

# Ministry Focus Paper Approval Sheet

This ministry focus paper entitled

EQUIPPING THE CHURCH DEACONS OF CHAI WAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
WITH AN ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP APPROACH

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EQUIPPING THE CHURCH DEACONS OF CHAI WAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH  
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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE  
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

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## ABSTRACT

### **Equipping the Church Deacons of Chai Wan Evangelical Church with an Adaptive Leadership Approach**

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Chai Wan Evangelical Church was established with a “burden for evangelism [and the] pursuit of godly life,” according to its mission statement. The primary goal of the church is to share the gospel and nourish Christians to become holy. In 2007, the church launched a student ministry, which resulted in an increase in evangelical and pastoral needs. In order to work well with the young leaders who are working with this ministry, a new paradigm for leadership is needed. Therefore, the purpose of this project is to develop a training plan for the deacons to be adaptive leaders.

Part One of this project explores the formation of leadership approach at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. This section also explores why the church’s current leadership approach is ineffective, while the evangelical and pastoral needs increase. Finally, this section describes the reasons for the implementation of adaptive leadership.

Part Two presents a theological reflection upon the challenge of church leadership. The importance of leadership for the church is discussed. The biblical theology of adaptive leadership is examined in order to give an account for its applicability and implications in a new era.

In the light of the leadership challenge before Chai Wan Evangelical Church and the theological understanding of leadership put forth in Part Two, Part Three presents a practical strategy for equipping deacons with adaptive leadership. It explains how key leaders, including deacons and young potential leaders, are recruited and trained, then adopt to exercise the new introduced leadership approach. This section also explains how the project will be assessed.

Content Reader: Randy Rowland

Words: 259

To my wife,  
Eva Ho

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PART ONE  
MINISTRY CONTEXT

## INTRODUCTION

Leadership is unarguably important in church. Being a pastor, whether a lead pastor, teaching pastor, or youth pastor, one is obligated to lead. In some ways, leadership for pastors is more important than their speech, conduct, love, faith, and purity.<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, pastors not only “give [their] attention to prayer and the ministry of the word” (Acts 6:4)<sup>2</sup>, but also are expected to lead the pastoral staff and congregation to build the Kingdom of God. Poor leadership may lead to serious consequences in church, including making the ministry ineffective, causing conflict between pastoral staff members and elders, and failing to set a target for the church and the congregation. Any of these results will inevitably hinder a church’s growth and development.

On the other hand, effective leadership in church can unite pastors, church elders, and the congregation for building a good and clear vision for development. It can adjust the church’s focus to the needs of the congregation and evangelism, while nurturing new thought for change, which can enhance a church’s adaptability for ministry and boost its growth and momentum. Effective leadership can eventually revitalize a church’s ministry.

Unavoidably, pastors encounter various difficulties in relation to their leadership within the church. One dilemma is that some groups of church members believe that when serving God, faithfulness is more important than accountability. The pastoral team often finds it difficult to guide these lay members in service. Pastors are expected to love and take care of their church members, yet at the same time, they also have a

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<sup>1</sup> Chung-Ming Lau and Lung-Kwong Lo, *Church Management Makes Sense: A Partnership of Pastors and Lay Leaders*, 4th ed. (Hong Kong: CCL, 2013), 127.

<sup>2</sup> All biblical references are taken from the NIV, unless otherwise noted.

responsibility to provide them with guidance to serve in different ministries. In some church denominations, the board of directors is composed of the elders and pastors, and these individuals are in certain sense regarded as employed departmental managers. Conflicts and clashes can easily exist between these two groups of people, and these present challenges to pastors seeking to exercise their leadership.<sup>3</sup>

The Church, as an organization designed to extend the Kingdom of God on earth, needs excellent leaders with God's calling and authority to lead with vision and direction. These leaders should have a blueprint for church growth and the charisma and vision to mobilize their members to serve with faithfulness to attain a common goal. Thus, a first step is to determine the purpose and meaning of leadership.

Warren Bennis describes leadership as "like beauty: it is hard to define but you know it when you see it."<sup>4</sup> In his book, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, Peter Guy Northhouse reports that during the last six decades, over sixty classification systems have been established to define leadership.<sup>5</sup> Some approaches define leadership as "the focus of group processes."<sup>6</sup> Others define leadership from a personality perspective, that a leader is deploying his or her special traits to influence the followers to finish certain tasks. Northhouse explains that others define leadership as "an act or a behavior" demonstrated by a leader to make some transformation in a group. Still other approaches define leadership as a power relationship wherein a leader is exercising his or her

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<sup>3</sup> Lau and Lo, *Church Management Makes Sense*, 127.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Bennis, *On Becoming a Leader* (Menlo Park, CA: Addison Wesley, 1989), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Guy Northhouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2015), 5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

authority over followers. Some consider leadership to be when a leader motivates his or her followers to attain goals beyond their ability, which is defined as transformation process. Lastly, some researchers define leadership from a skills perspective that emphasizes capabilities that can make one's leadership successful.<sup>7</sup>

The concept of leadership is broad, but the following four elements are commonly understood to be critical, according to Northhouse: “1) Leadership is a process; 2) leadership involves influence; 3) leadership occurs in groups; and 4) leadership includes attention to common goals.”<sup>8</sup> Northhouse states that considering these elements, the definition of leadership can be described as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”<sup>9</sup> Leadership comprises the influence of a leader who affects follower to achieve a common goal. Without influence, leadership is ineffective. Therefore, with no leadership, the progress of development cannot be measured.

In church, pastors and elders need to make decisions on any number of things. If a church ministry is scrutinized through this lens, leadership is observed to be the influence to make things happen. During the process of leading, leaders affect and are affected by their followers at the same time. It is crucial that the pastors, elders, department directors, and fellowship committee are able to influence the congregation, department members, and fellowship members, and rally dedication to serve in the ministry. Without this process of influencing, concrete development is difficult to attain within a local church.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Consequently, passion, energy, creativity, and spiritual resources for building the Kingdom of God are aspects of leadership that influence others in a church setting. In brief, leaders who can influence their followers are critical in order to maintain a healthy operation and development within a church ministry.

A church needs its leaders and leaders are obligated to lead the church. Bennis asks, “Where is the leader? Where have all the leaders gone?”<sup>10</sup> The lack of leaders is already recognized as a challenge within the business world, and the Christian world is not immune from this. In my ministry context in Hong Kong, the churches are presently experiencing a wave of pastors retiring, particularly those belonging to the Baby Boomer generation. The Hong Kong Church survey of 2014 indicates that at the time, the following statistics were true of Hong Kong churches: 13.1% of churches (169) do not have a lead pastor; 8.8% of churches (113) would have their lead pastor retiring in three years, among which 62.8% of them (71) have no lead pastor succession plan.<sup>11</sup> This reality has become a pressing concern to the denominations and churches. The succession issue is not restrained to groups of lead pastors or directors of Christian organizations, but also to groups of elders or core lay pastors in church. The absence of a succession plan and the lack of capable successors are both topics which require immediate attention for the Church in Hong Kong.

The common practice in Chinese society is for a leader to step down between the ages of sixty and seventy. In order for successors to have sufficient time to form their serving teams, build up their authority, and adjusting their serving strategy, the suitable

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<sup>10</sup> Eddie Gibbs, *LeadershipNext* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>11</sup> Chi-Wai Wu and Tze-Ho Lau, eds., *Pastoral Ministry in Turbulent Years: Studies on Hong Kong Church 2014* (Hong Kong: HKCRM, 2016), 160.

age of successors should be between thirty-five and forty-five. The successors might need to reach the age of fifty until they are mature and well recognized enough to completely take the lead. Potential successors therefore should come from Generation X—those born between the 1960s and the 1980s. The concept of Generation X was first introduced by researchers in America, and thus, the generalizations made about members of this generation might not be applicable to the Chinese context. However, to a certain extent, it is relevant to the Hong Kong social phenomenon, as its cultural formation factors, such as culture, family, technology, and economy, have influenced Hong Kong in a similar way and cause similar socio-economic transformation.<sup>12</sup>

The people born in the 1960s grew up in an era of rapid economic growth in Hong Kong during the 1970s and 80s. At that time, many churches launched massive evangelical efforts through establishing Christian schools and social service centers. Hong Kong churches have since experienced massive development, and church members have had plenty of service opportunities that have provided them with abundant ministry training. Many ministry workshops covering aspects like Bible study, evangelism, and church leadership were offered by various Christian organizations during this period. A significant number of Hong Kong Christians have benefited from these training courses and have been equipped with different ministry leadership techniques. If these Christians respond to God's calling to full-time ministry, they should be strong successors of today's

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<sup>12</sup> Kai-Man Kwan and Kwok-Tung Cheung ed., *Postmodern Culture and Christianity* (Hong Kong: FES, 2002), 380.

lead pastors. Or if they decide not to pursue pastoral leadership, they have potential to become capable church elders instead.<sup>13</sup>

Ironically, according to the Hong Kong Church survey, 27.4 percent of church members are between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four, and their attendance at church activities is the lowest among all age groups.<sup>14</sup> Christians of this age group are potential successors of key leaders, yet they are often indifferent members who are standing aloof.

Generation X Christians in Hong Kong are a unique demographic. They are found to be working hard to move up the social ladder to reach the middle class. In an article titled, “Generation X, Where Are You?” Christian Communication, Ltd. offers four reasons to explain their minimal participation in the church.<sup>15</sup> First, they are middle-aged, being too occupied with burdens from work and family which have left them with very limited eagerness and energy to serve God. Second, they have served for many years. Yet with increasing occasions of conflict with the church elders, they are marginalized and eventually stepped down from ministry. Third, they served zealously for a period, but have burnt out after coming across too many failures in ministries. Fourth, they are too engaged with worldly things, which have pulled them out from the church and caused them to backslide in their faith.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Christian Communication, Ltd., “Generation X, Where Are You?” Six Leadership Essentials, February 5, 2015, accessed September 1, 2016, <https://sixleadershipessentials.org/2015/02/05/532/>.

<sup>14</sup> Wu and Lau, *Pastoral Ministry in Turbulent Years*, 69.

<sup>15</sup> Christian Communication, Ltd., “Generation X, Where Are You?”

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Chai Wan Evangelical Church has been established for thirty-five years, and most church leaders and elders have been in leadership positions since that time. These leaders realize that it is time for them to pass the baton in order to nourish and cultivate the next generation of the church. But many younger members have stepped down from ministry or have left the church due to the reasons mentioned above. Some of those who left were potential candidates for the roles of church elder or ministry leader. For those who left the church due to conflicts with church leaders, if those conflicts can be resolved, these members could be the new generation of leaders that the church could count on for the next ten or twenty years.

These younger Christians are well-educated professionals, and they have adequate experience and training in spiritual formation and ministry. They have identified the issues that have affected the church negatively, and they have insight and passion to revitalize the church. In postmodern times, people do not trust each other, nor do they trust authority.<sup>17</sup> This cultural trend is also prevailing in churches.

As an example, recently at Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the young leaders worked out a proposal for a few changes in the church. This included implementing a procedure in which the young leaders would supervise and evaluate all the ministries planned by the deacon board. But the deacon board considered the move as a threat to their authority, and conflict ensued.

There is no doubt that many members of the younger generation are passionate about leading the church to improve and grow. They only require proper guidance and

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony B. Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 5-6.

training. The leaders of the older generation should seek to get along and serve with these potential members until they are ready and willing to take the lead. In fact, the other essential element to this succession progress is whether the church deacons are open to change and new concepts—spiritually, mentally, and technically. Therefore, the approach to launch a succession plan should start with getting the existing church leadership to be more open to new concepts. With humility and mutual understanding, the younger generation of Christians can be brought up as future leaders.

Hence, the purpose of this project is to develop a plan for leadership transition at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. When a church implements a leadership transition well, it positively affects church growth and the extension of Kingdom of God. Therefore, the thesis of this project focuses on guiding the church deacons to develop a new leadership approach, so that the distrust between them and young potential leaders shall be resolved. The young potential leaders shall participate more fully in church ministry and they shall be well positioned to lead the church to pursue God's call.

This project is divided into three parts. Part One describes the history of planting the Chai Wan Evangelical Church, as this story provides the background against which to consider leadership transition throughout the history. One particular aspect of the church's history that affects this discussion of leadership transition relates to God's opening a door for student ministry in 2007. This new student ministry clarified the need for younger church pastors and leaders. The church deacons discovered that the needs and challenges of the students were difficult for them to meet, due to the differences in culture and age. Part One concludes by considering how the existing situations are setting the study foundation for the leadership transition that is the focus of this project.

Part Two focuses on theological reflection. This is consummated by first reviewing various literature written on church leadership and its fundamental components. These works provide a foundation for a theology of leadership renewal. This section also discusses leadership renewal in light of history, culture shift, and biblical support of adaptive leadership, based on Moses' leadership in wilderness, and the life and teaching of Christ's leadership in the gospels.

Part Three outlines a practical strategy for developing the Chai Wan Evangelical Church deacon's leadership. It presents specific goals, the content of the strategy, and the target population. This includes a timeline for implementation that involves developing young potential leaders to take the lead in the church. This section also unfolds a plan for assessment with recommendations for the future.

The world is experiencing uncountable cultural shifts, tensions between old and new, and transition from modernity to postmodernity. In church, leaders are encountering dynamic changes in lifestyle, interpersonal relationships, and responsibility. At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, we are confronting similar challenges. While our church has opportunity for growth with student ministry, it is a challenge to transition the leadership to young potential leaders. It is my hope that this project can help lead the church deacons toward leadership transition with a new leadership approach.

## CHAPTER 1

### MINISTRY CONTEXT AND CHALLENGES OF CHAI WAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

Hong Kong, the ministry context of this project, is a vast metropolitan arena and a former British colony. In early colonial days during the post-war periods and civil war in China, Hong Kong was a shelter for migrants and refugees from Mainland China and Southeast Asia. Approximately one million refugees immigrated to Hong Kong in the 1950s.<sup>1</sup>

The colonial government lacked sufficient financial and human resources to settle the influx of immigrants. Charitable organizations and missionaries then became the dominating sources for addressing the refugees' needs. During that period, many Christian missionaries were forced to leave the newly established People's Republic of China and ended up in Hong Kong. Historians Fuk-Tsang Ying and Pan-Chiu Lai observe, "With the churches already established before 1949 and the newly arrived missionaries as

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<sup>1</sup> Pan-Chiu Lai and Fuk-Tsang Ying, "Diasporic Chinese Communities and Protestantism in Hong Kong During the 1950s," *Studies in World Christianity* 24, no. 1 (2004): 138.

well as churches newly established, Hong Kong became a labor-intensive missionary field.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Planting Chai Wan Evangelical Church**

Many Evangelical churches in Hong Kong were founded by the Christian missionaries during this period of time. In late 1950s, the Hong Kong Baptist Church organized a Summer Revival Camp which revived the spiritual lives of an impressive number of Christians. These revived Christians desired God’s word and hungered for spiritual growth. Their hearts were on fire and they devoted themselves to serve the Lord. When the Baptist church kept growing, conflicts arose in some branches between the leaders and certain church members regarding pastoral style and development of a vision. Those groups with opposite views then left and established independent evangelical churches on Hong Kong Island and Kowloon Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the Shaukiwan Evangelical Church was founded. She is also the mother church of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the church where I have been serving as pastor since 2001.

### **A Brief History of Shaukiwan Evangelical Church**

Between 1958 and 1959, some dedicated Christians teaching in a secondary school in Shaukiwan successfully led their students to Christ. The students were first brought up in a small discipleship class for new believers, and later they joined a Baptist church in Shaukiwan. As time passed, there were disagreements within the church, which drove a group, including these students, to detach and form Shaukiwan Christian

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 144.

<sup>3</sup> Evangelical United Church (Shaukiwan Evangelical Church, Chai Wan Evangelical Church, Grace Evangelical Church), *Church Member Handbook* (Hong Kong: EUC Liturgical Committee, 2002), 4.

Fellowship. In 1966, the fellowship reached a stable level of attendance and was officially founded as Shaukiwan Evangelical Church.<sup>4</sup>

Though it was founded with only twenty members, since the beginning, the founding pastor of Shaukiwan Evangelical Church led the church to launch evangelistic works within the community. These included opening the church for use by students in the area to study and do homework after school. Church members also offered to help the students with their homework, and they often invited the students and their parents to their homes for dinner. The pastor and some of the elders also made regular visits to the residents within community. The many gospel meetings organized in the evenings were always attended wholeheartedly by the congregation, and many newcomers were led to Christ. A lot of door-to-door evangelism was initiated during weekends or on Sundays after regular church services. The church also grew with more students brought by their dedicated Christian teachers. With God's grace and every member's commitment, the church gradually expanded to comprise eighty active members. Among those in the congregation, there were many living in the neighboring city of Chai Wan. A planting vision was thus seen among the church leaders.<sup>5</sup>

#### A Brief History of Chai Wan Evangelical Church

Chai Wan Evangelical Church is currently an independent denominational church. In 1979, Shaukiwan Evangelical Church planned to set up a branch for more localized evangelistic works in the Eastern District, as a response to the spiritual needs of Christian

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 5-6.

students. Back then, Chai Wan was still a resettlement area, as its location is at the east end of Hong Kong Island next to Shau Kei Wan. It is administered under the Eastern District and was originally designed to provide industrial and residential areas. The flourishing community, with an increasing number of primary and secondary schools, made Chai Wan a promising potential land for evangelism.

In 1982, the Education Bureau offered fifteen places for a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to establish a community service center. One of the designated places was Chai Wan. Grasping the opportunity, leaders of Shaukiwan Evangelical Church submitted a proposal to set up a self-study center in Chai Wan to the Bureau. With God's grace, the prayer was answered and a self-study center in Chai Wan was approved to be set up by the church.<sup>6</sup>

Shaukiwan Evangelical Church then sent one pastor and seventeen church members, most of whom lived in Chai Wan, to set up a self-study center, and more importantly, to plant a church. On January 1, 1983, Chai Wan Evangelical Church was founded and held its first Sunday service on the same day.<sup>7</sup> There were a lot of challenges as the team sought to run and manage the church and self-study center simultaneously. Nevertheless, the church leaders and members kept exerting extra effort to commence various outreaching works, such as organizing a gospel night, a gospel carnival, distributing flyers, and initiating personal evangelism. With their dedication and God's

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<sup>6</sup> Between the 1950s and the 1980s, most Hong Kong families lived in public estates. The units were too small for their children to study at home. A self-study center is a place operated by an NGO where students can do their homework and study after school.

<sup>7</sup> Evangelical United Church, *Church Member Handbook*, 7-10.

grace, church attendance at the Sunday service increased from eighteen people in 1983 to an average of one hundred people in the 1990s.

