

CASE STUDIES OF THE PLANTING OF SELECTED CHINESE-LANGUAGE
EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

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ABSTRACT

CASE STUDIES OF THE PLANTING OF SELECTED CHINESE- LANGUAGE EVANGELICAL CHURCHES IN SOUTHERN NEW ENGLAND

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Readers: John Reed, Johann Lai

This study sought to learn and understand the circumstances and certain relevant factors in the beginning of three evangelical New England Chinese-language based churches. The goal was to learn the parameters and resources that were needed to successfully plant these churches, with a view to the possible beginning of a Chinese-language based church in the Southeastern Massachusetts area. The process that I used included a brief introductory history of Chinese Christianity, a search for appropriate “subject churches,” contacts established with leaders in the subject churches, interviews and surveys completed with those leaders, a literature and web-based information search and a brief study of local Chinese intellectuals who may eventually become part of a church plant.

The Lord of the Harvest always compels us to seek the spread of the Gospel and a resultant establishment of churches regardless of cultural and political barriers. However, wisdom must be sought and applied for the careful planting of intercultural churches and a proper pool of resources must be available along with opportunity. No Chinese-language-based church exists in the whole of Southeastern Massachusetts although there is a significant number of mainland born, Taiwanese, Hong Kong born and American Born Chinese in our area. The most numerous community of Chinese is from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Therefore all three subject churches are located in university-rich areas: Amherst, Worcester and Acton (near Boston), Massachusetts. The research concludes that with a proper spiritual sense of God’s calling,

adequate resources, a favorable location and access, a new Chinese-language based evangelical church is indeed possible in Southcoast, Massachusetts. Possible complementary research is also suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I was intrigued to learn that University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth Assistant Professor of Chemistry and my new friend Dr. Shuwei Cai was from a city of ten million people in northeast China. He had earned two of his three degrees at the Nankai University in Tianjin, China (and his Ph.D. at U.Mass.Amherst.) I was also embarrassed to admit that I had never heard of his city.¹ Even though I have not yet had opportunity to visit China, I wondered how could an American pastor, with a graduate degree and reasonably aware of world events and history have managed to never hear of China's third largest city? This typifies my pleasant if constantly humbling experience of learning about China, the Chinese in our own country and the great potential for new ministries among them.

The explosion of Christianity in the Book of Acts and its spread to many lands, continues today all over the world and among many peoples who find themselves replanted in a foreign culture. The planting of new Christian churches occurs in many ways and with many circumstances. Often people who have immigrated to the United States find themselves in need of new churches here which accommodate their original culture. Resident evangelical Christians in the host culture are then challenged and emboldened to facilitate these new church plants in their own proximities. Can we learn and understand of the circumstances and relevant factors which occurred in the beginning of a few ethnic Chinese evangelical churches in the greater Boston area? Can these

¹ Similarly, a recent encounter with a new graduate student ("Grace") introduced me to another city unknown to me—a Berlin-sized city in northeast China: Dalian, population 3.2 million.

lessons assist in the possible and eventual planting of a new church in the area of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth? This is my research question. I became interested in developing this research because I am personally involved with a number of immigrant Chinese “intellectuals” from the university community around the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Since no Chinese church exists in our immediate vicinity, the idea of studying how to plant such a church became a compelling idea. The Dallas Seminary website states that “Chinese is now the largest and most spoken language in the world and the second most common language on the Internet.²” If this is in fact true, what more evangelistic response than to begin to accommodate Chinese-speaking people in the places where the Chinese live?

According to the 2000 Massachusetts census includes a total population of 6,349,097 people of whom 238,124 are generally Asian (3.8%) and 84,392 are Chinese (1.3% of the general Massachusetts population.) This represents the third largest non-Caucasian minority after the Hispanic (6.8%) and African-American (5.4%) populations.³

Approximately fifteen million people live in New England but less than 360,000 (<2.4%) of them are associated with any church that preaches a Christ-centered Gospel.⁴ While targeting-nomenclature is somewhat different, the latest Barna Research Group statistics suggest that nationally “7% of adults qualify as evangelical Christians,”

² Dallas Theological Seminary, “Why Chinese Courses?” online: <http://www.dts.edu/admissions/onlineeducation/chinese/whychinesecourses/?lang=en-US>, (accessed 3 November 2007).

³ “Moving to Massachusetts,” *Massachusetts Real Estate Sales and Mortgage Financing*, Online: http://www.homes-in-ma.com/relo_baystate.php referencing date from *U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 Summary File 1, Matrices P1, P3, P4, P8, P9, P12, P13, P,17, P18, P19, P20, P23, P27, P28, P33, PCT5, PCT8, PCT11, PCT15, H1, H3, H4, H5, H11, and H12.* (accessed 1 August 2007).

⁴ Evangelical Free Church of America, New England District Association web site 2007 <http://www.efcneda.org/planting.htm> (accessed 13 May 2007).

the term “qualify” being identified with some specificity.⁵ The plight of the Chinese in New England is noteworthy as one introductory web site notes, “Only through decades of struggle, isolation, and slow progress were Chinese Americans able to find a secure place in the life of the nation. Today, though, a new surge of growth and cultural vitality promises to transform the Chinese American community, and to reshape American life for future generations.”⁶ A new report generated within New England suggests that, “Only 14% of converts are coming to faith in Christ in one time conversion event experiences. Previous classic methods of gospel presentation are not as fruitful today as personal relationships & lifestyle witness.”⁷ In addition the report finds that “people of all educational levels, including well educated, are coming to faith in Jesus. People from all income levels are finding new life in Christ.” Strikingly, “80% of [New England] churches list evangelism as one of their top three priorities but less than 2% of New England congregations experience ongoing adult conversion evangelism taking place” with any reportable frequency. For the Chinese population itself, Iris Chang notes,

⁵ *The Barna Update*, www.Barna.org May 21, 2007 The term evangelical assumes the designation "born again Christians" [who] are defined as people who said they have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to Heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their savior. Respondents are not asked to describe themselves as "born again." "Evangelicals" are people who meet the born again criteria (described above) plus seven other conditions. Those include saying their faith is very important in their life today; believing they have a personal responsibility to share their religious beliefs about Christ with non-Christians; believing that Satan exists; believing that eternal salvation is possible only through grace, not works; believing that Jesus Christ lived a sinless life on earth; asserting that the Bible is accurate in all that it teaches; and describing God as the all-knowing, all-powerful, perfect deity who created the universe and still rules it today. Being classified as an evangelical is not dependent upon church attendance or the denominational affiliation of the church attended. Respondents were not asked to describe themselves as "evangelical."

⁶ Emmanuel Gospel Center, “More than 100 Churches Planted in Boston During the Last 5 Years,” Boston, MA 2007, online: http://newne.net/db_public/u14_public/index_EN.php?display=onpage&what=1509 (accessed 13 May 2007).

⁷ Vision New England’s report, *The Vision New England Recent Convert Study*, 2007, online: http://sites.silaspartners.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0,,PTID14438|CHID114781|CIID2314274,00.html (accessed 16 May 2007).

Fearful middle-aged and elderly Kuomintang bureaucrats began to leave Taiwan to join their children in the United States. But they were not the only Chinese affected by world events. In the following decade, the 1980s, the thaw in Sino-American relations would lead to open exchanges between the United States and mainland China, shattering the Bamboo Curtain and opening the way to a new era of emigration.⁸

This “new surge of growth” is not only being seen in Boston, but in other areas which include many colleges and universities, including the community of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, the second largest of the five U. Mass., campuses (about 9,000 students.) In his Master’s thesis, Mee Lin Kong suggested that since 1989 China is the leading sender of students to the United States and therefore churches ought to give high priority to starting Chinese Bible study groups and ministries.⁹ The 2007 opening of the new bio-engineering, molecular biology, and cell biology National Botulinum Research Center, the first such core campus facility in the U.S. devoted entirely to this research, is expected to attract an even greater number of Pan-Asian intellectuals specifically to our area.¹⁰

My own church in Dartmouth (Dartmouth Bible Church)¹¹ is currently a church of about 320 people and includes a number of Chinese educators, researchers and their families as well as students associated with the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Our church is located directly adjacent to the campus, less than a quarter of a mile away (see Figure 9, page 98). Chinese Christians are happily involved *within* our church but it is plain that strong potential exists for the planting of a daughter Chinese

⁸ Iris Chang, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History* (New York, Penguin Books, 2003), 311.

⁹ Mee Lin Kong, “A Biblical Approach to Chinese Campus Ministry,” (Master’s thesis, Calvary Theological Seminary, Kansas City) 1994, 2.

¹⁰ Hoey, John University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, online: http://www.umassd.edu/communications/articles/showarticles.cfm?a_key=1334 (accessed 1 June 2007).

¹¹ Dartmouth Bible Church, online: <http://www.DartmouthBible.org> (accessed 1 June 2007).

church. As the Chinese immigrant and second-generation populations grow, this potential will only accelerate. At present, our church family is prepared to assist and encourage the planting of a daughter church.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The focus of this dissertation is to develop three case studies of existing Chinese-language based evangelical church ministries in southern New England and the discovery of transferable factors, if any, from the establishment of those churches. In other words, what transferable factors and lessons can be found through a study of three existing Chinese-language based evangelical churches in southern New England? This topic supports my goal of developing tools and performing research relevant to the general promotion of the Gospel and the evangelical presence in southeastern Massachusetts. Specifically we are exploring the possibility of planting a Chinese church in our immediate area. A cooperative and recognized evangelical presence in our region has ignited a personal passion in me throughout my twenty-four years in New England. Of course the Gospel should ideally penetrate all ethnic families in our region. However, no fellowship, community or church of an organized and permanent nature is currently offered to the Chinese people-group in our immediate area. Therefore the time is right to explore the potential for establishing the first Chinese evangelical church there.

By “transferable factors” I mean those aspects and realities that emerged during the forming of the subject churches which might be duplicated in the planting of a new but similar church in Southcoast, Massachusetts.

Five HYPOTHESES to uncover such factors are developed in this dissertation and were probed by various means. Those hypotheses are as follows:

First, certain basic features of the specific local **environment** will accommodate the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church in a selected area, as evidenced by previous similar church plants.

Second, there will be several favorable **conditions** that need to be fulfilled before the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants.

Third, important **preparations** need to be completed in advance of the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants.

Fourth, we expect a number of significant **parameters** will be recognized in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants.

Finally, various **resources** will be required in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants.

This project naturally interfaced with my ongoing ministry in southern New England, both in my own church and among the wider evangelical community (including the evangelical Chinese.) Also my work on the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth and a recent appointment as Protestant Chaplain naturally connect with ministry among Chinese intellectuals. It is an exciting prospect to imagine a new Chinese church with so many Chinese (first and second generation) in our area. There are at least eight Chinese churches in the greater Boston/Providence area but no organized church closer to us than the single Chinese church in Rhode Island, in Pawtucket (Providence) which is 34 miles distant from our campus. Since there is a core of evangelical Chinese believers in and around my own church, and in a few other churches, coupled with a growing number of unchurched Chinese intellectuals associated with the university who are open to the Gospel, the time seems right to explore the development of an organized Mandarin-based ministry. There is also the local restaurant industry (which includes no less than 15 Chinese restaurants in the area immediately near to U.Mass.Dartmouth.) Workers in these establishments generally work every Sunday and therefore would require their own specialized kind of ministry. The Gospel has not

reached this industry, but could be effectively targeted by outreach-minded members of a Chinese-language speaking congregation.

Beginnings of this Research

It is always wonderful to see God work in our churches, opening doors to various people-groups, even sometimes through unanticipated or unlikely means. In 2000 our church began to minister to a young Japanese Ph.D. student and his wife. This couple, who shall be anonymous in this dissertation, had moved to Dartmouth when he began his doctoral studies at U.Mass.Dartmouth and attended our church. Rev. David and Ruth Schaffer¹², who are members of our church, provide an ongoing ESL class (English as a Second Language) and were privileged to lead both this Ph.D. student and his wife to Christ. Ironically, their conversions opened the door to an expanding ESL ministry with other pan-Asian intellectuals, now chiefly from China.¹³

This specific research began with my involvement in a Chinese Bible study on the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, one of five University of Massachusetts campuses in the state and which is located in the Southcoast area of Massachusetts.¹⁴ There had been meaningful contacts between our church (and myself) and Chinese intellectuals in earlier years.¹⁵ However in 2005 I was invited to the on-

¹² This couple has ministered in our church to international students since 1996. Their ESL class began in 2001. *World Reach* newsletter, Baptist General Conference, March 2007, 1, 8.

¹³ The Japanese Ph.D. student is now an engineer with the Bose Corporation and with his wife are a vital part of the Japanese Christian Church in Boston.

¹⁴ Broadly defined "Southcoast" is a reference to that coastal region of the state of Massachusetts which sweeps from the Cape Cod Canal to Westport. More narrowly applied, the term refers to the areas encompassed by the cities of New Bedford and Fall River, including the area adjoining the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. It is this narrower definition which we are using.

¹⁵ Opportunities to render humanitarian aid to needy Chinese students and families presented themselves from time to time. We also hosted various activities by the Chinese Student Association (a secular campus organization) and served as a church home for the occasional Chinese Christian graduate student. In the 1980s tensions were evident between Taiwanese and mainland Chinese intellectuals from our local university. In more recent times however, those tensions have largely disappeared.

campus Bible study by a chemistry professor (Dr. Maolin Guo) who also attends our church. Dr. Guo and his wife Weiping Yang (a chemistry department researcher) are originally from mainland China and Dr. Guo is now Assistant Professor of Biochemistry at U.Mass.Dartmouth. With the strategic location of our church (Dartmouth Bible Church) we have found a natural relationship with the university. In fact, the original vision in 1963 of our church's founding pastor was to be located next to the university campus,¹⁶ even though at that point the campus was not yet constructed. Ground-breaking for the new S.M.T.I.¹⁷ campus occurred exactly one year (June 14, 1964) after Dartmouth Bible Church was founded.

As acquaintances were made in the Bible study, we became increasingly aware of the network of Chinese churches that exists in the New England region. The Chinese Christians sponsored several Chinese "fellowship parties" in 2005, inviting leaders from the Pawtucket, Rhode Island Chinese church to attend. The network of Chinese churches around New England is not large but it is fairly well connected. I learned that there is a keen awareness of each other and some cooperative ministries. We had known of one specific and very urban church, the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, pastored by a friend and fellow Dallas Seminary graduate, Steven Chin, and I had visited that church on several occasions in previous years. As a starting point, Pastor Chin's church website includes the following summary of their beginnings:

Boston Chinese Evangelical Church (BCEC) was started in June 1961, by a group of 18 founders. This group shared a common vision for reaching the Chinese Cantonese-speaking population of the Boston. Church services were held in homes and rented buildings until the construction of the current church buildings at 249 Harrison Avenue in 1979. The BCEC Annex (237 Harrison Ave.) was completed in 1993. Between the 1960's and the 1970's, the size of the Cantonese

¹⁶ Ruth Durfee Nolan, interview with the author, 25 September 2006. Mrs. Nolan is the widow of deceased Rev. Chaloner Durfee, founding pastor of Dartmouth Bible Church.

¹⁷ U.Mass.Dartmouth was previously called the Southeastern Massachusetts Technical Institute, then Southeastern Massachusetts University.

congregation grew steadily. Over time, English speaking and Mandarin speaking services were also added. Presently, we have three Cantonese services, one Mandarin service, and two English-speaking services in two campuses. Almost 1000 worshippers attend service at BCEC every Sunday. They come from Chinatown, local Universities, and the surrounding suburbs of Boston. The congregation consists of all age levels: infants, toddlers, preschool, elementary, junior high, high school, college, young adults, married couples, and elderly. BCEC offers ministries to meet the needs of every age group. On September 9, 2003, we launched a new campus in Newton, a suburb of Boston, to further expand our blessing to the greater Boston community. We were blessed by the purchase of a beautiful church building on Walnut Street in Newton, and we will send one English and one Cantonese congregation to start Worship Services there.¹⁸

Although BCEC is not one of our case study churches, it represents a good example of a relatively recent Chinese church-plant in the evangelical tradition that has succeeded dramatically. BCEC is also an inner-city church with all the attendant problems associated with doing church ministry in a crowded part of a large city. After consultation with the Chinese that I know from the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth (hereafter referred to as U.Mass. Dartmouth) the search began for three churches which would be applicable and willing subjects of a study on how they began. Once again, my research question is: What transferable factors from similar church plants can be discovered which might be utilized in the planting of an evangelical, Chinese-language based church in southern New England?

The Quest for Subject Churches

Even as I was gradually becoming aware of the term “Chinese intellectuals,”¹⁹ and wondering what that specifically meant, I contacted several Chinese churches I knew

¹⁸ Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, online: <http://www.bcec.net> (accessed 30 September 2006).

¹⁹ Ted Pricskett, “Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel” in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* January 1993, 58. Pricskett defines “Chinese intellectuals” as “students from China’s top universities, the cream of the crop...visionaries often referred to as intellectuals.”

about concerning the possibility of studying their origins. In addition to BCEC (above), I contacted the Chinese Christian Church of Rhode Island (CCCRI.) This non-denominational evangelical church ministers in both Mandarin and English in Rhode Island and to some Southcoast Massachusetts Chinese believers, and was established in March 1977.²⁰ This church seemed a logical candidate since several of the U.Mass.Dartmouth Chinese Christians were both familiar and acquainted with leadership personnel there. A CCCRI staff pastor (Rev. John Tsang) and his wife had visited the U.Mass.Dartmouth campus for a Chinese fellowship in 2005. Recently a church deacon and his wife also visited there, and our church too. However both of these leaders subsequently relocated and thereby hindered our ability to retain effective contact with CCCRI. One of our church members, another U.Mass.Dartmouth faculty member, had formerly been a member and deaconess in the Amherst Chinese Christian Church in Amherst, Massachusetts (adjacent to both the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Amherst College), Dr. Xiaoqin “Shelley” Zhang. She offered to contact an elder of the Amherst church and introduce me and my research project to him. Elder Henry Lu (a landscape architecture professor) was very receptive; I arrived for my introductory site-visit there on November 2, 2006. ACCC became my first case study church.²¹

Then I was encouraged by Dr. Shuwei Cai (Assistant Professor of Chemistry at U.Mass.Dartmouth) to contact the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston, the largest and best-known Chinese ministry in our region.²² This church began in 1969 with 13 attendees and now has a pastoral staff of seven. (Interestingly, they continue to search

²⁰ Chinese Christian Church of Rhode Island, online: <http://www.cccri.org> (accessed 30 September 2006).

²¹ Amherst Chinese Christian Church, online: <http://www.accch.org> (accessed 15 October 2006). Professor Lu has subsequently in 2007 relocated to England as a new missionary there. This church shall be referred to hereafter as “ACCC.” Their address is 611 Belchertown Road, Amherst, MA 01002.

²² Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston, online: <http://www.cbcbg.org> (accessed 2 October 2006).

for a senior pastor and have been in that search for some time, illustrating the need for more trained Chinese-American pastors.) One of the staff pastors is an American and I contacted him by e-mail with an introduction to my project and a request to visit their church for a brief interview. Apparently some of the Chinese churches have been studied often in recent years by social science organizations and scholars, and due to the time commitment that a study church would need to contribute, my request was graciously declined.

It was becoming apparent that a personal introduction by someone in the confidence of the existing leadership would prove more effective at securing willing case study churches. Next I explored a new church-plant that I had heard about within our church's own conference affiliation (The Northeast Baptist Conference of the Baptist General Conference), in Quincy, Massachusetts. However I was unable to establish contact with their current pastor in the early stages of searching for case study churches for my research. Next, Dr. Cai informed me of a relatively new Chinese church in Worcester, Massachusetts (the Worcester Chinese Gospel Church.)²³ He provided an e-mail introduction to their pastor, Pastor Zhiqui "Timothy" Xu, who was receptive to an introductory interview. I carried out an interview and site visit on January 24, 2007 in Worcester. This church became my second case study, recently planted itself by a mother-church, the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts in Southborough, Massachusetts.²⁴

Finally, Dr. Cai also informed me of a very new church in Acton, Massachusetts. The "River of Life Christian Church in Boston" began ministry very

²³ Worcester Chinese Gospel Church, online: <http://www.worcestercgc.org> (accessed 10 November 2006). This church shall be referred to hereafter as "WCGC." Their address is 21 Belmont Street, Worcester, MA 01605.

