



Welcoming The Strangers Among Us

Vincent Lee

Historical Settings

The demographic makeup of the Chinese churches in Canada has been changing with the trends of immigration in Canada. Before 1960's, the Chinese churches have been small in number. In the 60's and 70's, the Chinese churches experienced growth due to the movement of visa students and immigrants, mainly from Hong Kong, into Canada. It was not a large influx at that time. The Chinese churches grew when visa students became Christians, and when the Canadian government allowed many of these Canadian trained students become immigrants. Many stayed in Canada, while the rest finished their studies and returned to their native location. In the 80's, as the

Britain government agreed to return Hong Kong to Mainland China, many people from Hong Kong applied and came into Canada as immigrants. Some of them were former visa students who returned to Hong Kong. This was a large influx and represented the second influx of immigrants into the Chinese churches. By mid 90's, the majority of the Chinese churches were Cantonese speaking.

Beginning in the early 90's, many Mandarin speaking visa students and immigrants came from Mainland China, and started the third influx of immigrants. This group were mainly Mandarin speaking. Chinese churches responded to this wave and started Mandarin speaking congregations. This wave continued even to the present.

Opportunity for the Chinese Churches

In the past two years, Hong Kong experienced social unrest, and many chose to immigrate to England, United States, Canada and other countries. For the Canadian Chinese churches, this is the fourth wave of influx of immigrants. Besides the immigrants from Hong Kong, there is also a rise of immigrants and refugees from other parts of the world, such as Syria, Afghanistan.

With the rise of the influx of people into Canada, the churches in Canada have developed several approaches to welcome newcomers. One such example is the "Welcoming Church Project". The initial impetus of this movement was for welcoming newcomers, immigrants and refugees, from different parts of the world. The movement hoped to include the new immigrants from Hong Kong. The purpose was to develop a "welcoming mindset" for members of the churches so that these newcomers could be welcomed to join the churches. They help to mobilize church members to walk along these newcomers in their relocation experience. They aim to network churches, organizations and agencies to work as a team to support these newcomers. Often these projects entail picking newcomers up from the airport; helping them find accommodation and to shop for food and daily necessities; assisting them in obtaining the necessary government documents, such as social insurance cards, photo cards or driver licenses; to search for employment or training that would lead to future employment opportunities. Newcomers that have children would also need assistance in connecting the families with the local education systems. All these require the church to mobilize people and seek people with different expertise to join as a team to reach out to these newcomers.

Biblical Mandate

Jesus commanded us to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20). He also said, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it, "Love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39) In other words, our Lord Jesus has called His church to welcome, accept and bring these newcomers to Him, and ultimately into His heavenly Kingdom. This is our call. Will we respond to His call to take up the opportunities at hand and face up to the challenges?

Challenges to Chinese Churches

In light of the opportunity, what are the challenges? The first challenge for the Chinese churches is whether we are prepared to take this opportunity and become welcoming churches. Before the present wave of influx of immigrants from Hong Kong, the Cantonese ministries of many Chinese churches were changing their focus to ministering to the senior communities. These Cantonese congregations no longer develop or even possess young adult ministries that once brought many new believers into the churches during the 70's and 80's. When the newcomers enter the church, should the younger family members of these families join the English ministries, or should the Cantonese congregation restart a young adult ministry? In addition, what about the effect on the children ministries?

A second challenge is the mindset of the church. Many Cantonese speaking members have lived in Canada for one or more decades. Their children are now grown up and working in their career, or even have started their own families. The newcomers are unfamiliar with Canada, and need time to readjust. Even returning Canadian citizens, who once studied in Canada, but later returned to Hong Kong to work, have different mindsets. The challenges that the church members have faced many years ago when they first came into Canada are different from the current situation the newcomers are facing. Examples are the high cost of housing in large urban centres, as well as job prospects (many newcomers have chosen to stay in locations where there are not many Chinese, such as Newfoundland). This means we need to bridge the cultural gap between the "host" and the "guests". How do we, as "hosts", welcome these "guests" and integrate them into our churches?

The third challenge is to take this opportunity to develop a ministry plan which would not only welcome newcomers from Hong Kong, but also newcomers from other places, now and in the future. Although the needs may be different, the formation of a welcoming or caring team would ensure that this is not a temporary measure, but to make this welcoming movement a response to the Great Commission and the Great Commandment from the Bible. A welcoming church is a growing church, a Spirit led transformed and transforming church.

The Hudson Taylor Centre of Tyndale University is planning a conference for Cantonese ministries in Canada, to discuss the opportunities, challenges and ways to face the tasks ahead of us. Please pray for the organizing of this event under COVID-19 situation. We hope this event can be held in 2022, and pray that the pandemic situation would improve.