### The Core Values of Chai Wan Evangelical Church

Chai Wan Evangelical Church aligned her vision with other independent evangelical churches in Hong Kong, as being evangelical, spiritually devoted, and pursuing holiness. Our mission statement, “shouldering up evangelism, pursuing godliness,”<sup>8</sup> is adopted based upon two Bible passages:

For when I preach the gospel, I cannot boast, since I am compelled to preach. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! If I preach voluntarily, I have a reward; if not voluntarily, I am simply discharging the trust committed to me. (1 Corinthians 9:16-17)

Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)

This mission statement reconfirms the church’s vision that every Christian has a part in the Great Commission. Everyone in the world should learn about God’s good news and be able to respond to God’s grace in Christ. All Christians, regardless of whether or not they are part of a local congregation, are obliged to spread gospel. Every Christian is granted the pleasure of sharing the good news of the gospel joyfully with others.

God gives salvation merely by his grace, but he needs his human agents to communicate and offer it. Christians, as followers of Christ, should humbly grasp each occasion to share and introduce their personal faith in Jesus Christ. Christians are not only living their lives as his disciples, but they are also called to live by the good news they bring. The necessity of preaching the gospel is laid upon all Christians, while with

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., preface.

the heart of people the Holy Spirit will have his work (1 Corinthians 9:16). When asked why they share the good news, members at Chai Wan Evangelical Church will often answer simply, “Because we are Christian.” They share the gospel with people not only because of the grace they have experienced, but also because of the obligation entrusted to them by God and by the church.

### Church as Family

The word “church” carries multiple meanings. In his book, *The Essence of Church*, Craig Van Gelder explains that it can refer to a building, an activity, a policy group, a relational body, an institutionalized denomination, or organizational style.<sup>9</sup> However, undoubtedly a church is more than a physical building, a weekly programmed activity, a historical denomination, or any organizational structure.

In Hong Kong, most independent evangelical churches are deemed as fundamentalist, which often views the church as a family. The word “church” in Greek means “being called out.” It means people are called out from death, evil, the world, and sin to form a church. The church thus is never confined to the concept of a building (meeting place or chapel) nor a specific congregation. A church is a group of people being called out by God to gather for serving and worshiping him.<sup>10</sup>

Family is a precious. Church is the family of God, and Christian brothers and sisters are part of this family of God. The Apostle Paul writes, “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people and also members

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<sup>9</sup> Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2000), 14.

<sup>10</sup> Fundamental Book, “The Church of the Living God,” accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.fundamentalbook.com/article141.htm>.

of his household” (Ephesians 2:19). In Hong Kong, relationships are held in high esteem due to the strong Chinese cultural background. This high value on relationships is also influential within the church. As such, members always emphasize the fact that the church is their family. The following aspects of family as church represent the general consensus at Chai Wan Evangelical Church:

1. Family is a place to love.  
“Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God” (1 John 4:7).
2. Family is a place to be patient and to forgive.  
“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:2-3).
3. Family is place to build up and support.  
“From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work” (Ephesians 4: 16).
4. Family is place with management.  
“But Christ is faithful as the Son over God’s house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory” (Hebrews 3:6).
5. Family is a place to nourish.  
“The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?” (Luke 12: 42)<sup>11</sup>

Even committee meetings at Chai Wan Evangelical Church function as family meetings. For example, the church’s managing committee was created upon its founding. Its major function was to direct and manage the church, and the committee members were responsible to report to the mother church the progress of church development. All church issues, including pastoral needs, administration, finance, and household matters, were discussed in the managing committee meeting. Even trivial issues, such as purchasing groceries for the church, could also appear on the agenda. The committee

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

members always did their best to come up with an agreement on each and every issue, and they avoided the notion of voting to make any decisions. This was a period when the committee members were satisfied with the leadership style that allowed all members to share their ideas, opinions, and feelings during the meeting.

### **The Church Transition Period**

Beginning in the 1990s, Chai Wan Evangelical Church began to go through a period of transition. This began with a shift in worship style, and continued with the decision to model the structure of the church on Saddleback Church in the United States. Then in 2003, the founding pastor stepped down. All of these changes brought challenges and shifted the needs and perspectives of church members in many ways.

#### Changing the Worship Style

The first Sunday service took place on the same day that the church was founded. As a fundamentalist church, Chai Wan Evangelical Church had no strong foundation of worship theology. The church has been defined by her members as a reformed church, believing the theological doctrine of *sola scriptura*, which is recognizing Scripture as solely authoritative over the faith and practice of followers of Christ. The theology of worship was derived from the doctrine that identified the focus of the Sunday as preaching the Word of God. The worship leaders were expected to lead the congregation to sing a few songs from the hymns books that were not necessarily related to sermon, but were selected based on the worship leader's spiritual experience and preference. The Sunday service was thus a combination of fifteen minutes of singing with sharing,

followed by the preacher in the pulpit preaching for forty-five to sixty minutes, and wrapped up with a song of response and routine church announcement.

In 1993, the founding pastor suggested the implementation of a praise and worship style that is more lively and energetic. He invited a church member who was gifted in music to design the new worship flow. She attended worship classes to study the theological concepts, practical techniques, and arrangement of praise and worship. When she had equipped herself with the necessary knowledge and experience, she provided training for the worship leaders, vocalists, and instrumentalists. She led a worship-planning focus group to work out the feasibility, content, and flow of worship. The planning group carefully selected the songs which were deemed to fit the new worship flow. They further prepared to procure the required facilities, including sound system, computer, projector, various software, and lighting.

The board of deacons then shared with the congregation about the vision of adopting a new worship mode. Some church members offered positive feedback, while some showed their concerns. Taking all the congregation's positive and negative feedback into account, the worship-planning focus group and the board of deacons refined the proposed content of worship. Finally, the new worship mode was introduced in 2000. It was the first time the church made a significant change in the ministry involving the whole congregation.

It is commonly understood that there are three actions that can split up a church. These are changing the worship style, changing the lead pastor, and the purchase of real estate for church expansion. At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, it took seven years before the new worship style was fully accepted by the church.

## Adapting the Purpose-Driven Church Model

Chai Wan Evangelical Church, like most evangelical churches in Hong Kong, was founded by former members of the Baptist Church. In the 1950s, a group of Baptists disagreed with the vision of the Baptist Church, which they felt over-emphasized Bible teaching but lacked zeal for evangelism. These members then left the Baptist Church and founded the Evangelical Church, dedicated to evangelism. In the terms of leadership structure and style, the Evangelical Church continued to follow the Baptist Church system and tradition, with the congregation on the top of church leadership structure, followed by the board of deacons, and then the ministry departments.

In 2000, Chai Wan Evangelical Church reformed its leadership structure in order to model them after the leadership structure of Saddleback Church in the United States.<sup>12</sup> In the new structure, the congregation remains on the top of the church structure, followed by the board of deacons. Below the board of deacons, the ministry was redefined with the following areas: Department of Evangelism, Department of Worship, Department of Fellowship, Department of Teaching, and Department of Administration.

As in most churches, elders and staff are viewed as the “decision-makers” at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. If something has to be done in the congregation, whether it is starting a new ministry or purchasing new equipment, the elders’ blessing is a prerequisite. In fact, church members also expect the senior minister to take lead in all programs and activities. A “top-down” management is operating in the church.

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<sup>12</sup> The growth of most Hong Kong churches has been stagnant since the student revival movement in late 1990s. The Saddleback Church model by Rick Warren offers these churches some insightful direction for church growth.

## The Resignation of the Lead Pastor

In mid-2003, the church's lead pastor, who had been serving the church for over sixteen years, announced his decision to leave the church at the end of the year. At that time, I had served with the church as a youth pastor for two years and was considered to be too new and inexperienced for the position of lead pastor. Another pastor who had been serving the church for five years was expected to take the lead. Yet arguments arose between him and the congregation, and sadly he was forced to leave the church shortly after the lead pastor resigned.

The board of deacons then decided to recruit a lead pastor as well as a pastor for rendering pastoral support to the women of the church. Two pastors, a husband and wife, subsequently filled the vacancies in March 2004. The husband took over the lead pastor role while his wife served as a women's ministry pastor. They were recognized as very capable to take up the roles. However, taking the congregation by surprise, their term of service only lasted for two years before they left the church.

The wife provided leadership for the women's ministry and the children's ministry, looking after the women's pastoral needs as well as the children's Sunday service and Sunday school. After serving in this role for a few months, she took time off for an operation, and she ended up taking sick leave after the operation for almost six months. When she recovered, she submitted her resignation at the end 2004. The deacon board was very surprised by her decision and tried to retain her service with some favorable offers. But she was determined to leave the church, and she did not give any reason for her resignation. The deacon board finally accepted, although they were not pleased. The lead pastor privately shared with me that his wife was not satisfied with the small scale of

the children's ministry. She went on to serve at another church that served over one hundred children after leaving Chai Wan Evangelical Church. The second reason for her departure was that she could not get along well with the children's ministry leaders, which hindered her heart and plan for the service.

The lead pastor also left after a brief tenure. He was doing his counseling studies when he joined the church, and he brought certain cultural change that was appreciated by the congregation. He also offered some insightful ways of leading, guiding the board of deacons to see things from a different perspective. In May 2006, he applied for a two-week study leave to go to Canada to finish his counseling degree. After completing his coursework, he needed to do a practicum in order to fulfill his course. Considering the tension between serving the church and the practicum, he tendered his resignation. The board of deacons offered him a part-time position, but he rejected it, saying that this would not be fair to the church.

As part of this project, I interviewed the chairman of the deacon board, asking him about the resignation of the preceding lead pastor. He told me that the preceding lead pastor found difficulty working with some of the female deacons. The female deacons also complained that the lead pastor was not committed to his service. The complaints seemed to highlight the personality differences between the lead pastor, who was task-oriented and less focused on feelings, and the former female lead pastor, who had been very caring and considerate. Finally, the lead pastor left the church at the end of June 2006.

At that point, the board of deacons approached me to offer me the post of lead pastor. I prayed and discreetly considered the position for over a month. I felt that I was

inadequate in leadership skills and pastoral experience, but I heard God calling to me to take up the position. As a result, I became the lead pastor of Chai Wan Evangelical Church in 2007. All of this transition of church pastoral leadership kept the church in an unstable status for a few years, during which time the size of congregation diminished slightly.

### **Recent Opportunities and Challenges**

In the last ten years since I have been serving as lead pastor of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, many opportunities and challenges have presented themselves. An opportunity to do student ministry has been a highlight of this season of church life, but it has required a great deal of pastoral attention. To some extent, the focus on the student ministry has impacted the commitment of young adults in the church, particularly those in their twenties and thirties. All of these changes resulted in the decision to determine the church's strengths and weaknesses using the Natural Church Development schematic. The outcome of this research was disheartening for many, and the ensuing low morale is yet another challenge.

### **Upsurge in Evangelical and Pastoral Needs**

In 2007, God opened the door for the church to set up a student ministry to serve students in a secondary school in Siu Sai Wan, an area adjacent to Chai Wan. The school invited the church to use the school facilities for Sunday service, fellowship, and other church programs. The church was in return required to lead the student fellowship committee and run different cell groups with the religious group of school. The church

was also supported to organize a gospel meeting for the students during the school assembly at Christmas time.

When the student ministry first started, there were only two pastors in the church to take care of all the church ministries. Though I was the lead pastor, I needed to take lead in the new ministry while my female pastoral colleague was responsible for ministry to women and Bible teaching. In an effort to focus on the student ministry, I spent my lunchtime every day at the school, getting to know the students and inviting them to church. I also led a couple of cell groups during lunchtime. Following all of this preparatory work, which began in September 2007 when the school semester started, we were able to launch a Saturday youth fellowship in December of the same year. From that time onwards, we have witnessed many students becoming Christians and growing in faith. The youth fellowship regularly has approximately forty to fifty students in attendance every week.

Since the church started to have Sunday service in the school hall in October 2007, there have been on average two to three newcomers joining the service every Sunday. The newcomers have been mostly residents in the neighborhood sharing quite different profiles; some are young couples, others are families, and some are rehabilitating from mental illness. As there has been an increase in parents bringing children to the church, a children's ministry department was set up to plan and arrange for the children's worship and fellowship. This ministry department has organized various workshops on children's growth and parenting. With more evangelical opportunities opening up, the human resources have become insufficient. It has been a challenge to juggle the resources—both

pastoral and volunteer—to respond to the needs for evangelism and the needs of the existing church members.

### Loss of Church Members

In the beginning of 2015, a Christian Institute called Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement published a report on a survey of Hong Kong churches.<sup>13</sup> It indicates that in 2014 there were 1287 churches in Hong Kong, with Sunday service attendance reaching 305,097 people. As compared with the attendance of 292,287 in 2009, there was an increase of 12,810 in number. Between 2009 and 2015, there has been an average of 16,180 baptisms/church membership commitments each year. This amounts to an accumulative 80,900 new members joining the Church in five years. In comparison, the report indicates that churches have lost 60,000 people during the same five years. Some of these represent those who have died, migrated, or are living out of the country temporarily for overseas study; nevertheless, the number of those simply not attending church is significant.<sup>14</sup>

The report indicates that the drop-out members are mostly those between the ages of twenty-five and forty-four.<sup>15</sup> This correlates with what is taking place at Chai Wan Evangelical Church as well. After the church started the student ministry in 2007, there was an upsurge of evangelical and pastoral needs. Some church members who had been part of the church for many years left the church. Those who left included couples,

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<sup>13</sup> Chi Wai Wu and Tze Ho Lau, eds., *Pastoral Ministry in Turbulent Years: Studies on Hong Kong Church 2014* (Hong Kong: HKCRM, 2016), 8-65.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 37.

families, and ex-deacons. As they were once the senior church members who supported the church with their time and resources, their absence creates uncertainty and distress.

### Natural Church Development Analysis

This wave of people leaving caused much speculation about the reasons why. Some felt the church was not growing in satisfactory quality or quantity. Some said the church was lacking love and they felt neglected. Some complained about insufficient pastoral care and biblical teaching. Some thought the church was dying when they witnessed people leaving.

The pastoral staff and deacons wanted to precisely locate the needs of the congregation and the weaknesses in the church. A few meetings took place to discuss and investigate the issue. With various issues involved, it was difficult to come up with a resolution to start tackling the complicated situation. It was determined that the Natural Church Development (hereafter, NCD) tool could be used to help analyze the needs of the congregation.<sup>16</sup> NCD suggests eight quality characteristics that are essential for building God's church:

- Empowering Leadership
- Gift-oriented Ministry
- Passionate Spirituality
- Functional Structures
- Inspiring Worship Services
- Holistic Small Groups
- Need-oriented Evangelism
- Loving Relationships

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<sup>16</sup> Natural Church Development is an analytical model founded by Christian A. Schwarz that is to produce sustainable results on measurable quality and growth rates in churches all over the world, regardless of culture, spiritual tradition, or demographic context. Natural Church Development, "About Natural Church Development (NCD)," accessed January 6, 2017, [http://www.ncd-international.org/public/natural\\_church\\_development.html](http://www.ncd-international.org/public/natural_church_development.html).

Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement was employed to provide analysis on a comprehensive survey conducted within the church. The CEO of the institute came to the church to present the results and proposed solutions for development and improvement. Among the eight quality characteristics, Chai Wan Evangelical Church scored lowest points in aspects of Loving Relationships and Holistic Small Groups.

After the analysis was shared with the congregation, many members felt frustrated. They agreed with the results, and they believed the pastors and deacons were responsible. Some of the members later calmed down and felt the urge to stand up for the church. They initiated some meetings to address the problems and determine how to redeem the weaknesses noted in the analysis. They meticulously drafted a detailed proposal with plenty of thoughtful and practical suggestions and brought it to the deacon's meeting. Their proposal was impressive, and it contained a lot of creative ideas for the church's development and pastoral work. Though some deacons felt their leadership was threatened in some sense, I was inspired by the alternative point of view and their personal and specific requests for pastoral focus.

### **A New Leadership Approach: Adaptive Leadership**

Chai Wan Evangelical Church is now at a crossroads. There continue to be opportunities for student ministry, which would potentially lead to church growth in ten to fifteen years, as those students would join the church as adults. However, there are also a number of challenges. The first challenge is that the church is declining as some church members continue to leave. The second challenge is that the young potential leaders who can provide new insight and direction for church development are challenging the

authority of the deacons. It will be critical for a leadership transition to take place—from the older members, primarily the deacons, to the younger members, represented by the group that offered proposals to remedy the issues noted in the NCD survey. Navigating this leadership transition smoothly will determine whether Chai Wan Evangelical Church can turn the tide.

Most of the books and seminars on leadership nowadays share a similar motif: change is the norm. In their book, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*, Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk write, “Our culture is in the midst of rapid, extensive transformation at every level.”<sup>17</sup> Change is always taking place. It happens in different contexts, and the local church is no exception.

Roxburgh and Romanuk explain that there are two types of change—continuous and discontinuous—both of which require our attention.<sup>18</sup> They explain, “Continuous change develops out of what has gone before and therefore can be expected, anticipated, and managed.”<sup>19</sup> The growth of offspring offers a good illustration. The skills and experience a child has learned and gained can be regarded as quantifiers to determine the stage of the development he or she has undergone, which allows the parents to know their child’s progress. The current expertise and skills are decisive factors to administer continuous change; few new skills are required, if any.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Alan J. Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Discontinuous change, on the other hand, “is disruptive and unanticipated; it creates situations that challenge our assumptions.”<sup>21</sup> The skills one has already acquired can be ineffective when dealing with these types of change. Discontinuous change may bring frustration to those being affected, who can find themselves in an unanticipated world that is difficult to cope with. However, discontinuous change is in fact the force that keeps transforming a culture continually, turning a society into something different as seasons pass.<sup>22</sup>

At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the church is experiencing discontinuous change which can be regarded as disruptive and unanticipated. Some deacons with a top-down management mindset are afraid of their authority being challenged, while some see it as a good opportunity to get potential young leaders involved in the change. How the pastors and the deacons work along with this group of potential young leaders is crucial. There are two value systems in leadership: one is reactive, organizational, institutional, and passive, while the other is proactive, relational, missional, and intentional. The former is regarded as traditional which sustains stability, but it lacks the ability to respond to rapid changes. The latter emphasizes proactivity which requires interaction, adaptability, and a desire for betterment in order to embrace challenges and the ever-changing world.

Ronald Heifetz, in his book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, presents the concept of adaptive work in leadership: “Adaptive work consists of the learning required to address conflicts in the values people hold, or to diminish the gap between the values

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

people stand for and the reality they face. Adaptive work requires a change in values, belief, or behavior.”<sup>23</sup> Adaptive works requires both leaders and followers to confront rather escape from realities and conflicts.<sup>24</sup> Conflict and stress are raised due to the undesirable reality of disequilibrium in the ministry. This often happens during a time of development opportunity, church decline, or leadership change.

