Empowering Malaysian Christians at CityLife Church: A Strategy for Ministry and Mission

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This ministry focus paper entitled

EMPOWERING MALAYSIAN CHRISTIANS AT CITYLIFE CHURCH: 
A STRATEGY FOR MINISTRY AND MISSION

Written by

MICHAEL KAH KHOOI LOKE

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

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SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE
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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

BY

MICHAEL KAH KHOOI LOKE
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ABSTRACT

Empowering Malaysian Christians at CityLife Church:
A Strategy for Ministry and Mission
Michael Kah Khooi Loke
Doctor of Ministry
School of Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary
2018

The purpose of this paper is to empower Malaysian Christian migrants to participate fully in the mission of God through CityLife Church and amongst the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia. The impact of colonization of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British and their respective forms of Christianity on Malaysia, coupled with the subsequent formation of the indigenous church by Borneo Evangelical Mission provide context to the situation. After the independence of Malaysia, the discriminatory government policies toward non-Muslims led to a growing migration to Australia. Some have settled at CityLife Church where they have begun to play active roles in leadership and ministry. However, ongoing challenges persist, which are identified in part one.

A literature review of the missional Church in cultural diversity and contextualization, together with energy management and the theology of empowerment, provide the foundation for this study. A theology of mission of the triune God coupled with the calling of CityLife Church was developed together with the theology of empowerment based on the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus (part two). A ministry plan centred on the training and development of Life Group leaders of Malaysian descent is launched to increase their capacity for ministry and mission. The implementation process was developed, and the results achieved to date was analysed including success stories (part three).

This paper concludes that Malaysian Christian migrants can overcome their struggles with migrant mentality, divided loyalties, and increasing mental health issues through the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus. This renewed freedom and increased capacity can enable them to embrace fully God’s mission at CityLife Church. Their sense of calling and purpose are further enhanced through their active contribution to the wellbeing and health of the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia.

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To my wife, Gwen, who has encouraged and supported this lifelong journey of learning and transformation to the glory of God and his mission.
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PART ONE

COMMUNITY AND MINISTRY CONTEXT
INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Christian migrants in Australia struggle with their true identity. The focus group for this paper are Christians of Chinese descent. The struggle for identity began when their forefathers came from China to escape severe famines and settled in Malaya primarily in search of wealth and a better future. However, their preoccupation with and pursuit of wealth often meant their disinterest in local politics and the issues of the wider community.

Under British Malaya, the Chinese were brought in to work primarily in the tin mines. The economy expanded, resulting in rapid growth of the urban centres close to the newfound prosperity of the mines. With wealth came the opportunity for further education in the United Kingdom—the pinnacle of colonial elitism and prestige. Many Chinese migrants strived for this dream in colonial Malaya. The Western education and exposure naturally aligned the Western-educated Chinese with the British before independence. The Chinese reaped the rewards, as they became the middle persons of commerce. This sparked resentment from the Malays, who were primarily from the rural areas, less educated, and generally poor.

British Anglicanism came in tandem with British colonial rule, which resulted in many Chinese becoming Anglicans. Christianity grew as a result of the evangelistic activities of other denominations such as the Methodists, Baptists, and Brethren churches. Simultaneously, the Rajah Brooke’s rule in Sarawak, which encouraged missions, meant a large majority of Sarawakians became Christians, particularly among the indigenous communities.
Malaya’s independence came in 1957, followed by the formation of the Federation of Malaysia in 1963, comprising the Federated States of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, and Sarawak. Singapore left the Federation in 1965 and became an independent nation. The 1969 race riots triggered pro-Malay affirmative action, which degenerated into a discriminatory tool against the Chinese in particular, in all fields of commerce and government. Racial politics has thrived in Malaysia even up to the present day, and despite more than fifty years of Federation, the nation has remained as divided as ever along racial, ethnic, and religious lines. This has led to the steady migration of Malaysian Chinese Christians to Australia, a country that has evolved from her own horrendous legacy of racism through its “White Australia” policy into a postmodern, Western society. However, Malaysian Christians still grapple with this heritage of racism and cultural conflict which manifests in the growing mental health and family issues found in this group today.

This doctoral project aims to empower Malaysian Christian migrants to participate fully in the mission of God through CityLife Church amongst the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia. This calls for Malaysian Christians to be free from a “migrant” mentality, while effectively working through their cultural differences within a postmodern, multicultural Australia. This is accomplished through the welcoming and inclusive culture of CityLife Church, and active participation in its leadership, discipleship, and ministry programs.

In recent years, CityLife Church has transformed from a predominantly White, middle-class church to a multicultural entity representing more than 100 nationalities, and a membership of about 9,000 people. Database estimates put Malaysian Christians at
approximately 20 percent of that total. Malaysian Christians are now represented within CityLife Church and the community, at various levels of leadership and participation with a sense of identity, purpose, and renewed vitality. This has in turn brought about a powerful missional engagement among the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia.

Part one of this paper introduces a brief history of Malaya, starting with the Sultanate of Melaka and its early Islamic connection with China and the Middle East. The subsequent colonization of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British brought its own brand of Christianity, which reinforced the negative and false perception of Christianity as a Western religion and culture. The Brooke dynasty was established in Sarawak, and their consistent support resulted in the growth and expansion of indigenous Christianity, including the formation of the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM). A brief history of BEM is featured in chapter one.

The global collapse of the British Empire after World War II resulted in the independence of Malaya and formation of Malaysia. A compromised solution resulted, with the Malays being guaranteed special rights and privileges in relation to Islam, Malay customs, and culture. The Chinese, being migrants, received limited citizenship rights and maintained their place in the local economy. Sadly, subsequent racial tensions, particularly the race riots of May 1969, affirmative action for the Malays, and rise of Radical Islam, meant growing discrimination against Malaysian Christians, leading to a significant number of them moving to CityLife Church in Melbourne, Australia.

CityLife Church is now a diverse and multicultural church due to its adoption of an attractional model of inclusiveness in their services and ministries. Implementation of
the vision, core values, and strategies under successive pastoral leadership has enabled effective participation of many Malaysians. In spite of the progress made, anecdotal challenges exist for many Malaysian Christian families in Australia such as: difficulty in overcoming the migrant mentality, wrestling with the question of loyalty to Malaysia or Australia, and growing mental health issues among Malaysian migrants. These issues form the basis for the development of the ministry initiative described in part three.

Part two provides a literature review and biblical framework for the Missional Church in cultural diversity and contextualization with relevant perspectives from the Majority World. Critiques of past approaches of mission during the British colonial period assist in the development of the new ministry initiative covered in part three.

Mission and ministry cannot be accomplished unless undergirded by the holistic health of the individual and the Church. The current thinking on energy management coupled with healing through deliverance forms the basis for the theology of empowerment covered in chapter five.

The Mission of the triune God, presented in chapter four, provides a theological foundation for the Kingdom of God and the Great Commission, and considers how CityLife Church as the local body of Christ is called to participate in that mission. Six characteristics are discussed that constitute the Missional Church in postmodern Australia. These characteristics are: the church as sent, as led by the Spirit, as discipler, as signs and wonders, as emergent community, and as transforming culture.

A theology of empowerment based on the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus and the New Testament is formulated for the Malaysian context in chapter five. This is supplemented by a holistic approach of developing the spirit, mind, and body.
This is an important subject as the Church in general tends to encourage Christians to serve, without consideration for the deeper struggles that Christians have, which may bind them and reduce their capacity to serve. This theology of empowerment is part of the gospel that needs to be shared and understood in the right context.

Part three presents a ministry plan that starts with the theological implications of empowering Malaysian Christians through increased capacity while addressing the challenges identified in part one. Effective discipleship starts with hands-on experience in healing, deliverance, and holistic health. Life Group members of Malaysian descent participate in the leadership and ministry training. These participants are divided into the following categories:

1. Older generation aged 60 and above,
2. Families whose children are about to enter colleges and universities,
3. Young families whose children are of primary age, and
4. Young professionals who have studied in an English-speaking country like Australia, UK, USA, Canada, and New Zealand.

Chapter seven outlines the implementation of the two ministry initiatives as discussed in chapter six, which are to be fervent followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian community in Knox, and to be incarnated in the mission of God with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. A timeline of the major activities is provided to meet these initiatives. Some of the major activities include a ministry development process for the Life Group leaders and members of Malaysian descent. This process is supplemented by the arrangement of facilities, development of teaching materials, and budget management. The feedback and improvement on the ministry teaching of
empowerment and holistic health are assessed through a detailed questionnaire. To fulfil the second initiative, the 3Ce ministry is created as a platform to spearhead missional engagement in Sabah and Sarawak.

A detailed account of the results achieved to date are matched against the goals set in Chapter six. The results and progress made provide a positive insight into the effectiveness of the strategies and tactics used to fulfil the mission of God in the East Malaysian context. This has led to some significant development for the future such as the potential partnership between CityLife Church World Impact, 3Ce, and Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) Sarawak. The missional engagement of the Malaysian Christians in Australia with the ministry of the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak demonstrates another great example of how believers can partner with God to fulfil His mission within a global and relevant cultural context. A summary and conclusion are provided including proposed future steps.
CHAPTER 1

ISLAM, COLONIALISM, CHALLENGES AND MALAYSIAN CHRISTIAN MIGRATION

Brief History of Islam in Malaya

The history of the Malay Peninsula goes back to the third century BC. Likely, Christian contact occurred around the seventh century AD when Nestorian Christians from Persia and Turkish Armenian Christians were engaging in trade with Ceylon, India, and China. The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries saw the rapid expansion of Islamic empires within the Malay Archipelago via friendly interactions with Muslim Arab traders. The most prominent of these was the Sultanate of Melaka, founded in 1400 by Parameswara, a rebel Srivijayan prince.

In 1403, Admiral Yin Ching of China established diplomatic relations and trade with Melaka, which was reciprocated by a trade mission sent by Parameswara to China in 1405. This was further strengthened by a larger trade mission led by Admiral Cheng Ho

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3 Chia, *Malaysia and Singapore: Christianities in Asia*, 78.
(Zheng He), the head of China’s trade fleet, in 1409. After his return from China, having met Emperor Yung Lo of the Ming Dynasty, Parameswara married Princess Pasai, converted to Islam, and was conferred the title of Sultan Iskandar Shah (1414-1424).

His descendant, Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1446-1458), proclaimed Islam as the state religion, which was the beginning of the first wave of Islamization in Malaysia. Batumalai explains when the ruler converted, as was customary, all his subjects followed suit and became Muslims. Early Islamization was one of the unique features of Malayan history, as it affected the total life of Malays and also impacted non-Muslims. In 1456, Tun Perak was appointed the Prime Minister/Treasurer, and was credited with the rapid development of the Sultanate of Melaka. In 1458, Sultan Mansur Shah ascended the throne and married Princess Hang Li Po, thus cementing the strong alliance between the kingdoms of Melaka and China.

At the time, Melaka was under constant threat from the Siamese “Buddhist” Empire and it was common to form strategic alliances for trade and protection through marriages. Also, it would be likely that the Sultans at the time knew of the growing influence of the Islamic empire in the Middle East, and saw an opportunity to expand their own empire by being aligned with the emerging superpower. By making Islam the official state religion and following Islamic customs and practices, the Sultans set this precedence and direction for the future of Malaya, and later Malaysia, with lasting consequences.

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One wonders that if Parameswara had met with the Nestorian missionaries first and converted to Christianity, then perhaps the course of history for Malaya and later Malaysia would have been significantly different. Moffett notes that Muhammad in Asia and Charlemagne in the West were the two men that impacted the history of the world more decisively and dramatically in the second five hundred years of the Christian period. Samuel Hugh Moffett explains, “The loss of the Middle East to Islam marked the first permanent check to the Christian expansion besides losing its home and birthplace.”

**Colonialism and Christianity**

While the Crusades were a distant event, colonialism was very much part of Malaysian history. The country experienced the colonization of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British. Each affected the country in different ways depending on various groups’ ethnicity, culture, and circumstances.

As the Ottoman Empire blocked Europe’s traditional trade route with the East, the Portuguese needed an alternative route via the sea, which was realized by Vasco da Gama’s successful voyage around the Cape of Good Hope in 1498. Pope Alexander VI made some far-reaching decisions through the issue of papal bulls, whereby he decreed to the Spanish and Portuguese kings the establishment of the *padroado real* system, whereby colonial and ecclesiastical administrations were established simultaneously. As a result, the political and religious systems became inextricably linked, without any

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distinct separation of church and state. While this brought great benefit to the Catholic Church, as they could now ride the coattails of colonialism, it had long-lasting, damaging consequences on the church in Malaysia that are still plaguing it today.

Hence, in 1511 when Alfonso de Albuquerque of Portugal conquered Melaka, it was perceived by the Malays as a Western, Christian superpower crushing a smaller Malay, Muslim kingdom. Moffett notes, “The churches in Lisbon celebrated this victory as a triumph of Christianity over Islam.”8 When Francis Xavier spent three months in Melaka in 1545, it became known as the “Sodom and Gomorrah of the East,” as the drunken behaviour of the Portuguese soldiers and administrators were not quite the kind of Christian model one would want to portray to the local community. Rightly or wrongly, this perception of corrupt morals clashing with local values was etched into the minds of Malays and Muslims for years to come. To his credit, however, Francis Xavier did establish local churches through effective teaching and training, and built the first school, St Paul’s College.9

Schumann notes that after this point, the Sultans viewed their power and authority over their Muslim subjects as coming from their God, since they were the heads of state and protectors of Islam. In the eyes of the Portuguese authorities, non-Muslims were subject to a different law, rather than that of the Sultan. Hence, when some Muslims converted to Catholicism and were baptized, this was viewed as a serious threat to the


9 Chia, Malaysia and Singapore: Christianities in Asia, 81.
sovereignty of the Sultans, and eroded their authority over time. By 1549, the different missionary orders such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, Dominicans, and Augustinians reported around eighteen monasteries and around 60,000 Catholics.

After the capture of Melaka by the Dutch in 1641, the Dutch Protestants tried to suppress Catholicism, but to no avail. After seventy years in power, there were still six-times more Catholics than Protestants. The Dutch government was primarily motivated by trade, profit, and greed, and not expansion of Christianity, unlike the Catholic power of Portugal. The Protestant clergy were paid employees of the Dutch East India Company rather than the church, and therefore subject to the company’s wishes. The missionary calling of the Church was further weakened by a false and prevailing theological argument at the time, which held that the Great Commission ended with the apostles, and therefore the heathen need not be evangelized. This was totally contrary to the Calvinistic roots of the Dutch Protestants. One could suspect that the love of money and possessions overshadowed the spiritual calling of the Church to missions. It was easier to make money with the cooperation of the local rulers without the antagonizing effect of the conversion of many locals from Islam to Christianity.

British Colonialism and Christianity

British colonialism in Malaya was tied to the British East India Company (BEIC),

10 Schumann, Christianity and Colonialism in the Malay World, 34-35.
11 Moffett, A History of Christianity in Asia Volume 2: 1500-1900, 60.
12 Ibid, 357.
13 Schumann, Christianity and Colonialism in the Malay World, 40, 42.
14 Moffett, A History of Christianity in Asia, Volume 2: 1500-1900, 216.
which was established by royal charter in 1600. With the upturn of trade between India and China, the British needed a secured base along the Straits of Melaka. Under constant threat from the Kingdom of Siam, the Sultan of Kedah finally ceded the island of Penang to Francis Light on behalf of the BEIC in 1786, in return for protection against the Siamese. This was followed by the fall of Melaka in 1795 and Stamford Raffles securing Singapore from the Sultan of Johor in 1819. Thus, the three acquisitions became known as the “Straits Settlements,” and were governed and protected directly under British sovereignty.¹⁵ Little did the Sultan of Johor know that the sleepy and resource-poor island of Singapore would one day be a developed nation. The British saw the opportunity to secure the trade routes along the Straits of Melaka, whilst the Sultans wanted protection and security from the despised Siamese kings, who were traditionally Buddhists.

The BEIC brought in and paid for clergy from the Church of England to minister primarily to the needs of the British citizens present in Penang. Robert Hutchings became the first Anglican chaplain in 1814. He built the first church in Malaysia called the Church of St George the Martyr and learnt the Malay language. He was instrumental in publishing the Dutch Malay Bible and founded the Penang Free School, one of the most prestigious schools in Malaysia.¹⁶ Sadly, subsequent chaplains were not as mission-minded or externally-focussed as Hutchings, otherwise the Anglican church might have become one of the dominant Protestant Christian groups in current-day Malaysia. The Anglicans had a head start and the advantage of good beginnings, but failed to capitalize on it, particularly in West Malaysia.

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Chinese Migration to Malaya

The British expanded their presence when tin was discovered in the state of Perak, in order to satisfy the growing demand for tin during the Industrial Revolution in Europe. This saw a growing influx of Chinese immigrants to work the tin mines, particularly around the Larut Hills. The constant skirmishes between rival Chinese secret society gangs of the Hai San and Ghee Hin, and the rivalry within the Sultan of Perak’s court, opened the way for the British to play a more prominent role, resulting in the so-called Treaty of Pangkor. This allowed the British Resident of Perak to maintain order and ensure a smooth tin trade with absolute authority, while the Sultan kept direct control over Malay customs and the Islamic religion. This formed the basis for the annexation of other states such as Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, which became known as the Federated Malay States. For the sake of trade and harmony, the British government forbade the evangelization of the Malays. Increased economic development meant a larger demand for labour, which was satisfied by immigration from both India and China.\(^\text{17}\) This was the beginning of a siloed mentality of a multi-ethnic community in Malaya, which made the “divide and rule” governing by the British much easier, as no group would dominate. The Malays were mostly in the rural regions, focussed on farming and fishing, while the Chinese were in the towns, with the majority of Indians in plantations and the British civil service. Every community would have their own school, neighbourhood, profession, religion, language, and later even their own political party.\(^\text{18}\)


\(^\text{18}\) Ibid., 77.
While this was ideal for the British as colonizers, this would become a double-edged sword for the future of the country, both before and after the independence of Malaysia.

Changing Sarawak’s History under the Brooke Dynasty

The lack of interest from the British in Borneo in 1844 gave James Brooke, a private individual and ex-employee of the BEIC, the unique opportunity to colonize Sarawak with the grand vision of making Sarawak into the second Java through “Civilisation, Christianity, and Commerce.”

James Brooke was inspired by the influence of Sir Stamford Raffles and his success in ruling Java. His was motivated by success, power, and fame, with a possible knighthood from the Queen of England in recognition of his achievement if he could transform a backward country of natives into a developed nation. He was also careful to preserve and promote the native culture, having witnessed the negative effects of British influence in India. The distinguishing characteristic of the Brooke administration that was different from other European and British colonial powers was the inclusion of local leaders in the consultative and decision-making process, and a healthy respect for their culture and customs.

James was a pragmatic strategist, willing to draw support from the British to suppress piracy—an impediment to commerce and trade—provided that he maintained overall control. His “divide and rule” policy served him well. He assured the Malays of non-governmental interference in their Islamic religion and customs, while isolating the Dayaks (another

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20 Ibid., 6-12.
Indigenous Christianity in Sarawak

In his desire to achieve his grand goal of civilizing the natives, James encouraged missionaries to evangelize the Dayaks using a “gradual and reconciliatory” approach that avoided criticizing their existing beliefs and practices. Conversion would result in peace, through the process of lifestyle transformation from piracy, head hunting, and inter-tribal warfare. This was preferable over allowing the Malays to influence the Dayaks to become Muslims, which was a greater threat to his rule. His hands-on approach, coupled with strong and benevolent leadership, earned and secured loyalty from the local tribal chiefs. James Brooke expressed strong disapproval for over-zealous missionary tactics that rammed religion down the throats of others. He was totally convinced that this kind of approach would not work “in any Malay country and probably not among the Dayaks.”

Varney, in referring to the 2010 Malaysia census, highlights that 76.3 percent of the Iban population of 713,421 consciously identified themselves as Christian, as opposed to being a follower of traditional religion. Perhaps this validates James Brooke’s conviction of the right missionary approach to suit the cultural context of the hearers.

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21 Tan, Brookes, the British, and Christianity, 12-16.

22 Ibid., 19-21.

Charles Brooke, who succeeded his uncle James, was more open to other church denominations such as Catholic and Methodist, but maintained tight geographical segregation, such as allocating the Anglican Church to the first and second divisions, and the Catholics to the third division.\textsuperscript{24} While encouraging mission, he reinforced the separation of state and religion to ensure that the Church would not be powerful enough to usurp his authority.\textsuperscript{25} His political pragmatism shone when he encouraged the mass migration of Foochow Methodists to Sibu, under the pastoral leadership of Nai Siong Wong, to help overcome the financial burden of the state. The entrepreneurial and self-sufficiency spirit of the Methodist mission so impressed him that he encouraged them to start a work in Baram as well.\textsuperscript{26}

Vyner Brooke, who succeeded his father Charles, was a complete contrast, with his more relaxed and sociable personality laced with a tinge of impulsiveness.\textsuperscript{27} However, his preference to delegate downwards reflected a lack of self-confidence, thus distancing himself further away from the day-to-day affairs of the state.\textsuperscript{28} Under Vyner’s rule, strict adherence to the geographical demarcation of the denominations was relaxed. However, one of the consistent policies of the three Rajahs (James, Charles, and Vyner) was the non-proselytization of the Malays, a policy that still stands today.

\textsuperscript{24} Tan, \textit{Brookes, the British, and Christianity}, 34.

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 30-31.

\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 36-38.

\textsuperscript{27} C. Hudson Southwell, \textit{Uncharted Waters} (Calgary: Astana Publishing, 1999), 16-17.

\textsuperscript{28} Tan, \textit{Brookes, the British, and Christianity}, 40-42.
During the Brooke and British colonial period, Christianity grew through its various denominations: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM). From the Christian perspective, this positive development laid the foundation and gave the church in Sarawak a head start, before and immediately after Malaysian independence.

Development of the Borneo Evangelical Mission in Sarawak

The Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) was founded on August 31, 1928, in Melbourne, Australia. On October 1, 1928, the commissioning service was held for Frank Davidson, Carey Tolley, and Hudson Southwell, the pioneering missionaries to Sarawak, Borneo.29 The history of the BEM is well documented by Southwell’s Uncharted Waters, which became one of the primary sources of the BEM’s early days. Their arrival was timely as Sarawak enjoyed a measure of peace, just four years prior among the tribes.30 Unlike James and Charles, Vyner Brooke preferred a more hands-off approach, and the country was run mainly by the Chief Secretary and the Regional Residents.31

BEM was assigned to the Sungai Pranga, Limbang area of the fifth division, since other Christian denominations were already established in the first to the fourth divisions.32 At the time, there was social and political tension between two indigenous groups: the aggressive migrant Ibans and the Muruts (later called Lun Bawangs), exacerbated by a high mortality rate among the Muruts due to drunken behaviour and

29 Southwell, Uncharted Waters, 63-65.
30 Ibid., 40.
31 Tan, Brookes, the British, and Christianity, 40-42.
32 Ibid., 26,34.
irresponsible living. Yet, the transformation of the Murut tribes through BEM’s efforts highly impressed Rajah Vyner Brooke: “I believe you have done more good in a few years than the Government has done in forty. And the thing that surprises me is that your Mission does all this by methods of faith and by spiritual means.”

The success of the Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) in planting indigenous churches in Sarawak, particularly after the Second World War, was based on the ‘Three-Self’ principles of self-propagating, self-governing, and self-supporting. Given the relative isolation of such communities, they had developed self-contained and self-sufficient mentalities, which were fertile grounds for the realization of the ‘Three-Self’ principles. The unique story of BEM was not its success in planting autonomous, indigenous churches—as many other mission organisations have done that before—but its successful implementation of its pre-determined exit strategy. This meant missionaries were there to equip and train indigenous pastors, teachers, and missionaries to assume local leadership positions as soon as feasible so that the missionaries could move to other areas of work and ministry.

The work of BEM, which was modelled after the China Inland Mission (CIM), may have been influenced by Roland Allen, who advocated similar ‘Three-Self’

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33 Southwell, Uncharted Waters, 96-97.
34 Ibid., 101-102.
36 Ibid., 275-280.
principles based on his experience as a missionary in North China. This tested principle from China, together with the threat of communism in the South East Asian region at the time, resulted in BEM formulating a fifteen-year exit policy: to complete and hand over the ownership and responsibility of the indigenous churches to be under the umbrella of the separately-created organisation called *Sidang Injil Borneo* (which means Borneo Evangelical Mission in Malay) by 1965.

Factors for its growth during this period were: (1) the desire and willingness of the local indigenous communities to receive the message of Christ on their own accord without any coercion, (2) the use of Bahasa Malaysia and the local indigenous languages as a means of communication instead of English, (3) the contextualization of the Christian faith to local customs, (4) the demonstration of the superior power of Christ over local ruling spirits, and (5) the building of trust and friendships between the missionaries and the local communities through their sincere acts of service, teaching, and the betterment of their communities through education and social welfare.\(^{38}\) These factors influence the basis for the formation of the 3Ce ministry, discussed in Chapters six and seven.

**Independence of Malaya and Formation of Malaysia**

The Malays were more interested in local politics and concerned about their political future in a post-colonial era compared to the predominantly migrant populations of the Chinese and Indians. The Chinese were more concerned about the political unfoldings in China and generating wealth, just as the Indians were with India. Rowan

\(^{38}\) Tan, *Planting an Indigenous Church*, 136-140.
discusses how the three distinct streams of Malay nationalists—the first being the Islamic reformists, Malay educated radicals, and English-educated Malay aristocracy—were able to unite based on the perceived, growing threat from the non-Malay community. This concern prompted their move to ensure and safeguard their special position in the future Malaya and later Malaysia.

The Japanese further exacerbated this racial divide, during their occupation of Malaya during the Second World War. The Japanese favoured the Malays, at the expense of the Chinese. At the instigation of the Japanese, bloody racial riots broke out, particularly in the southern state of Johor, resulting in thousands of deaths.39 This continued after the war, with revenge and racial vendettas being commonplace, resulting in deep resentment and hatred between the Malays and the Chinese.

