

# LISTENING TO THEIR VOICES

AN EXPLORATION OF FAITH JOURNEYS OF  
CANADIAN-BORN CHINESE CHRISTIANS

An Abridged  
Version



By  
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A report commissioned by CCCOWE Canada

# Listening to Their Voices:

An Exploration of Faith Journeys of  
Canadian-Born Chinese Christians (An Abridged Version)

By  
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## Abbreviation

**A&A** Agnostics and Atheists

**CBCC** Canadian-born Chinese Christians

**CCIC** Canadian Chinese Immigrant Churches

**HE** Highly Engaged

**HF** Hemorrhaging Faith

**LA** Less Affiliated

**LTTV** Listening to Their Voices

**SND** Spiritual “Nones” and “Dones”

This booklet is an abridged version of “*Listening to the Voices: An exploration of faith journeys of Canadian-born Chinese Christians*,” written to provide a bird-eye view of the findings and the directional action recommendations for the readers without the details of the overall theoretical background and literature review, the data analysis, and complete references. As such, the abridged version is not intended to replace the complete analysis and findings of the research as presented in the full report. While it is helpful to peruse the summarized account, readers are encouraged to delve into the report as it provides not only a holistic analysis of eSurvey responses but also a deeper portrayal of the rich lived experience of the Canadian-born Chinese Christians in their faith journeys with respect to their joy, hope, aspiration, disappointment, agony, and despair. Needless to say, the accuracy and full understanding of the research must be based on the full report.

The research team is thankful for the opportunity to make a small contribution to the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches and echoes the Psalmist’s complete dependency: “Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain” (NIV, Ps 127:1a). In addition, the team wishes to acknowledge the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada Youth and the Young Adult Ministry Roundtable project for the consent to use the survey and interview instruments; the eSurvey respondents and interview participants for sharing their views and experiences of their faith journeys; the faithful sponsors (see the report for the full list) for their financial support; and the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) Canada for providing a platform to undertake the research. Finally, gratitude must go to the Triune God for guiding the entire study with unfailing love and unwavering faithfulness.

# Introduction

*Listening to Their Voices (LTTV)* is the research report of the study “*To Whom Shall We Go?*” conducted across six cities in Canada (i.e., Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, and Vancouver) that represent approximately 87% of the Chinese population and the Chinese immigrant churches in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2014). Extending the research of *Hemorrhaging Faith (HF)* (Penner, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy & Hiemstra, 2012) by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, *LTTV* leverages *HF*'s eSurvey and interview instruments with its own nuanced modifications for the purpose of probing the lived experience of the Canadian Born Chinese Christians (CBCC) in the context of the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches (CCIC). The objective of this study is to explore the faith journeys of two cohorts of CBCC: (1) the Stay-On (i.e., those who are attending CCIC at the time of interview) and the Drop-Out (i.e., those who had already disengaged their affiliation with CCIC) by examining what have shaped them to be the religious type of who they are through investigating the factors that motivate them to either disengage from CCIC and/or faith altogether, or continue a steadfast devotion to the religious community and a firm adhesiveness to their faith.

To achieve its objective, this study anchors on the qualitative-driven mixed method (i.e., using qualitative data analysis as the guide over the quantitative analysis) as the core interrogative research framework (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). To that end, the data analysis is first navigated toward the examination of the interview participants' narratives. As the religious orientation of this contingent is scrutinized, two subcategories of religious types within each cohort of Stay-On and Drop-Out of the interview participants

have emerged. Not intended to offer specific precision of boundary, religious typology is generally created to clarify the identity of the researched cohort in relation to the saliency of faith affiliation (Baker & Smith, 2015; Brewster, 2014; Zuckerman, 2012). Also, as is the case with most typologies, categories may overlap when applied to individuals given they are simplifications to the complexities of the human experience. With the application of the religious typology, the study can highlight the proclivity that motivates those who decide to stay engaged with CCIC (Stay-On), and effectively contrasts with the salient factors that may have caused those who are disaffiliated with the faith community (Drop-Out). In so doing, these religious types help explain the linkages of what caused the participants' affiliation with CCIC and their faith engagement in that context.

In the Stay-On category, two religious types have been distinguished: the Highly Engaged (HE) and the Less Affiliated (LA). HE essentially share a strong identification with the church as a community and are committed as devotees. They explicitly acknowledge the opportunity to grow with participation in leadership apprenticeship with endorsement and sponsorship from the first-generational leaders, all of which facilitated their growth in faith. LA, on the other hand, indicate a detachment from the community and the immigrant generation, citing unhealthy or disheartening experiences. In addition, this group takes umbrage at what they claim to be the dysfunctional leadership at CCIC that frustrates their growth in faith and aspiration. LA do not always indicate an alienation from their faith. They could be committed Christians but agonize over the affiliation with their community. More than half of this cohort had thoughts of, or had already taken steps in leaving CCIC at the time of interview. Therefore, what

differentiates LA from HE is that their commitment to CCIC is much weaker than that of the latter, and it dents their faith in some ways.

For the Drop-Out category, two distinct groups of religious types have also emerged: the Spiritual 'Nones' and 'Dones' (SND) and the Agnostics and Atheists (A&A). SND confess to have not abandoned their faith in God but most have developed an animosity toward church affiliation and attendance due to a number of factors, claiming no attachment to church as an institution (hence "Nones," referring to those participants in the surveys and polling who claim that "their religious affiliation is precisely that: none," according to Kenneson [2015]); or cutting ties with CCIC (hence "Dones," referring to those who were fed up with the church and "done with it" according to Packard & Hope [2015]). On the other hand, A&A appear to have completely jettisoned their faith and no longer identified themselves as Christians, as most in this cohort have denied the existence of God with only one participant identifying himself as an agnostic. As apostates, they approach faith and science as a zero-sum game with the belief in God being incompatible with their intellect, and church affiliation being no longer relevant to them. In particular, some in this group look upon the issue of homosexuality as the flash point for their departure of faith and disruption with the church.

With these four religious types (i.e., HE, LA, SND, and A&A) emerging from the analysis of the interview participants' lived experience, a corresponding set of these types can also be identified from the eSurvey respondents by ascertaining a composite profile of religiosity based upon the responses to a roster of questions from the eSurvey that are best characterized to be linkages to: (1) worship

service attendance; (2) strength of conviction in basic belief; and (3) spiritual practices and church affiliation. The resulting analysis of the eSurvey based on these corresponding religious types provides not only a top view of the respondents' sentiment toward the questions posed, but it also offers a detailed breakdown based on each religious type such that the correlation between religious types and the questions raised can be probed and established. For example, the analysis of the eSurvey question "Did your faith come alive on a mission trip?" yields the following result: 27% of HE registering "YES"; with LA, 23%; SND, 4%, and A&A, 8%, indicating that a mission trip is a more salient influence on those who are in the Stay-on cohort and less on the Drop-out. This analysis can lead to the understanding of whether a correlation between participation in a mission trip and a deeper faith conviction exists or not. For the full analysis of the eSurvey responses in relation to the religious types and how the responses are blended with the analysis of interview data, readers are encouraged to review the full report.

In this study, 739 respondents participated in the eSurvey, and 554 identified themselves as Canadian-born Chinese, with the breakdown corresponding to their religious types as follow: HE, 209; LA, 208; SND, 75; and A&A, 62. In addition, 37 participants were interviewed with the following makeup based on the religious types: HE, 10; LA, 9; SND, 9; and A&A, 9. The findings that emerge from the research of these four religious types are summarized in the next chapter.



# Listening to Their Voices



## Analysis and Findings

The analysis of the eSurvey result and the responses of interview participants identify eight determinants that shape the religious types into who they are, with each religious type being impacted by a group of two salient drivers. These eight determinants and their corresponding correlating religious types are: Mentoring Experience (HE); Vibrant Community (HE); Dysfunctional Leadership (LA); Unhealthy Culture (LA); Life Transition (SND); Conundrum of Romance (SND); Rising Intellectual Complexity (A&A) and Sexuality and Sexual orientation (A&A). Furthermore, two additional variables, Experiencing God at Special Events and Parental influences, are incorporated for analysis. They are included not for the purpose of differentiation of their correlation with a particular religious type, since, as will be explained later, they do not stand out as clear and unique determinants for specific religious types; but rather for their unique relationship with CBCC in the context of CCIC. To provide a high-level overview of the effects of these variables, a table (Table 1) capturing the determinants' effects across the religious types is included. The remaining sections in this chapter summarize the analysis of these determinants with the interviewees' real identity substituted with pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Table 1: Summary of Determinants Across Religious Types

| Major Themes                             | HE   | LA  | SND   | AA  |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| <b>Mentoring Experience</b>              | Very Active, Positive & Healthy (A Determinant)    | Present but Less Noticeable   | Positive but Indeterminate  | Negative & Hostile  |
| <b>Vibrant &amp; Authentic Community</b> | Highly Salient with High Belonging (A Determinant) | Unhealthy & Disenfranchised   | Absence of Connectedness; Lack of Support   | Virtually Absent  |
| <b>Dysfunctional Leadership</b>          | Positive but Less Noticeable                       | Very Hierarchical & Dysfunctional; No Vibrant Vision with Irrelevant Teaching (A Determinant) | Unprepared, Disengaged and Political  | Incompetent   |
| <b>Unhealthy Culture</b>                 | Supportive but Not Salient                         | Very Unhealthy, Rife with Conflict, Politics, & Hypocrisy and Exclusivity (A Determinant)     | Unsupportive & Judgmental   | Backward & Distanced  |
| <b>Life Transitions</b>                  | Healthy Support from CCIC                          | CCIC Unengaged  | Lost in Transitions through Life Stages; Relocation, Disconnected Community (A determinant) | Less Noticeable But Lost in Transition to University over Science Arguments |
| <b>Conundrum of Romance</b>              | Not Noticeable                                     | Fractured Relationship Experienced but Received Support from CCIC                             | Broken & Disengagement with Faith Communities (A determinant)                               | Absent as a Factor  |
| <b>Rising Intellectual Complexity</b>    | Absent   | Unnoticeable  | Absent  | Faith & Science a "Zero-sum" Game (A determinant)                           |



| <b>Sexuality &amp; Sexual Orientation</b> | Teaching is Muted or Irrelevant               | Teaching is Muted or Irrelevant    | Teaching is Muted or Irrelevant      | Teaching is Antagonistic and a Game Changer to Dislodge Faith (A determinant) |
|---|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Experiencing God at Special Events</b> | Palpable in Conferences and STM               | Present and Somewhat Active in STM | Unevenly Felt in Conferences and STM | Almost Absent   |
| <b>Parental Influences</b>                | Weak to Somewhat Strong but not a Determinant | Weak to Negative                   | Weak to Negative                     | Weak to Negative  |

## Mentoring Experience

Many researches have identified the presence of a role model, mentor, an authority figure, or someone who has taken steps to show interests and care for the younger sojourners in faith as an immensely positive impact on how their faith affiliation is shaped and sustained (Abo-Zena & Ahmed, 2014; Bowen, 2010; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Dean, 2010; Erickson, 1992; Lanker, 2009, 2012; Magyab-Russell, Deal & Brown, 2014; Martinson, 2004; Parks, 2011; Pearce and Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012; Powell & Clark, 2011; Reimer & Wilkinson (with Penner, 2015; Smith (with Longest, 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Longest, Hill & Christoffersen, 2014. While mentoring experience resonates in many CBCC across the cohorts, it is HE that rave the most about the engagement as they recall how nurturing with mentors has left an indelible imprint in their spiritual journeys. To no one's surprise, HE consider mentoring to be a significant reason for the positive identification of faith and strong adhesiveness with CCIC. With mentors, CBCC receive encouragement for growth; care for their wellbeing, physically, mentally, and spiritually; and

affirmation of their faith conviction. Mentoring as a practice needs not to be a formal set up, as many HE attest to an informal framework of how mature adults who show immense interest in guiding the younger generation through their faith journeys walk alongside them in times good or bad. To those who have been nurtured by strong mentoring connection in their lives, any disruption or abrupt withdrawal of such an engagement, which at times are instigated by the departure of the pastor-mentors, can create a loss of spiritual direction and a fracture with the faith community that could lead to a potential exit.

To CBCC whose lives have been graced by the mentor's presence, fruitful mentoring experience bears several conspicuous hallmarks. First, mentors are approachable, available, and always take the initiative to engage. Secondly, mentors listen with patience, offering not judgment but sage advice. Thirdly, mentors are open and transparent, showing vulnerability, and willingness for reverse-mentoring. Finally, mentors are incarnational, making sacrifices and investment in time, effort, and providing monetary support if necessary.

## Vibrant and Authentic Community

Another salient determinant that affects the faith journeys of young religious adherents positively is an active engagement with faith communities that fosters growth and deepens spiritual values (Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Penner et al. 2012). Such engagement, in turn, helps the faithful foster a strong sense of belonging with the faith community. For many CBCC, not only does this experience of belonging reflect CCIC as a place where ethnic socialization takes place, more importantly, but it also speaks to a venue where they experience joy and spiritual nourishment; form and

forge identity; build and cement relationship; shoulder pain and grief; and spur each other on with their peers in their faith journeys. Yet community experience can be a double-edged sword. While the positive impact of community experience guides CBCC in their growth and creates stickiness in the affiliation of faith and CCIC for HE, contrasting negative experience contributes to why LA, SND, and A&A CBCC become disengaged, feeling unsafe, and losing the bearing of their identity and faith conviction. Specifically for the LA group, the unhealthy culture they have voiced against stems more so from discontent with the leadership of CCIC as well as inter-congregational conflicts and less so from the friendship and positive support CBCC receive from the English speaking community within CCIC. As such, the experience for the LA and SND respondents is very much aligned with the A&A group as almost two-third indicates negative experience. While most CBCC identify their experience with the CCIC they associate or once associated as a critical component in shaping their faith negatively or positively, the HE cohort exhibits a much stronger identification with CCIC as a vibrant community of faith that has left a positive imprint in their spiritual formation.

