A Strategy for a Witness Community in Tung Fook Chai Wan Church

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AT TUNG FOOK CHAI WAN CHURCH

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ABSTRACT

A Strategy for a Witnessing Community at Tung Fook Chai Wan Church
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The purpose of this project is to describe a witnessing community strategy to lead Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in Hong Kong to go through a transition to become a missional community. As its members develop a more missional mindset, this middle-class congregation will demonstrate a lifestyle of serving, evangelism, and witnessing to the living Christ.

This strategy has four features. First, it is a cognitive-experiential approach aimed at behavioral commitment of the participants. Second, it is a stage-by-stage development with continuous evaluation and refinement. Third, it is a modeling and leadership-by-example approach. Fourth, the dual role of leadership by the top leader and the Holy Spirit is emphasized.

The implementation has three stages. In the first stage, a pilot witnessing community is formed in which twelve leaders participate in discipleship. In the second stage, the original twelve leaders form their own respective witnessing communities. In the third stage, the twelve leaders then form new communities, and other potential leaders are identified and invited to form new communities.

A pre- and post-implementation survey in the first stage of implementation indicates a change of spiritual beliefs, attitudes, practices, and vitality of the participants. The results of this survey from the pilot witnessing community shows signs that these leaders are indeed developing a missional lifestyle.

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PART ONE

MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church was established based upon a concept called “One Church.” In 2008, this concept was conceived by the leaders of the Tung Fook Church (the mother church of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church) under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This concept of “One Church” is shown in figure 1.

Figure 1. The “One Church” Concept

The Tung Fook Church in Causeway Bay (a central part of Hong Kong), being the mother church, began to set up branch churches in different districts in Hong Kong in 2009. As shown in the diagram, the branch churches are not independent. Neither are
they based on the traditional church-planting approach adopted by many churches in Hong Kong. In the traditional church-planting approach, a group of dedicated people are called and sent to a specific area in which a new church is built up. The mother church supports the new church for a period of time. After this period, the planted church should achieve financial independence.

Unlike this traditional model, the branch churches of the Tung Fook Church still secure strong financial and human resources support from the mother church, although most of them will ultimately achieve financial independence. Meanwhile, the pastors in charge of these branch churches enjoy a high degree of autonomy to launch their respective local initiatives, serving the needs of their particular neighborhoods in accordance with specific local situations, as long as they follow the basic core values of the Tung Fook Church.

There are two strategic advantages to this approach. First, there is a balance of upper/middle-class people and poor people within the Tung Fook Church and its branch churches. When the Tung Fook Church wants to implement a vision for serving the poor, it has easy access to the poor because some branch churches will be primarily composed of poor people. On the other hand, a branch church composed of mostly poor people will be facing a shortage of leaders and scarce financial and human resources, due to the fact that many poor people are uneducated, receive low income, and suffer long working hours. This shortage of leaders and resources becomes intrinsic in many churches that are committed to serving the poor in Hong Kong. This “One Church” approach will remedy this deficiency.
Second, being in the local area, branch churches can effectively develop connections with other local churches and non-government organizations to build up strong local network relationships. These networks will be constructive to the future evangelistic and service work and ultimate transformation of their respective local areas. This local network development cannot be done if the Tung Fook Church remains led from Causeway Bay and only occasionally organizes outreach activities in distant areas.

In 2009, God called me to lead a group of one hundred people (most of them leaders) to start a branch church called Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in the Eastern District, an area in the eastern part of Hong Kong. The set-up of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is also a fulfillment of the vision God had given to the Tung Fook Church as a whole during a revival in 1998. In that vision, a prophecy from God revealed that he would send his people to serve the poor in the Eastern District of Hong Kong. Our ultimate dream is to cooperate and work with the Holy Spirit to see the presence of God in the Eastern District and the subsequent transformation of people’s lives.

The Eastern District is a residential area mixed with private and public housing estates. The private housing estates, mainly in a prettier coastal zone, are filled with middle-class people. The public housing estates house poor families. These families often consist of two types of people. The first are older people, often lonely, whose children have left to pursue their careers elsewhere. The second are poor and uneducated new immigrants from China. Beyond the difficulty of these situations, the public housing estates are surrounded by cemeteries, which creates a strong sense of fear and hopelessness among the residents. Idol worship is popular. The result of these two types
of housing side by side is that there is sharp social and economic disparity between those who have and those who have not.

The congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church possesses two key characteristics. First, about 75 percent of the members have been converted within the last six years. This is the result of continuous evangelistic efforts in the Eastern District since 2009. Most members are spiritually young but energetic, willing to learn more about God and obey leadership. Second, the leaders who followed me to build up the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church are spiritually mature, dedicated followers. They are willing to commit long term in serving the Eastern District. Many of them experienced the revival of the Tung Fook Church in 1998. In their hearts, they long for the presence of God in the church again.

Darrell Guder writes, “Every Christian community should see itself as a community of missionaries. Its responsibility to them is to guide them to identify God’s calling, to recognize the gifts and opportunities they have, to provide them the biblical and theological training to incarnate the gospel in their particular fields, and then to commission them to that ministry.”¹ The challenge of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is to build up, equip, and empower her newborn, middle-class congregation to evangelize the poor people of the Eastern District through caring for and serving them. To address this challenge, a witnessing community strategy is adopted. Gailyn Van Rheenen rightly points out that a strategy for the development of a witnessing community is necessary. She writes, “Because missions must begin with the wishes of the sovereign God yet

function within the context of a social situation, strategy is defined as the practical working out of the will of God within a cultural context.”

This doctoral project has three parts. In Part One, Chapter 1 analyzes the characteristics of the Eastern District in which the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is located. Special attention is given to examine the demographic development and physical environment of the district that result in economic disparity and hunger for peace and hope. This chapter also depicts the background of the establishment of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, including her identity and practices. Focus is given to the relationship between the vision of the church and the witnessing community strategy.

Part Two consists of two chapters. Chapter 2 engages the relevant biblical and theological works for a church to be a missional community. This analysis identifies the key features of a missional church and explores ways to create a missional culture in a church. Particular attention is paid to the role of a witnessing community to practice evangelism by serving the poor and the importance of leadership in guiding the congregation in a missional direction. Finally, a survey will be given to examine the worldview and missional theology of Chinese churches in Hong Kong. This chapter also discusses the historical development of the views of these Chinese churches toward evangelism as well as caring and serving the poor in Hong Kong during the past fifty years.

Chapter 3 presents a theological justification for the adoption of a witnessing community approach to foster and nurture spiritual transformation and discipleship of the newborn congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. The objective is to create a

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2 Gailyn Van Rheenen, Missions (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 143.
platform for corporate imagination for evangelism by caring for and serving the poor. Meanwhile, there is a theological discussion regarding the most appropriate type of missional leadership for engaging the context of Hong Kong, particularly in terms of what role the church’s “top leader” should play. Finally, the chapter demonstrates the dual role of church leadership and the Holy Spirit in directing the congregation to missional service.

Part Three also consists of two chapters. Chapter 4 develops the ministry plan and goals as well as logistics for the implementation of the witnessing community strategy. This strategy possesses three characteristics. First, it extends from cognitive education to experimentation and then behavioral commitment. It is also a stage-by-stage development with continuous refinement after each development stage is complete. Third, it is a leadership-by-example approach in which community leaders will learn and grow together with those being led. Finally, the chapter presents the reasons for such a strategy.

Chapter 5 delineates the steps that will be taken to implement the plan of building up witness communities in the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church so that the congregation will be developed and empowered for evangelism by caring for and serving the poor. This chapter provides a detailed account in terms of the timeline, process, and necessary resources for such implementation. The process of leader development is clearly stated. Lastly, this chapter includes appropriate assessment tools to evaluate the goals of this new initiative.

The project concludes with a summary and a mark of demonstration of the determination of the leaders of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. This group deeply seeks to obey the Great Commitment and Great Commandment, and to embrace God’s
heart of blessing the poor people of the Eastern District through his Church. It is hoped that their commitment and passion will make a lasting impact in their own lives as well as the lives of those they serve.
CHAPTER 1

THE EASTERN DISTRICT AND THE TUNG FOOK CHAI WAN CHURCH

Formulating and implementing a strategy to enable the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church to act as a witnessing community in the Eastern District is a difficult task. However, by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer, by understanding missional theology more deeply, and by modeling Jesus’ life and mission, we are partnering with God in planning and implementing his strategy. Before proposing a strategy, it is important to better understand basic information about the Eastern District and the congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. This chapter delineates the historical background and development of the Eastern District with an emphasis on highlighting the issues and needs of the local community. Meanwhile, there is also a description of the establishment of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, the characteristics of her congregation, and her ecclesiological strategy.

**Historical Background and Development of the Eastern District**

The Eastern District is in the eastern part of Hong Kong. There are seven major zones in the District. These zones are Fortress Hill, North Point, Quarry Bay, Shau Kei Wan, Heng Fa Chuen, Chai Wan, and Siu Sai Wan. These seven zones are closely linked
together by the road system and the underground railway network (Mass Transit Railway). Only Siu Sai Wan is not reached by railway network. However, there are many bus and minibus routes which enable this zone to closely connect with the rest. Chai Wan and Siu Sai Wan are located at the most eastern end of the district. The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is located in Chai Wan. In discussions with some older residents in Chai Wan, it was discovered that there are both historical and daily population movements within Chai Wan, Siu Sai Wan, and Shau Kei Wan.

The historical movements began fifty years ago. At that time, the Hong Kong government redeveloped old public housing estates in Chai Wan, and it relocated the original residents of Chai Wan to Siu Sai Wan or Shau Kei Wan. When the new public housing estates were finished, the residents moved back in. On the other hand, daily movement is engendered by big Chinese food markets located in Chai Wan, where both residents of Siu Sai Wan and Shau Kei Wan buy fresh food to cook their meals. These cross-zone population movements and daily activities make the people of these zones closer to each other. No matter how active the population movement is among the zones of the Eastern District, however, 71 percent of residents stayed in the same district during the past five years.¹ This means residents rarely move out of the district. An older resident of the Eastern District says that people are “stably local.”

The Eastern District was originally a backwater of fishing villages, quarries, and dockyards. In the 1970s, the industrial and economic development of Hong Kong was extremely prosperous. With this development, the Eastern District was full of factories.

In order to deal with the huge residential needs for the increasing working population in this district, the government began to construct many public housing estates to accommodate these factory workers and their families. At the same time, other types of facilities, including transportation, education, medical and health, and other recreational facilities, were gradually developed.

However, in the 1990s, with the adoption of the open door policy by the Communist government in Mainland China, Hong Kong experienced an economic transformation. A significant number of Hong Kong manufacturers began to move their production plants to Mainland China because of the strategic advantage of significantly reducing their production costs there. This “exodus” movement of manufacturing industries created a drastic change in the communities of the Eastern District. Nowadays, the Eastern District is mostly residential, with only some industrial and commercial areas. There are a total of forty-two public housing estates in the Eastern District, and twenty-five of these are in Chai Wan and Siu Sai Wan.\(^2\) In 2014, the population of the Eastern District was about 579,000, or about 8 percent of the entire Hong Kong population.\(^3\) As a result of this history, the two challenges faced in the Eastern District relate to economic disparity and the spirit of fear.


\(^3\) Ibid.
Economic Disparity

As mentioned earlier, the Eastern District is mainly a residential area. Looking closer, one will realize that two types of housing estates coexist in the Eastern District. The first type is private housing and the other is public. Two examples that represent the private housing estates are Hang Fa Chuen and Island Resort. These private housing estates have three main features. The first is that most of these estates are located in a prettier coastal area and often have a sea view. Second, most of these estates are connected to excellent transportation systems with which the residents can travel conveniently to other parts of Hong Kong. Sufficient car parks are also available. Third, these estates are filled with middle-class people who have relatively high incomes and enjoy a more comfortable life. According to recent statistics, the median monthly household income for the private housing estate is HK$47,250 (US$6,057), while that of an ordinary household in Hong Kong is HK$24,500 (US$3,141). The median monthly household income gap between those in public versus private housing is HK$33,050 (US$2,416). The middle-class people living in private housing estates have more resources to own cars, to afford healthy food and eat out occasionally, to spend on vacation/travel, and to employ private tutors for their children.

On the other hand, public housing estates are usually filled with poor people. As mentioned in the introduction, these poor people are often lonely, elderly couples or singles, or they are new immigrants from Mainland China. The elderly poor people are

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5 Ibid.
those whose children have grown up and moved out of the district. Some are old couples, but more often they are elderly ladies whose husbands have passed away. According to the *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report of 2014*, there are 26,700 of these types of elderly people in the Eastern District.6

Others who live in public housing are uneducated, new immigrants from Mainland China, whose difficulties are several. The first of these difficulties relates to their lack of education. They are generally only able to find labor-intensive jobs that pay relatively low salaries and demand long working hours. According to a recent statistic, the median monthly household income for the public housing estate is only HK$14,200 (US$1,820), while that of an average household in Hong Kong is HK$24,500 (US$3,141).7 Many who are still unemployed have to receive government social security assistance, which Chinese culture deems shameful. Another difficulty is that most of these new immigrants come from rural areas and find it extremely difficult to adapt to the city culture and high-speed lifestyle of the Hong Kong people. Finally, the children of these families find it extremely difficult to adapt to the curriculum of the Hong Kong education system. Uneducated, their parents find themselves handicapped in helping their children. This problem is especially serious when their children learn English, as English is one of the key success factors in securing better schools and careers in the future.

Some of these new immigrant families have additional hardships that originated from a special social phenomenon in the 1980s. Owing to the fact that there were more

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men than women in Hong Kong at that time, many middle-aged men could not find spouses. The solution for these men was to go to rural areas of Mainland China and marry very young women, and after some years, they applied for immigration for their wives and children to Hong Kong. As time went on, problems appeared in these families. There were generation gaps between children and their old fathers, as well as between young wives and old husbands. Many of these old husbands grew ill or died, leaving their young widows and children with nothing to support their living. Considering these various circumstances, it is evident that the huge economic disparity creates a sense of hopelessness among poor people in the Eastern District.

Spirit of Fear

Although the Eastern District is mainly a residential area, many public housing estates in Chai Wan and Siu Sai Wan are adjacent to cemeteries. The Mount Collinson has a range of cemeteries, including Cape Collinson Chinese Permanent Cemetery, Holy Cross Roman Catholic Cemetery, Sai Wan War Cemetery, Cape Collinson Muslim Cemetery, Cape Collinson Buddhist Cemetery, and a Crematorium. Thousands of people flock to these zones to worship their ancestors during the “Ching Ming Festival” and “Chung Yeung Festival” every year, and in each of these festivals, crowds appear and serious traffic congestion is created.\(^8\) When residents of public housing estates in these zones open their windows, they inevitably see the cemeteries, the view of which directly leads to an imagination of death.

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\(^8\) In the Chinese culture, worshippers among their ancestors in festivals such as the “Ching Ming Festival” and “Chung Yeung Festival” is regarded as an expression of filial piety of a good son or daughter.
Images of death are very taboo among Chinese people. Most Chinese people in Hong Kong literally avoid mentioning the word “death” and even words that sound similar to it. For example, the sound of the Chinese word “four” is similar to the word “death.” In many residential or commercial buildings, the “fourth floor,” “fourteenth floor,” and other floors with the word “four” simply disappear. The main reason is that the developers do not build them, as they expect no one will buy these “unlucky” floors. For Chinese people, “death” implies separation from those whom they love, and it also connotes a strong fear of uncertainty and insecurity after death. This fear is aggravated by the unusually high rate of suicides in the Eastern District.

Driven by this strong sense of fear, idol worship is popular in the Eastern District, especially in Chai Wan, Siu Sai Wan, and Shau Kei Wan. In the minds of these residents, worshipping idols is equal to bribing supernatural forces in order to buy themselves tranquility. There are at least seventeen registered idol temples in these three zones. Among these temples, the Xuan Du Genies is the biggest and most popular. The idols worshipped in the Xuan Du Genies are various gods controlling the order of ghosts and managing the administration of food distribution in hell. Apart from worshipping those gods, there are also millions of ancestor nameplates in the temple, and special ceremonies are executed on a regular basis to worship them. In short, the physical environment and the high suicide rate of the Eastern District generate a spirit of fear, particularly among the poor people who reside close to the cemeteries.

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Hunger for Hope and Peace

These issues of economic disparity and a spirit of fear are evidenced not only by statistics, but also by personal connections between church members and those in the community. In one situation, church members have gotten to know a widow and her two children who are recipients of services at the church-run community service center. This family is new immigrants from Mainland China, and the husband died once they arrived in Hong Kong. As new immigrants, they are not yet entitled to social security assistance in Hong Kong. The uneducated widow who had to take care of two young children could not find any job in Hong Kong. Realizing they could not help much according to the law, the social worker of the Social Service Department of the Hong Kong Government referred them to the church for emergency food. When the visitation team contacted the family, they found out that they had no bed to sleep on and no heater for the shower.