²⁴ Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts, online: <http://www.cgcm.org> (accessed 15 November 2006).

recently in January 2006.²⁵ Acton is a northern suburb of Boston. Dr. Cai telephoned the woman who was most responsible for the beginning of this church and gained for me an invitation for my initial site visit on November 10, 2006 for a youth rally. During the youth rally, I was granted an interview by Mrs. Jocelyn Shu, the church planter who began the ministry there. A second site visit and interview was held on August 2, 2007. This church is the third case study church in my research. Distinct from the others, it possesses a theologically charismatic flavor, has a woman in the planter role who has since been ordained as minister and expects to become fully recognized as pastor soon. The church immediately affiliated with a larger church from California, as a mentor-church—The River of Life Christian Church in Santa Clara, California.²⁶ As the study unfolded, the three churches for case studies were as in Table 1.1:

Table 1.1. The Subject Churches

Church Name	Amherst Chinese Christian Church	Worcester Chinese Gospel Church	River of Life Chinese Church in Boston
Location	Amherst, Massachusetts	Worcester, Massachusetts	Acton, Massachusetts
Website	www.acch.org	www.worcestercgc.org	www.rolccib.org
Mother Church?	-	Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts	Affiliation: River of Life Santa Clara
Mother Church Website	-	www.cgcm.org	www.rolcc.net
Mother Church Location	-	Southborough, Massachusetts	Santa Clara, California
Host Facility	First Baptist Church in Amherst	Belmont Street Baptist Church	Vision New England
Year began	1978	2002	2005

From what we have seen and learned in this research, planting new Chinese-language based churches in New England includes several challenges, some universal to all church-planting projects and some unique to Chinese ministry in New England. The motivation of the people, the influence of qualified senior pastors and the sense of inter-

²⁵ River of Life Chinese Church in Boston, online: <http://www.rolccib.org> (accessed 6 November 2006). This church shall be referred to hereafter as “ROLCCB.” Their address is 468 Great Road, Acton, MA 01720,

²⁶ River of Life Chinese Church Santa Clara, CA, online: <http://www.rolcc.net/English> (accessed 13 November 2006).

connectedness between New England Chinese evangelical ministries all make for a high potential for success in the overall endeavor to see the Gospel move forward among the growing Chinese community in New England.

The Amherst, Worcester and Acton churches were chosen for several reasons. First, each proved open to being studied. Second each was interested in a kinship with a possible new church plant. Third, the three churches are not at all identical; each church possesses its own interesting uniqueness. ACCC is located in a pure university environment. WCGC is an inner-city church and also was planted on the mother-daughter model. ROLCCB is a very recent church plant, holds a charismatic flavor and immediately affiliated with a larger Chinese Christian fellowship. It is also led by a female pastor, somewhat unusual among Chinese churches in this country. Finally, I was able to establish excellent rapport with the main contact or pastor in each church. Prayerfully, it became clear these would be the right churches from whom to learn their beginnings, located below in Figure 1.1.²⁷

²⁷ Answers.com, "Massachusetts Map," online:
<http://www.answers.com/topic/massachusetts-counties-map-gif> (accessed date needed). Towns added by author.

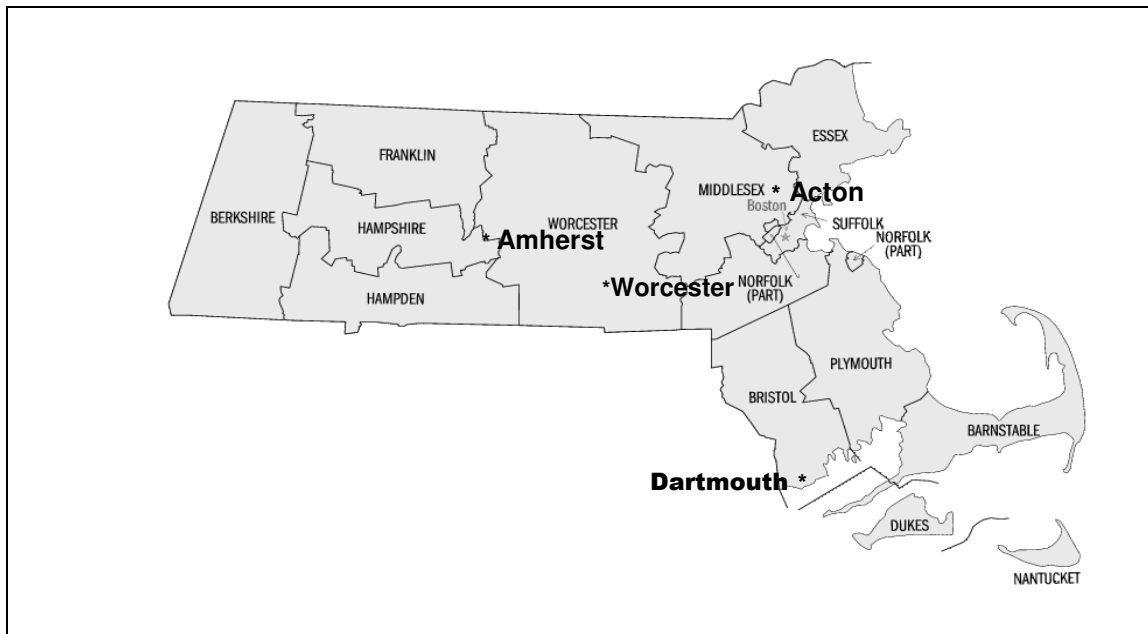


Figure 1.1 Subject Churches in MA with Reference to Target area (Dartmouth)

In the chapter following we will provide a biblical basis for the general subject of planting churches in an intercultural way, including a New Testament review. A brief history of the introduction of Christianity to Chinese people will be given and then some basic ecclesiastical goals outlined. Utilizing research sources discovered, we will consider the conditions deemed favorable in the literature for beginning a successful church plant, the preparations that should be made, and other considerations that were found to be relevant as this research unfolded.

In the third chapter we will discuss the basic issues and methods used to develop our research among the subject churches. Various interesting and intersecting issues were discovered and integrated into the instrument that was developed. The five hypotheses of the project will be shown as to how they were investigated with the survey instrument.

The fourth chapter displays the results of our investigation through the hypotheses tested and describes the findings in the three subject churches. Results of the

local survey are also given as well as a brief consideration to the matter of outreach to the restaurant community.

Chapter five gives my conclusions of this research project and suggests implications for further research which might be done. The whole process has been enlightening and is suggestive of much ministry yet to be accomplished among Chinese intellectuals, other immigrants and their families.

CHAPTER 2

PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This study seeks to learn and understand the circumstances and relevant factors in the beginning of three ethnic Chinese evangelical churches in the area of southern New England. The evidence gathered will facilitate the possible planting of a new church in the area of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth.

Gathering an adequate amount of research data in print was somewhat problematic because a) the cultural difference of Chinese ministry itself (with the attendant language challenge) presented interesting challenges of its own and b) the relatively small amount of existent literature pertaining directly to New England Chinese ministries. Literature on general church planting abounds but specific books, articles or theses on planting Chinese churches in New England are scant. Rudy Busto observes, “The lack of empirical data, interpretations, or even acknowledgement of evangelicalism among Asian American college students...Without the luxury of plentiful data or even a substantive body of writing on the subject of evangelical Christianity in Asian American communities, I will describe what I perceive to be salient problems...”¹

The cultural differences between this researcher and the general Chinese Christian community were not small. In general, this researcher received a warm and welcoming response from those he queried about this research. Nonetheless, the language barrier proved to be a challenge as well as some caution on the part of Chinese leaders who did not have a personal introduction to me. The Chinese churches surveyed include

¹ Rudy Busto, *The Gospel According to the Model Minority? Hazarding an Interpretation of Asian American Evangelical College Students*, in David K. Yoo, editor, *New Spiritual Homes: Religion and Asian Americans*, (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1999), 171.

many who are still learning English, and this researcher possesses no Mandarin skills. This made the administration of a survey instrument challenging. Many nuances and subtle meanings in English were difficult to transfer on to the instrument. However, the main contacts with the subject churches themselves possessed excellent English ability and verbal communication and interviewing with each of them was easy and complete. The Chinese church planters I met possess a slightly different sense of body-life, one may say a less cluttered concept of what a church body does socially. They seem satisfied with a simpler and less complex social environment within their churches. Finally, since many Chinese intellectual Christians are still transient, moving between professional positions, the basic “pool” of Christians from which to draw for leadership is smaller than in many Anglo churches. It takes longer to identify an adequate leadership team with which to build. These factors made data collection somewhat more difficult than originally anticipated.

In addition to general literature in the field of church planting and Chinese churches we surveyed key people in selected existing churches in the area by means of interview and use of a primary instrument (see Appendix A). I was able to ascertain various facts, attitudes, opinions and problems with solutions suggested in the establishment of their churches.

New Testament standards will apply in Chinese churches for church planting, evangelism, leadership development and the edification of the Christian community as they do in any other church. What follows is a consideration for a rationale with which to approach the possible planting of a new Chinese church in light of the three subject churches and a brief review of some literature and source information discovered for that process will be presented.

A Biblical and Historical Basis for Intercultural Church Planting

New Testament Review

The most basic New Testament hermeneutics yields the precedent, mandate and encouragement for sharing and proclaiming the Gospel message of Jesus Christ and planting churches in the widest possible community. As the apostles received from the Lord Jesus the imperative to “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age,” (Matt 28:19, 20).² Luke records that Jesus also told the apostles that once empowered by the Holy Spirit who would come upon them, they would be His witnesses “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”³ Little Bible study or historical justification should be required to establish that evangelism and church planting are two of the most ancient and fundamental activities for Christians. These activities are paramount, despite a recent interview with a full-time Roman Catholic campus worker of thirty years service on our local campus. Upon my recent appointment to university chaplaincy staff, I asked her about current boundaries and proprieties for campus religious workers (which officially includes herself, a female Jewish rabbi and newly appointed Director for the Center for Jewish Culture, a Hindu swami and myself).⁴ She informed me that the one rule officially recognized religious workers *must* honor is to avoid “proselytizing.” When asked what “proselytizing” means, she responded, “Do not tell everyone that they are going to hell unless they attend your

² *The New American Standard Bible*. 1986. La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation. Libronix Digital Library System, 3.0d, Bellingham, Washington, electronic edition. 2006.

³ *Ibid*, Acts 1:8b.

⁴ We comprise the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth “Religious Resources Center,” online: <http://www.umassd.edu/studentaffairs/religious.cfm>. (accessed 30 September 2007).

church.”⁵ Perhaps Christians will never be completely tension-free in this world when queried as to their ultimate mission, even (or especially) at institutions of higher learning.

The early Christians planted churches from beginnings in Jerusalem almost immediately after Jesus’ ascension (Acts 1–6), to Antioch, into Asia and to Europe, encompassing and assimilating many cultures and language-groups. By the end of the span of approximately thirty years covered by the Acts of the Apostles, it is evident that a church or church network was planted in Rome and by the traditional end of the New Testament (another thirty years), the time of the writing of John’s Book of Revelation, the specific *cities* which had identified churches included the city of Samaria (Acts 8:1-8;14-17, 25; 15:3), Damascus (Acts 9:19), Lydda (Acts 9:32–35), Joppa (Acts 9:42), Antioch (Acts 11; 14:27), Psidian Antioch (Acts 13:44–52), Iconium (Acts 14:1), Lystra (Acts 14:21; 16:1), Berea (Acts 17:10), Cenchrea (Rom 16:2), Corinth (Acts 18:7, I and II Cor), Thessalonica (Acts 17:4), Ephesus (Acts 18:19, 20; Eph), Colossae, (Col), Philippi (Acts 16:12ff), Athens (Acts 17:34), Troas (Acts 20:12), Tyre (Acts 21:4), Ptolemais (Acts 21:7), Caesarea (Acts 21:8, 9), Rome (Rom), and the other churches which receive direct communications from the Lord Jesus in Revelation 2 and 3: Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea. *Regions* referenced as having churches included Galilee (Acts 9:31), Syria and Cilicia (Acts 15:23), Galatia (Acts 16:6, Gal 1), Phrygia (Acts 18:23), Achaia (Acts 18:27), Macedonia (Acts 20:2), Cyprus (Acts 15:39; 21:16), Crete (Tit 1), etc. This is a brief documentation for the early spread of the Gospel in a western direction in the earliest decades of the first century (see Figure 2.1). One of Luke’s many summarizing comments captures well the quick spread of the Gospel: “And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10). The number of specific ancient

⁵ Interview with an unnamed Roman Catholic campus worker and the author, the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, 28 June 2007.

sub-cultures and language groups included in the entire Mediterranean region and enfolded into first century Christianity is staggering. Few of these went untouched by the work of the apostles and their protégés and disciples.

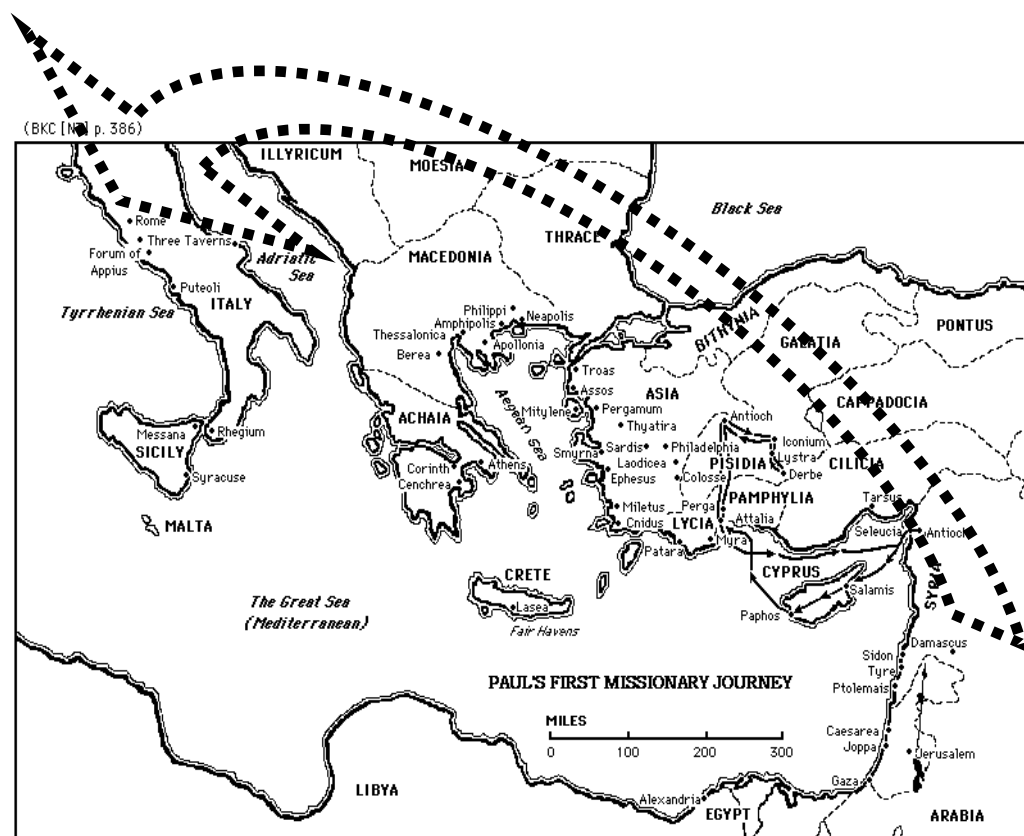


Figure 2.1 General Regions and cities receiving church plants by 95 AD ⁶

Christianity Introduced to the Chinese

We also note that church-planting has not always occurred as we envision it today. Ancient patterns of religion-planting are sometimes more political and less theologically deliberate by today's methods. Christianity knew a surprisingly early introduction into China. In his excellent and recent book, former *Time* magazine Beijing

⁶ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, editors *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1983-85) Libronix Digital Library System, Logos Bible Software (Bellingham, Washington) version 3.0d.

bureau chief David Aikman summarizes the first known genesis of Christianity in China by a mission delegation leader from a group of Nestorian Christians (the “Illustrious Religion”) from what is now Iraq. His name was Aluoben:

Now I was back in Xian to see something in the Forest of Steles⁷ Museum that was central to the story of how Christianity first arrived in China: the Nestorian Tablet [A.D. 781], a two-ton tablet standing more than nine feet tall and three feet wide, and inscribed with 1,900 beautifully carved Chinese characters. It was the official account of the first major Christian mission to China, an event that took place in A.D. 635, a few short years after the start of the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-906), and one of the most brilliant eras in China’s history...The Chinese characters [on the stele] set forth not only the theology of those early Christian travelers from Central Asia, but also the story of how they were received by the imperial authorities in Changan, site of the present-day city of Xian...The teachings contained in the Nestorian stele are certainly a recognizable expression of basic Christian doctrine.⁸

An interesting historical precedent is offered by a brief look at the most ancient known Chinese Christianity which provides a compelling backdrop to the growth of immigrant Chinese Christianity in the United States. It is not insignificant that there is a very old context for Chinese church-planting studies.⁹ The Nestorian stele’s proclamation (see Appendix C) and exposition of seventh-century mission-Christianity illustrates an interesting attempt to publicize their faith. While Nestorian Christianity would diverge from modern evangelical Christianity and even ancient Roman and Orthodox Christianity in a number of theological areas, it still represents the first

⁷ A stele (from Greek: *στήλη*, *stēlē*); also found: Latinised singular stela (and Anglicised plural steles) is a stone or wooden slab, generally taller than it is wide, erected for funerary or commemorative purposes, most usually decorated with the names and titles of the deceased or living—inscribed, carved in relief (bas-relief, sunken-relief, high-relief, etc), or painted onto the slab. Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, “Stele,” online: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stele> (accessed 11 October 2007).

⁸ David Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, (Washington, D.C: Regnery Publishing, Inc., 2003), 20–24.

⁹ A full translation of the stele is available at W.A. Wigram, “An Introduction to the History of the Assyrian Church,” 1909, online: http://www.nestorian.net/mar_adomapan_umra/nessorian_stele.php and is also provided in the Appendices to this dissertation. (accessed 25 June 2007).

documented form of Christianity to reach China. This earliest Christianity in China however, faced a serious setback within a hundred years by a conspiring of the forcible introduction of Islam into Western China and an overall reaction by imperial authorities against *any* new and externally introduced religions.¹⁰ How is this relevant to the prospect of planting a 21st century Chinese-language based church in Southcoast, Massachusetts? We find that many immigrant Chinese, especially intellectuals, are keenly aware of the heritage and culture which they have brought with them. An awareness of this very early introduction of Christianity into the heart of China is valuable for establishing connectivity and linkage among people for whom ancestry is culturally very important. Just being able to reference the Nestorian Stele and say something about it establishes a small tie with anyone from Xian, the capital of Shaanxi province in central China. One further historical finding: there is even a recent (if fanciful) theory put forth by Gavin Menzies that a Chinese treasure fleet landed and briefly settled areas of Massachusetts in 1421.¹¹ This theory has not been accepted or even publicized widely but it adds a colorful and felicitous attraction to the idea of a growing and distinctively Chinese Christian presence in southeastern Massachusetts.

Lin Yutang (1895–1976) represents an intriguing testimony from more recent times, however. Lin studied for his bachelor's degree at Saint John's University in Shanghai, then received a half-scholarship to continue study for a doctoral degree at Harvard University. He left Harvard early however, moving to France and eventually to Germany, where he completed his requirements for a doctoral degree (in Chinese) at the University of Leipzig. From 1923 to 1926 he taught English literature at Peking

¹⁰ Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 24.

¹¹ 1421, "Part VI Annexes - Evidence of Chinese Fleets visit to specific places all round the world," online: <http://www.1421.tv/pages/evidence/content.asp?EvidenceID=343> (accessed 23 August 1007).

University.¹² A classic and well-respected writer, philosopher, translator and author of thirty-five books, Lin made me feel a kinship with his story, a story similar to that of C.S. Lewis and so analogous to some of the Chinese intellectuals I have met. I had not been familiar with him before this research. In his very interesting 1960 book *From Pagan to Christian*, Lin wrote of his own coming to faith in Christ, which he called “the majesty of light,” as a process of discovery of the excellence of who Jesus is:

His [Jesus’] teaching was of a different order from that of previous philosophers. No more the positivism and common sense of Confucius, no more his staid occupation with human relations only, or his counsel of gradual self-cultivation; nor the phantasmagoria of a world of eternal transformations of Taoism, of Being returning to Not-Being; nor the mighty intellectualism of Buddha and his heroic effort at conquest of the perceiving mind, with the hope of escaping into the infinite and the unconditioned.¹³

Coupled with my own experience of leading Bible study with Chinese intellectuals, dialoging with them about the Gospel and the Bible, reading Lin’s story made me appreciate the carefulness and caution with which they approach conversion. Lin also had an aversion to the complications of Christian denominations but marveled at the person of Christ. “The forms are valuable or valueless only as they lead us to that goal which is the fellowship of Christ.”¹⁴ This seems so much like the Chinese Christians I have met in our area and has implications for the very basis of church planting.¹⁵

¹² Wikipedia, “Lin Yutang,” online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lin_Yutang (accessed 4 October 2007).