An adaptive leader follows certain strategies to bring about the best outcome and help people deal with the disequilibrium. First, the adaptive leader notices when a church situation becomes an obstacle to the believers’ spiritual growth. The adaptive leader also refuses to respond to the church problem with a technical solution, but instead brings everyone together to address the problem. Distress is caused during times of change, and churches turn to authority for solutions. When this happens, leader needs to develop an adaptive situation by shifting the responsibility back to the people and mobilizing them to modify their values and attitudes. An adaptive leader provides questions instead of offering authoritative solutions. He or she also exposes the people to the threat rather than protecting them from it in order to stimulate adaptation. The adaptive leader disorients people’s current roles for the development of new roles and relationships. He or she allows norms to be challenged instead of maintaining them.<sup>25</sup>

At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the church is undergoing a stage of discontinuous change, wherein deacons find themselves lacking the capacities and skills to tackle the changing cultural context. When the conventional leadership approach is

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<sup>23</sup> Ronald A. Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998), 22.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 126-127.

deemed ineffective, adaptive leadership can be a way out. In order to enable the deacons' paradigm shift regarding leadership style, it is important to consider a theology of leadership. Thus, Part Two commences with a literature review that seeks to clarify the concept of leadership at Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

PART TWO  
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter develops insight for new leadership at Chan Wan Evangelical Church by considering the biblical, theological, and practical theories put forth in six selected books. Through the first two books, leadership is studied in light of history and culture. The next two books explain the importance of leadership for the church in a new era. The last two books review the concepts of adaptive leadership, as these inform the process of designing and adopting certain practices to train adaptive leaders.

#### ***Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America,*** **edited by Darrell L. Guder**

Darrell Guder's book, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, is classified in genre of missional ecclesiology. It plays a fundamental role in explaining the general theory of the missional movement. Chapter 1 of the book presents the background, philosophy, and the study methods employed. A research team of six missiologists was formed to intensively work together for three years to study related literature to "discover the possible shape of missional ecclesiology for North America."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Darrell L. Guder, ed., *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 8.

The authors reconceptualize the theology of mission in regard to the *missio Dei*, the “mission of God.” They explain, “Mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather, mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purpose to restore and heal creation.”<sup>2</sup> God is claimed said to be a “missionary God.” The local church is defined as a group of “sent people” based on this theological concept. “As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (John 20:21).<sup>3</sup>

Chapters 2 and 3, written by Craig Van Gelder, present North American culture and the formation of church under the shaping forces of modernity and postmodernity. Chapter 2 discusses various cultural factors in North America that affect the nature and faithfulness of the church. Chapter 3 draws the reader’s attention to the interaction of Christianity with the cultural context. It discusses the form of a functional Christendom in North American settings and its impact on church denominations and para-local Christian organizations.

Based on the contextual and historical analysis in the previous chapter, the book addresses the theological foundation of missional ecclesiology in Chapter 4 by George Hunsberger. Hunsberger examines the fundamental definition of the local church as people who are called and sent by God to announce the sovereignty of God. This calling is based on the gospel: “In Jesus Christ the reign of God is at hand and is now breaking in” (Matthew 3:1-2).<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 15.

Chapter 5 by Lois Barrett then expands the understanding of the Church as being apostolic to the world. Her theological basis is that of the gospel and the Church's calling. The church is apostolic, which means it is "to be sent out" on behalf of the reign of God to the world.

Chapter 6 by Inagrace Dietterich examines the cherished relationship between the Church's existence as being apostolic and its practices of ecclesiology. The ecclesial practices of missional communities are discussed, which includes baptism, the Lord's Supper, reconciliation, discernment, hospitality, Scripture reading, leadership, and love and support.<sup>5</sup>

Chapter 7 by Alan Roxburgh explores the nature and practice of missional leadership. In light of the historical and cultural context, he presents how the context of leadership is shaped by Christendom and modernity. He introduces that a leader was historically seen as a priest and a pedagogue, while today a leader is seen as a counselor, manager, and technician.<sup>6</sup> Then he proposes an apostolic reorientation of concept and practice of ecclesial leadership in which leader is taking up the role of an equipper.<sup>7</sup>

Chapters 8 and 9 by Darrell Guder recommend the structural implications of a missional ecclesiology. He develops three principles for the structuring of the missional church: scriptural authority, cultural diversity, and local particular community. With these principles, he suggests some trajectories for the formation of missional structures in an unsettled context.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 159.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 190-198.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 183.

This book provides an understanding of the current situation of the North American Church against the background of changing culture, and opens up a reader's mind to the missionary nature of God. The reflections on practices for an emerging church based on missional ecclesiology are concrete and feasible. Chapter 7 offers the most significant input for this project. It gives an exhaustive introduction of the context of leadership in Christendom and modernity. Under the influence of modernity, church leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church are viewed as managers and technicians where they are expected to provide professional and excellent leadership at church. It explains why modern leadership has become ineffective in many ministry contexts, and the explanation rings true for Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

One of major limitations of Guder's writing is that it is now almost twenty years old. The chapters are developed based on the concept that our culture is changing, so we must reexamine the way that we understand God, the world, and the Church. The discussion of the missional movement should be updated in terms of how it deals with recent culture and ministry contexts. Second, Guder states that church leadership is influenced by Christendom where the local church was essential in the social system of church-state partnership, however in Hong Kong this was never the case. Thus, the discussion of church leaders moving beyond a Christendom mindset is irrelevant for our context. Third, the book discusses the impact of modernity on church leadership in that leaders are expected to fill the roles of counselor, manager, and technician. However, the impact of culture shift towards postmodernity are not discussed in depth, and it is this postmodern shift that presents a great challenge to Hong Kong churches, including Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

### ***The Great Giveaway*, by David E. Fitch**

Ecclesiology is an important topic to church leadership and renewal. *The Great Giveaway*, by David E. Fitch, is an excellent work about contextualized ecclesiology, presenting God's intention toward the Church in a postmodern cultural setting in western society, particularly North America. Fitch reviews and critiques church leaders who have adopted some aspects of modernism that have led to removing the core identity of the Church.

In the first chapter, Fitch critiques the tendency of some church leaders to measure success, suggesting that the Church indeed is demonstrating its illness by seeking rapid growth.<sup>8</sup> He states that individualism and corporate efficiency are highly valued in North America churches, making size the sole focus.<sup>9</sup> Fitch argues that when these two “sacred cows,” individualism and corporate efficiency, have become a church's goals, the evangelicals “have given away the definition of success in terms of being the body of Christ to America's culture of success and its agenda of modernity.”<sup>10</sup>

When a church embraces the definition of success in the context of modernity, the senior pastor subsequently becomes a CEO. In Chapter 3, Fitch points out the idea that CEO leadership is taken from the business world. Becoming a megachurch is the goal of many evangelical churches in North America, and this has in turn created the demand for a leader-pastor-CEO. The role continues to develop into a leader-public speaker-pastor-CEO, which then has become the preferred model in evangelical pastoral leadership. He

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<sup>8</sup> David E. Fitch, *The Great Giveaway* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 27.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 32-33.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-34.

disagrees with high-profile pastors/authors like Warren Bennis, Bill Hybels, and John Maxwell, who have borrowed the concept of leadership and management “operation” from American business, university, and government, and brought them into the local church.<sup>11</sup>

Fitch argues that Christians should not depend upon history to determine the type of leadership to adopt in our churches in the face of modernity’s fading influence. He suggests that we should define leadership in accordance with Scripture. In the New Testament, the word “leader” in the church context is not commonly used.<sup>12</sup> The Apostle Paul described those working in the churches with him as co-laborers, co-workers, most likely to avoid elevating himself over them. The word *diakonia* (“servant” or “service”) is more frequently used in reference to a leader in the New Testament which contrasted to secular concept of leader.<sup>13</sup>

Jesus commands his disciples not to use any titles of the worldly authorities, like rabbi, father, or leader. He also encourages them to reject those practices in leadership that are associated with dominant culture. In this regard, the Church should follow Christ’s model of leadership, which is servanthood. Jesus exemplifies this when he washes his disciples’ feet (John 13:13-17).<sup>14</sup> However, the trap of over-emphasizing servanthood in leadership should be avoided as well. Instead, the very character of the

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 73-74.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 81.

pastor should be redefined as the one who faithfully serves Christ's body on behalf of the Master.

Fitch's work first scrutinizes the definition of success when engaging the context of modernity. He examines how evangelicals have given away the calling of the Church—to engage in evangelism, leadership, production of experience (worship), preaching of the Word, justice, spiritual formation, and moral education—to engage with modernity. Then he suggests that if the Church wishes to live faithfully according to God's primary calling in postmodernity, church leaders need to rethink their adopted practices in the light of church history.<sup>15</sup>

Fitch also contends that even outside the evangelical world, modernity is inevitably breaking down, and the multifunctional leadership style may become ineffective in the business world as well. Servant leadership is becoming more relevant review in light of culture and history. At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the congregation is predominantly influenced by western culture in different aspects, which undoubtedly includes leadership style. The leadership of Chai Wan Evangelical Church has been shaped by modernity in that the lead pastor is viewed as a CEO and the deacon board is viewed as a board of directors. Fitch points out that the Kingdom of God is not under our control, therefore church leaders have to learn how to share and delegate their authority.<sup>16</sup> Taking into account the many difficulties Chai Wan Evangelical Church is encountering in leadership, a new mode of leadership should be explored.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 78.

For the purposes of this project, one of the limitations of *The Great Giveaway* is that it does not address the leadership of elders. It solely addresses pastoral leadership. A second limitation is that Fitch spends one chapter discussing leadership development in term of pastoral moral failure, but this is not directly related to the situation at Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

***The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World,*  
by Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk**

Alan Roxburgh and Fred Romanuk are amongst the most significant leaders in the missional conversation. Through their different works, the proactive and practical insights offered have been enlightening many church leaders to lead with missional transformation in the postmodern world. Their book, *The Missional Leader: Equipping Your Church to Reach a Changing World*, is a masterpiece that has laid a concrete foundation for subsequent development towards the theme of missional leadership.

This book is divided into two major sections. Section One, consisting five chapters, is about the context and challenge of missional leadership. In Chapter 1, the authors first state that they felt convicted to address a new leadership approach that is needed for missional communities.<sup>17</sup> As churches are in the wave of rapid and discontinuous change, six critical issues are presented for cultivating a missional leadership in the new cultural environment.

Chapter 2 discusses how to cultivate the imagination of a missional leader in the midst of massive change. The authors believe people can convey God's vision for the world, and imagination plays vital role to achieve the result. The role of pastor is to foster

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<sup>17</sup> Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 3.

and encourage this imagination to lead the congregation so they can hear God’s will and see his vision for the ministry. Nevertheless, cultivating a missional leader and congregation is no easy process. It can be an iterative process, with frequent looping back and forth.<sup>18</sup>

Chapter 3 presents a way to understanding the process of change and transition for a congregation in missional culture. The authors propose what they call a “Three-Zone Model of Missional Leadership,” which serves to provide the following aids:

- Assist leaders in understanding the adaptive shifts in leadership style required amid such change
- Identify the skills and competencies required in each zone
- Help congregations understand their own location in massive change.<sup>19</sup>

Chapter 4 presents an overview for comprehending the context of the missional congregation. The authors state that a congregation is a combination of various elements of relationships, traditions, and networks intertwining with one another. They suggest that a leader has to understand “several principles of how congregations-as systems can and do change”.<sup>20</sup> These principles provide a framework for the formation of the Missional Change Model and define its context.

Chapter 5 describes how the Missional Change Model was developed based on practical working experience with congregations and denominational systems. It introduces a way for church leaders to lead the congregation to lapse from a performative-reactive zone culture into an emergent zone. The model consists of five

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 62.

essential steps: “awareness, understanding, evaluate, experiment, and commitment.”<sup>21</sup>

Rather than a straight-line process, these five steps should take place as a set of spirals in which the elements are interlinking.

Section Two is the core of the book, which fleshes out the principles of missional leadership discussed in Section One. Chapter 6 introduces the general philosophy of missional leadership. The author points out four interconnected areas of leadership in a missional congregation: self, people, congregation, and context.<sup>22</sup> Chapter 7 provides an in depth investigation into a leader’s necessary personal maturity. It presents the leaders’ characters as the important skills and capacities required to lead the church in a missional movement. Missional leaders receive their primary calling from God to cultivate the missional congregation in the changing cultural context. The leaders are required to do the following: “1) foster a missional imagination; 2) cultivate growth; 3) enable change; and 4) create coalitions.” Chapter 8 explains this process and its related factors in detail.<sup>23</sup> Chapter 9 examines the processes of forming a missional culture in four aspects: “1) missional integration; 2) missional culture; 3) missional practices; and 4) missional theology.”<sup>24</sup> Chapter 10 discusses how a local church should learn to listen to and merge with its community. It considers the leadership skills and leaders’ competencies required for cultivating missional engagement.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 84-103.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 114-115.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 146-164.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 165-170.

Roxburgh and Romanuk state that the Church is experiencing a wave of discontinuous change which is disruptive and unanticipated. A simple adjustment in the present form of leadership is ineffective in the situation. A new type of leadership is essential to cultivate people for a missional future, which is vital to church transformation. Clearly, Chai Wan Evangelical Church is undergoing a period of discontinuous change where conflicts are raised due to differences between young and old generations. Church leaders, primarily belonging to the older generation, find that they are lacking the capacity to lead the young generations. In order to address this environment, developing a new leadership approach for transforming the congregation is imperative. Another contribution of the book is that it briefly introduces the idea of adaptive leadership, which focuses on distinguishing between adaptive and technical change. The church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church are well trained to tackle problems with tactical minds, and the notion of adaptive leadership will help them look at the issue from different perspective.

Roxburgh and Romanuk's book has a couple of limitations as it relates to this project. While their writing discusses adaptive leadership, it only employs one of the concepts for developing the leader equipping model, and they neglect to examine a biblical theology for adaptive leadership. Second, the book focuses on building leaders for the missional church movement, not addressing leadership transitions, which is the goal of this project.

***The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century,***  
**by Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch**

Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch are the meritorious authors of the missional church, with their works reshaping the missional thinking for many church planters and congregations around the globe. In their book, *The Shaping of Things to Come*, they write, “In our view, the church should be missional rather than institutional. The church should define itself in terms of its mission—to take the gospel to and incarnate the gospel within a specific cultural context.”<sup>25</sup> The book is divided into four main parts with twelve chapters.

Part One shows the current situation of the western Church, where Christendom is fading out and the post-Christendom era is rising. Frost and Hirsch point out that Christendom is no longer a definer of western culture, though presently many western countries, including the United States, still generally consider Christendom to be defining their cultural context. The churches in western countries still operate in a Christendom mode, rather than recognizing the growing post-Christendom context.<sup>26</sup> The authors state that there is a need for the Church to review its calling as a missionary church, to bring hope to people in the post-Christendom context. Three kinds of missional church are introduced: incarnational, messianic, and apostolic, each of which is then thoroughly discussed throughout the chapters.

Part Two discusses the “incarnational ecclesiology” of missional churches and its theological implications. The authors argue that missional church is incarnational, not

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<sup>25</sup> Michael Frost and Alan Hirsch, *The Shaping of Things to Come: Innovation and Mission for the 21st Century Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 20.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

attractional. As God came to our world and became the person of Jesus Christ, when the Church becomes incarnational, people can experience the genuine presence of Christ among them. An incarnational church also means that the church is being sent rather than withdrawing from other people in their lives. Finally, it implies that people can experience God in their own living culture.<sup>27</sup>

Part Three examines how the missional church can live out a “messianic spirituality.” The authors discuss how the word “faith” can be interpreted in two ways. One interpretation takes a Hellenistic view, seeing faith as a kind of knowledge, belief, or creed; another interpretation takes a Hebraic view, seeing faith as action, practice, and a kind of trust lived out. Frost and Hirsch contend that a church’s creed is important, yet it should not be dominating. The church has to be more engaging in missional faith.<sup>28</sup> To live out messianic spirituality, hospitality should be prioritized, and Christians can serve and bless others in their surrounding communities.<sup>29</sup>

Part Four addresses the need for “apostolic leadership” for enabling the church to transition from a Christendom mode into a missional mode. The authors propose a fivefold ministry model based on Ephesians 4: apostle, prophet, evangelist, shepherd, and teacher (which they call the APEST model).<sup>30</sup> They encourage those who would like to follow the missional church model to adopt biblical leadership and abandon the triangular

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 166-167.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 182.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 209.

hierarchies in traditional church. In the final chapter, the authors reassert the need for adopting a new leadership approach in the post-Christendom era.

*The Shaping of Things to Come* points out the obligation for the Church to rethink its calling in a post-Christendom era. The Church needs to shift from being attractional to being incarnational, especially as the challenges from cultural shift have made the triangular hierarchical leadership style ineffective. Renewal in leadership is essential for a new expression of the Church. At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the challenge introduced by cultural shift is influencing the congregation and impacting our leadership. A new leadership style is vital for the church transition.

Like other books reviewed here, the major limitation of *The Shaping of Things to Come* is that it develops a new leadership style based on the bankruptcy of Christendom. Hong Kong was a British colony and many churches in Hong Kong were established by western Christian missionaries, but the influence of Christendom has not been as strong as in western countries like the United States. Therefore, the Christendom discussion is less relevant for the Hong Kong ministry context.

Second, Frost and Hirsh develop a new leadership model, APEST, mainly based on the theology derived from Ephesians 4:1-16.<sup>31</sup> However, a theology for Christian leadership should include an examination of Jesus' life and teaching in the gospels, as well the lives and leadership examples of certain characters in the Old Testament. This offers a more comprehensive theology of leadership, which is needed as this project pursues a leadership transition at Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 206.

***The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your  
Organization and the World***  
**by Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky**

Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky are great scholars in the field of leadership who provide consultation, teaching, and training around the world to promote power and effectiveness in leadership. *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* is written based on two theoretical works, *Leadership without Easy Answers* by Ronald Heifetz, and *Leadership on the Line* by Marty Linsky and Ronald Heifetz. It provides insight into exercising leadership in a dynamic environment. The authors define adaptive leadership as “the practice of mobilizing people to tackle tough challenges and thrive.”<sup>32</sup> Adaptive leadership advocates that in order to make change, the broken parts of a system must first be identified and resolved by taking risks and challenges.

One important aspect of adaptive leadership is that leadership is not about someone’s position or authority, but a process in which anyone can participate and contribute. The authors explain that as adaptive leadership is not an authoritative practice, it is drastically different from getting one’s work done well.<sup>33</sup> Adaptive leadership emphasizes transformation within groups and motivating people to take action to tackle the changing environment for a forward momentum. The book consists of five parts. Each part guides the reader to adopt different adaptive leadership practices by providing tools with synthesized recommendations in relation to various personal situations.

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<sup>32</sup> Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership: Tools and Tactics for Changing Your Organization and the World* (Boston: Harvard Business Press, 2009), 14.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

Part One presents a comprehensive background of the theory. First, it briefly presents an overview of the book including the ideas, resources, practices, and examples meant to help readers lead adaptive work. It also introduces the adaptive challenges within an organization and the importance of building the adaptive capacity of a leader. This part also explains the theory of the practice. The authors explain that after locating the specific problem in a broken system, technical problems should be distinguished from adaptive challenges. Leadership needs to be distinguished from authority.

Part Two provides the tools and tactics to diagnose a system. It guides the readers to identify the missions, strengths, and weaknesses of an organization so as to understand the background of transformation. The authors then help readers to determine the adaptive challenges that exist in the complexity of values, beliefs, and loyalties.<sup>34</sup> The authors explain that “the people in an organization are seeking to meet the expectations of their various constituencies.”<sup>35</sup> This part ends with five key characteristics of an adaptive organization.<sup>36</sup> A worksheet is offered to readers to assess the magnitude of adaptability of their organization with the five characteristics.