Therefore, it was not surprising that when the British proposed the Malayan Union in 1945—a uniting of all the Malayan territories except Singapore—in which non-Malays would be given equal rights and citizenship, the Malays vehemently opposed it through protests and strikes, seeing it as yet another erosion of Islam and their identity. This gave rise to the formation of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) in 1946, headed by Dato Onn Jaafar, an organisation that has continued to be the major partner in the government since independence in 1957.40

Sadly, the British, severely weakened from the ravages of the Second World War and sensing the rise of nationalism and independence all over Asia, did not have the political will to pursue the agenda of the Malayan Union. Instead, as most colonialists of

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40 Ibid., 80-81.
the past did in the twilight of their empires, the British chose the easy option of pulling together and handing over power to the three main political parties at the time: UMNO, the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC), which altogether became known as The Alliance.

Led by Tunku Abdul Rahman, a British-educated aristocrat from UMNO, together with leaders from MCA and MIC, they took the country to independence on August 31, 1957, with the compromised formula of the “Chinese receiving limited citizenship rights and maintaining their place in the local economy in return for the Malay community being guaranteed its special rights and privileges in relation to Islam, Malay customs, and culture.” Sarawak and Sabah (British North Borneo), together with Singapore, joined the Federation of Malaysia in 1963. However, Singapore’s membership was short-lived, and in 1965 left Malaysia to become an independent nation.41

**Challenges Faced by Christians in Malaysia**

Ethnic tensions, particularly between the Malays and Chinese, have prevailed throughout Malaysia’s recent history. The expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 was primarily attributed to the fear of tipping the racial balance in favour of the Chinese. Race and religion have been the distinctive and predominant features of the Malaysian political landscape. The difficulty has been in maintaining the right tension between Malaysian nation building and unity while preserving Malay nationalism and *Ketuanan Melayu* (Malay Supremacy).

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41 Ibid., 81.
According to Kia Soong Kua, the contradictions of the Alliance formula led to the communal riots of May 13, 1969. He further argues the riot was “a coup d’état by the then emergent Malay state capitalist class to depose Tunku Abdul Rahman” (the first Prime Minister), who symbolized “the out-dated Malay aristocracy.” The race riots gave these capitalist elites the justification to aggressively promote the notion of Malay nationalism and supremacy. Official statements held the May 13, 1969 riots were prompted by the extreme provocation of the opposition parties (mainly Chinese and Indian) after they won significant inroads in the May 10, 1969, elections. From the analysis of the now declassified documents, Kua asserted that there was insufficient evidence to back up such an allegation, and that it was instead spontaneous rioting by ordinary Malays and Chinese. He concluded that the riots were engineered to bring about a regime change with Tun Abdul Razak, the then deputy Prime Minister, in firm control through the declaration of emergency ordinances. However, it would be fair to say the Chinese were blamed for starting the riots, which resulted in retaliation from the Malays. The official statistics that reported “137 people killed (18 were Malays), 342 people injured, 109 vehicles burnt, and 118 buildings destroyed,” confirmed the Chinese bore the brunt of the devastation from this sad and tragic event. Since the May 13, 1969 riots, the Malaysian Chinese have always lived with the dreaded fear that such an incident would happen again in the future. This fear has led to significant and increased

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43 Ibid., 3.


migration of Malaysian Chinese to other countries, including Australia. Politicians in Malaysia have often used the potential threat of racial riots to quell dissent or debate on race, religion, and privilege.

Chin recalls the introduction of the New Economic Policy (NEP) was designed to alleviate poverty and “restructure society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function.”46 This affirmative action was to bring all communities, particularly the Malay community, up to par with the others to avoid a repeat of the racial riots and bloodshed of May 13, 1969. In general, most Malaysians would agree with the spirit of the policy, but its implementation has sown seeds of frustration among the non-Malays. It has become a “Malay first” policy that has impacted every strata of society, from quotas in university placements, and preferential bank loans, to compulsory thirty percent equity reserved for Malays in every Initial Public Offering (IPO), and Malay-only tenders for government contracts. According to Chin,47 it made matters worse when the Malaysian civil service in their zeal created a virtually all-Malay enclave.

The fine line between affirmative action and outright racial discrimination came into question because of biased implementation. For example, in education, the quota of 55:45 in favour of Malays for higher education was regularly exceeded beyond 60 percent. As education has traditionally been a key priority for the Chinese and other non-Malays, this became a constant source of frustration among those communities. To compound this effect, the government allowed Malays to freely enter a one-year


47 Ibid., 163.
matriculation program as a backdoor way of getting into public universities, and also promoted Malay-only colleges such as Institut Teknologi MARA (ITM). ITM in turn offered diploma and degree courses to those Malay students who failed to enter public universities. Consequently, one could imagine the wide disparity in the standards and quality of academic qualifications, in addition to the perceived deprivation of deserving non-Malay students.

As another example, in the private sector, thirty percent of the IPOs became reserved for Malay investors. However many of these were bought by well-connected Malay elite who then quickly disposed of the shares, usually to non-Malays, for a quick profit. Hence, it was not surprising when Prime Minister Najib Razak (son of Tun Abdul Razak) announced that of the RM54 billion in shares allocated to bumiputra investors (Malays and indigenous people of Malaysia) in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange (KLSE) between 1984 to 2005, only RM2 billion worth of shares were kept, and the rest were disposed of for quick profit after the IPO was listed.48 Such short-term actions on the part of the bumiputra community was frustrating even for the Government, and bred further resentment among the non-bumiputra communities.

Malaysia is generally viewed by the West as a moderate, Muslim-majority nation, which is a success story for the twenty-first century. However, a perception has been growing that Malaysia seeks to be an even more Islamic country than those in the Middle East. Evidence of this includes the banning of the word Allah in the Malaysian translation of the Bible. Also, an Indonesian Islamic scholar, Dr Ulil Ahshar was banned from

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48 Ibid., 164.
entering Malaysia to speak at a forum because his brand of Islam was regarded as too liberal, in contrast to the general adhered beliefs and practices in Malaysia. The primary reason given was that the teaching contravened the Shafie school of Islam and could potentially threaten the Muslims in Malaysia.\textsuperscript{49}

McAmis notes that the Malays were primarily pagan before the adoption of Islam in the fifteenth century. Hence, Islam in Malaysia today is interspersed with strong beliefs in spirits, magic, and superstition, which are not derived from Islam. The average Muslim in Malaysia sees God as the great king or governor who is very powerful, but distinctly remote from the everyday life of a common believer. This belief has given rise to the local appeasement of spirits and gaining of favour for their common good.\textsuperscript{50} This is one characteristic that differentiates Islam in Malaysia from that practised in the Middle East. Perhaps this is what gave rise to an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia.

As Muzaffar, a respected Indian Muslim in Malaysia, defines an Islamic resurgence as “the endeavour to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of the Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order in the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Qur’an and the Sunnah.”\textsuperscript{51}

Von Der Mehden has explored Islamic revival in Malaysia and Indonesia and offers a discussion as to how their respective governments have reacted and responded to the


challenges posed by the resurgence of Islam. He categorizes four groups of Muslims: “traditionalists, radicals, fundamentalists and the revivalists,” as a means of comparison. He writes, “The vast majority of Muslims in Malaysia are the traditionalists,” living mainly in rural areas and therefore not as actively engaged in religious-political debate, but generally are supportive of governmental policies that include the protection and promotion of Islam. Elections are primarily won or lost based on the support of the rural population, due to the disproportionate representation of the electorate that favours the rural constituencies. Hence, throughout Malaysia’s history, they have been the “target of the radicals, revivalists and fundamentalists to influence them to their cause.”

The “fundamentalist” Muslims are more like fundamentalist Christians, who seek the practice of pure religion as promoted by their founders. These fundamentalist Muslims subscribe to the conservative orthodox interpretation of Islam and seek to “introduce a state or society based on close adherence to the Quran and Hadiths,” including the adoption of traditional Arab attire. They tend to be “suspicious of technological innovation and Western influence,” and are influenced by the local ulama and religious schools. They target new recruits among “university students and urban Malays,” which makes the government of Malaysia nervous about their potential reach.

52 Fred R. Von Der Mehden, “The Political and Social Challenge of the Islamic Revival in Malaysia and Indonesia,” Muslim World 76, no. 3-4 (1986), 221.
53 Ibid., 222.
54 Ibid., 223.
55 McAmis, Malay Muslims, 80-81.
and threat. By their promotion of an Islamic state and strict adherence to Islamic laws, they create disharmony among the racial and religious communities of the country.\textsuperscript{56}

The radicals are “more extreme than the fundamentalists” and impatient to achieve Islamic statehood, sometimes resorting to violence to achieve it. Because of their uncompromising orthodoxy, other religions in Malaysia feel threatened by their preaching and beliefs. Often the Malaysian government has resorted to strong measures to control deviationist teachings, as witnessed by the Memali incident of December 1985, when fourteen civilians and four policemen died.\textsuperscript{57}

Finally, the “revivalist” Muslims seek a renewal among its faithful in a modern context. Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), formerly led by Anwar Ibrahim, is a good example of the revivalist type of organisation. The pursuit of the broader issues of social justice within a pluralistic society, allows them to gain wider acceptance among the populace as reflected in their approximately 35,000 strong memberships. Hence, the ruling government sees ABIM and its leader as a greater threat to their political future.\textsuperscript{58} McAmis notes that ABIM has called on the government to introduce \textit{shariah} (Islamic law) to realise a just society.\textsuperscript{59} Ng has shown the type and extent of Islamization over the

\textsuperscript{56} Von Der Mehden, “The Political and Social Challenge of the Islamic Revival in Malaysia and Indonesia,” 223-224.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 225.

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid., 226-227.

\textsuperscript{59} McAmis, \textit{Malay Muslims}, 81.
timeline of Malaysia’s history that has shaped the political and religious landscape of Malaysia (See Appendix A).\textsuperscript{60}

Ibrahim expressed the concerns of many moderate Muslims and non-Muslims in Malaysia when he said Islamization in Malaysian public policy has created a false sense of superiority among many Malay Muslims, encouraging a belief that they have an edge in terms of law, economics, justice, and knowledge. As a political experiment, it has failed miserably, yet the policy makers are pushing for more Islamization, even to the point of attempting to re-write history, re-interpret the Federal Constitution, and destroy democratic institutions.\textsuperscript{61} This increased commitment to Islamization is seen in the spending of RM800 million per year by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (JAKIM) today, as compared to RM30,000 spent in 1960.\textsuperscript{62}

**Migration of Malaysian Christians to Australia**

Out of the Australian population of 23.4 million people, Malaysia appears in the top 10 countries of birth and represents 140,000, or 0.6 percent of residents.\textsuperscript{63} Many are professionals who were generally educated in the West or are fluent in English. The discriminatory policies in Malaysia against non-Muslims have prompted significant migration to Australia.


\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 57.

The main reason for this migration has been to obtain a higher quality of education for their children in Australia, as educational institutions in Malaysia have been limited due to discriminatory policies. However, the cost of private higher education in Australia is higher for foreigners. Yet, permanent residents and citizens of Australia are entitled to the Higher Educations Contributions Scheme (HECS). Students under the HECS can achieve a higher education through a loan system that is only required to be repaid by instalments upon employment. In recent years, however, due to such a high influx of migrants and defaults on such loans, the Australian government has changed their policy to state that permanent residents are no longer eligible for HECS.

The majority of Malaysian Christians coming to Australia are ethnic Chinese, with a small percentage being ethnic Indians. Ethnic Chinese are traditionally Buddhists-Taoists mixed with Confucianism that emphasizes filial piety and strong family ties. Education and success are key values embedded deeply in the Malaysian Chinese culture. Hence, resorting to various means, including spiritual powers such as fortune telling, geomancy, and talismans to fulfil such values would have been common before conversion to Christianity. Because of the historical influence of the British, plus the exposure to Western societies like America, Canada, and Australia, many Malaysian Christians are educated in the West and value Western-style democracy. This openness means the willingness to explore new ideas and experiences, including religion.
CHAPTER 2
CITYLIFE CHURCH MINISTRY TO MALAYSIAN CHRISTIANS

Introduction and History of CityLife Church

CityLife Church in Melbourne, Australia, is home to about 9,000 members, which represents over 100 nationalities. It started as a Pentecostal, Australian church in 1967, consisting of mostly Caucasian Australians. Today, more than half of the congregation members are from Asia, consisting of first-generation migrants and first-generation Australians, with some, like myself, who sit on CityLife’s Board of Elders. The board is primarily responsible for setting the strategic spiritual direction of the church. To do this, the board appoints the senior minister, who is authorized to run and lead the church. He is ably supported by his senior leadership team and staff. CityLife Church celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in February 2017, and also witnessed the passing of the leadership baton from Mark Conner, who served for twenty-two years as our senior minister, to Andrew Hill.

Richard Holland as Gatherer (1967-1986)

CityLife Church started from humble beginnings as Waverley Mission in 1967, under the leadership of founder Richard Holland, occupying a rented shop on Glenwood
Avenue, Glen Waverley. Under Holland, there were more noticeable characteristics of being a Pentecostal church, with regular signs and wonders such as healings, deliverances, and baptisms of the Holy Spirit with the evidence of speaking in tongues. This was very much aligned to Holland’s gifting of moving in the prophetic and the miraculous. Holland was a man of vision and faith, and longed to see the church as a beacon of light and impact in the community. The church grew rapidly from a suburban church into a diverse one incorporating overseas students (many from Malaysia) who were studying at local colleges and universities. It was indeed a church gathered with a mission, and by 1982 was renamed Waverley Christian Fellowship (WCF). Waverley Christian College (WCC) was created as a result of a merger with Parkmore Full Gospel Church College in that same year. WCF and WCC moved to its present location in 1982 when 9.6 acres of land were purchased at the corner of High Street Road and Cathies Lane in Wantirna South.1 Further details of the history under Holland can be found in Richard Holland’s book.2

Kevin Conner as Teacher/Organizer (1986-1995)

Kevin Conner was a gifted teacher and administrator, and so gradually the church became known for its in-depth and solid teaching. ACTION (All Church Teaching in one Night) nights became popular with the congregation and were well attended. Greater focus was given to home meetings, and team ministry was taught and practised in the

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2 Richard J. Holland, From an Acorn to an Oak Tree: A History of Waverley Christian Fellowship (Melbourne: CityLife Church, 1999).
context of the church ministries. Some of his significant contributions were the Keys of Knowledge seminars and starting the Leadership Bible College. Joyce Conner, his wife, assisted with pastoral care and oversaw the women’s ministry. The focus on missions continued with the formation of the missions committee in 1992. A second Sunday morning church service was started which motivated the building of the new auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,250 people. Kevin Conner was instrumental in providing more structure and order (membership, elders, etc.) within the workings of the church.


As Mark Conner’s gift was in leadership and preaching, he took the church further, building on the foundations laid by Richard Holland and Kevin Conner, with its seeker-friendly services and great preaching. There continued to be an inclusion of prayer for healing and the Holy Spirit under Mark’s leadership, complemented by greater organisation and excellent service presentations, equipped with the latest audio-visual equipment. With greater emphasis on personal evangelism, community outreach, and mission, CityLife experienced the largest growth in new conversions and membership in the first fifteen years of Mark’s leadership. However, between 2010-2015, as the church spread out through multi-sites, the attendance growth slowed and plateaued at below the 10,000 mark. Also in that time frame, other major churches such as Hillsong Church and Planet Shakers were establishing themselves in Melbourne with their brand of church.

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3 CityLife Church Inc. “This is our Story.”
Mission and Values

Mark Conner and the church’s elders at the time crafted a clear mission statement guided by biblical beliefs and values. Its “mission is to raise up fervent followers of Jesus Christ who will reach out and impact communities, cities, and nations for the Kingdom of God.”

Our Core Values are:

- Jesus Christ – we are a Christian church
- The Bible – we are a Bible-based church
- The Ministry of the Holy Spirit – we are a Spirit-filled church
- Discipleship – we are a maturing church
- Prayer – we are a praying church
- Worship – we are a worshipping church
- Loving Relationships – we are a loving church
- Servant-hood – we are a serving church
- Outreach – we are an evangelistic church
- Relevance – we are a contemporary church
- Diversity – we are a unified church
- Excellence – we are a quality church

These values are being reviewed regularly by the eldership board to ensure conformity and consistency. Further explanation of the mission, core values, and vision are found in Mark Conner’s thesis.

Effective Leadership and Preaching

CityLife Church provides an inclusive and safe environment for Malaysian Christians to thrive in leadership and ministry development, as reflected in the growth of

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5 Ibid.
CityLife Church, where approximately 20 percent of the membership are linked to Malaysia. Malaysian Christians are actively involved in the children, youth, young adults, and adult ministries. Many serve in leadership roles, such as Life Group leaders, coaches, and pastors. Malaysians are represented at the senior leadership and eldership levels, to reflect the growing diversity in the church. Many are pursuing theological training to further equip themselves for ministry, both in the marketplace and in church.

It is well recognized that first-generation Malaysian migrants in Australia will sacrifice primarily to establish their families on a firm footing both financially and educationally, above all other needs. There is anecdotal evidence to indicate that the second generation of Malaysian Christians is better off and more assimilated to Australian society and culture. The values of Australian society provide a fine balance between loyalty to the nation united by a common language, while co-existing within their multi-cultural framework. I pray future generations of Malaysian Christians will play positive and active roles in all spheres of Australian society. This would be the contextualized and holistic ministry of the missional church in a post-modern Australia.

Mark Conner’s visionary leadership and preaching have inspired many Malaysian Christian leaders in CityLife Church. I have been blessed by serving alongside Mark in the board of elders since May 2011. Effective leadership development resulted from learning and observing how Mark conducted himself in the context of the board and church. In addition, Mark was instrumental in encouraging me to pursue the Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) program at Fuller, since he had completed his Fuller D.Min. program in 2009. His encouragement and explanation on how the D.Min. would enhance my ministry journey helped overcome the initial hesitancy in taking such a vital step in 2014.
Life Group Model for Growing Diversity

The 2016 Census data of Australia indicated growing cultural diversity, with only two-thirds (67%) of the Australian population having been born in Australia. For the overseas-born persons, England and New Zealand rank the highest, followed closely by China and India, as the top countries of origin (See Table 1 in Appendix B). Malaysia surpassed Scotland and appears in the top ten countries of birth, representing 0.6 percent of the Australian population.7

In terms of religion, 52 percent of the population are Christians, reflecting the historical influence of European migration. The next two most common religions are Islam (2.6%) and Buddhism (2.4%), and interestingly now 30.1 percent of Australians profess no religion (See Table 2 in Appendix B).8 Table 3 in Appendix B highlights the religious shift of Australians, where in 1966, 86 percent professed the Christian faith, this number has now dropped to 52 percent in the 2016 census. In the corresponding period the “No religion” category has increased from 0.8 percent to 30.1 percent.9 The non-Christian religions stood at 4.6 percent in 1966, and grew to more than 7 percent in 2016 (See Table 4 in Appendix B).10 This rapid growth is due in part to the abolition of the White Australia Policy.

Consequently, the traditional way of doing church and mission along White,

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9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.
Western approaches would need to change for a diverse, multi-cultural, and multi-religious environment. In addition, with a growing 30 percent of Australians professing no religion, our missional ecclesiology also needs to change, and no longer can we assume the community is aware of fundamental Christian beliefs. This missional ecclesiology is discussed in chapter four, which considers the different aspects of CityLife Church as one of God’s missional agents on earth.

I am privileged to speak and minister to various Life Groups within our church that consist mainly of Malaysians and Singaporeans, about being totally free from the negative experiences of the past or broken relationships. Malaysians generally have a lot of baggage from their Confucianist-Buddhist-Taoist influenced beliefs and value systems. Engaging the values based on the Gospel with this diverse culture and belief system becomes a crucial part of ministry to Malaysians.

One example was when a young female doctor coming from that background experienced severe back pain. She had undergone various medical tests such as an MRI, X-rays, and consultations with specialists and physiotherapists to no avail. At the time, I was conducting some teaching in the area of healing and deliverance, and she was referred to me as a last resort. When we arrived at her home, she was lying on her couch unable to move, as each slight movement would cause severe pain. By that time, she had been on medical leave for a few months. On the way there, the Lord revealed that this severe back pain could be caused by a spirit of infirmity, like what is recorded in Luke 13:10-17. When the spirit of infirmity was commanded to leave in the name of Jesus, the severe pain left her immediately and she could walk around the room. The author had a vision of the spirit of infirmity like a scorpion, lodged into her spinal cord that triggered
the severe pain. Now she is back at work, with and all praise and glory given to God. For Malaysians with various spiritual backgrounds, a powerful encounter like this is essential to convince them of the need to switch allegiance to God. There are several stories of how God has transformed lives through his demonstration of power and love.

CityLife Church is well positioned to cater to the growing multicultural diversity in Australian society. As the church grows larger, the Life Group model allows members to maintain close relationships with one another. The corporate gatherings over the weekend coupled with the personal touch of Life Groups, are the keys to our effectiveness. More than 500 Life Groups meet informally, with different cross-cultural settings and demographics. Life Groups are the channels that promote outreach, discipleship, servanthood, and loving relationships with relevance, diversity, and excellence. A Life Group is a safe place where participants can share and discuss concerns and issues in confidence and provides empathy and prayer support for one another.

Coming from a culture of strong family ties, many Malaysian families, particularly parents who are first-generation migrants, find the uprooting from their familiar culture very difficult and traumatic. It is not easy to merely transplant this family relationship into a totally different and alien culture. Through leading a Life Group, my wife and I are privileged to help many Malaysian Christians find purpose and work through their challenges. For some, it may mean letting go of some practices from their country of origin and embracing new practices and attitudes of the new country. Hughes

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noted that religion and community could play an important and positive role for those migrating and settling in Australia. The Life Group is a great place to build mid to long-term relationships.

As members get closer, conflicts can arise between them. Usually they are over small, petty issues like a word spoken in jest or a discussion getting a little out of hand because of the strong views held by some. There is willingness to resolve issues quickly before it festers out of control. As a result, the group has matured and grown stronger and is able to attract new couples who appreciate such a culture and environment. Positive evidence of this is the eager enthusiasm of the group to meet very regularly to do life together without any coercion. Many Australians foster relationships over drinks, whereas Malaysians are more comfortable to do the same over food. Food and fellowship intertwine to create a participative and welcoming environment. The group has been able to reach out to those who have yet to hear the gospel through food and fellowship.

Multi-Site Church Model

In 2005, CityLife Church embarked on a multi-site church strategy, a fairly new concept at the time. It is a blend of church growth and church planting models, which is one church with multiple sites. Each CityLife site is free to develop its unique personality (rather than being a clone), yet all sites share a common DNA through the shared mission, vision, values, and leadership team. While it was working during the initial period, CityLife Church experienced stagnation in various sites, particularly in the CityLife Manningham site. This site was launched in March 2008 in the Northeastern

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suburbs of Melbourne. Many of the initial attendees were from the area and the
congregation grew to an average of 485 weekly attendees in 2008, which then peaked in
2010 with 499 attendees. From then on, it has gradually declined over the years to an
average of 443 in 2016. Approximately 88 percent of the attendees are Asian, of which
an approximate 60 percent came from Malaysia. This congregation’s lead pastor was also
originally from Malaysia.\footnote{CityLife Church Database, accessed Oct.18, 2017.}

The role of the lead pastor is vital to the success and growth of a multi-site
congregation. It is worthwhile to make a cursory comparison to see whether the specific
giftings of a lead pastor can impact the growth of such a congregation. Brenda Turner, a
woman with prophetic and pastoral gifts, was the lead pastor when CityLife Casey started
in 2006. The Casey site grew strongly from 270 to 428 in average attendance between
2006 and 2008. It then plateaued from 2008 to 2015, when its average attendance
fluctuating between 410 and 500. It seemed a ceiling limit of 500 was reached despite
various initiatives to counter the stagnation.

Mark Conner brought in Kim Hammond, who took over as lead pastor of CityLife
Casey in June 2015. Hammond had pastoral and preaching as well as evangelistic
giftings. Average attendance grew from 439 to 637 between 2015 to 2017. In February
2018, an additional Saturday service was added, which resulted in an average attendance
of 900.\footnote{Ibid., accessed Feb. 15, 2018.} While some of that growth may be attributed to the provision of a new building
for church services, it is not just the exercising of gifts, but the outworking of the
missional life of a lead pastor, and the empowering the congregation to do so as well.
The multi-site model has provided Malaysian Christians with additional opportunities to serve and develop their ministry gifts and character. However, leadership seems to be restricted to leading Life Groups and serving in the worship team and children’s ministry. Virtually none are forthcoming for the role of an elder or senior leadership team member. Perhaps the issues identified in a later section of this chapter could be the reasons why many are unable or reluctant to rise up and take the challenge of senior leadership within the church.

CityLife Church Community Care

In addition to Life Groups, CityLife Church impacts the community through its counselling, community care, and development ministry. CityLife Community Care was started under the leadership of Mark Conner. This ministry has impacted the Malaysian community through its counselling and welfare services to individuals and families in their times “of crisis, financial need and distress.”\(^{15}\) In Malaysia, it is taboo to seek counselling or welfare services, as it is perceived to be a “loss of face” to the family. CityLife Community Care provides a safe and private environment for them to seek help. The COACH (Creating Opportunity and Casting Hope) program is helping many to transition into Australian society. In 2016, 5,900 support services were provided with the help of over 630 volunteers, many of whom are part of the Malaysian demographic within CityLife Church. Support services include mentoring programs, support groups,

community events, counselling, garden maintenance, nursing home visits, budgeting, and practical food support.\textsuperscript{16}

Waverley Christian College

As education is a key driver for Malaysians migrating to Australia, CityLife Church provides an integrated educational program from pre-kindergarten to year 12, through their school, Waverley Christian College (WCC). WCC has a short history of forty years but has grown remarkably to approximately 1,950 enrolments in 2017, spread across the Wantirna South and Narre Warren South Campuses, providing primary and secondary education.\textsuperscript{17} Many Malaysian families in the area send their children to WCC, and as a result many find their spiritual home in CityLife Church as well, since the Knox school campus is located on the main CityLife Church Knox campus. Without a doubt, this co-existence of the Wantirna South campus has been a main draw for families joining the CityLife Church Wantirna South site.