Taking up the Challenges

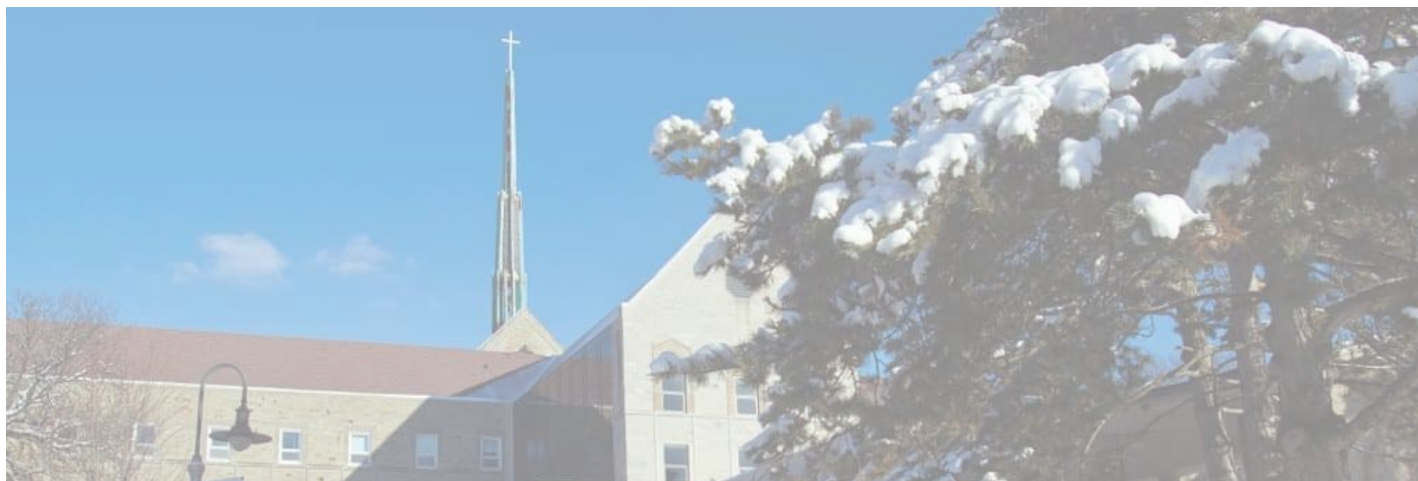
In order to take up the opportunity, Chinese church leaders must prepare the members of the church to face the challenges. Here are some suggestions:

1. **PRAY** - Like all changes and challenges, we must start with prayer. In John 3:27, John the Baptist said, "A person can receive only what is given them from heaven." The ministries of the church come from and led by God. The church is sustained by the power of God, and so we must pray that the Lord directs and empowers us to face these challenges.
2. **PLAN** - We need to evaluate how much resources we have, where we can find resources that we do not have currently. This will help us to plan how extensive and intensive our welcoming effort can have. We need to form a welcoming team with various expertise and spiritual gift mix, to welcome these newcomers. We also need to network with other churches, organizations and agencies to draw on their expertise, experience and resources, to serve as a team.

3. **PROCEED** - Plans without action are meaningless. James 2:26 said, “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.” In 1John 3:18, the Bible said, “Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth.” We must put our plans into action so that the world might experience the love of God, and we are to love others as He has loved us.

The needs are enormous, the challenges are great, but the opportunities are here for us to take. In light of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, how do we respond?

Rev. Vincent Lee, lead Cantonese pastor of Milliken Christian Community Church and volunteer Associate Director of Hudson Taylor Centre.



有關戴德生華人事工中心

ABOUT HUDSON TAYLOR CENTRE

同心服侍

中心的事工及計劃，目的在推動及協助華人教會牧者或信徒在這不斷轉變的時代，探討教會及信仰生命上的不同範圍及議題，融合研究和實踐而達至更新。當中有不少義務同工參與組織及籌劃各項工作，願神賜智慧給組員計劃及推動各項事工，祝福華人教會。

「聖言聆應」計劃

中心盼望透過計劃，協助教會講道事奉中的年輕牧者或信徒在講道職事上的操練。接納的講道錄音均由資深牧者細心聆聽，進而對講道者給與意見及回應。有意操練講道事奉及參加此計劃的傳道同工，可與中心聯絡。

成人主日學課程

有見及大多市華人教會，在主日學事工上缺乏老師，中心聯繫了一群天道神學院的校友，成為這事工的團隊和資源，以教學來服侍大多市的華人教會。查詢有關事工可與中心聯絡。

烏克蘭華人教牧領袖培訓課程

中心與加拿大國際差傳協會為烏克蘭華人教會牧者及領袖舉辦的教牧神學文憑課程。請為老師的課程預備及同學們的學習禱告。



「中了彩票大獎」

黎惠康

數月前有人中了彩票大獎。新聞訪問時，他透露：「第一件事情，就是去找神職人員。」之後，有教內人仕向我發問：「若果他找的是你，你會怎樣應對？」簡略來說，可以分作三個層次：