A second situation relates to the difficulty low-income children have in school. Many poor, working-class families hope that their children can receive proper education in Hong Kong so that they can move up the social ladder in the future. Additionally, these parents are either illiterate or have received minimal education in China, and they have had no education in English. The visitation teams of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church regularly visit these families. On several occasions, while playing with and talking to the children, church members have asked them which subjects they like most and least. Surprisingly, all of these children report that they do not like English. The reason is that they cannot catch up with the pace of learning English in Hong Kong, and their illiterate parents cannot help. The mastery of English is important in Hong Kong because
proficiency in English can give a child better opportunity to enter a good school and secure good employment in the future. To these deprived families, their children also become relatively underprivileged by not learning proper English. As the next generation is unlikely to move up the social ladder, cross-generational poverty seems impossible to change. Their future seems hopeless and helpless.

This hopelessness and helplessness have engendered a strong sense of insecurity and anxiety about the future among the poor. This sense of insecurity is aggravated by the spirit of fear. As mentioned earlier, the proximity of cemeteries to homes and the high suicide rate of the Eastern District generate a spirit of fear in the hearts of these people. To this population, traditional Chinese idol worship seems like a solution. But such real peace will not happen. Jesus said in John 14: 27, “Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, give I to you. Don’t let your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful.” 10 It is only the peace released from the gospel of Jesus that can help these people really overcome their fear.

**The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church**

The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church was established in 2009. In that year, I led a group of one hundred people (most of them leaders) from the mother church, Tung Fook Church, to start this branch church in the Eastern District. The establishment of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church was a fulfillment of the vision God had given to the Tung Fook Church as a whole during a revival in 1998. In that vision, God spoke to the leaders, saying that he had heard the sound of weeping of the prostitutes (idol worshippers),

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10 All biblical quotations are taken from the Word English Bible, unless otherwise noted.
widows, orphans, and deprived people of the Eastern District. God proclaimed that his will was to heal and transform the Eastern District. In order to achieve this, he would build up his church in the Eastern District. God also prophesized that he would send his people to this district to serve these poor people.

During the foundation of the church, the leaders further received three elaborations of the visions from God. First, this new congregation is to be a prayerful and worshipping community that can witness Jesus by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 1:8, Jesus said, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is also to make disciples for Jesus. In Matthew 28:18-21, Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Third, the congregation is to serve the poor. In the story Jesus told in Matthew 25:40, “The King will reply ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

Strategy

Since 2009, the overall strategy of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in the Eastern District has been two-pronged. The first set of steps involves evangelizing the middle-class residents, building them up, and then equipping and empowering them to serve the poor in the same district. At the same time, the church will make use of its
community service center as a platform to serve the poor in order to demonstrate life examples for middle-class congregants.

There are multiple reasons for this strategy. First, middle-class people possess more financial and time resources and have more potential to serve. They are also more educated and can easily be trained and developed as leaders. Second, it is the will of God that those believers who have are to share their resources with those who do not have. The church’s ultimate dream is to cooperate with the Holy Spirit to help the residents of the Eastern District see the presence of God and participate in the subsequent transformation of people’s lives.

Strengths of the Congregation

The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church has three particular strengths. The first one is that the congregation is highly motivated for the purposes of God. About 75 percent of the members of the congregation have become believers within the last six years. This is the result of the church’s continuous evangelistic efforts in the Eastern District since 2009; there has been a powerful presence of God during the formation of our congregation. Prayer and wholehearted worship have become part of the daily lives of those in the congregation. Additionally, because of the gospel, reconciliation has taken place between formerly hostile people and brotherly love has grown among them. People who were previously lukewarm spiritually have drastically changed such that they love spreading the gospel. Joy fills every corner of the church. Life change has given rise to effective testimonies to the friends and relatives of these brothers and sisters, which has resulted in a great deal of growth in the congregation. Today, most members are
spiritually young but energetic, willing to learn more about God and be obedient to the leadership of the church. Meanwhile, the leaders who had followed me to build up the church are spiritually mature and dedicated followers who are willing to commit long term to serving the Eastern District.

The second strength is one of the advantages of the concept of “One Church” described in the introduction of this project. The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church has strong financial and human resources support from the mother church so that it can launch programs or projects on a larger scale than those of many other churches in the Eastern District. This support is particularly important during the developmental stage when the church needs to invest a lot of resources in laying down the foundation, building up the image of the congregation, and piloting and organizing various evangelistic activities in the Eastern District. In this aspect, the leadership of the church finds relatively larger freedom in initiating creative ways of spiritual formation and methods of serving the poor people.

The third strength is the fact that the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church has gradually built up a good network of relationships with other local churches and other non-church partners. There is already a good fellowship among the pastoral staff of various churches in the Eastern District. When we established our Church here, we are invited to participate in this fellowship. This fellowship is an excellent platform for us to develop sincere mutual support with other churches and also from time to time explore opportunities to launch joint programs to serve the needs of the district. Apart from churches, the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church seeks to partner with non-church
organizations in the Eastern District. The community service centers of the Social Service Department of the government have been good partners for the past six years. Meanwhile, the church is also actively working with many non-government organizations (NGO) in the district.

A typical example is St. James Settlement. Before 2009, when church leaders began to consider how to spread the gospel in the Eastern District, they were still strangers to the residents of the district, while St. James Settlement had already been running various centers here for many years. In our first large-scale home visit program to the families of public housing estates in the district, St. James Settlement allowed the members of our church to wear the badges of their voluntary workers during the visitation. This was effective in eliminating the initial barrier between members of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church and the local residents so that relationships could be developed. Since then, the church has continued to develop a good working relationship with St. James Settlement. We also co-organize various evangelistic and social service programs in the Eastern District every year. This local network is constructive in facilitating evangelism in the district.

Challenges of the Congregation

On the other hand, our congregation has four key challenges. The first challenge is that the mother church has been adopting what Kent Carlson and Mike Lueken describe as the “attractive model” of church for many years.\(^{11}\) Between 1998 and 2004,\(^{11}\)

the mother church was successful in attracting people, churched and unchurched, and it grew drastically in number. However, as attention was paid to numerical growth, the congregation was simply not nurtured to be spiritually deep in faith. There is also a trend toward consumerism, both in terms of basic materialism as well as a tendency to choose a church based upon what it provides. When the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church was established in the Eastern District, the leaders were still aggressive in evangelism and community services at the beginning, which represents an attractional approach. But now that the new congregation is growing, its leaders have begun to question whether the church should continue to copy the attractional approach of the mother church. The question at hand is as follows: Should leadership carefully and skillfully lead this new congregation to imitate Jesus and to be his disciples, or allow the existing culture of the mother church to unknowingly shift members toward consumerism? If the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church decides to initiate change, it must consider how to do so without committing the same mistakes mentioned by Carlson and Lueken.12

A second challenge is the spiritual immaturity of the congregation. As mentioned, about 75 percent of the members of the congregation are new Christians needing solid guidance regarding spiritual formation. The leadership must consider how to develop these new believers in spiritual formation, building them up and nurturing them with truth so that they can be real disciples of Jesus, imitating what Jesus did and witnessing Jesus outside the church building. The leadership must determine how to help these primarily

12 Ibid., 68. The authors mention that they as pastors initiated a transition of the church from seeker (attractional) approach to a spiritual formation approach, but they offered no real, viable, attractive alternative way of living, which created a great deal of confusion in the congregation.
middle-class believers grow in their relationship with God so that they will grow in love for God and love for other people, especially the poor people in the Eastern District.

The third challenge is in relation to the two life-stage features of the congregation. The first feature is that most members are busy professionals with white-collar jobs. As they progress in their careers, they need to assume larger responsibilities and face even higher demands for their time, energy, and attention. Many of them work very late every day. Even though most of our brothers and sisters do not enjoy a stressful work life and long working hours, they seem to have little control over it. The popularization of technological tools such as mobile phones, email, and video conferencing has significantly eliminated the space between workers and the workplace, resulting in the expectation that work continues at all hours of the day. This “collapse of space and time” is aggravated by the high-speed, demanding work environment in Hong Kong, which requires a high level of diligence and commitment.\textsuperscript{13} As a result, these brothers and sisters have very little leisure time.

The second life-stage feature is that many are married couples with young kids. In Hong Kong, parents tend to pay excessive attention to all aspects of life with children. Any leisure time is spent pursuing activities with and for their children. These two life-stage features result in these members being rather inactive in church life. Despite this inactivity, these congregants crave a community that can help rejuvenate their spiritual lives. In response to this challenge, the leadership must consider building up a community in which these people can find best support, grow together, and break the

bondage of inactivity in church life so that neighbors can ultimately see Jesus in this community.

The fourth challenge is that most members of the congregation share one or more of the characteristics of “Generation X” as described by Tom Beaudoin. These characteristics include being visually oriented and often narcissistic. However, they long for a living faith and a lived spiritual experience.\textsuperscript{14} Most of the spiritual formation teaching programs of the traditional Chinese churches in Hong Kong, however, tend to be more cognitive. In response to this challenge, the leadership must consider how to guide these spiritually young but sincere brothers and sisters to notice God in their everyday lives, to share the heart of Jesus, particularly with the poor of the Eastern District, and to see Jesus as they serve these people.

\textbf{Conclusion}

The hunger for hope and peace among the poor in the Eastern District seems to lay down a fertile ground for the merciful saving work of God. This also provides an opportunity for the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church to develop a community life in which our newborn, middle-class congregation can be built up and empowered to evangelize the poor through caring for and serving them. The energetic, obedient, and teachable congregation, the church’s extensive local network in the Eastern District, and the strong support of the mother church are notable strengths. The need within the congregation for spiritual growth through a process of encountering God both cognitively and

\textsuperscript{14} Tom Beaudoin, \textit{Virtual Faith} (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 177.
experientially seems to point to a way of community life in which members can see Jesus, be shaped by him, and then witness about him to those outside the church walls.
PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The question, “What is the purpose of the church?” has invited numerous discussions and even debates among theologians for many years. This project supports the understanding that being church involves being a missional church. Many are asking what is meant by the term *missional church*, and whether the concept of missional church applies to the context of Hong Kong. The objective of this chapter is to explore the theological basis for a church to be a missional community. The first section describes the development of the concept of the missional nature of God, *missio Dei*. The second section discusses the main characteristics, namely practices and witnesses, of a missional church. The final section demonstrates the latest ecclesiological proposals regarding how to create a missional culture and to guide a congregation in a missional direction. Meanwhile, all three sections explore to what extent the concept of missional church is applicable to the particular context of this project.
Missio Dei

As Craig Van Gelder confirms, the missio Dei “has now become a shared starting point for various streams of missiology.”¹ The concept of missio Dei dates back to the Willigen world mission conference of 1952 and the work of Georg Vicedom; the concept is summarized by Christopher J. H. Wright, who describes it by saying, “Mission flows from the inner movement of God in personal relationship.”² Since then, there was a change in the way people thought about the nature of mission; rather than mission being a ministry of the church, people began to believe that God is a missionary God and the Church is to participate into his work.³ In other words, mission became an attribute of God’s invitation of the Church into his pre-existing eternal work.⁴

John Stott, in his works, Christian Mission in the Modern World in 1975 and New Issues Facing Christians Today in 1984, reiterated that mission is a God-centered mission. Stott contends that “the primal mission is God’s, for it is he who sent his prophets, his Son, his Spirit. . . . Of these missions the mission of the Son is central, for it was the culmination of the ministry of the prophets, and it embraced within itself as its


climax the sending of the Spirit. . . . Now the Son sends [believers] as he himself was
sent.”⁵ Stott’s contribution was his establishment of the root of mission in God, not
humankind. He also includes social action and service as having the same important place
as evangelism in mission.

Wright further developed Stott’s work. In his book, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible’s Grand Narrative*, Wright discusses the limitation of mission to
only evangelism and social action and extends it to the saving deeds of God in the Bible,
where he could find numerous example of mission.⁶ To Wright, “a missional hermeneutic
of the whole Bible will not become obsessed with only the great mission imperatives,
such as the Great Commission, or be tempted to impose on them an assumed priority of
another (e.g., evangelism or social justice or liberation or ecclesiastical order as the only
‘real’ mission).”⁷ He suggests that to “set those great imperatives within the context of
their foundational indicatives, namely, all that the Bible affirms about God, creation,
human life in its paradox of dignity and depravity, redemption in all its comprehensive
glory, and the new creation in which God will dwell with his people.”⁸

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⁵ John R. W. Stott, *Christian Mission in the Modern World* (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity
Press, 1975), 22, as cited by Rod MacIlvaine, “Selected Case Studies in How Senior Leaders Cultivate


⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.
In the 1980s and 1990s, three key authors emerged writing on missional themes: Francis Dubose, Charles Van Engen, and Darrell Guder. Guder’s book, *Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*, set the stage for the massive interest in missional ecclesiology today. In this work, Guder clearly describes the link between *missio Dei*, the sending action of God, and the nature of the Church:

> We have come to see that mission is not merely an activity of the church. Rather mission is the result of God’s initiative, rooted in God’s purposes to restore and heal creation. “Mission” means “sending,” and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God’s action in human history. . . . We have come to speak of God as a “missionary God.” Thus we have learned to understand the church as a “sent people.”

Wright continues this train of thought:

> Fundamentally, our mission (if it is biblically informed and validated) means our committed participation as God’s people, at God’s invitation and command, in God’s own mission within the history of God’s world for the redemption of God’s creation.

Guder and Wright offer comprehensive insight about the concept of *missio Dei* and missional church.

> In short, mission is related to the very nature of God. God is a God of Trinity and God is a missionary God. God is missionary even before the creation. We know this by seeing what he has done in the past and is now doing in the present. We do not know all of God by ourselves, but it is God who chooses to reveal himself by the creation. The

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creation becomes missionary as it manifests God’s love. God expands this love by building up relationship and making fellowship with the people he created. God is missionary as he is a relational God. After the fall, God continues this mission. According to Lesslie Newbigin, Abraham and Sarah were called in the vocation of Israel as a light and blessing to the nations.\textsuperscript{12} This was a continuation of the mission of God, and the climax of this mission is the Father sending out his own son, Jesus, to die and be resurrected for us. The ministry of Jesus with his disciples equipped the future Church for its mission. Graham Hill emphasizes, “Mission is not just the obligation to gather the church. It is the taking part in the sending of the Son, the missio Dei, with the holistic aim of establishing Christ’s rule over all redeemed creation.”\textsuperscript{13}

The Pentecostal visit of the Holy Spirit gave birth to the Church that was called and empowered to carry on the mission. Hill contends that mission is a “permanent and intrinsic dimension of the church’s life” because the Church is a result of God’s eschatological mission of his redemptive reign; by nature of the Great Commission, the Church exists for mission.\textsuperscript{14} If the Church is missionary by nature, then participating in God’s mission is the responsibility of the whole Church, involving all of God’s people. Therefore, Craig Van Gelder and Dwight J. Zscheile conclude, “Missional church is


\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 266-267.
fundamentally about identity – about being the church – developing and deepening the Christian identity of every disciple must be at the forefront the church’s focus.”

The above narrative about the missio Dei construct provides a profound encouragement for the Church to be missional church. As MacIlvaine points out, if God the Father is already at work, pouring instances of common grace on his creatures, and if God the Holy Spirit is already at work convicting the world of its need for saving grace, then believers can have confidence in two facts. The first one is that God has preceded the Church in mission. The second one is that the Church’s role is not to solely bear a heavy burden; God is doing this already. The role of believers is to prayerfully discern where and how God is working in his specific location and come alongside him with risk-taking faith in the work he is already doing. These two facts are particularly relevant to the position of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in the context of Eastern District of Hong Kong as described in Chapter 1. God the Holy Spirit is already working in this world, and he gives vision to the church’s leadership and invites the congregation to participate in his work of evangelizing, serving, and witnessing about him in the Eastern District.

Furthermore, if God is continuously at work in extending his common grace and saving grace as part of his mission, then believers can extend themselves in common

17 Ibid.
18 Ibid.
grace in compassionate service to the needy, as well, as they seek to fulfill the gospel mission Jesus has already given in the Eastern District. Bosch states rightly that “mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus.” The missio Dei construct provides a powerful encouragement to the members of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in their missional commitment in the Eastern District. This commitment includes four aspects. First, it encourages them to audaciously cross the cultural boundary and enter into the local cultures of the people in the Eastern District. Second, it empowers them to live an authentic lifestyle together with these people and to find common ground in their daily lives without compromising their own faith. Third, it empowers them to gain the trust of these people by serving and helping them genuinely. Fourth, having gained trust, they will be able to lovingly challenge their idolatrous practices and introduce the story of Jesus.