To CBCC, a vibrant and authentic spiritual community bears three key attributes. First, the essence of an authentic community reflects acceptance, mutual support, and transparency. Furthermore, a spiritual community that is vibrant creates sticky belonging and extends its welcome to congregants and outsiders. Finally, a faith community that is authentic creates a strong bonding amongst the congregants through friendship and connectedness.

## Dysfunctional Leadership

Unlike secular organizations, Christian churches do not define their vision and mandate based upon leaders' self-interest, the organizations' market values, or by human wisdom. Rather, faith institutions seek a spiritual direction that is rooted in the Biblical values and practices as well as in their spiritual conviction. To that end, the vitality of faith communities depends greatly on how their leadership builds such a vision that is rooted in their core spiritual values and calling, and inspires their followers in a way that is true to these values and mandate with transcendental guidance and personal example to achieve ministry goals (Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley & McKinney, 1998; Wong, 2015). For CCIC, the leadership landscape is complicated by the ethnic cultural ethos exhibited by the first-generational leaders, lay and pastoral, and the resulting conflicts that are engendered between these leaders and CBCC. In this study, some in the HE cohort affirm the value of the immigrant church leadership and the wisdom and the blessing it has brought upon the local-born. Yet such a sentiment is eclipsed by the terrible experience shared by many CBCC in the other cohorts, be they still staying on in the immigrant church (LA) or left it for a variety of reasons (SND and A&A), when they speak poignantly about the stagnation, confusion, hypocrisy, and power struggles at the religious institutions in which they grew up. Leaders, according to these participants, tend to put on a façade, with their commitment to the younger generation being artificial, and the practices hypocritical and inauthentic. In addition, the Chinese cultural exercise of leadership that tends to be top-down with power centralized in the hands of a few is perceived to be in conflict with the emerging Western leadership style that gravitates toward being open, bottom-up, participatory, and peer-driven, an experience the local-born have gained favour in the school and their career

(Heimans & Timms, 2018; Wong, 2015). Thus, to many CBCC in LA, SND, and A&A cohorts, the Chinese leadership at CCIC is perceived to be dysfunctional.

However, more than the other cohorts, LA exhibit a strong inimical sentiment about their emotionally distant relationship with CCIC. These CBCC identify two detrimental factors as the tipping point for fleeing the community, as most contemplated taking, or had already taken steps to exit their own CCIC at the time of the interview: dysfunctional leadership and an unhealthy community culture. To these LA, dysfunctional leadership reflects two suites of traits at CCIC: (a) hierarchy, power concentration, and local-born being treated as underlings; and (b) lack or clash of vision.

## Unhealthy Culture

For any community, a vibrant and life-giving culture gives rise to its vitality. Yet an unhealthy culture is reflected in the staleness or even disintegration of the organization as well as in the misalignment of behaviours of the members with the good-intended stated values. Faith communities are no exception. Churches whose ecclesiastical culture is built upon sustainable spiritual values that are rooted in Biblical teachings and Jesus's sacrificial example tend to create cohesive, passionate, loving, and growing communities. In contrast, churches that are rife with a harmful culture such as internecine conflict or abuse of power gravitate to a high degree of disassociation of the members (Mammana-Lupo, Nathan, Todd & Houston, 2014, p. 113).

For many of the participants of this study, in particular to LA, the culture of CCIC they are associated with can best be characterized

as unhealthy or debilitating. Simply put, a church not spiritually healthy is a faith community that does not reflect the sacred values and the divine vision it is supposed to reflect. To the LA, the presence of four indicators of the community cultural behaviours that, when knitted together, comes to portray the unhealthy culture of CCIC: (a) politics; (b) irrelevant teachings; (c) hypocrisy; and (d) conflict.

## Life Transition

Many studies highlight that transitional changes which occur through various life stages serve as instigation for institutional and faith disengagement with the religion for those who grew up in faith traditions (Bowen, 2010; Francis & Richter, 2007; Penner et al., 2012; Thiessen, 2015). In this study, transition impact as an adverse influence is clearly evinced in the Drop-Out participants (i.e., SND and A&A), yet it is very much mute in the narrative of the Stay-On cohort (i.e., HE and LA). While most of the A&A interviewees discuss in particular other triggers that precipitate their abandonment of faith in God when they grew up, transition through life different stages is a clear detectable salient theme that presents itself as a significant variable impacting on the faith journeys for SND according to their narratives. Caught to be betwixt and between high school to university and from university to career, SND found themselves facing unprecedented uncertainty in their life and faith in the context of (1) changing locales and life priorities; (2) shaping identity that is malleable; (3) forging new, or reconstructing old, relationship with various faith communities and friends; (4) meeting overwhelming academic demands; and (5) daunting expectations to adjust and excel both in school and career. Though many in the HE and LA cohorts share a similar experience, life transition is particularly adversarial in shaping

SND's decision in dislodging their affiliation with the church. The most prominent reason for not attending church as raised by SND is the changing priorities of life as illustrated by Esther as she remarks: "But I think because my life is now so different and so busy, I haven't made it a priority. And I haven't ...found the time to (return to church)." From the discourses of SNA, there are multiple contributing factors behind the changing priorities of this cohort, and this study has identified the following provocation under the broad determinant of life transition: (a) natural process of growing up; (b) career adjustment; (c) an absence of connectedness; and (d) changing of church location as a cost-and-benefit factor.

## Conundrum of Romance

The second determinant whose presence is palpable in the faith journeys of SND is found in how nuanced romantic experience shapes their disengagement with the faith community. As one can imagine, a romantic relationship is a significant source of identity and spiritual development for emerging young adults as enduring intimacy between romantic partners tend to strengthen their shared values, life aspiration, and faith (Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll & Badger, 2009). As a spiritual venue and an ethnic social hub, CCIC are a natural incubator for such a relationship to bud and mature. Furthermore, a university campus is also an open and fertile ground for a strong socialization engagement that could lead to romantic relationships (Freitas, 2008). A healthy romantic engagement often leads to an abiding commitment that lasts a lifetime, whereas a romantic breakup may lead to a disruption of identity, rage, and emotional upheaval (Barber, 2016; Fisher, 2016). Such a tumultuous experience could, in fact, lead to the jostling of one's religious conviction and commitment, complaining about or blaming on God

for not letting the romantic relationship come through. To that end, for many in the SND cohort, one of the significant disaffiliation experiences is related to either the broken romantic relationship or engaging a commitment with either non-Church attending or Roman Catholic partners through marriage or cohabitation. Collectively, romantic relationship demands such a significant emotional undertaking that either a fracture of the relationship or engagement with non-Christian partners has resulted in shifting the values and the spiritual stance of the CBCC involved. For the former, ongoing connection with the faith community where broken relationship occurred is not necessarily easy for two reasons: the presence of the former romantic partner makes it difficult or awkward to continue community participation; and a sense of failure or shame that generally accompanies the fracture tends to push them away from that venue. For the latter, connection with the church may not be advisable since these participants might be stigmatized as their chosen partner is a non-Christian, a practice that is regarded as a taboo in CCIC. In addition, life values and priorities are inexorably changed over time as a common set of faith practices between a Christian partner and a non-Christian or Catholic spouse can seldom be established. Regardless of the two, the factor of romantic relationship looms so large for SND that half of the cohort attributes pessimism to this particular experience and how it has severed their connection with the faith community and altered their faith journeys.

## Rising intellectual complexity

Studies suggest that former faith adherents forsake their belief in the existence of God for a variety of reasons. Key among them is the perceived inconsistency between theistic belief and logical thinking that is based on scientific and empirical reasoning (Baker & Smith,

2015; Francis & Richter, 2007; Kinnaman, 2011; Thiessen, 2015). The logical approach to dislodge faith conviction comes usually through a gradual process as the apostates develop a sense of doubt and a level of cerebral complexity to challenge their faith over time (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997; Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Galen, 2014; Hunsberger, Alisat, Pancer & Pratt, 1996; Hunsberger & Brown 1984; Hunsberger, Pratt & Pancer, 2002). Many of the A&A CBCC grew up as typical local-born Christians, being corralled to attend church as a religious routine celebrated and practiced by their parents. Some in the A&A group did take ownership of faith in the teenage years and exhibited a strong adherence to Christian belief and disciplines such as spiritual devotion and involvement in congregational ministry. At the same time, this cohort is also subjected to non-religious influences. Secularism, which has dominated Western thinking for many decades, promotes a pluralistic agenda in the cultural milieu that has permeated in, among other things, academic curriculum and social media. Evolution, religious diversity, moral relativism, anti-traditional sexual orientation, anti-establishment, and anti-authority are but a few examples of teachings and influences that the participants and respondents of this study have been imbued in as a part of their growing up process (Wong, 2016). In spite of the seemingly positive religious influence in their upbringing, CBCC of the A&A cohort have chosen to disengage their belief in God. Six out of eight interviewees in the A&A cohort offer telling accounts of citing unbelief as the reason for jettisoning their faith. From these narratives, two specific elements are highlighted for their faith desertion: (a) science and faith as a zero-sum game; and (b) an inadequate and inconsistent response from CCIC on doubt, faith, and science. Frustrated by how the issues of science and doubt are eschewed and marginalized at CCIC, many A&A discard their faith in favor of seeking answers from non-religious sources.

## Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

Sexuality is a necessary, and an unavoidable part of terrain teenagers and adolescents must navigate in their process of growing up (Booth, Crouter & Snyder, 2016). However, studies show that young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality is often found to be merely simplistic, and the institution is out of steps with times (Kinnaman, 2011; Penner et al., 2012). In addition, parents may not have placed a high priority in preparing the teens in transition into university in the area of sex, love, and romance (Freitas, 2008). The faith community as a collective ensemble that encompasses congregants, pastors, leaders, and parents appears to have a large gap to fill in addressing the issue of sexuality and sexual orientation. CCIC are no exception in this regard. The issue of sexuality and sexual orientation has plagued CBCC across the religious types as they agonize on how it is being addressed at CCIC, an emblematic stigma that reflects the inability of CCIC in dealing with broader contemporary issues in a relevant and timely manner. Deeply rooted and intersected in the teachings of conservative evangelicalism and the Chinese culture, most, if not all, CCIC hold a traditional Biblical view of marriage and sexuality. To them, marriage is a sacred institution that governs the relationship between a husband and wife, and sexual practices can only be sanctioned and espoused within the marital covenantal agreement. Any sexual activities outside of the Biblical spousal framework is unequivocally condemned and labeled sinful. Yet raised in a secular culture that favours and promotes sexual freedom, and spurred by the celebrity or pop singers they follow (e.g., Ariana Grande, Katy Perry, Justin Bieber, etc.), CBCC find themselves staging an uphill battle in navigating a path of faithfulness and purity in dealing with their own sexual fascination and at the same time finding very little helpful assistance from CCIC.



However, the analysis of the study indicates that there is a correspondence between CBCC's faith adherence and the traditional view of sexuality that is consistent with the predominantly conservative and evangelical persuasion, particularly on homosexuality in terms of acceptance, leadership position, and solemnization (i.e., HE being the most conservative, and A&A the least). Also, while the Stay-On cohort tends to be sympathetic to gender equality in church leadership, they are much more aligned with the evangelical view that rejects the solemnization of gay marriage. Conversely, while sharing a similar acceptance of gender equality in leadership with the Stay-On, the Drop-Out group, and in particular the A&A, exhibits an expressive liberal posture toward gay marriage. In fact, many A&A are gay-friendly, and two of them declare their gay identity. For many in this cohort, such a stance has become a catalyst for their abandonment of faith.

The CBCC's faith experience as related to sexuality and sexual orientation at CCIC (i.e., the openness of CBCC toward sexuality equality as well as how religious types corresponding to acceptance of solemnization of gay marriage, as well as how most A&A having cited the issue of homosexuality as the reason for their deflection from faith) can be understood from the perspectives of three issues: (a) sexuality as a taboo and generally muted in CCIC; (b) conservative Chinese culture on sexuality and teaching ceded to school; and (c) antagonistic responses on homosexuality leading to apostasy. Together, these issues conflate to spur many A&A to become apostate and abandon the faith in which they grew up.

## Experiencing God at special events

Many researches indicate in varying degrees how God's presence can be palpably felt at such special spiritual events as conferences, retreats, and short-term mission engagements (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012; Reimer & Wilkinson (with Penner), 2015). In general, a positive experience of God often corresponds to a higher religious affiliation and a greater level of engagement with the religious community for the faithful (Penner et al., 2012). To that end, this study examines how participation in such events may correspond to CBCC's faith adherence. In particular, it includes an examination of the Ontario cohort in how their faith has been shaped by attendance of Teens Conference, an annual two-day event organized by the Ambassador For Christ Canada held in Toronto during the Spring break (typically staged in March) for high schoolers.

For CBCC, the experience of God through participation in conferences or retreats appears equally salient across the HE and SND cohorts and less so in the LA cohort, and virtually none in the A&A cohort. Yet for SND, such an experience is not strong enough to eventually counter the forces of other influences to create enough adhesiveness for them to stay on with church affiliation. Thus conference attendance does create an affirmative impact in some but does not stand out as a differentiated dominant factor that underpins a correspondence for religious affiliation

Similar to the conference and retreat participation, Teens Conference experience as identified by the Ontario cohort does not assert itself as a strong distinctive influential factor for the Stay-On to remain highly connected to CCIC and their faith. On the other hand, attendance does not present itself as a substantial impact to suggest that it may have sowed the seeds for the Drop-Out to leave

the church or the faith altogether. In brief, Teens Conference attendance may have created a level of concrete impact on some participants' growth, yet it does not differentiate itself as a strong correspondence for faith affiliation.

According to CBCC this research studies, the short-term mission is not a ministerial engagement that most have participated in. To the extent they have involved in such endeavors, a small positive effect does surface in some participants across the HE, LA and SND cohorts, offering no direct or distinctive correlation of such engagement to a higher degree of faith stickiness as represented by the religious types. However, a case can be made that as small as the effect may have been, it is more palpable and salient in the Stay-On cohort as a whole than the Drop-Out, which is likely to have correlated to the higher level of stickiness to their faith for both HE and LA participants more so than the others.