World Impact: CityLife Missions

World Impact is CityLife Church’s missions department, whose stated mission is to “empower churches across cultures to impact unreached people groups for the Kingdom of God.”\textsuperscript{18} Resources and people are mobilized to support our missions partners that operate in countries like Cambodia, India, Myanmar, and Indonesia as they

\textsuperscript{16} CityLife Community Care Inc., \textit{Annual Report 2016} (Wantirna South, Victoria, 2016), 4.


“proclaim and demonstrate the Kingdom values of justice, mercy and faith in a world of oppression, poverty and unbelief.” 19 Malaysian Christians participate actively and regularly in our missions programs through fundraising projects and short-term missions trips. Together, Life Groups with young adults and adults from a predominantly Malaysian background are some of the most active groups supporting World Impact. Two out of four staff members of the World Impact department are originally from Malaysia. Malaysian Christians find purpose, meaning, and empathy through participation in World Impact events, as they too know what it means to be marginalized in their country of origin. Perhaps coming from a more Eastern culture, which emphasizes communal interest, it becomes more natural for Malaysian Christians to be active in missions. Their participation in World Impact sets the background and environment for them to participate fully in the mission and support of the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak, expanded further in chapters six and seven.

The synergistic and complementary ministries of CityLife Church, Waverley Christian College, and CityLife Community Care have been a testament to God’s grace and have shown us an evolving model of what it means to be a sent church, impacting the community, city, and nations for the Kingdom of God.

**Ongoing Challenges for Malaysian Christians in Australia**

In spite of CityLife Church providing a spectrum of ministries and support as discussed above, ongoing challenges persist for Malaysian Christians. The main challenges are as follows: difficulty in overcoming migrant mentality,
wrestling with the question of loyalty to Malaysia or Australia, and growing mental health issues. The degree to which these challenges impact them depends on their different stages of life. This is discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Overcoming Migrant Mentality

As part of the deal for the independence of Malaya and later Malaysia in 1963, Malaysian Chinese visitors were granted limited citizenship. Even though they had been born in China, many decided to take up citizenship as they saw Malaysia as their new home. Those who were born in Malaysia naturally did not identify with China as their homeland. They were exposed to the British system of education, and many graduated from British or English-speaking universities in the United States of America, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. Many had aspirations to build a post-independence Malaysia starting as early as 1957, but did not realise the full impact of the racial riots of May 13, 1969. This single event would change the direction of Malaysia from a multi-cultural society to one dominated by the Malay race, culture, and religion.

The Malaysian Chinese, including those born in Malaysia, are often reminded by the ruling Malay political leaders that they are second-class citizens, being differentiated by race and religion. Affirmative action for the Malays meant the Chinese were restricted and discriminated against in business and educational representation in Malaysian universities. As achieving higher education is a driving ethos for Malaysian Chinese, they were confronted with a deja vu experience: to consider migration again, but this time primarily to English-speaking Western nations, such as Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and the USA. Many Malaysian families made the sacrifice to uproot and transplant
themselves into a country like Australia. They feel they are once again foreigners living in a new country, having to rebuild their lives from scratch.

Different categories of Malaysians come to Australia: the older generation migrated some years ago and their children were either born or grew up in Australia. Others may have just arrived through sponsorship by their children. Many were impacted by the May 13, 1969 race riots in Malaysia and have experienced firsthand the gradual and increased impact of racial discrimination through the affirmative action policies of the Malay-majority government. Next, there are families whose children are about to enter into university. This generation missed the race riots experience but witnessed the transition to the Malay language in the Malaysian educational system. This move away from the English language medium of instruction was a deliberate reaction to British colonialism and the promotion of Malay nationalism.

Another group that has migrated consists of young families whose children are of primary and secondary ages. These are generally the ones that see no future for their children’s education and career prospects in Malaysia. They are bilingual or trilingual, meaning they retained their Chinese language skills and culture in their primary education, but had to go abroad or through local twinning programs for their university education in the English language. A fourth group encompasses young professionals with no children who are likely to have studied in an English-speaking country. They are similar in background to those in category three but decided early their future lay in living in a Western country like Australia. These four categories of Malaysian Christians are the focus of the new ministry initiative laid out in chapters six and seven.
Question of Loyalty: Malaysia or Australia?

Migration is a common phenomenon today as a result of globalisation. More so in Asia where the world’s largest populations, like in India and China, are rising from their third-world status to become global economic superpowers to catch up with developed economies like South Korea and Japan. As a result, economic migration from Ireland and other European countries is common today in Asia, which was virtually unheard of twenty-five years ago. Australia has declared that the twenty-first century belongs to Asia and was even able to avoid a recession in 2008-2010 thanks to the growing appetite for raw materials from China’s heavy industries, particularly in construction, infrastructure, and manufacturing.

Migration in Malaysia is a sensitive topic as it has unspoken connotations of disloyalty to one’s country. Given the negative factors discussed in the previous section, it is not surprising emigration has risen, particularly among the Malaysian Chinese community. This community is most impacted by the NEP, declining educational standards, and limited opportunities, exacerbated by the ongoing process of Islamization. Their colonial connection with Britain and fluency in English, encourage and facilitate the many opportunities for capable Malaysians to study in English-speaking countries. Given the more equitable opportunities in a fair and open democracy, it is hardly surprising upon graduation many Malaysians opt to stay in their country of education, resulting in a growing brain drain to Western-developed nations. Hwa Yung rightly expresses concern about the high level of emigration, particularly when more than 35 percent of those who migrated to Australia are Christians. This is highly disproportionate to the 9 percent of the population who are Christians. On this basis, Hwa Yung questions
the commitment of Christians to Malaysia who are unwilling to pay the price of being a counter-cultural community. Goh goes a step further by equating migration of Christians to a lack of loyalty to the nation and warns against despair and apathy.\textsuperscript{20}

Those who migrated are viewed as less committed to Malaysia. This was a view held strongly by Hwa Yung and others in the 1970s when they were students in the United Kingdom. There was a strong push for Malaysians to return to Malaysia upon graduation.\textsuperscript{21}

I am perhaps one of the rare Malaysian Christians that returned twice to Malaysia. The first time was in 1984 from the UK, in the interest of nation building. Since I was trained as a chartered engineer, particularly in the field of mechanical and automotive engineering, employment was sought in the newly established Malaysian National Car company called Proton in 1984, only to receive rejection primarily because of being a non-Malay. After five years of working in an unrelated field, my family and I decided to migrate to Australia in late 1988 when I was promptly employed by Delphi Automotive Inc., a division of General Motors Inc., which at the time was the world’s largest automotive company.

Such was the depth of disapproval of emigration that my own church in Malaysia refused to pray for the family as a farewell blessing. Ironically, in 1993, we moved back to Malaysia for the second time, and worked as an expatriate for Delphi to expand their automotive business, particularly with Proton and Perodua (Malaysia’s second-largest

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\textsuperscript{20} Hwa Yung in Rowan, \textit{Proclaiming the Peacemaker}, 175-178.

\textsuperscript{21} I participated in those “Return to Malaysia” conferences, and am therefore writing from first-hand experience.
national car company). Nine more years were spent in Malaysia, with five and a half years in Kuala Lumpur and three and a half years in Penang. During this time, there were opportunities to be actively involved with the Anglican churches in both cities, having previously served in various leadership capacities, including the running of the Alpha program. These experiences, and others like it, illustrate that it could be an overgeneralization to link migration to a lack of commitment to Malaysia, when the system and policies in Malaysia discriminate against one’s race and religion.

Over the last twenty years, globalisation has impacted the world with the consequent result that it is fairly common to see many nationalities working abroad. For example, it is estimated that one million Australians are overseas, compared to an overall population of twenty-four million. No one would equate working overseas as a lack of commitment to Australia. In addition, the government of Australia allows for dual citizenship, which means that many Australians who are abroad hold another passport. It is therefore not appropriate to hang on to such an outdated notion of emigration being linked to lack of commitment to a country.

There is also a necessary distinction between loyalty to a country and loyalty to a government that practised affirmative action for the Malays and discrimination of the non-Muslim community, as perceived by the people. One would suggest that a better approach would be to include the overseas Malaysians in nation building instead of labelling them as disloyal or lacking commitment to the country.

Growing Mental Health Issues

The challenges of overcoming the migrant mentality, struggling with questions of
loyalty, and adapting to a postmodern culture, coupled with the stress of migration, have 
exacted a toll on Malaysian Christians coming to Australia. Anecdotal evidence indicates 
a slow but growing number of Malaysian Christians within CityLife Church that 
experience mental health issues. The years of discrimination in Malaysia have seared this 
vulnerability into the Malaysian Christians’ psyche. It is an issue that Malaysians in 
Australia have to resolve within themselves, lest it rears its ugly head under the wrong 
circumstances.

Many Malaysian migrants struggle to find equivalent level jobs in Australia. In 
the Malaysian cultural context, this perceived demotion can be a “loss of face,” leading to 
rejection, depression, and regret about coming to Australia. This is compounded by a 
reluctance to open up and talk about issues and challenges they are facing.\textsuperscript{22} This 
reticence is prevalent among Malaysian men, who are usually the breadwinners. Among 
the professional class of Malaysians, some are willing to sacrifice their careers for the 
sake of their families and have succeeded in pursuing a new career through re-education 
or re-training.

For those owning small to medium-sized businesses in Malaysia, it is not 
uncommon to find husbands returning there to continue running those businesses, while 
their spouses and children remain in Australia. The lack of business connections and 
differences in culture in Australia have prevented these Malaysians from establishing a 
foothold in Australia. As financial security is a high priority, this sacrifice of separation is 
considered acceptable and tolerated. This has become so prevalent that it is called an

\textsuperscript{22} Australian Capital Territory Government, Multicultural Health Policy Unit, “ACT Health 
Community Profile: Malaysia.” 2015, 3-4.
“astronaut family.” The wife stays in Australia and shoulders the direct responsibility for the family needs, while the husband is living in Malaysia and visiting Australia when time permits.\textsuperscript{23} This kind of practice has spilled over to some of the CityLife Church Malaysian community.

However, such an arrangement poses social relationship challenges for the marriage and family. As it is taboo to talk about this with others, it can be difficult to establish the extent of the problem. The years of discrimination suffered in Malaysia have forced many to take such drastic actions for the sake of a better future for their families. The long-term effects of such actions may surface later in life and will be likely to affect the well-being of the children of such families. It is comparable to living in a single-parent environment.

The separation of the husband and wife for long periods of time increases the risk of extra-marital affairs. Again, when such events happen, it is seldom discussed and tends to be swept under the carpet, especially when the children concerned are young and dependent. This is also done for the sake of the family name, which is influenced by Confucianist thought. However, the pressure to stay together diminishes when living in Australia, where it is common for marriages to be dissolved due to irreconcilable differences. It is observed that divorces and separation among Malaysian couples are likely to occur when they reach the “empty-nester” stage of their lives. Their sacrifices have produced their intended outcomes of children attaining tertiary qualification, getting

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{23} Pascale Allotey, Lenore Manderson, Jane Nikles, Daniel Reidpath, and Jo Sauvarin, “Chinese: A Guide for Health Professionals,” The Australian Centre for International and Tropical Health and Nutrition, University of Queensland.}
married, and future financial success. Nevertheless, it could be a vulnerable time for the estranged parents, who have nothing in common to continue living together.

Malaysians are generally a passive and peace-loving group and tend to avoid public displays of embarrassment to preserve the family name. Family conflicts are usually confined within the walls of the home and not to be shared with outsiders. Peace and harmony are highly valued among Malaysian communities in Australia but need to be understood within a hierarchical and Confucianist social order. Their way of resolving issues generally means conflict avoidance or one party giving in to the other. In general, Australian society would put a similar priority on peace and security. However, they believe change or resolution should come through peaceful dialogue, sensible persuasion through the democratic process within an egalitarian context.\textsuperscript{24} These differences of approach could be a source of misgivings and conflicts among first generation Malaysian migrants and their children who have grown up in Australia, thus contributing to a further increase in mental health issues.

PART TWO

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
CHAPTER 3
LITERATURE REVIEW

A missional church model functioning within an inclusive, multicultural society like Australia is explored. Perspectives from the Majority World are considered to counterbalance the predominant viewpoints of the West. Contextualization and transformation of the Malaysian Chinese culture are important, as some elements of the culture have hindered spiritual growth and development. Elements of culture that are consistent with Christian beliefs are to be retained. Spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical health issues are becoming dominant in Australian societies and have also affected Malaysian migrants in Australia. Understanding the specific causes and solutions of such health issues would empower the Malaysian migrants to increase capacity and capability.

Called to Witness: Doing Missional Theology by Darrell L. Guder.

Guder traces the move from theology to mission to an integration of missional theology, a happy marriage of theory and praxis, which then defines a truly missional church in its own context. Guder suggests the underlying theme is “Trinitarian
missiocentricity” and welcomes critical and thoughtful discussions and conversations. Believers are called to witness to the gospel of Jesus Christ in each individual’s context.

Historically, theology was pre-eminent and mission was a secondary outcome that came out of that theological consideration. Guder writes, “The relationship between theology and mission was originally seen as a matter of theory and practice.”

1 It is reflected in the way pastors are trained first and foremost, followed by missionaries. Mission was viewed as one of many outworkings of practical theology. 2 However, missional theology is the outworking of the church’s involvement in the mission of God, which then affects the way pastors and leaders are trained to fulfil Jesus’s Great Commission. This book proposes the merging of theology and mission, hence missional theology.

Guder reiterates the general consensus among “the global missiological” discourse that any “authentic theology” must necessarily be “relevant, local and contextual,” and hence “multicultural and translatable” for the mission of the gospel. 3 This has the consequential effect of “destigmatizing all cultures,” while neutralizing the “particular claim to normativity of long-established churches of Western Christendom.”

4 That missional theology is grounded in a Trinitarian framework of the Missio Dei. Guder explains, “It’s God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit,” and now incorporated another movement as the triune God now

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2 Ibid., 4.

3 Ibid., 20.

4 Ibid.
“sending the Church in the world.” It argues that God is a God of mission, and mission is at the very core of the Trinity.

This is not an idea that originated from the Church although in her history, the believers thought they were the pioneers and custodians of mission. The church is now invited to participate in the mission of God. Guder asserts, “The mission of the church is to participate in the reconciling love of the triune God who reaches out to a fallen world in Jesus Christ and by the power of the Holy Spirit brings strangers and enemies into God’s new and abiding community.”

This is contrarian and reductionist to Western Christendom and euro-centric theology, where individualist salvation is emphasized and hence missed the larger, encompassing “message of the inbreaking reign of God (of the entire world) in Jesus Christ.” The strong traditional ties to “Western cultural expressions” and these unquestioning assumptions in normative Christianity have shackled the Church from seeing a “universal, multicultural and multi-organizational character of the Catholic Church, which was what our Lord Jesus had intended.”

Hence, a discussion of the Missio Dei is critical when shifting from a post-Christendom context to a multireligious context like that of Australia. Guder explains that “The Missio Dei consensus is problematic precisely in its central conviction: its claims of

5 Ibid., 22.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid., 23.
8 Ibid.
the uniqueness of Jesus as Savior and Lord.” This has resulted in “an alternative cluster of approaches that seeks to soften that unique claim with a wide range of interpretations” with the intent to nullify the unique claim of Christ as the only saviour of the world. The Missio Dei, as thoroughly explained, “generates not one mission theology, but many, with all these theologies serving to equip the saints in all their cultural settings for the common missionary vocation.”

Guder does not shirk from the lesson of history in confronting the reality of past missiological endeavors under the influence of “European Christendom and colonialism” and how that has impacted the spread of global Christianity. He advocates a balanced perspective in confronting the “stereotypes of culturally insensitive, supremacist Western missionaries” of the colonial era while simultaneously acknowledging the many other missionaries that stood up to gross injustices suffered by the indigenous people in the face of “self-interest wealth and military power.” Due to the preservatory efforts of missionaries in the field of education, medicine, and agriculture, many indigenous cultures and languages survive in spite of the onslaught of Western imperial powers right through independence of their nations. In spite of humanity’s greed and failings, Guder counters that the “western missionary movement” has worked as evidenced by the growing and emerging churches in the former missionary

9 Ibid., 26.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid., 42.
12 Ibid., 45-46.
13 Ibid., 46.
14 Ibid., 47.
fields of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. This is more so in Malaysia where the resultant missionary activities of the colonial era have produced an enduring Christian community, albeit not perfect, that thrives today in spite of opposition and persecution from the Islamic forces and influences that are at work in the country.

Indeed, Church has become “multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, and multistructural.” The growth of world missions in non-Western countries has spawned some “hard and threatening questions” where context and culture play significant roles in the formulation and shape of missiological thought. Due to successful and aggressive migration policies of government, Australia has evolved into a “multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, and multistructural” nation, and CityLife Church is a great example of how this evolution has taken place over the last fifty years.

Guder reminds believers that “Classical Christologies tend to neglect the mission of Jesus.” Yet, Jesus Christ defines the shape of the redeemed life and attested by New Testament illustration of “being conformed to Christ.” Guder shows the glaring difficulties of Western theological dichotomies, such as “the separation of the church and its mission, [and] the separating of the gospel of personal salvation from the gospel of the inbreaking reign of God in Christ,” to name a few, which gave rise to reductionisms that distort “the missional mandate of the gospel” and promote consumerist tendencies.

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15 Ibid., 20, 47.
16 Ibid., 44.
17 Ibid., 45.
18 Ibid., 50.
19 Ibid., 51.
20 Ibid., 52.
within the church.\textsuperscript{21} This raises pertinent questions of whether it is necessary to carry over such Western-flavoured dichotomies into a multicultural, diverse church such as CityLife Church. How can the Western elements be filtered out while still retaining the essentials of the gospel that are neutral and relevant?

In quoting Lesslie Newbigin, Guder reiterates the pattern of John 20:21 that the church’s model of mission must be aligned to Jesus’s. The church is called to be “a sign, an instrument and a foretaste of the Kingdom.”\textsuperscript{22} Scripture does not propose another way and the church is a means to an end and “not an end in itself.”\textsuperscript{23} Guder argues further that if “Jesus is both the message and the model for its witness,” then Christology should be the expression of “his missionary calling and action.”\textsuperscript{24} Thus, it makes sense for every believer’s ministry to model after Jesus in each local context. Indeed, a “missional Christology” within a Trinitarian framework is embraced by the church to make both the “deed of Christ visible and the word of Christ audible.”\textsuperscript{25} This is something CityLife Church seeks to fulfil consistently throughout its fifty-year history with its values and mission guiding principles.

It provides a solid foundation for the development of a universal hermeneutic of the gospel in the its various contexts. It promotes freedom and liberation for the people of

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{24} Guder, Called to Witness, 54.

different cultures and backgrounds to practise Christianity in their own contexts that are relevant rather than to adopt a wholesale version of Western Christianity. The lessons learnt from North America are particularly similar to the situation in Australia.

What has changed in mission is the presence of cultural pluralism. Due to global migration, Asian and African communities are growing in North American countries and Australia. Whether the Church realises or not, this means “intercultural encounter, crossing boundaries, changing and being changed.” It significantly changes the way equally diverse local leaders are trained. These leaders can have the confidence, under the authority of the Trinitarian mission, to fulfil the Great Commission knowing they are fully empowered to do so without any baggage from the past and the need to adopt a foreign practice or culture.

The missional theology is discussed in a post-Christian Western context and does not address the application of missional theology in an Asian context. It does not consider, the cultural elements of a context in the formulation of missional theology. Hence, it is imperative to initiate formulations of missional theology that are relevant to this unique context.

*Global Church: Reshaping Our Conversations, Renewing Our Mission, Revitalizing Our Churches* by Graham Hill

Graham Hill alerts readers to the dramatic and changing demographics of Global Christianity with the epicentre of Christianity shifting from Europe and Northern

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26 Ibid., 38.

27 Ibid., 24.
America to Africa, Latin America, and Asia. He advocates a “glocalized” approach to missional theology, which is symbiotic and transformational, a realistic departure from the superior, Western, and colonial mission model. Hill proposes a radical approach through hospitality, to reach out to the outer fringes of society, the marginalized, in fulfilling the mission of God.

Quoting Bevans, Hill affirms by 2025, two-thirds of Christians will be located in continents such as Latin America, Asia, and Africa, with the typical Christian being “female, black and lives in a Brazilian favela or an African village.” To illustrate the significant magnitude of this ecclesial shift, China is predicted to have 247 million Christians by 2030, which is far greater than the combined number in the United States, Brazil, and Mexico. Hill asks a pertinent question: “What does it mean particularly, for the Western Church,” including Australia? How should a multicultural church like CityLife Church in Australia continue to respond to such an overwhelming prediction and development?

Quoting from Matthew 5:13-16, Hill declares, “The church in mission is the salt of the earth, the light of the world, and a city set on a hill.” This forms the basis of Hill’s book in “shaping our conversations (salt), renewing our mission (light), and

30 Hill, Global Church, 13.
31 Ibid., 14.
32 Ibid.
33 Ibid., 15.
revitalizing our churches (city).” In line with this shift of Christendom, Hill proposes emphatically the Western church needs “a new global and missional narrative” and the abandonment of “our flawed Eurocentric and Americentric worldviews.” This is a significant and bold call as many churches in the West including Australia may acknowledge the major shift of Christendom but are slow in adopting any radical approach to change due to five hundred years of dominance of Western-led theological leadership.

Global migration may be the catalyst required for Western church leadership to drastically change course to hear and sense what the Holy Spirit is doing in churches today. This is further developed in part three pertaining to Malaysian migrants, as Australia has become a diverse and multicultural society due to this major migration from non-Western countries. Hill cites “glocalizing conversations and collaboration” are taking place “when urban Christians from Majority World and Western theologians, activists, ecumenical, Pentecostals, evangelicals, colleges, church movements and development agencies met in Bangkok for their first International Society for Urban Mission (ISUM) summit.” Hill attributes the success of this summit to the “Christ-honoring urban mission values bottom-up, grassroots perspectives rather than top-down, distanced perspectives.” It empowers local leaders to promote contextual theologies based on

34 Ibid. 17-18.
35 Ibid. 15.
36 Ibid., 23
37 Ibid., 25. Italics original.
their insights and perspectives about what God is doing in their midst. Hence the need for a “glocalized theology” that is symbiotic and transformational.\textsuperscript{38}

Glocalization has been defined as when “the local (contextual, homogenous) and the global (universal, heterogeneous) interconnect” which are “interdependent” yet distinct and “symbiotic.”\textsuperscript{39} This is in sharp contrast to the colonial mission model, which was based on the superiority of the Western world and its imposition of its brand of Christianity on the recipient culture. This glocalization process shaped essential theological themes such as authority of Scripture, interdenominational theology, Trinitarian theology, pneumatology, association and dialogue, mission, the Missio Dei, and church ecclesiology.\textsuperscript{40}

Hill believes the Majority World, having gone through tremendous oppression and aggression throughout its history can teach others how “Hospitality can be the key to the formation of churches that are wonderfully diverse yet deeply unified.”\textsuperscript{41} The church, being the alternative society that reflects the Kingdom of God, can use hospitality to build a bridge to the outcasts, the fringe of society, that allows conversations about the amazing narrative of God’s grace through Christ, thus giving hope and reconciliation.\textsuperscript{42} Their concept of hospitality came from their biblical worldview based on the “social

\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., 24-25
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 26.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 28-32.
\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., 99.
\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
relationships of the Trinity.\textsuperscript{43} This is further enhanced by the “eucharistic hospitality” where “eating, drinking, and fellowship over a meal” is very much embedded into most Majority World cultures, which are not dissimilar to the culture of Christ, two thousand years ago.\textsuperscript{44} One can draw a parallel among Malaysian Chinese culture, where relationships and friendships are fostered through meals and drinks over a period of time. Although not much serious talk takes place during such events, one can witness the creation of a bond or a bridge of trust and respect which takes time to establish, yet is crucial in business and spiritual relationships. This contrasts with Western-style relationships which tend to be more transactional and contractual in nature whereas in the Majority World, the real terms are covered by the goodwill and strength of their relationship.

However, Hill is advocating for unconditional “hospitality to strangers, asylum seekers, refugees, homeless, rural and urban poor” which comes with a cost of potentially being “exploited, hurt, rejected and misunderstood.”\textsuperscript{45} Hill goes further by arguing “The church’s hospitality is a participation in the mission of God” particularly when it is to the “most unlikely people” and in “most unlikely places.”\textsuperscript{46} The church acts as the proxy host on behalf of God to his “multicultural, multifaceted banquet table”\textsuperscript{47} giving hint to the eschatological anticipation of the great supper of the Lamb. This is indeed a challenging

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\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 100-101
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., 103-104.
\textsuperscript{46} Ibid., 109.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
task for Malaysian Christians in Australia, who are of Chinese descent. Hospitality is easily practiced in the context of its own kind but becomes difficult and beyond one’s comfort zone when extended to the marginalized.

The “glocal” and hospitality approach are powerful means to fulfil the mission of God in each context. This is particularly relevant to CityLife Church, as it has lived out these concepts through Life Groups and congregational activities. However, upon a closer examination of Life Groups, participants are generally effective in reaching out to their own kind, such as Malaysians to Malaysians or similar social classes, but may not be as effective in what Hill advocates in reaching out to the fringes of society.

*Contextualization: Meanings, Methods, and Models* by David J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen.