Part Three emphasizes actions that leaders should take to endorse change. The authors discuss how a leader can interpret an organization prudently in order to bring about change in an effective way. Three ways of mind-shift are presented: “from technical to adaptive, from benign to conflictual, from individual to systemic.”<sup>37</sup> The

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 101.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 114-116.

authors then provide a way to design effective interventions to mobilize people to tackle an adaptive challenge based on the interpretations of the situation. There is a discussion of what it means to “act politically,” and six guidelines are offered to help leaders act politically. The authors then demonstrate how a leader works through different conflicts in order to proactively deal with adaptive issues.<sup>38</sup>

Part Four scrutinizes the development of adaptive leadership practices from a personal perspective. This section invites readers to see “yourself as a system,” which means knowing one’s various identities. This includes “identifying [one’s] loyalties, knowing [one’s] triggers, discovering [one’s] tolerances, understanding [one’s] roles, and articulating [one’s] purposes.”<sup>39</sup>

The final part offers practical guidelines for leaders to employ while leading adaptive change by utilizing the assessment results obtained from the diagnostic stage of development. The authors provide five key components to “deploy yourself,” which focus on purposes, committing boldly, motivating people, understanding one’s capabilities, and thriving oneself with holistic support and ordered restoration.<sup>40</sup>

The major contribution of this book to traditional church leadership, and particularly to Chai Wan Evangelical Church, is that it offers a good way to distinguish between technical problems and adaptive challenges in a church context. In addition, it suggests a suitable interaction between leaders and followers. It also provides good

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 181-230.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 231-297.

diagnostic tools and tactics for organization, which is applicable to transforming church. Finally, it offers a practical way for leaders to seek personal development.

The major limitation of Heifetz's work is that it is secular study of leadership with no Christian theological ground. It can only offer tactics for decision making in a secular corporate and political body. As it is solely anthropocentric, a theology of adaptive leadership needs to be examined for building the leadership transition of Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

### ***Transforming Congregational Culture*, by Anthony B. Robinson**

Anthony Robinson is a pastor, consultant, speaker, and teacher. His books on leadership are derived from integration of his personal pastoral work, experience, and theory. In *Transforming Congregational Culture*, he addresses the notion that many mainline congregations operate on old assumptions about their role.<sup>41</sup> He draws attention back to the purpose of the church in a changing culture and practical approaches for making the necessary shifts. It is a great volume on church renewal.

The book's thirteen chapters can be divided into three major sections. The first major section discusses the large context and great challenge faced by mainline churches. In the second major section, the author describes the different changes in congregational culture the church has experienced which impose crucial challenges. In the final section, leadership is concluded to be vital for transforming the congregation in changing context. Then six strategies are suggested to help the reader lead congregation change.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., vii.

The first section discusses the major changes in American culture during the last several decades which have affected the way churches function. Robinson points out that the following is witnessed in mainline churches: “shifting from obligation to motivation, erosion of trust and reliable authority, new religious pluralism, mainline Protestantism and modernity, and the complacency of an establishment.”<sup>43</sup> This section also describes how the mainline churches have responded to cultural change, which leads to transformation of a congregation’s culture. Robinson employs the concept of adaptive leadership, specifically that the leaders should be able to verify the difference between “technical work” and an “adaptive challenge.” Five characteristic roles and functions of leaders for adaptive challenge are suggested: direction, protection, orientation, dealing with conflict, and establishing norms.<sup>44</sup>

In the second major section, Robinson suggests nine significant directions for reshaping the culture of a church congregation in response to the cultural shift:

1. From civic faith to human transformation
2. From assuming the goods to delivering the goods
3. From a congregational spirituality of givers to receivers who give
4. From board culture to ministry culture
5. From community organization to faith-based ministry
6. From democracy to discernment
7. From a budget viewed as ends to that of means
8. From fellowship to hospitality
9. Membership growth: from passive to active.<sup>45</sup>

In the final section, Robinson draws on Heifetz’s strategies for leadership in situations of adaptive challenge and suggests leadership skills with examples from his

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 3-13.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 25-121.

own work and writing. First, Robinson explains that “Getting on the Balcony” means “getting away from the congregation periodically – not just to forget about it but to see it more clearly.”<sup>46</sup> This can be done through quiet retreat, a continuing education event, or a visit to another congregation. Second, “Identifying the Adaptive Challenges” helps the congregation face the essential question, “What are we here for?” Third, “Regulating Distress” is important when the congregation is engaged in adaptive work. Robinson suggests several ways to regulate distress: creating a strong “hold environment,”<sup>47</sup> sequencing and pacing adaptive work, and changing by addition instead of subtraction. Fourth, it is critical to “Maintain Disciplined Attention” to the identified adaptive challenge and stay focused on the work at hand. Fifth, “Giving Responsibility Back” to the broad congregation should be done by involving a wide group in leadership and vision sharing. Sixth, “Protecting Leadership from Below” allows those who are outside the existing designated leadership or at the margins of the congregation’s power to have their part to shape the future of congregation.<sup>48</sup>

Robinson’s book reasserts the fact that the Church is facing a cultural shift in the postmodern era. He concludes that adaptive leadership would be a good leadership approach in responding to this challenge. The author introduces Heifetz’s adaptive leadership strategies and applies them to his own church ministry. This book indeed offers insight and direction regarding tackling the challenges at Chai Wan Evangelical Church with the application of adaptive leadership.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 125.

<sup>47</sup> Robinson states that this can be done through worship, prophetic leadership, developing and maintaining relationships of trust and care, and celebrating events.

<sup>48</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 122-136.

Although *Transforming Congregational Culture* is written in a church context, the limitation of the book is that it is examined purely on the basis of cultural factors. Robinson's other book, *Leadership for Vital Congregations*, offers a brief biblical theology of adaptive leadership with consideration of Moses's leadership in the wilderness.<sup>49</sup> This book would provide a good start for developing an adaptive leadership theology for the leadership transition needed at Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has reviewed six books that are important to the theology of church leadership. Each book offers a substantial and valuable contribution in developing the leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church with a new leadership approach. These works inspire the theology of leadership renewal that is presented in Chapter 3.

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<sup>49</sup> Anthony B. Robinson, *Leadership for Vital Congregations* (Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 2007), 44-45.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEOLOGY OF THE NEW LEADERSHIP APPROACH INITIATIVE

Church leaders are no strangers to conflict. When conflict is not treated properly, it can result in a church split, deacon boards can disintegrate, ministries are hindered, and pastors lose their jobs, passion, and sense of calling.<sup>1</sup> The nature of conflict needs to be understood. In their book, *Thriving through Ministry Conflict*, James P. Osterhaus, Joseph M. Jurkowski, and Todd A. Hahn write,

1. “Conflict is inescapable. Because of the major differences between human beings, it is a wonder there actually is not more conflict than we already experience.
2. The problem is not conflict itself but how people relate to one another when they are in conflict.
3. Conflict is both good and necessary because it elicits different points of view, clears the air, and makes it possible to resolve extraordinarily complex issues.”<sup>2</sup>

Conflict is unpreventable. In order to find an effective way to resolve it, the crucial thing is to find out how it emerged. Conflict may emerge due to differences in personality, generation, education background, and understanding of doctrine.

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<sup>1</sup> James P. Osterhaus, Joseph M. Jurkowski, and Todd A. Hahn, *Thriving through Ministry Conflict* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

Complicated cross-cultural differences presently confronting our world are a major cause of church conflict.

In Hong Kong, postmodern culture has a deep impact on youth, and this affects church leadership. First, the pastoral leadership of Hong Kong churches is aging; the average age of a seminary student is approximately forty years of age, and the average age of a missionary is forty-eight years of age. Second, most church leaders have been in leadership for decades, and are currently over fifty to sixty years old. It is difficult to raise young leaders—those who are part of the post-80s generations—since they are not well trusted by the church elders. The conflict is raised not only due to personality differences but the differences between modern and postmodern cultures.<sup>3</sup> It is not simply a problem of young against old, open-minded against conservative, or modern against traditional. Conflict between modern and postmodern thought occurs even within similar age groups.

### **Church Leadership in a Postmodern Ethos**

Presently, the Church is facing the challenge of cultural shift from modernity to postmodernity. This section discusses the content and impact of cultural change. The influence of postmodernity on younger generations is examined to explain the differences in values between the younger and older generations in Hong Kong who have grown up in different social and cultural backgrounds. In addition, the difficulties of modern leadership in Hong Kong churches is discussed to address the need for church leadership renewal at Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

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<sup>3</sup> Yam-Keung Tsoi, and Yiu-Kuen Leung, "Postmodern Leadership," *Global Missiology* 33 (2013), [http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/chinese\\_t/article/view/1198](http://ojs.globalmissiology.org/index.php/chinese_t/article/view/1198), accessed August 10, 2016.

## The Culture Shift from Modernity to Postmodernity

The modern worldview was brought to a climax by the Enlightenment paradigm. The modern era advocates that human rationality is the only way of knowing, and three key features identify the modern worldview: “1. The obsession of modernity with rationality, 2. The conviction of modernity about progress, and 3. The focus of modernity on the individual.”<sup>4</sup> Therefore, modernism leads to the adoration of human reason, believing that humanity is undergoing evolution, and individual rights are paramount. Modernism supports human rationality and human rights, resulting in a denial of external authority and alternative ways of knowing.<sup>5</sup> James Hunter defines modernity as follows: “As *both* a mode of social life *and* moral understanding more or less characterized by the universal claims of reason and instrumental (means/ends) rationality; the differentiation of spheres of life-experience into public and private; and the pluralization and competition of truth claims.”<sup>6</sup>

During the course of the last century, the modern era has slowly given way to the postmodern era. Robinson writes, “Modernity has hallmark values of reason, self-sufficiency, progress, and optimism, but they were losing their sense of inevitability and their taken-for-granted status. A new secular, religiously pluralistic, and postmodern culture was emerging.”<sup>7</sup> The term *postmodernity* is expressed with various implications appearing out of different cultural settings. Postmodernity is not merely a philosophical

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<sup>4</sup> Brian Carrell, *Moving between Times* (Auckland: The DeepSight Trust, 1998), 38-40.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>6</sup> Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 3.

movement that follows modernism, but rather is a response to the modernist agenda. Frederico de Onis first introduced the term *postmodern* in the 1930s, but it became well known when it was used to refer to responsive trends to modernism in art, literature, and architecture in the 1960s and 1970s. It was extended to cover the worldview of philosophical thought, arts, political matters, and some disciplines of science, theology, and trendy culture in the 1980s. Postmodernism was principally considered to be “pessimistic wishful thinking” and as “nihilism with a smile.”<sup>8</sup>

Jacques Derrida was a controversial French intellectual who proposed the idea of deconstruction, which is related to post-structuralism and postmodernism.<sup>9</sup> In his article, “Letter to a Japanese Friend,” Derrida presents his idea: “Deconstruction is not a method and cannot be transformed into one. . . . Deconstruction is neither an analysis nor a critique and its translation would have to take that into consideration. . . . What deconstruction is not? everything of course! What is deconstruction? nothing of course!”<sup>10</sup> It is difficult to define the idea of deconstruction, but its task is to decenter the meaning of text (truth, form, essence, presence, and so on), undermine metaphysical thinking, and contradict binary/dual opposition, so as to continually transform the meaning from binary to plural.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, nothing in this world is certain and stable, changing from time to time. With the idea of deconstruction, Derrida developed two

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<sup>8</sup> Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Millard J. Erickson, *Truth or Consequences: The Promise and Perils of Postmodernism* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001), 114-115.

<sup>10</sup> David Wood and Robert Bernasconi ed., “A Letter to a Japanese Friend,” *Derrida and Difference* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 3, 5.

<sup>11</sup> Hoi-Sang Yuen, “The Pastoral Approach and Pastor’s Role under Influence of Post-modernism,” *Pastoral Journal* 10 (2000): 65.

important concepts: the first is known as “*differance*,” and the second is his position against binary opposition. Both of these have influenced popular culture and, by default, church culture as well.

Derrida invented a unique French term, *differance*, which comprises two meanings: differing and deferring. In his book, *Truth or Consequences*, Millard Erickson writes, “The differing is a matter of showing a series of ‘trace,’ of showing the difference between things. This how reference works, such as dictionaries, function. They define something by showing how it differs, or is distinct from, other things.”<sup>12</sup> Jayant Prasad explains that “*differance* may be the condition for that which is deferred, and may be the condition for that which is different. *Differance* may be the condition for difference.”<sup>13</sup> This concept implies that the culture has no closure and is always moving, changing, and transforming without any fixed manner or form.

In Western philosophy, binary opposition is the structuralized concept of opposing beings or elements, such as mind/body, rational/emotional, reason/passion, man/woman and nature/culture; setting these in opposition is generally done in order to demonstrate that one unit has a higher privileged position than the opposing unit.<sup>14</sup> However, Derrida challenged this notion, asserting that such binary oppositions were indiscriminate and fundamentally unstable. He deconstructed the suppositions of structuralism and the idea

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<sup>12</sup> Erickson, *Truth or Consequences*, 118.

<sup>13</sup> Jayant Prasad, “Some Key Terms,” Derrida: The Father of Deconstruction blog, November 19, 2007, accessed February 7, 2018, <https://newderrida.wordpress.com/2007/11/19/some-key-terms/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid

of binary opposition, rejecting the notion that one unit privileged over another.<sup>15</sup> This way of thinking influences youth today to reject authority, which results in the distrust of church leaders who bring a top-down leadership mindset.

Guder writes that the new world under the “postmodern condition,” would have the following patterns: “1. Endless choices made available by technology. 2. Loss of shared experiences. 3. Meanings conveyed as surfaces and images. 4. Transient relationships. 5. Plurality of approaches to sexual expression and experience. 6. Increasingly two-tiered economy with many dead-end jobs. 7. Personal spirituality without the necessity of organized religion. 8. Random violence and clashes between cultures. 9. Feelings of anger or resentment because somebody’s left us with a mess.”<sup>16</sup>

Postmodernism has been extremely influential in the West in last few decades. One consequence of postmodernism for the Church is that it makes evangelism unpopular, which has resulted in the decline of the Church. However, postmodernism like a tsunami is spreading from the West to the East with overwhelming influence. Gibbs states that some Asian countries have encountered the continual pulse of modernity and postmodernity hammering their prehistoric cultures; Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Mainland China are also inevitably experiencing the same waves.<sup>17</sup>

Kwan and Cheung acknowledge that there are conflicts between three thoughts that exist today in Hong Kong and Chinese society: pre-modern, modern, and post-

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Guder, *Missional Church*, 37.

<sup>17</sup> Gibbs, *ChurchNext*, 25.

modern.<sup>18</sup> This situation results in a complex society, and these three worldviews continue to compete. For example, not all university students are influenced by either modernism or postmodernism. Some students still believe in Christianity with authority, while some think Christianity is superstition and anti-science. Although modernism is relatively less influential than postmodernism, its effect still cannot be overlooked.<sup>19</sup>

Today, more and more people, especially the young, hesitate to believe in an absolute truth, and they reject Christianity as authoritative thought. They do not like the idea of submitting to God, and God is viewed as one who restricts their freedom. Even for the young believers who accept Christ, they are still greatly under influence of postmodern culture.<sup>20</sup> In his book, *Conversational Evangelism*, David Geisler tells the story of a former Bible seminary student who was working in student ministry at church in Singapore. Of her struggles in evangelism to university students, she wrote, “Many students [in Singapore] don’t think that there is a standard of right or wrong. Rather, they believe that this is up to the individual. This means they do hold a standard right or wrong themselves, but they feel that each person’s standard of right and wrong differs from the other.”<sup>21</sup> In Hong Kong, young believers under the influence of postmodern culture have the following characteristics: “1) they have no interest in studying the Bible or doctrine; 2) they are more interested in individual or small groups (rather than a traditional church setting); 3) Christianity is their personal choice but they do not necessarily believe in

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<sup>18</sup> Kwan and Cheung, *Postmodern Culture and Christianity*, 10-11.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>21</sup> David Geisler and Norman Geisler, *Conversational Evangelism* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2014), 24.

absolute truth (and they are not eager to share the gospel); and 4) the identity of believers as Christians is not concrete.”<sup>22</sup>

Today the Church must learn to exist amidst these postmodern influences in the West and the East. Culture permeates every aspect of life; it can influence our thinking, attitudes, and actions. All people, including believers, are molded by the culture in their context to a certain extent. The post-80s generations of Hong Kong are inescapably shaped by postmodern culture. Their focus is on the individual over and above the group, and they tend to question authority. Both of these characteristics cause difficulty when they are interacting with church leadership. If church leaders would like to engage and nourish these generations effectively, we need to understand them and transform our leadership approach.

#### Church and the “Post-80s Generation” in Hong Kong

The phrase, “post-80s generation” or simply “post-80s” is a slang term in Hong Kong for the younger generation, or those who were born after the 1980s.<sup>23</sup> Some scholars suggest that it does not merely refer to people who were born after the 1980s in the biological sense, but it represents a wider range of people, essentially those who make up the fourth generation of Hong Kong people, or those known as millennials or Generation Y in the West. In a broad sense, it refers to those born after 1980 who entered young adulthood around the year 2000.

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<sup>22</sup> Kwan and Cheung, *Postmodern Culture and Christianity*, 11-12.

<sup>23</sup> The term “post-80s” has been used to refer to the youth in Mainland China. The term generally has negative connotations of being self-centered, materialistic, and non-pragmatic. There is also a connotation that those in this generation are marginalized. Other descriptors of this group is that they live “paycheck to paycheck” and have an “internet addiction.”

This group of people was born during a period of economic growth in Hong Kong and they were raised in small families. As Hong Kong families are relatively rich, they do not experience many difficulties in their lives. Their parents often take care of problems for them. As a group, generally speaking they are sensitive, materialistic, dependent, lacking confidence, and irresponsible. Being born in a digital age has led them to be creative. They enjoy freedom and they know few boundaries. They resist traditional values. They are good at using the Internet to work and communicate with people.

In his book, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing the World*, Don Tapscott states that there are eight characteristics or norms to describe members of the millennial generation: “They prize freedom and freedom of choice. They want to customize things, make them their own. They’re natural collaborators, who enjoy a conversation, not a lecture. They’ll scrutinize you and your organization. They insist on integrity. They want to have fun, even at work and at school. Speed is normal. Innovation is part of life.”<sup>24</sup> In Hong Kong, the characteristics of the post-80s are very different from those of Baby Boomers: they react quickly, they are creative and imaginative, change is normal, they live in the present, they make use of the Internet, they enjoy the concept of story, they resist authority, and they are independent. The post-80s are born into relative material wealth. Highlighting this, ex-Hong Kong Chief Executive Officer Donald Tsang, in one of the Legislative Council Meeting, commented that the post-50s generation

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<sup>24</sup> Don Tapscott, *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation Is Changing the World* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2009), 6-7.

pursued efficiency and economic growth, while the post-80s generation seeks value and self-fulfillment.<sup>25</sup>

The thoughts and feelings of the post-80s generation are exemplified in a young woman named Lai.<sup>26</sup> Lai is currently twenty-two years old. Her parents are Christians and she grew up attending church. She attended two different churches, joining most church activities including fellowship, Sunday service, and gospel camp.