As a collective variable for affecting the religiosity of CBCC positively or negatively, the engagement in special events such as conferences, retreats, Teens Conference, and short-term mission ministry to experience God does not offer an unmistakable and consistent correlation for CBCC this research studies as no specific religious type has stood out to be the cohort impacted the most in shaping of their religious identity by such as an experience.

## Parental influences

The impact of parental religiosity on their children has been widely regarded as one of the most significant influential factors for understanding the faith engagement of the younger generation (Myers, 1996). Parental piety has been identified as a critical determinant for the young adolescent's retention of their faith (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012; Smith (with Longest), 2009). On the other hand, hypocrisy on the part of the parents is pinned as the chief reason for the apostasy of the children (Zuckerman, 2012).

However, the analysis of parental influence as an active agent for affecting concrete faith affiliation on CBCC this study examines through the lens of (1) family devotional practice; (2) parental faith identity as a Christian; and (3) presence of explicit acknowledgment of parental influence, points to a less certain direction, since it is not consistently or uniformly observed as a salient correlating variable across the religious types. In general, some parents of CBCC did assert a degree of influence through their engagement in the ministry. Such a parental engagement alone does not necessarily translate into an impact on their children's growth in faith. In particular, a few in the Drop-Out group indicate that their parents are ministers, deacons, or lay leaders at the church they grew up in. Though these roles or positions would normally lead to the belief that their children should have a strong adherence of faith, these Drop-Out participants indicate otherwise virtually by their religious types. For this study, the religiosity of the parents behaves at best as a collective neutral agent for CBCC, neither facilitating the Stay-On cohort to stay affiliated with the church nor discouraging the Drop-Out to disaffiliate from their faith



## Conclusion

The analysis of the findings points to one important direction in response to the determinants of the CBCC's faith journeys for CCIC: any action to be taken will require a combined exploration and understanding of these factors as well as how they may manifest themselves at individual venues of CCIC. In addition, the findings point to both challenges and opportunities CCIC are collectively facing in addressing the needs of CBCC and preventing further exodus of the younger generation. In the next chapter, a suite of eight directional action recommendations is suggested for CCIC to address the findings holistically that this research has surfaced.

## A Paradigm Shift: Directional Action Recommendations

To respond to the unvarnished aspiration and frustration of CBCC as well as the emerging determinants for their attachment to faith and CCIC, and to buck the trend of CBCC defecting from their faith affiliation, a seismic shift of ministry paradigm and practices at CCIC is required. To that end, eight directional action recommendations are identified in this chapter to ameliorate the CBCC's concerns and to build on what may have already been done at CCIC and elsewhere to deepen their faith conviction. At the same time, it must be recognized that each congregational ministry is highly contextualized and uniquely positioned, and therefore distinctively differentiated from others. Intended to be broad-strokes, the recommendations are not designed to be a "one-size-all-solution," a set of "plug-and-play" quick-fixes, or a suite of detail implementation initiatives. Rather they together serve as a framework for CCIC individually and collectively to examine thoroughly where the current state of their multi-congregational ministry lies, and what the areas of transformation ought to take place.

Transformation is never easy, nor is it a clean path. Translation of these action recommendations into what ministerial steps each CCIC needs to undertake requires the faith community to adopt a humble stance and act in a prayerful spirit with a willingness to engage in honest and open dialogues, navigating nuanced conversations as well as intentional listening on the part of all stakeholders in the community. Only then can a refreshed cohesive

vision and a clear mission for both generations emerge in CCIC to overcome barriers and forces of influences and to move forward for God's kingdom and His glory. Finally, the recommendations are a clarion call for the first, second, and the next generations of CCIC and CBCC leaders and laity to engage with one another with dignity and mutual accountability in addressing the phenomenon of the exodus. In so doing, CCIC may recognize that they are called to chart a new course that is characterized by mutual humility and respect, one that is marked by intergenerational collaboration and reflects not merely the priority of the local immigrant church, but also the broader interest of the Kingdom of God which transcends national and ethnic boundaries.

## 1. From “Jiaozi” (dumpling) to Jesus

*Strengthening the gospel-centric preaching and teachings that holistically engage faith, vocation, identity, community, culture, and values.*

Growing up with the ecclesiastical structure that still favors the Chinese congregations as the leading authority in directing the church ministry, many CBCC recall confusion around the distinction between ethnic and faith practices as cultural differences loom large among the congregations. Also, concerns over the teachings of CCIC being biased toward cultural preferences over the gospel-centric messages are clearly expressed in this study. Such a bias is manifested in the teaching of passages such as “obeying your parents” (e.g., NIV, Eph 6:1), which are delivered with a paternalistic tone and exercised in a patriarchal manner that is very ethnically Chinese. Though not spoken with an intention to subjugate the local-born, the message is often perceived to convey rigidity with no room for discussion or creativity. Out of their hunger for following Jesus, the younger generation craves for deeper teachings of who Jesus is and what He represents, a longing

that is reflected in the rallying cry: “Don’t give me ‘jiaozi’, just give me Jesus.”

To that end, CCIC are encouraged to firmly root their teachings in His word and yet be sensitive to how the Spirit guides them in interpreting the Scripture in the context of CBCC. The communities must come to grip with the notion that Jesus, therefore gospel-centric teachings, is at the core of the local-born's construction of their identity that intersects between a hybrid ethnicity (i.e., Chinese-Canadian) and faith. Gospel is the adjudicator for values and truth. As such, the gospel-centric message will inform, reform, transform, and create culture (Carson, 2008; Crouch, 2008; Kim, 2017; Kraft, 2005; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978; Newbigin, 1986; Niebuhr, 1951; Platt, 2015) and, in turn, will help address the conundrum many CBCC, especially LA and A&A, express about the CICC teachings being mute, irrelevant, and untimely. The CBCC this initiative has studied indicate an insatiable hunger for the gospel-centric message: just give them Jesus.

## 2. From belonging to being discipled

*Developing and implementing a set of radical yet Biblical-based discipling principles and practices that accept risk-taking and shape a life-long devotion.*

As this study has illustrated, HE of the Stay-On cohort register a robust identification with CCIC as well as a tenacious commitment to the faith. One of the primary reasons for the strong attachment is the emphasis these participants place on the friendship that has been knitted in the faith community. Such a relationship creates a robust spiritual fellowship as well as a social bond that, in turn, enhances the level of homophily as well as connectedness in the community (Wong, 2015). Thus to no one's surprise, acknowledgment of

strong belonging is one of the critical markers for this group. Yet at the same time, broken relationship, among peers in general and in particular of the romantic variety, does result in a high likelihood of disassociation of CBCC from their community as exhibited clearly by the SND cohort. The problem lies in part with the reality that CBCC place a premium in the human relationship as the end-game more so than in the divine relationship; and the church is the venue for constructing and maintaining the amicability. When such a relationship is no longer adhesive or becomes fractured, the affiliation with the community is no long viscous, especially in a venue that is salient with the honour and shame culture that may frown upon such incidences as a failure.

A two-fold action can be considered for addressing the issue. First, a clear articulation of the church's relational value that is rooted not in association with cliques, clans, first-comers, or social background, but with God needs to be established. The second prong is construed through a key understanding of what Biblical followership must constitute. While it is true that the Lord calls the church and his followers to "disciple all nations," followers must first be disciples. In this context, an argument can be put forwarded that disciples are not made, but forged, first by obedience to the Lord's calling and emulation of His devotion to the Kingdom, then by developing and honing of spiritual practices (such as prayer and worship) that lead to a deeper commitment to follow Him. Only then can disciples inspire others to join in the journeys. And the most important aspect of the lifelong spiritual pursuit lies not so much in the 'acting out,' but rather in the 'baking in.' In other words, the focus of discipleship is more on the 'being' rather 'doing,' and concerned about 'shaping' than 'making.' If this understanding of disciple shaping is acceptable, then there is only one paragon of faith we must emulate and follow: Jesus Christ the Lord Himself.

CCIC need to re-orient themselves by returning to the Jesus of the Bible, and focusing on the radical nature of Jesus' lifestyle and his transformative values as the foundation of discipleship: risk-taking; courageous; complete dependence on the Father; truth-telling; merciful and compassion; dispensing justice but always with enduring love; obeying and suffering with faith; and perseverance in, and deeply committed to, completing the redemption mandate. The question remains: Are we complacent with the status quo? Or are we willing to engender a sense of wonder in the younger generation to be Christ-like disciples and take risks for the Lord and to be whomever and to wherever God calls them to?

### **3. From textbook instruction to journeying**

***Creating a set of mentoring practices that are not necessarily formal but organic, championing a space for reverse mentoring and mutual support.***

Taking from the saliency of faith experience in the HE group, one can defer that growth in faith for CBCC requires not so much traditional textbook instructions as dependence on someone being alongside them to journey together. This framework of nurture can be seen in how Jesus raises up the Twelve when He sets them aside so that "they might be with him" (NIV, Mark 3: 14). To Him, equipping of the Twelve involves a process of modeling and shaping of their calling, character, and competency, a process not likely to be accomplished in the classroom environment but rather through a life ministry experiential setting. One of the key reasons for such a pedagogical shift can be gleaned from a local-born when she remarks: "our generation values experience more." The "alongsideship" appreciated by CBCC requires a willingness on the part of the mentors to lower their self-merit to a level that the mentees feel comfortable. It requires an incarnational practice of

engaging with the mentees in unfeigned humility, seeking mutual accountability rather than asserting a stance of superiority. It implies the alacrity to admit vulnerability and brokenness and yet maintain transparency. However, the practice of mentorship does not necessarily need to take on a formal program or structure, though it is always helpful to have it in place. The informal mentorship experience HE encounter attests to the eagerness and readiness of the mentors to enter into the mentees' world as who they are, helping the mentees with all they can, including self-sacrifice in time, finance, and energy. Mentees in the HE group express appreciation for the assistance from the mentors in their willingness to listen, accepting them as who they are without judgment, caring for their wellbeing, and affirming their faith. The mentoring experience that seems to have worked best for this cohort puts emphasis less on the positional status of the mentors than the authenticity of care.

#### **4. From protecting to preparing**

*Putting in place a concrete transition plan for high-schoolers to move into university, and for college students from university to career*

According to this study, transition through life stages such as from childhood to puberty, from the teenage years to emerging adulthood, and from the university campus setting to the career pursuit is often disruptive and likely to induce a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of faith and identity that is part and parcel of CBCC's growing up into maturity. With that in mind, how can parents and church community aid and support the younger generation in a manner that is nurturing but not overpowering, and equip them in ways that can help them anticipate and address the challenges they may face during the

transitory experience? Most importantly, any assistance must start with parents who are required to commit themselves first on the transformative path of being authentic followers of Christ in order to generate the moral and spiritual capital and authority to invite the children to emulate them in all facets of their daily pursuit of discipling their children (NIV, Deut. 6:4-9). Such a commitment is pre-requisite as the preparatory changes require a fundamental examination of values in CBCC's life aspiration that is usually defined by academic and career achievements.

To alter the pathway from protection to preparation and equipping, CCIC and immigrant families can judiciously shape the worldview and the spirituality of CBCC by finding ways (e.g., short-term mission engagements) to guide them to see the world from Jesus' perspective, such as through participation in short-term mission engagements in serving the needy and less fortunate parts of the world. Such a process needs to start long before the teenagers are to be transitioned into college. The preparatory process ought to be rooted in a seismic shift of cultural values into faith values that requires to take place first in parents. As an alteration of mindset, parents must change the paradigm of what can be described to be "preparing the path for the child" to one of "preparing the child for the path." Preparing the path for the child is generally motivated by worldly success, marked by fame and accomplished through the paths of professional careers or success theology. Thus the means of preparing the path for the child implies the pursuit of competencies that tends to favor cerebral capability in areas such as mathematics and sciences, prerequisite subjects to enter into medical school or accounting major. In contrast, a "preparing the child for the path" approach requires a fundamentally shifted mindset. Rather than competency centric, the pursuit is calibrated on helping the child to discover his purpose and calling in life and building his character.

Thus a child needs to be raised with confidence and a sense of wonder of what he or she may want to be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Preparing the child for the path requires intentional equipping on many fronts: building up their own faith values and identity; opening up conversation about liberal practices of sexuality and why they are not consistent with spiritual values; strengthening their faith both as a deep-rooted and yet enduring experience of God as well as foundational and holistic understanding of key Christian teachings. Preparing the child can also mean painting the picture in advance for the child what campus life may involve, inviting those who have current or past experiences to speak to their life and walk with them. In addition, investigative questions on faith and social life on campus can be postulated with potential answers sought out in advance to facilitate a fruitful conversation with the local-born, and, in turn, encourage them to arrive at their own conclusion through their own inquiries (Freitas, 2008).

## 5. From “a museum of the saints” to “a hospital for the wounded”

*Fostering an environment that is safe and respectful, allowing doubt, questions, and failures to be expressed without condemnation.*

If progression of faith is perceived as a pilgrimage through life stages, then such a journey can, in fact, be full of joys, agony, and tears, mirroring the triumphant celebration in God’s court and the darkening experience of the Valley of Baca (Ps. 84). The downtrodden encounter in the valley can be very lonely. Sojourners in such a circumstance long for a companion who can share the tears and agony, or a place that is safe to restore their confidence and faith. Yet the interviewees’ narrative suggests that CCIC do not

always offer a “safe house” or a “city of refuge,” a place and space where CBCC can feel comfortable to express their doubt, speak of their wound and hurt, and look for spiritually therapeutic re-generation of their faith commitment.

Very often, CBCC are fearful of the repercussion of being judged and that the deep desire to experience God’s mercy and healing would be obstructed. Thus in the eyes of some CBCC, CCIC are thin on encouragement, impatient on human failure, and quick to criticize. Clothed in conservative ethos and teachings, CCIC are looked upon as institutions that frown on any spiritual misgiving, in part due to the demand to preserve the perceived “holiness” nature of the church, but mostly due to a non-practice of forgiveness and reconciliation, a stance that is rooted more in the culture of honor and shame rather than in the Biblical values of reconciliation and mercy.