Hesselgrave and Rommen provide a theological framework of understanding and application of contextualization in the twenty-first century. Their expansion of the Nicholls’s model for understanding cultural behaviour and Kraft’s dynamic equivalence transculturation model are useful in the Malaysian Christians’ context. The New Testament is written in contextualized format and content. For example, the Lukan gospel was written for Theophilus, a high-ranking official and therefore set within “a distinctly Hellenistic mind-set” and cultural context. A fine example of cross-cultural contextualization is found in the intensive discourse of the Jerusalem council (Ac 15). The Judaizers were rightly concerned for the preservation of the Old Testament traditions such as circumcision, given the rapid influx of Gentile believers into a newly created

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organism called the Church. With the earlier Holy Spirit’s intervention in the conversion of Cornelius’s household (Ac 10), the church leadership resolved to include the Gentiles without imposing unnecessary practices and beliefs from their traditional Jewish culture.  

For twenty-first century believers, contextualized exegesis and application of Scripture, particularly the New Testament, are critical to the health and growth of the Church. Misinterpretation without proper contextualization has led, for example, to the current prohibition of women leading or preaching in some churches. This has been detrimental to the life and health of the Church when gifted women are denied opportunity to minister in this way.

This book is one of the earlier works to create in a single volume, the analysis of a range of “contextualization meanings, methods, and models from an evangelical perspective.” Of relevance to this discussion is the authors’ discussion on Bruce Nicholls’ dogmatic theology and relation centres’ concepts and Charles H. Kraft’s dynamic equivalence transculturation model. Nicholls employs a multi-layer approach to explain cultural behaviour (See Appendix C). Theological contextualization takes place at the deeper levels of ideology/worldview and values, and is of particular interest to theologians. Cultural contextualization occurs at the institutions and behaviour/customs surface level, a focus for anthropologists and sociologists. Nicholls embraces a dogmatic approach to contextualization instead of an existential one, which is favoured

49 Ibid., 10.
50 Ibid., 51-69.
51 Ibid., 53.
by most Ecumenists. This is because of his concern of falling into compromise and
syncretism based on his strong conviction of biblical theology.\textsuperscript{52} So the solution is
finding a biblical-based contextualization that can transform local culture to the gospel
without destroying the essence of that culture.

The concept presented by Nicholls is relevant for the Malaysian Chinese community particularly in the ideology, cosmology, and worldview layer. The existence of evil spirits is still part of any Chinese community’s cosmology and worldview. For example, many Chinese still celebrate festivals that are related to the spirit world such as the festival of the hungry ghosts. When children are sick, it is a common practice to bring them to the temple to consult a medium or a monk. Prayers and charms are normally offered for the affected child with the hope of appeasing the spirits to induce a healthy outcome. The exposure to such practices may open the door for demonization. Even after conversion to Christianity, many Christians are still tormented by this until they are ministered to through healing and deliverance. While Australians from Western cultures are not prone to such practices, there is a growing concern from the number of Australians who expose themselves to new age spiritual practices such as yoga and transcendental meditation and the bringing in of religious artefacts such as faces of Buddha and other idols from Bali. These idols become gateways for such demonic influences to pass through and affect the individual and family. These are discussed further in Chapters five and six. Kraft’s dynamic equivalence model goes beyond the

\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 52-59.
original proponents like Nida and apply that principle to all related contextualized activities (See Appendix D).  

Interpretation of Scripture is prone to error due to an individual’s own cultural conditioning, and that the original text is written in a completely different cultural context. Implicit assumptions of the original texts are not necessarily explained, as it is well understood by the original writers and recipients. The error is further compounded by an attempt to derive a contemporary meaning from the original texts without due consideration to its context.  

A case in point is the implementation of a dogmatic position about women leadership and submission in the context of church leadership and marriage. To some extent, the Malaysian Chinese culture still regards women as inferior, second class, and discriminated against in terms of opportunities for further education and inheritance. So, when this demographic reads about Paul not allowing women to speak in public (1 Cor 14:34-35), cultural bias skews the interpretation, and concludes this teaching is still relevant today. Consequently, many Asian churches in Melbourne would not consider having women in eldership or senior pastoral positions. Living in an egalitarian society like Australia, together with the exposure of equal rights and correct hermeneutics, the younger Malaysian generation is less likely to be so conditioned in their thinking and action.  

Equally, when one’s culture is like that of the original Scriptures, interpretation is done well. Jesus spends a great deal of time eating and drinking (Mt 9:11; 11:19; 14:16, 15:2; 15:32; 26:17), and the Malaysian culture excels in this area of hospitality. CityLife

53 Ibid., 62-63.
54 Ibid., 63.
Life Groups are engaged actively in having meals together as a way of outreach, fellowship, and discipleship.

Malaysian Christians are in a multi-cultural context, with a dominant Western culture in Australia. This book does not address a unique situation like that of CityLife church which has over a hundred nationalities represented. It does not provide a process to develop a contextualized church which reflects that diversity.

*Anthropological Reflections on Missiological Issues by Paul G. Hiebert*

Hiebert proposes critical contextualization without the compromise of the gospel. He advocates the model of the bicultural bridge as a means for different people of different generations to connect through communication and dialogue. He introduces the excluded middle, an analytical framework to explain how the seen and unseen levels interact with the five senses.

Hiebert deals with critical contextualization in the context of his experience of India. However, he believes the principles are applicable to other cultures such as the Malaysian Chinese. He gives a frank and accurate analysis as to how past missionaries dealt with the “old culture” of new believers in the era of “cultural pluralism.”

Colonialism promoted the technical and intellectual superiority of Western civilization with the resultant conclusion that non-Western civilizations and cultures are inferior, “animistic,” and pagan. The spread of this Western-tainted gospel meant the rejection and destruction of these pagan cultures before Christianity could take root in the receptor culture. This was the era of non-contextualization based on monoculturalism and

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ethnocentrism. Christianity meant adopting Western ways and culture, and hence was perceived as a foreign religion.\textsuperscript{56} This perception continues to be an impediment to the preaching of the gospel and the source of strife and suspicion for modern missions today. However, these local cultures, beliefs, and practices did not die, but went underground and subsequently permeated the local church resulting in syncretism. This understanding is of particular relevance when dealing with indigenous churches and communities of Sabah and Sarawak.

Hiebert supports the need for critical contextualization while preserving the integrity of the gospel without compromise. One needs to look beyond anticolonialism and create a sense of interdependency in a global context. Critical contextualization begins with exegesis of the culture, which is basically to observe how the traditional beliefs and customs are applied to a particular issue at hand. Secondly, relevant Scriptures are studied in relation to the issue. This requires a holistic, hermeneutical approach involving theology, anthropology, and linguistics to ensure an accurate fit of the gospel in the local context. Thirdly, ownership is instilled in the local leadership and community, to critically evaluate their cultural beliefs and practices in the light of this new biblical understanding. This promotes discernment and deeper spiritual growth in the community, a contemporary example of the outworking of the priesthood of all believers.\textsuperscript{57} A contextualized approach like Hiebert’s is valuable, which is similar to the principle of teaching someone to fish rather than giving them a fish. While the process will take a longer time to take root, it opens up longer term and lasting possibilities of

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 76-81.

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid., 88-92.
transformation of a community. Establishing such a framework will allow that community to systematically evaluate their culture and practices and to modify and adapt some while discarding those that are clearly evil or anti-Christian.

Hiebert’s bicultural bridge connects people from one culture to another.\(^{58}\) This is particularly relevant for Australia, being a Western country seeking to develop missional churches amid an expanding multicultural context. Recognising that both the missional church and the targeted community have their respective cultures, the bicultural bridge allows for communication and dialogue to take place. This involves the grassroots details of customs, values, schools, clothing, food, housing, among others. The model allows for intergenerational development, which allows first and second-generation missional Christians to be more effective.

However, bicultural bridges create stressors.\(^{59}\) These stressors are more keenly felt by the targeted community leaders who themselves have become part of both cultures. They can experience alienation from the community of their first culture, so a balance is required. The gospel can only be effective as the bicultural relationships bridge the gap between cultures.

Within the local value system, it is pertinent to focus on the impact of the excluded middle as proposed by Hiebert,\(^{60}\) an analytical framework that consists of the seen-unseen dimension as well as the organic-mechanical dimension. The unseen dimension is broken up into the high religion layer based on cosmic beings and forces

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 147-152.

\(^{59}\) Ibid., 152-158.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 189-197.
and a middle layer of local gods, ancestor spirits, and demons. The third seen layer is based on the five senses, which can be verified by experimentation and observation. Asians in general are more aware of the spiritual reality as compared to the West. This is probably due to the Asian worldview, which is influenced by the great religions such as Hinduism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, and the traditional political structures of imperialism. For example, in ancient China and Japan, the emperor was worshipped as god or the representative of the god of heaven. Such traditional beliefs co-exist in today’s modern Japan, China, and most exemplified in North Korea.

The excluded middle is an important area because of its strong influence over Asian culture and value systems. This becomes important as Australia and her churches have to deal with the growing multicultural landscape as discussed in chapter two. Ephesians 6:10-18 reminds readers of God’s authority, power, and the reality of spiritual warfare that is highly organised with a clear objective of usurping God’s plan and purposes.

Hiebert proposes a holistic theology to address all three layers. He attempts a macro biblical view of spiritual warfare for the middle layer. However, he does not go far enough in dealing with the realm of the demonic and how this impacts the society (Malaysian Christians) in which they have control.61

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61 Ibid., 203-215.

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*The Power of Full Engagement: Managing Energy, Not Time, is the Key to High Performance and Personal Renewal* by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz

Loehr and Schwartz believe “Energy, not time, is the fundamental currency of
high performance.” The skilful management of such a precious resource would result in improved “performance, health and happiness,” key elements of a wholesome life. “To be fully engaged, we must be physically energized, emotionally connected, mentally focused and spiritually aligned with a purpose beyond our immediate self-interest.”

Harnessing the latest technologies and techniques, Loehr’s definition validates what the Bible records long ago, when Jesus summed up the two great commandments: Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and loving your neighbour as yourself (Mt 22:37-40). Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote, “Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thes 5:23). God is interested in the health of an individual’s spirit, soul, and body so that a person’s love for him is complete and holistic.

Because humans place more value on mental faculties, there is a tendency to discount the importance physical energy plays in performance. In reality, physical energy is the fundamental source of fuel even if a person’s work tends to be more sedentary. It lies at the heart of alertness and vitality, yet it also affects emotional management, creative thinking, concentration, and maintaining a commitment to one’s goals and mission. Most people ignore their physical health and condition.

63 Ibid., 5.
64 Ibid.
65 Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the Lexham English Bible.
Emotional intelligence (EI) is simply the capacity to manage emotions skillfully in the service of high positive energy and full engagement. Importantly, individuals need to harness pleasant and positive emotions such as enjoyment, challenge, adventure, and opportunity. On the contrary, negative emotions such as fear, frustration, anger, and sadness trigger the release of cortisol, which in large amounts are toxic to the physical system.  

Loehr compares two tennis greats, Jimmy Connors and John McEnroe, who had achieved Grand Slam titles in their careers. The key differentiator was how Connors maintained endurance at the peak of his game when he was thirty-nine by reaching the semi-finals of the US open and retired aged 40. McEnroe, on the other hand, retired at age thirty-four. McEnroe acknowledged his inability to control his anger was a key factor to losing the French Open to Ivan Lendl in 1984. He acknowledged too much energy was wasted on being angry. He then won Wimbledon in 1985 when he controlled his temper.

Negative emotions have an impact on organizations too. Gallup found the single factor that influences the productivity of an employee is his or her relationship with their direct superior. It is therefore critical that superiors encourage, care for, and give recognition and praise to employees. The ability to communicate consistent positive energy is the key to effective management. Loehr considers these as the key muscles or competencies that fuel positive emotion such as self-confidence, self-control (see-
regulation), social skills (interpersonal effectiveness), and empathy with smaller supporting muscles including patience, openness, trust, and enjoyment.69

Loehr believes the most compelling source of purpose is spiritual energy derived from deeply held values and beliefs and a purpose that goes beyond self-interest. Purpose creates a destination, which in turn drives full engagement by focusing one’s desire to invest in an activity or goal. People become fully engaged only when caring deeply about something and believing what they are doing really matters. Purpose is what powers individuals and feeds their souls. The search for meaning and purpose is among the most powerful and enduring themes in every culture. Purpose becomes a more powerful and enduring source of energy when it moved from negative to positive, external to internal, and from self to others.70

Loehr and Schwartz provide a clear approach to wholesome wellbeing that is relevant for the lifestyle of the twenty-first century. However, they may overemphasize the importance of technologies and techniques without due regard for the reality of the spirit world. The inclusiveness of the spirit world with such human interactions would provide greater understanding on how it can affect an individual’s optimal performance.

Healing Through Deliverance, Volume 1: The Foundation of Deliverance by Peter Horrobin

The deliverance ministry is the forgotten ministry of the Church due to the enlightenment of Western civilization and misguided fear among God’s people. Peter Horrobin provides a thorough explanation of this delicate topic with biblical foundations

69 Ibid., 72.

70 Ibid., 131, 135.
including many examples from Jesus’s own teachings in the Gospels and also events recorded in Acts. He supplemented with many real cases of people who have been helped by this ministry. The explosion of New Age practices and the occult, together with the breakdown of morality, relationships, and the rise in mental health issues are prompting the Church to the reality of the spirit realm and to consider the answers provided through the deliverance ministry.

Horrobin kicks off with a detailed explanation of humankind as God’s special creation. The dissection of spirit, soul + body (sinful nature) and the further breakdown of the soul into the will, mind, and emotions are helpful in understanding how demonic spirits can affect the different facets of one’s being. Knowing the inner workings and hierarchy of evil spirits has shed light on the elemental spirits, rulers, powers, and principalities of the Satanic kingdom (Eph 6:12, Gal 4:3-5). Recognizing they can torment or hinder Christians from fulfilling their true calling in Christ, enables readers to overcome and gain victory in their spiritual warfare against the enemy.

Details of various demonic encounters in the Gospels and Acts provide a biblical perspective of how demons work and some of the remedies available to be free. Horrobin uses the story of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mt 8:14-17; Mk 1:29-34; Lk 4:38-41) to explain the connection between the demonic and physical ailments, which may be caused by a spirit of infirmity. He shared about a case of a woman who picked up a spirit of infirmity through transference from her aunt. She developed a severe form of sinusitis but was

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71 Peter J. Horrobin, Healing through Deliverance, Volume 1: The Foundation of Deliverance Ministry (Tonbridge, Kent, UK: Sovereign World Ltd., 2003), 31-44.
healed through deliverance from this same spirit. “No permanent healing” can be experienced until the particular demon causing the illness is cast out.\textsuperscript{72}

Horrobin also dealt with the question of how Christians can be demonised and clear the misunderstanding about Christians being “possessed” by demons. Malaysian Christians accept the reality of the spirit world as part of their religious worldview. Before conversion to Christianity, many come from different religious backgrounds of Buddhism, Taoism, Animism, and Hinduism. Mediums and priests from such religions are sought for blessings, guidance, fortune telling, and healings. These practices invariably open the door to demonic bondage and torment.

Horrobin’s teaching on deliverance helps to deal with some of these issues, as many have not sought deliverance when they accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Horrobin’s references to the spirit of infirmity have deepened the understanding of the effects of demons in the physical realm. I have prayed for someone who experienced severe lower back pain as a result of a spirit of infirmity. She was miraculously set free when the spirit of infirmity was cast out. Further development of the deliverance ministry in the context of the Malaysian Chinese is discussed further in Chapters five and six. The cases referred to in the book are mostly from a European setting without much reference to Asian contexts. However, one can draw from these principles and apply them contextually to the Malaysian context.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 139-141.
Volume 2 of Horrobin’s book provides a practical approach to the deliverance ministry. The rise of the occult and involvement into new Age experiences in Australia is challenging the church to re-examine the validity of the deliverance ministry in its context. The chapter on “observable symptoms of demonization” provides a comprehensive range of demonic activity that causes a rethink about the theology of salvation of Jesus. The Church is missing a vital piece of Jesus’s ministry which is clearly spelt out in Scripture but has chosen to avoid it due to its sensitivity and controversy. Many in LifeChurch’s leadership have come across fellow Christians struggling in their daily walk with Christ. Some serve as leaders, yet some of their struggles remain despite counselling, prayer, and coaching. This is most pertinent in the realm of discipleship and leading the victorious Christian life. The symptoms help believers identify and confirm the existence of demonic activity and strongholds in everyday life. Reviewing the list of symptoms, it is likely many Christians would experience such torment, arising often in childhood. If the deliverance ministry is not offered or available, many Christians are likely to live the rest of their lives struggling in those areas of torment.

Chapter four of the book provides a comprehensive explanation on how demons enter the human being. The list consists of fifteen categories of possible demon entries. It is interesting to note only three categories are religious in nature (occult, religious sins, and alternative medical practices rooted in the demonic), while the rest (twelve

73 Peter J. Horrobin, Healing through Deliverance, Volume 2: The Practice of Deliverance Ministry (Tonbridge, Kent, UK: Sovereign World Ltd., 2003), 55-84.
categories) are personal or involving other people. This is consistent with the general observation that most challenges today have to do with self or relationships with others. One possibility is that Satan knows God makes humans for relationships, but through the curse of sin and brokenness, relationships have become the source of contention and strife until redeemed and restored through faith in the Lord Jesus.

Volume two of Horrobin’s book provides a comprehensive study on the practice of the deliverance ministry. It is more than just a reference and can help emerging practitioners find answers to areas they are encountering. I have been involved in this ministry for the last forty years and this book has filled in the gaps of my ministry as I encounter the challenges of the Malaysian Christians in Australia. The insights in this book will assist greatly in the preparation of training materials for the deliverance ministry as discussed in chapters six and seven of this paper.

Cases referred to in the book are mostly from a European setting without much reference to Asian contexts. The impact of other religions such as Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Hinduism in the realms of demonic entries and the corresponding symptoms are missing from this book. These are the religions Malaysians are commonly exposed to prior to their conversion to Christianity. Therefore, I intend to develop further insights in the Malaysian Christian context. Undoubtedly many of the symptoms and demonic entries are similar, but how it happens is most likely different due to different social and cultural contexts.
CHAPTER 4

A THEOLOGY OF MISSION OF GOD IN CITYLIFE CHURCH’S CONTEXT

Chapter two traces the growth and development of CityLife Church over the first fifty years through the effective senior leaderships of Richard Holland, Kevin Conner, and Mark Conner. However, the attractional model of preaching and great services, together with the multi-site strategy, are currently showing signs of unsustainability. It is also stretching the finite staff and volunteer resources.

Following the literature review of chapter three, this chapter proposes a theological foundation for the Mission of the triune God. Trinitarian theology of mission based on the Missio Dei is foundational to the understanding of mission for the Church. CityLife Church as the local body of Christ is called to participate in the mission of God, uniquely expressed by the six missional characteristics that are relevant for CityLife Church in a postmodern Australia.

*Misso Dei and Trinitarian Theology of Mission*

David Bosch believed Karl Barth was one of the earliest theologians “to articulate
mission as an activity of God himself.”¹ At the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1952, the concept of *Missio Dei* was further expanded as mission emanating from the very character of a triune God. Bosch, in quoting Aagaard and Moltman, affirms “Mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God” This was subsequently expanded as a movement of the triune God sending the Church into the world.²

This Trinitarian focus was a significant departure from the Enlightenment approach of mission, which emphasized soteriology and ecclesiology. Mission was seen as God’s own initiative in restoring and healing creation. It forms the biblical backbone and narrative of God’s involvement with humanity, beginning with the calling and blessings of the nation of Israel through which all nations of the world would be blessed. Darrell Guder writes, “God’s character and purpose as a sending or missionary God redefines our understanding of the Trinity.”³

Mission begins and ends with the Trinity. God, not the Church, owns the idea of mission. Out of this perfect initiative and plan, God sends the Church as a vehicle to participate in his mission. This correct perspective of Mission is God’s initiative in which he graciously allows and encourages the Universal Church to participate. This shifts the focus from the Church as a missionary sending agency to God himself. This is consistent

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² Johannes Aagaard in Bosch, *Transforming Mission*, 400.

with the original Greek meanings of “πορευθέντες – poreuthentes”⁴, Go (passive, participle)⁵ which means while we are going about our lives “μαθητεύσατε-matheteusate”⁶, and make disciples (Active, imperative verb)⁷, God commands His Church to make disciples, as part of the Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).

Newbigin expresses the unique roles of mission within the triune God as: (1) proclaiming the Kingdom of the Father as Faith in Action, (2) sharing the life of the Son as Love in Action, and (3) bearing the witness of the Spirit as Hope in Action.⁸ These intimately related concepts resonate with Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians 13:13. Actions of the triune God are in sync with their being and sovereignty in fulfilling their divine plans for mankind. It clearly demonstrates the divine initiative comes from the perfect will of God.

The Cross was the perfect plan of redemption and salvation, though regarded as foolishness by Greeks and a stumbling block to the Jews (1 Cor 1:21-25). However, the foolishness of God is wiser than men; the weakness of God is stronger than men. Therefore, it is easy for humans to miss the revelation because it is spiritually discerned. (1 Cor 2:14).

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⁶ Harris, The Lexham English Bible, Mt 28:19.

⁷ Liddell, A Greek-English Lexicon, 1072.

Indeed, God is a Missionary God. The theology of mission could not be adequately articulated from an ecclesiological (focusing on the mission of the Church) or Christological (emphasising human obedience to the Great Commission) perspective. Instead, a Trinitarian approach would be more complete and appropriate.\(^9\) The paradoxical tension of individuality and community occurring simultaneously is a great illustration of the Trinity. If that models believers’ relational calling, then “The incarnation of God demonstrates your missional calling to live into time and place.”\(^10\)

Even then, the Missio Dei has two strains, one has a more specialised focus on the redemptive work of God through the primary vehicle of the Church, as well as a more generalized approach of God’s ongoing concern and care for all of his creation.\(^11\) The latter development corresponded well with the increased secularization of its day where God is understood to be already active and present in the world. Thus, the Church’s role is to discover and flow with what God is doing.

However, Van Gelder expresses the limitations of the Trinitarian model, which tends to separate and individualize the Godhead in three distinct modes particularly in reference to Jesus in the context of the reign of God without sufficient integration with the work of the Spirit. He contrasts this “functional modalism” to the Eastern tradition, particularly the Cappadocian fathers’ concept of “social Trinity.” This relational approach was derived from the concept of “perichoresis” which is based on “equality”

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and “mutuality.”\textsuperscript{12} This illustrates a more personal, fluid, and dynamic concept of Trinitarian theology instead of the one dominated by the Western thought process, which tends to be more compartmentalized.

Perhaps it is timely to embrace alternative Eastern approaches to counterbalance such interpretations. This is more relevant as the centre of Christendom has shifted from the European and North American context towards Asia, Africa, and South America. Roxburgh laments despite the acknowledgement of the Missio Dei, subsequent literature is still biased towards ecclesiology without due consideration for what God is actually doing in communities and for the church to prioritise strategies accordingly. He reminds readers the early Church “began as a movement, not an institution.”\textsuperscript{13} Van Gelder offers four powerful insights that redefine the Church, which are: (1) The missionary God is sending the Church into the world. (2) This mission is tied to the kingdom of God. (3) The missional church, as an embodiment of Christ, is called to participate actively in a “postmodern, post-Christendom, globalized context.” (4) Every believer within this Church is called to a life-long mission of discipleship.\textsuperscript{14}

Finally, the mission of God is eschatological. The triune God has done all they can to restore fallen creation through the redemptive work of Christ. It is now sustained

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 53-55.


\textsuperscript{14} Van Gelder and Zsheile, \textit{The Missional Church in Perspective}, 4.
by the Holy Spirit in anticipation of Christ’s second coming. The Church is now called to confront the “powers of evil” and bring restoration “in every dimension of life.”

**Mission of the Father: Affirming Authority to do His Will**

Jesus received the Father’s seal of approval and authority at his water baptism when the Holy Spirit was seen descending on him like a dove (Mt 3:16). Jesus spoke about the Father’s sending authority in John 20:21-23 for the benefit of the disciples and empowered them with the same delegated authority. This was sealed by the Holy Spirit (Jn 20:22) and later used by Paul (Eph 1:13) as a guarantor of believers’ inheritance. Jesus stressed the importance of doing His Father’s will on various occasions (Mt 7:21), as expressed in the Lord’s prayer (Mt 6:9-13) and it is up to His Father’s will (Mt 20:23) as to whom should sit on his right and left of his throne. Jesus reinforces the importance of delegated authority as he compliments the centurion (Mt 8:5-13). Jesus said his “food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work” (Jn 4:34). Newbigin notes Jesus spoke as one with authority but not like the scribes who have only derived authority from the Torah. It is “an authority of God himself present in the midst of human history.”

**Mission of Jesus: Gospel of the Kingdom of God**

Jesus preached the good news of the Kingdom of God in Galilee (Mk 1:14-15).

After his temptation, Jesus returned to Galilee and in Nazareth and launched his ministry

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manifesto in relation to the Kingdom of God (Lk 4:14-21). Jesus reiterated the importance and priority of preaching the Kingdom of God in other places (Lk 4:43). It is an advancing kingdom reflecting Trinitarian authority and power over the Satan (Mt 12:28). This is not about some isolated sector of world history but the declaration of the “reign and the sovereignty of God” over the “origin, meaning, and end of the universe and of all human history within the history of the universe.” Nevertheless, this Kingdom is unlike all human kingdoms such as the Roman empire, which was acquired and sustained through bloodshed and tyranny. Jesus said his Kingdom is not of this world (kosmos) (Jn 18:36), which meant it was still under the control of the enemy (Lk 4:5-8).

An incredible transaction took place when the entire universe and humanity were transferred into the Kingdom of Jesus through the Cross and Resurrection (Col 1:13-23). The gospel of the Kingdom of God was validated by Jesus’s resurrection. The gospel is of and about Jesus, which includes his preaching and teaching. Guder expresses concern that the gospel preached today may not be in line with the gospel that Jesus preached, and this has “woefully impoverished the church’s sense of missional identity.” Would there be a need to put the central theme of establishing the Kingdom of God in our local contexts? Perhaps deviation from the priority of the Kingdom of God would mean a distraction, or worse, an establishment of our own kingdom. Paul warns in 1 Corinthians 3:6-17 that one’s work be tested by fire.