The majority of post-80s Christians like Lai grew up in middle class families who provided them with a comfortable living situation. But this is vastly different from how most post-50s Christians in Hong Kong grew up, as most of them were poor and many were refugees with little or no education. However, due to their hard work, they gradually climbed in social and economic status.

While Lai's generation grew up much more comfortably, they experienced great change due to various political and economic situations in Hong Kong. Many struggled personally with identity issues after Hong Kong reunited with China in 1997, and many also faced new pressures due to the economic tsunami, education qualification inflation due to SARS, and a high competitive employment market due to globalization.<sup>27</sup>

Lai complains that the church and its pastoral team are unable to respond appropriately to the needs of young believers. Post-50s Christians are focused on effort

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<sup>25</sup> Chi-Wai Wu, "The Thinking of Post-80s in Church: Part1," *Christian Times*, January 15, 2010, accessed November 12, 2016, [http://christiantimes.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp?Nid=57491&Pid=6&Version=0&Cid=150&Charset=big5\\_hkscs](http://christiantimes.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp?Nid=57491&Pid=6&Version=0&Cid=150&Charset=big5_hkscs).

<sup>26</sup> Student Christian Movement, "Defend the church tradition at the fringe of church," accessed January 25, 2017, <https://post80sselfdelingyouth.wordpress.com/c12/>.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

and perseverance. They believe that God will carry them through all difficult circumstances if they are faithful. However, post-80s do not necessarily believe this, as they are confronting the wave of changing history and the uncertain economy of Hong Kong. They have been met with new challenges that involve their choices regarding education, career, and Christianity.

Clearly, the post-50s and post-80s have grown up in completely different cultures, social and economic conditions, and experiences of Christian formation, which results in different sets of values. Lai hopes that church leaders would sit down and listen to young believers and understand what they think and need, rather than force them to follow the older generation's way of Christian living. She hopes the understanding between young and old in the church can be achieved through interaction and conversation instead of top-down teaching.<sup>28</sup>

Lai's perspective provides clarification regarding next steps for the current leadership team at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. If the church elders continue to use traditional pastoral and leadership strategies to nourish the younger generations, it will not be successful. Post-50s church leaders are hesitant to hand over their authority to the younger generation. They think the young generations only know how to complain about the church's weaknesses without adding constructive contributions to build the church. Though if they can humble themselves to listen the voices of the younger generations and pass the baton of leadership to a certain extent, this will encourage the young leaders to become more involved in church ministries and take on increasing leadership roles.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

## The Difficulties of Modern Leadership in the Hong Kong Church

In Hong Kong churches, leadership challenges are due primarily to the following reasons: incompetence, leaders' lack of understanding of the people they serve, and leaders' unhealthy personal lives. Another major problem relates to the dramatic changes that have taken place in society in this new millennium, and the Church's inability to adequately adjust. In his book, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age*, Richard Hamm writes, "The modern paradigms, which are the underpinning of our mainline systems, no longer work. Yet these systems and we who comprise these systems are loath to change much of anything about them."<sup>29</sup> In the current postmodern era, difficulties arise when post-50s leaders continue to lead with a modern era leadership mindset.

Modern leadership is characterized by a business model of church. Pastors are trained to be like CEOs for managing the pastoral staff, leading the church leaders, inspiring the church members, casting the vision, and leading the church toward growth in accordance to God's call.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, the church elders are regarded as a board of directors who make important church-related decisions. Modern leadership is about planning, organizing, and controlling.<sup>31</sup> The top-level managing staff will instruct and persuade staff to accomplish the task. The company is directed with top-down leadership and considered to be a task-orientated organization. Their formula is "*success* =

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<sup>29</sup> Richard Hamm, *Recreating the Church: Leadership for the Postmodern Age*, The Columbia Partnership (TCP) Leadership Series (Atlanta: Chalice Press, 2007), 2.

<sup>30</sup> Fitch, *The Great Giveaway*, 73.

<sup>31</sup> Tsoi and Leung, "Postmodern Leadership."

*manpower + organization + result.*”<sup>32</sup> Many evangelical churches in Hong Kong are captivated by this mode of leadership as they seek to acquire the magical numeric growth of church attendance. However, this kind of modern leadership is deemed ineffective in the postmodern ethos.

In their article titled, “Postmodern Leadership,” Yam-Keung Tsoi and Yiu-Kuen Leung articulate the difficulties of modern leadership at church in the postmodern cultural context. The first aspect of modern leadership that does not sit well with postmodern culture is top-down leadership. The church leaders focus on planning and setting targets, and the church members are viewed as chess pieces to act out their plan.<sup>33</sup> As the result, postmodern church members are not willing to submit to the authority of those in leadership, and disagreements will arise between church leaders and church members. On the other hand, though, if leaders have no visions or goals, they appear to be afraid of change and new approaches. As a result of this, a church will lose its momentum to move in new directions.

The second aspect of modern era leadership is decision by hierarchical procedure. Modern leadership strongly supports bureaucracy.<sup>34</sup> A minor agenda requires countless procedures and meetings to proceed. This type of leadership leads to loss of time, loss of creativity, and micro-management.<sup>35</sup> Young church leaders are discouraged from serving as they find there is limited room for them to exercise their gifts and creativity.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

The third aspect of modern era leadership is control and micromanagement. It is a traditional phenomenon for Chinese parents to control and closely monitor their children, as they do not want to see failure. But in a church, leadership that is too controlling will cause church members to lose their passion and creativity as they seek to avoid making “mistakes” in ministry.<sup>36</sup> Some church leaders even implement intangible rules and measurements that end up making church members feel criticized or judged for their efforts. In postmodern culture, younger generations are less likely to respond well to rules and regulations. Therefore, leadership in the postmodern ethos should be focused more on servanthood and coming alongside rather than controlling and micromanaging.

The fourth aspect of modern era leadership is a lack of creativity. As the culture continues to shift, it is important to understand that methods that were successful in the past may no longer be effective, and new approaches are needed. It is important to note that innovative methods can be adopted in a changing culture if only the core values of the church remain unchanged. Church leaders often lead based on their knowledge, experience, and norms of the past since these can give church members a sense of security and certainty.<sup>37</sup> However, old approaches may not work in the new cultural context, and the renewal of church ministries cannot take place without an openness to change. Leaders in the postmodern era need to know how to ask questions rather than simply give answers, and they must allow the Holy Spirit to work in people’s hearts to find solutions. Heifetz writes that adaptive leaders are to provide direction and orientation, and they are to deal with conflict and develop norms while dealing with adaptive

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

challenges. A leader delivers solutions when tackling a technical problem. However, when tackling an adaptive challenge, a leader needs an entirely different and more inspiring skill: asking questions.<sup>38</sup>

The fifth aspect of modern era leadership is task-based ministry as opposed to relationship-based ministry. Many churches and Christian organizations in Hong Kong have a culture of “ministry before relationship,” or in other words, “no ministry, no relationship.”<sup>39</sup> But young generations in postmodern culture are more relational, and they expect a caring, accepting, and secure community. They do not wish to be ordered to finish a task, but rather they want their leaders to help them find out who they are and encourage them to exercise their gifts. Leaders in the postmodern era cannot just focus on getting tasks done, but they must focus on building a relational community.<sup>40</sup>

The sixth aspect of modern era leadership is expertise leadership. Leaders with a modern era mindset believe they have all the answers for all the problems. They think they are capable to deal with problems based on their experience and knowledge. However, the problems in postmodernity are more complicated. Young believers distrust authority and are disappointed by expertise bureaucracy.<sup>41</sup> They respect leaders who investigate problems seriously, not ones who give a model answer right away. They would like to deal with problems with unity, using everyone’s gifts and abilities to discover solutions together.

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<sup>38</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> Tsoi and Leung, “Postmodern Leadership.”

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Leaders with a modern leadership mindset are like architects. They are focused on planning, long-term or short-term goals, program design and procedures, schedules, and monitoring. Leaders with a postmodern leadership mindset are like gardeners or farmers. They need to be adaptive and flexible in order to deal with uncertainties, like environmental factors such as intensity of sunshine, rainfall, and temperature. They also have to pay attention to different characteristics of each plant in order to provide suitable nurturing methods.<sup>42</sup>

This discussion of the difficulties of modern leadership in Hong Kong churches highlights the need for Chai Wan Evangelical Church's leaders to learn more about postmodern culture and consider how our leadership styles may need to be altered. We need to spend time seeking to understand the young church leaders who have grown up with a postmodern mindset. It is essential for the current church leaders to provide opportunities for the young leaders to serve. If the young leaders neglect to find hope, care, a sense of belonging, and room for creativity, they will not commit and they will most likely leave the church. This will critically impact Chai Wan Evangelical Church's development due to a lack of available future leaders.

### **Biblical Theology for Adaptive Leadership**

Scriptures are always an important foundation for ministry renewal at church. After considering the theology of church leadership renewal in terms of culture shift, this section examines it biblically with consideration of Moses' wilderness experience and Christ's life and teaching in the Gospels. Moses is one of the greatest leaders in the Old

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

Testament who is expected to provide technical leadership in the Book of Exodus.

However, at the end of his leadership journey, he carries out adaptive leadership to lead the Israelites to a face new situation with new ways of thinking and living. In the Book of Numbers, Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness are in a time of transition, and Moses is required to provide adaptive leadership to address this changing period.

In the New Testament, Jesus exemplifies adaptive leadership through his teaching and leading. He empowers his disciples to preach, teach, and heal the sick and lost in the world. He also gives the disciples authority from God to do ministry. This section explores the leadership of these two great leaders in the Bible in order to determine the biblical theology for adaptive leadership, thus applying the renewal of church leadership approach within Chai Wan Evangelical Church.

### The Wilderness Journey in Exodus

Moses was called to lead the Israelites who were under the yoke of slavery out of Egypt to the Promised Land. The wilderness journey was full of difficulties and challenges, and Moses was expected to demonstrate technical leadership by providing a quick fix for the various problems they encountered. He often demonstrated adaptive leadership, though, as he led people to experience new ways of learning and transition.

First, Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt after Pharaoh allowed them to go. God led them through the desert road instead of the road in Philistine country toward the Red Sea. God was afraid that the Israelites might think of returning to Egypt if they faced war. The desert road was much longer and full of risks. God led them with pillar of cloud in the daytime and pillar of fire at night.

When Pharaoh was informed that Moses had led Israelites out, he and his officials changed their minds and pursued them. Pharaoh and his officials took the army and the best chariots with them to chase the Israelites toward the Red Sea. When Pharaoh's army approached, the people cried out to God and said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert" (Exodus 14: 11-12). Moses comforted them and said, "Don't be afraid and stand firm." Then Moses lifted his staff over the sea and a strong east wind blew, and finally the Red Sea was divided. The people walked through the dry land of the Red Sea to the other side. After they finished crossing, the waters merged and Pharaoh's army drowned in the sea.

Later, as the Israelites wandered through the wilderness, they met with new challenges. For three days, they could not find any water. They reached Marah and found the water there was bitter. They complained to Moses, saying, "What do we drink?" Moses threw a stick into the water then the water became drinkable.

On another occasion, when the whole Israelite community left Elim, they were starving and wanted to return to Egypt. Once again they grumbled against Moses, "If only we had died by the Lord's hand in Egypt! There we sat around pots of meat and ate all the food we wanted, but you have brought us out into this desert to starve this entire assembly to death" (Exodus 16:3). God told Moses that he would send manna from heaven to feed the Israelites.

Whenever the Israelites encountered a problem, they expected a quick fix. They assumed Moses and God would provide quick and tangible solutions. Certainly Moses and God took care of their people, but the solutions were not always quick. When Israelites were enslaved in Egypt, God set them free after some time by showing signs and wonders. When the Israelites tried to escape from Pharaoh's chariots, God saved them by dividing the Red Sea when Moses lifted his staff. When they were thirsty, God offered them water by telling Moses to throw a piece of wood into the water. When they were hungry, God fed them with manna from heaven.

Though Moses sometimes provides technical leadership, sometimes his leadership is adaptive. In the story of God providing manna from heaven, Robinson states that "the gift of manna only points to a deeper source of provision and to the new reality that is emerging, the reality of living in a trusting relationship with God."<sup>43</sup> In the story of crossing the Red Sea and setting the people free from Pharaoh, they are experiencing "freedom from" Egypt, but they are also experiencing "freedom for" their lives outside of captivity; Moses leads them in the process of changing their minds and hearts.<sup>44</sup> There was no concrete answer ready for this enormous adaptive challenge. To tackle such an undefined situation, the people of Israel are required to live and act in a way that is faithful to God. Moses has the task of mobilizing adaptive work among the Israelite

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<sup>43</sup> Robinson, *Leadership for Vital Congregations*, 44.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

community in the wilderness.<sup>45</sup> He carries it out with effective tactics, guiding them on a sojourn of learning and transformation.<sup>46</sup>

#### Eldad and Medad Deliver Prophecy in the Camp

Another passage regarding Moses' wilderness experience is taken from Numbers 11:24-29, and this story is highlighted by Nick Carter in his article, "Adaptive Leadership: Planning in a Time of Transition." It is a story about the Israelites during the most significant transition in their history.<sup>47</sup> The Israelites had followed their leaders to escape from Egypt, and they ended up in the wilderness, with a vision of freedom and the Promised Land. But they experienced repetitive confusion, hardship, and endless challenges throughout the long journey. They distrusted Moses, doubted God, and questioned the whole journey. They considered returning to Egypt and to slavery, as they thought they might fare better than in their journey to the Promised Land. Their complaints put a heavy burden on Moses. Eventually, when Moses feels overwhelmed and frustrated, he asks God for help. God tells him to delegate his authority to seventy elders, and the Holy Spirit falls on them.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Heifetz contends that in time of danger, people tend to look to a leader for direction and solutions. A leader has to mobilize adaptive work to involve people to regulate their impracticable anticipation. Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2009), 14-15.

<sup>46</sup> Robinson, *Leadership for Vital Congregations*, 44.

<sup>47</sup> Nick Carter, "Adaptive Leadership: Planning in a Time of Transition," *Theological Education* Vol. 46, Number 2 (2011): 7-14, accessed January 15, 2017, <https://www.ats.edu/uploads/resources/publications-presentations/theological-education/2011-theological-education-v46-n2.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

Generally, this passage is interpreted as one that teaches management and the importance of delegating tasks, however a more interesting story can be discovered.<sup>49</sup> As Moses gathers seventy elders and as the Lord's Spirit rests on them, two men named Eldad and Medad were supposed to have joined the seventy men with Moses, but they did not and they are in the camp. Although they did not join Moses, they also receive the power of the Spirit to prophesy right there in the camp.

A young fellow notices what Eldad and Medad did and believes that they did not follow the rules. He runs to Moses and reports what these two men did in the camp. Joshua, a faithful follower of Moses, listens the report and condemns Eldad and Medad. He asks Moses to command these two men to stop prophesying immediately, as they did not follow the rules.

Surprisingly, Moses declines to condemn Eldad and Medad but calls out, "Would that all God's people were prophets!"<sup>50</sup> Carter notes that Moses challenges everyone in the camp by asking if they all fully understand the unbelievable work that God is doing among them. Most people of Israel beg to return to Egypt, but they cannot see what they need to learn and what is in front of them. God's spirit is working in these two men who will help the Israelites to move on in their journey to reveal the glory of God. Moses is not concerned with whether Eldad and Medad join his group of leaders or not. Moses expects there are more of these rule breakers with God's mind among the Israelites.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

This passage demonstrates a good opportunity and challenge for the leaders of Israel, particularly Moses. At the time of transition, adaptive change is required. In their book, *Leadership on the Line*, Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky address the clear difference between technical change and adaptive change. Technical change assumes that the knowledge we have can provide solutions to the problems. Adaptive change, however, admits that people are in a completely new context and limited prior knowledge can be used; thus, we do not really know the answers to address the problems that we encounter. The problems demand new understandings and new approaches through ongoing experiments. Moses is continually doubted by the people of Israel, which eventually causes him to doubt God and the journey to the Promised Land. He exercises technical leadership when he provides the solution of delegating the authority to seventy elders. Everyone at the elders meeting receives instructions and rules to lead them to the new land the Israelites were promised. The incident with Eldad and Medad, though, requires that Moses become adaptive in order for him to accept the new way of receiving God message. It challenges the Israelites' core assumptions, encouraging them to rethink their values. This adaptive change can help them not only to predict a successful different future, but to learn how to distinguish and live in a difficult new situation and rethink how they can move on when things cannot be changed.<sup>52</sup>

Ephesians 4:20-24 states, "That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self,

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<sup>52</sup> Carter, "Adaptive Leadership," 8.

which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.” This passage addresses the importance of our minds being renewed with his spirit, and of putting away our old life and putting on new life. Moses saw the same Spirit working in Eldad and Medad’s hearts, giving them authority to prophecy in the camp and to have a dream of the Promised Land.<sup>53</sup> The work of the Holy Spirit can change the orientation of people’s hearts and renew people’s souls; it also enlightens people’s spiritual lives, empowering them to put away the old nature and be transformed to magnificent and amazing new life.

#### The Parable of New Wine in Old Wineskins

In early Israel, grapes were pressed into winepresses for fermentation. At the first phase of fermentation, gasses were generated. After that, the fermenting juice was put in clay jars for storage, or into wineskins for delivery. The wineskins were made of goatskins. The partially fermented wine was poured into the wineskins up to the neck, and then the wineskin was closed off. If grapes were freshly pressed into wineskins and then the skins were tied, the gas generated at the early stage of fermentation would burst the wineskins. If the material was stretchy enough to deal with the burst, then the whole process of fermentation could be completed. Nevertheless, if the wineskins had been used and stretched, they could not be used for containing wine that was still fermenting, as the gas would cause them to burst.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>54</sup> Kenneth L. Barker and John Kohlenberger, III, eds., *NIV Bible Commentary*, Volume 2: New Testament (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 148.