**Key Characteristics of Missional Church**

There are two key characteristics of missional church – practices and witnesses. Practices and witnesses can never be a set of evangelistic programs or a series of activities. They should be a response to the missionary God and ultimately the missional culture of a community. Hill writes, “The missio Dei has important consequences for the missional activities of the church. This includes the need for the church to cease focusing merely on the activities of mission. Instead, it should recognize that gospel proclamation,

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19 Ibid., 29.

work of justice and compassion, church health, growth, and planting, and so on, are all
grounded in and directed toward the *missio Dei.*”  

**Practices**

To Van Gelder and Zscheile, a missional church should have a set of practices, patterns of behavior, and concrete acts – not just doctrines or rules to follow – that shape Christian life, imaginations, and discipleship of that congregation.  

These visible practices are to be made with habits of heart and mind and openness to the Holy Spirit, not only among the leadership but also among the members of the congregation. In essence, there should be a missional culture with sufficient space for the Holy Spirit to work in a missional church. It is worth emphasizing here that these visible practices of a missional church cannot be reduced to “missional activities or programs.” Bosch writes,

> Mission is not narrowed down to an activity of making individuals new creatures, of providing them with “blessed assurance” so that come what may they will be “eternally saved.” Mission involves from the beginning and as a matter of course, making new believers sensitive to the needs of others, opening their eyes and hearts to recognize injustice, suffering, oppression and the plight of those who have fallen by the wayside.

To Van Gelder and Zscheile, the Church is to serve in the world as three symbols. The first symbol is a “sign” that the redemptive reign of God is already fully present. The second one is a “foretaste” that the eschatological future of the redemptive reign has already begun. The third one is an “instrument” under the Holy Spirit to bring that

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21 Hill, *Salt, Light and a City*, 267.

22 Ibid.

redemptive reign to bear on every dimension of one’s life. Unfortunately, however, Van Gelder and Zscheile do not provide any concrete examples regarding how the Church can practically demonstrate any of these symbols to the world.

Kenda Creasy Dean, on the other hand, proposes three more visible practices for a highly devoted missional community that seeks to cultivate consequential faith. First, the church should be welcoming and it should help newcomers to become familiar with church languages and practices. Second, the members of the church should confess their identity as Christians. Third, they should outreach to their adjacent communities, offer hospitality to their neighbors, and pray for them.

Dean’s suggestions are very practical for the work of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in the context of Eastern District. Incorporating Dean’s practices would mean a commitment to regular prayer and intercession for the needs of the adjacent area and for the church itself as a missional outpost to serve their neighbors. It would mean a regular commitment to live a missional lifestyle among members’ respective spheres of influence (colleagues, friends, family members, and relatives). The church could also have a regular, outgoing commitment to care for and serve the poor in their local area. The ultimate goal of these practices is to facilitate a process, driven by the Holy Spirit, in which a missional culture can be built up in the church.

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Witnesses

Newbigin proposes that the life of a missional congregation should be an effective hermeneutic of the gospel.\(^2^6\) He suggests that the Church is chosen and called to witness to God’s purposes for all humanity, and that this calling is not a privilege but a responsibility. Newbigin is seen as the father of missional ecclesiology.\(^2^7\) Having spent years in India as a missionary and returning to England, he was shocked to realize that the West had entered a postmodern, post-Christendom era, and was now a difficult mission field than India.\(^2^8\) Newbigin proposes an important tension in terms of being culturally sensitive but radically countercultural at the same time. This concept is valuable for those who consider the West to be their mission field. However, this concept is not concrete enough to suggest any practical steps for a missional church to live out the gospel in the context of Hong Kong. Because Hong Kong has never experienced an era of Christendom, Newbigin’s ideas are less applicable.

John Howard Yoder and Darrell Guder, on the other hand, propose a more helpful concept of witness as a characteristic of an incarnational missional community.\(^2^9\) In Guder’s view, the Church should be an incarnational mission – a witnessing community, not individual, to the world with demonstration of, invitation to, and initiation into the


\(^{2^7}\) MacIlvaine, “Selected Case Studies,” 22.

\(^{2^8}\) Ibid., 22.

Kingdom of God. Guder asserts that witness includes a wide range of meanings. According to the Gospels of Luke and John, it is “to present the eyewitness evidence to Jesus so that people might believe the claims of Christ and enter into a personal experience of His salvation” by faith. The Apostle Paul, on the other hand, called for the formation of Christian communities that would focus on leading lives worthy of their calling. This calls for a witnessing community with members embracing a lifestyle that demonstrates Jesus to their neighbors in their daily testimonies.

Alan Roxburgh delineates an even more concrete witness approach that a missional church can adopt. To Roxburgh, the Holy Spirit is breaking the boundaries of how the contemporary church should be; he contends that the church can no longer contain Holy Spirit’s work in the world. Roxburgh therefore suggests a more radical approach based on the teaching with Luke 10:1-12. The objective is to form communities of hope. The radical witness approach Roxburgh proposes includes five key aspects.

First, the community is to go local into the ordinary lives of the people in their neighborhoods by avoiding going back to their homogeneous networks. Second, the community is to give up the attractional approach and any evangelism program involving sending out people with “prepacked baggage” (that is, preconceived notions about people, including findings from market research, methods of assessing the readiness of someone

30 Guder, The Continuing Conversion of the Church, 55-58.
31 Ibid., 56.
32 Ibid., 58.
33 Alan Roxburgh, Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 117-118.
for a next step, and conceiving programs to offer to them).\textsuperscript{34} Roxburgh is convinced that this “baggage” not only stops the church from seeing the needs of people to whom they outreach, but they also blind them to being open to what God is doing.\textsuperscript{35} He proposes the humanization of the relationship between believers and the people of their neighborhoods. Third, the community is to settle into and to plant the root of the congregation in their neighborhoods. Roxburgh explains, “There could be nothing more powerful as a witness to the alternative story of God’s future than Christians who take this vow to stability and make their own neighborhoods the primary location of their lives.”\textsuperscript{36} Fourth, the community is to “eat what is set before them” by entering into the world of their neighborhoods and sharing their daily lives.\textsuperscript{37} Fifth, the community is to connect to the people by listening to their stories and engaging them to the bigger stories of God and, even further, the unpredictable experiment of walking with Jesus.\textsuperscript{38}

All of this means a commitment of a community of believers to the intentional development of long-term relationship and friendship with their neighborhoods. It means a commitment to a process of ongoing testimonies by living lives of loving God and neighbor so that the people of the neighborhoods can start to feel, know, and experience Jesus. It also means a commitment in ministering to the poor and healing the brokenness of humanity. It means following the lead of the Holy Spirit and becoming a repentant and

\textsuperscript{34} Roxburgh, \textit{Missional}, 126.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., 126.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., 170-171.

\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 172.

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 173-174.
forgiving community to proclaim repentance and forgiveness of sins. It means a commitment to reconciliation, breaking down barriers, and making Christ-followers.

In summary, the most salient characteristics of a missional church are practices and witnesses. These can never be a set of evangelistic programs or a series of activities, but they must be a response to a missionary God. This process, driven by the Holy Spirit, will involve changes and transition. Therefore, leadership is required to anchor these changes and transition in the church. The final section of this chapter presents various proposed leadership approaches to creating a missional culture as well as to guiding the congregation in a missional direction.

Leadership Approaches to Create a Missional Culture

Various theologians and church practitioners have presented ideas regarding leading a congregation in the direction of missional church. Before proceeding to this discussion, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the development of the worldview of Chinese churches and their understanding of missional church in Hong Kong. This provides background for the consideration of leading the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church towards a missional church paradigm.

Worldview of Chinese Churches in Hong Kong

For a long time, Chinese churches in Hong Kong were heavily influenced by the dualist theology of Watchman Nee and Wang Ming Dao.39 Most of the leaders in the

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39 徐承恩，《基督教與香港貧窮問題》，《中國神學研究院期刊》，第 35 期（2003 年 7 月），Tsui Shing Yan, “Christianity and the Problem of Poverty in Hong Kong,” Chinese Graduate School of
mainstream evangelist and fundamentalist Chinese churches saw the relationship between the Church and the world (society) as opposite and even antagonistic. The local church was seen as a spiritual body that should only care for spiritual matters. On the other hand, the world was viewed as a material realm that has nothing to do with life after death. Some smaller churches even contended that the world is controlled by Satan and is therefore basically evil. In hopes of reaching a decaying world beyond redemption, they were focused on evangelism alone. It was thought that the Church should act like the Ark of Noah to save as many souls as possible in the time of the Great Flood.

Within this worldview, social care and service to the poor were seriously questioned. This tide slowly began to change after the Lausanne Covenant in 1974. The Lausanne Covenant emphasized the dual importance of evangelism and social responsibility of the Church. After this, the Chinese churches in Hong Kong gradually moved from seeing the world as a realm of the devil to viewing it as God’s creation. The world is full of evil. However, the Church is not to be against the world itself but rather the evil of the world. God fulfills his will through both the Church and the world. The ultimate objective of salvation is the fulfillment of God’s will within creation. Therefore, the Church has a responsibility to care for society (the world). Beginning in 1974, many evangelical Chinese church leaders began to search for opportunities to care for the poor.

However, the concept of missional church is still unfamiliar to many Chinese church leaders in Hong Kong. Some leaders even misunderstand it as encouraging more

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*Ibid., 7.*


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believers to be overseas missionaries. Also, according to a recent study, the mode of evangelistic activities of most Hong Kong churches remains attractional, and only few of them adopt a go-and-share model or lifestyle evangelism. However, there seems to be a slow trend among the leaders of some larger churches that are beginning to discuss and try to implement the concept of missional church. The present situation in the context of Hong Kong confirms the views of many theologians and practitioners who are writing about missional church.

Leadership and Culture

Among the prominent thinkers and writers of the missional church movement, there is general agreement that leadership is a crucial element of a missional church. Many books and articles propose ways for church leaders to guide their congregations to the God’s missional direction. Hill suggests a reflection and self-questioning approach. He is convinced that missional churches need leaders who are continuously reflective in their working for the mission and the Kingdom of God. These leaders need to always ask


44 See, for example, Hill, Salt, Light and a City, 258; Mary Kate Morse, Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2008), 33; and J. R. Woodward, Creating a Missional Culture: Equipping the Church for the Sake of the World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 74-74.
themselves questions such as whether they are leading the church to obey God’s mission, to glorify God, and to discover more insights about the mission of God.\textsuperscript{45} This concept of an ongoing reflective practice is important in the context of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church because its leaders and members need to continuously review and adjust church practices with a heart that is sensitive to the Holy Spirit.

Mark Branson and Juan Martinez focus on ethnic and cultural approach in a multi-cultural congregation. They suggest that leaders should fully understand two facts about their congregation when they are leading members in a missional direction. The first one is that each congregation is heavily influenced by relational, organizational, and care-giving patterns of the church’s ethnic and cultural background. The second fact is that each church’s missional formation is affected by how the members’ cultural backgrounds influence the ways they interact with the strangers.\textsuperscript{46} By understanding the complexities of the ethnic reality as well as cultural and linguistic boundaries, the leaders need “to be particularly sensitive to the complexities of the communication so that [they] can strengthen relationships across these differences”\textsuperscript{47} This will help the leaders build up a missiological framework that embraces the identity of the congregation and allows them to be receptive to God’s work in that community.

The only area of Branson’s and Martinez’s approach that may be applicable in the context of Hong Kong is that the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is building up the middle-

\textsuperscript{45} Hill, \textit{Salt, Light and a City}, 268.

\textsuperscript{46} Mark Branson and Juan Martinez, \textit{Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities} (Downers Grove, IL: Inter Varsity Press, 2011), 69.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid., 123.
class people of the Eastern District to serve and evangelize the poor within the same
district. This may involve a certain degree of cross-cultural interactions, and Branson and
Martinez are helpful in highlighting the complexity of a multi-cultural reality. The two
authors offer a reminder that being culturally sensitive is important; this is true in the
context of Chinese culture in Hong Kong where relationship is very important.

Mary Kate Morse proposes a space creation approach for the Holy Spirit to
work.\textsuperscript{48} She urges church leaders to properly make use of their power to leave room for
the power of the Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit is given room to speak, it can direct
the congregation towards being used by God for the fulfillment of his mission in the
world. Morse states, “We are first fruits of God’s Kingdom. If we cannot create space for
peace, for re-creation, for dignity for the fruits of the Spirit, where will people find
God?”\textsuperscript{49}

Morse provides many stories in her book. However, there is a particular
suggestion for creating space for the Holy Spirit to lead the mission, which is very
applicable to the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. Morse recommends a practice called
“Spirit Led and Bottom Up” for planning missional initiatives. The practice takes place at
a meeting that is divided into two parts. The first part involves a time of prayerfully
listening to God, allowing the Holy Spirit to guide the leaders in their planning process.
The leaders should anticipate that the results of this first part will include rough ideas and
broad images. The second part of the meeting involves a brainstorming session based on

\textsuperscript{48} Morse, \textit{Making Room for Leadership}, 200-203.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 201.
the rough ideas gleaned from the first part, as well as a survey of the church’s activities and relevant figures from the past year. The results of the second part may include many creative ideas.

The idea is that the Holy Spirit is provided with space to play a key leading role in the leaders’ planning process. The scope of this practice can be extended to the congregation when participants are invited to be silent and to listen to the Holy Spirit in his direction to the congregation. Paper may be provided for participants to record images, Bible verses, or ideas that can be collected as input to be given to the leaders of the church.

Another missional church author, J. R. Woodward, believes that a leader is an equipper and cultural architect. He therefore proposes what he calls a polycentric leadership approach, “where leaders interrelate and incarnate the various purposes of Christ.” To Woodward, these polycentric leaders – apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher (mentioned in Ephesians 4) – are crucial in cultivating an essential environment to equip the Church for the work of mission to the world. The apostle makes disciples and encourages the church to thrive and rest in God’s mission. The prophet calls disciples to liberation from sin through the healing experience of spiritual disciplines. The evanglist assists the community to become welcoming to the lost through hospitality and sharing God’s story with others. The pastor nurtures a healing community through the practices of confession and peacemaking, promoting a reconciling

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50 Woodward, Creating a Missional Culture, 61.

51 Ibid., 60.
community. The teacher cultivates an ethos of learning by encouraging people to participate in sacred assemblies for equipping and future-oriented living.

These polycentric leaders cooperate with each other to cultivate the whole church in diverse ways for the mission of God. Woodward explains that when we “reflect on the social Trinity and allow our understanding of the relational nature of God to shape our approach to leadership, we will become more interdependent, communal, relational, participatory, self-surrendering and self-giving.”

Nevertheless, Woodward remarks that although a more bottom-up and participatory approach is adopted by the leaders to make decisions within a ministry, decisions that affect the whole congregation should still be more centralized.

Woodward’s approach is insightful. However, it carries both potential risk and opportunity. The risk is that the church may be messy. As Akerlund argues, the over emphasis on participation in leadership may undermine any meaningful discussion about leadership because if everything is leadership, nothing is leadership. The polycentric leadership concept requires a high degree of trust to work together well, and this is usually a result of long relationship building. This issue is particularly relevant in the Chinese context of Hong Kong where relationship is especially crucial in completing tasks. However, this approach also affords the church an opportunity to be influenced by its various equipping gifts and voices. Meanwhile, it helps move the church from an

52 Ibid., 89.
53 Ibid., 215-216.
egocentric, controlling, and “strongman” type of leadership to more fully trust the Holy Spirit who works in the life of the congregation.55

An adjusted version of Woodward’s approach could be adopted within the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. First, the pastor-in-charge can cascade the decision-making power relevant to a ministry to the leader of that ministry, but retain decision-making power for decisions related to the whole church. Second, the pastor would select leaders according to their gifts as discerned. Third, the pastor could encourage the ministry leaders to try creative ideas while allowing for mistakes. Fourth, as the relationship of the leading team is extremely crucial in this approach, efforts should be made to nurture it.

Conclusion

All in all, the concept of missio Dei emphasizes that the initiator of the loving mission for the redemption of the creation is the Father who sends his Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. This loving mission is evident in the Bible, particularly in the ministry of Jesus through the Holy Spirit. As Brian Edgar points out, as the body of Christ, the Church is invited to participate in the work that the Triune God is already doing: “Those who have come to know the life of God through the missionary activity of the Son are themselves given the privilege of becoming ‘co-missionaries with God.’”56

Missio Dei is a starting point for missional church that is called to work alongside with God to complete this mission. In response to the missionary God, the Church has a responsibility to be missional and adopt practices and witnesses that point to a

55 Woodward, Creating a Missional Culture, 212-213.

community lifestyle and culture that engages with the world but remains different from it. To be such a witnessing community, a congregation has to go through a cultural shift in order to be missional. Change will undoubtedly involve transition. In this transition time, particularly in the context of Hong Kong where the general understanding of missional church concept is still slow, the role of leadership is especially crucial. The ensuing chapters address the biblical and theological foundations of a witnessing community as well as ways of implementing this community in the context of the Eastern District in Hong Kong.
CHAPTER 3

A THEOLOGY OF MISSION:
COMMUNITY, PRACTICE, AND WITNESSES

As mentioned in the last chapter, the Church has the obligation to be missional. That is, the Church ought to adopt practices and witnesses that engage with the world while it remains different from the world. This inevitably leads to some questions: What is a witnessing community? What is God’s intention for a witnessing community? What features should a community have in order to become missional? To be such a witnessing community, a congregation must go through a transition. What type of missional leadership is required to guide this transition? This chapter establishes the biblical and theological foundation of a witnessing community and the features of missional leadership that are applicable at Tung Fook Chai Wan Church.