（一）最聚焦的是從理論和倫理角度來探討這課題。

從這窄角度來看，彩票只不過是冰山一角；甚至深入一步的「賭博」，也只不過是表皮徵狀。再深入探索時便發覺，雖然說是聚焦，但內中卻包括許多不同的範疇。其中：

以近代理論來說，自二十世紀末，這成為了滿具挑戰性的議題。現代科學的世界不但充滿了「或然機率/概率」(probability)，甚至倡議物質的存在也有相當的或然成分（見：量子場 quantum field theory）；在社會羣體間的事情，「或然/概率」的成分就更為明顯。由此推論，本着「或然機率/概率」的抉擇，豈不是自然的事？這不全是理論虛渺的紙上談兵；就如一個舉足輕重的實例：「風險投資」(venture capital)，無可置疑是創新創業的主要推動之一。應當如何作評估？在什麼情況之下才算是「越界/越軌」，等同「賭博」？進一步，這也帶到「大數據」(Big Data) 的倫理與界限。

另一範疇，以福音性信仰來說，「信靠的體現，操練，與活出」便是其中的主要課題。尤其是在落實體現中，許多的抉擇與措施都是在「張力」中——是「信靠」與「籌備」，「估算」，等之間的張力。聖經記載上亦不乏兩者兼備的實例。現今世代的例子，比比皆是：保險，安全帶，預防針，等——其中在某信仰群體中會帶來爭議。那麼，平衡線該劃在那裡？灰色地帶包含些什麼？是不斷帶來新的議題。

在這層次有無數的範疇，說不盡的爭辨。在這未完結的討論上，要留意：另外有實施上的因素，是不能忽略的。這些因素本身（羅列，分析）也是課題一部分，特別是：

- 實施框架：是否「零和博弈」(zero sum game)；有沒有受害/受損者；等。
- 實施的價值取向：要取得經濟利益？權力？任何其他優勢？等。
- 實施的方法，手法/手段：公平競爭，兵不厭詐，捫騙，乘虛而入，強奪擄掠，等。
- 實施的心態：求生，逢場作戲/興，聯誼趁夥，娛樂，成癮，盼望的寄託，等。

(二) 進一步，由理論角度可以擴闊至輔導的角度——作「全人全方位的輔導」。

這樣，課題便本質性地闖開了：不止於，或不一定是「中彩票」。故此要環繞性的作多方面的探索：

- 他找神職人員之目的是什麼？贖罪？還神？求再來一次？擔心？其他。
- 他與神的關係如何？是否清晰。
- 我對「他」的認識；之前有沒有「偽裝」？現在有沒有「掩飾」？有沒有推出許多「借口」？
- 為什麼是找「我」？利用：我的角色？地位？因為：我好人？容易上當？
- 他與「重要的他人」(significant others)的關係如何？為什麼沒有與「他們」一起來？
 - 得了橫財會否成為鉤心鬥角，甚至謀財爭奪的入口？
 - 會不會已經破裂到一個地步，現在乘機分道揚鑣？
- 他是在什麼情況和狀態中買下彩票？（包括以前...）
- 他前面「特別是獎金」的打算/計劃：
 - 有沒有掙扎？掙扎在那裡？為什麼會有？
 - 你對「財富」的看法？你對「安全穩陣」的看法？
 - 對「人生」的看法「意義」，「永生」，「罪」，「基督&十架」，「救恩」= 帶進**最關鍵問題**。

(三) 最後，再進一步，擴闊至牧養培訓的角度。把以上具典範性的情況，作比較性的展示和討論。

這在**牧養培訓**的課堂，上述多方的探索方向是一個交互過程，按照逐步的回答來定奪下一步的探索，並且在過程中要加插許多增加信任，敞開，領會，等等的環節。是要從實踐中學習。典型的個案示範，可以考慮加上小組「個案討論+匯報」。

黎惠康牧師，戴德生華人事工中心主任。

1. 感恩中心成立二十週年。求主賜智慧並帶領中心前面事工和服侍的方向，能有效地作學術研究及華人教會的橋樑。

This year is HTC 20th Anniversary, may God grant us wisdom as we continue to serve as a bridge between the academia and the Chinese Church.

2. 在新冠疫情下，中心的講座及研究會未能舉行。求主賜籌辦小組智慧，能夠知道如何在各種挑戰下繼續籌辦這些聚會。

HTC seminars and special events (such as Bible Seminar on Ephesians, Conference on Cantonese Ministries etc.) have been postponed due to COVID-19. May God grant wisdom to members of the planning committees as we proceed with the planning and coordination of these events amidst the challenges.

3. 在新冠疫情下，感恩烏克蘭教牧神學文憑課程能夠在網上進行。下一個課程將於2022年4月舉行。請為老師的課程預備及同學們的學習禱告。

The Pastoral Training in Ukraine have been conducted via the web through the pandemic. The upcoming course will be held in April 2022. Pray for wisdom for its continuation.



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