¹³ Yutang Lin, *From Pagan to Christian*, (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1960), 225, 226.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 240.

¹⁵ Dr. Shouwei Cai, in an e-mail to the author on 1 October 2007, stated, “[Lin Yutang] is a very famous writer, and his journey may represent quite a few of Chinese intellectuals. The author is a son of a Chinese Pastor, and received a Christian education early in age. He departed from Christianity when he was in college and his during his later faculty position in one of the most famous Chinese universities. His journey of searching began there. Lin compared Christianity with other major religions in China through his journey of searching (taking his most part of his life), and he concluded that the Christianity is the Majesty of Light!”

Ecclesiological Goals

Books, articles and internet-based content abound relating to biblical ecclesiology and basic church planting, deriving directly from the philosophy and spirit of the New Testament. There is of course much variation of opinion about what should constitute a new church, what should be its structures and what flavor it should have in style, governance and function. In his classic nineteenth century work on ecclesiology, the Scottish Free Church theologian D. Douglas Bannerman wrote, “The chief end of the Church is to be in this world what Christ Himself was, to do in it what He did, to carry on to final success the great work for which He came from heaven.”¹⁶ That work of course is the proclamation and explanation of the Gospel resulting in the redemption of people, and their assembly into edifying and productive communities. It is essentially the same work as should be the work of modern church planting. Bannerman also suggests the basic approach of the apostles: “The preaching of the apostles to the multitudes consisted essentially in an appeal to plain facts with a few equally plain inferences from them, followed up by a direct and powerful appeal to conscience.”¹⁷ This succinct summary of the apostolic sermons would appeal to Chinese intellectuals and illustrates the kind of straightforward statement to which they can relate.

The qualities that constitute a healthy church have received great attention in publishing in recent years. Stephen Macchia’s book *Becoming a Healthy Church: 10 Characteristics* is widely referenced in church growth studies. In their excellent book on church planting, growth and health Elmer Towns and Warren Bird suggest that church planting strategy is moving away from a numbers-driven church growth emphasis to focus on growing healthy churches. They cite a massive German study on church health (and by implication, relevant to church planting):

¹⁶ D. Douglas Bannerman, *The Scripture Doctrine of the Church—Historically and Exegetically Considered*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 246.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 275.

In perhaps the world's most comprehensive study of church health, German researchers Christian Schwarz and Christolph Schalk have processed more than 4 million survey responses from several thousand churches across more than fifty countries covering six continents. ...they found that not one but many essential qualities are required for a church to be healthy. Schwarz's *Natural Church Development* outlines the leadership, gift-oriented ministry, passionate spirituality, effective structures, inspiring worship services, holistic small groups, need-oriented evangelism, and loving relationships that characterize a church that is naturally healthy.¹⁸

They suggest a few very basic but fresh principles for infusing healthy qualities into a new church:

1. Develop a passion to reach lost people.
2. Follow the ministry model of Jesus (build, equip, win, multiply.)
3. Identify your purpose (tying in with Rick Warren's emphasis on purpose development and articulation.)
4. Determine to remain culturally relevant.¹⁹

Bill Hybels writes from the unique experience of founding the Willow Creek Community Church and writes out of that endeavor:

I've been convinced to the core of my soul that biblically functioning communities can and will flourish again. It's not going to happen because we're talented or special or because we have all the answers or because we're laser-age technocrats who create the right environment for it. It will come about because the Bible says it ought to happen, and the Bible is absolutely true.²⁰

¹⁸ Christian Schwarz and Christolph Schalk, *Natural Church Development* (Kelowna, B.C.: International Center for Leadership Development and Evangelism, 1998), 200, cited in Elmer Towns and Warren Bird, *Into the Future* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 2000), 27.

¹⁹ Ibid, Towns and Bird, 28–34.

²⁰ Bill and Lynn Hybels, *Rediscovering Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 184.

Hybels observes that “in addition to all of the biblical characteristics that are supposed to mark a community of believers, there are certain tenets that are especially distinct in these churches...” articulated in ten distinguishing core values:

1. Anointed teaching is the primary catalyst for transformation in the lives of individuals and in the church.
2. Lost people matter to God and therefore ought to matter to the church.
3. The church should be culturally relevant, while remaining doctrinally pure.
4. Christ’s followers should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth.
5. The church should operate as a unified community of servants stewarding their spiritual gifts.
6. Loving relationships should penetrate every aspect of church life.
7. Life change happens best in small groups.
8. Excellence honors God and inspires people.
9. Churches should be led by those with leadership gifts.
10. Full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer.²¹

Even though this research studies three existing Chinese evangelical churches, we found that all of the Chinese Christian leaders we encountered hold to these same basic values and are trying to incorporate them into their churches.

Ecclesiological goals which derive from Scripture itself are also would appeal greatly to the Chinese Christian leaders we met. Robert Deffinbaugh offers an elegantly simple and useful summary of New Testament images which we cite here in part, and which give a New Testament flavor of the “church.”

These images should provide a picture of the mission of every church planting mission:

(1) The body of Christ, of which our Lord is the Head (Rom 12:5; 1 Cor 12:12; Eph 1:22-23; Col 1:24). With this analogy Paul emphasizes both the unity of the body and the individuality of each particular member.

²¹ Ibid, 184–194.

(2) The Temple of God. Again, the church is referred to in Scripture as the temple of God. Each individual Christian is a stone, all of which make up the temple, still under construction, and our Lord Jesus Christ is the Chief or Cornerstone (1 Cor 3:16; Eph 2:19; 1 Pet 2:5f). The temple is the place where God dwells, so that the church is the dwelling place of God. God not only dwells in each Christian individually, but in all Christians corporately.

(3) The Bride of Christ. Another description of the church is that of the bride of Christ (2 Cor 11:2; Eph 5:22f; Rev 19:7; 22:17). Here we have emphasis upon the love of Christ for His church, and His full and adequate provision for His bride.

(4) The Flock of God. The church is also described as the flock of God (John 10:22f; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 5:2). Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Shepherd of the flock. Here we are reminded of His loving and tender care for His church, in feeding, leading, and protecting it from harm.

(5) The Vine and the Branches. The last analogy which we will consider in this message is that of the Vine and the branches (John 15:1f). Here our Lord Jesus is described as the source of life and power and fruit for the Christian.

All of these images or analogies indicate the most intimate relationship between our Lord Jesus Christ and His body, the church.²²

As most Christians, Chinese Christians honor the ecclesiological goals of attempting to fulfill the pictures of body, temple, bride, flock and vine as illustrated here. They desire nothing less than the fullest expression and demonstration possible of such imagery. A question that is pondered is: are we planting a Chinese church in America or are we planting an American church with Chinese people? What are the distinctively Chinese cultural characteristics that would carry over into a Chinese-American church? What aspects of American ecclesiology will be utilized?

The concept of planting a Chinese-language based church where there are Chinese people flows from a New Testament standpoint, coupled with a basic ecclesiological understanding of appropriate goals, and united with an appreciation for the longstanding nobility of Chinese Christianity to begin with. The challenges and

²² Deffinbaugh, Bob. "Introduction to the New Testament Church," online: http://www.bible.org/page.php?page_id=417 (accessed 1 August 2007).

questions to be answered are more practical than theoretical. God wishes His gospel to be proclaimed “even to the remotest part of the earth.” Southcoast begins to qualify as “remote”—especially when people from even remoter areas begin to make homes here. Alongside Southcoast congregations with Christians speaking English, Portuguese, Spanish, Creole and other languages, Chinese will accommodate a new fellowship of believers in Jesus Christ. Vision is important, and as Alvin Louie, quoting Malphurs notes, “The process of church planting begins with vision. Without vision, ministry organization and church planting will go nowhere.”²³ If good environmental features, favorable conditions, adequate preparations and resources and a sufficient sense of the right parameters can be brought together, the vision is compelling for planting a new Chinese-language based evangelical church in Southcoast, Massachusetts.

The focus of this dissertation is to develop three case studies of existing Chinese-language based evangelical church ministries in southern New England and its transferable factors. Our five explorative hypotheses are once again queried.

Basic Issues

The first step in researching this project was to attempt to gain some global and historical perspective on the Chinese people and those immigrating to the United States. There is a fascinating and often heart-moving history and also a great challenge to try to appreciate from a wholly western background which I possess.

²³ Alvin Louie, “Case Studies of the Mother-Daughter Model of Church Planting in North American Chinese Churches,” (D. Min. diss., Dallas Theological Seminary, 1995), 133, quoting Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century (A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal)* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992).

Understanding the Importance and Uniqueness of Chinese Intellectuals

Current statistics indicate that of the world's approximate 6.6 billion people, 1.3 billion live in China (just under 20 per cent.)²⁴ According to a recent article in *Time* magazine, this includes approximately 200 million young adults "under the age of 30, a demographic cohort that serves as a bridge between the closed, xenophobic China of the Mao years and the globalized economic powerhouse that it's becoming. China's twentysomethings are the drivers and chief beneficiaries of the country's current boom...whose incomes grew by 34 per cent in the past three years."²⁵ With the compelling sub-heading "The new middle class is young, rich and happy. Just don't mention politics," the same article declares that, unlike the previous generation one quarter of all twentysomethings in China have now attended college.²⁶ China's rapid rise currently to becoming a significant world economic presence was highlighted in a recent lecture on our campus at U.Mass.Dartmouth by the former head of state and President of the Republic of Cape Verde, His Excellency Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro. He said, "China is contending with the West for a significant presence in the emerging markets of Africa."²⁷ China is moving outward and is possessed of a long, complex and fascinating history. Its current political and social scene proceeds from the rise of Mao Zedong's vision for a socialist/communist society before and after World War II, although changes are occurring almost yearly. Few seem aware that China suffered roughly the same number of military deaths during that war as Japan and as well, according to one source,

²⁴ GeoHive, "Global Statistics," web site: <http://www.geohive.com/default1.aspx>, accessed 24 September 2007, and U.S. Census Bureau, "Population Clock," online: <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html> (accessed 24 September 2007).

²⁵ Simon Elegant, "China's Me Generation," in *Time*, 5 November 2007, 48.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

²⁷ His Excellency Antonio Mascarenhas Monteiro, first democratically elected President (1991-2001) of the Republic of Cape Verde, and current Lloyd G. Balfour African President-in-Residence at Boston University's African Presidential Archives and Research Center (APARC) in a lecture heard by the author at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, on 1 October 2007. President Monteiro made several striking references to China's growing influence.

an astonishing approximate total of 19,605,000 total deaths²⁸, a figure which is second only to the Soviet Union. Today, the more the Chinese presence in western societies is studied, the more impressed we become with the importance and strategic value of ministering the Gospel among them and accommodating the need for new Chinese churches in the United States. Often Chinese intellectuals, while abroad, retain strong family and business ties back to China and do not forfeit their presence and influence there. They present a unique challenge to minister the Gospel to them while abroad with the prospect for fruitful ministry and even a resultant multiplication that could occur eventually back to China itself. Indeed, China has for some time been its own missionary-sending country as for instance in the “Back to Jerusalem” movement, a large ministry endeavor which began in the late 1920s and continues today. Their vision statement:

The BTJ vision is a passion for the house churches of China. We pray about it daily, dream about it, and talk about it over breakfast, lunch and dinner. The Back to Jerusalem vision is not some small trivial matter for us, but the driving force of our lives and ministries. Many feel it is God’s ultimate call and destiny for the Chinese Church, the very reason they exist! Back to Jerusalem is not some kind of end-times theory. We have no plans to rush to Israel. Rather, BTJ refers to a call from God for the Chinese Church to preach the Gospel and establish fellowships of believers in all the countries, cities, towns, and ethnic groups between China and Jerusalem. This vision is no small task, for within those nations lay the three largest spiritual strongholds in the world today that have yet to be conquered by the Gospel: the giants of Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism.²⁹

Ministry to and by Chinese immigrants in America historically begins in California. Alvin Louie’s dissertation research started there and provided a good basis for

²⁸ Ho Ping-ti. *Studies on the Population of China, 1368–1953* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959); Referenced at *Wikipedia: the Free Encyclopedia*, “World War II Casualties,” online: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II_casualties (accessed 21 October 2007).

²⁹ *Back to Jerusalem*, online: www.backtojerusalem.com/vision/ (accessed 11 October 2007).

study of several aggressive and successful Chinese church plants,³⁰ all on the mother-daughter model for beginning new churches. In fact, Louie's dissertation itself was the closest single source of "previous research" to this actual research focus that I found, although his study does not specifically relate to New England which encompasses a somewhat unique field for ministry in the United States. Nonetheless, Louie's work queried many of the same questions related to my study. His thorough and exhaustive summary of Chinese church plants in California and the Toronto, Canada area was very helpful.³¹

In New England, one of the earliest Chinese ministries would be the current Chinese Christian Church of New England which traces to the end of the nineteenth century in Boston and is now located in Brookline, Massachusetts. In 1896, Baptists and Congregationalists started a mission together in Chinatown, known as the Chinese Christian Church. In 1946, that ministry was joined by Methodists, Episcopalians and Presbyterians and established the Chinese Christian Church of New England. In 1975, CCCNE relocated to Brookline. This interdenominational (and non-Pentecostal) mission effort has yielded a church today in excess of one thousand people—very large by New England Protestant measures. Their mission statement is well-worded, inviting and succinct:

The purpose of our Church is to serve God:
by confessing the unity of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; by helping the congregation worship the triune God in a variety of ways; by enjoying Christian fellowship together; by growing together in the Christian faith; and by bringing the good news of salvation to our Chinese people so that we might all receive Jesus Christ as our own personal Lord and Savior, and by helping the congregation meet the human needs; by helping immigrants adjust to their new life in America in the light of the

³⁰ Louie, Alvin, "Case Studies of the Mother-Daughter Model of Church Planting in North American Chinese Churches."

³¹ Ibid.

gospel of Jesus Christ and our Asian heritage; by promoting social justice and righteousness within our community; and by helping the congregation exert a prophetic influence upon the community.³²

The investigation into Chinese ministry resources was greatly useful as background for approaching the three subject churches to learn how they began. In some ways the literature overlapped what would be found for American church planting. On the other hand Chinese church planting is unique for the people being reached, their displacement and second generation issues and for the unique opportunity we presently possess.

Previous printed research relating specifically to Chinese ministries in New England was very limited. Internet sources were more available and helpful though expectedly most of these are in Chinese. Predictably the interviews that were granted were most useful in this research although they were less easy to obtain than anticipated. While the Chinese Christians are very determined and passionate about the work of the Gospel they are also somewhat guarded. It was evident that their leaders are often overworked and the need for focused leadership training is obvious. Their hopefulness about the prospects for growth are evident and they have been a joy to work with and from whom to learn.

This research was heavily assisted by e-mail contacts and internet resource availability. Although we are very aware of the volatile nature of internet web sources the most up to date and freshest information on ongoing ministries is available there. The interviews were also essential along with the follow-up contacts for clarifications.

Along the way we became aware of the possibility which we hope to see occur, for receiving assistance from Chinese Christian leaders from other places in the planting of a church in Southcoast Massachusetts. This is only now starting to occur. We

³² Chinese Christian Church of New England, online: http://ccne.org/mission_mission.htm (accessed 4 January 2007).

can only hope and pray that God will send the Southcoast area what is needed, and grant the wisdom as the coming months and years unfold.

Retired Kansas State University Professor Robert Taussig, a long-time Christian worker among international students noted in a recent e-mail,

I continue to marvel at the marvelous cultural aspects of Mainland Chinese people. So few of my co-laborers seem to grasp how much we need to learn about this marvelous people in order to effectively share Christ with them. We currently see many of these young people in their late 20s up to the early 40s genuinely receive the Lord and submit to baptism. We also deplore the wasted fruit as we fail to properly disciple the new believers.³³

Basic Features of the Specific Local Environment

Certain basic features of the specific local **environment** will accommodate the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church in a selected area, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. The website for the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention asserts that “According to the 2000 U.S. Census, there are 2.7 million Chinese-Americans” and offers the opinion that “the Chinese market in North America has reached a critical mass, and businesses and organizations are paying attention to that trend.”³⁴ The same web site summarizes the challenge with reaching Chinese Americans evangelistically:

Although atheism is promoted in China, the Chinese-American community consists of people from many different religious backgrounds and beliefs: Christians, Muslims, Taoists, Buddhists, Confucianists and so on. Ancestral worship is common and is practiced in combination with rituals and beliefs

³³ Robert Taussig, e-mail to author, 27 August, 2007. Professor Taussig is a retired faculty member (veterinary science) at Kansas State University, who, along with his wife Mary, have sustained an important and long-term ministry and outreach to international students in that university community, particularly to Chinese. In 2003 they referred to us one of the Chinese intellectuals now attending our church. Dr. Taussig provided great enthusiasm and unanticipated interest to this research.

³⁴ North American Mission Board, “Church Planting Village,” online: http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/site/c.iiJTKZPEJpH/b.991903/k.815D/Chinese_American_Missions.htm (accessed 22 August 2007).

borrowed from Buddhism, Taoism and/or Confucianism. Chinese-Americans tend to work hard to keep their lives in harmony. Respect is very important. The good news is that God is raising a growing number of churches to reach out to Chinese Americans.³⁵

Areas dense in Chinese population, like Chinatown in Boston, will find a rich potential for planting a Chinese church. However our area is a mix of rural and suburban. Situated between two 100,000+ cities, Dartmouth is a large rural seacoast town. With a population of about 31,000 Dartmouth³⁶ includes the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth as well as the Southern New England School of Law among its several communities.

Another general consideration is that historically, and on a national scale, Asian Americans have experienced racism from parts of the resident population. This may be true in many areas of the country, as is spoken of by Lee in his essay on marginality. Lee wrote,

For Asian Americans, race appears to be the all-important factor for their dehumanization...the general impression in the American public at large and even in some quarters of Asian American communities is that the white racism against Asian Americans is minimal at most and is quickly decreasing. One reason for this is the myth of Asian Americans as the so-called model minority, disseminated widely by the mass media, according to which the economic and educational successes of many Asian immigrants prove that they are not really discriminated against and that America is still a land of opportunity.³⁷

This dramatic characterization however, seems largely untrue in modern Southcoast Massachusetts. Southcoast is extremely diverse in its ethnic makeup,

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ City-Data.com, "Dartmouth Massachusetts," online: <http://www.city-data.com/city/Dartmouth-Massachusetts.html> (accessed 22 August 2007).

³⁷ Sang Hyun Lee, "Marginality as Coerced Liminality," in *Realizing the America in Our Hearts*, ed. Fumitaka Matsuoka and Eleazar S. Fernandez (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2003), 19.

including thousands of Portuguese, Cape Verdean, French, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Brazilian, Indian, African-American, Puerto-Rican and other groups as well as Chinese alongside the Caucasian majority. Indeed, this area—famous for its legacy of Frederick Douglass, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry, a whaling and textile industry indwelt by people from many races and cultures--even seems like a haven from racism to many local residents. Prospects for a successful and welcomed Chinese congregation appear very positive from a sociological perspective. While Chinese immigrants in many other places in America have historically struggled with local racism, indeed the Southcoast area has been by this researcher's observation mostly free of it.

While university communities often offer good potential for planting a Chinese ministry, the transience of the Chinese community necessitates a careful planting of an adequate permanent core of believers. ACCC, like Dartmouth Bible Church, lies on the very edge of the University of Massachusetts (at Amherst). In their beginning in the late 1960s, there was a simple Bible study in a dormitory on campus. Other aspects of the target area for a potential Chinese church would include general educational opportunities available to Chinese immigrants, civil liberties that might be new to them, and their mobility in the areas where they live. Questions of whether they are of an urban or rural background might bear on their interest in involvement with a Christian church. Finally, the environment for church planting may have provided opportunities for evangelism among secondary Chinese groups.