Community

What is a community? According to the Oxford Living Dictionary, a community is “a group of people living in the same place or having characteristics in common.”¹ This

word comes from the Latin *communitas*, which is derived from the root word *communis* or “common.” The closest Greek word in the New Testament Bible is *koinonia* (*κοινωνία*).

*Koinonia* embraces at least four meanings. First, according to New Testament Greek Lexicon, it means common unity in purposes and interests. 

*Koinonia* is a derivative of *koinos* (*κοινός*), which means “common.” When members of a community united in common experience share their joy and pain together, a bond is created which not only overcomes brokenness and spirit of division, but also empowers and encourages these members to exist in mutually beneficial relationship. The ultimate objective is for all community members to gain wholeness, as they relate to their environment and to God. The second meaning is participation and relationship. *Koinoneo* (*κοινονεω*) means “partner” or “joint-owner.” But according to Jeff Kloha, *koinonia* possesses even deeper meaning. In addition to the members of a community participating in something in

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6 Ibid.

common, there is a close relationship among them all.\textsuperscript{8} The third meaning is sharing. Koinoneo also means “sharer.”\textsuperscript{9} A community is characterized by the spirit of contribution and generous and tangible sharing among its members, instead of selfishness.\textsuperscript{10} The fourth meaning is that it is action-oriented.\textsuperscript{11} Koinonia indicates a strong commitment to communing and sharing.\textsuperscript{12} This implies that the members of a community take action not only for the benefit of those inside the community, but also outside of it. Fellowship is not an end in itself, but a means to gather a witnessing community.

In short, a community in the New Testament is characterized by a bond of unity based on common experience and purpose. All members participate in this community and maintain close relationship among themselves. This community of people are action-oriented, meaning that they not only share generously within this community, but they also extend their good relationship and help to those outside the community. It “is a place


\textsuperscript{9} New Testament Lexicon, New American Standard, s. v. “koinoneo.”

\textsuperscript{10} The Message Church, “Our Core Values: Koinonia.”


\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
where believers connect with each other on a soul level; in doing so, they spur each other on to a deeper relationship with God” and become his committed followers.13

In their article, “Relational Leadership and the Missional Church,” J. Breedt and C. Nemandt point out that the “journey of discovering the community and its relationship in the Trinity, as well as community and relationship of the Trinity to creation, sets an example and standard of who and what the church should be.”14 In order to explore more about the intention of God for a witnessing community, it is appropriate to examine the nature of God and his relationship to the development of various communities in the Bible and the history of the Church.

Community in the Old Testament

At the very beginning, before the creation, “God has already existed in triune community.”15 That is the reason why many scholars believe that the koinonia between Christians is rooted in the life of Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit.16 Bennet observes that “although the Trinity is not explicitly captioned in the Bible, it is implied throughout all


Scripture (Genesis 1:1-2, 26; Luke 1:35-37; John 14:16-26; John 17; and Revelation 1:4-6).”\textsuperscript{17} These passages display harmonious “actions between the three persons of God. God the Father is the One who sustains and from whom human beings derive their purpose. God the Son is the One and Only Redeemer of human beings. God the Holy Spirit is the One who enlightens, comforts, and sanctifies them.”\textsuperscript{18}

In the creation, the Trinity God makes human beings in their image (Genesis 1:26), and therefore, we were created with an intrinsic capacity and inner urge to connect with each other. At first, it was a community between God and humankind. Later, with the creation of Eve, it became a community between God and humankind and also between human beings. After the Fall, sin destroyed human beings’ capacity of building community with one another (Genesis 3:8), and henceforth, tragedies went on from generation to generation; Adam and Eve shifted the blame (Genesis 3:12-13), and Cain and Abel quarreled and ended with one brother killing another (Genesis 4:5-8).\textsuperscript{19}

God’s redemption plan of such a fallen world and its brokenness always involves building and rebuilding community as a venue of growth.\textsuperscript{20} Noah and his family were a chosen community of eight people, and this community was strategically placed on the earth for God’s purpose of paving the way for the rise of his people.\textsuperscript{21} Moses chose and

\textsuperscript{17} Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Group (Part 1).”

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{19} Campus Crusade for Christ, “The Role of Community in Discipleship.”

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{21} Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Group (Part 1).”
trained leaders who were fearing God and appointed them over communities (Exodus 18:21-26). This practice of responsibility delegation and community formulation was effectively passed down over generations. During the exile, Daniel and his three friends formed a community of mutual commitment, encouragement, and accountability (Daniel 1:17, 2:17-18). God used this community to witness himself through the strong commitment of its members to their faith and to the working out of truth in the Gentile kingdoms throughout a long period of time.

In fact, it is God’s plan for the nation of Israel, as his chosen people, to serve as a big witnessing community to testify about him in front of the whole world. He called them a “kingdom of priests” (Exodus 19:6), and he intended that people of the surrounding nations would be able to get a picture of who God is through the quality of these people’s community life. Therefore, in Deuteronomy 26-27, the Israelites worshipped together as a community. In Exodus 12-13, they celebrated the Passover as a community. In Leviticus 16, they enjoyed Yom Kippur as a community. In Deuteronomy 31:10, Moses commanded that God’s Word be read to the Israelites as a community, and this practice was restored in Nehemiah 8 and 2 Chronicles 34:29-33. In Numbers 26,

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Campus Crusade for Christ, “The Role of Community in Discipleship.”
Moses organized this big witnessing community first by tribe and then by family in order to foster the interconnectedness among the members.26

In Deuteronomy 28, God promised blessings to them if they obeyed him and curses if they did not.27 Therefore, the whole community was held responsible for the sin of Achan (Joshua 7:24), and Joshua and other leaders of the community had to seek God’s favor together.28 The book of Judges describes a repeated cycle of communal sin and communal crying out to God, who then raised up judges to restore his people and bring them revival.29

In short, God intends a community to be his witness. His plan is to restore the capacity of human beings to build community with him and among themselves. Such capacity was destroyed by sin, and it is God’s intention to redeem human beings for it. Such a plan is revealed even more fully in the New Testament era.

Community in the New Testament

The concept of community was further extended and elements of discipleship and spiritual transformation became more obvious in the New Testament era. The ultimate purpose is witness for God in the world. The incarnation represents the fact that the Trinitarian, communal, and relational God is manifested in this world. As the body of Christ, the Church is obliged to witness the nature of God to the world. The Lord’s Prayer

26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
begins with “Our Father,” indicating a strong sense of the communal nature of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus developed his disciples in a community setting in which these disciples learned, prayed, ministered, and grew together. He seldom spent time with just one disciple, but either the twelve or the three, “even in his most significant moments such as the Transfiguration and the Garden of Gethsemane.”30 As a community, Jesus journeyed with these disciples from place to place, training them through on-the-job assignments and debriefings to expect them to be able to take up his role and responsibility one day to spread the gospel throughout the whole world.31

The Pentecost marked the beginning of the active spawning of communities with a sense of overflowing joy (Acts 2:46), a “desire to come together frequently (2:44, 46), eating together and worshipping (2:46-47), and the readiness for unreserved commitment to one another in a shared common life.”32 About three thousand people were converted in one day (Acts 2: 41). With the multitudes of people, it became impossible for the apostles to meet these new believers individually. Therefore, the only feasible way to resolve this issue was that they came together and formed many small communities, and the apostles visited these communities one after the other to teach them Word.33

30 Ibid.
31 Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Group (Part 1).”
32 Campus Crusade for Christ, “The Role of Community in Discipleship.”
33 Ibid.
The Apostle Paul also developed his disciples in community. When he launched his mission trip, he traveled with people like Barnabas, Luke, Titus, and Timothy.\(^{34}\) The beginning of Paul’s letters always includes many names, and his letters were addressed to and read collectively to different communities.\(^{35}\) In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul clearly stated to the believers that they were “all interconnected as the body of Christ,” and therefore it was “not possible for them to be free-standing and isolated entities.”\(^{36}\)

Community of Discipleship, Spiritual Transformation, and Witness

In the New Testament era, discipleship, spiritual transformation, and witness of a community are always interwoven together. An online dictionary states that “witness” means “to see, hear or know by personal presence and perception.”\(^{37}\) In Greek, witness (\(\mu\acute{a}r\nu\varsigma\)) is a transliteration of the word “martyr” because “martyrs were witnesses of Christ, of his death and resurrection,” and “of their future with Christ in heaven.”\(^{38}\) In essence, witness is a lifestyle of faith that is demonstrating the living Christ to others. Such witness is to be made in a community setting. Discipleship is a process where members of a community “help one another to become better followers of Christ.”\(^{39}\) Such discipleship will engender spiritual transformation, which means character growth or life

\(^{34}\) Ibid.

\(^{35}\) Ibid.


\(^{39}\) Campus Crusade for Christ, “The Role of Community in Discipleship.”
change. A meaningful witness can be deemed as a result of discipleship and spiritual transformation in a community. Discipleship will bring about life change and character development, which is a manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit and a strong testimony of the living Christ.

In the New Testament period, community was a powerful place that could impact life change or character growth of the members. An article published by Campus Crusade for Christ entitled, “The Role of Community in Discipleship,” contends that this process of character growth in the New Testament period involved three aspects. The first aspect is growth in authenticity and grace. Acts 2:46-47 states, “Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” This is a vivid picture of a safe place where members of a community could genuinely express themselves, explore, question, be lovingly challenged, celebrate, fail, repent, experience affirmation and grace, and learn to rely on the Holy Spirit for transformation.

The second aspect is correction. The death of Ananias and Sapphira reminded and even warned the whole community of the importance of holiness and integrity in front of

The third aspect is reconciliation. Jesus challenged his disciples to involve several others, or even the whole community, to win over a brother who sinned against another follower so that a reconciliation could be achieved (Matthew 18:13-17). James encouraged believers of a community to confess their sins to each other and pray for each other’s healing (James 5:16). Paul also urged the believers to be a loving community that would embrace a struggling believer (Romans 15:1-2).

In his book, *A Community of Character*, Stanley Hauerwas comments on the witness of these life changes: “The corporate life of believers shapes the behavior of individual Christians so that their lives together witness to the truth and power of the gospel.” Relationships in the community in which members were forgiven, accepted, and helped to flourish demonstrated God’s grace and enabled people not just to hear the gospel but also to see it. Jesus commanded his disciples to be the light of the world (Matthew 5:13-16). Jesus said that when people saw the unity and mutual love of a  

42 Ibid.  
43 Ibid.  
44 Ibid.  
45 Ibid.  
46 Ibid.  
48 Campus Crusade for Christ, “The Role of Community in Discipleship.”
community, they would recognize that they were Jesus’ disciples and that Jesus was really sent by the Father (John 17:23). Paul urged believers to be shining like bright stars (Philippians 2:15) and reflecting the glory of God (2 Corinthians 3:18).49 This was to be done by the practice of love, acceptance, compassion, honesty (Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9), and honor (Galatians 3:28) – all taking place in a community so that people could see this lifestyle as a sharp contrast with that of the world.50

The reconciliation captioned above includes not only that among the members of a community but also that between God and the world. Rau argues that “Christ is living in and through us (John 14:20; John 17:23; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 1:27), and we, in community, are the hands and feet of Jesus in the world.”51 A community not only witnesses through demonstration of God’s love, but it also mediates it through the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:18).52 In Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-12, Jesus sent his disciples in small communities twice to outreach to their neighbors, to enter into the strangers’ houses, stay with them, eat and drink with them, serve them, heal their sicknesses, drive out their demons, listen to their stories, and share the gospel with them. Jesus also shared with his disciples his “a cup of cold water” vision, with which he urged them to serve the needy (Matthew 25:34-40).


50 Ibid.

51 Rau, “Living the Bible in Community.”

52 Macy, “Community: God’s Design for Growth.”
According to the historical record, the early Christians were indeed very generous in sharing what they had with those in need. The apostolic community considered “remembering the poor” (Galatians 2:10) to be among its most basic moral imperatives, and this generosity served as a beautiful witness to the society of the time.\(^{53}\) It was also the various witness communities in the early church period that were ambassadors of love, bringing deep care, God’s compassion, and healing power into this broken world. As a result, “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47). It was also these communities which acted as outpost from which God’s love freely flew in the world and changed the world.\(^{54}\)

**Community in Church History**

Several instances of Christian community in church history can encourage us toward life together today. St. Benedict of Nursia was extremely active in his efforts to aid the poor.\(^{55}\) The rule of Benedict emphasized that community service to others (Matthew 25:34-40) is a way to do to others as we would do to Christ. As they served others, members of community could recognize God in those whom they served.\(^{56}\) This was done in two ways. First, in their community life together and service, members could experience spiritual fruit (Galatians 6:22-23) during their spiritual journey. Second, they


\(^{55}\) *Christian Worldview Journal*, “The Church and the Poor: Historical Perspective.”

could experience the joy of receiving and using spiritual gifts to build up the body of Christ and to reach out to help the needy.57

John Calvin (1509-1564) established communities whose members regularly prayed, studied the Scripture, and reached out to serve and evangelize the native French of his time.58 John Wesley (1703-1791) and his brother formed a community called the “Holy Club,” in which the members committed in “personal growth, accountability, spiritual stewardship, doing so by bearing one another’s burdens and speaking the truth in love.”59 Eventually, the members experienced significant life change by the Holy Spirit. These types of small communities became a key tool for spiritual revival in the Wesleyan movement that largely transformed English society.60 Later, the Puritan weekly small communities were “powerfully used by God to lay the foundation for spiritual growth, renewal, and great awakenings” in American society.61

Summary

Several observations about God’s will for a witnessing community can be obtained throughout the above survey of community development in the Old and New Testaments as well as church history. First, it is God’s intention for a community to

57 Ibid.

58 Bennett, “A Brief History of Small Group (Part 1).”

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.
witness to him in the world. A witnessing community is therefore a legitimate vehicle to be used by God to achieve his purpose in the world.

Second, a witnessing community is to have a practice of being open to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is a place for the incarnation of the Trinity and relational God who reveals his heart and plan to the members of a community. Therefore, space should always be opened to the Holy Spirit every time the community gathers.

Third, a witnessing community is a place where discipleship and spiritual transformation are practiced. The common purpose is that of nurturing whole-hearted Christ followers through intensive interaction, fostering loving relationships, and the renewing work of the Holy Spirit. In this way, lives are changed, mindsets are transformed, and character is developed. As a result and even throughout the process, people of the world will be able to see the living Christ in such community.

Fourth, a witnessing community is to have action-oriented practices. The transformation of a community to be missional never begins with an understanding of the community’s being but rather with its doing.62 In taking missional actions, the community is transformed.63

Fifth, a witnessing community is to be outwardly focused. It is destined to be boundary-breaking, wall-demolishing, and outreaching. It seeks to enter into its neighborhood, to live with the neighbors, to share with poor, and to genuinely help those in need.

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62 Akerlund, “Missional Leadership.”

63 Ibid.
A witnessing community should possess the above features in order to become missional, and therefore a transition process is needed for a congregation to migrate in a missional direction. In view of the context of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, it is important to consider what kind of missional leadership is required to lead the congregation in such a direction. The next section of this chapter addresses this topic.

**Missional Leadership**

In Chapter 2, it was mentioned that the concept of missional church is still not familiar to many Chinese church leaders. There is, however, a slow movement among a few large church leaders in a missional direction. In this particular environment, leadership is crucial in guiding a congregation for towards missional purposes. A survey of relevant literature about missional leadership summarizes some useful leadership approaches in three points. First, there should be an ongoing reflective leadership practice with sensitivity to both the culture and relationships of the congregation as well as the leading of the Holy Spirit. Second, there should be an intentional creation of space for the Holy Spirit to work among the people in relation to missional direction. Third, there should be a communal, relational, and participatory approach in formulating the missional direction of the congregation.