The parable of new wine in old wineskins is about new things in old things, as well as about new things overflowing out of old things.<sup>55</sup> Jesus used this parable in response to the Pharisees' challenge about why his disciples did not practice fasting. Jesus' teaching did not comply with Jewish law, but it expressed the radical nature of his presence and work on earth. Jesus's intent was not to start something entirely new without any relation to the past. As he said, "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them" (Mathew 5:17). Jesus's authoritative teaching impressed the Jewish leaders but failed to conform to Moses' teaching. In fact, his teaching was to be built upon the Mosaic Law. In *The Parables of Jesus*, David Wenham writes, "He is indeed unconventional, because the kingdom of God which he has brought is a new reality which cannot be contained in the old forms of Judaism: when God's rule is established, this is something exciting, even explosive, not just a new version of an old theme."<sup>56</sup>

Jesus used an adaptive skill to teach his audiences. He stressed that it is not enough to understand his revolutionary teaching about Christianity in view of Mosaic Law. Believers need to apply this teaching in their own lives. The parable of new wine in old wineskins is key to adaptive leadership as it demonstrates the outrage of the challenge. It shows that if one wants to adapt a new approach or teaching, old things must be abandoned. People are often unwilling to give up traditional norms, even when they are deemed to be ineffective. The metaphor of the new wine and old wineskin demonstrates

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<sup>55</sup> David Wenham, *The Parables of Jesus* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 33.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

the good value of new wine, and how it would be a mistake to store it in an old container. Adaptive leadership shows the advantages of new things while proving the benefit of old ways fading out.<sup>57</sup>

In addition, the end of the parable offers a surprising view to the reader that people think the old wine is better. “And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for they say, ‘The old is better’” (Luke 5:39). Certainly Jesus is saying that people are reluctant to change. But it also true that the taste of old wine is better than new wine. The problem is that if the wine is stored for too long, the taste is spoiled. That is the adaptive challenge for the Church. This passage offers church leaders two implications.

First, in order to manufacture old wine, one must begin with new wine. In order to have wise, long-tenured leaders in the future, one must be willing to allow for young leaders to lead in the present. Developing strong leaders takes time, therefore churches would be wise to begin investing in young leaders as early as possible. Second, in order to manufacture good wine, it is necessary to produce lots of wine. Making good wine requires experimentation with different combinations, bunches of grapes, vats, and aging periods. The winemaker keeps on trying with all these variations until he or she finds a good combination. However, it is not failure if it does not work the way the winemaker planned, because it is a journey of learning. A final implications of this parable as it relates to adaptive leadership is that leaders do not have all the answers, but their job is to lead followers to try new things and find out solutions through learning and transformation.

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<sup>57</sup> Joseph Stewart, “Benefits of Adaptive Leadership Applied to CBA Churches When Dealing with Complex Problems Requiring Change” (DMin. diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 2013).

## The Parable of the Good Samaritan

One day, an expert in the law stood up in public to challenge Jesus. “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” he asked (Luke 10:25). As an expert in the law, he expected Jesus to give him a list of laws that he needed to obey, and that this would lead to a debate. Instead of telling the lawyer the answer, Jesus questioned him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” (Luke 10:26). The lawyer answered with a text he would have known very well: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind; and love your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27). This text does not come directly from the Old Testament, but it is the synthesis of two passages: Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18. Perhaps the lawyer had heard these two texts brought together as one from Jesus or another rabbi before, and expected Jesus to assert it.<sup>58</sup> Jesus replied, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live” (Luke 10:28).

If the lawyer desired to know how to inherit eternal life, the conversation may have ended when Jesus answered the question. However, the lawyer continued the conversation by asking, “Who is my neighbor?” The lawyer had a motive, which was to justify his own actions. Brian C. Stiller writes, “He may have assumed that Jesus would respond with, ‘Your family and friends,’ to which the lawyer could easily say, ‘Those I already do,’ and walk away with a smile, having won the argument.”<sup>59</sup> In place of answering the question, Jesus narrated the parable of the Good Samaritan. At the end,

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<sup>58</sup> Brian C. Stiller, *Preaching to Parables to Postmoderns* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 81.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

Jesus asked the lawyer, “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” (Luke 10:36). The lawyer indirectly admitted that the Samaritan could live out the law better he could. The lawyer replied, “The one who had mercy on him,” and it is notable that he did not say, “the Samaritan.” Stiller contends that this was because he, as an expert of the law, was like the rabbi in the parable who failed to perform, while the Samaritan, who was rejected by the Law, became a good illustration of what it means to love one’s neighbor.<sup>60</sup>

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus demonstrates an adaptive method to teach the lawyer and those with him. The lawyer wanted to test Jesus by asking him, “What must I do?” He expected an answer from Jesus that would be considered a technical change, like following certain rules. But Jesus’s response called for an adaptive change, which involves the changing of the heart and mind. The illustration of the Good Samaritan is helpful for demonstrating adaptive leadership in that a leader is not to give people a list of what to do and what not to do, but rather a good leader ought to challenge people’s minds and values.

#### Jesus Talks with a Samaritan Woman

In John 4:1-26 is the story of Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman at the well. This story demonstrates how a leader would lead change through an adaptive process that can be complicated and requires patience. The Samaritan woman at the well needed a new understanding of living water, the right place for worship, and her behavior. When Jesus asks the Samaritan women for a drink of water, he explains that the best water for

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 86.

her is living water. However, the woman does not understand what Jesus means about living water. She thinks Jesus is talking about literal water from Jacob's well (John 4:11-12). She is also thinking of herself, as she says she does not want to keep coming to the well to draw water (John 4:15).

An adaptive leader would engage the struggle to change the person's understanding or mindset. Jesus demonstrates this type of leadership by patiently answering each question the Samaritan woman asks, and trying to guide her focus on her spiritual needs.<sup>61</sup> To identify an adaptive challenge, asking questions is an important skill as it can clarify the core values we hold and the dissimilarity between individuals.<sup>62</sup> This adaptive process presents the leader with an opportunity to bring about change in the attitudes and behaviors of an individual or a group. Thus, asking questions with purpose is essential.

In John 4:19-26, the Samaritan woman moves the conversation to the topic of worship. At this point in history, there was an enduring dispute between the Samaritans and the Jews about the right place for worship. The Samaritans asserted that the Mountain Gerizim was the proper place, while the Jews said it was Jerusalem. But Jesus points out that when the time comes, the place for worship would not be rendered as a tangible place, but rather a relationship with God. The challenge Jesus encountered from the Samaritan woman is similar to the church leader who wants to bring about change in a congregation. Church congregations often firmly embrace their traditions, although they are deemed to be ineffective. To lead a congregation towards transformation with an

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<sup>61</sup> Stewart, "Benefits of Adaptive Leadership."

<sup>62</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 126.

adaptive approach takes time, patience, and guidance. It takes a great deal of time on the part of the leader to exercise adaptive leadership, and the congregation's pace needs to be considered.

### Jesus Reinstates Peter

Jesus saw Simon and renames him "Peter," which means rock. In Luke 5, Jesus calls Peter to follow him to become a "fisher of men," then Peter immediately leaves everything and follows him. Peter stays with Jesus for three years as disciple. Peter was a born leader, so he naturally became the leader among the twelve disciples. Throughout Peter's life, his loyalty, passion, determination, and decisiveness are evident. He boasts three times he would never forsake Jesus, saying, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will" (Matthew 26:33), and later, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you" (Matthew 26:35), and finally, "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death" (Luke 22:33). However, within twenty-four hours he disowns Jesus as Lord three times before the rooster crows.

Jesus restores Peter and re-commissions him as a disciple with his unfailing love (John 21:15-23). Peter is questioned about his love for Jesus, and he answers positively the first two times. Then Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep. However, Peter is hurt when he is questioned the third time because he knows Jesus is reminding him of his disloyalty.<sup>63</sup> The first two times, the word Jesus uses to ask if Peter loves him is the word for divine love (*agape*). Peter responds to Jesus that he loves him with *phileo*, that is, friendship and

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<sup>63</sup> Frank E. Gaebel, ed., *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Vol. 9 (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981), 201-202.

fondness.<sup>64</sup> When Jesus asks the third time, Jesus uses the word *phileo*, and it appears as though Jesus comes down to a lower degree of love (*phileo*) as Peter.

Jesus reinstates Peter with an adaptive process. He does not compel Peter to confess his disloyalty. Jesus fully accepts Peter when he sees Peter at the Sea of Galilee demonstrating his *phileo* for him. Clearly, Peter shows his *agape* for Jesus in his life and ministry, but it took time to reach the level that Jesus expected. Jesus had no personal desire to push Peter, but rather he guided him with suitable steps. As a leader, Jesus allows for his followers to make mistakes in their ministries, leading them to grow and develop at their own rate of change. Church leaders require humility to lead a congregation or followers to change in the postmodern era. They guide the congregation to change through an adaptive process with no predetermined personal desire or schedule, but rather they allow them to set their own pace for change.

### Summary

This chapter has provided a substantial theological foundation for developing a new leadership approach. It has investigated the impact of cultural shift on Hong Kong churches, which has resulted in the ineffectiveness of modern leadership. This chapter has also provided the biblical theology of adaptive leadership with consideration of two of the greatest leaders in the Bible, Moses and Jesus. Hong Kong is experiencing the cultural transition from modernity to postmodernity. The conflicts that arise are due to differences in age, culture, values, lifestyles, and understanding of what it means to be a Christian. The result is that church leaders with a modern era leadership mindset have

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

difficulty nourishing young believers to develop them to be the Church's future leaders.

In addition, the review of Scriptures regarding Moses and Jesus' leadership styles provides a good biblical theology of the adaptive leadership approach in a postmodern ethos. Moses' wilderness experience expresses that leaders need to humbly admit that they do not have all the answers and lead followers to define the adaptive challenge through a journey of learning and transformation. Jesus demonstrates how a leader might lead followers to change their hearts and minds through an adaptive process. In order to lead them to change, humility and patience are required.

Combining the cultural and biblical components lays a foundation to accomplish the purposes of this project. It is hoped that this would enable leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church to have a paradigm shift regarding leadership, understanding how adaptive leadership will be more fruitful than technical leadership. As such, the focus of Part Three seeks to apply the theology expressed in Part Two to the specific ministry context of Chai Wan Evangelical Church through a solid ministry strategy.

PART THREE  
MINISTRY STRATEGY

## CHAPTER 4

### AN INTEGRATED STRATEGY: GOALS AND PLANS

Now that a theological foundation has been set up, this chapter examines the theological study of Part Two, then addresses the implications for the ministry context of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, which is to equip the current deacons with a new leadership approach that is more relevant within the emerging culture. This is followed by five strategy goals including cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral aspects. In terms of cognitive change, the deacons will gain understanding regarding the concept of adaptive leadership theologically and biblically, as well as its feasibility and applicability to the present context. In terms of attitudinal and behavioral change, the goal is for the deacons to place their trust in the young potential leaders and pass on some of their authority. This chapter ends by outlining the content of these strategy goals, which includes a trial ministry that offers an opportunity to the old and young to work together and experience adaptive leadership.

#### **Theological Implications for Leadership at Chai Wan Evangelical Church**

In light of the Hong Kong Church's prevailing culture and the historical context of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, as reviewed in Part One of this project, coupled with

the theological reflection in Part Two, it is now established that a new church leadership approach is needed at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. First, cultural shift has presented a challenge to the congregation of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, as the church is regarded as fundamentalist. The fundamentalist mindset highly respects the authority of the Bible, but it also strongly avoids connection with the world.<sup>1</sup> This is due to a dualist belief in which the believers seek goodness and are in contrast to the world, which represents evil.<sup>2</sup> In order to keep Christianity pure and true, fundamentalists prescribe a list of dos and don'ts, preventing spiritual influence from worldly things.

However, culture penetrates every aspect of our lives, and church members are no exception. The church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church must admit that postmodern culture has great degree of influence on the congregation, both young and old. The church is facing the great adaptive challenge of the modern age fading out and the postmodern age emerging. The congregation senses a loss and experiences endless conflict. In some sense, the clergy and church leaders have lost their way and find themselves uncertain of the way forward.<sup>3</sup>

The church is experiencing the signs of changing times, and the leaders are trying hard to respond to these changes. Certainly there are opportunities in this new emerging age in addition to challenges. To respond to these challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities, church leaders must grow in knowledge, faithfulness, depth, risk-taking,

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<sup>1</sup> Good News Communication International td, "Rethink Fundamentalism," accessed October 12, 2017, <https://www.gnci.org.hk/mcontent.php?id=1883>.

<sup>2</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 210-211.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 18.

and transformation.<sup>4</sup> At Chai Wan Evangelical Church, church leaders need to recognize that leadership that seeks to meet adaptive challenges is different from the type of leadership they employed during a more stable period of the church.

Based upon the review of the Bible passages from the Old and New Testaments, the theological implication is that we need to lead the church in the new emerging era with adaptive leadership. In his book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, Heifetz asserts that leading with authority is characterized by five functions of leaders: direction, protection, orientation, controlling conflict, and norm maintenance.<sup>5</sup> However, exercising this kind of leadership in adaptive situations will very possibly result in difficulties in leading the church.

In the Israelites' wilderness journey in Exodus, the people of Israel expected quick solutions from Moses and from God. They needed signs and wonders to escape from the hand of Pharaoh. They wanted water and food when they were feeling thirsty and hungry during the journey. Moses used the incident of God providing manna from heaven, guiding the Israelites to learn and transform. In this uncertain situation, Moses did not provide an easy answer, but rather he led them toward living faithfully with God.

The parable of the new wine and old wineskins also demonstrates adaptive leadership, when Jesus does not provide a solution, but rather he asks questions about problem. To make new wine requires a process of trial and error until new good wine is perfectly done. It implies that church leaders ought to tackle church transitions by guiding followers to seek solutions through the learning process. Chai Wan Evangelical Church's

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>5</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 126-127.

deacon board is facing such challenges as member loss, spiritual depression, and cold hearts. The church leaders have led the church with authority for the past thirty years. However, in this new era, their leadership is less effective. These leaders need to concede that they do not have the answers, but rather they ought to pose question about the problems and work with the younger leaders to determine next steps together.

Leading with a technical mindset will protect followers from external threats, however adaptive leadership addresses these threats together with congregants. Rather than simply protecting people, adaptive leadership allows them to experience threats as a means of provoking adaption. Jesus used the parable of new wine in old wineskins to challenge people's understanding of Christianity in light of Mosaic Law. He used this metaphor to share the value of new teaching even as the advantages of old way are diminishing. To experience something new, church leaders ought to work together with the congregation in order to deal with perceived threats.

Recently, some of the younger leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church presented a detailed proposal with many new and creative ideas for church development and pastoral work renewal. The church deacons, who generally have an authoritative leadership mindset, were threatened by the significant changes suggested in the proposal. They wondered about the feasibility of what the young leaders proposed. They worried that the changes would bring unexpected impact to the congregation that they would not be able to handle. However, adaptive leaders should allow themselves to feel "the pinch of reality" instead of simply rejecting or judging new ideas.<sup>6</sup> This type of dose of reality

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<sup>6</sup> Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 99-100.

is often the precursor for adaptive work to happen. Leaders mobilize their followers to leave their comfort zones in order to bring about change.<sup>7</sup>

In adaptive leadership, a leader often disorients people in order to cultivate new role relationships.<sup>8</sup> In Numbers 11:24-29, Moses shows how to carry out this process of role disorientation. The people of Israel were complaining in the wilderness as they experienced confusion, suffering, and trials. Moses, like other leaders with a top-down leadership mindset, gathered seventy elders together to wait for God's miraculous work. God's spirit then worked in Elad and Medad when they prophesied at the camp, but these two men were breaking the rules and challenging the elders' authority. However, Moses demonstrated adaptive leadership that disoriented current roles by endorsing these two rule breakers to be the leaders of Israelites, replacing the seventy elders. For Chai Wan Evangelical Church's recent situation, the church deacons always expect potential church leaders to be experienced in serving, zealous about God, committed and responsible, mature in Christ, and have adequate Bible knowledge. In order to raise up young leaders who may not meet the deacons' expectations, the present church leaders need courage and open minds to change the orientation of their hearts and disorient the current roles to develop new leaders for a new age.

Conflict is inevitable within any group or body due to difference in values and expectations. It is often very disruptive when conflict happens in a church. When conflict occurs, a leader who seeks technical change would try to resolve the conflict so as to

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<sup>7</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 21.

<sup>8</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 126.

maintain order in the church. A leader in adaptive change would not simply control or quell conflict, but would allow it to be exposed.

In the incident of Eldad and Medad prophesying at the camp, Moses could simply have condemned them for prophesying and commanded them to stop. But instead he allowed them to speak, and so doing, he challenged the Israelite's faithfulness in God. In the gospels, Pharisees and the teachers of the law often generated conflict by challenging Jesus about ritual legitimacy and Christian living. Jesus did not ignore or condemn the Pharisees and experts in law directly in order to suppress the conflict, but he used the opportunities to respond to them with parables in hopes of changing their hearts.

In adaptive change, conflict provides an important opportunity for learning and transformation. It is difficult for Chinese people to expose conflict, as they are concerned about maintaining harmony in relationships. Chinese people generally avoid confrontation. When the young potential leaders presented their proposal about the church's development, most of the deacons expressed positive comments and appreciated their innovative work. However, when the deacons discussed the proposal privately at the deacon board meeting the following Sunday, they were clearly annoyed. Unresolved conflict is not good for a church, but a good leader will lead people to face conflict and see it for what it is. To expose conflict is a great challenge for a Chinese church, but it is worthwhile to learn this process, which promises growth and maturity if handled well.

A technical leader not only offers direction, protection, orientation, and controls conflict, this leader also maintains the norm. However, an effective leader should question norms and let norms to be questioned. Jesus used the parable of new wine in old wineskins to question the norm of Jewish virtue (Luke 5:33-39). Jesus also challenged

norms about inheritance of eternal life through legalism by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). In addition, in John 4:19-26, in his encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well, Jesus challenged the notion of a “right place to worship” by asserting that relationship with God is far more important than a location.

Chai Wan Evangelical Church has been in existence for over thirty years, and many traditions and “norms” have been established. These norms have in some ways become obstacles for younger potential leaders who would like to express their thoughts and dreams about church. The existing church leaders cling tightly to this history and style, since it has been effective for many years. They embrace history, tradition, and a stable structure, and they feel insecure when these norms are challenged. To question the norms or let the norms to be questioned is an important role of adaptive leaders, as it will clarify our future direction and purpose.

Adaptive leadership in a ministry context is difficult to apply, as it was primarily developed for the business world. However, after theological reflection in light of cultural and biblical prospects, it is still found that this kind of leadership approach is relevant and feasible to church ministry in the postmodern era. Chai Wan Evangelical Church is influenced by postmodern culture, and church leaders viewed as authoritative figures are distrusted by the younger congregants. In his book, *Canoeing the Mountains*, Tod Bolsinger writes, “Adaptive leadership is about letting go, learning as we go, and keeping going.”<sup>9</sup> A leader’s humility is essential to adaptive leadership because it requires that the

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<sup>9</sup> Tod Bolsinger, *Canoeing the Mountains: Leading into Uncharted Territory* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 88.

leader learns how to tackle conflict and diminish gaps between people.<sup>10</sup> If the church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church are equipped with the adaptive leadership approach, the differences in values between the current church leaders and the young potential leaders will be diminished, and the distrust of young leaders will be resolved. If this is accomplished, they can be raised up to take the lead of the church to accomplish God's mission. Once a leadership succession plan is carried out smoothly and effectively, the church can expect a bright future according to God's will.

### **The Goals of the Project**

The first goal of this project is a cognitive goal. Hong Kong is influenced by the postmodern culture, and young leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church are particularly affected. One aspect of this cultural trend is a lack of trust in authority. The current church deacons are viewed as authoritative figures who direct and decide all church matters, and this results in conflict with young potential leaders. In order to remedy this, the current church leaders need to be taught about postmodernity and how it affects the values, thoughts, and attitudes of young leaders at church. It is hoped that such teaching will result in more openness towards the young leaders and what they have to offer.