This is not to suggest that CCIC should treat sinful behaviours lightly. However, the holistic support for the downtrodden in the valley must not start and end with a direct and straightforward judgment, leaving the afflicted with little opportunity to rebound in God’s grace and forgiveness. The end objective ought to be restoration through a spiritual environment that is rooted in love, respect, acceptance, and compassionate nurturing exemplified by Christ. Given the culture and practices discussed, CCIC are perceived as what Van Buren (1964) characterizes as: “a museum for saints,” a place that only welcomes those who are perfect, when CBCC need the most in times of quandary is a place and space that is safe, transparent, willing to offer mercy and support before condemnation is rendered. Again in Van Buren’s conception, “the church is a hospital for the sinners,” embracing who are in need of love and restoration, echoing what Jesus accentuates: “It is not the



healthy who need a doctor, but the sick” (NIV, Mark 2:17). CCIC can consider, as some have already put in motion, establishing practices that reflect the values of how the church must be perceived: an accepting, forgiving, and restoring community. Such practices may include the creation of a place so designated as, for example, “Safe Corner,” “Youth Hub,” or “Upper Room” where teens can enter with a feeling of safety and comfort that they are being listened to when expressing doubt and pursuing restoration. In other words, the communion of saint and forgiveness of sins as advocated in the Apostles’ Creed need to go hand in hand in the ministerial pursuit for CBCC.

## 6. From rigidity to fluidity

*Reimagining and redeploying rituals and symbols in a way that is both Biblically centric and culturally adaptive (e.g., worship, ambiance, ministry orientation & practices).*

For many CBCC, the “old-home” practices of the first generation of “doing ministry” are at times confusing, and at others irrelevant. More importantly, CCIC are perceived to be organized with a structure that reflects a power base that favors the first comer or founder cohort, which is typically the Cantonese in the Canadian context. A typical flashpoint that reflects a cognitive dissonance in the CBCC’s mind is the practice of the “joint-service,” a worship service for all congregants from different languages held on important occasions in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter with design and execution in resources such as song and speaker selection favoring the first-generation, which explains why the language of the service is typically Chinese, and English is interpreted according to many CBCC. The joint-service, for many CBCC, is but a representative of how ministry design and resource allocation are deployed in favor of the Chinese speaking

congregations at CICC. With such favoritism and authority in place, congregations of different languages are motivated to take side in conforming to the power structure irrespective of the disagreement among them. CBCC tend to acquiesce with the arrangement, recognizing that the power structure does not stand in their favour. The practice, in turn, gives rise to the congregational grievance in matters dealing with ministerial programs or events that is to be implemented across the congregations as seen in the joint-services.

The disputes point to a more profound discord about the affiliation of CBCC with CCIC. To the extent that the immigrant church is discussed in the collective overall multi-congregational setting, CBCC are quick to single out the exclusionary mindset of the first-generation which usually stands against the local-born’s passion for inclusivity of ethnic groups other than the Chinese. They argue that the ministry orientation and ambiance reflect more of the “back home” cultural practices than progressing toward a biblical centrality of affirming Christian identity in the “new home” ethos.

Furthermore, joint-services have become a moment of truth for the CBCC that surfaces not only cultural differences but theological differences in the areas of style, approach, and meaning of such practices at CCIC. For example, some single out the interpretation of the worship language to accommodate the needs of different congregants as messy. In addition, for the local-born and other congregants, important occasions such as Christmas offer the best opportunity to invite non-believing friends to participate in the worship service and get to know the Christian faith. However, the language barrier and the “old home” cultural practices appear to demotivate the local-born to invite newcomers, as the experience is not conducive for them to enjoy the worship.

These issues are not only emblematic of the inability of CCIC to be culturally adaptive in their worship style but also pointing to a broader suite of operational practices of ministry (e.g., mission budget at CCIC favoring Chinese ethnic sponsored mission ministries). Thus worship conflict is but a microcosm of a broader intergenerational discord. CCIC need to reimage how to replace culturally outmoded forms of ministry and substitute them with new thinking in a way that would allow the faith community to reshape the practices that are at once culturally adaptive and Scripture-centric to make it accommodating to both generations. Though Chinese congregants, Cantonese and Mandarin speaking, remain to be a majority in most CCIC, it would be helpful for them to adopt a humbling gesture to relegate control of such events as the joint-service to CBCC, so that they can become the first stringer, to learn, grow, and execute such ministry practices so that they too can be considered as mature members of the family. In order to accomplish this, CCIC need to be willing to reimage and reshape the ministry orientation to make it intergenerational friendly and ethnically neutral in the pursuit.

## 7. From hierarchy to lower power distance

*Rethinking and resetting leadership practices such that: (a) power distance is narrowed; (b) a structure and culture is espoused that is local-born friendly, with open communication, distributed decision-making responsibility, and trust; (c) leadership apprentice is encouraged.*

CCIC leaders who were brought up in the Asian cultural background and trained in the traditional ministry philosophies tend to postulate a focused view of leadership primarily defined by power and authority that is based more on the 'Strongman Theory' (i.e., success and failure is determined by one single individual who occupies the top role in the hierarchical ladder).

Such a leadership practice ensconces the decision-making responsibilities safely in the hands of a chosen few. This study, however, shows that the manner with which CCIC leadership power and authority is exercised is not entirely always Biblical, it also advances the merit of the seniority or the status the leaders hold in the church.

In contrast, in a broader sense and a context that is much more familiar to the local-born, leadership can be perceived not merely as "power," but also as "position" (i.e., the role), as "process" (i.e., the influencing mechanism), and as "person" (i.e., the virtues and character of the leader) (Jackson & Parry, 2011). With this frame of reference, key leaders can maintain their power not so much for the purpose of holding onto the positional authority, but instead deriving the spiritual one that is based on the calling from the Lord. In addition, leadership influence can be distributed through delegation and the inspiration of the leaders' character. In such a conception, leaders do not instruct the followers: "You do it," but rather invite them: "Let's do it." This practice of leadership enables the followers to be a part of the bigger movement for the Kingdom's sake. But most importantly, no leaders know of all the solutions. By leveraging CBCC who are more specialized in areas that the leaders are short in knowledge and expertise, greater influence can be exercised and goals can get accomplished better through the process of inclusion. Even if the followers are not experts, a deeper level of engagement would impress upon them that they are valued, and in so doing, the development of younger leaders can emerge. Yet very often, local-born register concerns over being perceived as "children" and not given opportunities to participate in the leadership of CCIC in a meaningful way to encourage growth and accountability. In this regard, they continue to experience as the second-stringer, being labeled as the perennial 'never-ready'



generation, rather than being developed to become the ‘get-ready’ emerging leaders.

In countering the power differential that is inherent in CCIC, the first-generational leadership may want to engage in examining if they merely have authority and power in their position but in effect lost its influence on the local-born. Furthermore, they are encouraged to embrace a leadership stance that is inclusionary, engaging, respectful, trusting, and empowering. Leaders may also want to consider not always exercising power that is associated with leadership position but lowering the power differential such that the two generations can be knitted closer to one another. Jesus, as the Servant-King, is a perfect paragon to emulate: humility, service-centric, and valuing the little ones who come to Him. With Christ, the Chief Shepherd, as the mimetic foundation, immigrant church leaders could consider embracing such a servant-leadership stance.

To accomplish this, a paradigmatic shift in four dimensions in the leadership approach and a systemic transformation of ministerial practices is needed in CCIC’s culture if we are to ensure the ongoing participation of the local born in a nurturing and partnership footing. The first dimension is related to the leadership language and stance by eliminating habits of citing experience and seniority as the merit to lead or using a heavy-handed top-down language in exchanges with CBCC. The second one promotes a practice of boundary management in rejection of micromanagement such that clear guidance on scope and parameters can be given within which delegated authority can be exercised by CBCC. The third dimension speaks to a clear and open communication process that engages input from CBCC such that deeper ownership of ministry can be created. The last dimension addresses the development of leaders of CBCC, not looking upon them as the young and inexperienced

“never-ready generation,” but giving them the front row seats to learn, observe, grow, and to become the “get-ready” leaders as the development process intends.

## 8. From being “stuck in the middle” to “reigniting the vision”

*Reigniting the CCIC’s vision to (1) incorporate the input of the local born and; (2) to increase the share of ownership of the local-born through practices of inter-generational ministry for the sake of God’s kingdom and a holistic world mission.*

In a study of congregational changes across the U.S., Ammerman (1997) remarks that when confronted by unprecedented and disruptive social, economic, demographic, and religious forces, congregational communities that thrive with vitality and capabilities to adjust are those that tend to expand both entrepreneurial and adaptive energy to meet the demand of their vision, values, missions, and identity (pp. 346-349). Conversely, those that resist, or fail to make, the necessary changes and maintain the status quo are likely to face a slow decline and “disappear from the scene.” For them, “death (of the community) is an inevitable part of the (congregational) life cycle” (p. 345). Ammerman’s observation is no different from the sage admonition from the Proverbs: “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (KJV, 29:18). As to how critical a vision plays in the well-being of CCIC, Wong (2015) concludes in one of his findings that an absence of a vision and foresight that excites and inspires the local-born not only thwarts their growth and maturity, it forces them to exit CCIC altogether in search of more open and aligned mind-sharing congregational communities to live out their own conviction of vision and identity (p. 534).

This research’s findings indicate that one of the concerns raised by the participants, in particular LA, is related to the refusal

of CCIC to engage with CBCC in enlarging the church's vision to address their yearning for a higher degree of independence in the ministry direction that is likely to include an appetite for an inclusive multicultural orientation. Furthermore, CBCC desire to make a difference to the world and contribute to causes they care about, and they want the institutions they associate with to support their ideals and unleash their passion. They tend to be inspired by a focus that engages their faith in the public arena, helping the less fortunate and the marginalized, addressing social injustice in addition to evangelism and global mission participation. Many in the LA group explicitly identify the lack of an inclusive vision as the centrifugal force for their contemplation and actions to exit CCIC, as they conclude that association with an institution that does not have the same mindshare is vacuous. The purpose of church's vision is to project the future state of the community's corporate life, and it is to be articulated in a faithful manner with its best understanding of God's intention for the congregation as a whole in this time and place going forward (Ammerman et al., 1998). For CBCC to fulfil that purpose of what they believe God has called them to be and to do, their aspiration needs to be heeded and heard. Despite their coming of age and professional achievements as executives or middle management, many CBCC continue to be considered as inexperienced and at times chafed at as callow when it comes to church ministry. The refusal to entertain input from CBCC about the future direction signals to them that CCIC continue to favour the resistance to challenge the status quo of the current ministry orientation at the expense of seeking innovation and transformation that is necessarily inclusive of CBCC's yearning for maturity, autonomy, and growth. Under the circumstances, the church as a whole as experienced by the local-born can be perceived to be lethargic, lacking a sense of urgency or readiness to stay in front of the societal, cultural, and congregational changes that are impacting

both first-generation and their children; and to capitalize outreaching opportunities to communities beyond CCIC. With that in mind, though some CBCC resign to accept the notion that the church is "stuck in the middle," others deliberate departure from CCIC.

The learning from this study is that if CCIC are to strive for a thriving intergenerational ministry for years to come, a broadening of their vision that places equal priority on the CBCC input needs to be ignited in order to generate and enhance faith and ministerial ownership. CCIC must recognize that though language and ethnic biases could be a barrier, a vision of a church in the Canadian context needs to be dynamic and versatile enough to create an engagement with the mainstream culture under the mandate of the Great Commission (Matt 28). The first-generation immigrants may not be competent in skills to accomplish all the mandate has demanded, but they can offer rich ministerial wisdom, sage guidance, and generous resource support such that CBCC can become more effective in such a pursuit. In addition, both generations need to consider moving the ministry to a level beyond language, culture, and ethnicity in order to shape a community that is rooted in God's kingdom values: a spiritual community of hospitality, forgiveness, truth-telling, gratitude, and fidelity that are reflective of God's redemptive mandate and his character of love, grace, mercy, and justice.

## Conclusion

The landscape of the twenty-first century is dotted with post-modernistic and secularized dynamics such as religious pluralism, conflicts between democracy and ideology, rises of consumerism and liberalism, and advances of social media. These impetuses

collectively form the influential forces that are shaping the societal values and norms in Canada which, in turn, have been affecting directly or indirectly CCIC and their ministry over the last few decades. Christ's church has been facing forces of change throughout the ages, and CCIC are not immune in dealing with challenges and disruptions in their context. Though the guise of change differs from one to another, each influence compels the church to delve deeper into its conviction and reaffirm its faith and core values, sharpen its focus in solidifying its holy and servant identity, and redouble its efforts in remaining faithful to Christ's commandment to love our neighbor and disciple across the street and around the globe. Amidst many challenges CCIC have to tackle, one can argue that nourishing CBCC for healthy growth and maturity is one of the critical mandates the immigrant churches need to examine and execute. To that end, this study has provided insights into the aspiration, frustration, and agony of CBCC along their faith journeys by surfacing key determinants that have come to shape their religious identity and commitment, as well as their affiliation to CCIC. Taken together, the findings of this research and the directional action recommendations can collectively establish a fresh framework in facilitating CCIC and CBCC to chart a new path for engaging a collaborative partnership in ministry for the sake of God's kingdom and His glory.