In his article, “Missional Leadership: A Critical Review of the Research Literature,” Truls Akerlund discusses several authors and theologians who are thinking and writing about missional church. Akerlund references Craig Van Gelder, who
contends that missional leadership is always provisional and contextual. Akerlund summarizes Elton’s and Guder’s arguments in this aspect in the following three points: first, leaders in the Bible led in different ways according to the special situation of their particular time; second, the contextualization of various witness communities in different locations in the New Testament largely influenced their respective structures of leadership; and third, missional leadership will manifest in different forms in accordance with their particular contexts and thus, when these contexts change, the respective leadership will also change. Akerlund also confesses that “it is evident from the present review that research on missional leadership to a great extent is a Western undertaking.”

In this connection, it is appropriate to look into the particular context of Hong Kong before a meaningful discussion is achieved in regards to what type of missional leadership the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church needs.

Hong Kong Context

The current literature about missional leadership generates deep reflection on what and how churches and their leadership should be in view of the deconstruction of Christendom and the postmodern era. However, this phenomenon seems applicable only to North America and Europe, but not to Asia, and particularly not to Hong Kong. In fact,  

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66 Ibid., 34.
Christendom was never a reality in Hong Kong, and therefore the post-Christendom plight and the legacy of Christendom does not exist here.

Meanwhile, many current books and articles about church suggest localized, small witnessing communities as a trend of church in the future. In such circumstances, missional leaders are advised to lead their communities in this direction. However, in Hong Kong, there is a polarized situation among the churches. On the one hand, a large number of churches function as middle-class “social clubs” that possess abundant resources but refuse to embrace the poor. Nor are they willing to enter into their neighborhoods to witness to Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there are Christian communities that are whole-heartedly devoted to serving the poor, but they face serious shortages in resources and some of them have to struggle for survival. For this reason, the “One Church” concept has been developed, and, according to the concept, a salient leadership role is required to manage the work of resource sharing between those who have and those who have not. This context will inevitably affect what and how missional leadership should be in Hong Kong.

Role of the Top Leader

In a setting like Hong Kong, where seniority is extremely significant, it is important to consider the influence that a top leader should have in relation to the vision setting of a witnessing community. Alan Roxburgh argues that a missional leader should be a cultivator of an environment in which the community can corporately discern what

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God is doing among them. He rejects any top-down approach in setting a vision for the witnessing community. According to Akerlund’s observation, most studies about missional leadership suggest that leadership does not reside with individuals, but rather is a social process situated in the relationship among the community concerned. J. Breedt and C. Niemandt call it “shared interdependency” and propose a highly relational organization structure. Whilst this project generally concurs with the views suggested above, it is unsettling that there is “no consensus . . . on who and how in regards to vision work.”

In fact, Akerlund cites studies undertaken by Chai Tsu-Kao, who writes about missional leadership in Taiwan, an Asian context; Chai suggests that excessive emphasis on the leaders as servants will likely deprive the congregation of sufficient programs and strategies for leadership formation. Related to this, Randy Willis opines that there is an

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70 Akerlund, “Missional Leadership,” 27.


irreplaceable role of individuals in shaping missional culture in a community. The findings of both Chai and Willis are in line with those of the recent studies made by the three key denominations in Hong Kong: the Methodist Church, the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church, and Hong Kong Evangelical Church. Surveys taken in these three denominations reveal that there is a general expectation among the congregations for a top leader, 「必須要專心一意的堅持教會的使命，要有清晰的遠象，無論對任何阻攔的勢力都不會屈服」, “to be intentional and consistent in cultivating clear vision, focusing on implementing it, and insisting and persevering in front of any hurdles and difficulties.”

Another survey performed by the Hong Kong Evangelical Church also reflects a similar phenomenon. It states that congregations are looking for top leaders who are, 「高瞻遠矚，有異象，看到別人看不到的需要和機會，並能有策略和有步驟地帶領教會完成這些理想」, “far-sighted, can identify vision that they cannot see, and are capable of systematically implementing strategies to lead the churches towards that direction.” These surveys reflect some traditional Chinese values, such as a hierarchical family order in which positional leaders are in higher status, as well as respect for and submission to authority, which are still ingrained in the hearts of Chinese believers in Hong Kong.


As Boas Shamir points out in his article on leadership research, “For a phenomenon to be called leadership, some actors must have more influence than others.” Morse also agrees with Shamir by emphasizing that an individual missional leader should be intentional in exercising his or her power to create space for the Holy Spirit to work in people in relation to missional direction.

Instead of adopting an “extreme” view of seeing missional leadership as “shared, relational, reciprocal, completely bottom-up, interdependent” process with individual leaders playing insignificant role, this project proposes a synthesized approach. Whilst a communal, relational, and participatory approach is to be adopted in formulating missional direction of the congregation, the top leader is still required to play a key role in initiating and setting vision as well as continuously overseeing the overall transition process. This does not imply that leadership is only open to people in formal positions or suggesting a “strong man” style of leadership. It is an issue of the degree of participation of the top leader or the weight of his or her role in guiding this transitional process. It is suggesting that an initiative-taking and continuous, leading-by-example role should still be played by a top leader, at least in the initial stage of the transition. The weight of this leader’s role will gradually diminish when the congregation becomes more and more

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78 Morse, Making Room for Leadership, 42-47.

mature to be led by the Holy Spirit. A brief case study of Jesus’ missional leadership can help elaborate these points.

**Jesus’ Missional Leadership in Luke 10**

In Luke 10:1-12, by sending out the seventy into the towns and villages where he would be coming, Jesus was guiding these disciples towards missional direction in three ways. First, Jesus intentionally created space for the Holy Spirit to work among them. Roxburgh writes what Jesus’ words to his disciples might sound like today: “Like strangers in need of hospitality who have left their baggage behind, enter the neighborhoods and communities where you live. Sit at the table of the other, and there you may begin to hear what God is doing.” By going out without knowing in advance which house they were to enter, the disciples had to be open to the prompting and leading of the Holy Spirit. By entering houses, eating, drinking, working, and staying with the strangers’ families where the disciples’ well-being depends upon the hospitality of these families, the disciples were going into space over which they had no control. They had to rely upon the Holy Spirit.

Second, Jesus is guiding the transition by organizing the disciples into witnessing communities. He sent the seventy disciples in communities of two to dwell with the neighbors. They served them, built relationships with them, witnessed Jesus among them, shared the gospel with them, learned the heart of the Lord for these lost and needy people, and saw God in the people they served.

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Third, Jesus, who was fully human in incarnation, was the top leader who initiated this paradigm-shifting process. Jesus was the one who planned and prepared for this transition. Early in Luke 9:1-6, he had already started the first round training and development for the twelve who were supposed to be the leaders of these seventy. Jesus gave these disciples teachings on who he was (Luke 9:18-27) and the costs of discipleship (Luke 9: 57-62), and he led them to experience his power through various miracles (Luke 9:10-17; 9:37-43) before the process was launched. Jesus also gave extremely clear and detailed instructions on what to do during their mission trip (Luke 10:1-12). When the seventy were returned, he also gave them feedback and de-briefed the experience with them (Luke 10:18-24).

However, throughout the whole process, Jesus was never hands-on in leading the actual operations. Nor did he interfere in any case or event. He just opened space for the seventy to experiment and experience what God was doing and what God was speaking to them. As a result, boundaries were broken and the whole community of the seventy grew.

**Conclusion**

In short, in order to guide the congregation in transition to missional direction, leadership is crucial. Such leadership should possess certain features. First, it should be continuously reflective with a sensitive heart to both the culture and relationships within the congregation as well as the leading of the Holy Spirit. Second, it should be intentional in creating space for the Holy Spirit to work among the people in relation to missional direction. Third, it should adopt a communal, relational, and participatory approach in
formulating the missional direction of the congregation. Fourth, and this feature is particularly critical in the context of Hong Kong, it should adopt a synthesized approach in missional leadership. It should simultaneously adopt a communal, relational, and participatory approach in formulating the missional direction of the congregation while the top leader still plays a key role in initiating and setting the vision for this missional direction.

In summary, God intends a witnessing community to fulfil his missional purpose and plan on earth as it is in the heaven. A transition process is needed for the congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church to migrate toward a missional direction. In view of the particular context of Hong Kong, a contextualized approach should be employed in this aspect. The forthcoming chapters delineate the ministry plan and goals as well as logistics for the implementation of this witnessing community strategy.
PART THREE

MINISTRY STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION
CHAPTER 4
MINISTRY PLAN

The previous chapter established the biblical and theological foundation of a witnessing community and the features of missional leadership applicable in the context of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. A witnessing community approach is a legitimate vehicle for God to fulfil his purpose of transforming both the Church and the world. It is also a place where discipleship and spiritual transformation happens, and this witness enables the people around to see the presence of the living Christ. It is also a place where community members are not satisfied with purely talking within the church walls, but are audacious enough to reach out to their neighbors and to serve the poor and needy in an incarnational way.

To be able to understand more about the heart of God and what God is doing among them, a witnessing community should be open to the leading and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Alongside the work of the Holy Spirit, the active leading of top missional leaders is crucial. This chapter presents a plan to implement the strategy of a witnessing community so that the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church will be able to respond to God’s calling as a missional witnessing community.
Towards a Strategy for a Witnessing Community

In their book, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*, Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martinez succinctly describe the nature of leading a congregation towards missional direction: “Leadership is not about an individual or even a small group having great ideas and pulling a church into their vision. Leadership is about shaping an environment in which the people of God participate in the action-reflection cycle as they gain new capacities to discern what God is doing among and around them.”¹ In this project, Branson and Martinez’s concept of the leadership triad—including interpretive leadership, relational leadership, and implemental leadership—is adopted as a cornerstone structure in formulating the strategy for a witnessing community.² Meanwhile, a fourth concept of discernment leadership is introduced in order to make this strategic concept more comprehensive.

Branson and Martinez explain each facet of the triad. The first facet, interpretive leadership, addresses the need for meanings. Its goal is to guide and shape the community members to pay attention to the Scripture, their own historical heritage, and the revelation of the Holy Spirit about God’s calling to them.³ In the strategy plan of this project, this concept is applied in the cognitive process step.

The second facet, relational leadership, addresses the need for human connections and communal dynamics. Its goal is to build up close relationship among the community

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¹ Mark Lau Branson and Juan Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership: A Practical Theology of Congregations and Ethnicities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2011), 57.

² Ibid., 54-55.

³ Ibid., 55-56.
members in order to facilitate the progress in missional transition.\(^4\) In the strategy plan, this concept is mainly applied in the step of a pilot experiential witnessing community, in which relationships are nurtured, and discipleship and leadership by example are practiced.

The third facet, implemental leadership, addresses the need for activities and structures. Its goal is to guide the relevant experiments and practices and construct necessary structures in order to capitalize the progress of missional transition.\(^5\) In the third step of intentional and incremental building up of missional culture and the missional community lifestyle, this concept is applied.

The fourth concept introduced in the strategy plan below is discernment leadership, which addresses the need for continuous recognition and identification of the work and leading of the Holy Spirit in the community during the transition. Roxburgh writes, “Missional leadership cultivates the practice of indwelling Scripture and discovering places for experiment and risk as people discover that the Spirit of God’s life-giving future in Jesus is amongst them.”\(^6\) The missional leader of the witnessing community should be open to recognizing the activity of the Holy Spirit and responding to his direction in concert.

\(^4\) Ibid.
\(^5\) Ibid., 55-56.
Characteristics and Goals of the Strategic Plan

This strategy possesses four characteristics. First, it is a process extending from cognitive education to experiment and then to behavioral commitment of the participants. Second, it is a stage-by-stage development; the strategy will continuously be refined after each development stage. Third, it is a modeling and leadership by example approach, in which the community leaders will learn and grow together with the followers. Fourth, the finalization of the various implementation initiatives is determined by the leader, but members’ participation is encouraged and space is open for the Holy Spirit to play a key leading role in the planning.

The ultimate goal of this witnessing community strategy is a smooth transformation of the whole congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church to be a missional witnessing community through which God’s will becomes reality in the Eastern District. To achieve this ultimate goal, a pilot witnessing community approach with a modeling effect is adopted so that subsequent communities can be rolled out to the whole congregation. There are four specific objectives for this pilot witnessing community.

The first objective is to enable this community to understand the nature of God as a missional God, God’s mission in the world, and God’s call for the Church to witness him through incarnational evangelism and service to the poor and needy. The second objective is for members to gain a deeper understanding of God as a missional God and the meaning of a missional church. It is also a step to help community members internalize this calling and further embrace the vision of the church for incarnational
evangelism and service to the poor and needy. The third objective is to conceive ways to carry out initiatives for incarnational evangelism and service to the poor and needy and implement them. This will involve a participatory approach among community members. The fourth objective is to ensure that incarnational evangelism and service to the poor and needy is a continuous practice that becomes a regular lifestyle of the community.

**Content of the Strategy**

This witnessing community strategy plan consists of three major steps. The first step of the strategy plan is the formation of a pilot witnessing community in which there is an integration of discipleship and leadership by example. The development progress of the pilot witnessing community will be regularly reviewed and refined so that the involvement of the congregation gradually increase. After the completion of the pilot witnessing community, its members will be sent out to form their respective witnessing communities. Then the members of these witnessing communities will also be sent out to form their communities. The pilot witnessing community was launched in February 2016 and completed in February 2017. The twelve members will form their respective witnessing communities in March 2017. The goal is that the impact can ultimately be extended to the whole congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church.

The second step is a cognitive process in this pilot witnessing community. This includes a serious of teaching, Bible study, and group discussion programs aimed at enabling the community members to understand, from biblical and theological perspectives, the nature of God as a missional God, his will for the Church as a missional church, and the nature of an incarnational approach to evangelism and service to the poor
and needy. The emphasis will be placed on Jesus’ mission and his calling to the Church. The historical heritage of openness to the work of the Holy Spirit, evangelism, and caring for the poor of the Tung Fook Church will also be discussed to support this process.

The third step is an experiential learning process, the goal of which is to foster a missional culture and a missional lifestyle in the community. Consistent and persistent actions are critical. Community members will be encouraged to try different ways of incarnational evangelism and service among the poor and needy.

Step One: Formation of a Pilot Witnessing Community

Missional transformation of a congregation cannot be accomplished simply by preaching and announcing a great idea. It can only be demonstrated by the lives of the church leaders and “successful” examples. In other words, there should be modeling and leadership by example. Roxburgh writes, “Incarnational living is at the heart of mission.”7 Thus, the pilot witnessing community should involve an integration of discipleship and leadership by example. At Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, twelve lay members have been selected and invited to join this pilot community, and as senior pastor, I have committed to spending time with them over the course of one year. After this experience, they will be sent out to form their respective witnessing communities.

Discipleship and Spiritual Formation

The nature of this pilot witnessing community is a discipleship and spiritual formation group through collective experiential learning. The spiritual formation process

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7 Ibid., 80.
of this pilot community is based on the four pillars suggested in James Wilhoit’s book, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community.* Wilhoit calls these four pillars “receiving, remembering, responding, and relating,” but for the purposes of this project, they have been renamed as four A’s: awakening, awareness, affection, and assembly.

Awakening means the actions of arousing the sense of urge for spiritual growth among members and of bringing them to a place of openness to the grace of God. There is an inevitable process of self-realization of a sincere follower of Jesus about his or her own spiritual need when time goes by. Therefore, by taking part in Bible studies, worship, meditation, and other spiritual disciplines, “sooner or later we usually feel a vague but persistent urge for something more . . . a hunger for God’s continual presence.”

Awareness means the actions that lead community members to realize deeply two issues. The first issue is “who we are.” We are just human beings suffering from our own sins and pain, and we need huge amounts of grace from God. The second issue is “whose we are.” We all belong to God. Awareness can help members of the community realize that no matter how long they have been following Jesus, their lives can be more hopeful and freedom filled when they are aware that they need God’s grace more than they know.

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8 James Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation as If the Church Mattered* (Grand Rapids: MI: Baker Academic, 2008), 50-51.

Awareness helps us understand that God’s grace is larger than they can imagine and that this grace is available to them through the Holy Spirit.

Affection refers to living out the values of the gospel by practicing incarnationality among others. Spiritual formation is always profoundly social, and one cannot keep it to oneself. For all that is between an individual and God affects who the person is, and that in turn modifies one’s relationships with everyone around him or her. One’s relationships with others also modify the individual and deeply affect his or her relationship with God.\(^\text{10}\) Wilhoit explains, “Service predisposes a person to learn. . . . We do not know how well we have understood or observed until we try to actually do what we learned.”\(^\text{11}\) Through compassionate service to the poor, community members can in turn experience spiritual transformation because service takes us beyond our narcissism. With appropriate guidance from the Holy Spirit, we can see Jesus in those we serve.\(^\text{12}\)

Affection not only helps community members love each other and love the poor through loving service, but it cultivates among them a lifestyle of responding to the values in the gospel. In this aspect, the pilot witnessing community members are asked to participate and learn in various projects and activities of the church for serving the poor and needy. These experiential activities will be depicted in the experiential learning process step.


\(^{11}\) Wilhoit, *Spiritual Formation*, 149-150.