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17 Ibid., 30-31.
18 Ibid., 37.
19 Guder, ed. Missional Church, 87-89.
Mission of The Holy Spirit: Community of the Kingdom

Jesus promises the baptism of the Holy Spirit to his disciples and empowers them to be his witnesses within their local contexts and beyond (Ac 1:4-8). The Holy Spirit uses Peter’s sermon to convict about three thousand people to follow Christ and be baptised into the community of the Kingdom (Ac 2:37-42). Signs and wonders validate their apostleship (Ac 2:43) and bear testimony to Jesus who has been raised from the dead (Ac 4:2-4) resulting in about five thousand who believed. Newbigin elaborates the Holy Spirit is the “active agent of mission” which powers the Church in her missionary endeavors. Yet, the Holy Spirit cannot be constrained by cultural prejudice or human timing as seen in the experience of Cornelius’s household receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Ac 10:34-46). Newbigin insists, “Mission is not essentially an action by which the church puts forth its own power and wisdom to conquer the world,” but “rather an action of God, putting forth the power of his Spirit to bring the universal work of Christ for the salvation of the world nearer to its completion.”

The giving of the same Holy Spirit to the Gentiles ultimately overcame the deeply ingrained religious beliefs of the Jews about the necessity of circumcision to be saved. This undeniable fact and reality to be received by faith and faith alone settled the disputes of the Jerusalem Council. It concluded beautifully in the letter to the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia with the words, “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things” (Ac 15:28). This is a powerful

20 Newbigin, The Open Secret, 56.

21 Ibid., 59-60.
lesson that church leadership can learn from, always to seek the will and mind of the Holy Spirit in church deliberations and planning.

The breaking down of racial, social, cultural, and political walls enables the Holy Spirit to create truly Christian communities, what Guder describes as the spirit of *koinonia* of “holy living, mutual support, and sacrificial service” as expressed in Acts 2:42. This is “a new collaborative order of interdependence, shared responsibility, mutual instruction, and commonality.”22 This is indeed a far cry from the typical Western church life, centred on the individual and what one gets out of church instead of contributing to it. Yet, in the early church under the direction of the Holy Spirit, there is deafening silence and absence of the individual “I” in all the church does. Yes, individuals were involved such as some of the prominent leaders like Peter, James, Paul, and Barnabas, but their decisions and actions are taken in the context and benefit of community.

### Mission of CityLife Church in Postmodern Australia

God has used CityLife Church to be a blessing to over one hundred nationalities and communities in Melbourne, Australia as discussed in chapter two. For it to continue as the apostolic agent of the gospel of the Kingdom, our ecclesiology must be grounded in “God’s nature, purpose and action.”23 Guder states, “To be authentically evangelical, our ecclesiology must necessarily be missional.”24

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23 Guder, *Called to Witness*, 74.

24 Ibid.
The Church as Sent

An apostolic church is outward focussed, which means its activities and a large portion of investments of time and money are spent for the sake of others. The mission of the Church should naturally align with the mission of God, proclaiming a gospel that centres on Jesus. In fact, the gospel is Jesus expressed in local contexts. This gives freedom of expression through language, forms, and culture. It also means a move from the Church being the sending organisation to one that is being sent. Roxburgh provided some helpful reminders of the “sent” Church. God is ahead of believers, already in their neighbourhoods, and they are invited to join him is his mission. The Spirit is empowering congregations to journey with him. Members of the church can listen to the voice of God as confirmed by Scripture. Leaders are invited to create those safe spaces for such discernment to take place in the spirit of prayer. Leaders are called to lead by example.25

This is well encapsulated in Hammond’s book on “Sentness,” which he defines as “submerging ourselves among the places and people God has sent us to, fostering shalom spirituality for them and cultivating safe places for people of diverse backgrounds to explore the meaning of faith.” It further “means sharing life with the teams and tribes God sends us with and standing in the gap to empower others and their dreams for mission.”26 The recent results of CityLife Casey can be attributed to the outworking of these principles.

25 Roxburgh, Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World, part II, Kindle.

26 Kim Hammond and Darren Cronshaw, Sentness: Six Postures of Missional Christians (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books), 43.
The entire congregation has to be released and empowered for the “work of ministry” and not just the anointed leaders. This leads to the building up of the body of Christ (Eph 4:11-12). The sense of being sent also keeps the Church from complacency and settling into mediocrity. It is constantly reminded by the Holy Spirit that it is on a mission of re-establishing the Kingdom of God on earth until Jesus returns again.

The Church as Led by the Spirit

God created humanity by breathing on them in creation (Gen 2:7). Due to the fall, Christ came to redeem humanity and created the Church as the vehicle to bring reconciliation of humanity back to God. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on the Church (Jn 20:22) as a sign of the beginning of the mission of the Church in God’s reconciliation of humanity to himself. The Church was founded after the resurrection of Jesus as a sent people and sealed by the Holy Spirit (Jn 20: 21-22). Jesus instructed the infant church to tarry in Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father, the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Ac 2:4,8). This was fulfilled at Pentecost (Ac 2:1-4), which transformed the fearful disciples to be emboldened witnesses for global evangelism and discipleship (Mt 28:18-20; Mk 16:16-18).

The acts of Holy Spirit continued in the early Church as recorded in the book of Acts. In following the progression of the Ephesian church, Paul spends two full years reasoning and arguing for the Kingdom of God (Ac 19: 8-10). So much was happening that contact with handkerchiefs and aprons taken from Paul resulted in extraordinary miracles of healing and deliverance (Ac 19:11-12). The seven sons of Sceva tried to imitate the spectacular by borrowing the name of Jesus and suffered a humiliating retreat
when the man with the demon overpowered the seven men. This incident brought a clear and unique distinction of the power and authority in Jesus’ name as compared to their Jewish traditions. As a result, the word of the Lord grew among them (Ac 19:13-20).

Being led by the Holy Spirit becomes even more important for the contemporary Church. It is so easy to allow better technology, human skills, and techniques to create those special effects and unconsciously replace the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Humans now have better educational tools and apps that are beneficial for the furtherance of the gospel. In themselves, these elements are good and neutral, but these and better organized meetings cannot substitute the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. For example, this is crucial in the decision making of Christian leaders. The events at the Jerusalem council (Ac 15) emphasize how the church leaders resolved a very delicate but crucial matter of salvation by grace alone and not through circumcision and tradition. Leaders need to seek the guidance and confirmation of the Holy Spirit before any major decision is made.

The Church as Discipler

Jesus delegated his authority to the Church and commissioned his followers to make disciples of all nations by first being in community through water baptism and maturity through effective biblical teaching and obedience (Mt 28:18-20). The book of Acts records the growth and expansion of the Church as it learnt to perform the “perichoretic” dance in step with the Holy Spirit. This is evidenced by massive conversions (Ac 2:40-42; 4:4) as the new converts devoted themselves to the apostles’ doctrine, fellowship, and prayers. Roxburgh stresses the need for consistent practice of
discipleship of listening, discerning, testing, reflection and deciding. Practices are very important as the twenty-first century is characterized by the abundance of conflicting information through the internet. Not only is there a need to filter out erroneous teaching, but there is also a need to embed such biblical beliefs into one’s very being. That can only come through consistent practice. These practices are best done in the context of small groups. Families are being saved instead of individuals, for example, Cornelius (Ac 10), the Philippian jailer (Ac 16:25-34), and Lydia (Ac 16:14-15). When families come together in unity, the discipling process is being worked out in their daily lives through an intergenerational environment.

The Celtic model of discipleship based on a team ministry offers a fresh look at how discipleship is being carried out using “a fivefold structure of experiences” covering individual devotion to mutual accountability in small group settings that empower believers for engagement with the outside community. These experiences are reminiscent of early church practices as well as providing relevance to today’s local contexts. The gradual Celtic model of fellowship first, before ministry/conversation and then followed by belief and commitment, reflects the post-modern culture and has been confirmed to encourage more people to come to faith than the traditional Roman model. This emphasizes relationships that build trust and open the door for subsequent conversation of faith in Christ. The traditional methods of “door to door” and mass

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27 Roxburgh, Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World, chap. 5, Kindle.


29 Ibid., 42-44.
evangelism may be too confronting and would yield limited results but more importantly may put people off from hearing the gospel. Discipleship is a journey of discovery of God in one’s life under the guidance of good leadership and teaching.

The seven disciplines, given by Christ to the church to shape “our lives into his presence for the transformation of the world,” are the “Lord’s Table, reconciliation, proclaiming the gospel, being with the least of these, being with children, the fivefold ministry, and kingdom prayer.” Fitch is convinced these seven disciplines were affirmed in the early church and could provide a repertoire of disciplines for living within community while fulfilling the mission of God in believers’ lives and neighbourhoods. They become bridges of opportunities through social relationships beyond the four walls of the church and allow believers to participate in what God is actively involved and engaging with the world.

Fitch illustrates how this works by using the analogy of closed, dotted, and half circles (See Appendix J). The closed circle represents the inclusive body of believers in mutual submission and submission to Christ. Beyond that is the dotted circle which still represents the body of believers but there is room to include the outsiders usually meeting in the context of a home, to introduce the presence and disciplines of Christ. This extends to the half circle which represents the Christians interacting in the world. This model presented by Fitch provides a thought provoking tool to consider if one’s relationships

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31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.
are primarily focused on Christians (maintenance mode) and to intentionally challenge how many more relationships should be external. Overemphasis on external relationships on the other hand could lead to exhaustion mode. Without this critical assessment, then it is unlikely that much will change in terms of growth in discipleship.

The Church as Signs and Wonders

In the age of enlightenment and post-modern context, where the supernatural is largely discarded, it is vital that the Church restore its credibility through the working of signs and wonders. This is particularly so in Australia, where the history of the country is not as deeply rooted in Christianity as in the United States of America. Modern Australia was founded as a result of the British creation of a penal colony in Sydney in 1788. Christianity grew as result of the Anglican church following the advance of the new colony and when free people were allowed to settle in Melbourne and other cities. As was discussed in the earlier section of immigration and evolving multiculturalism, there is a significant decline in the number of Christians and now 30.1 percent profess to have no religion in the 2016 census (See Appendix B, Table 2).

With increasing secularization of education and deliberate exclusion of Christian studies in the Australian school system, a growing number of Australians reject the supernatural and consider it superstition. Signs and wonders do not contradict science and knowledge but rather, it is the inability and limitation of human understanding to explain supernatural phenomena. Both can co-exist side by side. This presents a real opportunity for the Church to live out the supernatural as portrayed in the book of Acts. Some illnesses and phenomena could not be explained without the supernatural.
Jesus made clear his ministry incorporates signs and wonders to validate his authority, which points to an alternative way of living in the Kingdom of God. Mark 16:17-18 reads, “These signs will follow those who believe: In My [Jesus’] name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues; they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.” Signs point to the risen Lord and Saviour and testify of His Messiahship. That is exactly what the early disciples did. Being emboldened by the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Ac 1:8, 2:4), they bear testimony to the name of Jesus and signs and wonders (Ac 2:22,43; 4:30; 5:12,16) followed by the preaching of the gospel.

Humanity of the twenty-first century is looking for spirituality but not religiosity. Phyllis Tickle mentions the 1960’s and the age of Aquarius whose mantra was “I’m spiritual but not religious.” People were looking for meaning and purpose in the spiritual realm. The Aquarian generation exists today in the form of the “unchurched.” Hence, biblical signs and wonders point to the reality of such spirituality, to get their attention so the message of the gospel of the Kingdom could be preached. Interestingly, instead of pursuing signs and wonders, the Church in general has adapted their services, preaching, and style of worship to be the “new signs and wonders” to attract the unchurched. While these attempts have worked, sooner or later, its effectiveness plateaus and the Church is tempted to try the next gimmick. The Church, therefore, needs to be faithful and true to the teachings as discussed in the previous paragraph and be open to baptism of the Holy Spirit so the same signs and wonders recorded in Acts can become a spiritual reality and

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33 Phyllis Tickle, Emergence Christianity: What it is, Where it is Going, and Why it Matters (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012), chap. 9, Kindle.
normality in the life of the Church. Since signs and wonders point to Jesus, our focus therefore needs to be on the teachings of Christ as faithful followers.

Roland Allen, in *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?* notes St Paul did not use signs and wonders as an inducement for his audience to receive his teachings or “attempt to convert people by working miracles on them.” Yet these signs and wonders drew the crowds to listen to the gospel and validate the divine message and messenger. These signs point clearly to two crucial doctrines of charity and salvation, which included release from bondage of sin and deliverance from evil.  

34 Ephesus was a sophisticated and strategic Roman city (Ac 19:1). The existing ruins such as the theatre, with a seating capacity of approximately 25,000, the public library of Celsus, and the temple of Artemis together with many gymnasiaums and baths, bear testimony to the significance of the city.  

35 Its strategic importance may be the reason why Paul chose Ephesus and invested two years of his life, “reasoning and persuading concerning the things of the Kingdom of God” (Ac 19:8-10).

It was in this city that “unusual miracles” took place and where handkerchiefs and aprons taken from Paul resulted in healings and deliverances in the name of Jesus (Ac 19:11-12). The spectacular defeat of the seven sons of Sceva by one man with an evil spirit (Ac 19:13-20) resulted in a massive conversion of both Jews and Greeks. The dramatic approach taken by the Holy Spirit through Paul was essential to draw people to the reality of an alternative religion, which was far superior to the one they were


practising. This dislodged a deeply entrenched religious system tied to a powerful economic support base of silversmiths headed by Demetrius. No wonder Demetrius and his crew saw this as a major coup to their livelihood and lifestyle and instigated a major riot at the theatre of Ephesus (Ac 19:29-34). In the growing age of secularism and declining influence of Christianity in Australia, signs and wonders could be the first step to draw people’s attention to the gospel of Jesus.

The Church should also be a sign that points to Jesus. Russell believes this sign to be provisional and subject to change and renewal to be an effective witness to “God’s love and justice” in various contexts.36 When people see the Church, they see Jesus and what he stood for in the spirit of love. Jesus said, “By this shall all know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another” (Jn 13:35). The world will notice when they see a diverse community of followers of Jesus living in unity and harmony and emanating a lifestyle that reflects the character of Christ in local contexts. Perhaps in today’s realm of religious pluralism, signs and wonders will take their rightful place and play a crucial role in pointing the way to Jesus as “the way, the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6).

The Church as Emergent Community

The twenty-first century of internet and social media has brought about a major paradigm shift where individuals are more empowered through instant access for knowledge and news at their fingertips. Ironically, this powerful interconnectivity has increased loneliness and social isolation. Yet, humanity is made for community. This is reflected even in the recent Grenfell Tower fire in London where the community

naturally came together and pooled resources to satisfy a common need for food, clothing, and shelter instead of waiting for the institutional support.\textsuperscript{37} McLaren wonders if Christians could move away from the comfort of defining their faith as a set of beliefs and be able to express life in loving ways, as incarnated in Jesus within community.\textsuperscript{38} Sparks and his associates believe the gospel is “more tangible and compelling when the local church is actually a part of the community, connected to the struggles of the people and even the land itself.”\textsuperscript{39}

Tickle, in \textit{Emergence Christianity}, proposes the gospel can be spread through dispersed communities.\textsuperscript{40} She describes an example of a sustainable church, which is devoid of a hierarchy that can come together for worship and prayers while blended into community. This model could be replicated beyond the confines of denominations while preserving the essential doctrines of Christology and loving God and loving one another. She further adds that “Emergence Christianity is, first and foremost, deinstitutionalized,” a key characteristic that it is completely at home with the culture,\textsuperscript{i.e.} post-modern culture like Australia. Other characteristics include

non-hierarchical organization; a comfortable and informed interface with physical science; dialogical and contextual habits of thought; almost universal technological savvy; triple citizenship with its triple loyalties and obligations; a deeply embedded commitment to social justice with an accompanying, though largely unpremeditated, assumption of all forms of human diversity as the norm;

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\textsuperscript{38} McLaren, \textit{The Great Spiritual Migration}, chap. 3, Kindle.
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\textsuperscript{39} Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen, \textit{The New Parish}, 22.
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\textsuperscript{40} Phyllis Tickle, \textit{Emergence Christianity}, chap. 6, Kindle.
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\textsuperscript{41} Ibid., chap. 16.
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and a vocation toward greenness.\footnote{Ibid.}

Russell uses the symbol of the round table to illustrate the inclusiveness and connectedness of “God’s final eschatological banquet” as the ultimate expression of the “unity of humanity.” This transcends all barriers of “religion, culture, race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.”\footnote{Russell, \textit{Church in the Round}, 17-19.} Coming from a Chinese cultural background, I am very familiar with the round table concept as a place for hospitality and communal sharing of food and lives. Relationships are formed and strengthened through such interactions. It even extends into other aspects of society such as the business sector. In many ways, it is similar to how Jesus spent so much time eating and drinking as portrayed in the Gospels. Prominent examples include eating at Matthew’s house (Mt 9:9-13) and Zacchaeus’s (Lk 19:1-10). It is a powerful platform for outreach and sharing the gospel through relationships. Russell extends this further into feminist ecclesiology, which she argues it is possible to be both “a feminist and a faithful Christian.” Feminism means advocating for women needs and is not against men, in fact men can advocate for feminism. She writes, “The critical principle of feminist theology is a table principle,” where people who are marginalised can join with those at the centre to participate fully in the life of the church.\footnote{Ibid., 24-27.} This is possible but may require an intentional focus of church leadership to make it happen and to break out of deep-seated traditions.

Faithful presence basically means following Jesus into the neighbourhood with likeminded disciples. It is allowing one’s imagination of the incarnation of God through
Christ and expressed in a diverse and local contexts. God is ever present throughout the world yet he becomes powerfully present through his people who are determined to make his presence known. The Kingdom of God is made manifest when God’s people come together in unity and submit to his kingship and rule. Rachel Held Evans, in quoting Heather Kopp believes “People bond more deeply over shared brokenness than they do over shared beliefs.” Small groups create a safe place for people to identify that they too need help. When functioning more as a recovery group than a religious organisation, all kinds of people are drawn to the group—even the ones not expected. Held Evans explains, “Imagine if every church became a place where everyone is safe but no one is comfortable. Imagine if every church became a place where we told one another the truth. We might just create sanctuary.” This is very much in line with Jesus’ example of including everyone, even the outcasts such as Matthew and Zacchaeus as mentioned earlier. Yet Jesus (Lk 12:1-3) and Paul (Gal 2:11-13) had no qualms confronting hypocrisy when required.

The Church as Transforming Culture

St. Paul exalts the Roman church “not to be conformed to this world (kosmos), but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, [and] prove what is that good and

45 Sparks, Soerens, and Friesen, The New Parish, 45-46.
46 Fitch, Faithful Presence, chap. 1, Kindle.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 72.
acceptable and perfect will of God.” (Rm 12:2). Paul was referring to the predominant Roman worldview and culture that permeates every strata of society. The Church as a new minority and alternative community has been transplanted amid such a society.

The local church must be contextual in every cultural setting to stay relevant and be an effective agent of God. However, culture is not neutral but has been negatively influenced by the fallen nature of humanity and enslaved by the forces of darkness. The Church is called to continue in the redemptive reign of God by exposing the powers that have been defeated.⁵⁰ However, Van Gelder does not go far enough to explain in greater detail how these forces are to be exposed and rendered powerless. One would suggest the need to expound more on the nature of spiritual warfare through effective prayer of binding and loosing through the authority of Jesus (Mt 16:18-19) and prayers of deliverance so they can be free to live fully the lives that Christ has ordained them to.

Newbigin refutes Guttmann’s conviction that “The basic forms of tribe, neighbourhood, and age group are part of the God-given order of creation, and the work of missions is to build upon and to perfect these created realities.”⁵¹ Newbigin struggles with the following idea: “To ascribe absolute value to the forms of social organization at any one time and place is both historically naïve and theologically intolerable,”⁵² as such claims of absolutes belong only to Christ. For Newbigin, organizations of social structures and cultures are subject to change from the very people who are living in that culture and also from external sources beyond it. Hence, culture is a dynamic entity that

⁵⁰ Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church*, 119-120.


⁵² Ibid.
will evolve from generation to generation and the degree of transformation is subject to the powers at work in that culture. From the communication of the gospel, a “three cornered relationship is set up between the traditional culture, the Christianity of the evangelist, and the Bible,” which results in a complicated and unpredictable outcome.\footnote{53} Since concepts and understandings of God can influence greatly the cultures and civilizations we live in, theological shifts will naturally lead to transformation of culture.\footnote{54} People who are confronted by the failure of institutions create movements. It can bring about positive change or be resisted by the elite status quo, which may result in an alternative, competitive institution called denominations in the church context.\footnote{55}

It means transforming into the culture of Jesus, who is the embodiment of God himself. A culture that is inclusive, distinguishing between neither Jew nor Greek, slaves nor free, male nor female (Gal 3:28). The concept of an egalitarian society with a God dimension, ruled by the power from above would stretch beyond the realms of a global and multicultural alliances yet with unique individual entities empowered with self-organization and autonomy to live out their convictions within their local contexts.\footnote{56}

Hunter noted St Patrick’s effectiveness in evangelism and church planting arose from the diverse team ministry of “priests, seminarians, laymen, and laywomen” who engaged contextually with the leaders of the local community, backed by prayer and the

\footnote{53} Ibid., 147-148.  
\footnote{54} Brian D. McLaren, The Great Spiritual Migration, chap. 7, Kindle.  
\footnote{55} Ibid.  
\footnote{56} Ibid.
miraculous. The local tribe could evolve into a particular Christian community without any disruption to their way of life and culture. It is therefore not surprising the resultant church would be highly indigenous in its leadership and practice. St Patrick and his team started a movement resulting in a revival in Ireland. It was said in “his lifetime, 30 to 40 (or more) of Ireland’s 150 tribes became substantially Christian.” It is also noted the Irish revival was so effective because of the “ethos of its communicators and its communities.” In other words, believers become the message. The credibility of the messenger of the gospel is paramount. People believe not because of what believers say, but who they are. Only when people judge Christ followers as trustworthy and genuine, are they willing to listen to the gospel message and consider its implications for their lives and families. Celtic Christian leaders became great students of the “host culture and affirmed and built on every indigenous feature that they could.” A great example of this is how they adapt the worship of tall standing stones by Irish Celts before conversion into “tall standing Celtic crosses with the circle intersecting the cross.”

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58 Ibid., 10-11.
59 Ibid., 46-47.
60 Ibid., 87
61 Ibid.
CHAPTER 5

A THEOLOGY OF EMPOWERMENT AND HOLISTIC HEALTH
FOR MALAYSIAN MIGRANTS

Before encouraging Malaysian Christians at CityLife Church to participate in a Missional Church model as proposed in chapter four, it is necessary to address the issue of increased capacity and freedom from past bondages. A theology of empowerment is proposed based on the study of the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament context. This is the first step to transformation of the Malaysian community of CityLife Church within the missional framework and characteristics discussed in chapter four. A holistic ministerial approach involving spirit, mind, and body allows for the capacity development of the Malaysian Christians, which is essential to the fulfillment of their calling within the Australian context.

Theology of Empowerment

Malaysians in general need to be set free from the bondages of the past and those associated with culture, hang-ups, and other religious practices prior to their conversion to Christ. Many of those who become Christians receive forgiveness, new life, and fullness of the Spirit but stop short of healing and deliverance at the point of conversion.
Consequently, some are still bound and handicapped by the demonic strongholds that have prevented them from realising their full potential that God intended.

The Healing and Deliverance Ministry of Jesus

Jesus launches his ministry manifesto of the good news of the Kingdom of God by reading from Isaiah 61:1-2, and claiming its fulfilment as validation of his Messiahship (Lk 4:18-21, 8:1) as illustrated in the following key elements: (1) “release (ἀφέσιν – aphesin)”\(^1\) to the ‘captives (αἰχμαλώτοις – aichmalōtois).”\(^2\) Believers are released through Christ from their penalty for sins. (2) recovery of sight to the blind. Healing is now available in the new Kingdom of God. (3) “freedom (ἀφέσει – phesei).”\(^3\) for those who are “oppressed (τεθραυσμένους – tethrausmenous).”\(^4\) This word refers to someone else (Satan and demon spirits) oppressing another (believers). Healing and deliverance are the hallmarks of Jesus’s ministry. Jesus teaches with authority (Lk 4:32), affirms signs of healing and deliverance as a testament to his Messiahship, and delegates power and authority from the Father. Subsequent scriptural references confirm his healing and deliverance ministry.

The casting out of demons ushers in his alternative Kingdom of God (Mt 12:28). The Gospels, particularly of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, show the constant conflict between his Kingdom and Satan’s kingdom. This can be seen in Satan’s temptation of


\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ibid.
Jesus (Lk 4:1-13), the preaching of the Kingdom (Lk 8:1-3), the empowerment the twelve apostles in emulating his ministry (Lk 9:1-2), the sending out of the seventy (Lk 10:17-20), and the deliverance of the Gadarene demoniac (Lk 8:26-36; Mk 5:1-20; Mt 8:28-34). Prince asserts Jesus expects his disciples then and now to follow in his footsteps to cast out demons as part of the preaching of the gospel.\(^5\) He says graciously evangelism without the casting of demons is “not New Testament evangelism” and that it is unscriptural to exclude deliverance when praying for healing.\(^6\) This is a relevant claim in today’s context when hardly much preaching and teaching on deliverance are conducted in the Church today.

The first deliverance occurs in a synagogue in Capernaum (Lk 4:33-36; Mk 1:21-28). The five signs, which include healing and deliverance, confirm his ministry (Mk 16:17-18). The preaching of the Kingdom of God is tied to signs of healing and deliverance (Mt 4:23-24; 8:7-13,16; 9:35; 10:1-8; 12:10-22). There are references that some physical illnesses are linked to demonic spirits, such as the healing of the blind and mute (Mt 12:22), the deliverances from epilepsy (Lk 9:38-42; Mt 17:15-18), a spirit of infirmity (Lk 13:10-17), and mental illness (Lk 8:26-36; Mk 5:1-15). Prince notes Jesus does not draw a distinction between healing people of sickness and casting out demons from them.\(^7\)

Jesus uses commanding prayer in exercising his authority and power over


\(^6\) Ibid., 11.