Finally, something should be said about the general density of evangelical churches in a given area. If an environment is rich with many evangelical churches, or rich with such churches within certain specific ethnic or immigrant groups (as certain urban areas appear to hold numerous Korean ministries, for instance), justification for additional or new ministries seems questionable. New England however, possesses far fewer evangelical Christians and evangelical ministries than other regions of the United States. This includes Chinese ministries. If New England in general contains

approximately 85,000 people of Chinese heritage, and if that number appears to be increasing, there is room for many more Chinese ministries. This seems especially true in Southcoast, Massachusetts although as we have noted, some Chinese Christians are content to integrate into existing evangelical churches.

Favorable Conditions for a Successful Church Plant

If what goes on in Beijing has any transfer equivalent to this country, then the observation by David Aikman is compelling. Aikman notes,

A Peking graduate student of religious studies spent a summer on a sociological project trying to find out how many study groups or house churches there were in the Chaoyang District of Beijing, a locality heavily populated by students, scholars, and professionals. She concluded that there were at least 20,000 small groups (sometimes as small as three or four people) in this area of Beijing alone, and that large numbers of these were Christian groups.³⁸

In thirty years of ministry, I have seldom seen such spiritual hunger in any one immigrant group as we are seeing among the Chinese in our area. There are several specific **conditions** that need to be satisfied before the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church can occur, such as some found in our research:

1. General interest level.
2. Finding a suitable location for meetings.
3. Identification of what those initial meetings would be?
4. Deciding on a minimal number of permanent Chinese speaking residents.
5. Identifying the level of adequate theological awareness (and how that was decided).
6. Discovering the sense of theological unity among the start-up core group of believers.

³⁸ Aikman, *Jesus in Beijing*, 252, 253.

Also, since the southern New England area is so predominantly Roman Catholic, the question of attitude toward Catholicism was briefly considered, though no literature or even acknowledgement for this interface could be found relevant to our area.

A secondary survey (see appendix B) sought to learn if there are local Chinese Christians who would like to see a new Chinese church in this area. With a limited number of respondents, the answer seems in the affirmative.

The limited histories of each of the subject churches, gleaned from their websites, revealed that each church's original founders perceived conditions to be generally favorable for an attempt to plant a new church. None of the churches possessed a written history of their fellowship, at least not in English. What documentation could be obtained from the leaders or by visiting the churches was collected. This included church bulletins, posters and a few brochures. As expected most available literature is written in Chinese, some with English and Chinese. ACCC's weekly bulletin includes this summary statement of their purpose:

“Welcome to the Amherst Chinese Christian Church (ACCC). We are a Bible-based non-denominational church. Our goal is to reach out and spread the gospel to the Chinese people as well as Asian descents in Amherst and the surrounding areas. If you are a Christian who is search for a church, we hope ACCC can become your spiritual home. If you are a seeker, may you find the truth in this Church and get to know Jesus Christ. Regardless of your religious background, we hope you can be a part of us, that we may grow together in this spiritual path.”³⁹

Interviews with each of the subject church's leaders made it clear that the original conditions were favorable or even somewhat urgent to begin a new church. The interviews were the crucial source of information and I kept a journal for the site visits. The two conditions listed above, theological awareness and unity, gave little concern as

³⁹ Amherst Chinese Christian Church, *Weekly Bulletin*, (Amherst, Massachusetts, 25 March 2007).

they originally assumed. Indeed, unlike American evangelicalism where there are many variations and camps within the movement, evangelical Chinese Americans seem to two camps, general evangelical and charismatic-evangelical. Regional loyalties from the Asian continent are noted but largely not factored into church planting, other than the obvious distinction of Mandarin or Cantonese languages. Larger Chinese churches sometimes offer services and study groups in both dialects.⁴⁰ Which language is predominant seems to be dependent on that which is dominant in the area of the church plant. Denominational boundaries and precedents seem almost non-existent among any of the Chinese churches in New England of which we became aware.

I discovered that the Chinese leaders I met possessed a satisfaction in the planting of their churches. They testified to God's leading and that He had provided what was needed, at the time that it was needed. They are less sophisticated than their evangelical American brethren when it comes to expectations but no less serious or willing to trust God, perhaps even more willing.

Preparations that Need to be Made

Important **preparations** need to be completed in advance of the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. Our research will consider what advertisements, if any, were used, what promotional tactics were utilized, was anything agreed upon and communicated regarding a cooperative standard between mainland-born, Taiwanese-born, Hong Kong-born, etc.) How was a pastor found and what form of church polity was utilized? Were children's ministries anticipated, provided for? Was handicap accessibility an issue, and was it provided for at all? Media provisions (Bibles, equipment, Sunday School materials, etc.) were explored.

⁴⁰ Such as Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, online: <http://www.bcec.net> (accessed 30 September 2006).

Those interested in ministering to Chinese intellectuals and their families should gain some acquaintance with Chinese culture and some of the issues attendant to immigration from China. A basic article was prepared by Ted Pricskett in 1993. In it he informs of a number of vital preparations that are needed. Beginning with an understanding of political events and changes within China since the Tiananmen Square incident in 1989, a minister to Chinese intellectuals needs to see that opposition to Christianity changed to openness was originally. Chinese intellectual investigations into Christianity resulted in a significant expansion of Christianity within China and abroad. Pricskett says, “Those trying to reach this special group [intellectuals] should be well-versed in Confucian classics and be living lives that truly reflect the character of Jesus. Appreciation of Chinese culture and holy lives are important keys in reaching intellectuals.”⁴¹

Steve Pike, National Church Planting Director for the Assemblies of God, suggested in 2005 ten things that need to be done in preparation to plant a new church—any church. These include establishment of a prayer team and meaningful connections for the planters with other leaders who have planted churches, good leadership planning to cultivate agenda harmony and common vision, holding a “partnering party” to which sympathetic pastors in the area would be invited, provision of effective orientation for the prospective planters and the highlighting of the general need to trust God to lead and provide in the church planting enterprise. Pike believes that “any healthy church can parent a new church.”⁴² This example is representative of the general internet articles that exist among more prominent denominational organizations.

⁴¹ Ted Pricskett, “Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel” in *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* January 1993, 58–65.

⁴² Steve Pike, “Preparing for Partnering: Top Ten Things Your Church Can Do To Prepare to Parent or Partner to Plant a Church,” Assemblies of God Church Planting, online: <http://churchplanting.ag.org/PDF/stevepike/Preparing%20for%20Parenting.pdf> (accessed 19 January 2008).

General trends among Asian American churches also bear investigation. L² (“L squared”) is a private foundation that “seeks to develop the leadership and legacy of Asian Americans by providing support and resources. D.J. Chuang of L² recently published a very useful survey entitled “Asian American Churches: An Introductory Survey,”⁴³ in which 46% of 190 invited churches participated. (Chuang states that of 300,000 churches in the United States an estimated 7,000 have a majority attendance of Asians.) Major findings of this survey reveal that,

1. Currently Asian churches are diversifying ethnically with 34% now being comprised of more than one ethnic group and 79% reporting at least 10% non-Asian attendance.
2. 51% of surveyed churches are less than 250 people but 12% are more than 1,000 people.
3. Churches are reaching multiple generations with 42% having at least 50% first generation Asians and 59% having at least 59% second generation Asians.
4. A significant interest in further church planting, with 61% reporting plans to launch daughter congregations and 31% who already have done so.
5. Many Asian churches have an evident missionary zeal, with 84% having sent out short-term mission teams, 74% financially supporting missionaries, and 61% having sent out career missionaries.⁴⁴

At any time when the planting of a Chinese church is being considered, the preparations should be informed of the current conditions in China itself. Events and conditions in the home country are generally of interest to immigrants. Currently it is suggested that the atmosphere for religion is changing and becoming more open. A move away from traditional Marxist attitudes about religion is being detected as the nation attempts to move towards what is perceived to be a more harmonious socialist society—one more accommodating to religion in general. Christianity in specific, as the vehicle of a national appeal for good behavior is being seen as a platform “to replace the moral void

⁴³ D.J. Chuang, “Asian American Churches: An Introductory Survey,” May 2007, Leadership Network, online: http://www.leadnet.org/downloads/file_455.pdf. (accessed 19 January 2008).

⁴⁴ Ibid, Chuang.

left when the [Communist] party long ago jettisoned historical Chinese values and, more recently, loosened the sipped-tight social strictures of communism, under Mao Zedong. Religion, the party has decided, can also be useful in encouraging social harmony because it urges its followers to hew to a moral code.”⁴⁵ Under this same topic of current trends and conditions, a longer series of articles appeared in *Newsweek* highlighting the growing watchfulness of China’s metamorphosis in the world community driven by internal shifts. In an interesting article in this series, “Mao to Now,” Melinda Liu speculates that much of the shifting is economically driven. She wrote, “A lot of people think Tiananmen was all about democracy. They’re wrong. Economics had a big role. After a decade of impressive but halting economic reforms, inflation was running wild, and although farmers were making money for once, city dwellers were lagging—especially on university campuses where labs and classrooms were as decrepit as the housing.”⁴⁶ For whatever confluence of reasons, testimony is clear that China is in a time of some change and this has effect on Chinese intellectuals in the United States and elsewhere. Prospects for church planting are affected by this too as Chinese Christians arrive in greater numbers and are more open to Christian ideas.

Alvin Louie’s 1995 dissertation exemplifies preparations to be considered for utilizing the mother-daughter model for church planting. He summarizes several Chinese church plants and for each surveys what was the vision, philosophy of ministry, leadership, support, demographics, implementation plan and core group used. He developed his own thorough questionnaire which he used with his case studies.⁴⁷ Perhaps most helpful was his Chapter IX, “Suggestions and Implications for Future Study” in

⁴⁵ Edward Cody, “China’s Leaders Change Tactics Toward Religion,” in *The Washington Post*, January 20, 2008, A21.

⁴⁶ Melinda Liu, “Mao to Now,” in *Newsweek* magazine, Special Issue, January 7, 2008, 43.

⁴⁷ Ibid, Louie, 323 ff.

which he offers ideas for application from his subject churches and their plants. These will be considered in the next chapter.

Since many of the potential Chinese in this area for enfolded into a Chinese church are Chinese intellectuals, it will be valuable to collect resources of a testimonial nature about the path of conversion to Christianity. Resources which evidence some intellectual processing of an apologetics nature would be particularly helpful. Like Yutang Lin's *From Pagan to Christian*, such a book is the more recent *Song of a Wanderer: Beckoned by Eternity* by Li Cheng. Written in 1998 the English edition appeared in 2002 and gives a comprehensive apologetic for the veracity of the Christian message. Cheng graduated from Beijing University and then the Chinese Academy of Services with his Master's degree in 1982 and then from the Michigan State University with his Ph.D. in 1987. He chronicles his move from atheism to a full belief in Christianity through a more thorough study of the idea of the existence of God, the Bible as the inspired Word of God, the evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and other topics related to modern science and Christianity, creation versus evolution and the general Christian world-view. Cheng states that other Christian professors and a beginning by attendance at a Chinese Bible study near Case Western Reserve University were instrumental in his own initial consideration of the claims of Christ. The humility of the leader of that study impressed Cheng as he gently directed him, "Your problems are not unusual. When we first became Christians we encountered them as well. The only solution to these problems [Cheng's objections] is to study and learn more. When you begin to have a deeper knowledge of the Bible and Christianity, it won't be too late then to decide to accept or not."⁴⁸ This book was a representative and useful resource as a

⁴⁸ Li Cheng, *Song of a Wanderer: Beckoned By Eternity*, (Paradise, Pennsylvania: Ambassadors for Christ, Inc., 2004 second English edition of the Chinese simplified script, 1998), 388.

preparatory testimony and as a tool to make available. Cheng's testimony is similar to that of many of the Chinese intellectuals we have met at U.Mass.Dartmouth.

Survey development and interview information were primary for my study. Word of mouth notification among Chinese contacts and via the internet were also exploited for exposure. As well, the Directory of churches and ministries that we learned about at ACCC was helpful for accommodating the original search for information.

Significant Parameters that Need to be Recognized

A number of significant **parameters** will be recognized in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. These would include,

1. The establishment of well-articulated and measurable goals.
2. Questions about preparatory training (biblically and theologically) of the beginning leadership team?
3. How strong a desire and sense of determination did the original church members possess?
4. Were any expectations for financial support communicated?
5. Was any measurable degree of regular attendance at regular services expected, and of whom?

Louie's dissertation provided a complete and thorough survey of literature regarding church planting in general. Introducing the very specific question of the mother-daughter church planting concept and in preparing a questionnaire, first of all, Louie considers fully seven writers on their steps and phases in church planting. These writers begin with Donald MacNair (*The Birth, Care and Feeding of a Local Church*) which suggests 3 "phases."⁴⁹ Eight steps were envisioned by Ezra Earl Jones (*New*

⁴⁹ Donald MacNair, *The Birth, Care and Feeding of a Local Church*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), 196.

Church Development in the Eighties).⁵⁰ Louie notes this represents the approach taken by a mainline denomination.⁵¹ From an older Southern Baptist approach, Jack Redford (*Planting New Churches*) suggests nine steps.⁵² Donald McGavran, considered by many a “father of the church growth movement,” states seven steps in *Try These Seven Steps for Planting Churches* in a 1981 edition of “Global Church Growth Bulletin.”⁵³ In addition, Peter Wagner gives seven steps in *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest*⁵⁴ in 1990, Larry Lewis (also a Southern Baptist) offered nine steps in *The Church Planter’s Handbook*⁵⁵ in 1992. Finally Louie summarizes Aubrey Malphurs four-part approach in his 1992 *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century*.⁵⁶ Louie feels that in these seven authors “there were found more similarities than differences in the planting of a church.”⁵⁷ His summary concludes with his own questionnaire which studies seven steps for planting a church.

Step One: What is the vision for a new church and how has it been communicated?

⁵⁰ Ezra Earl Jones, editor, *New Church Development in the Eighties* (Cincinnati: The National Division Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 1978), 11.

⁵¹ In particular, Louie summarized Jones’ succinct and clarifying points which are helpful: (1) Why organize a new congregation? (2) The need for a brief theological statement under-girding the purpose of the new congregation, (3) The purpose of the new congregation? (4) The type of congregation to be organized, (5) How will specific ministries be set up by the new congregation? (6) What are some goals for the new congregation for the first year? (7) What ways will be first-year goals be accomplished and with what means? (8) The role of a pastor to the new congregation? (9) The sources of financial support and the length of time for any new subsidy.

⁵² Jack Redford, *Planting New Churches*, (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), 34ff.

⁵³ Donald A. McGavran, “Try These Seven Steps for Planting Churches”, in *Global Church Growth Bulletin* 18 (May-June 1981), 110.

⁵⁴ C. Peter Wagner, *Church Planting for a Greater Harvest* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1990), 27.

⁵⁵ Larry Lewis, *The Church Planter’s Handbook*, (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1992), 17–23.

⁵⁶ Aubrey Malphurs, *Planting Growing Churches for the 21st Century – A Comprehensive Guide for New Churches and Those Desiring Renewal*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992, 233ff.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, Louie, 98–131.

Step Two: What is the preliminary mission design (philosophy of ministry)?

Step Three: What will the leadership of the new church look like?

Step Four: How will the new church be supported? (which assumes a critical contribution from the “mother” church.)

Step Five: What will the physical demographics look like for the new church?

Step Six: What will be the first steps in implementing the church plant?

Step Seven: What will be the makeup of the initial core group?⁵⁸

Resources Required to Successfully Plant a Chinese Church

Various **resources** will be required in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants and by what written material could be found. We found no shortage of online resources available to assist a church planter or a core team interested in beginning a new ministry. The Chinese are quite adept at utilizing internet capabilities to their fullest. Since many Chinese intellectuals are fully computer-educated, they tend to depend as much on internet tools as printed.

This serves as one suggestive outline for the kinds of topics and issues that might be considered in a church planting project and evidences what other new churches have found important. It also illustrates useful website content. Even the Southern Baptist specific material could be helpful in introducing new church leaders to the concept of meaningful association. Rajendra Pillai, on the same website, offered a succinct and useful guide for Americans wishing to befriend Chinese intellectuals (See Appendix E.)

Another resource which became evident was the attendance of various Christian conferences developed by, run by and promoted by Chinese Christians themselves. In the time of this research we have been made aware of several regional conferences specifically aimed at Chinese-American Christians. We attended one evening

⁵⁸ Ibid, Louie, 132–149.

of a youth conference entitled simply “Storm” at ROLCC. A large “revival” conference on apologetics and topics in Christian Living was held on the campus of Roger Williams University in Rhode Island. It was sponsored by Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (CBCGB) and entitled “Let’s Rise and Build Up the Body of Christ.”⁵⁹ Our own church also hosted a small Friday evening conference for Chinese Christians and seekers in our area in March 2007 with Drs. William Chung-Kuo Ho and Esther Fai-Wan Su. The evening event featured presentations in both English and Mandarin on marriage, creation/evolution and sharing personal stories and testimonies. It was attended by about 30 people. This husband and wife team travels internationally and brings high academic credentials (he is a medical doctor and she a Ph.D. biochemist), a warm and inviting style and interesting visual aids. Interestingly, their four children all possess Ph.D.s as well as each their own vital testimony.⁶⁰

Reading through the website for the Evangelical Free Church of America Eastern District⁶¹ section on Chinese ministries provides a good sampling of four Chinese ministries in the greater New York City area: First Ithaca Chinese Christian Church,⁶² begun in 1983; a church plant at Second EFC of Brooklyn which saw ten conversions in 2006;⁶³ New York Chinese EFC which started in 1999 and now has 63 members and 130 attending, which grew out of Dorcas Ministries, a non-profit outreach to the garment

⁵⁹ Shouwei Cai, e-mail to the author, 10 October 2007.

⁶⁰ For example, the website of their youngest son, Dr. Sean Ho, who is a mathematics professor at Trinity Western University, online: www.seanho.com (accessed 8 October 2007). The other three grown children are Drs. Samuel Ho (computer science), Adina (genetics and psychology), and Susanna Isabel Ho Chou (M.D. and Ph.D., molecular genetics.) A 2001 interview with the whole family is available at <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v24/i1/genius.asp> (accessed 11 October 2007).

⁶¹ Evangelical Free Church of America Eastern District, online: <http://www.edaefca.org/urban6.asp> (accessed 23 August 2007).

⁶² First Ithaca Chinese Christian Church, online: www.immanuel.net/sites/ficcc (accessed 23 August 2007).

⁶³ Evangelical Free Church of America Eastern District, online: <http://www.edaefca.org/urban6.asp>.

industry and located in Brooklyn. This ministry currently focuses on English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for 100, to children through a Vacation Bible School and utilization of computers to teach computer literacy.⁶⁴

Perhaps the most critical resource needed is to establish a sufficient core group of permanent or semi-permanent believers. What was the number and nature of that core of leadership? Chinese-speaking pastors who possess adequate theological training are few compared to the number of Chinese churches and fellowships in New England. Staff pastors needed to work with youth, discipleship, worship, counseling, Christian education and visitation are also hard to find, strongly suggesting a need for training of more pastors and leaders.

Other resource questions needed answering. What kind of a financial base was needed and what facility needs were found to be available? Was adequate transportation made available?

Most churches soon find the need for the ministry of pastoral counseling. One article states however, that “Our survey of the experience and attitudes towards counseling shows us that generally speaking, Chinese pastors regard pastoral counseling as subsidiary, less important, but a necessary function in their overall portfolio.”⁶⁵ All three pastoral leaders in the subject churches perform pastoral counseling.

It was stated by Professor Lu (ACCC) that the offering of English classes has proven to be a helpful attraction. Dartmouth Bible Church has offered such a class for several years. As a desired resource to offer to the public, such classes are beneficial and would only attract people, some who might not otherwise investigate a church. Also in an

⁶⁴ Ibid, and www.dorcas-nyc.org (Chinese).

⁶⁵ Vincent Poon, *3 Pastoral Counseling Among Chinese Churches – A Canadian Study*, in *The Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, Winter 2003, Vol. 57, No. 4, posted on the Hudson Taylor Center of Tyndale University, 401, online: [http://www.hudson-taylor-centre.com/mandarin/article/JPCC_57\(2003\)/JPCC_57\(2003\).html](http://www.hudson-taylor-centre.com/mandarin/article/JPCC_57(2003)/JPCC_57(2003).html) (accessed 22 August 2007).

interview held with Ida Liao,⁶⁶ a Chinese Bible study host working in the Bridgewater, Massachusetts area, she proposed that an introductory library of Chinese Christian literature provided to the Chinese Christian community in Southcoast at the outset would be well received. ROLCCB provides such a library. As well, a similar library resource service is now being assembled through Ambassadors for Christ, an interstate ministry “reaching Chinese intellectuals for Christ in this generation.”⁶⁷ Many good and popular books on Christian living, theology, the family, etc. originally published in English and now translated into Chinese are available from AFC. This website also includes a searchable directory of Chinese churches, Bible studies and ministries in the U.S.