Assembly refers to actions to encourage the continuous formation of spiritually supportive but challenging relationships in the community. Augsburger points out that in a community, “what is believed is lived; what is lived becomes believable to those who view it in the wider community.” As a witnessing community, this is living out our faith by committing radically to the values of Jesus and continuing his mission.

**Implementation Plan**

As mentioned above, the ultimate goal of this witnessing community strategy is to transform the congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church to be a missional witnessing community through which God’s will is realized in the Eastern District. In order to achieve this goal, an incremental approach is adopted in the implementation of this strategy plan.

In the first stage, a group of twelve people with leadership potential has been identified and invited into the pilot witnessing community. This group is taking part in a community discipleship and spiritual transformation process for one year. They are being developed and trained to be leaders leading a larger-scale initiative in the second stage.

In the second stage, the twelve leaders developed in the first stage will form their respective witnessing communities to go through a similar discipleship and spiritual transformation process for one year. At that time, a larger population will be invited to join these witnessing communities. A review will be made during the end of both the first stage and the second stage respectively so that appropriate fine-tuning and revisions can be implemented before the start of the next stage.

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13 Ibid., 179.
In the third stage, the refined version of these witnessing communities will be launched inviting the whole congregation. Some members of the twelve witnessing communities in the second stage will be able to form their respective witness communities. It is hoped that growth continues into the future.

Step Two: Cognitive Process of the Pilot Witnessing Community

The key objective of the cognitive process is to address two hurdles that will likely need to be crossed as the church seeks the transformation of the community members toward a missional mindset. The first one is the ignorance and misconception of the term “missional” among the leaders and congregation as a whole. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the concept of missional church is generally unfamiliar to many Chinese church leaders in Hong Kong, as well as among the laity. Some leaders believe that the missional church concept is a repackaged idea of committing to international mission by supporting and sending out more missionaries. The second hurdle is the lack of comprehension and embracing of Jesus’ mission and his calling for the Church to bear his cross and move out of their comfort zone. In order to overcome these two hurdles, two initiatives will be launched: book studies and a teaching series on the Gospel of Luke.

Book Studies

The first stage of this cognitive process focuses on initiating book studies within the congregation. Two books have already been selected and the studies completed by the pilot witnessing community. The first is Ed Stetzer’s Planting Missional Churches and the second is Alan Roxburgh’s Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood. In his book,
Stetzer clearly explains that to be missional is not a manner of supporting overseas missions, but a commitment to do missions in a church’s immediate context.\textsuperscript{14} Stetzer’s book is a launching point for the notion that doing missions in our neighborhood is not optional but biblically imperative.

In the second book, Roxburgh goes one step further to invite community members to enter into their neighborhoods to discover what the Holy Spirit is doing there.\textsuperscript{15} He also challenges them through his detailed exploration of the Gospel of Luke 10:1-12 in a “new language house” perspective to rethink how evangelism can be executed in a missional and incarnational way.\textsuperscript{16} These book studies will be followed by discussions in order to acquire a collective understanding of what God is speaking to us as a community. Participating community members will be encouraged and empowered to use the insights learnt from these books to organize similar book studies and discussions with their peers and other members of the church.

\textbf{Teaching Series}

The second stage of the cognitive process is a series of teaching sessions, which I will present as senior pastor. This teaching series has been completed in the pilot witnessing community. This series walks through the Gospel of Luke chapter by chapter. The main theme is “Jesus’ Mission and His Message to Us.” Topics such as the mission of Jesus, the leading of the Holy Spirit, the importance of announcing the kingdom of

\textsuperscript{14} Ed Stetzer, \textit{Planting Missional Churches} (Nashville: B&amp;H Publishing Group, 2006), 19.

\textsuperscript{15} Roxburgh, \textit{Missional: Joining God}, 187-188.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., 133-148.
God, the Church’s calling to enter into the neighborhood, and the Church’s role as a sent community. A brief outline of this teaching series is given in Appendix A.

In this series of teaching, the historical heritage of the Tung Fook Church will be presented as well. During the revival of the Tung Fook Church in 1998, a significant portion of the congregation corporately received three visions from God. The first vision is to witness Jesus by relying on the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 says, “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” The second vision is to make disciples for Jesus. Matthew 28:18-21 says, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” The third vision is to serve the poor. Matthew 25:40 says, “The king will reply, ‘I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

After receiving these visions, the church was very open to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and various evangelistic initiatives were launched to spread the gospel, particularly among the poor and needy. The result was one great harvest after another and significant growth of the congregation. Recounting this history can remind church members of what God did in the past and reignite the imagination of what God will do through us in the future. This glorious legacy, including the courage of those leaders who later followed me to set up our church in 2009, is a large support to the missional transition process.
The above teaching series was accompanied by a series of Bible studies. These are based on suggestions provided by Branson and Martinez: Acts 2; Jeremiah 29; Luke 10:1-11; Galatians 3:23-29; Ephesians 1:5, 7-10, 22-23, 2:12-14, 3:8-10, 4:1, 11-13; Matthew 5:1-12; Acts 10; 1 Corinthians 12; Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 6; and Revelation 7:9-10. These Bible studies have been completed in the pilot witnessing community. Michero quotes Roxburgh and Romanuk to argue that “missional change begins with the actual narratives, questions, issues, and anxieties of people at this moment. It connects these experiences to the biblical narrative that offers a language for understanding and making sense of those experiences. By encountering Jesus in his world, they are better able to see their own world through Jesus’ eyes.”

Step Three: Experiential Learning Process of the Pilot Witnessing Community

The third step involves a continuous experiential learning process. The objective is to intentionally and incrementally build up missional culture and missional lifestyle in the witnessing community. The process of building up a missional culture and witnessing community lifestyle cannot be just a set of evangelistic programs or a series of activities, although they are instrumental in culture building. There should be sincere, whole-hearted, and long-term commitment in this direction.

The members of the pilot community are being led and instructed to practice witness in three key aspects. First, there is a regular prayer commitment for the needs of

17 Branson and Martinez, Churches, Cultures & Leadership, 18, 35, 72, 90, 102, 124, 135, 156, 179, 204, 229, and 234.

our local district and for this community as missional group to serve our neighbors.

Second, there is a regular commitment to living a community lifestyle of being missional within the members’ respective spheres of influence (colleagues, friends, family members and relatives). Third, there is a regular commitment to serve the poor in our local district. The ultimate objective of these continuous witnessing practices is to facilitate a process, driven by the Holy Spirit, in which a missional culture can be built up in this pilot witnessing community.

**Commitment to Prayer**

As part of the commitment to prayer, the pilot witnessing community intercedes for the needs of the Eastern District on a regular basis. In every service, integrated into the worship, there is a corporate prayer time during which all members of the congregation can pray together for the needs of our immediate neighborhoods. The content is refreshed every week by a dedicated research team from the members of the pilot witnessing community who continuously study and pray for the Eastern District.

Meanwhile, the members of the pilot community and I go to the “field” of the local district regularly. We take a prayer walk through the neighborhood every month. In each prayer walk, community members are guided to visit different places of the Eastern District to visually observe the needs of the people and those of the district. They are trained to be prayerful and to ask the Holy Spirit to help them see the real local needs. After the walk, there is a short debriefing session during which the community members share their observations and understandings, and intercede together for these needs as revealed by the Holy Spirit.
As a result of this regular intercession time, the walls between the witnessing community and the neighborhood are gradually being broken down, and the members are experiencing closer contact with the people of the local district, building up both spiritual and emotional connections with them. The community members are better able to embrace the local people and their needs. The essence is to allow as much space for the Holy Spirit to impact the members of the community as possible. Throughout the whole process, as Branson and Martinez mention, the role of leadership is to help the church “invest in discernment and experiments.”

**Commitment to Living a Community Lifestyle**

As part of the commitment to living a community lifestyle, I am also working with the pilot witnessing community to help them live within their spheres of influence with a more missional mindset. As mentioned in Chapter 1, 70 percent of the members of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church are residents of the Eastern District, and all members of the pilot witnessing community are residents of the Eastern District. Their respective spheres of influence are a rich field for their witnesses. Guder points out that the public worship of the mission community should be open and welcoming to all. In this pilot community, a movement of missional witnesses among its members in their respective spheres of influence has been launched.

This movement is already being carried out in several ways. First, cell groups are focusing on evangelistic visitation to the members’ non-believing or non-church-going

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19 Branson and Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*, 27.

family members, colleagues, or friends. Second, some members have initiated a prayer
wall on which the members of the congregation can pin the names of their non-believing
or non-church-going family members, colleagues, or friends. A group of dedicated people
from the pilot witnessing community regularly prays for the salvation of those names on
the prayer wall. A third aspect of the movement involves the regular coffee/tea hospitality
session after the worship services. The members of the pilot community are taking the
initiative to invite their non-believing or non-church-going family members, colleagues,
or friends to this hospitality time.

In addition to the ideas above, the members of the pilot community are being
encouraged to initiate their own creative evangelistic actions in their daily lives and
within the congregation. These ideas could be actions taken individually or as a cell
group to serve and care for the people in their respective spheres of influence. It is
important that the evangelistic aspects of their actions are not a “hidden agenda,” but that
these actions are done with a pure motive of caring for their neighbors as witnesses of
Jesus.

The yearly church retreat camp in which the pilot witnessing community
members should participate is another venue which could serve as a place to practice
community living with a missional mindset. Church members are encouraged to invite
their non-believing friends and relatives as guests, and at the end of the retreat, the pilot
witnessing community will practice open table Eucharist. In these several days of camp,
newcomers will be able to develop friendship with other members of the community.
Traditionally, on the last day of the retreat, there will be a celebration gathering with worship, teaching, and open table Eucharist. Without using Christian jargon, I explain the gospel and the meaning of the Eucharist in the Bible and ask everyone to examine their lives. I then state that Jesus welcomes everyone to feast with him. Every guest is invited to participate in this feast. I also explain that the plate of bread and the cup of wine will be passed to everyone. If guests are willing to accept Jesus, they can take them and this means that they are willing to join in Jesus’ family. As a result, there are conversions from time to time. Hospitality, love, and inclusion with a focus on God and his loved people create space for the Holy Spirit to work in people’s hearts.

Leadership by example is crucial in this community where discipleship is practiced. There is an unspoken custom within Christian circles in Hong Kong for a church to employ only Christians as employees. On one occasion, there was a non-pastoral vacancy in our church, and I faced a dilemma regarding whether to employ a non-believer from a poor family in the Eastern District who desperately needed a job. After prayer, I sensed that God wanted our church to be a welcoming community. I then “broke” the rule and employed this man.

This man worked with us every day as an ordinary worker, observing how we live our lives—how we serve people, pray, and worship God. I did not “hard sell” the gospel to him and simply let him live and work with us. Initially, he said he was thankful for our kindness but had no feeling about Jesus at all. As time went by, I realized that he became more attentive in our prayer meeting, worship, and preaching times. During one prayer meeting, I realized that he even rose up his hand to worship God. One of our pastors then
asked if he was willing to accept Jesus and he said, “Yes.” His ensuing testimony of faith has had deep and far-reaching impact.

**Commitment to Serving the Poor**

As part of the commitment to serving the poor, the pilot witnessing community is making this a priority on a regular basis. The Tung Fook Chai Wan Church has already established a resource center to serve the poor in the Eastern District. The issue is how to transform the whole congregation of the church for such missional and incarnational evangelism and service to the poor and needy so that the vision of “being with the least of these” (Matthew 25:40) can be fully materialized. Gornik quotes Mark 14:7, “The poor you will always have with you,” to argue that this is a statement not about the poor but about the social location of the discipleship church. He contends that Jesus’ implication is that believers will always be among the poor and can do the right thing for them at any time.21 Gornik is convinced that the future church is one of the suffering and the poor.22

As believers, we must consider how we respond to the poor among us. In his book, *Walking with the Poor*, Bryant Myers focuses on the “transformational development” of the poor; he suggests that missional communities should help the poor recover their identity and their vocation and live in just and peaceful relationships with God, self,

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22 Ibid., 209.
community, others, and the environment. To Myers, missional community witness is the witness to Christ’s lordship over all of these relationships in the kingdom of God.

Gornik addresses this topic in very practical ways. He points out that if a Christian community wants to create impact in their neighborhood, it should: a) be born of the Holy Spirit; b) read Scripture in communion; c) develop leadership in that local district; d) build up networks with other churches and non-government organizations in serving the poor; e) be committed to holistic ministry; f) confess that individualist thinking in the community is wrong: if the unity of the church that confesses one Lord, one faith, one baptism in 1 Corinthians 12:23 and Ephesians 4:4-6 is truth, there should not be two churches in the world, one poor and one wealthy; and g) implement the principle of sharing characterized by “giving and receiving” (Philippians 4:15) between those who have and those who have not in the Church.

To Gornik, the above deeds of love and faith will bring about hope. He writes, “Hope proclaims, against all the relentless claims that a meaningful future is not possible, and against the constant agonies of suffering, that because of the cross and the resurrection, tomorrow can be different from today. This is the work of the Spirit of life, who draws all of us toward the renewal of life.”

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24 Ibid., 342.


26 Ibid., 233-234.
The “one church” concept as proposed in the introduction is in line with Gornik’s idea of sharing between those who have and those who have not in the church. According to this idea, the resources can be transferred from the richer congregations to the poor congregations under the same roof. With the establishment of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, three initial witnessing practices addressing real needs of our neighborhood were initiated by the church. Participation in these ministries is included as a part of the experiential learning process of the pilot witnessing community. The members of the pilot witnessing community completed their participation in these ministries as of September 2016, and they acquired abundant learning.

The first practice includes the food bank service and visitation team. The food bank service, entirely funded by our church, is a good base of witness. It consistently provides not only food, but also home visitation, non-food help, and care and prayer for those needy families in our local district. In the process, we involve not only church staff but also members of congregation as leaders and members of the visitation teams. These brothers and sisters act as ambassadors of love to visit the homes of needy families on a regular basis, helping in the renovation and furnishing of their homes if needed, caring and praying for them, and developing relationship with them. Some members also accompany them to consult doctors when they are sick and share the life of Jesus with them.

The visitation team focuses on people who would like to attend church but who are not able to do so. One group of these people in the Eastern District is the elders who have difficulty in walking because of either old age or sickness. In the past, no one paid
attention to them. The pilot witnessing community is bringing worship services to their homes on a monthly basis. The visitation teams, comprised of three people, visit their homes to have short home worship services with them during each visit. The team members worship with them by singing one simple hymn. The leader shares with them a five-minute message based on a simple Bible verse. The team members then care for them, pray for them, and have Eucharist with them. When Eucharist is conducted, there is a strong presence of God which none can forget. Throughout the period of service, the members of the pilot community are observing that more and more of these poor people are moved by their love, and it is hoped that they will accept Jesus.

Gradually, these visitations will not only become a set of routine activities but a corporate learning experience of the whole community. The members of the pilot witnessing community have been sharing how they see Jesus in the people they serve. Some of them have shared their testimonies in the weekend services, and their excitement is contagious in the congregation. In the early years of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church, all the members of visitation team were the people God originally called to go to the Eastern District. As time goes by, there are increasing numbers of the middle-class residents who also reside in the Eastern District. As these individuals join our church, they are good candidates to join the visitation teams to serve their neighbors.

The second practice the pilot witnessing community has been invited to join is the service to the mentally handicapped/challenged. There are many groups of deprived people in Hong Kong, one of which is the mentally challenged. God has given our church a dream to start a long-term commitment in serving them. We call these people “GEM
GEM” because there are two meanings of the word “gem.” The first meaning is that of a precious stone. Unlike the world that perceives them as useless, through our service and care, we help them recover their original identity in the eyes of God. Through service, the Holy Spirit not only lets these people experience the love of others (brothers and sisters serving them) but also the love of God. The members of the pilot community are seeing God’s love in these “GEM GEM” people as they serve.

The second meaning of GEM is as an acronym for “God Enables Me.” God has deposited many talents into every person, including these mentally challenged people, and we help them explore and exert these talents. Many “GEM GEM” people can perform in dance, music, and drama. Whenever they dance or perform drama, there is a strong presence of God, and tears come from the eyes of nearly everyone in the audience. Many stories about the changes of the GEM GEM people are shared. A mentally challenged boy had never talked since he was born. After the ministry team served him with love, he said, “Thank you, Jesus!” and danced with joy. His mother, who had never heard his voice before, was overcome with joyful tears. The GEM GEM was originally a special ministry that took place outside of church worship times. However, two families with mentally challenged children have joined our regular services and worship together with us. They were rejected by other congregations in the past, but they have found new acceptance and love in our church. As the members of the pilot community will observe, these stories of witness have great impact in both our community and our neighborhood.