The second major goal is also cognitive. It seeks to help church leaders attain a biblically embedded and theologically rooted understanding of adaptive leadership. Adaptive leadership was originally developed for the business world, and the idea of a biblical theology of adaptive leadership is a relatively new concept in the Christian world. For the church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, as Reformed and fundamentalist

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<sup>10</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 22.

believers, Scripture has ultimate authority. With this in mind, it is important for them to understand how adaptive leadership is biblically based.

The third goal is attitudinal, aiming at encouraging church leaders to be humble to lead the young people at church after adopting this new leadership approach. The church leaders with a modern era mindset are usually trained with top-down or authoritative leadership. The desired future envisages that the church leaders can trust the young leaders and believe they are responsible to carry out the appointed ministry tasks.

The fourth goal is behavioral, targeting the church leaders. The goal is that the current leaders will pass the baton of leadership to the young potential leaders. The current leaders will have opportunities to experience the adaptive leadership approach, and they will be inspired to incorporate the practice of adaptive leadership as part of the gradual leadership transition. It is hoped that the church leaders will be willing to delegate their authority to the younger leaders and work along with them, as adaptive leadership is learning journey.

The final goal is behavioral and possibly optimistic. It is hoped that the young potential leaders can finally be raised up to take over the leadership of the church. It takes time to change a person in terms of cognition, attitude, and behavior. The process of equipping the current church leaders to be adaptive is not something that will be done overnight. It is anticipated that the young potential leaders will experience the changed hearts and mindset of the current church leaders after this new ministry initiative launches. Once they observe this change, it is hoped that they will be willing to serve with them and finally take the baton to lead the church to pursue God's mission.

## **The Content of the Strategy**

Now that the goals of this project have been comprehensively outlined, this new ministry initiative needs a thoughtful strategy for implementation. This strategy involves four primary components. The first component is a discussion with current church leaders regarding the need for a new leadership approach. The second component involves teaching the current church leaders about the concept and theology of adaptive leadership. The third step is a presentation on the importance of adaptive leadership to young leaders. And the final step is the recruitment of young leaders and the planning of the trial ministry.

### **Discussion Regarding the Need for a New Leadership Approach**

Recently, a deacon of youth ministry abruptly resigned from the deacon board and left the church. This individual is in his early forties and was expected to take up the position of chairperson in the future. His resignation brought certain degree of shock to the church. The reason he gave for leaving is that his ideas were rejected when he had suggested a new direction regarding church's pastoral work development. This situation is similar to what happened following the NCD survey was taken at the church. The resignation of deacon is one more event that strengthens the need of leadership renewal.

Two sessions will be arranged to discuss the needs for leadership renewal at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. The first session will study the current situation of the church, including church member loss, the congregation's passion about the church, and the leadership succession plan. The second section will examine how cultural shift influences the thoughts and values of young people at church, and how modern era leadership (that

is, top-down or authoritative leadership) is deemed less effective. Finally, it is anticipated that the church deacons will come to the conclusion that leadership renewal is needed in this new era.

### Teaching Adaptive Leadership to Church Leaders

The teaching section consists of three lessons: 1) the concept of adaptive leadership; 2) the biblical theology of adaptive leadership; and 3) discovering the adaptive challenge of Chai Wan Evangelical Church. The concept of adaptive leadership comes from the secular world and is new to church leaders. The church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church are conservative and cautious about new things. They need to know everything about the new ministry including the plan, experience from others, advantages and disadvantages, anticipated results, and resources before implementation. The first lesson explains of the concept of adaptive leadership and offers examples of applicability from other churches' experiences.

In order to change the church leaders' cognition about leadership, a presentation of the biblical theology of adaptive leadership is needed. Bible studies will be provided to achieve this cognitive goal. The passages studied will be based primarily on the passages discussed in Chapter 3 of this project. In order to help church leaders to identify the adaptive challenges of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, an exercise will be provided (see Appendix A). Various case studies will also be supplied for discussion during the training.

### Revival Meeting for Young Potential Leaders

This component of the strategy will be directed at the young potential leaders. In this step, the goal will be to enlighten their spiritual lives so that they will be more

passionate about serving the church in a leadership role. A revival meeting will be held consisting of the four “Ps”: praise, preaching, presentation, and prayer. Praise and worship will be conducted at the beginning of meeting. Songs will be chosen based on the theme of God’s grace for church and for us so that we are willing to commit ourselves to serve and lead the church.

Preaching has a huge capacity, power, and potential to produce spiritual formation and life transformation of individual believers or a whole congregation. Therefore, praise and worship will be followed by a message regarding leadership development and succession and its importance to church development. The message is developed based on various Bible passage focusing on Jesus training the twelve disciples.<sup>11</sup> Calling for commitment will be proclaimed at the end of the preaching time, and this will invite a response from the young potential leaders.

After young leaders are motivated through the fire of the Holy Spirit, a presentation on the importance of adaptive leadership will be given. The content and biblical theology of adaptive leadership will be presented. It will stress how this approach seeks to reform the current church leaders’ cognitive awareness, attitudes, and behavior. The revival meeting will conclude with small group prayer.

Prayer plays an important role for church unity, renewal, and development. When we commit ourselves to pray for church leaders, pastors, and congregations, the Holy Spirit will change our hearts so that are less likely to complain or blame church leaders. The hope is that distrust is dissolved, hurt is healed, and stress is diminished.

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<sup>11</sup> Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini, *Building Leaders: Blueprints for Developing Leadership at Every Level of Your Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008), 24-25.

## Engaging Current Church Leaders and Young Church Leaders

Two trial ministries—prayer ministry and worship ministry—will be planned to engage current church leaders and young potential leaders. The current weak points within the congregation include evangelism, serving God, dedication to God’s word, and loving people. It is hoped that prayer will serve a great way to set the church members’ hearts on fire again with the work of Holy Spirit and they presence of God. In addition, they can share life with each other, encouraging and motivating one another.

In addition to prayer ministry, a new worship ministry is also proposed. Since the church started student ministry in 2007, many students have become Christians and have grown in Christ. These students are now young adults who attend the Sunday service. It is important for the church to change its worship style to be more contemporary and energetic in order to nourish them well. Two young potential leaders, a husband and wife with musical gifts, have experienced and been trained to lead worship with more lively style. They see the needs of these young adults, and they have expressed their heart and interest in worship reformation. Therefore, the church leaders decided to launch the worship ministry reform as another trial ministry.

These two trial ministries will provide an opportunity for current church leaders and young leaders to work together in the implementation of adaptive leadership. The first step is to recruit key leaders from among the young church members who will be designing the trial ministry plan with selected deacons. I will provide supervision and guidance during the planning meeting for the trial ministry. A brief review and assessment related to leadership matters during the meeting will be done after every planning meeting.

## Target Population and Project Leadership

Chai Wan Evangelical Church is a small church with approximately 130 attendees every Sunday. Every year, between six and eight church leaders are elected to serve on the deacon board for a one-year term. The target population is composed of the current church deacons. Since most of them are older, they have been trained with a top-down or authoritative style of leadership. They must be the first target group to be trained with the new leadership approach. After attending the training session focused on leadership renewal, only a few of the deacons will be elected to test the new leadership approach by planning the trial ministry. The youth pastor and the women's ministry pastor will also be invited to join the training session.

The second target population includes the selected young potential leaders. All the young church members are welcome to attend the revival meeting, but only a few young leaders will be selected to test the strategy. There are four criteria for selection. First, the person must be between the ages of twenty-five and forty, as this group of people struggles most with the current church deacons, most of whom are over fifty-five. Second, one must be a registered church member who has been at the church for five years. Third, each person must have been involved in a church ministry for at least three years. Fourth, each member must be mature in Christ and passionate about serving God.

Regarding the leadership of this project, in their book, *Building Leaders*, Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancini suggest that the lead pastor can head the process of leadership development.<sup>12</sup> I have been serving at Chai Wan Evangelical Church for over sixteen years, and I have served as lead pastor for ten years. I have seen the challenges

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 112.

and opportunities presented to the church, and it is clear that leadership renewal is crucial to the current church situation. As lead pastor, I have an obligation and call from God to lead the church to move forward. When I was crafting the idea of the project, I was introduced to the concept of adaptive leadership by Reverend Wu Chi-Wai. Although he only briefly described the general idea and how it can benefit Hong Kong churches in a postmodern era, it helped me articulate some of my thinking about the direction of leadership renewal. I have since extensively studied adaptive leadership, and I have given thoughtful theological reflection regarding the particular ministry context of Hong Kong. Therefore, I will be the trainer and facilitator of the leadership renewal training.

### **Summary**

This chapter has demonstrated that based upon the theological implications of leadership development at Chai Wan Evangelical Church, the desired future involves equipping the church deacons to be adaptive in a postmodern ethos. The strategic goals commence with two cognitive goals: first, to teach the church deacons how cultural change influences the values and thoughts of young church members, and second, to teach the concept of adaptive leadership to the church deacons. The third goal is attitudinal: the goal is that the current church leaders would be more humble and trusting of the younger church members. The fourth goal is behavioral: the goal is to recruit both older leaders and younger leaders to experience the adaptive leadership approach together. The final goal is to raise young potential leaders to be church leaders in the future.

Considering these five goals, a strategic plan was formulated to achieve those objectives. The first step is to open up a discussion about the need for leadership renewal

at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. The next step is to demonstrate the principle of adaptive leadership in general, and to present a biblical theology of this new leadership approach. The third step is to gather young church members for a revival meeting. The fourth step is to offer a practice field for the current church leaders and young leaders to experience adaptive leadership. With all these strategic steps, it is hoped that the current church deacons will be more willing to pass the baton of leadership, while the young leaders will be prepared to move into leadership positions to lead the church in the future.

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF OUTCOMES

This chapter addresses the practical steps that will be made in order to equip the current church leaders to be adaptive leaders so that the church leadership succession will be smoothly carried out. This first part of this chapter addresses the timeline of the project. Next, the resources for training and implementation are described. Then, the evaluation of implementation is presented based on participant interviews and feedback from outside reviewers. Finally, a report on results and next steps for ministry context are described.

#### **Project Summary**

The need for leadership renewal at Chai Wan Evangelical Church is well defined. This project desires to change the leadership approach of church deacons who have a modern era leadership mindset. Understanding the influence of cultural shift is the first step. The concept of adaptive leadership will be introduced to church leaders. This type of leadership is not about someone's position or authority, but it is a process in which

anyone can participate and contribute.<sup>1</sup> With the use of this approach, it is anticipated that the differences in values between current church leaders and young potential leaders will be lessened so that they can work together as well as understand and learn from each other. Finally, a successful leadership transition will help Chai Wan Evangelical Church to fulfill its mission of “shouldering up evangelism, pursuing godliness.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Timeline**

As previously mentioned, certain concrete steps for implementation are needed for the project, and a timeline is provided in Appendix B. In September of every year, the pastoral staff presents a church year plan for the coming year. Before presenting the year plan in the deacon board meeting, the chairperson and I meet together to discuss the plan proposed by the pastoral staff. In September of 2016, I addressed the need for the leadership renewal considering the current situation of Chai Wan Evangelical Church, and offered the idea that adaptive leadership would be the key to positive impact. After approval of the proposal, the general idea of the church plan was brought to the deacon board for discussion in October 2016.

The main step for equipping the church leaders with adaptive leadership took place in November and December 2016. A total of five training sessions were offered to the current church deacons. Two training sessions were offered in November. These sessions reviewed the current situation of the church and examined the cultural change influencing the young church members. The training also discussed the fact that

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<sup>1</sup> Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 24.

<sup>2</sup> Evangelical United Church, *Church Member Handbook*, preface.

leadership renewal is needed in order to face the challenges of cultural shift. Another three training sections were provided in December 2016. The theory of adaptive leadership and the experiences of other churches were presented in the first session. In second session, the biblical theology of adaptive leadership was presented in a Bible study format. In the last session, case studies were discussed.

The next step involved equipping the young leaders at Chai Wan Evangelical Church. In January of 2017, a revival meeting was organized for young church members, other church members were also welcome to join. The aim of this meeting was to stir up their spirit of love for God and service to the church, and to share with them about the plan for church leadership renewal. After the revival meeting, a number of young potential leaders who met certain selection criteria were invited to participate in a trial ministry to experience the new leadership approach. This also took place in January 2017.

Two trial ministries were then planned for implementation of the new leadership approach in February and March 2017. The appointed deacons and selected young potential leaders met together for four times for planning the trial ministry. These two ministries were launched in April 2017. After the ministries were completed in September 2017, assessment for the new leadership approach was carried out.

### **Resources**

There were several resources required for the project, including some fundamental books that each church leader was expected to read. These books include Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky's *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Chinese edition may be supplied), Ronald A. Heifetz and Marty Linsky's

*Leadership on the Line*, Tod Bolsinger's *Canoeing the Mountains*, and Anthony B. Robinson's *Transforming Congregational Culture*. Along with these books, supporting articles about the study of the Hong Kong Church, cultural shift, and characteristic of the post-80s generation were provided to participants. General informational material regarding church leadership renewal theory was shared with the young church members at the revival meeting.

In addition, some supporting aids were also needed for training and meeting. The church hall was prepared for church leaders' training sessions and the revival meeting. Rooms were also arranged for small group discussion and prayer sessions. A computer projector and sound system were available for presentations and meetings.

### **Assessment Plan**

A period of assessment commenced once all the trial ministries were finished. Because adaptive leadership was initially developed for the secular business world and is relatively new to the Hong Kong Church or the Chinese Church, it is difficult to find any quantitative assessment tools for evaluating the "success" or degree of application of adaptive leadership in a ministry context. Therefore, a qualitative assessment was merely adopted for assessing the feasibility and achievement of the new leadership approach for Chai Wan Evangelical Church's ministry context.

In the church, since I am the only person who knows the principles and applications of adaptive leadership, and since I provided training and supervision throughout the implementation process, therefore I served as the assessor of the project. Assessment was done by observation in the planning meetings as well as feedback from

the church leaders and young potential leaders. In addition to myself, by Rev. Wu, Chi-Wai of the Hong Kong Church Renewal Movement, who introduced me to the concept of adaptive leadership, was also called upon to review the project.

### **Report on Results**

Five church leaders' training sessions were offered in November and December 2016. Seven deacons and two pastors attended all five sessions. As expected, some of the older members of the deacon board had difficulty understanding the thoughts and values of the younger members of the church. Some deacons stated that the young leaders would submissively follow their lead if the pastors would preach and teach more about sacrifice, suffering, commitment, and obedience. This was not surprising considering their fundamentalist upbringing. Through the course of the training, the deacons came to understand that current young leaders distrust authority figures, and they acknowledged that leadership renewal is needed. In addition, the deacons also gained an understanding of the theory, biblical theology, and application of adaptive leadership.

Some deacons had trouble understanding how to apply the new leadership approach, declaring that they were trained to use an authoritative leadership approach in which the leaders simply tell the followers what to do. They also talked about how a leadership style that seeks transformation is a very new concept for them. They are used to leadership being applied by launching new ministries or reforming the church structure. With adaptive leadership, they are uncertain as to how it is applied. Another concern for them was time—a full year of implementation felt overly long. Although several deacons

raised different concerns and difficulties, the whole deacon board and two pastors finally agreed to learn and try the adaptive leadership approach.

The revival meeting for the younger church members took place in the beginning of January 2017. More than thirty young church members, together with the deacons, attended the meeting. After singspiration and preaching, I shared the about the church's need for young leaders and the church leadership renewal plan. In the discussion session, some young church members shared their thoughts and concerns about the church's present situation, while they also offered some helpful ideas and recommendations for church renewal. In the prayer session, the Holy Spirit was at work, and most of the young members present expressed willingness to participate in the trial ministry with the adoption of adaptive leadership. Due to time limitations, I could only supervise two trial ministries, therefore four young potential leaders were selected to participate. The church deacons and two pastors were so impressed and encouraged by the positive response of those present at the meeting, these leaders were very encouraged that church revival was at hand.

#### Trial Ministry 1: Prayer Ministry

Two deacons—the chairman of the deacon board and the deacon of youth ministry—were selected for leading the first trial ministry, which was a prayer ministry. Two female leaders from the young adult fellowship were invited to work with them to experience adaptive leadership. The church leaders have felt that many church members are losing their hunger for spiritual matters, passion for serving the church, and zeal for God. Prayer is a fundamental and powerful way to enlighten people's spirits so that they

can rekindle their first love for God and passion for church. With this in mind, we decided to launch a prayer ministry in 2017, expecting that church members would experience the power of Holy Spirit and the presence of the Almighty God to change their lives.

The team of four leaders and I met for four times to formulate the plan for the prayer ministry. In the first meeting, I briefly presented the rationale and purpose of the ministry, and the two young leaders agreed that it is important to nourish the spiritual life of Chai Wan Evangelical Church's congregation. Then each of us started sharing our ideas and suggestions about ministry content, schedule, leaders, resources, and grouping. Many constructive and positive ideas were presented.

With all of this information in our minds, we did not know why but we felt stuck in some way and that we should pray. The Chinese culture is very task-oriented, and it can be difficult to pause and take full consideration of a situation. When we were feeling stuck, the chairperson of the deacon board exercised an adaptive leadership skill of asking questions, and this way he helped us to "get on the balcony."<sup>3</sup> "Getting on the balcony" involves seeing things from up above, so that we can see more clearly and get the big picture. Church leaders need to get on the balcony periodically to understand more about the spiritual needs of a congregation. This can be done by visiting other congregations, participating in continuing education, taking retreats, and asking simple questions.<sup>4</sup> The chairperson asked some very simple questions that led us out from the mist. He asked, "What is the purpose of prayer in the Bible (not the purpose of prayer

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<sup>3</sup> Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 51-55.

<sup>4</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 125.

ministry)? Why is prayer powerful? How did Jesus pray? What does the congregation expect to experience through prayer?” With these simple questions, we gained a clearer vision about the direction of the prayer ministry and the content of each prayer session.

In the second meeting, we discussed the schedule of the ministry and the content of each prayer session. We planned six prayer sessions in all: two prayer sessions on two Sundays after the Sunday service from 11:45 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and four prayer sessions on four Saturdays from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The prayer content was designed in three dimensions focusing on loving God, loving ourselves, and loving people. We anticipated that approximately forty church members would participate the ministry. The two young leaders suggested dividing them into eight prayer groups randomly. They also suggested that each group leader be selected by mandatory appointment instead of invitation.

As the content, strategy, and schedule of ministry were almost fully planned, the chairperson of the deacon board proposed that he withdraw from the planning committee, in order to let the other deacon, the two young leaders and me form a working group to follow the ministry implementation. I could see that he was applying another adaptive leadership strategy of “giving responsibility back.”<sup>5</sup> In a changing culture, people need to own their work to increase their sense of belonging and responsibility. It should be noted that leaders only give responsibility back to those who are ready and willing to volunteer.<sup>6</sup> The two young potential leaders have been with the church for over ten years and have been involved in different ministries, and they were willing to work and take the challenge. Therefore, they were absolutely entrusted with the responsibility of carrying

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<sup>5</sup> Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership on the Line*, 127.