\(^7\) Ibid., 21, 192.
demonic spirits. The spirits come out with a word, accompanied by some manifestation but without much delay. Jesus’s contemporary disciples are called to do the same and expect similar results because his authority and power has been delegated to them (Mt 28:16-18).

The Healing and Deliverance Ministry in Acts

The apostles continue in the ministry of healing and deliverance as one of the signs in proclaiming the gospel. The healing of the lame person by Peter and John (Ac 3:11-4:4) leads to the preaching of the Kingdom resulting in about five thousand becoming followers of Jesus Christ. Amid persecution, they pray fervently that they continue with boldness to speak his word confirmed by signs and wonders and healing (Ac 4: 24-31). Through the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders such as healing and deliverance are done among the people (Ac 5:12, 15-16). These result in further growth of the Church that organised labour is required to administer the practical distribution of food to the Hellenistic widows (Ac 6).

Great persecution in Jerusalem causes the Church to move out to Judea and Samaria (Ac 8:1) Healing and deliverance continue under the hand of Philip the evangelist and there is great joy as people are set free (Ac 8:7-8). Horrobin notes the deliverance ministry is very much part of the “Gospel experience” even beyond Jerusalem.8

Acts 8 describes vividly the first spiritual encounter between the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of the enemy through Simon the sorcerer. Through the

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miracles and signs, Simon is converted and baptized (Ac 8:13). Peter discerns the evil in the heart of Simon even though he has become a Christian (Ac 8:20-23). This evilness of heart is traced to his involvement with the occult and sorcery, which are controlled by demonic spirits. There is no indication Simon repents and renounces such practices at the point of his conversion. Horrobin notes Peter wisely refrains from praying deliverance, as the act of repentance comes before any effective deliverance can take place; when repentance has not been genuine, it has held back the effectiveness of the deliverance experience.⁹ Prince identifies ten possible factors why people are not delivered, and at the top of the list is “lack of repentance.”¹⁰

Signs and wonders provide the spiritual breakthrough for the gospel in the case of Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul (Ac 13:4-12). Under the Holy Spirit’s anointing, Paul discerns the evil presence and source of Elymas’s power and pronounces judgement over him. This dramatic encounter causes Sergius Paulus to believe. The conversion of the proconsul has significant positive implications for the extension of the Kingdom of God. Horrobin warns those involved with the occult are subjected to demonic powers, which resist or oppose the truth of the gospel and will do whatever it takes to stop its propagation. Demons do not mind Christian activities that do not threaten the “kingdom of Satan.”¹¹ Jesus highlights the importance of binding the strongman before a breakthrough is possible (Mt 12:29; Mk 3:27; Lk 11:21-22).

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⁹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁰ Derek Prince, They Shall Expel Demons, 230.

¹¹ Horrobin, Healing through Deliverance, 200.
Acts 19 describes how God uses Paul to extend his Kingdom in Ephesus, a major commercial centre in Asia Minor, but also home of the occult through the worship of the great goddess Diana (Ac 19:27). “Unusual miracles” are performed through proxy healing and deliverance (Ac 19:11-12). In the midst of a great revival, the dramatic story of the sons of Sceva’s encounter with the demonic (Ac 19:13-17) provides the tipping point for ushering in the Kingdom of God in Ephesus. Yet, belief in Jesus means a powerful, complete, and expensive break from the occult (Ac 19:18-20). It is not enough to express repentance without destroying the objects of the occult. Destroying these cursed items liberate the family line from such curses for many generations to come.\textsuperscript{12}

**Holistic Health and Energy Management**

Holistic health is best understood first from the biblical perspective since God is the Creator of humanity and purpose of life. For Christians, the Bible includes the narrative of the creation, fall, and redemption of humanity through Jesus Christ. It describes the composition of humanity as spirit, mind, soul, flesh (sinful nature), and body created in the image of God. It contains the general principles for right and meaningful living but is not intended to be a scientific book that drills down to that level of detail. Hence, it is vital to draw from alternative sources of research from the professional world. This does not contradict the Scriptures but complements it by filling in the gaps of knowledge that science and technology afford.

\textsuperscript{12} Ibid., 209.
The Wholeness of Humanity: Spirit, Mind, Soul, Sinful Nature and Body

In loving God, Jesus emphasizes the connection and the full engagement of one’s “whole (ὅλης—holes), heart (καρδίας—kardias), soul (ψυχῆς—psyches), mind (διανοίας—dianoias), and strength (ἰσχύος—ischyos)” (Mk 12:30, Lk 10:27). This advocates an integral and balanced approach from God’s perspective. Strength in this case can be translated as “capability.” This implies engaging to the best of our ability or full potential. The twenty-first century lifestyle tends to compartmentalize individual’s lives into, for example, secular versus religious and private versus public. When it comes to healthy lifestyles, some would emphasize healthy eating, others stress the need for exercise, while others pursue a spiritual solution. Nevertheless, an integrated approach is seldom taken into account.

The Apostle Paul reinforces Christ’s holistic teaching in his concluding prayer to the Thessalonian church, “Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept complete, blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, who also will do this” (1 Thes 5:23-24). It is the God of peace himself who has taken the initiative to set believers apart for his exclusive use. Believers are to be holistically well and completely whole in spirit, soul, and body. Christ followers are empowered completely in service and devotion to God’s will and purposes.

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13 Harris, The Lexham English Bible, Mk 12:30.

There is an eschatological anticipation that the Church will be blameless before Christ’s second coming. The word ‘blameless (amemptōs—ἀμέμπτως)\textsuperscript{15} gives a glimpse of the Old Testament animal sacrifices without blemish and points to the perfect and better sacrifice of Christ, offered once for all (Heb 7:26-27). Christians live in the complete assurance of Christ’s perfect sacrifice based on better promises and covenant (Heb 8:6). Satan’s legitimacy to accuse believers has been removed totally. It is not something that can be done to earn acceptance, but is based on one’s identity in Christ. There is a strong urge to retain this perfect relationship in anticipation of Jesus’s return. So, Christians are called to live holistic, healthy lives with the capability and capacity to establish his Kingdom in anticipation of his return. To top it all, Paul is re-emphasising that it is God who calls and can be trusted unreservedly; He will definitely fulfil this as He is faithful.

Jesus said people shall not live by bread alone but on every word of God “(ῥήματι – rhēmati)”\textsuperscript{16}, the spoken word of God\textsuperscript{17} (Mt 4:4), which appears thirty-nine times in the New Testament. This is different from the λόγος (logos), generally the written word that shows up 230 times in the New Testament. Jesus connects the physical to the spiritual. Both are important, whereas believers today tend to emphasize one or the other. In John 6:63 Jesus says, “It is the Spirit who gives life, the flesh [sinful nature] is no help at all. The words [rhemata] that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.” It is important to live by the rhema word of God as it contributes to the life that God has destined believers to

\textsuperscript{15} Harris, \textit{The Lexham English Bible}, 1 Thes 5:23.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid., Mt 4:4.

live. Yet, humanity can live on a physical or material level but devoid of the spiritual. It is heartening, though, that more and more people are looking for the spiritual as they realize that the material cannot fully satisfy.

The Spirit

The Greek word ‘πνεῦμα (pneuma) is translated as blast or wind’\(^{18}\). Paul writes, “For God, whom I serve with my spirit [pneuma] in the gospel of his Son, is my witness, how constantly I make mention of you” (Rm 1:9). Later he declares, “For you have not received a spirit (πνεῦμα—pneuma) of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, Abba! Father! The Spirit himself confirms to our spirit that we are children of God” (Rm 8:15-16). This spiritual journey of holistic health and transformation is based on being now adopted as sons and daughters of the King. This work of grace is not something anyone worked for but is to be enjoyed as it is based on a relationship with God through Christ.

“For to us God has revealed them through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God. For who among men knows the things of a man, except the spirit of the man that is in him? Thus also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God” (1 Cor 2:10-11). What this means is after the coming of the Holy Spirit, it is possible for every believer to have access and know the will and purposes of God in their lives as they continue to be led by the Spirit.

\(^{18}\) Liddell, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, 1424.
A believer’s spirit is meant to be of power, love, and “self-discipline (σωφρονισµοῦ - sōphronismou)” instead of timidity, fear, or cowardice (2 Tm 1:7).

Sōphronismos can also be translated as “sound judgement or moderation.” So, the spirit is involved with the mind particularly in decision making and consideration of issues. It also indicates that one’s judgement can be clouded by fear due to a lack of moral strength. A spirit of timidity can prevent believers from sharing the gospel or be embarrassed to be identified as a Christian. Paul exalts Timothy to “lead disciples to the knowledge of the truth so that they come to their senses and not be held captive by the Devil to do his will” (2 Tm 2:26). Integrity and sincerity of heart are vital—being honest with God and men. When something is hidden, then the Devil can take advantage and hold people captive.

The Flesh (Sinful Nature)

Romans 8:5-6 reads, “For those who are living according to the “flesh (σάρκα – sarka)”21, the physical and human nature that is influenced by the world and sin22 are intent on the things of the flesh (sinful nature), but those who are living according to the Spirit are intent on the things of the Spirit. For the “mindset (φρόνηµα – phronema)”23, ‘the facility of thoughtful planning’24 of the flesh (sinful nature) is death, but the mindset

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19 Harris, The Lexham English Bible, 2 Tm 1:7.


21 Harris, The Lexham English Bible, Rom 8:5.

22 Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains), Loc. 4922.

23 Harris, The Lexham English Bible, Rom 8:6.

24 Swanson, Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains, Loc. 5859.
of the Spirit is life and peace.” These verses contrast the constant conflict of two natures within a believer, the old nature that is influenced by sin, world, and Satan and the new nature being renewed and transformed by the Spirit. To live holistic lives, Christians need to be aware of this constant battle that rages within and allow the Spirit of God to create a new mindset that is after the things of God. Lack of understanding of this has prevented some Christians from experiencing a wholesome Christian life on earth.

The Mind

1 Corinthians 2:14-16 reads,

But the natural man [Ψυχικός—psychikos, an unspiritual man, a state of life out of touch with God]25 does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. Now the spiritual person discerns all things, but he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord; who has advised him? But we have the mind [νοῦν – noun, way of thinking or attitude]26 of Christ.

Here Paul used another word, psychikos to describe the unspiritual man that is related to the sinful nature. As people attune their minds to the Spirit of God, they can spiritually discern the will and purposes of God. On the contrary, “the god of this age can blind the minds of the unbelievers” (2 Cor 4:4). The peace of God can guard believers’ hearts and minds in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7).


26 Mangum, Lexham Theological Wordbook, 1 Cor 2:16.
The Soul

ψυχή (psychē) is translated as the soul, life, or person\textsuperscript{27}. It can refer to a person’s inner life or that which gives life. This means it includes one’s personality and where emotions reside. In Acts 20:10, Paul used psychē to express the life that is in Eutychus, after Paul prayed over him. Jesus’s psychē is translated as life\textsuperscript{28} to illustrate the importance of life over food (Mt 6:25).

The Body

1 Cor 6:13-17 reads, “Now the body (σῶμα—soma, refers to the entire physical person, living or dead)\textsuperscript{29} is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. God both raised up the Lord and will raise us up by his power. Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Therefore, shall I take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be! Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For it says, the two will become one flesh. But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with him.”

In 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, Paul encourages believers to “Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a person commits is outside his body, but the one who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God with your body.” People have

\textsuperscript{27} Mangum, \textit{Lexham Theological Wordbook}, Acts 20:10.

\textsuperscript{28} Harris, \textit{The Lexham English Bible}, Mt 6:25.

\textsuperscript{29} Mangum, \textit{Lexham Theological Wordbook}, 1 Cor 6:13.
responsibility to take care of their physical bodies and not succumb to the Greek dichotomy that the physical is inferior and separate and therefore cannot affect the spiritual.

**Holistic Ministry**

The Bible deals with the holistic nature of spirit, mind, soul, sinful nature, and body. Interconnectivity and healthy maintenance of these elements are clearly seen. Yet, not many sermons stress the critical importance of these elements and provide effective application solutions so the believer can truly enjoy and experience the abundant life Jesus talks about.

The gospel through Jesus Christ is holistic as it brings about a new spiritual rebirth while healing individuals emotionally and physically. Jesus is seen as the perfect incarnation of the gospel and meeting the needs of the people in various circumstances. Jesus’ ways were varied, contextual, and he transcended social and cultural norms and circumstances. For example, the way he reached out to Zacchaeus (Lk 19:1-10) was vastly different from that of the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:4-26). Yet both approaches were equally effective in helping them respond to their Saviour and Lord. Holistic ministry is the integration of the gospel and meeting the needs of the people in their contexts. These needs are spiritual, physical, social, psychological, and emotional. Believers need to experience firsthand this holistic ministry from our Lord Jesus before ministering to others. Then every member of the Church can in turn minister holistically to people in need in their spheres of influence.
Current Understanding of Holistic Health/Energy Management

Holistic health and well-being are discussed in the previous section from a biblical perspective. Today, science and technology can complement the biblical narrative with a greater depth of understanding of the human person. Loehr and Schwartz stress energy, not time, is the most precious resource needed to manage effectively for a wholesome life.\textsuperscript{30} Energy management is further broken up into physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual energy along similar lines as the biblical framework. John Ng adds in social energy,\textsuperscript{31} but social energy straddles across the four elements of energy in promoting healthy social relationships and is therefore excluded from this discussion. Scizzero warns leaders to avoid the misguided belief that just because a person has a real experience with Christian activities like bible study, prayer, and fellowship, that automatically he or she is fine spiritually even though their emotional and relational world is collapsing and not in order.\textsuperscript{32} He illustrates emotional health with the analogy of the roots (inner, hidden health) of a healthy tree and its branches (outer, visible health). Emotional health and spiritual maturity are inseparable.\textsuperscript{33} Living in two very different public and private worlds is the height of hypocrisy. Falsehood and pretence are the fertile grounds from which the enemy can do the most harm. Eventually this hypocrisy

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{32} Peter Scizzero, \textit{The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming your Inner Life will Deeply Transform your Church, Team, and the World} (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 14-17.
\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., 48, 174-176.
\end{flushright}
would manifest itself and the consequential collateral damage to family, friends, and church are magnified exponentially.

**Flow and Happiness**

Flow is the common experience of many people who are able to move effortlessly with optimal energy resulting in the highest moments of enjoyment and satisfaction. The basic elements of flow mean the complete preoccupation of the task at hand in its complexity, yet one is totally absorbed with no distinction between thought and action, or without consciousness of self and the environment. Spending time with people can create a flow experience but needs to be mutually beneficial rather than one-sided.

Striking a delicate balance of differentiation and integration enables a person to lead a happy and fulfilling life. Differentiation recognizes individuals as “unique individuals, responsible for our own survival and well-being,” motivated further by optimal enjoyment of actions, and being integrated through relationship networks within a cultural context and environment. This creative tension of differentiation and integration is particularly relevant to the Malaysian Christian context as there is an overarching priority of the community needs over the individual needs. The challenge is finding an equilibrium that would work for the Malaysian community.

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35 Ibid., 40.

36 Ibid., 29.
Physical Energy

The need for physical energy, a basic fuel that powers daily lives, is many times underestimated. One’s wellbeing and responsiveness depends on it while managing emotions and creative thinking. This enables people to meet their goals and fulfill their mission. In spite of an excellent health system, “In 2014-15, just over half (56.2%) of all Australians aged 15 years and over considered themselves to be in excellent or very good health, while 14.8% rated their health as fair or poor.” This is compounded by the increase in obesity with age: “In 2014-15, 63.4% of Australian adults were overweight or obese (11.2 million people). This is similar to the prevalence of overweight and obesity in 2011-12 (62.8%), and an increase since 1995 (56.3%). Around one in four (27.4%) children aged 5-17 years were overweight or obese, similar to 2011-12 (25.7%).

Obesity is based on the Body Mass Index (BMI), whereby adults are considered overweight if their BMI is between 25.00 and 29.99, and obese if their BMI is over 30.00. Being overweight or obese increases a person's risk of developing long-term health conditions including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and type two diabetes.

In 2014-15, 55.5% of 18-64 year olds participated in sufficient physical activity in the last week (more than 150 minutes of moderate physical activity or more than 75 minutes of vigorous physical activity, or an equivalent combination of both, including walking). Nearly one in three (29.7%) were insufficiently active (less

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39 Ibid.

than 150 minutes in the last week) while 14.8% were inactive (no exercise in the last week).41

Healthy eating, good sleep, and regular exercise can reduce obesity and promote well-being and higher physical energy.

**Emotional Energy**

Physical energy is the basic fuel for firing “our emotional skills and talents.”42 It is important to harness pleasant and positive emotions such as enjoyment, challenge, adventure, and opportunity. On the contrary, negative emotions such as fear, frustration, anger, and sadness trigger the release of cortisol, which in large amounts are toxic to the physical system.43

Negative emotions have an impact on organizations too. Gallup found the single factor that influences the productivity of an employee is firstly his relationship with his direct superior. It is therefore critical that superiors encourage, care for, and give recognition or praise to employees. The ability to communicate consistent positive energy is the key to effective management.44

Gorman, in quoting the earlier works of McClelland and Spencer, defines emotional intelligence (EI) as four competencies such as the drive for results, the ability to take initiative, skills in collaboration and teamwork, and finally, the ability to lead teams. Managers in the high-potential group demonstrate virtually all of these

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41 Australian Bureau of Statistics, “4364.0.55.001 – National Health Survey.”


43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 75.
competencies while the average performance group possesses few of these competencies. Interestingly, cross-cultural differences across the world do not alter the competencies mix and therefore assist global organizations to make accurate and objective assessments of their staff wherever they are located. From these earlier studies have evolved the establishment of four domains of EI with their respective competencies. The domains are self-awareness, self-management, social-awareness, and relationship management.45

From the inner and outer life concepts of Scazzero, “facing the shadow” and “culture and team building” are particularly relevant in the area of emotional energy. The shadow is the continuous buildup of unconscious and uncontrolled emotions, impure motives, and thoughts that greatly influence and shape a person’s behaviors. It is the broken and mostly obscured version of the real self that is not apparent to others. Classic manifestations include those with public speaking abilities distancing themselves from close relationships, those that value excellence but cross over to perfectionism where there is no room for error. Another would be zealous for truth and right doctrine, but the zeal preventing someone from loving those who disagree. Lastly, the desire to maximize the potential of the Church for Christ makes one preoccupied with achieving objectives, thus compromising the ability to listen to others. These shadows have dire consequences when left unattended, resulting in unnecessary expending of emotional energy.

Culture involves the unspoken rules of how things are done in an organization. Team building involves the mobilizing of a diverse group of people to fulfill a common vision or goals. Emotionally healthy culture and team building in the context of

organizations requires the ongoing balance of personal spiritual formation with their work performance. This requires the investment of time and energy on the part of mentors or supervisors while glaring “elephants” in the room are properly addressed and not swept under the carpet. Experience confirms when these festering issues are not dealt with, they eventually come up in the future with far greater consequences.

**Mental Energy**

Siegell makes significant contributions by studying the connection between the mind and the brain at a neural level, which he calls Mindsight. Understanding Mindsight can free people from the set patterns of mind that prevents them from living their full potential. Through focused Mindsight, one can alter the mental and emotional states with a corresponding physical transformation of the brain. The good news is everyone can develop Mindsight and it provides greater freedom of choice and power to influence one’s future. How a person focuses his or her attention shapes the structure of the brain by growing more neural connections. These circuits create “resilience and well-being” with increased “empathy and compassion.” Amazingly, these connections do not stop growing after childhood but can continue for the rest of our lives.

The prefrontal cortex in the form of Mindsight maps creates complex image representations of the present, past, and future. It is from the ability to create such maps

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48 Ibid., xiii.

49 Ibid.
that the prefrontal cortex could integrate bodily regulation with attuned response and emotional balance of empathy, intuition, and insight. This is the seat of emotional wellness when everything is functioning normally. This also helps explain human behavior when losing control of a particular situation. The key then is to recognize when such functions breakdown and respond quickly to minimize the hurt they cause, which triggers the relationship restoration process.\(^50\)

The brain has more than one hundred billion interconnected neurons, with an average neuron having ten thousand connections or synapses that are in turn connected to other neurons. The number of neural firings equate to “ten to the millionth power or ten times ten, one million times.”\(^51\) Neural firings are confirmed by the increase of blood flow to a particular region of the brain. Siegel believes the firing patterns can be altered through the power of the mind, resulting in changed perceptions, responses, and feelings. The right mental activity can stimulate healthy synaptic linkages, which improves the overall health of the brain.\(^52\)

Genes and chance play a major role in defining temperament, which then influences the shaping of particular synaptic connections. On the other hand, experiences with the world, particularly in relationships, can change the structure of the brain and thereby influence a person’s temperament and personality in the long term.\(^53\) What this means is our positive or negative experiences trigger neural firing patterns in such a way

\(^{50}\) Ibid., 8, 26, 30.

\(^{51}\) Ibid., 38.

\(^{52}\) Ibid., 38-39.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 40-41.
that it produces pleasurable or dreadful feelings, causing a person to be attracted or repulsed by the immediate encounter.

The question then is whether people can transform negative experiences into positive ones. Positive transformation is possible through the redirected focus of the mind thus creating alternative synaptic linkages, which can be strengthened over time. Myelin, the fatty sheath around axons, is produced which improves the speed of conduction down the neuron length by as much as a hundredfold. The ability of the brain to transform itself is called neuroplasticity.\(^5^4\)

Humans are limited by the amount of information the brain can process. So, each person must decide what to pay attention to, how long, and how intensely. Hence, energies can be directed based on the values the person has adopted or embraced. This determines what and how well the individual accomplishes goals and builds relationships. Hence it is important to make a habit of not making important decisions when one’s mental attitude is not in a healthy state, such as when depressed or tired, as it negatively affects thought processes.\(^5^5\) This is focused mental energy that can be outworked in our daily lives. “The human mind is a relational and embodied process that regulates the flow of energy and information.”\(^5^6\) This real-time monitoring and regulation of the main organs of the body occurs throughout the nervous system.\(^5^7\)

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\(^{5^4}\) Ibid., 41-42.

\(^{5^5}\) Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Good Business*, 177-187.


\(^{5^7}\) Ibid., 52-53.
An individual can be influenced by the behavior and emotional responses of others to the point of replicating that behavior subconsciously. This is obvious in a parental relationship with a child in his or her formative years. If a parent’s responses have been positive, secure and stable, the child is likely to create mind maps that are clear and focused. The reverse is true if those personal relationship experiences have been volatile or unpredictable.58 This understanding confirms the long-held belief childhood experiences impact positively or negatively a person’s view and interpretation of theological understanding of love and perception of God as Father. By providing a clear explanation, Mindsight can be used effectively to assist people to work through their emotional and mental traumas of the past.

**Spiritual Energy**

Loehr and Schwartz believe spiritual energy based on deep values and beliefs creates a strong sense of purpose that has room for others. Purpose is like a compass that guides and motivates a person toward a specific destination. Full engagement results from the conviction that what is being accomplished has significance and is driven by a person’s values. The quest for meaning and purpose are powerful motivators in every culture. Loehr and Schwartz write, “Purpose becomes more powerful and enduring source of energy [when it moves from] negative to positive, external to internal and from self to others.”59 Ng acknowledges that renewed spiritual energy comes from going

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58 Ibid., 61.

beyond the self and being able to face new challenges and stretched goals. By participating actively in one’s community of influence and helping those less fortunate, individuals gain new perspectives and a renewed passion for living. The converse is true when a person falls into a rut—his or her spiritual energy diminishes.

We need deeper root structures such as firm beliefs and compelling values. For Malaysian Christians, firm beliefs and compelling values come from the right interpretation and application of the Word of God. Right values can positively affect communities, organizations, and nations. The value system of the gospel reigns supreme over the value system of the local culture. Local values that are compatible with values of the Word of God are to be reinforced and those that contradict to be countered.

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60 Ng, Dim Sum Leadership, 95-96.
PART THREE

MINISTRY STRATEGY
CHAPTER 6
MINISTRY PLAN

This chapter examines the theological implications of empowering Malaysian Christians in dealing with the ongoing challenges highlighted in chapter two. Embracing the theology of empowerment and holistic ministry principles has resulted in increased capacity for the Malaysian Christians. The reality of this increased capacity is described through my personal experience of being free from the oppression of the enemy through the authority of Jesus. This capacity is further enhanced through the application of holistic principles. Additional impacts include the growth of new Life Groups and a renewed commitment to mission to the indigenous Christian communities of Sabah and Sarawak.

The ministry goals are developed along two major initiatives: to be fervent followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian community in Knox, and to be incarnated in the mission of God with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. These initiatives are further broken up into specific, achievable and measurable goals. The ministry goals are supported by strategies that include (1) application of the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus to targeted Life Groups, (2) formation of a healing and deliverance ministry team as part of the ongoing discipleship process, (3) resource
development of teaching materials on healing, deliverance, and holistic health, (4) ministry training for Life Group leaders, and (5) formation of the 3Ce ministries as a vehicle for mission to the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak.

**Theological Implications of Empowering Malaysian Christians**

Chapter two covers in detail how CityLife Church, through its inclusive philosophy, core values, and strategies have helped empower Malaysian Christians to participate at various leadership and ministry levels which contributes positively to the local community within Australia.