The third practice in which the pilot witnessing community actively participating is the school bazaar service. As mentioned in Chapter 1, hope and peace is what we
understand the Eastern District needs, particularly for the children. In Hong Kong, school bags and supplies are very expensive, and not every poor family in our local district can afford to buy new ones each year. In one of the regular prayer meetings for the Eastern District, the Holy Spirit gave some members an idea of the joy that comes to a child when receiving a new school bag and supplies when the new school year begins. These members then worked with our church staff to organize a school bazaar to sell these items within the community at a very low price. Nearly all those present at the sale shared that they could see Jesus in the faces of the people being served. Our church encourages every member to participate in this event in different forms. If they cannot physically participate, they can make financial contributions. As a result, everyone can take part in the event in some form, and everyone can share the joy of serving people in the video of the event we share in various services.

Not only is the bazaar a regular event for our church, but other churches have joined as well. When the idea was shared with the other churches of different denominations in our local district, they immediately agreed to join. Now, this bazaar has become an annual event with a high degree of church participation and inter-church cooperation. Even the other branch churches of the Tung Fook Church have copied this idea, and they are implementing the same in their respective local districts.

**Planning for the Future of the Witnessing Communities**

As mentioned before, the believers in Hong Kong are relatively passive and always look for the strong direction of the leader. The members in the pilot witnessing community are the same. In the discipleship process, I always take the lead. However, in
the planning process about what service activities we can launch as a community, I intentionally create space for the Holy Spirit to lead. The planning process starts with a whole-day meeting, and this meeting takes place before the community members begin their experiential learning process. The meeting is not a paper-filled or cost-benefit-analysis type of meeting. The first half of the meeting is basically silent. After the worship session, each member of the pilot witnessing community is asked to be quiet before God for a relatively long time, asking God what he wants the church to do in the coming years. Then they sit together and share their understandings. Some rough ideas are noted as a result.

The second part of the meeting is two-pronged. First, the group shares the rough ideas that come out of the prayer time in the morning session. Second, the group discusses the pros and cons of activities the church was involved in during the past year. Then the community members are divided into groups of three to brainstorm their proposed activities based on the information on hand. At the end of the day, each group presents their respective proposal. A rough overall plan of services for the community is formed, which I then finalize with the trust of the community. It is surprising to discover that many creative ideas are conceived in the process, and most of the proposals are echoed by others. The Holy Spirit is provided with space to play a key leading role in our planning process. The whole pilot witnessing community learned how to give the Holy Spirit a free hand to lead during this time.
Conclusion

This chapter has expounded upon the plan of implementing a witnessing community strategy for the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. This plan aims at ultimately transforming this whole congregation to be missional, but the process starts with a pilot witnessing community that models the values and actions for the congregation. In this pilot witnessing community, there is a series of learning processes including a cognitive process, an experiential learning process, and the building up of a witnessing community lifestyle. It is an action-oriented plan driven by leadership by example. The implementation approach is incremental with a review and revision process taking place regularly. During the planning process, space is given to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The next chapter delineates the detailed steps of strategy implementation. It provides a detailed account for the timeline, process, and necessary resources for the implementation. The process of leadership development is presented, as are assessment tools that will evaluate the goals and objectives of this new initiative.
CHAPTER 5
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND EVALUATION

In Chapter 4, a plan was presented for implementing the strategy of a witnessing community to guide the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church so that it can respond to God’s calling as a missional witnessing community. This witnessing community strategy plan consists of three major parts. The first part is the formation of a pilot witnessing community in which there is an integration of discipleship and leadership by example. The second part is a cognitive process aiming at enabling the community members to understand the nature of God as a missional God, his will for the church as missional church, and the nature of an incarnational approach to evangelism and service to the poor and needy. The third part is an experiential learning process so that a missional culture and missional lifestyle can be fostered in the community. Meanwhile, space is created so that the leadership role of this transformation process is dually played by the Holy Spirit and the senior pastor of the church.

This chapter contains the detailed implementation plan of the above witnessing community strategy. This implementation plan consists of four key sections. The first section is a summary of the pilot project of a witnessing community and the subsequent
implementation process of more witnessing communities after the completion and revision of the pilot project. This section also presents the selection process of leaders and the continuous development plan for them. The second section delineates the pilot project implementation timeline with details regarding each of its phases. The third section describes the relevant resources and support for this implementation plan. The fourth section depicts the related assessment plan in place to measure the results of the pilot witnessing community.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the witnessing community strategy is divided into three stages. In the first stage, a pilot witnessing community of twelve people is formed, and this group will pursue discipleship and spiritual transformation for one year. These twelve people are being developed and trained to be the leaders who will lead a larger scale initiative in the second stage. In the second stage, the twelve leaders developed in the first stage will form their own respective witnessing communities, and these groups will endeavor upon a fine-tuned discipleship and spiritual transformation process for one year. At that time, a larger population will be invited to join these witnessing communities. A review will be made during the end of both the first stage and the second stage respectively so that appropriate revision actions can be taken before the start of the next stage. In the third stage, the refined version of these witnessing communities will be launched and the entire congregation will be invited. Some members of the twelve witnessing communities in the second stage will form their own respective witnessing communities.
Summary of the Pilot Witnessing Community Project

The pilot project approach was adopted as a way of implementing the witnessing community strategy in order to transform the congregation of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church towards a missional mindset. There are two benefits of this approach. The first benefit is that church leaders can evaluate relevant risks and validate benefits on a limited scope. The second benefit is the availability of visible examples for the congregation and church leaders to see practically how this new vision works.

The duration of the pilot witnessing community is initially one year. After this initial period of community life, there will be sharing and discussion among the twelve members to commonly determine whether this pilot community should continue to meet weekly. Alternatively, there could be a community of continuous discipleship or group mentoring, in which the members would meet on a monthly basis to provide a platform of continuous growth, mutual encouragement, and accountability.

Selection of Members

As senior pastor, I selected the twelve individuals who have participated in the pilot group. I followed certain guidelines as selection criteria. There were no restrictions in terms of gender, place of residence, or occupation. Participants should be between the ages of eighteen and sixty years old. Participants should be members of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church. In other words, members of the pilot community could be existing church members, zone pastors or cell group leaders, or cell group members. Participants should be committed to a cell group with regular attendance (80 percent attendance rate.
or above). In addition, participants should be recommended by their respective cell group leaders or zone pastors who deem them to be mature.

Participants should also demonstrate leadership potential. They should be interviewed by a selection committee composed of the senior pastor and two church committee members who discern and agree that each participant has leadership potential. If the candidate is already an existing leader, this part of the interview can be waived.

Finally, participants should demonstrate a commitment to the community. The nominated candidates should agree to a protocol in the pilot witnessing community called “FAITH.”1 “F” is faithfulness, which means faithfully participating in all community meetings and activities punctually and whole-heartedly. “A” is availability, which means participants should be available in terms of time and energy in the community learning and activities. This involves participants are prioritizing their schedules during the year-long commitment. “I” is initiative, which means being proactive in building up relationship with, learning with, and serving others. “T” is being teachable, which means participants should have humble hearts to be challenged and to grow with guidance. “H” is hunger, which means participants should possess longing hearts to comprehend the truth of God and his kingdom. This is not purely an intellectual hunger, but rather the deepest desire of their souls.2

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1 The “FAITH” protocol is adopted from the “FAITH” acronym of the Navigators, namely faithful, available, initiative, teachable, and heart. I have altered the phrasing slightly for the purposes of this project. See Navigators, “Passing on Your Faith,” http://www.navigators.org/Tools/Newsletters/Featured%20Newsletters/One%20To%20One/May%202015/May%202015/Passing%20On%20Your%20Faith (accessed November 1, 2015).

2 Debra Dean Murphy, Teaching That Transforms: Worship as the Heart of Christian Education (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2004), 219.
The recruitment process of the members of the pilot witnessing community followed a schedule that I had pre-determined. First, based on the recommendations of the cell group leaders or zone pastors, a list of potential candidates was made. Next, interview meetings were held with each of the candidates by the selection committee, composed of the senior pastor and two church committee members. In the interview meetings, the candidates were informed of the background and reasons for the pilot witnessing community and the idea of collective learning and spiritual growth in this community. During the interview, a list of questions were asked in order to help identify whether or not an individual candidate had leadership potential (see Appendix B). The candidates who are likely to have leadership potential generally have the following: the ability to influence others, good communication skills, the ability to work with and relate to others, and hunger for closer relationship with God and spiritual growth. After the interview, a finalized list of members of the pilot witnessing community were formulated, and the senior pastor called each of the selected members personally to invite them to join this one-year community.

Frequency and Content of Meetings

The pilot witnessing community was designed to initially last for one year, and the twelve members of the community were required to meet once every week. With fifty-two weeks of meetings, the community demands a high degree commitment and participation from its members. Apart from the weekly meeting time, the members were expected to sacrifice at least two hours per week for out-going services to the poor and needy in our neighborhood. Meanwhile, this community was also a leadership
development program through discipleship and leadership by example, after which these members are expected to start their respective witness communities. Leadership and life transformation are crucial in this strategy.

The first meeting of the pilot witnessing community was an introduction and kick-off meeting for the twelve members. The senior pastor, who also serves as the leader of the community, introduced everyone, gave time for members to chat with each other, and explained the vision and objectives of this community, the expected commitment and obligations for the members, the pilot and demonstration nature of the community, and the protocol of FAITH of this community.

Following the first meeting, all subsequent meetings are designed to last approximately two hours and are composed of four parts: welcome, worship, Word, and work. The first part is “Welcome,” which lasts for fifteen minutes. The purpose of this part is for ice-breaking and relationship building. One question is asked by the leader, and members share as they are prompted. An example of this type of question is, “Do you have wonderful experience in the past? Tell the rest of us one such experience.”

The second part is “Worship,” which lasts for another fifteen minutes. The purpose of this part is to focus every member on God and let the Holy Spirit guide everyone’s spirit, mind, and soul. The group generally sings a couple of worship songs together, such as “Shout to the Lord” and “Deeper in Love.”

The third part is “Word,” which last for sixty minutes. The content of this part consists four sequential sessions. Approximately thirteen weeks are spent on each session in order to get through all four sessions in the fifty-two weeks of the pilot witnessing
community duration. The first session is a group book study of Ed Stetzer’s *Planting Missional Churches* and Alan Roxburgh’s *Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood*. There are also discussions about what they learn and what the Holy Spirit speaks to the community through these two books. The second session is a series of chapter-by-chapter Bible teaching on the Gospel of Luke with the main theme of “Jesus’ Mission and His Message to Us.” The teaching includes the concept of missional church, God’s calling for his Church to be missional, the ways a church can be missional, and the concept and ways for a community to be incarnational in evangelism and in serving the poor and needy. The tradition of evangelism and serving the poor and needy is also mentioned.

The third session is Bible study using the material in *Churches, Cultures & Leadership* by Branson and Martinez. The verses that are relevant to missional church are Acts 2; Jeremiah 29; Luke 10:1-11; Galatians 3:23-29; Ephesians 1:5, 7-10, 22-23, 2:12-14, 3:8-10, 4:1, 11-13; Matthew 5:1-12; Acts 10; 1 Corinthians 12; Acts 11:19-26, 13:1-3; Luke 10:25-37; Acts 6; and Revelation 7:9-10.³ The fourth session is a de-briefing session after completion of each phase of outreach in serving the poor and needy. The purpose of the de-briefing is to capture the experiences and insights grained from these actual actions of serving people. Each leader who has led a small group in serving summarizes the learnings so that the community can grow together and embrace more of God’s missional calling.

The fourth part is “Work,” which last for thirty minutes. It is a space for mutual service and love in the community. It is also a time to invite the Holy Spirit to serve the

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³ Branson and Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*, 18, 35, 72, 90, 102, 124, 135, 156, 179, 204, 229, and 234.
members of the community. The leader asks all members to share one thing they have learned or what the Holy Spirit has been saying to them in the “Word” session and one thing God spoke to them in their private devotion. Immediately after each member’s sharing, the leader asks another member to pray for him or her. After the completion of the round, the leader intercedes for anyone in the community according to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. The members are also invited to do the same if they also feel prompted by the Spirit.

Leadership Style and Participation

In leading the pilot witnessing community, four main principles were adopted. The first principle is that the cognitive teaching should not be done in a traditional one-way classroom style. As Murphy rightly points out, learning is usually the work of the Holy Spirit. The leader has to allow room in the teaching so that the whole community can participate; the leader should not seek to accomplish success by his or her own might. The second principle is that the style of the community will emphasize collective experience and action, including group outreach activities with clear instructions and de-briefing, interactive two-way communication, encouraging testimonies of life examples, storytelling, and mutual cooperation among the members. The third principle is that the pastor-in-charge is aware of the danger of focusing too much on “doing” instead of addressing the “being” of an individual member. A balanced approach should be adopted in the execution of the meetings and activities of the community. The focus of the programs is on the community members being the loved sons and daughters of our Lord,

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4 Murphy, Teaching That Transforms, 214.
who are deeply loved by the Father who calls and guides them to fulfil his purpose in their neighborhood. The fourth principle is that of leadership by example and participation by the members, while space is open to the leading and work of the Holy Spirit among the members of the community.

The expected result of this pilot witnessing community is that, after one year of discipleship and spiritual growth, the members are empowered to form their own respective witnessing communities, each inviting twelve new members to start the discipleship and spiritual journey.

**Pilot Project Timeline**

The project timeline of the pilot witnessing community is presented in two tables, Table 1 for the first stage of the process and Table 2 for stages two and three. In each table, activities are given with start and end dates, as well as check points, or information about what needs to be in place.
## Table 1: Stage 1 Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Checkpoints</th>
<th>Start Dates</th>
<th>End Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theological research about missional church, incarnational evangelism and serving the poor and needy</td>
<td>Books and other materials about the topics available</td>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations of potential candidates for the pilot witnessing community and interview meetings</td>
<td>List of potential candidates available and meetings arranged</td>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification of twelve members with leadership potentials</td>
<td>List of twelve members available</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>January 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Launching Pilot witnessing community</td>
<td>First meeting of the community organized</td>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book study of Ed Stetzer’s <em>Planting Missional Churches</em> and Alan Roxburgh’s <em>Missional: Joining God in the Neighborhood</em></td>
<td>Members can share clearly the insights and learnings from the books</td>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching program about the missional God, missional church and God calling of our community to be missional</td>
<td>Members can share clearly the insights and learnings from the teachings</td>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>April 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching program about incarnational approach to evangelism and serving the poor and needy</td>
<td>Members can share clearly the insights and learnings from the teachings</td>
<td>May 2016</td>
<td>June 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twenty four weeks of chapter-by-chapter Bible teaching of the Gospel of Luke with the main theme of “Jesus’ Mission and His Message to Us”</td>
<td>Members can share clearly the insights and learnings from the teachings</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One day planning meeting dually led by the leader and the Holy Spirit to decide the outreach service activities of the communities</td>
<td>Meeting convened and a list of activities to be launched by the community available</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First phase of incarnational outreach programs</td>
<td>Programs started:</td>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Intercession and Pray walk in the Eastern District</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>● Hospitality program and evangelistic outreach activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and refinement of the first phase of incarnational out-reach programs</td>
<td>Refinement on the above programs made</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second phase of incarnational out-reach programs</td>
<td>Programs started:  ● Visitation and services in elders’ homes  ● Service to the mentally challenged people  ● School bazaar service</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation and refinement of the second phase of incarnational out-reach programs</td>
<td>Refinement on the above programs made</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
<td>December 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bible study using the material in Branson and Martinez’s book(^5)</td>
<td>Members can share clearly the insights and learnings from the study</td>
<td>January 2017</td>
<td>February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation meeting for the twelve members to evaluate the one year community life and to decide the form for the community to continue</td>
<td>List of refinement of the pilot community available and the form for continuing the community finalized</td>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>February 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testimonies by the community members to the whole congregation in regular worship services and other special meetings</td>
<td>Testimonies made</td>
<td>February 2017</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^5\) Branson and Martinez, *Churches, Cultures & Leadership*, 18, 35, 72, 90, 102, 124, 135, 156, 179, 204, 229, and 234.
Table 2: Stages 2 and 3 Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Check Points</th>
<th>Start Dates</th>
<th>End Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Twelve members of the pilot witnessing community become leaders and start their respective communities</td>
<td>Twelve witness communities started</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>May 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mentoring community for the twelve leaders (original members of pilot community)</td>
<td>First meeting organized</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>First evaluation of the progress of the twelve witness communities</td>
<td>Feedbacks obtained and refinement made</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
<td>September 2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Second evaluation of the progress of the twelve witness communities</td>
<td>Feedbacks obtained and refinement made</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
<td>January 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Final evaluation of the witness communities</td>
<td>Feedbacks obtained and refinement made</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Testimonies by community members to the whole congregation in regular worship services and other special meetings</td>
<td>Testimonies made</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>June 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The members of the twelve witness communities started their respective witness communities</td>
<td>More than twelve witness communities launched</td>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>July 2018</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Resources and Support

The estimated resources required to support this witnessing community strategy include three aspects. The first aspect is spatial resources. This includes weekly meeting venues and special meeting places in both the church building and the leader’s home. The second aspect is human resources. This includes the pastor-in-charge himself as the key leader. An additional administrative assistant is required to organize and prepare the theological research result for teaching, book study, and Bible study materials. This individual will coordinate various parties for experiential outreach activities, set up
equipment in various meeting venues, and serve as a liaison with the members of the pilot communities in the first stage and with leaders in the subsequent stages of the implementation. The Resources Center of the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church is also needed since the pilot witness communities will join the existing visitation teams and other various ministries to serve the poor and needy. The third aspect is a monetary budget for the visitation teams to buy foods and other items to share with the needy.