A Fundamental Assumption

While not an actual hypothesis, and separate from the above conditions, parameters and resources is the matter of whether the existing Chinese-speaking population in fact *desires* a new Chinese-speaking evangelical church to be planted. Since all of those queried indicated in the affirmative, this became the fundamental assumption at the outset of research. It is natural for Christians to crave fellowship, and if possible in the easiest possible environment where they will be most comfortable. If the desire for a new church is present then, other questions arise such as should that church be completely independent from its inception, should it be built on the mother-daughter model or formally associated and supported by denominational resources?

⁶⁶ Ida Liao, interview by author, Dartmouth, MA, 12 August 2007.

⁶⁷ Ambassadors for Christ, online: www.afcinc.org (accessed 10 October 2007).

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURE AND RESEARCH METHOD

As my awareness of newly arriving Chinese intellectuals coming to our part of the country for study, advancement, opportunity and new liberties developed, I felt compelled to explore the possibility of a new evangelical church in our area. This would be a church where major ministries are provided in Mandarin for both adults and children. Other ministry specifics would be determined later and by the actual planting team, such as style of worship, the breadth of children's ministries to be offered, a leadership model, affiliations to be explored and auxiliary immigrant support services to be offered. The focus of these case studies is to discover from three existing Chinese-language based evangelical church ministries in southern New England, what were the transferable factors for establishing their churches. In other words, what can be learned and derived from the experience of three other evangelical churches which are ministering to a Chinese population in New England? The research method used was to explore and query three existing churches in university-rich communities as well as to survey what relevant literature could be found. The existing Chinese Bible study on the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth provided a "home base" and a simple support group for this research. Indeed, they are invested as the desired eventual outgrowth of this research would be a new Chinese-language based fellowship, in "pre-church" mode. Then it is hoped an autonomous church can be planted within five years.

Sources for Research Information

Information for my actual research was sought from several sources, a summary of which follow:

The Chinese Bible study which meets on our local campus was the place where the idea for both this research and the dream of a new church were born. This group involves a simple Bible-reading format and includes both Christian and non-Christian attendees, mainland and Taiwanese Chinese and occasionally people from other countries, i.e. Nigeria, Vietnam and the United States. While not overtly evangelistic, one underlying motivation of the Christians involved is to provide a forum where seeking Chinese students, faculty and staff might bring their questions and at the same time be exposed to the basic material of the Bible. (Interestingly, a number of “visiting scholars” whose residency at our university is very temporary, have participated.) The study has thus far read through Genesis, Exodus, John, Matthew and Acts together and is currently reading through and studying the Gospel of Luke. This Bible study has served as an introductory source of informal information for this research.

Second, interviews were held with church leaders in the study churches as well as in other Chinese churches. Primary interviews were conducted with the main leaders (two pastors and one planter) in the three subject churches in Amherst, Worcester and Acton, Massachusetts.

Third, a primary survey instrument was developed (with consultation from U.Mass.Dartmouth Bible study participants) and administered to case study church leaders. See Appendix A. In the development of this survey, evaluative comments from those participants centered on content, readability and relevance. Evaluative questions queried:

1. Do the questions make sense? Is there a better way to “word” things?
2. What questions would YOU ask a church, about how they began?
3. Are any questions offensive or too personal?

4. Would it be better if Chinese translation was provided?
5. Can you think of any other improvements that might be added?

Words and phrases like “leaders possessing integrity” and “doctrinal definition” and “tithe” were not readily understood by all participants. Also, my simple attempt to use simplified Chinese translation of certain phrases via a translator website like FreeTranslation.com did not provide accurate translation of Chinese. Those characters were eliminated from the survey. It was suggested that a Chinese translation of the survey be completed but I could not find assistance in this since the survey comprised five full pages.

Fourth, a secondary survey instrument in English was composed and administered to a number local Chinese Christians in Dartmouth.

Fifth, books on Asian American culture, history, trends and religion were consulted for any background or case studies related to the planting of Chinese churches in the United States. Some material was found in particular on the issues of second-generation or third-generation Chinese regarding any conflict or values. May Tung’s book was useful and interesting in this regard.¹

Sixth, academic works and articles on the planting of Chinese churches were investigated mainly via the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN) on the internet.²

Seventh, internet sources were found for individual Chinese church planting endeavors and denominational programs. The Dallas Seminary supplement to Kate Turabian’s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations, 6th Edition* states, “...because of the current volatility of the medium [internet], outdated URLs and

¹ May Paomay Tung, *Chinese Americans and Their Immigrant Parents*, (Binghamton, New York, 2000) 111.

² Website for the Theological Research Exchange Network (TREN), www.tren.com
Theological Research Exchange Network P.O. Box 30183 Portland, OR 97294-3183 Last accessed 30 January 2008.

transient websites abound. Therefore, students should use Internet resources sparingly, and should always favor the print format over the electronic, if available.”³ I took this to heart but since such an abundance of pertinent information was currently available on the internet, and available in no print format (unless specified), and since the internet has expanded dramatically just in the past few years, I exercised the liberty to utilize internet sources wherever available.

Eighth, the individual websites for specific Chinese church websites were thoroughly explored.

Lastly, I learned of the formation of an interchurch Directory which lists hundreds of Chinese American churches and ministries throughout the United States. It is an ongoing work, continually being updated. ACCC Pastor Lu showed me the book and WCGC Pastor Xu also possessed one. ROLCCB knew of the Directory but did not possess a copy. What was striking about this Directory was its simplicity and ease of use. Hundreds of churches are listed, with basic contact information—name of church, address, phone number, pastor’s name, e-mail and website.

In summary, information about Chinese Christians, “intellectual” and otherwise, and Christian ministries among them is readily available. Material focused on basic Chinese culture, history and immigration trends is also plentiful. Sources related to Chinese-American church planting were less in number and materials specifically related to any of the aspects of planting Chinese ministries in the New England environment were difficult to find. Thus, this research problem relied more heavily on the interview process and personal contacts with Chinese intellectual Christians and the churches they have planted, than was originally anticipated.

³ Dallas Theological Seminary *Supplement to Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 6th ed. Doctor of Ministry CD. 2006, 4.

The Hypotheses Investigated

I have no previous personal experience with being part of a church plant. I have watched however, a number of churches begin from a distance including our own district's Boston Japanese Christian Church in Somerville, Massachusetts.⁴ From these observations, I hypothesized that a number of necessities would be needed for beginning a new Chinese church and that they could better be determined by learning from the experience of existing Chinese churches.

First, it was our projection that certain basic features of a specific local **environment** would need to accommodate the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church in that area, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. Most obviously, the founders of each subject church must have perceived there to be a sufficient Chinese population within the sphere of their anticipated churches. Interviews confirmed this to have been so, at least insofar as Elder Lu was aware (who was not an original church planter of ACCC.) WCGC began as a deliberate church plant from the mother-church because they were aware of so many Chinese in the greater Worcester area. ROLCCB seems to have planted itself with little regard for any environmental concerns except that it was the location of the first church members.

The environment would also have to be conducive to a multi-cultural ministry beginning and all three areas of the subject churches offered no hint of resistance or conflict.

Secondly, it was anticipated that there would be several **conditions** that needed to be fulfilled before the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as

⁴ Boston Japanese Christian Church website: <http://www.bostonjapanesechurch.org> (accessed 13 October 2007). Recognizing the traditional great differences and antipathies between Japanese and Chinese nationalities, we nonetheless rejoice in the transcendence of the Gospel above national rivalries, even longstanding ones. With 20,000 Japanese residents in the Boston area at any given time, we have watched the planting of this church with interest. Some commonalities exist to the planting of Chinese churches as evidenced by the emergence of "pan-Asian" church plants. This is also a sponsored church plant of my own conference, the Northeast Baptist Conference.

evidenced by previous similar church plants. These did include the base from which to identify an adequate core for beginning a local ministry, finding a location, discovering enough mature leaders and exploitation of promotional and advertising resources. Since ACCC began on the university campus its favorable conditions were more gradually realized, while WCGC and ROLCCB appear to have been more aggressive in creating favorable conditions.

Important **preparations** needed to be completed in advance of the planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. Enough time for local potential attenders to become informed about the new ministry is essential. Dependable leaders, teaching resources and an adequate facility were necessary. In the case of WCGC, a mother-church was used for support and guidance and a model from which to plant a new church. In the case of ROLCCB, they tied into a mother organization (River of Life Chinese Church Santa Clara and its network.)

A number of significant **parameters** will be recognized in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. Each church was clear on its foundational doctrine and guidelines for the selection of mature leadership. ACCC's Henry Lu highlighted the need for adequate training and seasoning of good leaders. ACCC and WCGC are more doctrinally defined and teaching oriented. ROLCC is more worship and spontaneous in how they determine God's plan for their ministry.

Various **resources** will be required in the successful planting of a Chinese-language evangelical church, as evidenced by previous similar church plants. Not dissimilar to other church-planting enterprises, the three case Chinese churches of the study found that sufficient vision, leadership, finances, facility and enough committed core members were all needed to successfully plant their churches. The needed resources, though Chinese in nature, were that same kinds of ingredients that most churches need to sustain.

Survey Instrument Development

A survey instrument was developed to assist in investigating the hypotheses of this research. It can be viewed as Appendix A at the end of this dissertation. The survey was first tested for understandability and relevance among the members of the Chinese Bible study of which I am part on campus at U.Mass.Dartmouth. Originally it was intended to be administered to a sample group of members of each subject church. Alvin Louie's 1995 questionnaire for planting Chinese churches proved interesting at this point. His nine-page questionnaire probed eight areas of interest in Chinese church planting: vision, philosophy, leadership, support needed, demographics, implementation planning, core group requirements and what positive and negative lessons were learned?⁵ This questionnaire provided a good starting basis for ideas for the development of my survey, although some of Louie's details under vision and philosophy were either too specific or irrelevant for our purposes.

Gaining access to multiple members of the subject churches however, proved nearly impossible. From ACCC I was acquainted with Dr. Shelley Zhang, former member and deaconess and current member of our church. Site visits and interviews were provided by Elder Henry Lu and one interview with his wife, Li. At WCGC I was welcomed at the site visit and given an interview with Pastor Zhiqui Xu. At ROLCCB I interviewed planter and minister Jocelyn Shu twice and her husband Dr. Jeff Shu. I also interviewed college student Lily Chuang at that church as well as guest speaker Victor Quan from the affiliated mentor-church in Santa Clara. Each of the principle leaders, Lu, Xu and Shu completed the primary survey (See Appendix A and Chapter Four.)

Even at the suggestion of a controlled survey through the leaders, the approach simply was not practical. The difficulty of administering a survey in English

⁵ Louie, 344–352.

would have required more time and effort in translation and clarification than any of the Chinese leaders as administrators could contribute. Translating the survey into Mandarin would have also been too time consuming. For the same reasons an e-mail version was also deemed impractical. Therefore, the survey instrument became a tool for the interview and visit process with the leaders themselves, augmented by personal observations made during the site visits.

The second survey which was briefer was then developed to provide a more focused gauge of opinion among some of the Chinese that we know in Southcoast, and related to the hoped-for eventuality of this research—a new Chinese-language based church in Southcoast. See Appendix B. As a single page administered during the normal time of Bible study on campus, this survey was very helpful for our purposes.

I also kept a journal of notes for all significant conversations from interviews, phone contacts and conversations relevant to this research over its duration, as well as an e-mail log of correspondence with various church personnel.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

As the selection of churches to be queried unfolded, I noticed the differences between the three churches. While each church lies near a university or multiple universities and draws heavily from the Chinese intellectual community each church has its own unique features. Amherst (ACCC) represents a Chinese church located within a pure university-town. It is nearing thirty years in existence. Worcester (WCGC) is both an inner-urban church and one located near universities and colleges. It was planted much more recently. Acton (ROLCCB) is near university-rich Boston but isn't really defined as much by focused ministry to Chinese intellectuals. It exists as a predominantly urban ministry and is a very new church plant. Additionally ROLCCB possesses a theologically charismatic "flavor" making it quite unusual among Chinese ministries on the East coast, though that flavor seems more incidental than deliberate and more matter of fact than Western. Also ROLCCB is led by a female minister, again, making it unusual among evangelical Chinese churches. Therefore, the three churches being studied offer individual idiosyncrasies while all serving well the needs of this research.

It was anticipated that finding willing church leaders among existing churches would be a challenge. As noted in e-mail correspondence, the larger Chinese churches have been studied and queried for "social science" purposes with some frequency in recent years, taxing the staff of those churches.¹ A good introductory relationship with the contact staff from those churches became necessary. Pastors Lu, Xu and Shu were all

¹ Although currently CBCGB is showing interest in supporting a mission endeavor to the Chinese community around U.Mass.Dartmouth and contact has been made with Minister Jiang Wei, their campus ministry and evangelism pastor. They have also contributed to our new Chinese Christian Library a collection of messages on compact disk.

accommodating and helpful. They were quick to respond to e-mail inquiries and telephone calls.

Displacement

The very idea of assisting in the possible planting of an ethnic-immigrant church at all has been humbling and exciting, let alone a ministry among such a fascinating people as the Chinese. For a pastor who has never lived outside of the United States, such a prospect is awe-inspiring. Our church has been blessed to host, help and disciple Christians from other nations. In recent years we have enjoyed believers and seekers coming to Dartmouth Bible Church from Ghana, Sierra Leone, Haiti, India, Japan, England, Vietnam and China (mainland and Taiwan.) Most of the Chinese intellectuals in Southcoast have come here from some other place, either China itself or from academic posts or graduate schools in other American or European cities. That in itself presents a distinction from many local Christians, many of whom were raised and have lived in no other place than the Southcoast region of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. The Chinese that we have met have emigrated chiefly from mainland China although some are from Taiwan or Hong Kong. Some have come from familiar sounding cities like Beijing and Shanghai but others were raised in less familiar places like Hefei, Tianjin, Lanzhou, Kunming and Xian. The challenges of a radical relocation faced by these immigrants are often felt to be offset by the opportunities in the United States in general, Southcoast Massachusetts in particular and often at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. Their needs include the urgency to become functional in English as quickly as possible, to primary laws and motor vehicle practices, where to purchase food and other basic services, acquisition of furnishings and appliances, and of course simple friendships. With a newfound freedom for unrestrained intellectual pursuit they often explore Christianity or other religious systems. We have observed (pleasantly) that non-Christian Chinese intellectuals are not hesitant to designate themselves as “non-

Christians.” To them, there would be no need to pretend at Christianity. To our observation they have often possessed a vibrant curiosity and openness. Displacement, while daunting, also offers new opportunities and they are quick to explore. In the winter of 2007 we received a visit from Ting-Yao “Robert” Chen, a Taipei electrical engineer (See Figure 4.1 below.) He had been a student in the Master’s program at U.Mass.Dartmouth and graduated in 1987. After twenty years he made his first return visit to the United States, this time with a wife and son. Ting-Yao found our church once again, and happily shared with us that the support of Christians in Southcoast in the mid-1980s when he was very new to American culture meant a great deal to him and facilitated his young Christian faith greatly. There were still a few church members present who remembered him. Displacement for Chen was only temporary but his case typifies the kind of impact a host church can have. Chinese intellectuals however often come to Southcoast accompanied by spouses, parents or sometimes their children.



Figure 4.1. Ting-Yao “Robert” Chen and family with the author

Second Generation Issues

May Tung notes, “Second-generation Chinese Americans and their immigrant parents basically had to rely on their own merits and efforts, with little help from their

zuguo, ancestral land, until the 1980s.”² These residents often undergo a time of disorientation especially if they were born in China. If they are “ABCs” (American born Chinese), a strict loyalty to Chinese culture seems lessened. They are encouraged to retain their Chinese language and heritage but they are also often self-motivated to lead “normal” American lives. This gives rise to some tension in Chinese families and affects the kinds of ministries churches should consider especially new church plants. In all three churches there are second-generation attenders and in all three churches they participated on the music team for worship.

There are emotional incongruities too, as Tung notes: “Through the European-American lens, the Chinese may appear passive, reserved, boring, inarticulate but intelligent, reliable and hardworking. Through the Chinese lens European-Americans may appear impulsive, superficial, insensitive, self-absorbed, but fun and confident...Each style has its advantages and drawbacks.”³

There is also the interesting issue among many Chinese about family size. In recent years, Elegant notes, “The most obvious change [generational] is demographic. Because of China’s one-child policy, instituted in 1978, this is the first generation in world history in which the majority are single children, a group whose solipsistic tendencies have been further encouraged by a growing obsession with consumerism, the Internet and video games.”⁴ Several of the Chinese we have met talk about the “Little Emperor Syndrome” among Chinese children. The internet site *Beijing Scene* notes:

One of the consequences of the One-Child Policy (besides an alarming imbalance in the numbers of male and female children) has been the emergence of the “xiao huangdi” (“Little Emperor”) phenomenon. The term xiao huangdi didn’t come into wide use in China until the 1990s. Today it is commonly used to refer to Chinese kids who are “zai tangshui li zhangdade” (“raised on sugar water”) and

² Tung, “Chinese Americans and their Immigrant Parents,” 91.

³ Ibid., 76.

⁴ Ibid, Elegant, “China’s Me Generation,” 50.

enjoy all the privileges that come with being “du shengzi” (only children). These little tykes have been so “jiaoguan” (pampered) and “chonghuai” (spoiled) by their parents that they run the risk of being incapable of doing anything for themselves.⁵

This somewhat colloquial and opinionated description nevertheless aptly describes the feelings of some Chinese with whom we have talked. The situation has some implications for church planting and future spiritual growth problems inherent in a new immigrant population. However, Chinese immigrants to the United States now seem to be reverting to a multi-child practice.

ROLCCB’s Jocelyn Shu said that, “mingling our young people with the adults produced harmony between the ages.”⁶ Accordingly, much of the church’s worship team is young people in their early twenties. Second-generation Chinese also seem to desire a more contemporary style of worship although they do not tend to dress in the typical manner of American young people. In our first visit to ROLCCB, their youth band sang worship songs familiar to me. Their style of worship was very American-charismatic. The teens, all of whom were ABCs, seemed very comfortable with that style of worship. One brief interview with Lesley College student Joyce Lily Chuang and attender of ROLCCB evidenced great enthusiasm for the new church and its potential to reach Chinese youth in and around Acton.⁷

Another issue is the potential shifting of children and teens into a new Chinese based ministry after they may have already been part of an ongoing evangelical church. There may be some hesitation for some families to reintegrate into a new Chinese-language based ministry once friendships have formed, involvement is established and acclimation is complete.

⁵ *Beijing Scene*, online: <http://www.beijingscene.com/V05I006/comrade/comrade.htm> (accessed 1 November 2007).

⁶ Jocelyn Shu, interview with the author, 2 August, 2007.

⁷ Joyce Lily Chuang, interview with the author, 10 November 2007.

Meeting the Chinese in Our Area and Discerning Their Makeup

The Chinese community in our area derive geographically from mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and other countries as well. More specifically, they include first generation immigrants, second-generation (American born) children and teens, second generation professionals, intellectuals or academics, restaurant workers and their various family members. Several significant names from the local community have been referenced previously. My becoming acquainted with the Chinese in Southcoast has been a twenty year process. As noted, our church has reached out in occasional ways to Chinese residents and students as we had opportunity. Certain similarities seemed to emerge which might be used to facilitate a new church. Obviously the Chinese language (Mandarin, usually) is the most common bond. There is also the celebration of traditional Chinese events and calendar cycles, the common ground of shared academic departments and projects, and a “learning curve” experience among Dartmouth Bible Church people about the kind of practical help that new Chinese residents often need. For instance when a vehicle is needed, certain used car dealerships can be recommended. Housing opportunities, basic furnishings, medical and social service references, acquaintance with distant but regional Chinese churches and simple friendship are all offered and shared by our people.

Are there differences which will hinder the planting of a new church? Russell Jeung notes,

Asian American evangelical congregations assert that cultural distinctives in upbringing bond Asian Americans. Yet these churches respond more to the professional class of this group than to their distinctive cultural needs. They have tailored their church for urban professionals more characterized by their stressful careers and their busy lifestyles than by ethnic traditions. Asian

American mainline congregations assert that the political disenfranchisement and marginalization of minorities bring Asian Americans together.⁸

In the late 1980s we noticed some tensions between Taiwanese students and mainland Chinese students. Interestingly, those tensions seem to have greatly lessened in the twenty years since then. When asked if those tensions still exist each of Lu, Xu and Shu replied in the negative. None felt that those differences control the feelings of very many church attenders or members in their churches.