However, Malaysian Christians still encounter ongoing challenges when settling in Australia. These ongoing challenges are: (1) overcoming migrant mentality, (2) question of loyalty between Malaysia and Australia, and (3) the impact of migration on growing mental health issues. These can be attributed to deep fundamental issues of rejection and insecurity, brought about through generations of discrimination and being treated as second-class citizens in Malaysia. These entrenched feelings are more prevalent among first generation Malaysian migrants. Many Malaysian migrants experience various degrees of racism and discrimination in the workplace. These negative experiences reinforce their insecurity and rejection, which leads to mistrust, and hence reduced loyalty to their host country. Such pressures on the first-generation migrants have contributed to the increase in mental health issues, such as depression and suicides within the context of family disputes and conflicts. Until such issues of insecurity and rejection are dealt with at a deeper level, the Malaysian migrant community will continue to be subjected to the vicious cycle of such challenges.
The embrace of the theology of empowerment and holistic health principles can help the Malaysian community overcome these challenges and be empowered to fulfill their God-given calling in Australia. This liberates them to focus on the mission of God and the Church. Believers’ loyalty is now to a higher calling, the pronouncement and establishment of the Kingdom of God based on the theology of the *Missio Dei*.

**Increased Capacity through Empowerment and Holistic Ministry**

One of the most effective ways to validate the principles discussed in chapters three to five is to apply them to my own context which is similar to the Malaysian Christian migrants in Australia. Personal encounters increase one’s understanding of this new ministry initiative and provide empathy for those who needed to go through this ministry. It translates theory into practice and knowing its effectiveness provides additional confidence to implement such learnings in later sections of this chapter.

**A Personal Encounter**

We come from a traditional rich family in Malaysia. My grandfather died at the age of forty-eight and my father inherited wealth at a young age, but it was all squandered through bad company and gambling. When my mother was pregnant with me, she made a decision to have an abortion due to her poor financial and marital situation. My grandmother heard about it and prevented it from going forward. However, my mother’s decision to have the abortion opened the door for a spirit of rejection to enter me even when I was in my mother’s womb. As a result, I struggled with rejection throughout my childhood without a clear understanding of where it came from.
This struggle with rejection continued, even after I committed my life to Christ and was baptized in the Holy Spirit without a clear sense of victory. Struggles with rejection led to over-sensitivity to what people said, resulting in automatic retaliation, and unnecessary arguments. In such moments of negative emotions, wrong words were uttered causing hurt and strife in others, which had an ongoing ripple effect. Ng calls this “Smiling Tiger, Hidden Dragon” phenomena, which refers to resolving conflicts in an Asian context.\(^1\) Instead of building the body of Christ, people inadvertently wound it through immature actions and reactions.

**Free from Spiritual Oppression**

In dealing with my own rejection, I have discovered an additional connection worth discussing. Even though I was involved in the deliverance ministry and baptized in the Holy Spirit, I was blinded by the reality of this bondage of rejection in my life. This was because I did not know how and why this rejection had become a source of bondage until my mother shared about her attempted abortion many years ago. Satan operates in the cloak of darkness and deception. Once this was exposed, it was relatively easy for me, with the help of a pastor, to be delivered from a spirit of rejection and related spirits through commanding prayer under the authority of the Lord Jesus.

Demonic spirits can take advantage of a person’s areas of weakness and vulnerability through the works of sinful nature. Persistent sinning in such areas causes bondage and subsequent strongholds. Jesus explains how the stronghold is established through the introduction of other related spirits (Lk 11:24-26). In my case, it started with

the spirit of rejection through the attempted abortion. Other spirits such as spirits of insecurity, worry, anxiety, fear of failure, fear of poverty, and procrastination entered through subsequent traumatic events in my teenage years.

The works of the flesh (sinful nature) are described in Galatians 5:19-21. The apostle Paul draws the connection between flesh and sin (Rm 7:5), and Jesus emphasizes the practice of sin as being a slave to sin (Jn 8:34). Making a practice of sinning is of the devil, who has been sinning from the beginning and Jesus, the Son of God appeared to destroy (λύσῃ -lyse) the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8). The word destroy means loose, untie, or release, which means that Satan can bind individuals as a result of persistent sinning. The relationship between the sinful nature, sin, and the influence of the demonic on our mental, emotional, and physical well-being are illustrated in Appendix I. The arrows indicate the vicious cycle that Satan and demons use to cause individuals to sin (Gal 5:19-21), promote lawlessness (1 Jn 3:4-9), and torment (1 Jn 4:18). This vicious cycle descends into a downward spiral where Satan’s ultimate objective is “to steal, and to kill, and to destroy” (Jn 10:10).

**Using the Mind: The Key to Breaking Strongholds**

God has provided a holistic solution that leads to victory and abundant life (Jn 10:10). Unconfessed sin is like rubbish that attracts rats (demons). Confession leads to forgiveness (1 Jn 1:8-10) so that believers are released from guilt and captivity. Believers are called to be crucified with Christ (Rm 6:6), to not give in to sin (Rm 6:11), and to walk in the Spirit (Gal 5:16,18). Forgiveness, healing, and deliverance are available to
break the strongholds and bondage through the death and resurrection of Jesus as in the aforementioned theology of empowerment.

The Bible contains a great deal about the importance of the mind. In Romans 12:2, Paul contrasts the conflict between being conformed to this world, which has a different worldview to that of being transformed by the renewal of one’s mind to Christ Jesus. The god of this age can blind the minds of unbelievers (2 Cor 4:4). Paul claims to have the mind of Christ (1 Cor 2:16). The peace of God can guard one’s heart and mind in Christ Jesus (Phil 4:7).

The demonic realm will tempt human beings to sin initially in their minds. If their minds are not strong in Christ, then those thoughts will eventually manifest as sin. When one sins, it creates an area of vulnerability. The demonic realm is not omniscient like God, but they can observe areas of weakness or vulnerability. That is how they set up temptation usually around areas of weaknesses rather than a person’s strengths. When an individual continues to sin, it places them in enemy territory, giving an opportunity to build strongholds. Gradually over time, these strongholds render the Christian ineffective even though they cannot take away their salvation. It is like a four-cylinder car engine which is only running on two cylinders. It is difficult to climb a hill or face life situations when inhibited in that way. Hence, some Christians give up or may even end their lives prematurely. Christians can be misled to believe all their problems are associated with their sinful nature and so they blame themselves entirely. Others swing to the other extreme where every problem is attributed to demons without human responsibility. The balance is to recognise the connection between the two and to use appropriate remedies as provided through Christ.
Mental and Emotional Energy

My struggle with rejection was a drain on my mental and emotional energy. This caused many sleepless nights as the mind actively reviews negative experiences. This led to a reduction of sleep and lower physical energy. Such negative repeating incidents caused neural firings that are wired together. Hence, it becomes instinctive and the negative mindset deepens if left unchecked. However, whenever I am confronted with a similar situation, I have been able to refocus my mind and not allow my negative emotions to run their course. Refocusing allows the brain to promote new pathways of neural firing thus altering my feelings, perceptions, and responses. I have been able to listen more to other people’s points of view and react less impulsively. Now I make a conscious decisions on what to devote my energy to instead of reacting to every situation. This has increased my mental, emotional, and physical energy levels.

Participation in the Fuller Doctor of Ministry program has increased my mental capacity and sharpness. It enables the reframing of different perspectives through a more disciplined and synthesized approach while enhancing my creative imagination. This is what I call the synchronization of the left and right sides of my brain. On a regular basis, I exercise my brain to be more respectful of others in conversations and discussions. Having a respectful attitude would avoid unnecessary misunderstandings, and results in strengthened relationships among friends, colleagues, and in ministry.

Physical Energy

I adapted my sleep habits once I learned about the importance of getting enough sleep. I got into the habit of doing too much in the waking hours resulting in less than
seven hours of sleep. It is also important to allow the body to prepare for quality sleep and using a sleep cycle “app” has facilitated the monitoring and fine-tuning of my sleep patterns, exercise routines, and optimal heart rates. Listening to the body and taking short power naps have enhanced my physical well-being, resulting in more productive output. Eating small portions of food has kept my weight within the normal BMI range, resulting in better physical condition and quality sleep.

**Capacity to Confront Tough Challenges**

Experiencing healing and deliverance from rejection and other spirits prepared me to encounter the most challenging trial in my career. My family and I were living in Penang as expatriates while I was managing an American electronics business worth 400 million dollars per year in 2001. Jim² became his boss as the Asia vice-president of the company. He was highly intelligent but severely lacking in emotional intelligence. His distorted understanding of loyalty resulting in expecting absolute unquestioning support.

For example, Jim called one day and wanted me to fire one of his business managers over some trivial matter. When I tried to explain that it would not be reasonable to do so, Jim immediately saw me as his enemy and planned to lay me off from the company for a period of time. One part of me wanted to fight this injustice and sue Jim and the company for wrongful dismissal, but felt the Lord indicating otherwise. After joint discussion and prayer with my wife, we decided to immediately move the entire young family back to Melbourne without having lined up a job or a home.

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² This name has been changed for privacy purposes.
I felt stretched spiritually, emotionally, mentally and financially, but by God’s grace, we managed. I was able to cope in part due to the formation process I had before this major encounter. Now I have a greater appreciation for the importance of a holistic practice of spiritual, mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The increased capacity has enabled me to cope under severe stress and recover dramatically and speedily. A few years later, Jim killed his third ex-wife and her boyfriend. Emotional instability can have serious collateral damage to loved ones and others.

The key to ongoing holistic health is to maintain a life that is sensitive to the Spirit’s leading and prompting with the willingness to change. My experience has enabled me to share with others who have similar struggles. It’s a joy to see lives transformed and their capacities increased to be an effective and fruitful servant of the Lord.

Growth of Life Groups through Effective Discipleship

As discussed in chapter two, Life Groups at CityLife Church are functioning well on the surface. A closer examination of some Life Groups with Malaysian migrants indicates a possible missing link: not dealing thoroughly with their past and burdens, resulting in strongholds and bondages. This has impeded the progress of many Malaysian Christians, even though they want to grow and contribute as Christians. This is where the ministry of empowerment through deliverance and the embrace of a holistic approach to well-being can contribute to additional growth of Life Groups both numerically and qualitatively. There will be a renewed vigour to embrace the mission of CityLife Church
and embark on discipleship that would encourage Malaysian Christians to function and grow in their journey of faith with a deep sense of fulfilment and satisfaction.

Contributing Effectively to the Multicultural Diversity of Australia

When one is well, it is possible to contribute effectively to the wellbeing of the multicultural society of Australia. It would have an outward focus, willing to give beyond the local Malaysian community. CityLife Church provides a significant platform for such contributions to take place over time. One of the vital ministries is CityLife Community Care which will soon be headed by a Malaysian-born leader who has vast experience in the field of community care and leadership.

Another area of involvement is the continuing support of Malaysian migrants for Waverley Christian College. Some of the Malaysians, particularly the second generation, can join the teaching fraternity to bless all in the nearby communities of Knox and Casey through Waverley Christian College. As one of the more established migrant communities, one can build bridges of support to newer migrant families and those outside the church to be a continued blessing to our communities.

Many Malaysians have joined the Victorian Liberal party, as they become more aware and concerned about the issues confronting our community, state, and country. The theology of empowerment and holistic health provides a strong foundation and basis for Malaysian migrants to contribute more fully and effectively to the community in which they find themselves. This is a symbiotic and sustaining model for improving the wellbeing of a society. This enables Malaysians to move away from the challenges identified at the beginning of this chapter and to plant community roots in their adopted
country of Australia. This transformation will result in the emergence of the new identity in Christ within the Kingdom of God in Australia.

A Renewed Commitment and Focus on Mission

Learnings from chapter four on the theology of the mission of God and the Church, coupled with the application of the theology of empowerment and holistic health will positively impact the Malaysian migrant community to a renewed commitment and focus on mission. A personal mission statement to be adapted from the CityLife Church’s mission statement could read as follows: To raise up fervent followers of Jesus Christ to reach out and impact communities (of Malaysian migrants and the Indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak), cities (the cities of Knox, Melbourne, Kudat/Kota Marudu, Sabah and Miri/Limbang, Sarawak), and nations (Australia and Malaysia) for the Kingdom of God. This specific mission statement forms the basis for developing the ministry goals in the next section.

It is sensible for Malaysian migrant Christians to focus on the mission and news of the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak as most grew up or have connection to the country. They understand the language, political, social, religious and multiracial culture, and mindset of the Malaysians. They can respond far quicker to the challenges and needs of the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak. With their greater understanding and experience of the theology of empowerment and holistic health, they will become more effective and produce a sustainable model of missional engagement.

Ministry Goals

The ministry goals are developed along two major initiatives. This is (1) to be
fervent followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian community in Knox and (2) to be incarnated in the mission of God with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. These initiatives are further broken up into specific, achievable, and measurable goals as discussed below.

Fervent Followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian Community in Knox

CityLife Church has been a welcoming spiritual home for Malaysian migrants over the last fifty years and the growth is attributed to the Life Group model. Our goal is to teach the theology of empowerment and holistic health to ten new Life Groups of mostly Malaysian migrants, over the next three years. Once Christians are free from the stronghold of the enemy and are able to increase their capacity, they will be more effective in establishing the Kingdom of God within the community of Knox. The thrust of the teaching is not the increase of head knowledge, but the empowering of believers through regular practice for themselves and others. This is a more effective way of growing in discipleship, which is in line with Jesus’s way of raising disciples through teaching, practice, and correction.

Fundraising is a vital component of ministry and a good stewardship in this area would ensure the identified projects of 3Ce are sufficiently resourced for the long term. The 3Ce ministries was formed in response to the needs and challenges of the indigenous Christian communities in Sabah and Sarawak. The number three represents the Trinitarian missional theology working through Christ, Church, and Community based on the empowerment of local leadership, sound biblical education, and sustainable economic development. A fundraising dinner is organized among supporters to share the specific
areas of mission and needs for Sabah and Sarawak. A target of 100,000 dollars has been set for 2016 to 2020.

Incarnated in the Mission of God with the Indigenous Churches of Sabah and Sarawak

Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) Sarawak has been identified as a partner for church planting to reach ten new communities from 2019 to 2021. The Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) has agreed to work with 3Ce Ministries on leadership development for up to thirty young pastors over the next three years. This will be done in collaboration with Cornerstone Resources Berhad.³

My wife and I have been promoting the needs of 3Ce, and a mission trip with committed supporters took place in July 2018 to provide first-hand awareness and understanding of the needs in Sabah and Sarawak. This has enabled church members to give more purposefully to the work and ministry there. Based on our findings of the July mission, additional trips are being planned for January and July 2019.

The preschool promotion and development is one of the strategies formulated for 3Ce in response to the Islamization of the indigenous children, many of whom are from Christian homes. The goal is to support ten preschool ministries within BEM Sarawak and PCS from 2016 to 2020 with a budget of 50,000 dollars. The funding will support the teachers’ salaries for many of the preschool in the interior of Sabah and Sarawak. This initial funding is necessary as there are usually insufficient students and financing from BEM Sarawak and PCS to start new preschools. They are up against the ongoing

competition from the government funded preschools which are offered free of charge but with the compulsory requirements of learning more about Islam at a young tender age.

The 3Ce ministries seek to provide inexpensive solar lighting to at least ten communities that have no electricity and water treatment systems to five communities from 2016 to 2020. Such projects enable indigenous children to improve their educational standards through extra lighting in the evenings. Clean water will improve the overall health of the villages to positively affect future generations. In addition, ongoing sustainable enterprises will be developed within the target villages utilising their resources such as land and skills. Growing and processing ginger to export from Sabah to Melbourne is done in collaboration with Malaysian Care, a well-established NGO in Malaysia.  

Ministry Strategies

Ministry strategies are essential to achieve the ambitious goals as discussed above. To achieve these goals, we need to train and empower Malaysian Christians. This is achieved through the application of the healing and deliverance ministry of Jesus. Even though we are initially targeting the Life Groups that have a high Malaysian composition, the ultimate purpose is to empower all Life Groups to fulfil the mission and Calling of God within CityLife Church.

Application of the Healing and Deliverance Ministry of Jesus

The healing and deliverance teachings are to be conducted through the Life Groups that

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have predominantly Malaysian Christian migrants. Aspects of the teaching include: (1) the deliverance ministry of Jesus as our model for ministry, (2) examples of the clash of the Holy Spirit versus the occult, (3) how do Christians get oppressed? (4) exposing Satan’s strategy, (5) understanding Satan’s tactics, (6) possible openings and demon groupings, (7) connection of physical, sinful nature and the demonic, (8) presenting God’s holistic solution, (9) demonstrations on how to pray for deliverance, (10) practical learning to pray for the deliverance for others, and (11) the use of genograms. These sessions can be conducted in homes with twenty to thirty people and take at least three hours including breaks. The teaching is interspersed with questions and answers, followed by a demonstration of how deliverance is conducted. The group is then divided into smaller groups to facilitate a practice session, supervised by me, the course facilitator. The healing and deliverance teaching is the first phase of ministry development covered in this doctoral project. It is anticipated that in the future, the second phase of development will involve the holistic health and energy management as discussed in chapter five.

Formation of a Healing and Deliverance Ministry Team

The deliverance ministry team members are chosen Life Group leaders who are keen to learn about the ministry of healing and deliverance. These leaders recognise their own need for deliverance when other approaches such as counselling, prayer, repentance, and self-discipline have not produced a lasting breakthrough in their lives. They in turn can help others in their Life Groups experience that breakthrough and build capacity for increased ministry.
The purpose of this team is to raise up and teach as many Christians as possible in the area of how to be free from the snare of the enemy and for them to teach others also. The intent is to move away from the traditional model of relying on an “expert” when battling such problems and expect the expert to do all the praying and deliverance. In this approach, leaders are taught the theology and the practice of deliverance to the level that they can learn to pray for others within their Life Groups. Life Group members are encouraged to continue to pray for self-deliverance. The team can provide coaching, as required to facilitate an ongoing development process. This is in line with Jesus’ Great Commission (Mt 28:18-20).

Resource Development on Healing, Deliverance, and Holistic Health

Resource development is based on the accumulated bibliography in the areas of healing, deliverance, and holistic health. These resources are included in the Bibliography section of this doctoral project paper. Leaders use a PowerPoint presentation which addresses the topics highlighted in the previous section. Scriptural references are discussed frequently to provide a strong biblical basis for this ministry. This is supplemented by appropriate references from the literature review found in chapter three and the bibliography section. Resource development is an ongoing exercise as new experiences are gained and additional references are acquired.

Ministry Training for Life Group Leaders

Additional training sessions are held just for the deliverance ministry team so that they can develop themselves further in this ministry. This means going deeper into the topics highlighted in the earlier section to increase their confidence to pray for their Life
Group members on their own. The most effective way to develop this ministry is to learn by doing with further coaching and mentoring of these leaders. The Fuller praxis model of reflection, theory, and action\(^5\) are used frequently for such purposes.

Formation of 3Ce Ministries

My wife and I, together with a committee, founded 3Ce ministries on 4 May 2014 when they held their first inaugural committee meeting in Melbourne. The vision is to raise Strong indigenous Christian communities through the empowerment of local leadership with sound biblical education and sustainable economic development. Strategies to fulfill the vision include: (1) partnering with local Churches/Christian organisations, (2) participation in mission in Sabah and Sarawak (3) preparation and training of leaders (4) Preschool promotion and development, and (5) Promotion of sustainable enterprises, which are relevant and profitable to the local community and economy. 3Ce is the vehicle to fulfil the ministry goals of mission to the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia.

Target Population and Leadership

The target population is the Malaysian migrants who are divided into the following categories: (1) older generation aged sixty and above, (2) families whose children are about to enter colleges and universities, (3) young families whose children are of primary age, and (4) young professionals who have studied in English-speaking countries such as Australia, UK, USA, Canada, and New Zealand. It is anticipated that

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this ministry initiative will be open to Christians from other churches to participate in the mission objective of reaching out to the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. I, with my wife’s assistance, am the main architect of this project to meet goals through the effective implementation of the developed strategies. Accountability is provided through the update and feedback from the new Life Group leaders and the 3Ce committee.
CHAPTER 7
IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

This chapter outlines the implementation of the two ministry initiatives as discussed in chapter six, which are (1) to be fervent followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian community in Knox and (2) to be incarnated in the mission of God with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. To meet the objectives of these ministry initiatives, a timeline of the key activities is provided. A ministry development process for the Life Group leaders and members of Malaysian descent is discussed in detail. This is followed by the formation of the 3Ce ministries’ committee, whose primary purpose is to promote missional engagement in Sabah and Sarawak. Resource management such as facilities, teaching materials, and budget is considered. The effectiveness of the ministry teaching on healing and deliverance is assessed through a detailed questionnaire. A detailed account of the results achieved to date are matched against the goals set in chapter six.

Timeline

The following timeline table provides an overview of the critical milestones and activities of this project.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target Date of Completion</th>
<th>Key Milestones</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 2017</td>
<td>Life Group (LG) leaders of Malaysian descent are identified and selected to participate in the deliverance and holistic seminar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 2017</td>
<td>Ministry resources on deliverance and holistic health developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2017</td>
<td>First training with LG leaders completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2018</td>
<td>Confirm LG leaders to join mission trip to Sabah and Sarawak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2018</td>
<td>Mission trip sub-committee formed to plan for mission trip to Sabah and Sarawak in July 2018.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 2018</td>
<td>First pilot training of LG members conducted by project facilitator and trained LG leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>Follow-up session with LG leaders about any challenges and questions on the deliverance ministry to their LG’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| July 2018                 | First team mission trip to Sabah  
First team mission trip to Sarawak with CityLife World Impact and Borneo Evangelical Mission |
| Aug 2018                  | Evaluation of team mission trip and Next steps |
| Oct 2018                  | Questionnaire sent out and completed by LG leaders and members of Malaysian descent |
| Nov 2018                  | Follow-up trip to Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) Sarawak with CityLife Church World Impact  
Partnership MOU to be signed  
BEM Sarawak 90th year celebrations |
| Dec 2018                  | Results of questionnaire compiled and analysed |

**Ministry Development for Life Group Leaders and Members of Malaysian Descent**

The participants chosen for this pilot project are Life Group leaders and members of CityLife Church who are of Malaysian descent. These leaders have expressed a need
and interest in learning about the ministry of Jesus particularly in the realms of healing and deliverance. The LifeTrax and Life Group leaders training at CityLife Church provides a good foundation to launch them into this pilot project. They form the first batch of participants of our training classes of teaching and hands-on experience.

The success of any ministry development program is dependent on the leader that is initiating the program and whether he has the ministry skills and experience for others within the Malaysian Christian community who would look up to such a leader. One can only lead in this new initiative if one has gone through it himself/herself and have enough experience to teach or facilitate this new ministry of empowerment through deliverance and the promotion of holistic health.

Identification of Leaders

The leaders are chosen from Life Group leaders of Malaysian background who identified a need for deliverance within their group and expressed an interest to learn more about this ministry. This is done in consultation and approval of CityLife Church elders and senior leadership team. These chosen leaders are then invited to attend the training session using the prepared ministry materials together with the demonstration of conducting deliverance. After that, if leaders continue to show interest, then they are invited to participate in this program.

Leadership Responsibilities

I am the group facilitator, and with the support of my wife, have the responsibility to organise the initial training sessions with the identified leaders. I have been involved in the deliverance ministry for over forty years in England, Malaysia, and Australia. I am
responsible for developing the teaching materials as listed under strategies of chapter six. The format of the teaching materials and sessions follow the Fuller model of Praxis of Reflection, Theory, and Action\textsuperscript{1}, which I have found to be most effective in my own experience and have adapted that to this new ministry initiative.

The Life Group leaders who are participating in this program are responsible for encouraging as many of their group members to attend the training and ministry sessions. This is vital as the Life Group leaders themselves would handle subsequent follow-up sessions. The group facilitator will act as a mentor to provide further guidance and support when required, in particular when Life Group leaders are encountering some ministry difficulties when dealing with more complex cases. This is an ongoing process and will be integrated into the usual care and support Life Group leaders generally provide to their members.

Leadership Tasks

The identified leaders go through the teaching sessions with the materials developed on deliverance and holistic health. Question and answer sessions during the training are followed by actual praying for healing and deliverance. The key is to incorporate teaching with practice as that would reinforce learning and also provoke relevant questions. Participants learn as they clear any questions from their minds, especially when the answers are biblically based.

On an ongoing basis, these leaders use every opportunity to pray for healing and deliverance for those in their Life Groups. Leaders are reminded that the best teacher is

\textsuperscript{1}Kurt Fredrickson, \textit{DM710 Doctoral Project Proposal Development Course} (Pasadena, CA: Fuller Theological Seminary, March - June 2017).
the Holy Spirit and every person’s situation is unique. With practice and the help of the Holy Spirit, leaders can accurately pinpoint the demonic root cause of the problem and pray for deliverance for that person. The aspect on holistic health is part of the ongoing process of discipleship as leaders continue to live this out in their own lives and also the lives of their members.

Leadership Guidance

The facilitator organises follow-up sessions with these leaders to provide additional guidance and teaching. Guidance sessions are formal and informal. Formal sessions are conducted with the leaders by the facilitator to ensure continuous learning and development. The facilitator is also on the path of continuous learning as each individual case is unique and tailored accordingly. The more practice a leader has in this ministry, the more effective he or she becomes. There is no substitute for ongoing experience.

3Ce Ministry Committee

The 3Ce committee has been formed to promote mission among the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. This is fulfilled through the goals and strategies discussed in chapter six. The committee provides a team approach with the enabling of different ministry skills and giftings. It has the added advantage of providing guidance and accountability for one another, as well as for myself, the facilitator. In addition, CityLife World Impact has endorsed the 3Ce ministry and has kindly allowed 3Ce supporters to donate via the World Impact account designated for the use of 3Ce ministry support. The CityLife finance department has graciously provided financial
administrative support to enhance accountability. This transparency has encouraged 3Ce supporters to give continuously to this particular need.

3Ce Missions Sub-Committee

In addition, a Missions sub-committee is formed to plan for the first mission trip to Sabah for July 2018. The purposes of the team mission trip are to: (1) focus on God’s glory among the Indigenous Christian communities. God deserves to be praised among the nations. (2) See the projects we financially supported through Malaysian Care, Perpaduan Anak Negeri (PAN) Sabah, and Cornerstone Resources Berhad (Ps Lam). (3) Be part of the Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS) leadership development program conducted over three (3) days in the town of Kudat, which lies on the northern tip of Borneo Island.