**Evaluation Plan**

The evaluation plan for this pilot witnessing community includes two parts. The first part is a pre- and post-implementation questionnaire distributed to the twelve members of the pilot witnessing community when stage one of the implementation is complete. The second part is the distribution of the same questionnaire to the 144 members of the twelve witness communities after the completion of stage two. The objective of these pre- and post-implementation surveys is to measure the spiritual growth of the members of these witnessing communities in terms of changes in their beliefs, attitudes and spiritual practices, and spiritual vitality.

Each member of the pilot witnessing community and the subsequent communities is to complete the questionnaire twice. They complete it once before the launch of the communities and a second time after the completion of the year of community life. The
design of the questionnaire is a simplified version of the Reveal Spiritual Life Survey by Willow Creek Community Church.\(^6\)

The questions are divided into two sets. The first set seeks to investigate the status of the member’s beliefs, attitudes, and spiritual practices, while the second set seeks to measure their spiritual vitality. A comparison of the scores in the survey will highlight the change of these values in the lives of the members. Although polling only twelve people is a relatively small sample as compared to our existing adult congregation of three hundred, it can still reflect the impact of the full process. These twelve members will directly affect the spiritual transformation of the rest of the church, as they will be the future leaders. The same survey will be given to the 144 members of the twelve witnessing communities involved in stage two.

Survey Results Analysis

Table 3 shows the change in spiritual beliefs and attitudes of the twelve members of the pilot witnessing community before and after their participation in the community.

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\(^6\) The Reveal Spiritual Life Survey was developed by Willow Creek Community Church to measure the spiritual growth and spiritual health of a church. For details, see the Willow Creek website at http://www.willowcreek.com/MFCP/MFCP_appendices.pdf (accessed January 10, 2016).
Table 3: Results of the Pre- and Post-Implementation Questionnaire for Stage 1 (Spiritual Beliefs and Attitudes)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Spiritual Beliefs and Attitude Statements (Very Strongly Agree)</th>
<th>Pre Pilot Witnessing Community</th>
<th>Post Pilot Witnessing Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Size</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. I believe nothing I do or have done can earn my salvation</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I believe the God of the Bible is the one true God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I believe God is actively involved in my life</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I desire Jesus to be first in my life</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe the Bible has decisive authority over what I say and do</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I exist to know, love, and serve God</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. I believe a Christian should live a sacrificial life that is not driven by pursuit of material things</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. I am willing to risk everything that is important in my life for Jesus Christ</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. I pray for non-Christians to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. I give away my time to serve and help others in my community</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My first priority in spending is to support God’s work</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The scores in the above table indicate the percentage of respondents who answered “Very Strongly Agree” to the statements about spiritual beliefs and attitudes in the questionnaire. It is observable that there is a relatively large increase in scores in question 4, 8, and 9. This increase reveals that some elements of the missional mindset, such as putting God as one’s first priority of life, stewardship, and willingness to give
away one’s life, are beginning to develop in the hearts of these twelve members during the year of learning through cognitive and experiential programs. This is a significant sign of gradual spiritual transformation among the members of the community.

Table 4 illustrates responses to the same questionnaire, but these questions relate to the spiritual activities taking place within each member’s life. These activities represent their spiritual practices and vitality. Respondents are asked whether they are doing spiritual activities at least once a month; these are activities other than those that are part of their participation the pilot witnessing community. They can also write down any activities not listed in the questionnaire. The assumption in this set of questions is that there should be a lot of cognitive and experiential activities taking place. If these members are still willing to be engaged in missional activities that go beyond their specific commitment, then surely their hearts are changing toward a missional lifestyle.

Table 4: Results of the Pre- and Post-Implementation Questionnaire for Stage 1 (Spiritual Activities)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual Activities (Once or more per month)</th>
<th>Pre Pilot Witnessing Community</th>
<th>Post Pilot Witnessing Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population Size</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual friendship in workplace or other non-church venues</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pray for other people</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Display Christian symbols</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discuss spiritual issues with non-Christians</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share my story of faith</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give Christian books and music</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite friends, colleagues or family members to church events or gatherings</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serve those in need on my own</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The increase in scores in Table 4 demonstrates an increase in the spiritual practices of those in the pilot witnessing community. This is a clear indication of an increase in spiritual vitality among the members. An initial conclusion is that there is a beginning of the gradual life transformation of these twelve members and there is a movement in their lives towards a missional lifestyle. This is highly encouraging because it means that these twelve leaders will be able to create a deeper impact when they start their respective witnessing communities. This expectation can be measured and confirmed when the same survey is distributed to the members of the twelve subsequent witnessing communities in implementation stage two.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has described the implementation plan of the witnessing community strategy. This includes the three different stages of the implementation plan, the selection process and criteria of the members of the pilot witnessing community, and the detailed implementation timeline with clear and specific checkpoints and completion times. Leadership selection and development of people with leadership potential and leadership by example are emphasized as a crucial part of the strategy. The necessary resources needed are also mentioned. A pre- and post-implementation questionnaire is used as an assessment tool in each of the first two stages of implementation. The submission of this project coincides with the completion of stage one and the first assessment. The results are encouraging as they show positive change in terms of spiritual beliefs, attitudes, and practices of the twelve members of the pilot community. These members are at the beginning of a movement toward a missional lifestyle. The next chapter provides a
summary and conclusion of this project. It also includes a discussion about how the Tung Fook Chai Wan Church might impact the Eastern District after the implementation of this witnessing community strategy.
This project explores the formulation and implementation of a strategy for a witnessing community at Tung Fook Chai Wan Church in Hong Kong. The context of the Eastern District, in which the church is located, and the background of the congregation of the church are described. In this district, there is a big economic and social gap between those poor and the middle class. There is a strong need for peace, hope, and joy in the district, and it is God’s calling of the church leadership to grow the middle-class believers to serve the poor and needy and share the gospel with them. In this context, the church needs to grow in a missional church mindset.

A survey of the theological literature about missional church indicates that a missional church should be a community possessing practices and witnesses that point to a community lifestyle and culture which engages with the world yet simultaneously remains different from it. In order to be such a witnessing community, the congregation has to go through a transition. In Hong Kong, the concept of missional church is not widely understood, if not misunderstood, and believers still heavily depend on pastoral guidance for direction; they expect the senior pastor to demonstrate strong leadership. In this circumstance, it is crucial to have a dual role of strong leadership and the leading of the Holy Spirit in the transition towards missional church.

A survey of the Old Testament and New Testament as well as church history reveals that a witnessing community approach is a legitimate vehicle for God to fulfil his purpose of transforming both a congregation and allowing others to see the presence of the living Christ. It is a venue of discipleship, spiritual transformation, life change, wall-
breaking, and outreach to the neighborhood in an incarnational way to serve the poor and needy. It is also a space where the work and leading of the Holy Spirit are welcomed and well received.

With this theological and biblical foundation in mind, a plan for implementing the witnessing community strategy is made. A pilot witnessing community is formed to go through one year of cognitive and experiential learning. It is also a discipleship, spiritual transformation, and leadership development journey. The leaders developed in the pilot community will start their respective witnessing communities, and the transition process in the congregation continues.

The implementation plan is to adopt a pilot and example demonstration approach. Assessment, review, and refinement are performed after each stage of implementation so that the next stage can fully incorporate the learning from the previous stage. As the first stage of implementation began in February 2016, the submission of this project coincides with the completion of the pre- and post-implementation survey of this stage. The survey indicates positive changes in the spiritual beliefs, attitudes, practices, and vitality of the members of the pilot witnessing community. This is also a sign of the beginning of a movement of the twelve leaders towards a missional lifestyle. It is expected that this group of people will continue their journey and create deep impact in the congregation. The ensuing paragraphs report key points of learning acquired from the first stage of implementation of the witnessing community strategy up to now.

The first learning is that whole-hearted and long-term commitment of a leader in this missional transformation is extremely important. It is not just an endorsement or
promotion of a program or church activity, but a consistent demonstration of leadership by example. It demands a leader to personally model a missional lifestyle. This is an issue of deeds rather than words. It requires that leader possess a character of perseverance because missional transformation is a slow process in need of intentional and deliberate efforts to cultivate. As a leader, I am aware that the congregation and church leaders in Hong Kong in general are not familiar with the concept of missional church. Most of them are confused between the concept of “missions” and “being missional.” As Michero points out, “Missions is something a church does; to be missional expresses the core identity of a church, its heart and soul.”

1 Much effort has been made in teaching, open discussions, misconception clarification, and objection handling to assist these pilot witnessing community members to leap over the hurdle of theological understanding. Much time has been spent with them in hospitality activities of the church and outreach activities so that they can visualize what a missional lifestyle should be and experience God together.

The second learning is that leader selection and leadership development is crucial. Missional transformation cannot be imposed from the top down or manipulated for implementation. It is a value of the kingdom of God that has to be genuinely owned and embraced by the congregation. Therefore, missional transformation agents are necessary. The leaders who are totally convinced that the missional church ideals are God’s calling upon our congregation are already equipped with leadership character and skills. They have the capacity for making a big impact by influencing the rest of the congregation.

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1 Michero, “Strategies for the Missional Transformation of an Attractional Church,” 114.
They will become effective missional transformation agents to facilitate the transition of the congregation to be missional.

The third learning is the fact that despite the fact that Chinese believers in Hong Kong demand strong church leaders, human leadership cannot compare with the work of the Holy Spirit. As leader of the pilot witnessing community, I was extremely anxious at the beginning of the process. I prayed very earnestly during this time, and in every meeting of the community, when I created space to invite the Holy Spirit to work in the minds of the members, they learned the missional concept much more quickly than I anticipated. All objections to the missional church ideals were resolved easily.

There was another occasion when the community members prayed together, and all of us sensed the prompting of the Holy Spirit to visit an old lady who lives alone in a small flat in an adjacent public housing estate. We agreed to cut short the meeting and visit the lady who broke into tears because of our surprise hospitality. She told us that she originally intended to commit suicide as her son had passed away recently, but by our visit we had saved her life. All members were overwhelmed by such a wonderful work of the Spirit and were more and more convinced that witnessing community is God’s way for our church. As Zechariah 4:6 states, “Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says Yahweh of Armies.”

In closing, two emails are quoted below. These were both sent to me from James Wong, before and after the first stage of implementation. The first email is dated November 11, 2015, upon my invitation that he join the pilot witnessing community:

I totally respect your leadership and am a faithful supporter of the church. However, some recent development has provoked my uneasy feeling, honestly
anxiety, about our future direction. I hope I’m not over worrying. I’m afraid the change you are planning to make will damage the peaceful life of the congregation. I’m afraid the new idea called “missional” and the actions you are promoting will create confusion in our congregation. Actually, our congregation is still young. Why not let them deepen their roots and grow? Our church is already doing some services in the community of Eastern District anyway. Why change? Please understand this opinion is from my sincere concern, and please don’t treat it as an offence. In Christ, James

After considerable hesitation, James agreed to join the pilot witnessing community. This second email is dated April 1, 2016, after he had spent several months meeting with the pilot group and participating in the service commitments:

I need to write this mail to say thank you for everything God did and you did in this year of community life. This year is enlightening to me. I’ve got a new understanding about God’s heart and his calling. I know now that being missional is not going New Guinea, but being a missionary in our neighborhood. I’m glad I can go out and serve people as I can see Jesus in them. My tears flow every time I see the GEM GEM worshipping God. I was so skeptical about new thing before. But after this year, I have to say, Sorry! I was wrong! I know this is only the beginning of a new journey, but I am committed to it. Love in Christ, James

May God’s work in James’s heart be a foreshadowing of what is to come for the entire congregation of Tung Fook Chai Wan Church.

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Both emails have been translated by the author from Chinese.
APPENDIX A
SERMON SERIES ON MISSIONAL CHURCH, BASED ON THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

***This sermon series is based on the work of Mark D. Roberts.¹

- The mission of Jesus and his Church: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor. He has sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." (Luke 4:18-19)

- Missional church should indwell in the Holy Spirit and be led by him: Mark D. Roberts asserts that Jesus “was sent by God in the power of the Holy Spirit” (Luke 4:18).² Roberts continues to explain that although “Jesus was the divine Son of God, he was empowered by the Holy Spirit for his ministry,” and although Jesus’ “birth was a miracle of the Holy Spirit, at his baptism by John in the Jordan River, he received the Holy Spirit in a dramatic way (Luke 3:21-22).”³ Henceforth, Jesus “was guided by the Holy Spirit (Luke 4:1).”⁴

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² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.
• Missional church is to announce the kingdom of God: Jesus practiced what he preached to announce the coming of God’s kingdom. This includes release for the captives and oppressed (Luke 4:33-35), healing (Luke 7:21-22), liberation of “those who were bound by social injustice and prejudice (Mark 7:24-30; Luke 5:12-15; 7:36-50; 8:43-48; 10:38-42; 19:1-10),” and calling “his followers to love their neighbors and their enemies (Luke 6:35; 10:27).”⁵ Roberts concludes, “Where Jesus was, there was the kingdom of God (Luke 17:21).”⁶

• Jesus’ mission is “to form a witnessing community of good news”: Roberts writes, “Although not explicitly stated in Luke 4:18-19, when the poor, the blind, and the captives received the good news of God’s kingdom, they also had the chance to join the community of kingdom people, who, once reconciled to God, experienced reconciliation with each other as well. In Luke 5, Jesus called a few fishermen to form the core of his disciples, promising that they would now fish for people (Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16). The community of Jesus’ followers live under God’s reign, demonstrating love and justice as servants of God and of each other (Luke 11:42).”⁷

• Missional church is to enter into our neighborhood: Luke 10:1-12.

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⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.
“We are a community sent by Jesus on a mission”: Roberts explains, “We who follow Jesus are a community of sent people as Jesus was sent into the world by his Heavenly Father (John 17:18).” Jesus has given our church as a community a responsibility to continue his mission in this world to proclaim the reconciliation between God and all people and all creation. In Luke 24:49, Jesus also promises us that the Holy Spirit will empower us sufficiently to do such mission. 

8 Ibid. 
9 Ibid.
APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS: SELECTING CANDIDATES WITH LEADERSHIP POTENTIAL

The following is a detailed description of the eligibility questions and the way a candidate with leadership potential is identified:

- There are a total of five key questions. The first one is, “Do you have experience of leading people to achieve an objective? If yes, please briefly describe it.” The second one is, “Do you have experience of influencing others’ way of thinking or doing things? If yes, please briefly describe it.” The third one is, “Do you think people always listen to what you say? If yes, please give one example. If no, why do you think this is not the case?” The fourth one is, “Could you describe your relationship with your existing cell group members in the Church? Do you like them? Do you think they like you? Why?” The fifth one is, “Did you try to learn to grow in your knowledge and relationship with God in the past three years? If yes, please give one or two examples.”

- With regard to whether a candidate has the ability to influence others: If the answer to the first three questions is “yes,” the candidate has to give examples. The examples the selection committee is looking for are that he/she has the role and experience of leadership such as being a leader of a project in his/her company, the church, or other hobby group, or playing a leading role in other groups within or outside the church.
• With regard to whether a candidate has good communication skills, the selection is done through observation. If the selection committee is convinced that he / she can express his / her opinion or idea clearly both verbally and / or by body language, he / she is deemed to possess good communication skills.

• As for the question whether a candidate has the ability to work with and relate to others, the selection committee will observe the way he / she answers question four. The criteria to determine whether a candidate has good relationship with his / her existing cell group members is his / her manner during his / her description of their relationship. If the candidate describes it happily without hesitation, it is likely that the relationship is good. If he / she can give good examples, it is very likely that he / she can relate well with others.

• As for the question whether a candidate has a hunger for spiritual growth, if the answer is yes in question five, the selection committee will ask for examples. The examples the committee is looking for are whether he / she practices a personal devotion discipline, reads books on spiritual topics, attends conferences that can enhance his / her relationship with God, and / or attends courses relating to biblical or theological studies in seminaries. The selection committee will also ask if the candidate has any recent experience of an encounter with God.


Morse, MaryKate. Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2008


Online Sources