There is always the possibility too that the local American people in the church will lose their affinity for an immigrant sister-church. Although such degradation would be tragic, it is not without precedent as has been seen with changes in world politics in the past. The urgency always is for church members to maintain a high degree of Spirit-led feelings and convictions, which should always transcend local or geopolitical passions.

The Subject Churches

Amherst Chinese Christian Church

The Amherst Chinese Christian church had its core beginning about 1963 as a Bible study in a dormitory on the campus of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. At that time, the group was able to meet in the First Baptist Church of Amherst, once per week on Saturdays. The church officially incorporated in 1978, fully fifteen years after its first core began to meet. Jacob Tang was the first pastor. The church currently owns their own facility, with enough land available for expansion and is located strategically adjacent to U.Mass.Amherst's large campus. The flavor of this church can be seen in their own description of their history (See Appendix C.)

⁸ Russell Jeung, *Faithful Generations: Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 162.



Figure 4.2. Amherst Chinese Christian Church Amherst, Massachusetts⁹

ACCC has one elder (Henry Lu), eight deacons and a non-resident pastor (Pastor Gene Liu with a local resident pastoral assistant, Wing-Yiu Ho). ACCC currently worships in one Mandarin service and one English service. The Mandarin service sees about eighty adults and thirty children in attendance and the English service about twenty-five adults, for a total size of ministry about 125 people. Lu is adamant that ACCC's smaller English service could not survive on its own without the earlier Mandarin service of worship, an interesting symbiosis. Dr. Zhang (above) attended ACCC for five years with her husband, Liang, and served as a deaconess for one year. This is significant because as a current Dartmouth Bible Church member, she has provided willing support and coordination for this study.

⁹ Photo from the website for Amherst Chinese Christian Church, www.ACCC.org (accessed 12 November 2006).

Elder Lu has observed that Chinese pastors can become discouraged in a Chinese-American church because of the high turnover rate and frequent transience of attendees. He therefore believes that his church should adopt the “mentality of becoming a sending church” thus influencing who they might find as a permanent senior pastor—a thing they only recently have accomplished.¹⁰ Like many churches, Lu says ACCC needs to continue to develop their core leadership and consistency of support of the church. I observed a monthly “all-leadership meeting” during my second site visit on March 25, 2007. Elder Lu presided (the new non-resident pastor was present.) Any issues of church life may be raised by meeting attendees, which include deacons, deaconesses, Sunday school teachers, Awana Club workers and anyone who functions in a regular position of ministry leading.

ACCC offers an English class for area residents who wish to enhance their English understanding and skills. Elder Lu notes that this is an effective ministry for a Chinese-speaking congregation to offer. Conversely, Chinese churches sometimes offer classes in Mandarin or Cantonese for the children of the church and this can become a competitive service to the spiritual training, Lu says. Also, at ACCC translation into English is available during the Mandarin worship service, which encourages attendance by those wishing to bridge the language barrier.

An interesting statistic which ACCC enjoys is that 90% of adults who attend the first worship service (Mandarin) stay for adult Sunday school. This seems predictable since the general Chinese population in Amherst comes predominantly from the “intellectual” community and might enjoy an educational approach to ministry. A six class sequence of basic doctrine and Christian living classes is rotated through a repeating two-year schedule. Other adult Sunday school classes at the time of my second site-visit include a

¹⁰ Henry Lu, interview with author, Amherst, MA November 2, 2006.

“Walk Through the Bible” class, a verse-by-verse study of the Epistle to the Hebrews, a class on “How to Evangelize” and a class specifically designed for “seekers.”

ACCC offers a fellowship lunch every week after the English worship service. A simple meal of chicken and rice is served every week and the church kitchen has been specifically equipped for this menu. Many people stay for this lunch each week which affords a growth-minded opportunity for interpersonal connections to be made on a weekly basis.

Although the following chart is in Chinese, the careful structuring of teams and positions as well as lines of accountability are evidenced here:

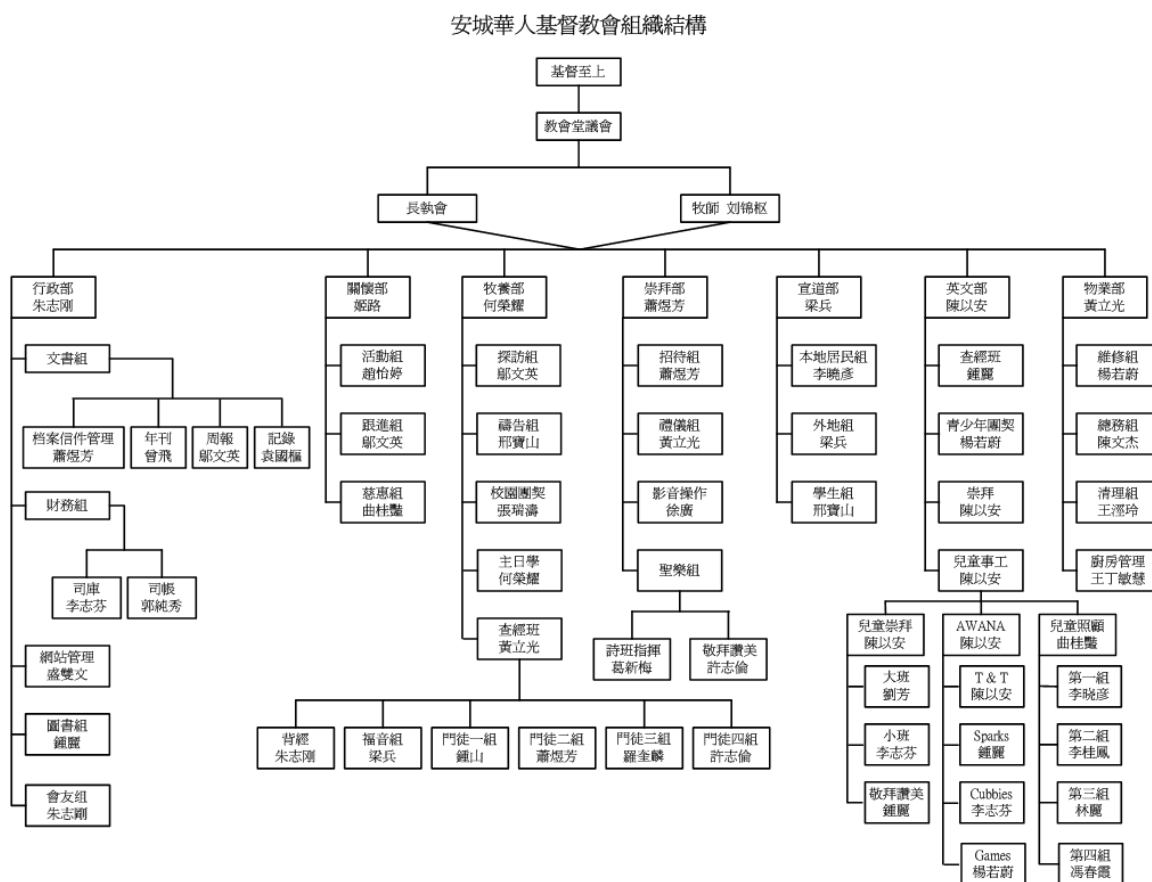


Figure 4.3. Structure of Amherst Chinese Christian Church

The children's ministries of ACCC are completely in English, which reveals a deliberate philosophy to assimilate their people into an English-speaking environment. Lu says that "number twos" (second-generation, or American-born Chinese) are proving reticent to re-assimilation into Chinese culture, preferring Westernization of their current home. Many do not wish to permanently relocate back to China. This is what makes English classes a "must" for effective ministry and church planting. Another interesting ministry that has developed in recent years has been the Friday evening Awana Clubs. The church hosts a Friday evening adult Bible study (which includes the same number of people who attend Sunday morning) and when seekers began to attend that study they noted that their children needed care in that time. Chinese classes were begun for second-generation Chinese American children but the church subsequently changed their approach and began an Awana Clubs ministry for the children of seekers, many of whom do not yet regularly attend Sunday morning activities. This Friday evening Awana Club ministry is now their largest children's activity of the week. As ACCC has grown, they have discovered the need to offer the Chinese community multiple kinds of ministries, at different times and with varying specificity to being seeker oriented, discipleship or maturity based.

ACCC promotes a strong emphasis on Christian family values. Against this ethic is the common Chinese experience of long distance marriages, often imposed in China in recent decades by government-imposed relocations. Hoy writes that "China is experiencing unprecedented levels of spontaneous mobility which has wide ramifications for demographic and urban development."¹¹

Lu notes that in ACCC there is a feeling of "blessing" concerning the predictable and potential tension between mainland-born Chinese and Taiwanese or Hong

¹¹ Carolyn Hoy, Abstract for *Women, Migration and Current Urban Dynamics in China: Fertility and Family Planning*, (University of Leeds: School of Geography, 1996), 1.

Kong-born immigrants. Their church was begun originally by Christians from Hong Kong and Taiwan. Only in more recent years have new members from mainland China join ACCC.

A second site visit was made on March 25, 2007 on a Sunday morning. We visited both the Mandarin and English services, followed by the every-week church lunch and the monthly co-workers' meeting. We learned then that many of the ABC children are resistant to learning spoken Chinese. These classes were given at the same time as the Friday night Bible study but were not well-received. So, Awana Clubs were begun which have drawn many families including many who are unchurched.

Most important was Lu's perspective that a successful start for a new Chinese-language based church requires about 30 "leaders" who will be present in the church for a significant period of time, i.e. not transient.

Worcester Chinese Gospel Church

I learned of the Worcester Chinese Gospel Church from Professor Shuowei Cai, Chemistry professor at the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth. This church (hereafter referred to as "Worcester") began in the summer of 2001 as a "branch" and a deliberate church plant by the Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts in Southborough, and became independent from their host church in 2004.

The host church (Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts) began in 1982 and ministers currently to over 200 people. Pastor Caleb Chang became that church's first full-time pastor in 1991 and Rou-Jen Ho was ordained the first pastor of the new daughter Worcester church on November 2, 2002.¹²

¹² Website for Chinese Gospel Church of Massachusetts (the mother church), www.cgcm.org, (accessed 26 October 2007).



Figure 4.4. Worcester Chinese Gospel Church Worcester, Massachusetts¹³

My site visit to the Worcester church was held on January 24, 2007. Southborough, Massachusetts is 16 miles from Worcester. The Worcester church is in the process now of becoming fully independent, according to current Pastor Zhiqui “Timothy” Xu. This church currently includes Bible study groups, a disciple-making emphasis, various fellowships and special events, an English as a Second Language (ESL) class, a host system for newcomers, a process of being holiday-sensitive for Chinese culture and a strategy for inviting known Chinese evangelists to the church for special meetings.

Currently the church includes 90 to 100 adults and 40-50 children, including about 10 teenagers. Pastor Xu however, says that “how many people do you have?” is not the right question. “How many mature Christians do you have?” is the better question, the same sentiment I heard from Elder Lu at ACCC.¹⁴ In the five years of WCGC’s existence about 180 students have passed through their ministries. Xu says any new church plant might need to “depend on student skills and ministries for a while for the church to develop enough ministry to sustain itself.” Job changes are frequent and turnover of personnel is therefore a regular part of life in their church. Advertising has

¹³ Photo by author, taken on 24 January 2007.

¹⁴ Zhiqui Xu, interview with author, Worcester, MA January 24, 2007.

been minimal and promotion has mainly been by word-of-mouth, some distribution of flyers and an aggressive outreach by e-mail.

Xu observes that the 1989 Tiananmen Square event in Beijing, China was a watershed issue in changing the attitude of a significant number of immigrants he has met who have come to New England. While previously in China there had been a “shoving aside of traditional beliefs under Maoism” today most Chinese are not atheists, at least according to Pastor Xu. “A strong feeling of vacancy is not uncommon.” He says Buddhism is still very much entrenched in Chinese culture and at the same time a great Christian revival is ongoing now.

The three important foci of the Chinese intellectual-immigrant’s life are church, family and school. A church should capitalize on those areas, says Xu. American-born Chinese (“ABCs”) are undergoing an identity crisis and a church should realize this and work to assist and alleviate the tensions. The second-generation children of Chinese immigrants are growing “very frustrated” with the tensions of retention of their Chinese cultural priorities and their assimilation into American culture. Additionally, youth pastors who understand the Chinese culture and can effectively minister to the “ABCs” of today are very difficult to find. WCGC is aggressively seeking a youth pastor as is its mother-church (CGCM.)

For its first four and a half years WCGC was hosted by Belmont Street Baptist Church (an inner-city church affiliated with the Baptist General Conference) and recently was able to purchase their own facility in what was most recently a United Methodist facility which is next-door to Belmont Street Baptist.

River of Life Christian Church of Boston

As the Chinese immigrant population in New England grows, the town of Acton appears to be seeing an increasing number of Chinese residents.

Even in towns like Acton that are further away from Boston, Chinese communities are forming. Nearly 850 people attended a recent Chinese performance event in Acton, and each weekend, hundreds of Chinese American children attend classes at the Acton Chinese Language School, which operates in the town's high school. The town even has its own Asian market.¹⁵

The River of Life Christian Church of Boston began in January 2006 in Acton Massachusetts, in the building belonging to Vision New England, the largest regional association for evangelical evangelism and renewal in the United States.¹⁶ River of Life Christian Church of Boston (hereafter referred to as ROLCCB) was planted by two Chinese women, Carol Huang and Jocelyn Shu. Shu indicates that she “received a vision while in Trinidad in July of 2005 to start a new church in the greater Boston area.” Her testimony gives the distinctiveness of this church plant as “a church with God truly at the center, rather than tradition and to spurn rigidity and unwillingness to acknowledge the Holy Spirit,” a thing she evidently felt in the other regional Chinese churches. She states that the beginning of ROLCCB was a step-by-step plan that unfolded from the Lord gradually, including her seeing a For Lease sign on the Vision New England building in Acton. The work began with the establishment of a home-based prayer meeting for Chinese Christians. The church began with 16 people and now includes 73 people, according to Shu. She states that this is the first “charismatic” Chinese church (which she generically terms “River of Life church” in New England. Their work affiliated themselves with River of Life Church of Santa Clara California in the fall of 2006,¹⁷ a

¹⁵ *Sampam – New England’s Only Bi-lingual Chinese-English Publication since 1972*, online: http://www.sampam.org/show_article.php?display=888 (accessed 20 July 2007).

¹⁶ Vision New England, online: <http://visionnewengland.org> (accessed 22 June 2007).

¹⁷ The mother church was founded in 1995. The grandmother church is established in Taipei in 1954 as Bread of Life Christian Church by Chinese evangelist, Rev. Timothy Zhao, and it can be traced back to 1942, when Pastor Timothy Zhao founded the first Bread of Life Christian Church (Ling Leung Tang) in Shanghai. River of Life Church (Santa Clara), online: <http://www.rolcc.net/english/aboutus> (accessed 3 August 2007).

church-planting minded church which has facilitated the beginning of 36 other churches. On November 10, 2006 I made a site visit to this church for a youth rally (interestingly named “Storm”), featuring ROLCC Santa Clara staff pastor, Victor Quan. Quan says that ministry to youth is one of the biggest challenges facing Chinese-American churches today,¹⁸ and that “none of the Chinese churches know what to do with their youth.” He challenged ROLCCB to utilize their youth in the grounding of their church plant.



Figure 4.5. Facility of River of Life Christian Church of Boston¹⁹
(Vision New England building Acton, Massachusetts)

ROLCCB’s facility situation was interesting. Their church is housed in the former headquarters facility of Vision New England, an evangelical Christian “umbrella” ministry which has been downsizing in recent years. Though in a rented space, ROLCCB’s set-up was uncluttered and elegant. Like ACCC, their audio-visual support was up to date and appeared to be very effectively utilized. Jocelyn Shu was appointed as pastor of the church in January 2007, apparently an unprecedented position for a Chinese woman in New England among evangelical Chinese churches. A former deaconess for missions in a Chinese church in Lowell, Massachusetts, Shu says she was instrumental in

¹⁸ Message by Victor Quan November 22, 2006 ROLCCB location.

¹⁹ Photo by author, taken on 2 August, 2007.

the planting of a Chinese church in Nashua, New Hampshire. The summary of that church's beginnings is instructive:

On January 19, 2003, the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Nashua (55 Franklin Street, Nashua, NH) officially began service. We praise the Lord that we can now meet on Sunday mornings. Ever since the early nineties, when Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell first began, God had given us a vision of building a Chinese church in Nashua. And in 1997, Mrs. Chuan Lee began a weekly women's Bible study, which became what is today Hannah's Women Bible Study. Between 1999 and 2000, CBCGL's Renewal Fellowship began meeting in Nashua once a month, first in the home of brother David Chen, and then at Grace Lutheran Church. In 2001, when CBCGL became sure of the goals and vision of church planting in Nashua, the Northern Region Church Planting Committee, and the Galilee Fellowship were formed. The fellowship first began in July that year by holding Bible studies at Trinity Baptist Church every Friday night. After a year and a half of watching many people get to know the Lord better, accept Jesus as their personal savior, get baptized, and serve in the church, we were reassured of God's encouragement to build a church pleasing to God in Nashua. CBCGL wholly supported our vision, and at the same time, local churches in Nashua, Great Lutheran Church, Trinity Baptist Church, and Grace Fellowship Church, also supported us, happily lending us a space for worship. We are really grateful for God's countless grace. And through Christ and His Church, we wish to spread His grace to others of this world. In this unstable world filled with conflicts and battles, may we walk according to God's will and experience the grace of this wondrous God.²⁰

Also this wider context includes the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell, whose description is also interesting:

Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell was established as a church plant by Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston. CBCGL held its first Sunday worship on January 22 1989, at the Peter Reilly School in Lowell. Rev. Gene Liu was the founding pastor. For the first three years, CBCGL met on Fridays at Trinity Lutheran Church, Chelmsford, Sundays at the Peter Reilly School, and rented a third space for the church offices. Over the next few years attendance grew to the point where CBCGL was able to buy the building at the current location in 1992. Since that time we have been able to hold all of our activities in this one location. Building "A" was purchased in 1995. October 3, 1999 saw the inauguration of

²⁰ "Chinese Bible Church of Greater Nashua," <http://www.cbcbn.org> (accessed 15 August 2007).

CBCGL's English Worship, LEM (Lowell English Ministry). September 2003 saw the retirement of Pastor Liu after 15 years of faithful service and the appointment of Rev. Kurt Teng as Senior Pastor. The current Pastoral staff: Kurt Teng, Senior Pastor since 2003, Paul Hsiung, Education Minister since 2003, Ching-wu Chen and Cantonese Pastor since 1997. God has continued to bless the ministry of CBCGL. We now have a family of over 400 adults and youth, 100 children, as well as community Bible studies. From its founding, CBCGL has been a church where people can come to find love and care. Chinese Bible Church of Greater Lowell is an independent, Chinese, evangelical, Bible church.²¹

For finances, Shu says their approach is to "trust God."²² For doctrine, ROLCCB has adopted the doctrinal statement of ROLCC Santa Clara.²³ A core value is the freedom to "worship God freely and to sense God's heart."

²¹ <http://www.cbcgl.org/lem/history.html>

²² Jocelyn Shu, interview with author, Acton, MA, 12 August 2007.

²³ River of Life Christian Church, "We Believe in the Triune God," Online: <http://www.rolcc.net/english/faithstatement> (accessed 15 August 2007): A simple six-point statement, reproduced here:

We believe in the trinity true God.

- God the Father is the true God who creates the universe.
- God the Son Jesus is the same as God Himself who became man. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born from Virgin Mary. He gave his life on the cross to save man's sins. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. On the third day, Jesus was resurrected from death and ascended to heaven. He is sitting at the right hand side of our almighty Father God, and he will come again to judge the world.
- God the Holy Spirit lives inside every believer. Filled by the Holy Spirit brings holiness to every believer and strength to serve our God.
- We believe the Bible is inspired by God, and the foundation of all faith and living.
- We believe man is saved by faith alone. At judgment day, both the believed and the unbelieved will be resurrected, the believed will have ever lasting life, and the unbelieved will perish forever.
- We believe the church is the body of Christ. From the apostles' days to present days, we all belong to the same body to witness the glory of God.