**Resources**

Due to the initial small number of leaders, the training sessions would initially be conducted in my home and then extended to other Life Group leaders’ homes. As they are conducted after dinner on a Saturday night, it keeps the cost to a minimum. It reduces the hospitality load so more leaders can open up their homes for such training.

It is anticipated that as the numbers grow, and the course training will be extended to more Life Groups, that we will be using the CityLife Church facilities at the Knox campus which can accommodate 100 to 2,000 people. While there are logistical and efficiency benefits in hosting large groups of people, the downside is the loss of personal focus and attention which is essential for this particular ministry. A pragmatic approach may be a larger group teaching format, with around forty to fifty people participating,
followed by small group discussions and practice. It may be possible to do this when enough leaders are trained for the small group discussion and ministry.

The written materials are developed from the literature review in chapter three and from the theology of empowerment and holistic health presented in chapter five, together with relevant reference materials as provided in the bibliography. It is supplemented with my forty years of deliverance ministry experience. PowerPoint presentations on healing and deliverance and holistic health are developed with a strong biblical basis, as discussed in chapter five. Controversial topics such as “Can a Christian have a Demon?” and “How Demons Enter and Become Strongholds” are dealt with in a balanced manner. One of the significant developments is the author’s understanding of the connection between the spirit realm and an individual’s mental, emotional, and physical states. Most importantly, the teaching materials stress the practical side of learning to pray for deliverance for themselves and others. There is also the need to teach people to stay free and build on their capacity and capability.

The objective is to put on paper what I have learnt so that it can benefit those who are in need. Many churches are reluctant to talk or teach about this even though many Christians need help in this area. So, the hope is the materials can be taught and passed on the next generation. This ministry training can be carried out at minimal cost, as the bulk of it is the investment of time that has already been spent documenting and developing the materials.

3Ce has been operating as an endorsed ministry of CityLife World Impact, which means it is a recognised ministry within the church but without financial and formal support. Recent progress and development has encouraged a longer-term collaboration
between 3Ce and CityLife World Impact. When finalised, this means my team and I will have access to the CityLife Church World Impact network of supporters including the church’s Life Group networks.

**Report on Results to Date**

This section evaluates progress against stated strategies and smart goals. This allows for objective and realistic assessment of our strategies and to make necessary adjustments. The lessons shared here are beneficial to those who are embarking on similar missional initiatives.

**Assessment of the Teaching of Theology of Empowerment**

The purpose of the assessment plan is to evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching on healing and deliverance for the target population of Malaysian migrants as listed in chapter six. The assessment is accomplished through the completion of a questionnaire (See Appendix H). The sample size is taken from the participants of the deliverance seminars of both Life Group leaders and members. The results are compiled and analysed.

**Empowering Ten new Life Groups (2017-2020)**

My team initiated the formation of two additional Life Groups through the mobilization of empowered Malaysian Christians. One was to cater to the “Half Timer” group, where potential participants are those who have transitioned from their corporate or business lives and as a means of outreach to Malaysians who have yet to know Jesus. The gathering is once per month and usually held over lunch at a restaurant or cafe. This
eliminates the need for finding hosts to house such meetings. The meal times provide an opportunity for new “half timer” people to meet others and build relationships. The format of the gathering is rather informal and often seems directionless. What was discovered was that many people who are outside the church or Christians who are unchurched are more willing initially to participate in such groups. It also provides another avenue for potential Life Group leaders to take on roles of responsibility. Over the months, we have observed people outside the church are more likely to bring their friends to such a group than to a church service initially. The key is all about building relationships and connections.

Another Life Group caters to the senior members of the Malaysian community. As the demographics are quite different, we meet monthly usually in a home where some refreshments are provided. We have discovered that flexibility is the key to such a group. So, when one of the members had a stroke and needed to be placed in a nursing home, the group leaders decided to hold the monthly meeting at the nursing home to minimise the inconvenience of travelling for the person affected. The lay leaders, as needed, also administer Holy Communion elements. It affirms again the need of the body of Christ to minister and encourage people where they are—usually outside the walls of the church.

Fund raising of $100,000 for 3Ce Ministries (2016-2020)

As of July 31, 2018, 51,680 dollars have been raised through targeted fundraising dinners and individual giving. Individual giving forms a vital, ongoing part of the fundraising effort as people invest in the vision and mission of 3Ce. Most of the giving is from Malaysian Christians in Australia, which is not surprising given their experience
and understanding of the challenges faced in Malaysia. It is anticipated that this target group of donors will continue to grow, particularly when the MOU is signed between CityLife Church and BEM Sarawak in the near future. The target of 100,000 dollars by 2020 is therefore achievable.

Partnering with Local Churches/Christian Organizations

Due to the efforts of 3Ce Ministries over the last three years, CityLife World Impact Missions director, Andrew Chisholm has given the go ahead to investigate the possibility of a tri-partnership between CityLife Church, Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM) Sarawak, and 3Ce. This has resulted in sending a team from Melbourne in July 2018 to discuss with BEM Sarawak’s executive council the nature and specifics of collaboration between the three organisations. This would be the first time in our church’s history to partner with a major indigenous denomination. BEM Sarawak is one of the largest Christian denominations in Malaysia with a membership of 150,000 in 750 churches. This new, ongoing development is in line with our new “No Limits” vision, which is to impact cities and nations, community by community (See Appendix E).

3Ce has formed a partnership with Cornerstone Resources Berhad (CRB), and the Protestant Church in Sabah (PCS). PCS leadership has committed to 3Ce, together with Pastor Lam of CRB, to conduct leadership a development program for thirty of their young and promising pastors over the next three years. The teaching materials are based on the series Pastor Lam developed called Seminar Pembentukan Pemimpin Muda (Young Leaders Development Seminar). The cost of the program is to be shared by 3Ce, CRB, and PCS as an expression of joint ownership. This is a significant development as
we are now given the opportunity to influence and impact the new generation of young
PCS pastors.

Preschool Promotion and Development

As of July 31, 2018, a total of 15,000 dollars has been given to the preschool
ministry in Sabah and Sarawak through 3Ce’s initiatives, impacting twelve preschools.
This is part of the effort to counter the spread of Islamization among our Christian
indigenous people, as discussed in chapter one. Supporting preschools means positively
impacting the next generation of Christians in Sabah and Sarawak.

Promotion of Sustainability

As electricity has not reached many parts of the interior of Sabah and Sarawak, 3Ce has embarked on various solar lighting projects to improve the living standards of the community. Solar lighting systems are now installed in villages, schools, churches, and community halls in the remote areas of Sabah and Sarawak. So far, ten villages with a combined population of approximately 2,000 people have been positively impacted.

The elimination of kerosene lamps has reduced fire and health risks whilst providing a safer and cheaper alternative. The additional lighting in the evenings has improved educational standards among the younger generation. Better education enables the next generation to break the cycle of poverty in their communities (See Appendix F).

The provision of clean water systems is made possible through the collaborative efforts of 3Ce with Aqua Pura, a Swiss NGO specialising in the provision of clean water
systems using UV technology. Two clean water projects have been implemented, one at Kampung (Village) Parang, Sarawak (See Appendix F), and the other at Kampung Pinawantai, Sabah (See Appendix G). In both cases, hundreds of individuals are positively impacted by improved health and well-being for the long term, thus enabling them to break the shackling cycle of poverty in their community. When their leaders decided to share their new blessings with surrounding villages, this created a powerful ripple effect on other communities. The potential for clean water systems is enormous, as thousands of villages in Sabah and Sarawak need such systems. Both the solar and clean water systems are powerful relationship builders of trust with the communities we serve.

**Development of Sustainable, Economically Empowering Projects**

Ginger is being exported in collaboration with Malaysian Care Sabah. The indigenous farmers are hardworking people who can produce the crops, but their small land sizes limit their production capacity. Also, they do not have access to retail markets. Hence, they are subjected to the control of the middle-people who come to the farms to collect and buy their fresh ginger at low prices. The farm prices of fresh ginger can range from fifty cents to one US dollar per kilogram, which limits these farmers’ success. Each farm lot, roughly about half an acre of land, can yield about 500 kilograms of ginger per year. 3Ce is looking at the possibility of exporting ginger or processed ginger to Australia to improve the profitability of the indigenous farmers in Sabah. This is a new project which requires further development.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The Christians have faced discrimination and hardships before and after the formation of Malaysia. This was further exacerbated by the racial riots of May 13, 1969 which resulted in the introduction of pro-Malay policies and affirmative action. However, this degenerated into a discriminatory tool against the non-Malays in all fields of commerce, education, and government. This has led to a steady migration of Malaysian Chinese Christians to Australia, a country that has recently abandoned the horrendous legacy of racism of the White Australia policy in 1972.

The Malaysian Chinese Christians became migrants in Malaysia as a result of their pursuit of wealth and prosperity. Many decided to stay as the British were leaving Southeast Asia. Malaysia seemed like a good place to stay, being their motherland China was still in poverty at the time. Many were born in Malaysia and are happy to identify with Malaysia as their new host country. While diversity of race, culture, and religion is good, often it can be very difficult to balance as the special rights and positions of the Malays are not only written in the constitution, but are actually being legislated in policy and action. This does not bode well for the Malaysian Chinese who feel unsettled in Malaysia; hence the need to overcome the perpetual migrant mentality. In tandem with that is the related question of loyalty. How can one be loyal to a nation when it has policies to discriminate against the race of the Chinese?

One would have thought that migrating to Australia would wipe the slate clean and enable Malaysian migrants to start again, but the lingering feeling of racism and the lack of opportunities in careers especially for the first generation migrants cause many to wonder if it is worthwhile to have more loyalty to Australia than Malaysia. The inability
to settle or feel like they belong causes growing mental health issues. Being a communal based culture, we find it difficult to raise our hand and ask for help.

The welcoming and inclusive culture of CityLife Church has enabled many Malaysian Christians to actively participate in different levels of its leadership and ministry programs. This is reflected in 18 percent of CityLife Church’s congregation identifying with Malaysia. However, ongoing challenges still exist such as (1) overcoming migrant mentality, (2) the question of loyalty, and (3) the impact of migration on growing mental health issues.

It is with this context in mind, that this doctoral project seeks to empower Malaysian Christians even further by being freed from past baggage to increase our capacity to fulfil the mission of God in our context, as well as participate in missional engagement with the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak.

A theological reflection in chapter 3 presents a Trinitarian framework of the Missio Dei. It depicts God the Father sending the Son, and then both the Father and the Son sending the Spirit into the Church. Now the triune God is sending the Church to fulfil God’s very own mission of reconciliation and establishing the reign of God that goes beyond the traditional walls of Western Christendom, ultimately reflecting a more diverse, multicultural, and universal Church. It challenges the limitations of past colonial models of mission which would not work in today’s context.

The epicentre of Christianity has shifted from traditional European and other Western countries to the emerging economies of Africa, Latin America, and Asia. A
glocalized\textsuperscript{3} approach to missional theology is needed that is symbiotic and transformational, that embraced the global migratory trends and behaviours. It is based on hospitality as a means of building new relationships and bridge with the fringes of society, far beyond our comfort zone of association. This reflection calls for a contextualised gospel that is relevant to the twenty-first century of multi-faceted cultures, without compromising its fundamental integrity and purity.

To pursue the mission of God, believers should seek to be free from any bondage or hindrance that may reduce their capacity. Deliverance has been provided through the ministry of Jesus as expounded in the Gospels and the book of Acts. Further understanding of how Satan seeks to entrap individuals provides a proactive response to counter his schemes before they can do significant damage. The liberating freedom of such ministry is a precursor to a deeper understanding of holistic health which further enhances the Church’s capacity and capability.

The call and mission of the triune God forms the basis of calling and ministry for CityLife Church and also for the purposes of this paper. We are now invited to participate in the mission of God. We can now pursue mission with the assurance and guarantee of our God because his interests and agenda are at stake—not ours. This provides a tremendous relief to all who are striving to fulfil God’s call in their lives. It concerns the consolidation of his Kingdom on earth in preparation for Jesus’ eschatological return. It liberates the Church from an attractional model of ministry to an incarnational one where believers live out the humanity of Christ through everyday situations. As CityLife Church

\textsuperscript{3} Hill, \textit{Global Church}, 17.
aligns with the mission of God, it can fulfil its calling as a sent church that is led by the Holy Spirit, backed by signs and wonders and followers of Jesus who are discipled in accordance to his will and purposes. An ever-present, emergent Christian community is transforming culture in anticipation of Christ’s return.

Healing and deliverance from evil spirits are of the common signs recorded in the New Testament to usher in the new Kingdom of Jesus. This theology of empowerment is essential for Malaysian Christians who come from spiritual and cultural backgrounds that may be in contradiction to the word of God. Such practices have put many Malaysian Christians in bondage that only the ministry of Jesus can release. Once freedom is experienced, it would make sense for Malaysian Christians to embrace the theology of holistic health incorporating the spirit, mind, soul, sinful nature, and body of the believer. This holistic health is not to be enjoyed by the believer alone, but to be shared with others as we engage in mission in the Australian context and among the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak. The theology of empowerment through healing and deliverance is recommended to the wider Christian community as part of our evangelistic outreach due to growing spiritual, mental, and emotional problems.

The theological implication of embracing the theology of empowerment and holism is the increase in capacity to fulfil the calling and mission of God. This is best illustrated through my personal encounter of freedom from spiritual oppression using the power and authority of Christ. There is a definite connection between the works of the sinful nature and the demonic realm, and how the exercise of the mind provided the key to breaking strongholds in my life. The subsequent application of holistic principles
results in the increase of mental, emotional, and physical energy with the discernible increase in capacity, particularly in coping with tough challenges.

This freedom has motivated me to teach and minister in Life Groups of Malaysian Christians so they too can experience this increased capacity, resulting in additional Life Groups being formed. This has empowered more Malaysian Christians to contribute effectively at Waverley Christian College, and also in the Victorian Liberal party. This widening and growing influence will enable Malaysian migrants to move from their inward-looking challenges to a proactive engagement and enrichment of the multicultural diversity of Australia and renewed commitment and focus on mission among the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak.

The positive outcome of this experience is the development of ministry goals that centre on two major initiatives: (1) to be fervent followers of Jesus Christ in reaching out to the Malaysian community in Knox and (2) to be incarnated in the mission of God with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak. With well-planned strategies, an increasing number of Malaysian Christians are empowered and engaged in the extension of God’s kingdom both in Australia and Malaysia. A notable outcome is the formation of 3Ce ministries by me and my wife. Through the participation of a committed team, the impact of this small ministry is felt in Melbourne and in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia.

Effective implementation and feedback to ensure good outcomes are discussed with a timeline showing key milestones to reflect the methodology used for theological teachings of empowerment and holistic ministry to Malaysian Life Group leaders and members of CityLife Church. This is supplemented by a ministry development process of this teaching program that covers details such as identification of the leaders, their tasks,
responsibilities, resources development, budget, and facilities, as well as guidance. Initiative is being fulfilled through the 3Ce ministries committee and supporters.

The achievements of goals to date are presented under the results report. A questionnaire was developed to assess the effectiveness of the theology of empowerment for Malaysian Christians. An evaluation of the feedback will be compiled, and any relevant feedback will be incorporated into the next round of teaching. A detailed account of the results achieved to date against each goal is presented. Given the short time frame, the results achieved have been encouraging.

The mid-term goal is for this theology of empowerment and holistic health to be rolled out to all Life Groups of CityLife Church as part of our ongoing leadership and ministry development. Hopefully missional engagement with the indigenous churches of Sabah and Sarawak will grow and become a major mission initiative of CityLife World Impact. The principles and practice of theology of empowerment and holistic health can be shared with the wider community of Christians within CityLife so they can be a blessing to their respective communities, thus fulfilling the mission of God. This paper is the first attempt to embracing the six characteristics of the Missional Church model based on the Missio Dei through the empowerment ministry of Jesus for Malaysian Christians. It is hoped that future work can be expanded further on these six missional characteristics as the ministry encounters new challenges, circumstances, and contexts.
## APPENDIX A

**SPECTRUM OF ISLAMIZATION\(^1\)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Person/Party</th>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualified- Secularist Islam</td>
<td>Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia’s First Prime Minister)</td>
<td>General acceptance of secular framework of Islam</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modernist/ Accommodationist</td>
<td>Dr. Mahathir, IKIM</td>
<td>Infusion of Islamic values in public institutions</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reformist</td>
<td>ABIM</td>
<td>Education programmes to restructure social institutions</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legalist</td>
<td>Pusat Islam/JAKIM</td>
<td>Legal regulations extended to regulate social life</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purist Fundamentalist</td>
<td>Parti Islam Malaysia</td>
<td>Paramount of Shariah and Islamic State, prominent focus on Hudud</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

\(^1\) From Kam Weng Ng, The Quest for Covenant Community and Pluralist Democracy in an Islamic Context The Centre for the Study of Christianity in Asia: Annual Lectures 2006, ed. Mark L.Y. Chan (Singapore: Trinity Theological College Publication, 2008), 3.
Table 1: Country of Birth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>69.8</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Religious Affiliations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Affiliation</th>
<th>Population ('000)</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Christian</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic</td>
<td>5 291.8</td>
<td>22.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>3 101.2</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Christian</td>
<td>3 808.6</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>12 201.6</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other Religions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islam</td>
<td>604.2</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhism</td>
<td>563.7</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinduism</td>
<td>440.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sikhism</td>
<td>125.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judaism</td>
<td>91.0</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>95.7</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1 920.8</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No Religion</strong>(^a)</td>
<td>7 040.7</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Australia</strong>(^b)</td>
<td>23 401.9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) No religion includes secular and other spiritual beliefs.

\(^b\) As religion was an optional question, the total for Australia will not equal the sum of the items above it.

---


Table 3: Religious Shifts in Australia\(^3\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>1966</th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2016</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian</td>
<td>88.2</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>52.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Religions</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Religion</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>30.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Growth in “Non-Christian Religions” and “No Religion” before and after abolition of White Australia Policy\(^4\)

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\(^4\) Ibid.
APPENDIX C

THE LAYERS OF CULTURE⁵

Observable Behavior and Customs

Institutions (e.g., Marriage, Law, Education)

Values

Ideology, Cosmology, Worldview

APPENDIX D

DYNAMIC-EQUIVALENCE TRANSLATION PROCEDURE\(^6\)

Original Cultural Matrix

1. Linguistic and cultural analysis of the original total situation (including the personal factors)

2. Decoding of the essential elements of the message (not simply of the individual words)

3. Paraphrasing the material in such a way as to make explicit all implicit information.

4. Translating this explicit paraphrase literally into the receptor language.

5. Re-encoding the material in the receptor language in such a way as to make implicit the information that this language requires to be implicit.

6. Rewriting the material in the appropriate style (forms) of the receptor language to produce a dynamically equivalent effect on the hearers.

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APPENDIX E

CITYLIFE WORLD IMPACT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK WITH NO LIMITS VISION (used with permission from CityLife Church World Impact).
APPENDIX F

SOLAR LIGHTING AND CLEAN WATER FOR KAMPUNG (VILLAGE) PARANG, SARAWAK: COLLABORATION OF 3Ce AND AQUA PURA OF SWITZERLAND

3Ce consists of concerned Christians from CityLife Church and other churches in Melbourne who share the same vision for the future of the indigenous churches in Sabah and Sarawak. 3Ce is an endorsed ministry of CityLife Church World Impact.

In 2013, we visited Kampung Parang (KP) with the collaboration of Kuching Evangelical Church, a member of Borneo Evangelical Mission (BEM). KP is about sixty kilometres from Kuching, the capital of Sarawak, partly accessible by road with the last leg of the journey by foot.

KP is a Christian Bidayuh village with 61 families.

There is a preschool with twenty-two children. As there was no electrical grid, we provided solar lights to the village.

We visited KP in September 2016, by which time, grid electricity was installed, but there was still no clean water. Water was piped in from the nearby river. This piped water still required filtration, and when filtered, was found to contain E. coli bacteria, requiring boiling which was time-consuming and costly.

In collaboration with Aqua-Pura, an NGO of Switzerland, 3Ce installed the first ever, bacteria-free water system for the preschool Tadika Melodi in KP. This is first ever Aqua Pura system installed in the whole of Asia.
The system was installed with the help of a local team from Kuching Evangelical Church, the headman, and Ps Samson from KP.

Sample A was the river water, which had E. coli bacteria. Sample B was the treated water by the Aqua Pura system, which showed no traces of bacteria. Children from the preschool can now drink water straight from the tap. Now washing of utensils and cooking are cleaner, resulting in the overall improvement of the well-being of the children and teachers. The village of sixty-one families will also benefit from this precious commodity of clean water. We believe this will attract more children to attend the preschool. Jesus said, “And whoever in the name of a disciple gives to one of these little ones even a cup of cold water to drink, truly I say to you, he shall not lose his reward” (Mt 10:42).

3Ce believes such a holistic approach to the gospel will bring transformation to thousands of villages throughout Sabah and Sarawak. The international collaboration between Australia (3Ce/CityLife Church), Switzerland (Aqua Pura), and Malaysia (BEM Kuching and BEM Kampung Parang) is a great example of how the worldwide Church can pool skills and resources together to make a difference in the communities and organisations we serve.
APPENDIX G

CLEAN WATER FOR KAMPUNG (VILLAGE) PINAWANTAI, SABAH, MALAYSIA: A COLLABORATION OF 3Ce, PAN SABAH, AND AQUA PURA OF SWITZERLAND

In Oct 2017, we visited Kampung Pinawantai (KP) with the collaboration of PAN Sabah to discuss the village’s water condition and supply. PAN Sabah is an NGO focussing on supporting and promoting the rights of the indigenous communities of Sabah. KP is about 144 kilometres (three hours by car) from Kota Kinabalu, the capital of Sabah.

In Dec 2017 a local team from the Full Gospel Businessman Fellowship and PAN Sabah, with the assistance of KP, installed the Aqua Pura clean water system. KP is a small village of thirty-four families consisting of 129 adults and thirty-five children. There is no electricity or clean water. Electricity is generated by an unreliable and costly petrol engine generator. E. coli-infected water is piped from the nearby river, meaning it had to be filtered and boiled to eliminate the bacteria. Often this is not done to save cost, resulting in a gradual deterioration of health of the entire village.

Samples taken after the installation of the Aqua Pura clean water system confirmed the absence of any bacteria. Now the Sunday school children and the families of KP are blessed with clean tap water. Testimonies provided indicate an overall improvement in health for the entire village. This blessing is now extended to other families in nearby villages.

This is another great testimony of the holistic approach to mission by bringing transformation to an entire village through a glocal collaboration of Aqua Pura (Switzerland), 3Ce (Australia), PAN Sabah, the Full Gospel Businessmen’s Fellowship, and the local SIB (Borneo Evangelical Church) in KP.
APPENDIX H

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MALAYSIAN MIGRANTS
FROM CITYLIFE CHURCH

The purpose of this survey is to empower Malaysian Christian migrants to participate fully in the mission of God through CityLife Church locally and missionally amongst the indigenous communities in Sabah and Sarawak, Malaysia.

Name: _______________________________ (optional)

Mobile: ________________________ Email: ____________________________

1) Demographics (Please tick applicable boxes)

☐  21-29 yrs  30-39 yrs  40-49 yrs  Over 50 yrs

   Female  Male

   Single,  Married,  with children  without children

   Years migrated to Australia

   0 - 5 yrs  5.1 - 10 yrs  10.1 – 20 yrs  > 20 yrs

   Permanent Resident of Australia  Citizen of Australia

2) Challenges faced by you as Malaysian migrants (Please tick applicable boxes and rate severity by circling numbers)

   Overcoming migrant mentality—still feel as a migrant and not able to settle in Australia.

   (unlikely) 1  2  3  4  5 (very likely)

   Conflict of loyalty between Malaysia (your country of origin) and Australia (your new adopted country).

   (unlikely) 1  2  3  4  5 (very likely)

   Malaysian culture conflicts a great deal with postmodern Australia’s Western culture.

   (untrue) 1  2  3  4  5 (very true)

   Since coming to Australia, my mental health issues have increased.

   [171]
3) Please tick relevant boxes of issues that you faced BEFORE attending the deliverance teaching ministry

**Spiritual**
- □ Other religions
- Fortune telling
- Palmistry
- Food offered to idols

Others: ______________________________

**Psychological**
- Worry
- Anxiety
- Procrastination
- Distraction
- Lack of concentration
- Confusion
- □ Insomnia

Others: ______________________________

**Emotional**
- Fear
- Rejection
- Insecurity
- Fear of failure

Others: ______________________________

**Physical**
- Pain
- Tiredness

Others: ______________________________

4) After attending the deliverance seminar, please tick all boxes that are true for you:

- Able to differentiate between work of the sinful nature and work of a demon
- Able to pray for self-deliverance
- Able to pray for others in deliverance
Experience an increase of capacity, either spiritual, mental, emotional, or physical.

Able to have more control and victory over temptations

Greater confidence and hunger for the work of the Lord

Encouraged me to read the Bible

Participate more fully in my Life Group

Greater involvement in World Impact missions

Increased involvement in CityLife Church, please elaborate area of involvement:

________________________________________________________________________

Exercise more of the gifts of the Holy Spirit

Support 3Ce’s mission in East Malaysia

Greater involvement in community eg. school, community, please elaborate:

________________________________________________________________________

Others, please elaborate:

________________________________________________________________________

5) Would you recommend the deliverance seminar to your friends and family members?
   Yes    No

6) Any suggestions for improvement?

________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX I

God’s Holistic/Victorious Solution

- Healing/Deliverance
  - Demons/Satan
  - Rats

Interrelated Problem: Spiritual and Sinful Nature (Physical, Emotional, Psychological)

Key - Mind

- Mental
- Emotional
- Physical

- Sin - Rubbish

Confession/Repentance
(1 Jn. 1:8-10)

Dead to Sin, Alive to God
(Rom. 6:12-14) (Eph. 2:1-3)

1 Jn 4:18

1 Jn 3:4-9

Mt 7:21-23

Gal. 5:19-21


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