# Listening to Their Voices

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# 聆聽心聲

(簡短版)

王健安著

彭孫偉譯

2018年7月

世界華人福音事工聯絡中心

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# Listening to Their Voices

## 序

本冊子為 *Listening to the Voices: An exploration of faith journeys of Canadian-born Chinese Christians* 的精簡版本，省略了完整的理論基礎和專家評論、數據檢視、和完整的參考，並以一個鳥瞰的角度將其研究結果和定向議案展現給每一位讀者。因此，本摘要無意取代完整版本的研究內容及其結果。細讀本冊子固然對讀者有幫助，作者仍鼓勵讀者去鑽研完整的版本；因它不但提供了整全的網上問卷調查研究，更將加拿大出生的華人基督徒在信仰歷程上所遇到的喜樂、盼望、抱負、失望、煩惱和絕望等這些豐富的生活經驗中有更深入的分析。無可否認，研究的準確性必須以完整版本為準。

研究小組很感恩有機會能夠為加拿大的華人移民教會作出微小的貢獻，正如詩人完全的信靠：「若不是耶和華建造房屋，建造的人就枉然勞力。」（詩篇 127:1）

# Listening to Their Voices

## 導論

聆聽心聲（LTTV）是一個以「何去何從」的探討作為依據的研究報告，它在加拿大六個城市（包括：卡加利、愛民頓、滿地可、渥太華、多倫多、和溫哥華）內進行，其遍蓋的範圍佔華人人口和加拿大的華人移民教會數目的 87%（Statistics Canada, 2014）。延續由 the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada 所完成的 *Hemorrhaging Faith (HF)* 研究（Penney, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy & Hiemstra 2012），LTTV 採用了 HF 的網上問卷調查和訪問研究工具，再以仔細入微的改良，去探討這些加拿大土生土長的華人信徒（CBCC）在加拿大華人移民教會（CCIC）的處境中成長的心靈經歷。本研究項目的目標是要探索兩類 CBCC 的信仰歷程：一）Stay-On「留守」（即是那些受訪時仍在 CCIC 中聚會的人）；二）Drop-Out「退出」（即是已經跟 CCIC 斷絕了關係的人），並審視有甚麼決定性的影響塑造他們的宗教類別，有那些因素刺激他們與 CCIC 或 / 甚至信仰斷絕關係，或繼續對教會有一種強烈的忠誠及對信仰不離不棄。

為了達到這個目標，本研究項目採用以定性為主導的綜合方法（即是看重定性過於定量的數據為依歸）作為核心審查研究的架構（Morse & Niehaus, 2009）。為此，首先沿著受訪者的敘述加以審查並作出資料分析。藉著他們的宗教取向審查，可以從留守的和退出的受訪者組合中，各自產生出兩個宗教類型的子類別。本研究無意提供特定而精確的界線，宗教類型學一般的作用是澄清那些被研究者的身分及其信仰聯繫的關係（Baker & Smith, 2015; Brewster, 2014; Zuckerman, 27）。與其他眾多的類型學一樣，應用在個體上的範疇，都會因著他們從簡單至複雜的人生經驗而有所重疊。對於宗教類型學的應用來說，本研究項目可以將那些選擇留在 CCIC 中



參與者「留守」的傾向而突顯出來，並有效地將導致那些離開信仰群體的人「退出」的主要因素作出對照。這樣做，這些宗教類型就能夠有效地解釋參與者與 CCIC 的關連和他們對信仰投入之間的聯繫。

在「留守」這個類別當中，可以將宗教類型區分成兩部分：Highly Engaged 「高度參與」(HE) 和 Less Affiliated 「較少歸依」(LA)。實質上，HE 作為一個群體，對教會有強烈的認同、承諾成為擁護者、並明確地表示願意把握機會參與由第一代領袖所認同和贊助的領袖培訓，以便促進他們在信仰上成長。另一方面，LA 表示他們跟教會群體和移民的上一代經已脫離，並指出許多不健康或令人沮喪的經歷。還有，這一組人認為眾多 CCIC 的領導力在功能上失效，導致他們在信仰和抱負上未能增進而感到憤怒。他們本來可以是一群委身的基督徒，卻因為附屬於自己的群體而感到煩惱。在這群體中，在受訪時有超過半數曾經想過，或已經採取行動要離開 CCIC。因此，LA 與 HE 的分別是在於前者對 CCIC 的委身比後者更弱，在某程度上削弱了他們的信仰。

至於「退出」這個類別中，同樣地有兩種宗教類型的子類別出現：屬靈上的 'Nones' 「沒有」和 'Dones' 「終結」(SND) 以及不知論和無神論者 (A&A)。那些 SND 承認自己並沒有放棄信仰，但因為某些因素，大部分人對所屬的教會和出席產生了敵意，更宣告與教會這個機構並沒有任何關係（因此是「沒有」，就是那些在接受問卷和受訪時表示，按照 Kenneson (2015) 的觀察：「他們的宗教關連是填上『沒有』」，）或是與 CCIC 斷絕關係，（因此「終結」是指那些已經對教會受夠了，按照 Packard & Hope (2015) 的理解，他們與教會再沒有任何關係）。另一方面，A&A 似乎已經完全拋棄了他們的信仰，不再稱

自己為基督徒，就正如他們大多數都否定神的存在，唯獨只有一人稱自己為不知論者。作為背教者，他們認為信仰和科學是零和博弈，神根本與他們的智能並不相容，所屬的教會更與他們無關。特別是，有部分人更將同性戀的議題作為離開信仰和教會的導火線。

在受訪者的生命經歷分析結果中，所得到的四種宗教類型（即：HE，LA，SND，和 A&A），也同樣地可以從網上調查的一系列問題中，找出相關的綜合類型，包括：一）聚會人數；二）對基本信念所持信服的強弱；三）屬靈上的實踐；四）與教會的聯繫。對於利用這些宗教類型所作出的網上調查研究結果，不單提供了一個對受訪者回答問題時的情緒俯瞰圖，還能夠將每個宗教類型與這些問題之間的關連作出探討。例如，其中有一網上調查的問題是：「你能否在宣教旅程中活出信仰？」便得到以下的答案：27% HE 答「有」；而 LA 佔 23%；SND 4%；A&A 8%，這代表宣教旅程對於那些「留守」比「退出」的影響力更大。這分析會幫助和引導我們明白參與宣教旅程和更深的信仰之間有沒有任何關連。若要知道有關宗教類型和受訪者在網上調查的回應所作出的全部分析，建議讀者參閱本文的完整版本。

在本研究項目有 739 人參與網上問卷調查，當中有 554 名受訪者表示他們是出生於加拿大的華人基督徒。按照宗教類型可以將他們分為：HE，209 人；LA，208 人；SND，75 人；以及 A&A，62 人。另外，有 37 名接受面談的人，他們的宗教類型可以分為：HE，10 人；LA，9 人；SND，9 人；以及 A&A，9 人。有關這四種宗教類型的研究結果將會在下一個部分作出概述。

# 研究分析與發現 (Analysis and Findings)

從網上調查的分析和面談受訪者的回應，本研究發現有八種不同的決定因素來塑造他們是屬於那一種宗教類型，而在每一種類型中又各自有兩種突出的影響。這八種決定因素與其相關的宗教類型分別是：Mentoring Experience (HE) 「友師經歷」；Vibrant and Authentic Community (HE) 「動力真誠群體」；Dysfunctional Leadership (LA) 「失效的領導」；Unhealthy Culture (LA) 「不健康的文化」；Life Transition (SND) 「生命期的交接」；Conundrum of Romance (SND) 「戀愛的困惑」；the idea of God (A&A) 「對神的概念」；和 Sexuality and Sexual Orientation (A&A) 「性和性取向」。此外，還有兩個變數合併在研究分析之內：「在特別聚會中經歷神」，及「家長的影響」。這報告包括這兩個變數在內，並不是為了區分它們與某種宗教類型具有的相關性（正如往後將會作出解釋，它們未能將獨有的宗教類型影響，清楚地表達出來），乃是因為它們在 CCIC 中與 CBCC 存在著獨有的關係。為了對這些變數提供一個高層次的概覽，列表（一）把所有宗教類型的決定因素影響展示出來。本章其餘的部分將會對這些決定因素的分析作出總結，並會把被訪者的真實身分替換為假名，從而保障他們的私隱。

列表（一）：宗教類型的決定因素綜覽

| 重要主題   | HE               | LA                              | SND                         | A&A                       |
|--------|------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 友師經歷   | 非常主動，正面和健康（決定因素） | 有但少注意到                          | 正面但不一定                      | 負面而有敵意                    |
| 動力真誠教會 | 明顯地有良好的歸屬感（決定因素） | 不健康和被邊緣化                        | 不存在的聯繫；不足夠的支持               | 實質上沒有                     |
| 領導     | 正面但不明顯           | 太多階級又沒有功效；沒有明確的異象和相關的教導（決定因素）   | 預備不足；失去興趣和政治化               | 不能勝任                      |
| 文化     | 支持但不明顯           | 非常不健康，許多衝突，政治化，假冒為善和「小圈子」（決定因素） | 不支持又批判性                     | 倒退和遠離                     |
| 生命期的交接 | 得到 CCIC 的支持      | CCIC 不會參與                       | 在生命不同的階段中迷失了過渡；不聯繫的教會（決定因素） | 較少留意並在大學的科學爭論上失去了過渡       |
| 戀愛的困惑  | 不明顯              | 破碎關係的經驗但得到 CCIC 的幫助             | 與信仰群體折斷和斷絕關係（決定因素）          | 沒有是個因素                    |
| 複雜智能   | 沒有               | 不明顯                             | 沒有                          | 信仰與科學是一個零和博弈（決定因素）        |
| 性與性取向  | 沒有相關教導           | 沒有相關教導                          | 沒有相關教導                      | 教學是對立的，也是一個消除信仰的新原素（決定因素） |

| 特別聚會<br>經歷神 | 在聚會和短宣<br>中經歷到         | 有經歷並且頗積<br>極參與短宣 | 在聚會和短宣<br>中的經歷參差 | 幾乎沒有 |
|-------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------|------|
| 家長的<br>影響   | 由弱到稍為<br>強，但不是決<br>定因素 | 弱到負面             | 弱到負面             | 弱到負面 |

## 友師經歷 (Mentoring Experience)

眾多研究指出，一個好的榜樣、一位友師、一個權威的人、或一個有興趣去關心年青信徒的人，是會對他們信仰關係的塑造和持續作出正面的影響 (Abo-Zena & Ahmed, 2014; Bowen, 2010; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Dean, 2010; Erickson, 1992; Lanker, 2009, 2012; Magyab-Russell, Deal & Brown, 2014; Martinson, 2004; Parks, 2011; Pearce and Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012; Powell & Clark, 2011; Reimer & Wilkinson (with Penner), 2015; Smith (with Longest), 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Longest, Hill & Christoffersen, 2014)。雖然友師經歷在 CBCC 中產生許多共鳴，唯獨 HE 對這經歷的結連有極大的迴響，就是使他們想起與友師一起培育屬靈旅程中能夠留下深刻的印記。不足為奇，HE 認為友師關係可以對信仰有正面的肯定，又能夠與 CCIC 建立密切的聯繫。有了友師，CBCC 便能得到鼓勵去成長；身心靈得到照顧；甚至在信仰上獲得肯定。友師關係並不需要正規地建立，正如許多 HE 指出，只要一個成熟的成年人在一個非正式的框架中，無論是好與壞的景況，去陪伴著一個較年輕的人一起走過信仰的旅程便可以建立友師關係。對於那些在生命中曾經透過較強的友師結連而被培育的人來說，任何與友師關係上的瓦解或是它突然的失，將會造成屬靈導引上的損失，甚至有可能令他們離開信仰群體。

對於那些從友師得到恩慈協助的 CBCC 來說，卓越的友師經歷

給他們帶來一些顯著的標誌。第一，友師們都很親切、平易近人、甚至經常主動參與。第二，友師們願意耐心地聆聽，也不論斷，反而提供明智的建議。第三，友師們都非常開放和透明，不但展現軟弱的一面，也願意接受 reverse-mentoring「反向指導」。最後，友師們都願意「道成肉身」，在時間、能力、和金錢上為下一代作出投資和犧牲。

## 動力而真誠的教會 (Vibrant and Authentic Community)

另一個較為突出的決定因素，能夠正面地影響著年青宗教信徒的信心歷程的成長和靈命進深的地方，就是與他們的信仰群體有積極的結連 (Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Penner et al. 2012)。在這種契合之中，可以幫助他們對教會培育出強烈的歸屬感。對於 CBCC 來說，經歷了歸屬感不單反映出 CCIC 是一個族裔的社群，更重要的是，它是一個可以經歷喜樂和靈命成長、構成和鍛造身分、建立和鞏固關係、承擔困苦和傷痛、以及在信仰路途上與同伴互相激勵的地方。然而，教會的經歷可以是一把兩刃利劍。雖然教會經歷對 CBCC 的發展有正面的影響，也促進 HE 對信仰和 CCIC 可以保持聯繫，但相對的負面經歷卻令屬於 LA, SND, 和 A&A 的 CBCC 對自己的身分和信仰的肯定完全脫離和感到不安。尤其是 LA 這個組別，他們所反對的不健康文化，是源於對 CCIC 的領袖們的不滿和會眾之間的衝突；而非來自 CCIC 的英語群體內所得到的支持和友誼。因此 LA 和 SND 的經歷與 A&A 的非常一致，有三分之二的被訪者指出有負面的經歷。雖然大部分 CBCC 認為，他們在所屬的、或曾經所屬的 CCIC 的信仰經歷，曾對他們的信仰塑造出正面或負面影響，但是 HE 這個組別對 CCIC 這個充滿活力的信仰群體，表現出強烈的認同，能夠在他們屬靈生命的塑造上留下正面的印記。

對於 CBCC 來說，一個充滿動力和真誠的屬靈群體會有三個重

要的屬性。首先，一個真誠的教會在本質上可以反映出互相接納、彼此支持和極高透明度。另外，一個充滿動力的屬靈群體不單能夠使人產生歸屬感，還可以擴大對會眾和新來賓的開放和接納。最後，一個真誠的信仰群體是能夠藉著友誼和聯繫，在會眾之中造成鞏固的關係。

## 失效的領導 (Dysfunctional Leadership)

基督教的教會與世俗的機構不同。它是不會採用領袖的自我利益、市場價值、或人的智慧來制定異象和使命。相反地，它要尋求以聖經價值為主的屬靈導引，和以屬靈信念上的實踐為依歸。為此，一個信仰群體的生命力，是取決於他們的領導階層如何以屬靈的價值觀和呼召來建立它的願景，以符合這些價值觀的方式激勵跟隨者，並用聖靈的指引和個人的榜樣來達到事工目標 (Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley & McKinney, 1998; Wong, 2015)。至於 CCIC 的領導模式因涉及第一代領袖（傳道、牧師和平信徒領袖）的族裔文化風格而變得複雜，結果造成領袖與 CBCC 之間產生衝突。在這研究項目中，有部分 HE 組別中的人肯定了移民教會領袖的價值，就是給予在這裏出生的人帶來智慧與祝福。然而，使這種情緒黯然失色的是，有許多 CBCC 在其他組別分享到一些令人反感的經驗。特別是那些仍然留在移民教會中的 LA，或是因為各種原因已經離開的 SND 和 A&A。他們所談論到的，是他們長大的教會停滯不前、滿有混亂、虛偽、和權力鬥爭。根據受訪者的觀點，領袖們都傾向戴上面具，對年輕一代的承諾是虛假的，甚至聖工的實踐都具有不真實性和沒有真誠。還有，帶有中國文化的領導力被認為與西方的領導風格有所衝突，西方的領導傾向於開放、民主和參與，是本地出生的人在學校和職場中熟悉的經歷。因此，對於那些在 LA、SND 和 A&A 組別內的 CBCC 來說，CCIC 內的華人領導力是失效的。