<sup>6</sup> Robinson, *Transforming Congregational Culture*, 133.

out the ministry. However, due to time constraints, we thought it was not suitable to form a working group to implement the ministry. The plan remained for the five of us to proceed with the implementation.

After finishing the ministry plan, we presented the plan to the congregation the following week during Sunday service. Some church members expressed negative feedback regarding the grouping and times for prayer sessions. The suggestion to form groups randomly is a new idea at the church, as groups are usually formed based upon people's background, age, and friendships. The congregation also expressed their concerns on prayer sessions commencing on Saturday night as most of church members may be engaged with family life and other personal commitments. This session may have low attendance. The congregation also expressed concern regarding the plan for group leader selection, noting that selection by appointment was disrespectful.

In response to the undesirable feedback from the congregation, the two deacons explained the rationale behind the plan for grouping and for the schedule, and they encouraged the congregants to try and see how it works. The deacons also offered their promise to review and revise the whole ministry with the young leaders after implementation, so that it could be improved for the future. By protecting the young leaders from the criticism, the deacons provided room for the young leaders to experience trial and error in carrying out the ministry, which will help them grow as leaders.

After the ministry was completed in September 2017, each of the four participants of the prayer ministry team provided feedback on their adaptive leadership experience. The chairperson of deacon board, who has a background of authoritative leadership, expressed that adaptive leadership was difficult to apply, particularly the aspects of

cognitive and attitudinal change. He also stated that it was easier to take responsibility himself than it was to “give back responsibility.” However, he acknowledged that it was good to try, otherwise there was no other way to provide young leaders the platform to take responsibility and experience the pressure of leading. The deacon of youth ministry was more open-minded and optimistic in his feedback, noting that he fully trusted the two young potential leaders to carry out the ministry. The two young leaders felt that they were trusted and granted the authority to do the work. They also appreciated the efforts of the two deacons to protect them from discouragement and hurt when the congregation was critical of the plan. In sum, although there was still room for improvement in the implementation of adaptive leadership, they all agreed it was a good start.

#### Trial Ministry 2: Worship Ministry

Another trial ministry was planned to examine the feasibility of the new leadership approach, and this was a worship ministry. The deacon of worship ministry was responsible for this trial ministry, and the deacon of fellowship was invited to join. Two young potential leaders, a husband and wife with musical gifts, were involved in this ministry. As it happens, this couple had detached themselves from the church in the last few years, but God’s love set their hearts on fire again, and they decided to be more committed to serving God in church. I believe it was good timing so that they could be involved in this adaptive leadership trial and grow as future leaders.

The husband and wife have experienced and been trained with a new worship style and more lively, modern music from a Christian Music Institute called One Circle. They initiated a proposal for worship renewal, which would incorporate songs written in

recent years and worship training to help lead the renewal. They presented this proposal in the worship ministry meeting, and as expected, a member opposed their ideas. This member said that she believed that old hymns have more solid theological ground and provide more fruitful spiritual content to the congregation's life.<sup>7</sup> She also expressed that electrical music instruments would make the congregation uncomfortable during the worship service.

The deacon of worship ministry identified this difference of opinion as an adaptive challenge rather than a technical challenge. This is because the disagreement was not primarily about changing songs or using different musical instruments, but it centered on a difference in values, beliefs, or habits, as Heifetz describes.<sup>8</sup> After identifying the adaptive challenge, the deacon of worship ministry asked a few questions in order to help identify the root of the conflict and/or the gap of values. The questions included, "What is purpose of worship? Why we need to worship? Why we need to worship together?" All these questions directed us to focus on God instead of worship style, songs, or musical instruments. At the end of meeting, we came to the conclusion to launch the worship ministry renewal despite the concerns raised by a member.

In order to carry out the new worship ministry, various resources were needed, such as copyrights of the new songs, new musical instruments, and new sound systems. The two deacons brought this budget plan to the deacon board meeting discussion. As budget plan was not proposed in this financial year, some deacons were hesitant to approve it. The deacon of worship ministry applied the adaptive skill of protecting

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<sup>7</sup> As mentioned previously, in 2000 Chai Wan Evangelical Church adopted a praise and worship style that uses old hymns and modern worship songs.

<sup>8</sup> Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership*, 19.

leadership from below, explaining that those resources were fundamentally essential to the ministry renewal. Finally, the deacon board approved the budget plan.

Eight worship training sessions consisting of four theoretical sessions and four practice sessions were organized. All the worship leaders, including vocalists and musicians, benefited and were inspired by this training. After the training was completed, the new style of worship was launched that all the trained worship leaders and vocalists were ready to implement. Not surprisingly, the deacon of worship ministry received a lot of negative comments regarding the style and songs. She sought to regulate the distress by communicating with these church members who shared the negative comments. It was not an easy task since the argument was based upon people's values, but she handled it very well by utilizing the adaptive skill of regulating distress.<sup>9</sup>

After the worship ministry renewal had been launched for one month, I interviewed the four leaders in order to assess the process. The deacon of worship ministry said that she herself was open-minded regarding the adaptive leadership approach, but she expressed caution regarding the receptivity of it by the church as a whole. She said that it was difficult to apply in our church context. The congregation viewed her as the authority and the decision-maker when it comes to worship. While she protected the leadership from below, she also needed to regulate the distress from the congregation. She bore the brunt of the tension as the team applied the adaptive leadership approach. However, she concluded that it was a worthwhile exercise because it provided a safe place for the young leaders to lead the ministry. The two young leaders

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<sup>9</sup> Heifetz and Linsky refer to this as orchestrating the conflict. Heifetz and Linsky, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 101-102.

showed their gratitude for offering protection as they led. They were also pleased with the church's support by providing everything required for the ministry renewal. They could see the change is happening in the church.

#### Assessment of the "Success" of the New Leadership Approach

As mentioned before, the fifth goal of this project is that the young potential leaders will take part in a church ministry. It takes time to truly change people's minds and hearts. Chai Wan Evangelical Church has been struggling to retain younger members and help them move into leadership roles in the church. However, with God's grace, Jesus' love, and the Holy Spirit's work, several young members are coming forward in leadership in various ministries. In this way, the adaptive leadership approach has been successful.

Since 2007 when the church began holding its Sunday service at Lingnan Hang Yee Memorial Secondary School, many newcomers living in the vicinity will visit the church. Some are adults and elders, some are rehabilitating from mental illness, some are young couples, and others are families. There is great potential to share the gospel. An increase in parents bringing children to the church in recent years caused the church to plan a family fellowship to fulfill their pastoral and evangelical needs. However, many current church leaders are engaged with other ministries, and the plan was put on hold.

The two female leaders who were involved in the prayer ministry also have young children, and they see the challenge and opportunity of meeting the needs of families like theirs. After the completion of the adaptive leadership approach training, the church approached them about leading the ministry to young families. After praying about it,

they decided to take the lead to plan and arrange the family ministry, together with one of the pastors. They met together to work out the strategic plan regarding aim, direction, content, target participants, budget, and various resources needed. The family ministry will be launched in the beginning of 2018 with these two women at the helm.

Although negative feedback was given by the congregation after the initial implementation of the worship style renewal, it was generally well accepted later, especially by the younger church members. In fact, a lot of young church members became more involved and committed to the worship ministry. The husband and wife who helped launch the renewal were delighted and encouraged by the great enthusiasm and commitment that was expressed, and they have decided to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the worship ministry. They joined the worship ministry after the completion of the leadership renewal training. The deacon of worship ministry still oversees the church worship ministry, but these two young leaders actually took up the ministry in terms of executing worship renewal, training, teaching, planning, administration, and setting up guidelines. The wife also provides support for the youth worship service that is held on Saturday afternoons. The husband is expected to be ready to take charge of the worship ministry in two or three years.

### **Summary**

The church leaders and selected potential young leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church were trained in the new leadership approach. The steps involved included a leadership training course, a revival meeting, and the implementation of two trial ministries—prayer ministry and worship ministry. After the two trial ministries were

completed, interviews with all the participants were carried out to assess the feasibility and applicability of the adaptive leadership approach. The primary goal of this project—that the young potential leaders would enthusiastically take leadership in a church ministry—was achieved. Beyond the success of the primary goal, several young church members took up leadership roles in different ministries, further defining the success of the new leadership approach.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this project is to develop a new leadership approach at Chai Wan Evangelical Church to confront the challenge of respecting unique generations and worldviews within the congregation. While student ministry continues to provide great potential for church growth in the next ten to fifteen years, there are also several challenges the church leaders need to tackle. The first challenge is that the church is declining in terms of attendance and spirituality. The second challenge is that the young potential leaders distrust the deacons who are viewed as authoritative figures. Carrying out church leadership renewal will determine whether Chai Wan Evangelical can reverse the trend of these challenges. Reflecting theologically on literature, culture, and the Bible has laid a foundation for the means and method of training current church leaders to be adaptive leaders.

During the course of this project, the current church leaders were provided training on the biblical theology, concept, and application of adaptive leadership. Two trial ministries were launched to offer an opportunity for present church leaders and young potential leaders to work together using adaptive leadership. Although the current church deacons found it difficult to learn and apply the concepts of adaptive leadership, the four younger leaders were excited about the opportunities given to them, and they participated enthusiastically. The response of these younger leaders is a sign of success regarding the application of adaptive leadership to a certain degree.

This project addresses several points. First, each church leader needs to understand the influence of the prevailing culture as it penetrates different aspect of our

lives. In fact, the culture affects all church members, whether old or young. The ways of ministry that have been effective for many years are no longer successful. In a postmodern ethos, young church members distrust the authority of church leaders, as they have different values and thoughts. Humility on the part of church leaders is needed to diminish the gap and resolve the conflicts between them.

Second, leadership transformation takes time. The church leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church were trained with a modern leadership style, which is top-down and authoritative. Chinese people are typically results-oriented, often focusing primarily on the method and result with immediate effect. However, leadership transformation is a matter of paradigm shift; it involves cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral change. Time is an essential element for all these changes. One of the major definitions of adaptive leadership is that leadership is a learning journey requiring leaders' understanding the follower's pace. Therefore, it is critical to allow time for them to accept and adopt this new ministry approach.

Third, in emerging culture, church leaders are co-leaders. A church leader is not a super-star leader; instead, he or she is a leader who can work with each other exercising complementarity. It is necessary for the Hong Kong Church to understand that a popular lead pastor is not necessarily the best person to lead a church, since it can be so disruptive if or when this leader steps down. We need leaders who can form healthy ministry teams so that leadership succession can be smoothly carried out. Then the ministry can be continuously sustained to pursue God's call.

Finally, adaptive leadership demonstrates an effective leadership approach in discontinuous change, however it has several limitations that should be noted. Roxburgh

and Romanuk state that leaders are not easily or rapidly molded with the concepts and practices in the journey of leadership approach transition. Few leaders (including the authors themselves) have been led with frameworks suggested in their book. These frameworks are in many cases counterintuitive and dissimilar to conventional leadership beliefs and exercises. It often takes a few years for church leaders to gradually comprehend that this approach can help a church authentically discover the core reality of a congregation.<sup>1</sup> Northhouse comments that adaptive leadership is a complicated process, therefore it is difficult to assess the degree of success and applicability.<sup>2</sup> In addition, Northhouse challenges the concepts of adaptive leadership, claiming that they are too broad and abstract. Heifetz describes the process of adaptive leadership using the following phrases: “identifying loyalties,” “protecting leadership voices below,” “mobilizing the systems,” “naming the defaults,” “holding steady,” “acting politically,” and “anchoring yourself,” however these terms are vague.<sup>3</sup> Clarification of all these conceptual behaviors is needed in order to carry out the process practically and effectively. I personally experienced the limitations of adaptive leadership when I trained the church deacons; Chinese people are traditionally very practical and concrete, and adaptive leadership is neither. Finally, conflict will be raised between adaptive leaders if several church leaders apply adaptive leadership frameworks at the same time. The theory of adaptive leadership works best when approached by a single leader.

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<sup>1</sup> Roxburgh and Romanuk, *The Missional Leader*, 204.

<sup>2</sup> Northhouse, *Leadership*, 276-277.

<sup>3</sup> Heifetz, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, 138-144.

## **Implications for Future Ministry**

Chai Wan Evangelical Church is under a gradual process of reconstruction in terms of the congregation's heart, soul, and spirit, but it is assuredly moving forward. The current church leaders are willing to delegate authority and trust the younger members, while the young are ready to take on the challenge of leading ministry. There are two implications for future ministry.

First, the church needs a strategic plan for leadership succession. In the Chinese Church, there are two problems when it comes to leadership succession. First, it is common within Chinese churches to simply neglect development of a leadership succession plan. Many are not concerned about the resignation or retirement of current church leaders; they simply believe that God will provide with abundant provision. The second problem is that insufficient time is provided to train leaders for succession. Leadership succession cannot be done overnight; it is a process requiring several years.<sup>4</sup>

The current leaders of Chai Wan Evangelical Church are not as committed to leadership succession as they should be. Chai Wan Evangelical Church is a small church, and not many potential leaders are ready to be trained. It is critical to work out a leadership succession plan. This can be done by yearly training regarding the church history and culture, leadership, and ministry plan. Young potential leaders could also be invited to join the deacon board's meeting to explore the church operations.

The second implication for future ministry is that intergenerational pastoring is needed within the church. The church has been exercising age-segregated pastoral care

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<sup>4</sup> Christian Communication, Ltd., "Leadership Succession Culture Part II," accessed October 28, 2017, [https://sixleadershipessentials.org/category/Leadership Succession/](https://sixleadershipessentials.org/category/Leadership%20Succession/).

for many years. This kind of pastoral care plan can offer independent and tailor-made pastoral care for each age group, including worship, fellowship, and Bible teaching. It can also increase opportunity for the church members within that age group to partake the ministry, enhancing their degree of engagement.<sup>5</sup> However, age-segregated pastoral care tends to increase, not decrease, the generation gap. The youth need the church adults or elders to provide suitable guidance and direction for them to grow. If this does not take place, the youth miss out on the chance to learn from people of different age groups. It is same for the adults; they need to have fellowship with people of different ages to enrich their lives.<sup>6</sup> A generation gap can cause conflict between the old and the young, and this is even more severe when they do not have regular contact with one another.

Intergenerational pastoring can provide more engagement in serving and Christian living, so that the young and old have opportunities to work together and understand each other better. The gap will be diminished and the values can be shared and taught to the young.

Chai Wan Evangelical Church has employed an age-segregated pastoral care method for many years. As a small church, this kind of pastoral care causes church ministry to be fragmented. As result, the voices of the young cannot be heard by the senior church members, causing unnecessary disagreements and opposition between them. If intergenerational pastoring can be implemented at Chai Wan Evangelical Church, it will strengthen the connection between young and old, so that the young church members feel more respected, ultimately smoothing the leadership succession.

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<sup>5</sup> HKCRM, "Age-segregated pastoring or Intergenerational pastoring," accessed October 30, 2017, <https://hkchurch.wordpress.com/2017/10/19/Weekly-Review-Age-segregated-pastoring-or-Intergenerational-pastoring/>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

## **Implications for the Larger Christian Community**

When I was crafting the preliminary idea of this project, the Occupy Central protest took place in September 2014.<sup>7</sup> It was led by many of the young people in Hong Kong, who distrusted and opposed to the Beijing and Hong Kong governments. This incident had great influence on the youth in Hong Kong. The youth of the post-Occupy Central movement have a different way of thinking, emphasizing independence and self-consciousness. They are concerned with “saving the church by themselves,” and they relentlessly critique the pro-establishment camp (including the Church).

For many years, a leadership and governance approach of Hong Kong churches had been influenced by the social mainline values, from authoritative leadership of the colonial era to enterprise leadership of HKSAR era.<sup>8</sup> Those leaders believe that church growth is equivalent to growth of the Kingdom of God. With this mindset, many churches bought and built large buildings in hopes of attracting large numbers of congregants. However, the youth nowadays are more concerned about social justice, the disparity between the rich and the poor, climate change, and cultural conservation rather than number of attendees, money, and size of the church building.

Principally, the youth distrust and oppose to the pro-establishment camp and any authority figures. They dislike the empty words of many in authority. Therefore, in order

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<sup>7</sup> “Occupy Central—also known as the Occupy movement and the ‘umbrella movement’—was a civil disobedience movement that began in Hong Kong on September 28, 2014. It called on protesters to block roads and paralyse the city’s financial district if the Beijing and local governments did not agree to implement universal suffrage for the 2017 chief executive election and the 2020 Legislative Council elections according to ‘international standards.’” SCMP, “Occupy Central,” accessed on November 1, 2017, <http://www.scmp.com/topics/occupy-central>.

<sup>8</sup> HKSAR refers to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. This title was adopted by the country after it exited British rule in 1997.

to nourish and lead the youth well, earning their trust is critical. Church elders cannot lead the youth by flaunting their authority, saying, “You trust us and obey our lead, then we can talk about other matters.” In contrast, the youth follow church leaders’ lead after they find the church leaders to be trustworthy.

Many Hong Kong churches are in a period of leadership transition. However not many people are willing to consider church leadership because of the challenge from the church youth. The differences in values and opinions between old and young are presently a hindrance to church development in Hong Kong. It is my hope that this project would offer a contribution to the larger Christian community: leading is a learning sojourn, and everyone must be humble to learn and listen from each other, whether one is a leader or a follower. Adaptive leadership is not about authority, but it is a process that everyone can be involved in that can offer a platform for leaders and followers to learn and face problems together as a team. The title of Heifetz’s book, *Leadership without Easy Answers*, identifies the challenge of leadership in all sectors. In sum, as the culture is continually changing, an effective church leader should be open-minded, humble, willing to learn, and ready to be adaptive to all change, ultimately leading the whole congregation to fulfill God’s mission.

APPENDIX A

Identifying the Adaptive Challenges of Chai Wan Evangelical Church

1. Describe your ministry challenge in brief.
2. State the ministry challenge that all group members generally agreed upon.
3. In the group, discuss what you consider to be the dangers within this ministry challenge. Why is this critical to this ministry?
4. What are the technical problems and adaptive challenge in this ministry challenge?

Ministry Challenge:	
Technical Problems	Adaptive Challenge

APPENDIX B

### Timeline of Implementation

Date	Content
September 4, 2016	Discussion with chairperson about the need of church leadership renewal
October 2, 2016	Present the general idea of church plan regarding leadership renewal in deacon board meeting
November 6, 2016	Training Section 1: Review the current situation of the church
November 13, 2016	Training Section 2: Examine the cultural change influencing the young church members
December 4, 2016	Training Section 3: Present the theory and application of adaptive leadership
December 11, 2016	Training Section 4: Present the biblical theology of adaptive leadership
December 18, 2016	Training Section 5: Identify the adaptive challenge of the church
January 8, 2017	Revival meeting for young church member
January, 2017	Selection of young potential leaders
February to March, 2017	Two Trial Ministries Planning meeting
April to September, 2017	Launch the two trial ministries
October, 2017	Assessment of the implementation

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