ROLCCB proved to be the simplest and most basic church plant of the three subject churches. On the visits, I was accompanied by Dr. Shuwei Cai whose consultation and perspective in this research have been valuable. Dr. Cai is himself a Christian convert since immigrating to Southcoast, coming originally from Tianjin, China and Nankai University. He possesses a love for Bible study, an interest in missions and a wide association with various Christians around New England. While he remained passive during the interviews with Jocelyn Shu and her husband, Dr. Jeff Shu, Shuwei was indispensable in helping me think through and process what I observed and learned on the visits there. ROLCCB is an example of a Chinese church plant which was commenced largely on the vision and sense of “call” of one church planter. There is a vigilance and determination in Mrs. Shu and her husband and fellow core group members which are admirable. To date, early in this church plant, the ministry seems viable and growth oriented.

As I sought out information related to the beginnings of each of the three subject churches, I found a variance in the complexity of studying each. ACCC proved the easiest about which to learn for I was granted excellent access to information through its elder, Henry Lu. We shared several e-mails, two on-site visits (the second accompanied by my wife, Renée, and an interview with wife (also very active in the church)). WCGC was more difficult, not because Pastor Xu was elusive (he was very helpful) but because some vagaries that seem inherent with the mother-daughter model actually clouded some of the distinctions we would have anticipated with a new church. ROLCCB’s beginnings, on the other hand, were very easy to ascertain because its founding is so recent and because Mrs. Shu’s approach is very plain with a simple spiritual basis.

Basic questions were probed in each of the subject churches by means of interview and the survey instrument. The instrument, though carefully constructed, proved difficult to use with people in the subject churches beyond the pastors or main

leaders. A rehearsal test was performed with Chinese Christians from our local area and although they were motivated and very cooperative, language challenges were very present.

Perhaps the most critical resource needed is the establishment of a sufficient core group of believers permanently residing in the area. The number suggested for this varied between 15 and 40. The main leaders of all three subject churches agreed that a solid if small group of “committed Christians” is absolutely essential. This was not surprising, except that the Chinese church leaders and planters in our study seemed content to do without many things as long as they had the services of a few committed believers. Therefore, there is no shortage of on-line and some printed material aimed at promoting commitment and discipleship.

Once again, the aim of this research was to develop three case studies of existing Chinese-language based evangelical church ministries in southern New England and the discovery of transferable factors, if any, from the time of establishment of those churches. I did in fact discover transferable factors from within the histories and practices of the subject churches which might be duplicated in Southcoast, Massachusetts. Appendix A provides the survey instrument that was used with the three pastors/leaders of the subject churches. The survey questions were grouped so as to probe the hypotheses. These concern the environment, favorable conditions, preparations, significant parameters and required resources.

What Kind of a Local Environment Do We Need?

From one standpoint, where there are Christians there can be a church regardless of the environment. Admittedly churches have been planted or have simply sprung up in the most unlikely places and times. The Holy Spirit sometimes motivates His people to begin a church or fellowship just because of the community of believers, even if conditions are adverse. There we know that the hypothesis of creating or selecting

a good environment can have its boundaries. The subject churches though seem to have been sensitive to this aspect in the beginnings of their churches. The original leaders seem to have been both aware and intuitive about where they wished to plant a new Christian church. To some extent the aspects of a good church planting environment are based on expedience: Where is land or a facility affordably available? Can we locate our church in line with public transportation? Are there enough interested Chinese available? A summarizing of the results in these questions for each of the subject churches is given as in Table 4.1, following:

Table 4.1. Environmental Considerations for the Subject Churches

ENVIRONMENT/AREA	ACCC	WCGC	ROLCCB
Was your area attractive?	Definitely	Definitely	Definitely
What resources were available?		University community	
	Existing Chinese community	Existing Chinese community	Strong sense of "call" here
	Job relocations here		
	Warm Chinese inclusiveness	Warm Chinese includeiveness	Leadership couple experienced in Chinese church previously
Minimum Chinese needed?	20	10 to 20, then 40	25?
Enough where you are?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Primary Chinese dialect?	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin

Each church reported that the environment and area which they targeted for the long-range establishment of a new Chinese Christian church proved attractive for that purpose. Each of the three regional areas contained enough Chinese Christians and seekers to make a new church viable. Their experiences demonstrate that an environment which can provide at least 20 committed, adult core members is needed to begin a ministry. Since each lies within range of major university communities, they found their locations to be conducive to that minimum. None of the three churches minister among Cantonese-speaking people (although many Chinese churches do, including some in Boston). Each church also has played into the nature of Chinese communities' warmth and close-knit nature. The Chinese communities around their new churches were also naturally receptive to the kind of Gospel ministries the planters hoped to establish.

In short, an environment with an adequate Chinese population, with sufficient accessibility to the facility, with local receptivity to an international ministry and enough general educational resources will provide a good place in which to begin a new Chinese church.

What Favorable Conditions Do We Need?

Various conditions were envisioned for launching a successful new Chinese church. These come in part from the planters' previous experiences, from the writings of various Christian theologians and thinkers, as mentioned in Chapter 2, and from a collective agreement between the first leaders as to the quality of ministry, they hoped to establish. This was not discerned from any foundational writings or histories held in the possession of the leaders interviewed but from statements made in the interviews themselves. Each of the leaders was well acquainted with the standard American church growth writers. ACCC's Henry Lu represented a pastoral figure with long experience in following the flow of books and thinking in church growth. Pastor Xu from WCGC is himself a seminary student and scholar and leads from a place of being well-informed about current thinking in the area of church planting. Mrs. Shu (ROLCCB) is richly experienced in church start-ups and in the distinctives of new Chinese churches.

As to the crafting of specific favorable conditions, the subject churches' results are summarized in the Table 4.2:

Table 4.2. Favorable Conditions Explored in the Subject Churches

FAVORABLE CONDITIONS	ACCC	WCGC	ROLCCB
Interest level among Chinese?	Promising	Promising	Promising
Finding a suitable location?	Help from American church	Help from American church	Vision New England building
Early meeting satisfaction level?	Very good	Good	Very good
Qualities among early leaders?			
friendliness?	yes	yes	yes
Bible knowledge?	yes	yes	?
Interested in meeting needs?			yes
Capable disciples themselves?	yes	yes	yes
Excitement about Christ?		yes	yes
Courageous and confident?	yes	yes	
Good emphasis on music?		yes	
Possessed high integrity?	yes	yes	yes
Languages to be used?	Mandarin	Mandarin	Mandarin, English
Relatability to 2nd gen. Chinese?	poor	poor	good
Support from outside?	Somewhat	More than somewhat	Definitely
Leaders' spiritual maturity?	Growing	Mature	Growing
Other qualities of early leaders?	Love of God, good foundation for evangelism	Warm-hearted, faithful to the Word of God, family environment	Faithfulness, sacrifice
Ministry to children?	None in the beginning	Host church provided	Using teens in church ministries
Relatability to Catholicism?	Not relevant	Not relevant	Not relevant

Conditions for planting a new church in general and a Chinese church in particular can be encapsulated in a generally determined attitude by the planting team to be Christ-like. This may seem simplistic but after a decision was made as to if the interest level among the Chinese in the area was adequate; the research shows that the openness, basic willingness to be Christ's disciples and a positive approach all contributed greatly to creating favorable conditions for planting new churches. Some areas among each planting community were predictably weak (initial concern for "2's" for instance), but if the planting community chooses to be friendly and excited about Christ, these are themselves strong assets. In all three subject churches there was evidence by testimony and report that the original core was very determined simply to do God's work and to be Christ's disciples. (Certainly not all New England churches possess a deliberate commitment to friendliness or to having a positive approach.) Interestingly, a strong children's ministry was not a priority in ACCC's beginning though they currently possess one. Also of note is the fact that one condition all three churches sought was the support of an outside group. ACCC originally attached to an American church (though I could

not find out which one). WCGC was greatly aided by both its mother-church in Southborough and a host church (Belmont Street Baptist Church) in Worcester. ROLCCB immediately affiliated with the River of Life Santa Clara mother-church and organization. In other words, none of the subject churches set out to be wholly independent and singular. Finally, none of the subject churches paid any attention to what is a typical New England issue: relating to the Roman Catholic Church. Among their constituents it simply isn't much of an issue.

Concerning preparations that a new church might consider making before opening their doors, the research of the subject churches unveiled some interesting concerns, and some differences. The results uncovered by the survey instrument show efforts made in promotion (advertising and communication), finding and outfitting an adequate facility and decisions about doctrinal distinctives. A close "feel" for these concerns could only be obtained from ROLCCB since their church plant is so recent. ACCC and WCGC are several years old and only a general sense could be discerned. Nonetheless the survey revealed basic categories of preparations. They are simple and of a "grass-roots" nature. The Chinese content themselves with efficiency and an elegant plainness in style. In each subject church a need was seen for a Mandarin-based ministry, resources were gathered and the church was started. In the case of WCGC, their home congregation contained enough people traveling from the Worcester area to Southborough that the simple need to attempt a church plant closer to home prevailed. For ACCC, what began as a Bible study developed into a full church ministry taking two decades to mature. It was also a simple logic. ROLCCB simply testifies that God told them to begin a new church in Acton, Massachusetts. Therefore, they complied.

How Do We Prepare to Plant a New Chinese Church?

Any church planting endeavor must be prefaced, primed and patterned by prayer. God must be sought for timing, resources, location, effective advertising and

resources in the early stages of preparation to plant a church. In the launch stages His blessing and presence must be fervently sought as more resources, evangelistic opportunity safety and simple success are wanted. Prayer should be the pattern of the new church's life into the first year and after. A matrix of prayer opportunity and habit should lace the life of the church from its inception.

Prayer is talking to God. In this kind ministry, we mean a lifestyle of seeking Him and requesting His leading in every aspect. Most crucial is the spiritual lives of the planters and leaders. Of next importance is the community of seekers and unbelievers which the church hopes to reach with the Gospel. Then there is the frequently updated list of needs and resources which the new church will surely construct. Fourth, the leaders especially should pray about alliances which may benefit the new church family, i.e. the mother churches and host organizations enjoyed by each of ACCC, WCGC, ROLCCB and DBC. Jocelyn Shu was especially strident in her testimony about the requisite of prayer and staying close to God in Christ. There will surely be stresses and emotional strain. God will answer the one who seeks Him in such times.

Since prayer was a first priority of each of the subject churches and testified to early in my contacts, so any new church must pattern itself in the same way. There is no substitute for a community of believers hungry for God's indwelling presence. The spiritual battles are fundamentally the same as those faced by the first church planters around the Mediterranean in the first century.

Prayer however is not the only activity of preparation. Much hard work is needed. The specific preparations made by the planting teams in the subject churches are summarized in the array of responses to the survey instrument in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Preparations that Needed to be Made by the Subject Churches

PREPARATIONS?	ACCC	WCGC	ROLCCB
Original advertising?	E-mail, personal connections	Flyers	Web site, e-mail notice
Additional advertising, later?	Yellow pages, web site	Web site, letter mailing, sign	
Were personal invitations given?	Many	Many	Some
Was a cooperative standard communicated for relations between mainland, Taiwanese, etc.?	None used or needed	only the Bible	None was needed.
Was there an initial pastor?	Yes	Yes	Planter = 1st pastor
How was a pastor found?	Utilized a retiring pastor	Web advertisement	Planter = 1st pastor
Pastoral qualifications?	few; first pastor happened to be very experienced	Cultural background Chinese, evangelical theology, seminary trained	Vision, integrity, hard work, general familiarity with Bible
How was new church governed?	Group leaders, Key coordinators, then deacons	At first by volunteer coordinators, then later by board of deacons from voting	By planting leadership couple, now by leadership team
Children's ministries planned?	None in the beginning	Provided by host church	Youth group
Doctrinal standards?			
Bible believing & teaching?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salvation by Christ alone?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Salvation by faith alone?	Yes	Yes	Yes
God=Father, Son, Holy Spirit?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Christ is coming again?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Angels, demons, Satan = real?	Yes		
Christians should demo faith by good works?		Yes	
Baptism by immersion?			
Lord's table for believers only?		Yes	
Personal evangelism is important?	Yes	Yes	
Spiritual gifts exist?		Yes	Yes
Spiritual gifts include supernatural abilities?			Yes
Well-suited original facility?	Very good	Excellent; host church was very gracious	Very good; leased space from Vision New England
Security preparations?	None	bulletin announcements, CORI check screening	None
How was music planned?	Choir, worship team	Pastor, then Worship team	Worship team
Financial accountability?	Deacon-in-charge + two treasurers	Host churches practices	Reported and posted by <i>Quicken</i> report

Every resource available for advertising, information dissemination, finding personal invitees was used. ACCC began before e-mail was widely used so more traditional means of advertising were used there: word-of-mouth, flyers and Yellow Pages advertising. WCGC and ROLCCB are much more recent and full use of the internet was evidenced by both churches, utilizing e-mail notifications and web page implementation. WCGC also utilized direct mailings to help broadcast news of their new church. There was little-to-no concern about people cooperating together though they originate in different political geographies. This was interesting, because in the late 1980s I was keenly aware of a tension between mainland and Taiwanese people on the campus

of U.Mass.Dartmouth. None of the subject churches evidenced those tensions in the beginnings of their ministries. A planting-pastor was utilized in each church but each church came upon that individual in different ways: one by advertising, one by connection with a retired individual and one by being the planter, herself.

The challenge to find an adequate facility seems to have been a faith exercise that demonstrated God's support and supply. Each subject church solved this problem wonderfully, and testifies to the Lord's goodness in meeting their needs.

Each church has its own doctrinal standards and a statement of their theological distinctives. WCGC seems to be the most developed in doctrine (spinning off from the Southern Baptist configuration of its mother-church), with ACCC close behind in doctrinal specificity. ROLCCB is still in the formative stages of this very important area and currently leans upon the doctrinal positions of its affiliation with ROL Santa Clara to bring definition. This church evidenced little definition in their beginnings in doctrine other than to simply indicate that they were Bible-believing with a generally evangelical heritage in their founding people. ROLCCB was more driven by a strong sense of calling and vision rather than theology. All three churches practice believer's baptism and all three are premillennial, in the most general sense.

I could not help but be struck by a certain simple elegance among the Chinese intellectual Christian community in the brevity of their theological statements. Their short statements of doctrine compare to the almost 2,800 words in the Dartmouth Bible Church *Affirmation of Faith*²⁴ and the over 4,200 word *Doctrinal Statement* of Dallas Theological Seminary.²⁵ River of Life Santa Clara's *Faith Statement* is 213 words. In time each subject church may need to adopt a more detailed theological sense of

²⁴ *Affirmation of Faith*, Dartmouth Bible Church, online: <http://www.dartmouthbible.org/C&BLsFeb2004.htm>. (accessed 24 October 2007).

²⁵ *Full Doctrinal Statement*, Dallas Theological Seminary, online: <http://www.dts.edu/about/doctrinalstatement> (accessed 26 October 2007).

definition but in these early years what they have seems to suffice. None of the churches testified to any doctrinal difficulties or tensions. The charismatic flavor of ROLCCB distinguishes them somewhat from the greater Chinese evangelical community in greater Boston. In my discussions with Jocelyn Shu though, and among other area leaders there were evidenced no schismatic tendencies. I felt a definite cautionary spirit in the ROLCCB believers about distancing themselves too far theologically from the other Chinese churches in the region.

A general sense of excitement and anticipation echoed from the preparation days of each of the three subject churches, almost as if each does not feel like they are finished yet in preparing for their ministries' full impact. The preparations that were made at the beginning were entered into with an enthusiasm as is often the case with new church plants. However, among the Chinese there is a unique mission field to which they hope to minister and an indigenous sobriety of spirit. As "strangers in a strange land" they are both careful and deliberate while seeking the leading of God and His provision. These are also very fluid times for the role of Chinese in the world, including within this country.

Other parameters were also explored. All subject churches and indeed, all church planting literature pointed to the urgency that a good leadership team be available to successfully plant a new ministry. Qualities such as humility, demonstrating a servant heart while leading, integrity (moral, financial, etc.), seeing the goals clearly for the new church and very importantly, being capable to teach the Bible, were mentioned as indispensable. We also sensed, and therefore inquired, about the determination of a new core group in planting the new church. Each subject church leader "remembered" with joy the determination they felt and saw. Jocelyn Shu (ROLCCB) is still in the earliest years of resolve to see her church succeed and grow.

An obvious question was to ask if the church's leaders create the expectation that regular church attendance on Sunday's is expected? All three subject churches

answered in the affirmative, though Pastor Xu noted that growth in the WCGC in this conviction has come slower than was expected. Nonetheless, we observed in all Chinese churches in the region a high commitment to Sunday church attendance with not infrequently the practice being to be at church for several hours at a time on Sunday (rather than merely a single hour).

What Other Parameters Should We Recognize?

In the attempt to draw out all aspects of beginning a church that the three subject churches may have experienced, other significant parameters were envisioned and queried. Although they are admittedly somewhat subjective, they are nonetheless relevant in the establishment of healthy churches.

These parameters related more specifically to the character of the original church planters and leaders that were raised up. Not all imaginable qualities were mentioned, but certain graces came into clear focus and were addressed as important. Leaders who communicate a servant-heart and who demonstrate that style are always in demand. Patience and the possession of a good sense of vision for a new church and what it can accomplish were cited. Highly academic and theologically sophisticated leaders were not mentioned as one might expect in some American churches. However, an adequate level of Bible knowledge and the ability to communicate it effectively were valued and targeted as an important parameter. Pastor Xu noted that when WCGC began, they did not have the luxury of a great number of well-trained deacons but they used the young Christians that they had and who were willing to serve. This testifies to the reality that new churches do not always begin under ideal conditions. Mrs. Shu is also working with a young congregation and though she recognizes the need to train committed and teachable leaders she is working with those resources that are available.

As with any church plant, a sense of determination and a strong commitment to persevere are important. When asked if this quality was present among the original

planters, each church indicated in the affirmative. Again, ROLCCB is still a very new church and it remains to be seen if determination will be transferred by new leaders. Mrs. Shu's and her husband's resolve and sense of purpose are genuine.

An interesting aspect which surfaced in the research was the general expectation of every-Sunday church attendance. While this issue has increasingly become a challenge among modern American churches of all kinds, among the Chinese Christians it is less of a tension. Pastor Xu at WCGC reports a slower progress in this conviction among his congregation but it is improving.

These additional parameters in the subject churches were surveyed and are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Significant Parameters Found in the Subject Churches

SIGNIFICANT PARAMETERS	ACCC	WCGC	ROLCCB
Confidence in early leaders?	By servant leadership	By patient service, exemplary devotion, correct teaching	By vision and conviction and servant leadership
Expectations of leaders to be well-trained in the Bible?	Very familiar with the Bible, able to lead studies	Early deacons were young in the Lord; not very well-trained	Need to be adequate
Other leadership qualities needed?	Humility, servant heart, steady on doctrine	Unity-minded	Integrity
How determined was the first core of believers to see the church succeed?	Very	Very determined	Very
Was regular attendance on Sundays expected of the core group & leaders?	Yes	Yes, though growth in this area was slower than expected.	Yes

Many other factors can be imagined as well which would figure into the success or failure of a church plant. I am drawn again to the intangible fact of the pace being set in China among the twentysomethings, a pace characterized by an eager, aspiring consumerism.²⁶ As interest in politics pales, perhaps the vacuum of materialism will stimulate a deeper search for spiritual purpose. As numbers of those twenty-

²⁶ Ibid, Elegant, "China's Me Generation," 51.

some things make their way to this country and Southcoast, a waiting community of Chinese Christians would be well placed.

Finally, it has been interesting to encounter the very common idea of long-distance marriage among the Chinese intellectuals. This is a parameter for church planting in that a significant number of intellectuals we have met live with a long-distance marriage. Either their spouse is at another location in the United States, back in China or Taiwan, in Japan or in Europe. This places strain on the marriages and tracks to the social commonality of this phenomena in mainland China where couples have frequently been dislocated and placed in different locations by the government for job purposes. Dr. Taussig first told us of this issue, and its adverse effect on some Chinese. Elder Lu and Pastor Xu both confirmed it and stated that it poses a pastoral challenge. While they are often content and even driven to relocate apart from their family for professional opportunities, the impact on family life from a Christian ethical perspective is generally negative. Any new Chinese church should recognize this critical issue.

What Resources Will We Need?