然而，與其他組別相比之下，LA 與 CCIC 之間所存在的情感距離關係是充滿著強烈的敵意情緒。對於這些 LA，有兩個轉捩點使那些在受訪時的 CBCC 正考慮選擇，或已採取行動離開他們所屬的 CCIC：失效的領導力和不健康的教會文化。對於他們來說，失效的領導力反映出 CCIC 的兩套特質：一）階層觀念、權力集中、和將本地出生者視為下群；二）在異象方面有欠缺或衝突。

## 不健康的文化 (Unhealthy Culture)

對於任何團體而言，充滿活力和賦予生命的文化都會帶來團體生機。然而，不健康的文化卻反映了組織上的守舊思想甚至它的瓦解，以及成員的行為跟原本寫下來的良好價值觀出現錯位。與其他組織相比，信仰群體也不例外。教會文化是建立在可持續發展的屬靈價值上，這價值是植根於聖經的教導；而基督耶穌的犧牲榜樣則能夠產生一間有凝聚力、熱情、關愛、和成長的教會。相比之下，當教會充滿內部衝突和濫用權力等有害的文化時，便會引發會眾分離 (Mammana-Lupo, Nathan, Todd & Houston, 2014, p.113)

在本研究的眾多受訪者中，尤其是 LA 這個組別，跟他們有關連的 CCIC 文化可以被賦予「不健康」或「虛弱」的特色。簡單來說，一間屬靈不健康的教會是一間不能反映神聖的價值觀和願景的信仰群體。對於 LA 來說，以下四項指標描繪出 CCIC 的不健康教會文化：一）政治遊戲；二）不相關的教導；三）假仁假義；四）衝突。

## 生命期的交接 (Life Transition)

許多研究強調，當生命期的交接出現時，便會引動那些在宗教熏陶



下成長的人與他們的宗教信仰及宗教群體斷絕關係（Bowen, 2010; Francis & Richter, 2007; Penner et al., 2012; Thiessen, 2015）。在這項研究中，已經離開教會的人（即 SND 和 A&A）清楚表示這些交接對他們有負面的衝擊和影響，然而它在「留守」組別（即 HE 和 LA）中並沒有敘述。有許多接受訪問的 A&A 表示，在他們成長過程中有某些因素令他們放棄對上帝的信仰。但根據 SND 的敘述，人生不同階段的轉變便成為信仰旅程中一個既明顯而突出的影響和主要變數。從高中到大學、以及從大學到職場的模稜兩可之間，SND 發現自己在生活和信仰方面處於前所未有的疑惑當中，包括地域的變化和生活的優先次序；塑造易變的身分；與其他信仰群體和朋友建立新的（或重建舊的）關係；滿足極大的學業要求；以及在學校和職業生涯中能夠調整和超越那些令人望而生畏的期望。儘管 HE 和 LA 所分享的經歷相近，唯獨生命的交接清楚地塑造了 SND 與教會斷絕關係的決定。最顯著的原因 SND 不去教會就是生活中的優先次序不斷地轉變，就如 Esther 所說：「但我認為，因為我現正的生活非常不同，又如此繁忙，所以我沒有將它（教會）放在首位。我亦沒有 … 找到時間去（教會）」。從 SND 的對話內容來看，優先次序上的改變在這個組別有多種背後的因素；本研究項目發現下列有關生命交接的廣泛原因：一）自然的成長過程；二）職業上的適應；三）關係上的缺欠；四）以成本效益去更換教會的位置。

### 戀愛的困惑（Conundrum of Romance）

第二個決定因素的出現在 SND 的信仰旅程中是顯而易見的，這與細緻入微的戀愛經驗促成他們對信仰群體脫離關係有關。我們可以想像，戀愛關係是年青人身分和屬靈發展的重要來源，伴侶之間的親密能夠加強他們的共同價值、人生願望、和信仰（Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll & Badger, 2009）。

作為一個屬靈和族裔社交中心，CCIC 便成為戀愛關係發芽生長的地方。還有，大學校園也是一個開放的環境，使學生參與社交，甚至談戀愛（Freitas, 2008）。一個健康的戀愛關係通常會達到終生的承諾，而它的破裂卻帶來身分的毀壞、憤怒、和情感上的動盪（Barber, 2016; Fisher, 2016）。這不安的經歷實際上可能導致一個人對其宗教信仰和承諾出現掙扎，甚至抱怨或指責上帝為何不把這段戀情成事。為此，對 SND 組別中的許多人來說，其中一個離開教會的重要經歷，就是一個破碎的戀愛關係，或是與一個不參與教會（或羅馬天主教教徒）結婚或同居而造成的。總括來說，戀愛關係需要情感上的承諾，當 CBCC 經歷它的破裂或他們與非基督徒伴侶建立新的關係，都會使他們的價值觀和屬靈的立場改變。對於前者，當經歷過破碎的關係而要經常與屬靈群體走在一起並不容易。有兩個原因：前度戀愛對象的出現使投入教會感到困難或尷尬；因著分裂而導致的失敗和羞辱的感覺，迫使他們離開教會。至於後者，不與教會聯繫的原因，是因為參與者可能會因為他們所選擇的伴侶是非基督徒而被誣衊，這做法在 CCIC 被視為忌諱。此外，隨著時間流逝，基督徒與非基督徒（或天主教徒）的生活價值觀和優先次序也將會不能避免地產生變化，配偶之間的一套共同信仰實踐便很難建立起來。不管這二者如何，戀愛關係的影響如此之大，以致有半數的 SND 對此經驗感到悲觀，不但切斷了他們與信仰群體的關連，更改變了他們的信仰歷程。

### 日益複雜的理性表現（Rising Intellectual Complexity）

有研究發現，從前對信仰不離不棄的人，如今放棄相信神的存在有若干原因。其中一個最重要的是基於科學和經驗推理的有神論和輯思維之間的認知並不一致。（Baker & Smith, 2015; Francis & Richter, 2007; Kinnaman, 2011; Thiessen, 2015）。從邏輯的途徑去離開信仰一般是漸進式的，因為隨著時間推移，變節者會產生

一種懷疑感和一定程度的理性複雜性來挑戰他們的信仰。

(Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997; Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Galen, 2014; Hunsberger, Alisat, Pancer & Pratt, 1996; Hunsberger & Brown 1984; Hunsberger, Pratt & Pancer, 2002)。大部分的 CBCC A&A

都是典型本地出生成長的基督徒，被局限於慣性地去參加父母所要求的教會活動。有部分 A&A 在青少年時期曾經接受信仰，並表現出對基督教信仰和紀律有強烈的支持，例如屬靈操練和投入教會的事工。與此同時，這個組別也受到非宗教的影響。在過往幾十年當中，主導西方思想的世俗主義，促進了多元化的議題，這些議題已經滲透到學術課程和社交媒體等多種文化環境中。進化論、宗教多樣性、道德相對主義、反傳統的性傾向、反制度和反權威都是這項研究的參與者和受訪者在成長過程被灌輸的教育和影響的一些例子 (Wong, 2016)。縱使在成長過程中遇到正面的宗教影響，在 A&A 組別中的 CBCC 最終選擇放棄他們對上帝的信仰。事實上，在 A&A 組別中的八位受訪者中，有六位表示他們離開信仰和教會群體的原因是因為他們的不信。在這些敘述當中，他們放棄信仰的原因有兩個：科學和信仰是一個零和遊戲；以及 CCIC 對懷疑、信仰和科學的回應不足和不一致。很多 A&A 對 CCIC 在科學和疑問上避而遠之和邊緣化而感到沮喪，因此他們放棄了信仰，而選擇從非宗教的資源去尋找答案，來滿足他們對理性的要求。

## 性與性取向 (Sexuality and Sexual Orientation)

性是青少年在成長過程中及渡過青春期中不可避免的挑戰 (Booth, Crouter & Snyder, 2016)。然而，研究指出，年輕的基督徒認為教會在處理性的課題，是過分地簡化，並沒有與時並進 (Kinnaman, 2011; Penner et al., 2012)。另外，當青少年準備過渡到大學時，家長並沒有把重點放在性的課題、愛情、和戀愛這些範圍之內 (Freitas, 2008)。作為一個結合了會眾、牧者、領袖和家長的信

仰群體，教會似乎在解決和填補有關性和性取向的問題上有很大的嫌隙。CCIC 在這方面也不例外。對所有宗教類型，性和性取向的問題一直困擾著 CBCC，尤其他們對 CCIC 的解決方法感到煩惱，是反映出 CCIC 未能並相關地處理當今更廣泛問題的一個困惑象徵。植根於保守的福音派教義和中國文化，大多數（如果不是全部）CCIC 均持有聖經對婚姻和性的傳統看法。對他們來說，婚姻是約束丈夫和妻子關係的神聖制度，性行為只能在婚姻盟約內成為合法和支持。在屬乎聖經配偶框架外的任何性活動都將會被譴責，並且被標記為有罪。然而，在這個促進性自由的世俗文化中長大、並受到他們追隨的明星或流行歌手的影響（例如：Ariana Grande, Katy Parry, Justin Bieber 等），CBCC 發現自己在忠誠和純潔中的道上，與性的誘惑進行一場艱苦的戰鬥，而當中只得到 CCIC 少許的幫助。然而，本研究分析指出，CBCC 的信仰堅持程度與傳統的性觀念是對應的，亦與主流的保守派和福音派達致共識，尤其在接受同性戀、具同性戀傾向的領袖、和同性婚姻合法化方面（HE 較為保守、A&A 是最不保守）。此外，「留守」組別比較傾向同意及接納教會領導層性別平等，並且因為他們是最接近福音派的觀點，所以拒絕同性婚姻。相反，「退出」組別雖然與「留守」組別一樣，對領導層性別平等有相同的接納，但 A&A 對同性婚姻卻採取自由開放的態度。事實上，許多 A&A 是支持同性戀的，其中有兩人更宣告自己是同性戀者；對於這個組別來說，這種立場已經成為放棄信仰的催化劑。

CBCC 的信仰經歷，與 CCIC 在性與性取向的事情上（即是：CBCC 對性別平等的開放，以及宗教類型如何接受或拒絕同性婚姻，並大多數的 A&A 如何將同性戀的問題作為離開信仰的原因）可以從三方面作理解：一）CCIC 視「性」為禁忌，並將它淡化；二）保守的中國文化令致性教育割讓給學校處理；三）處理同性戀的敵對態度而導致離開信仰。這些因素合併成為 A&A 放棄了與他們一起成長的信仰。

## 在特別的聚會中經歷神 (Experiencing God at Special Event)

有許多研究指出，在特別的屬靈聚會，例如令會、退修會、和短期宣教，參與者對神的同在有更高程度的感受 (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012; Reimer & Wilkinson (with Penner), 2015)。普遍來說，一

個人與神有正面的經歷，是跟他在信仰群體中有積極的參與和對宗教有維繫有關 (Penner et al., 2012)。為此，本研究是要探討，

**CBCC** 參與以上的聚會如何符合他們對信念的堅持。特別的是，它包括了對安省組別訪問者的研究，嘗試了解他們的信仰如何在參與 Teens' Conference 青少年春令會而被塑造。青少年春令會是由加拿大使者協會，在每年的春季假期（一般是三月份）為高中生而舉辦的兩日活動。

對於 CBCC 來說，參加聚會或退修營能夠使 HE 和 SND 這兩個組別的人經歷神較多，LA 組別較少，而 A&A 則完全沒有。在 SND 這個組別中，他們雖然在特別聚會中經歷神的同在，仍是不足夠產生持續影響，使他們成長後留在教會。因此，出席這些特別聚會，在某方面產生肯定的影響，但這經歷不能成為一個區別宗教歸依的決定因素，讓正面的聚會經歷成為他們信仰的基礎。

跟參加聚會和退修會的人相同，青少年春令會的經歷，對那些安省參加者而言，並不能使「留守」一族覺得這是一個使他們與 CCIC 連結，以及在他們的信仰上成為一個強而有力的獨特影響因素。另一方面，參與者聚會對「退出」組別來說，並沒有表現它強烈的影響力，而播下了他們離開教會（甚至信仰）的種子。簡單來說，出席青少年春令會確實使部分參與者的成長有一定程度的影響，但它沒有將他們對信仰的聯繫作出任何區別上的對應。

就這次以 CBCC 所做的研究，他們大部分沒有在短期宣教事工

有參與。但至於曾經參與過短宣的 CBCC（其中 HE、LA 和 SND 組別內有些人有正面的影響），短宣的經歷並沒有在增加信仰的粘性上，提供直接或獨有的相關性。然而，儘管效果可能小，但短宣參與的影響在「留守」組別整體上比「退出」組別更加明顯和突出，這也解釋到 HE 和 LA 參與者的信仰粘性上比其他人更高。

作為一個對 CBCC 一個正面及負面影響的綜合變數，特別聚會的參與，如令會、退修會、青少年春令會、甚至短期宣教去經歷神，並未能對今次接受研究的 CBCC 提供清晰和一致的相關性；這對神的經歷，沒有對任何一個組別，在塑造特定的宗教類型中，有明確的分辨影響。

## 家長的影響 (Parental Influences)

父母對子女宗教信仰上的影響，被廣泛認為是去了解年輕一代對信仰參與的最重要因素之一 (Myers, 1996)。父母的虔誠已被確認為青少年決定保留其信仰的關鍵因素 (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012; Smith (with Longest), 2009)。另一方面，父母的虛偽亦被視為兒童背棄信仰的主要原因 (Zuckerman, 2012)。

然而，對在本研究的 CBCC 來說，父母的影響在他們的信仰聯繫上有三個因素：一）家庭崇拜的實踐；二）父母是基督徒；三）父母的明確影響，是指向一個不大肯定的方向，因為它未能統一或一致地在跨宗教類型上有顯著的相關變數。一般來說，某些 CBCC 的家長藉著參與事工上，對兒女確實有一些影響力。可是，家長參與事工本身並不一定會對子女在信仰成長上，產生任何的影響。特別是，在「退出」組別中有些人表示，他們的父母是教會中的教牧、執事、或領袖。雖然處在這些職份或位置的領袖們，在正常理解下，可以使他們的子女對信仰有更深的堅持，但那些已經「退出」



## 範式轉變：定向行動建議

### (A Paradigm Shift: Directional Action Recommendations)

為了回應 CBCC 坦率的意願和不滿，以及他們對信仰和 CCIC 聯繫的決定因素，並推翻 CBCC 偏離信仰的趨勢，CCIC 需要在事工範式和實踐上作出「地震式」的轉變。為此，本章確定了八項定向行動建議，來鞏固 CCIC 及在其他各方已經完成的工作，並改善 CBCC 的擔憂，從而加深他們對信仰的持守。同時，必須確認每個教會事工在情境和位置上都是獨特和與眾不同的。這些建議的意向是廣泛的，而不是「一刀切」的答案，也不是一套「即插即用」的快速修復，或一套詳細的實施方案。相反，它們作為 CCIC 在個體上和集體上提供的一個框架，是要協助 CCIC 檢查其各項事工的現況，以及在那方面應作出轉型。

轉型不是容易的事，也不是一條清晰的道路。若要將這些行動建議轉化為 CCIC 在事工上要採取的措施，信仰群體便需要有一個謙卑的立場、要以禱告的態度行事、願意跟群體內的利益相關者有參與和開放式的對話、並要銳意聆聽他們。只有這樣，CCIC 才能為上下兩代產生一個有凝聚力的宏觀和明確的使命，以致能夠克服障礙和其他影響的力量，為神的國度和榮耀向前邁進。最後，這些建議是對 CCIC 和 CBCC 的第一、第二、和下一代的領袖及平信徒發出採取行動的號角聲響，以便在互相尊重和問責的情況下作出交流，去解決這個流失的現象。當 CCIC 這樣做的時候，他們可能認識到，需要制定一種以謙卑和尊重為特點的新里程，並以跨代的合作為標誌；這不僅反映了本地移民教會優先的事項，也同時彰顯一個超越國家與民族界線上帝國度廣泛的利益。

的受訪者在實際上，會按照他們的宗教類型而另有相反的意見。對於這項研究，父母的宗教信仰充其量只能作為 CBCC 的「中性媒介」，既沒有促進「留守」的組別與教會保持聯繫，也沒有阻止「退出」的人與他們的信仰脫離關係。

### 總結

對那些 CBCC 處身於 CCIC 中，透過信仰歷程的決定因素所作出的研究結果分析，指出了一個重要的方向：任何將要採取的行動，都需要對這些因素進行探索 and 了解，以及它們如何在 CCIC 中各自表現出來。此外，研究結果顯示，CCIC 在滿足 CBCC 的需求和防止年輕一代進一步流失方面，指出了要面對的挑戰和機遇。下一章將會提供一套八項「定向行動建議」給 CCIC，以研究的結果作出全面處理。

## 1. 從「餃子」到耶穌 (From “Jiaozi” to Jesus)

增強以福音為中心的宣講及教導，去處理信仰、召命、身分、教會、文化和價值觀

在一間以華人會眾為事工權力為主導的教會下成長的 CBCC 來說，他們因為教會內的文化差異而在信仰和族裔的實踐中感到混淆。此外，本研究項目清楚地指出，CCIC 在福音信息的教導中有文化上的偏好。這種偏見的表現可以從聖經中這個段落：「聽從父母，這是理所當然的」（弗 6:1）看到；是一種以「家長主義」的語調作教導，並以「父權」的方式來行事，是典型的中國文化。儘管並沒有意圖去「壓服」本地出生的人，但這種信息往往被視為傳統的硬性規定，完全沒有任何討論的空間和創意。年輕一代渴望跟從耶穌，他們渴望追求有關耶穌是誰，和他代表著甚麼的教導，可以從他們渴求的聲音看到：「不要給我『餃子』，只給我耶穌」。

為此，鼓勵 CCIC 把她的教導植根於神的話，並敏銳地靠著聖靈去引導我們以 CBCC 的景況來解釋祂的話。眾教會必須抓緊這個概念：耶穌，即以福音為中心的教導，是本地出生者他們「混合身分」（即加拿大華人）和信仰建構的核心。福音是價值觀和真理的裁決者。因此，以福音為主的信息和教導將可以告知、改革、轉化、和創造文化（Carson, 2008; Crouch, 2008; Kim, 2017; Kraft, 2005; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978; Newbiggin, 1986; Niebuhr, 1951; Platt, 2015）。CBCC 在本研究中清楚地表明，他們非常渴求以福音為主的信息：只將耶穌給他們。

## 2. 從歸屬到成為門徒 (From belonging to being discipled)

開展及實施一套進取但基於聖經、可以接受冒險並能塑造終身奉獻的門徒訓練原則和實踐。

正如本研究所闡明的，「留守」組別中的 HE 對 CCIC 是有深厚的認同感，並抓緊對信仰的委身。其中一個對教會有緊密聯繫的原因，就是這些研究參與者在信仰群體中所建立的友誼。這關係產生了一種健全的屬靈團契和社交聯結，又能夠提高教會內的同質性和聯繫（Wong, 2015）。毫不意外的是，對歸屬感有強烈的承認，是這個群體的關鍵標誌之一。與此同時，破碎的關係，不論是朋友還是戀愛之間，確實導致 CBCC 與他們教會脫離關係的機會提高，就正如 SND 組別所表明的那樣。這問題的部分原因在於，CBCC 將人際關係（而不是神聖關係）放在首位；教會只是一個建立和維持和睦的地方而已。當這種關係不能再守著或破裂時，他與教會的聯繫不再是「粘性」的，尤其教會是在一個將榮辱突出的地方，可能因為關係上的失敗而皺眉。

有一個雙重的行動可以解決這個問題。首先，需要明確地表達一個教會性的關係價值觀，這關係並非建立在「小圈子」、家族、新來賓、或者社會背景，乃是與神建立。第二部分是通過對聖經跟隨者如何構成所作的解釋。雖然神呼召教會和信徒去「使萬民作祂的門徒」，但信徒必須首先成為門徒。在這種情況下，可以提出一個論點，門徒不是被造（"made"），而是煉造的（"forged"）。他首先要順服神的呼召和致力忠於神的國，然後發展和操練屬靈生命（如禱告和敬拜），便會有更深的承諾去跟從神。只有這樣，門徒才能激勵其他人加入旅程。畢生屬靈追求的最重要方面並不在於「演出」（"acting out"），而是「烘烤」（"baking in"）。換句話說，門徒訓練的重點是「所是」（"being"）多於「所為」（"doing"），關注於「塑造」（"shaped"）而不是「製造」（"made"）。如果這是對門徒塑造的理解是

可以接受的話，那麼我們只有一個信仰典範去效法和遵循：主基督耶穌祂自己。CCIC 需要重新定位，回到聖經的耶穌那裏，重點關注耶穌生活方式的本質，以及作為門徒訓練基礎的更新價值觀：承擔冒險、剛強壯膽、完全倚靠天父、誠實無偽、施恩憐憫、以恒久的愛去彰顯公義、以信心去順服和面對苦難、並堅持不懈地致力完成救贖的使命。問題是：我們對現狀感到滿足嗎？或許我們是否願意給予年輕一代一個屬靈的好奇心，使他們成為像基督的門徒，為主甘願冒險去神所差遣他們要去的地方？

### 3. 從指導 / 教科書到生命旅程 (From instructing/textbook to journeying)

打造一個「有機」而不「正規」的友師實踐關係，為逆向友師關係和互相支持提供空間

考慮到 HE 組別信仰經驗的顯著性，可以推斷 CBCC 的信仰增長並不需要傳統教科書的指示，反而應該依靠與他們一起同行的人。這種孕育的框架可以從耶穌怎樣設立十二個門徒見到，當祂將他們分別出來，以致「他們常與祂同在」（可 3:14）。對耶穌來說，裝備十二個門徒需要透過一個模範、塑造他們的召命、性格和能力的流程；這不可能在課堂的環境中完成，而是通過生活事工的體驗來完成。這種教學模式上的轉變關鍵之一，可以從一位 CBCC 的身上收集到，她說：「我們這一代更看重經驗」。CBCC 渴想的「並肩而行」，是需要友師將自己的自我優越，降低至受指導者能夠感到舒適的水平。他需要一種「道成肉身」而又謙虛的方式去跟受指導者一起實踐，要尋求互相問責而不樹立優越的姿態。這意味著（友師）要承認軟弱和傷害，並要維持一定的透明度。然而，要實踐指導並不一定需要採取正式的計劃或結構，儘管作好這方面的準備也有些幫助。HE 所遇到的非正式指導經歷，便證明了友師渴

望和準備好進入受指導者的世界，並竭盡所能幫助受指導者，包括在時間、金錢和體力上的自我犧牲。HE 組別的受指導者對友師的幫助、願意傾聽、接受他們而不論斷、關心他們的生活狀況、以及肯定他們的信仰而表示感激。對於這個組別來說，似乎最有效的指導經歷並不在於友師的位置有多高，而是真誠的照顧。

### 4. 從保護到預備 (From protecting to preparing)

為高中生進入大學、以及大學生進入職場制定過渡計劃

根據這項研究，從童年到青春期、從青少年到成年、從大學校園到職業追求等生活階段上的過渡，往往是破壞性的，並可能導致他們在長大成人中，對信仰和身分產生解構和重建。考慮到這一點，家長和教會群體應如何以培育，而不是壓倒性的方式來援助和支持年輕的一代，並協助他們能夠預見和處理那些在經歷中將會遇到的挑戰？

最重要的是，任何的協助都必須始於父母。首先他們要願意委身，在蛻變的過程中成為基督的跟隨者；並且在日常教育的各方面，用道德、屬靈質素和權柄去引領孩子仿效他們（申 6:4-9）。這種承諾成為先決條件，因為預備性的改變是需要對 CBCC 的人生抱負進行基本的檢查，這抱負通常是由學術和職業上的成就來確定的。為了改變從保護到預備和裝備的道路，CCIC 和家庭可以通過一些途徑（例如參加短期宣教），來明智地塑造 CBCC 的世界觀和屬靈生命；又引導他們從耶穌的角度去看這個世界，例如在世界上有需要和不幸的地區參加短期宣教。而這樣的過程需要在青少年進入大學前就要展開。籌備過程應該首先在父母身上開始，將文化價值轉換為信仰價值。在思維上的改變，父母必須將模式從「為孩子要走的路作好準備」（preparing the path for the child），改為「為將要走

的路來預備孩子」(preparing the child for the path)。為孩子要走的路作好準備，通常是用世俗的成功來推動、以成名為標記、並藉著專業知識和成功神學的路徑來完成。因此，為孩子要走的路作好準備，是意味著追求那些傾向看重思考能力的科目，例如數學和科學，因這些是進入醫學院或會計專業的必修科目。相比之下，「為將要走的路來預備孩子」這方法需要在思維方式上作出轉變。這種追求不是以技能為中心，而是幫孩子檢視自己生命的目標和呼召，並塑造自己的品格。因此，養育孩子要用信心和敏銳的洞察力，方能知道他們在聖靈引導下的需要。為將要走的路來預備孩子，是需要銳意地在多方面作好裝備：建立他們的信仰價值和身分、對性這個課題有開放的對話，以及為何它與屬靈的價值觀不符、強化他們的信仰，是根深蒂固而持續經歷神的、並對基督教教義有基本和健全的理解。為孩子做準備還需要給他們預先了解大學的校園生活，邀請那些現今或過去有相關經驗的人來分享他們的生命，並願意跟他們一起同行。此外，有關校園內的信仰和社交生活上的問題，可以預先設定答案，來促進與本地出生的孩子有些富有成果的對話，並鼓勵他們通過自己的詢問而獲得結論 (Freitas, 2008)。

## 5. 從「聖徒博物館」到「療癒傷口的醫院」(From “a museum of saints” to “a hospital for the wounded”)

打造一個既安全而得到尊重的環境，使懷疑、問題、和失敗得到表達而不被論斷

如果信仰的過程被視為人生朝聖的不同階段，這樣的旅程實際上是充滿歡樂、痛苦和流淚；反映出神的殿宇中有勝利的慶賀和在「流淚谷」中黑暗的經歷 (詩 84)。事實上，在山谷中受到蹂躪的遭遇是非常落寞的。在這種情況下，旅客們渴望找到一個能分享眼淚和痛苦的伴侶，或者一個可以很安全去恢復自信和信心的地方。然而，許多受訪者在敘述中表示，CCIC 並不會經常是一間

「安全屋」或是一座「逃城」，讓 CBCC 可以放心表達自己的疑問、說出自己的創傷和傷害、並能夠找到一個對信仰和屬靈上作出治療的地方。

許多時候，CBCC 害怕被論斷所帶來的影響，以及渴望經歷神的憐憫和醫治時會受到阻礙。因此，在一些 CBCC 的眼中，CCIC 的鼓勵是薄弱的、對人性的失敗感到不耐煩、而且很快就作出批評。在保守的思想觀念和教義下，CCIC 被視為一間蔑視那些在屬靈上有疑慮的機構，其部分原因是教會對「聖潔」有所要求，但主要原因還是未能將寬恕與復和實踐；這要歸咎於尊嚴和羞恥的文化，而不是復和以及憐恤這些聖經價值觀。

這並不是要求 CCIC 應該輕易地對待罪惡的行為。但對於那些在幽谷中受到壓迫而需要全備的支持，就不能用既簡單而直接的論斷作開始和結束，使悲傷的人得不到從神的恩典和赦免中復原的機會。最終的目標應該是藉著一個以基督的愛、尊重、修復、接納、和富有同情心的屬靈環境，來培育復和這個觀念。鑑於所討論的文化和實踐，CCIC 如 Van Buren (1964) 所說被認定為一間「聖徒博物館」，一間只歡迎那些完美的人的地方；相對地，CBCC 在困惑中最需要的是一個安全、透明度高、並在判斷之前願意提供憐憫和支持的地方。在 Van Buren 的觀念上，「教會是罪人的醫院」，擁抱那些需要愛和修復的人，呼應耶穌所強調的：「健康的人用不著醫生，有病的人才用得著」(可 2:17)。正如一些教會已經開始落實執行，CCIC 可以考慮設立一些被視為教會價值的必須做法：一個接納、寬恕和修復的團體。這些做法可能包括建立一個如「安全角落」、「青年中心」、或「閣樓房間」的地方，讓青少年可以在那裏表達疑慮和追求復和時，會感到安全和舒適。換句話說，在使徒信經中主張的「與聖徒相通」和「罪得赦免」，需要在 CBCC 的事工上攜手共進。



## 6. 從嚴格到靈活 (From rigidity to fluidity)

以一種以聖經為依據又具有文化適應力的方式（例如：崇拜、氣氛、事工取向和實踐），來重新構想和部署教會的禮儀和標誌

對許多 CBCC 來說，第一代「做事工」的「老家」模式有時令人困惑，又有時不相關。更重要的是，CCIC 的組織架構反映了一個有利於第一批或始創人的權力基礎；在 CCIC 而言，這個群體通常是粵語堂。在 CBCC 心中，最令他們在認知上不和諧的做法就是「聯合崇拜」，這就是在基督教行事曆中，那些重要的節日（例如聖誕節和復活節），使不同語言的會眾一起崇拜。然而，敬拜流程的設計和執行，如詩歌及講員的選擇，都傾向第一代的會眾。這便解釋了為什麼聯合崇拜的語言都是中文為主導，為了 CBCC 的原故而將它翻譯成英語。對許多 CBCC 來說，聯合崇拜的事工設計和資源分配，是有利於在 CCIC 內講中文的會眾而部署的。在這種偏袒和權力的情況下，不同語言的會眾，都會積極地站在與權力結構一致的地位，而不管他們之間有甚麼不同意見。CBCC 傾向於默認這種安排，認識到權力結構並不有利於他們。有這種做法反過來會引起全體會眾對處理事工項目或其他活動（例如聯合崇拜）的抱怨。

然而，爭議表明了 CBCC 與 CCIC 的聯繫並不和諧。就移民教會在整體不同語言會眾的環境而言，CBCC 便很快地找到第一代的排他性的思維，與本地出生所熱愛的包容性互相抵觸。他們認為事工的方向和環境反映了許多「守舊」的文化和實踐，而不是朝著「新家園」的社會思潮來確定以聖經為主的基督徒身分。

不但如此，對 CBCC 來說，聯合崇拜不僅有文化上的差異，CCIC 還在處理的風格、方式和意義上有神學的差異。例如，為了適應不同會眾的需要，而對其中一種語言不作出翻譯就變得雜亂無

章。此外，對於本地出生和其他會眾來說，重要的節日（例如聖誕節），是提供一個邀請未信的朋友來參加崇拜，並了解基督教信仰的最佳時機。可惜，語言的障礙和「守舊」的文化未能驅使本地出生的人去邀請新朋友，因為這些經歷使他們對崇拜失去興趣。

這些問題不僅是 CCIC 不能在文化上適應其崇拜風格的象徵，而且還指向更廣泛的事工運作模式（例如：CCIC 宣教部的財政預算會偏向華人事工）。因此，崇拜上的衝突只是各年代之間不和的縮影。CCIC 需要破舊立新，將文化上過時的事工形式以新的思維取而代之。這種重塑具有文化適應性，又以聖經為中心的做法，便能夠容納兩個不同的世代。雖然講粵語和普通話的中文會眾在 CCIC 佔大多數，但採取謙卑的態度，將聯合崇拜的控制權下放給 CBCC 會對他們有幫助，使他們成為第一批棟樑去學習、成長、和執行事工。這樣，他們便會被視為家庭中一個成熟的成員。為了達到目標，CCIC 需要重新塑造事工的方向，竭力追求上下兩代的友好和族裔中立的態度。

## 7. 從階級制度到縮短權力的距離 (From hierarchy to lower power distance)

反思和重新設定領導方針，例如：一）權力距離縮短；二）以本地出生的人為本、開放對話、分配決策和信任的架構；三）鼓勵學徒成為領袖

在亞洲文化背景和傳統思想下所培訓出來的 CCIC 領袖，都傾向要求一個以「強者理論」（能力和權威）為主的領導。換句話說，成功與失敗是取決於階級制度中的最高的領導人。這樣的領導方式，是將決策權安穩地交給已選定的少數人手中。然而，本研究指出，CCIC 所行使的領導能力和權威並不完全屬乎聖經；也同時看重教會領袖的資歷或地位。



相對之下，從本土出生的背景及廣泛的意義來看，領導不但被視為權力（power），更是一個職位（position）、過程（process）、以及領袖者的美德和品格（person）（Jackson & Parry, 2011）。有了這樣參考的框架，主要的領袖們可以保持他們的權力，不是為了抓緊位置上的權威，而是根據主的呼召而得到屬靈的權柄。另外，領袖的影響力可以通過授權和他的品格來進行分配。透過這種概念，領袖們再不會用「你這樣做」來指示跟隨者，而是邀請他們：「讓我們一起做吧」。這種領導的做法使跟隨者成為廣泛神國運動的一部分。但最重要的是，沒有一個領袖能夠知道所有的解決方案。通過利用 CBCC 來填補在領導層缺乏知識和專業，又藉著採納的態度，便可以實現更大的影響力，以及達成目標。即使追隨者不是專家，深入了解的參與也會使他們被重視；這樣一來，便能夠產生年輕的領袖。許多時候，本地出生的人被視為「小孩」，並沒有機會在 CCIC 中參與領導，從而獲得鼓勵去成長和承擔。在這方面，他們繼續成為第二梯隊，被稱為常年「未準備好」的一代，而不是成為「準備就緒」的新興領袖。

為了抗衡 CCIC 固有的權力差距，第一代的領袖可能需要考量自己是否僅僅擁有權威和能力，而實際上已經失去了對本地出生的影響。此外，他們應切實考慮去採取包容、參與、尊重、信任、和授權的領導姿態。領袖需要考慮不能總是行使與領導地位相關的權力，而是縮短權力的差異，這樣兩代人的關係可以變得緊密。作為僕人君王的基督耶穌，是個完美的典範：謙卑、以服事為中心、以及重視那些來到祂面前的小孩。作為大牧人，基督是模仿的基礎，移民教會的領袖可以考慮採用這種僕人領導的模式。

為了實現這個目標，如果我們要確保本地出生的下一代在培育和夥伴關係上持續參與，CCIC 的文化需要在領導方式的四方面上作出模式轉變，以及對事工實踐進行系統性的改變。第一方面與我

們的領導語言和立場有關，藉著消除引用經驗和資歷的習慣來引導 CBCC，或使用高壓嚴厲的言語跟他們對話。第二方面是提倡界線管理（而不是微觀管理）的做法；這樣，CBCC 便能夠靠著有關範圍和參數的明確指導而行使授權。第三方面說明了一個清晰和開放的溝通方式，接納 CBCC 的提議，從而加深他們對事工的擁有。最後方面是處理 CBCC 領袖的培育，不要看他們為年幼和沒有經驗的「未準備好的一代」，而是給他們「坐在前排」去學習、觀察、成長、並成為「準備就緒」的領袖。

## 8. 從「夾在中間」到「重燃願景」（From being “stuck in the middle” to “reigniting the vision”）

重燃 CCIC 的願景：一）容合本地出生的建議；二）以祂的國度和整全的普世宣教來增加下一代對跨代事工的擁有權

Ammerman（1997）在美國教會進行的堂會變化研究中指出，當堂會遇到前所未有而具破壞性的社會、經濟、人口、和宗教勢力時，那些具有活力和調整能力的會眾群體，就會傾向於擴大創意和適應性能量，來滿足他們對願景、價值、使命、和身分上的要求（第 346-349 頁）。相反，對於那些抗拒（或不能作出）改變並堅持維持現狀的人來說，他們可能會見到人數逐漸減少，甚至「完全消失」。對他們而言：「（群體的）死亡是（會眾）生命週期中不能避免的一部分」（第 345 頁）。Ammerman 的觀察與聖經箴言的訓誨沒有甚麼不同：「沒有異象，民就放肆」（箴 29:18）。至於願景如何在 CCIC 的福祉上發揮作用，Wong（2015）在他的一項研究中得出以下的結論：缺乏能夠激勵和啟發本地出生的願景和遠見，不僅妨礙他們的成長與發展，更迫使他們離開 CCIC，尋求一個更開放和思想一致的會眾群體，來實現自己的願景和身分的認同（第 534 頁）。

這項研究結果顯示，眾多受訪者（特別是 LA 組別）提出的一個擔憂，是 CCIC 拒絕與 CBCC 一起去擴大教會的願景，以解決 CBCC 對事工方向有高度獨立性的渴求，包括對廣泛性多元文化取向的偏好。此外，CBCC 希望改變世界，並為他們所關心的事作出貢獻；甚至期待那些跟他們有聯繫的機構去支持他們的理想，並釋放他們的熱情。他們傾向將信仰投入在公共領域，幫助那些不幸和被邊緣化的人；除了傳福音和參與普世宣教之外，還會處理社會上一些不公義的事。LA 組別中有許多人明確指出，缺乏包容性的異象是成為他們要決定和採取行動要離開 CCIC 的離心力。因他們認為，跟一間與自己完全沒有相同意念體系的機構所建立的聯繫是空洞的。教會的願景是要計劃群體生活的未來發展，並且從今以後，要以忠誠的方式去理解上帝對會眾整體的意向（Ammerman et al, 1998）。CBCC 若要完成上帝給他們的使命，他們的願望需要得到重視和聽取。儘管 CBCC 已經邁向成熟，而且取得專業成就，在社會成為高級行政人員或中級管理人員，但他們仍然被視為沒有經驗，甚至在教會事工上被認定是「乳臭未乾」。拒絕接受 CBCC 有關未來方向的建議，顯示出 CCIC 仍然不願意挑戰目前事工方向的現狀、尋找創新和轉變，這些都是 CBCC 對成熟度、自主性和成長的渴求。在這種情況下，教會整體被視為是沮喪的、缺乏迫切性、也無法站在影響第一代與他們子女的社會、文化、和會眾的變化之前端；甚至未能在 CCIC 以外的社區提供外展的機會。考慮到這一點，雖然有些 CBCC 無助地接受教會正「陷入中間」的觀念，但有其他人卻故意離開 CCIC。

從這項研究所得到的學習是，如果 CCIC 在未來幾年努力爭取一個興旺的跨代事工，他們需要擴闊自己的願景，必須將 CBCC 的提議作啟動並視為同等和優先，以致信仰和事工的擁有度會被提高。CCIC 必須認識到，儘管語言和族裔的偏見會成為障礙，但加

拿大教會的願景是需要充滿活力和多才多藝，這樣就能夠在大使命的要求下與主流文化接觸（太 28）。第一代移民可能不具備所需的技能去完成所有要求，但他們可以提供事工上的智慧、賢能的指導和慷慨的資源，使 CBCC 能夠在事工上更加有效。此外，兩代的人都需要考慮將事工推向一個超越語言、文化和族裔的層次，來塑造一個植根於神國價值觀的社群：一個熱情款待、寬容、說誠實話、感恩、和忠誠的屬靈群體。反映了上帝救贖的使命和祂的愛、恩典、憐憫和公義。

## 結論

二十一世紀的景觀是後現代主義和世俗主義的動力，如宗教多元化、民主和意識形態的衝突、消費主義和自由主義的興起、以及社交媒體的發達。這些動力影響了加拿大的社會價值觀和規範，亦在過往幾十年，同時直接或間接地影響了 CCIC 及其事工。基督的教會不同時代一直都面對著變革的力量，而 CCIC 在應對挑戰和破壞方面並不是免疫的。儘管變化各有不同，但每一個影響力都迫使教會去深入了解它的信念，重申它的信仰和核心價值，更注重和鞏固其聖潔和僕人的身分，並加倍努力去保持對基督大誠命的忠誠，就是愛鄰舍及使本地和世界各地的人成為門徒。CCIC 所面對的眾多變化中，有人可以爭辯說，養育 CBCC 使他們健康成長和成熟，是移民教會必須作出審查和執行的關鍵任務之一。為此，本研究通過揭示影響 CBCC 對信仰的認同，承諾和 CCIC 的聯繫等決定因素，來深入了解 CBCC 在信仰旅程中的熱情和期望作出見解，以及他們為何離開 CCIC 和自己的信仰。總括來說，這項研究的結果和方向性的行動建議，能夠共同建立一個新的框架，來促進 CCIC 和 CBCC，為了神的國度和祂的榮耀，一起繪製一條事工合作夥伴關係的新途徑。

## 參考書籍

請參閱英文簡短版

“By listening to the voice of the Canadian-born Chinese Christians regarding their aspiration and challenges of their faith journeys, this generation may indeed lay a proper foundation and repair the circumstances for the next. May the Chinese churches in Canada today implement necessary changes as inspired by the Holy Spirit, even if it may seem radical to the populace, but for the benefits of the next generation.”

Rev. Francis Tam, D. Min.  
Executive Director, CCCOWE Canada

“我們要祈求神給我們智慧，聆聽下一代的聲音，瞭解他們；並作出相應的改革及更新，使他們不再流失。否則沒有下一代承傳下去，華人教會前途堪危。讓我們謙卑地、勇敢地面對這嚴重的挑戰。加國華人教會一定要變，如何變？讓我們一起根據這研究作出實質有用的對策，使華人教會不再失血，要止血；並要補血。”

馬英傑牧師 D. Min.  
前任華福加拿大聯區總幹事