Perhaps the most practical issue of this research is the question, what resources will be needed to begin a new Chinese church in Southcoast? The danger is to imagine a list which is either too long or too short. We sought to know realistically what resources the subject churches gathered or were provided with. Actually fewer “necessities” were discovered than one might have predicted. While trying to avoid broad generalizations, I have noticed a distinct satisfaction with a simple list of resources fulfilled; a simple contentedness with space, good Bible teaching and adequate child care. Table 4.5, below, summarizes the findings in the subject churches:

Table 4.5. Resources Needed by the Subject Churches

RESOURCES REQUIRED	ACCC	WCGC	ROLCCB
Initial number of adults present?	20	40	25
Cash needed on hand to begin?	< \$1000/month	\$20,000	Trusted God. About \$1K/mo.
Were people expected to tithe?	Yes	Yes, tithing was taught from the beginning, and expected of Deacons	Trusted God
Was the first facility adequate for the first ministries of the church?	Yes	Yes	Yes
What specific facility needs existed in the beginning of your church?			
Seating (chairs)	Yes	Yes	Yes
Audio system		Yes	Yes
Nursery room		Yes	
S.S., youth rooms, Signs		Yes	Yes
Kitchen, dining Permitting		Yes	Yes
Cleaning, decorating			Yes
Library, resource center		Yes	Yes
Foyer, greeting area			
Musical instruments			
Parking	Yes	Yes	Yes
Other?		Gym	
Improvements to the facility since the church began?	New building purchased	New building purchased	Expansion within V.N.E. building; hope to purchase whole building ASAP.
Was parking adequate?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Transportation provided to potential visitors and seekers?	Yes	Yes, by systematic organized approach	No, or not regularly

The average of the responses for number of which adults would be needed for a new church start-up is 28. Further description of “adults” was not built into the survey other than the concept of “leaders.” A core group within the overall congregation can be relatively small but the respondents emphasized that a serious commitment had been provided by that core. This is reflected in the practice of tithing and the teaching of tithing early in ACCC’s and WCGC’s history. WCGC expects tithing from its deacons as a standard for leadership. Jocelyn Shu at ROLCCB, taking her cue from ROL Santa Clara, says that they simply “trust God.” A review of their financial report for June 2007, which was posted publicly inside their church rented space, reveals a comprehensive set of typical church expense line items, including missions. ACCC began on less than

\$1000 per month. WCGC envisioned a start-up “balloon” figure of \$20,000, representing a more deliberate plant of a “daughter” church. ROLCCB also spent about \$1000 per month at the beginning. All three churches crafted a long-range vision for acquiring their own facilities as soon as practical and ACCC and WCGC have seen that dream fulfilled. Both churches purchased existing facilities and renovated them to their needs. ACCC also possesses adequate land to expand as it becomes needed and practical. ROLCCB’s story is somewhat more dramatic. Vision New England, the region’s umbrella organization for many cooperative evangelical ministries, built a wonderful new office complex in Acton, Massachusetts in 1992. According to their website, “Vision New England ministry initiatives serve more than 5,000 churches in 80 denominations.”²⁷ However, a down-sizing and change in mission has prompted the sale of their building to other businesses. Thus, through a series of providential contacts and enablements, ROLCCB has leased most of the first floor of the facility and Jocelyn Shu hopes to purchase all of the building, “when God provides.” Parking has been adequate at all three churches.

As for specific accommodations and equipment, the early needs were predictably simple. I did notice that none of the churches lacked for excellent computer and audio/visual needs, perhaps reflecting the priorities of a technologically savvy and younger generation of new church members. As to specifics, ACCC’s Henry Lu only tagged seating and parking from the late 1970s church plant for that church. It is assumed more was actually provided. WCGC and ROLCCB reported a more standard list of start-up needs, including seating, audio, kitchen and nursery equipment and interestingly, a start-up Chinese library of Christian books.

Another resource envisioned was the offer of transportation for visitors or new attenders. ACCC offered this as did WCGC, doing so with a more deliberate and

²⁷ Vision New England, online: www.VisionNewEngland.org (accessed 3 November 2007).

organized approach. The outreach-related resource of English classes was also viewed as a useful in the case of ACCC.

Results from the Local Survey

The briefer survey taken of local Chinese residents yielded a positive expression of hope that a local Chinese-speaking church can be planted. All respondents are Mandarin-speaking and they projected a similar number of adults needed for the start-up as was reported by the subject churches. The average for attending adults was 31, with the additional specificity that about 22 Mandarin-speaking people would be needed. Establishing a mature leadership core was strongly advised and some interest was expressed (though not overwhelming) for the creation of a good children's ministry in the beginning.

As to a connection with a host church, or a supporting mother-church this community was mildly committed to those ideas though not overwhelmingly so. If an advantageous relationship could be established with an English-speaking host church and/or an established Chinese mother church, the local residents could see the value of assistance. Most respondents acknowledged a cautionary feeling of not beginning prematurely before an agreed upon minimum number of adults attenders appears likely.

The local Chinese envision the need for a Mandarin-based Bible study to begin with, a worship service in Mandarin with supplemental English ministries provided. Music utilized could be either contemporary or traditional. There was no strong preference expressed pertaining to music. A summary of survey responses is provided below in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6. Southcoast Opinion Survey, Local Chinese 2007

Survey Question	
Do you see potential for a new church?	Yes = 10 No = 0 Unsure = 1
Minimum # adult attenders?	Average response = 31
Long-term Chinese-speaking attenders?	Average response = 22
Chinese dialect spoken by leaders?	Mandarin = 10 Cantonese = 0
Children/s & teens' ministries needed?	S.S. (3), Nursery (2), C.C., Youth
Host church in the beginning?	Existing English-speaking? = 5 Independent = 0 Either = 2
Supporting mother church?	Yes = 4 No = 3 Yes = 7, if one is available
Which basic ministries at launch?	Bible study in Mandarin = 8 Worship in Mandarin = 4 Both = 4
English classes as an outreach?	Yes = 9 No = 2
Critical Factors in the beginning?	
Mature leadership core = 9	
Launch only w/ min. # committed attenders = 7	
Reliable Nursery + good S.S. = 4	
Solid financial base = 3	
Music = 4	
Opportunities to serve = 2	
have our own facility/space = 2	
Effective web site = 1	
Time of service = 1	

It would have been preferable to achieve a larger number of responses to this survey. Two attempts at the existing Chinese Bible study and one e-mail survey to that group only provided the summary table above. This suggests that envisioning will need to be led by an aggressive and strongly visionary individual or individuals. The local Chinese are resourceful and motivated but as with any healthy church plant, good leadership will involve leaders who can see potential and are undaunted by the challenges presented in planting of a completely new ministry.

Restaurant Outreach Possibilities

As regards possible outreach to the local Chinese restaurant industry, we have been aware of a large number of establishments in the area. One, near our church, is owned by a Chinese-Christian couple. The Chinese intellectual community seems to be the logical group who might be able to reach into the restaurant industry with the Gospel.

One restaurant is run by a Christian couple, as well. I contacted Elise Chong, Associate Director of Hope for New York.²⁸ She informed us of Chinese Herald Christian Crusades which has established a ministry to restaurant workers in Chinatown (Manhattan) and Flushing (Queens.) Their website is in Chinese only however, and translation can be sought at a later date.

One local restaurant was found to be owned by a Chinese Christian couple, Shi Wu Chen and Xiu Qing Zheng. When a local Chinese church is planted, and as a base for outreach, this couple potentially could be approached for guidance and resources in reaching into the restaurant community.

Summary of Results

The eighteen month process of researching this project has only introduced the possibilities to me for what can be discovered and found among the Chinese churches in America. New England's Chinese are in the process of becoming regionalized and increasingly permanent citizens. Their culture and language will not evaporate nor should it. With communication as it is in the internet age, connections with mainland China and Taiwan will remain fast and continuous. But most interesting has been the glance into the process that the Holy Spirit engages in any soul regardless of country of origin or culture. He is making us more like the Son of God, whether it is a Chinese-speaking individual or an English-speaking one.

While I did not query either the subject churches or the local Chinese Christian leaders with the specifics of ecclesiology or church planting principles mentioned in chapter 2, the results revealed their sympathies with those specifics. Good teaching, small groups, leading by leadership gifts (as Hybels emphasizes), the metaphors

²⁸ Elise Chong, e-mail to the author, 2 October 2007. The website of Hope for New York is www.hfny.org and the website for Chinese Christian Herald Crusades is www.cchc.org although this website is in Chinese. Translation will be sought.

Deffinbaugh mentioned, as well as the basic thinking of Bannerman, would all meet with approval in the subject churches' current leaders. More will be said about integrating and implementing principles from the literature church phase of research in Chapter 5.

We hypothesized that the subject churches would yield direction for a new church plant as to gauging the environment in which to plant, the conditions which would be favorable for a plant, preparations which would need to be made in advance plus certain other parameters to be considered, and finally the resources needed with which to plant. Each subject church did reveal from their history aspects to these inquiries. These have been demonstrated above. However, it was interesting that in none of the subject churches was there anything like the complicated systems of coordination, hierarchy or theoretical ecclesiology that we so commonly read about in American church literature. Sharp lines of distinction about spiritual gifts or competing styles of traditional/pragmatic/emerging among Western churches as Webber articulates,²⁹ seem almost irrelevant among the subject churches (although ROLCCB is charismatic in flavor).

The results I have articulated in this research will hopefully aid and motivate a core group of church planters in the near future to begin a new body and flock of Christ's people who will be positioned to reach a unique immigrant portion of Southcoast, Massachusetts. The process of research has been both humbling and stirring to begin what will likely be a continuing personal investigation into the wonders of Gospel power among internationals.

²⁹ Robert E. Webber, *The Younger Evangelicals: Facing the Challenges of the New World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 2002).

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

This research project has placed me in contact with some of the very special people in the Chinese immigrant community in Southcoast, Massachusetts and has equipped me to give serious consideration to the possibility of facilitating the planting of a new Chinese language-speaking church. While not overly numerous, their number appears adequate to commence work towards the eventual founding of a new Chinese fellowship. If this study had uncovered a discouraging underlying environment for such an endeavor, we would have concluded not to continue thinking in that direction. However, these case studies seem to display conditions and parameters similar to those which exist in Southcoast, Massachusetts currently. At least, they do not seem at all dissimilar to what exists now in our area. It remains to be seen whether there is an adequate base-community of Christians such that a church could be started, or whether the unchurched Chinese community will support a new church. The first challenge would be to recruit, motivate and empower an initial leadership core. That would involve some kind of assessment of the spiritual gifts, maturity level and doctrinal readiness of people who might serve in such a core group.

What is the Growth Potential in the Area?

Growth potential in the region for Chinese immigrant ministry is substantial. But is it so in the Southcoast area? With no Chinese-language ministry closer than Rhode Island to the west, none at all to the east and none closer than Boston to the north the potential for a growing Chinese ministry to intellectuals and families or otherwise, remains good in Southcoast.

Data in Table 5.1 (below) taken from the website Salary.com¹ corresponds to the four geographical areas relevant to this research--Amherst (Springfield), Worcester, Acton (Boston) and Dartmouth (New Bedford.) This information illustrates how the cost of living in Southcoast (represented here by figures for New Bedford) is among the lowest in Massachusetts. This feature of Southcoast has been an increasingly significant inducement to relocate south in the region over the past twenty years. Adding to this the dramatic growth in recent years of the U.Mass.Dartmouth community, we can only expect an increasing number of Chinese intellectuals (and others) to take advantage of it. The assumed base salary for the calculations is the equivalent for the 2006 average salary for an instructor at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the main campus in the University of Massachusetts system.

Table 5.1. Potential Cost of Living Changes for Relocations

Assuming a \$54,000 base annual salary*			Change in Cost of Living	Change in Salary	Net change in disposable income
Moving from	Springfield (Amherst) MA	to Boston MA	54.80%	11.50%	-\$23,337.00
	Boston MA	Worcester MA	-26.70%	-7.70%	\$10,283.00
	Worcester MA	New Bedford MA	-4.10%	-3.40%	\$364.00
	New Bedford MA	Springfield (Amherst) MA	-8.10%	0.50%	\$4,645.00
	Springfield (Amherst)	New Bedford, MA	8.80%	-0.50%	\$5,031.00
	Boston MA	New Bedford, MA	-29.70%	-10.80%	\$7,557.00
	Kansas City, MO	New Bedford, MA	1.90%	-3.60%	\$682.00

* based on the 2006 Average salary for Instructors at U.Mass.Amherst (Faculty & Staff Factbook 2006).

The illustration simply shows how a theoretical relocation by someone from any of the regions surrounding the subject churches (except Amherst) to the Southcoast area would generally provide a positive net change in disposable income. Since the

¹ Salary.com Cost of Living Calculator, online: http://swz.salary.com/costoflivingwizard/layoutscripts/coll_start.asp (accessed 29 October 2007).

University of Massachusetts system includes campuses at Amherst, Boston, Dartmouth, Lowell and Worcester, such relocations are always possible among university faculty and staff. Southcoast and the U.Mass.Dartmouth community are plainly poised for growth.

Since Southcoast is often thought of as a “bedroom” community for the greater Boston area, more and more citizens who work in Boston are locating their homes in Southcoast. It is one of the most affordable areas in the greater Boston region. There is also a fresh commitment by Massachusetts legislators to extend commuter rail from Boston as far south as New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts.² While this will take a number of years to fulfill it raises the desirability for more Boston-area workers to live and make a home in Southcoast.

There is a firm strategy and commitment by the current university administration at U.Mass.Dartmouth to continue to expand the school’s size and other regional colleges also continue to grow. All of these factors suggest an environment that would be positive and constructive for the planting of a new Chinese Gospel ministry.

What Leadership and Resources Would Be Required?

Based on the experience and quality of leadership enjoyed in the early years of the subject churches, coupled with this author’s familiarity with the current potential Chinese Christian leaders, it is projected that a sufficient leadership team could be recruited for the planning and at least prayerful exploration for a new Chinese language-based ministry in Southcoast. As an early step, a web site should be developed as well as the utilization of on-line “blogging” opportunities (Facebook, etc). These have great potential for fast and full information dissemination about any Bible study, special services and ministries that might be offered even on an exploratory basis. The web site might be entitled something like “Chinese Café” which is interactive and seeks user

² *The New Bedford Standard-Times* newspaper, online: <http://www.southcoasttoday.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20071005/NEWS/710050346> (accessed 5 October 2007).

input. This creates a no-risk way of expressing interest and expanding the idea of a new ministry widely via the internet.

A beginning step would be to invite a steering committee to begin to meet and to sponsor a weekly Bible study in Mandarin. An acceptable location would be sought and arranged for. Simple materials available from existing Chinese churches or from AFC³ (or a similar source) would be procured. Ambassadors for Christ, International could be chosen as a purchasing source and has been used recently for the beginning of a Chinese Christian library. This was a gesture in support of the Chinese Christians already here. An initial collection now established of Christian books (in Chinese) includes 150 books, a list specifically recommended by the Chinese ministry staff pastor, Ju-Ta Pan, from Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston (in Lexington.) CDs from the teaching ministry in Mandarin of that church will be available as well.

Next a regular Bible teacher who could minister in Mandarin needs to be recruited. An individual schooled in basic Bible, hermeneutics, evangelical theology and practical Christianity including an understanding of the Christian family, would be minimal. A seminary graduate would be preferable. It would also be helpful if the person can at least refer to skilled counselors if that ministry is needed. If this person does not reside locally, the Bible study could collect donations for reimbursement of travel expenses. This would contribute to their sense of “ownership” of the responsibility and privilege of receiving the ministry of a remote teacher.

After a Bible study is established, a core of church-planting leaders could be sought. This would only be an initial planting team, and could include men and women. They would meet frequently at first to establish the parameters and conditions for possible addition of a Mandarin worship service. They would also take upon themselves

³ AFC (Ambassadors for Christ, Int.) is a standard source for Chinese literature ministry, online: <http://www.afcinc.org/bookstore> (accessed 7 November 2007).

the commitment to carry out communications, promotion, advertising and web-site design and maintenance. This group would also prayerfully envision what ecclesiological goals and qualities the new fellowship should embrace, as discussed in Chapter 2 above.

An English class would then be established and sufficient advertising and invitation provided to the general Southcoast community, followed by decisions about child care and ministry which would be needed. A coordinator of this resource for the group would then be appointed by the leadership.

The leadership core would then begin to explore the beginning of a weekly worship service in Mandarin. The process could be envisioned as in Figure 5.1 below:

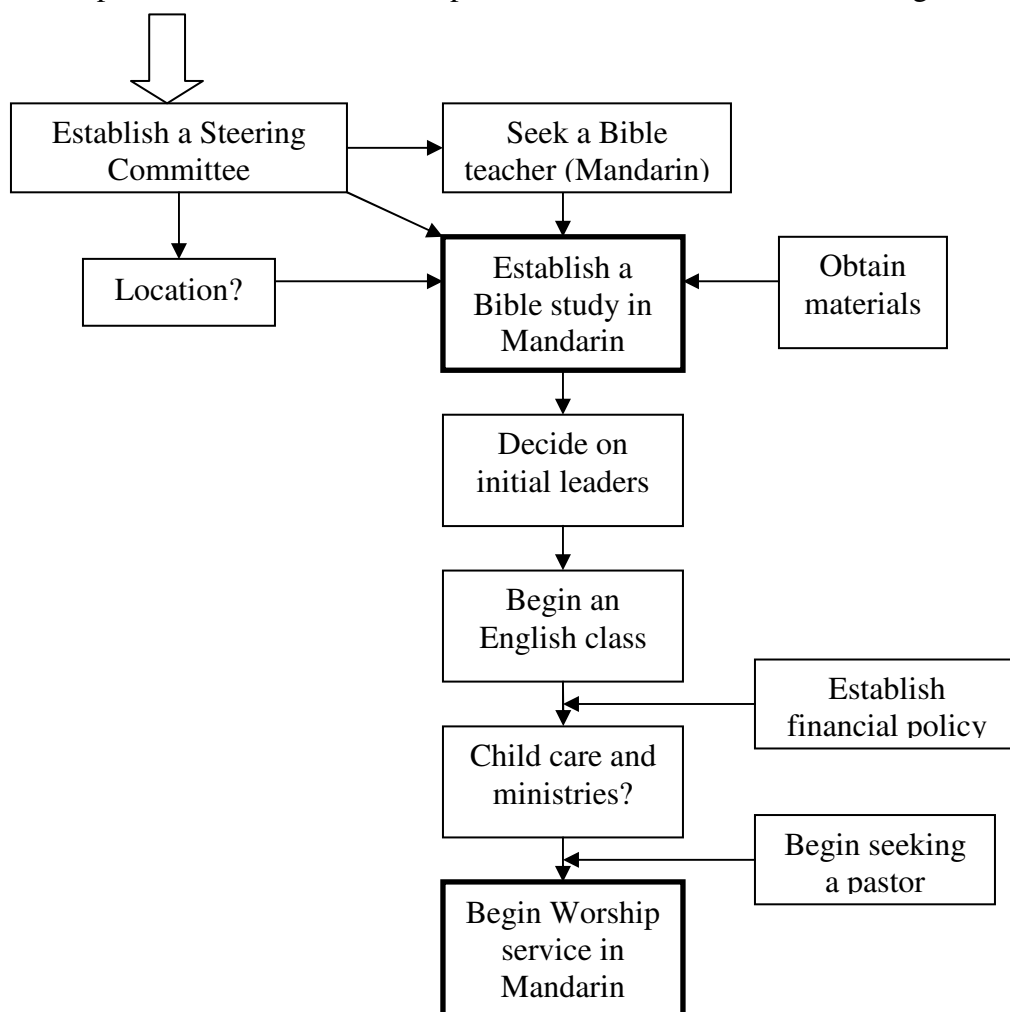


Figure 5.1. Chinese Church Planting Logic

A very much needed “resource” is the ministry of a pastor. A long-range plan for seeking a pastor would be developed and prayer effort enlisted for this project. Since there appears to be a shortage of qualified Chinese pastors in this country, the fellowship would need to look beyond New England. A full posting of the position, perhaps part-time at first, should be published through all available placement channels.

Other resources which may be needed at the beginning would include,

1. Securing of a facility in which either or both Bible study and worship service could meet on a regular and affordable basis.
2. Seating for the above meetings.
3. Songbooks or hymnals.
4. Bibles, either in Chinese or both Chinese and English.
5. Adequate sound equipment, if needed.
6. A computer for hosting a web site, and the services of a web server.
7. An overhead or data projector.
8. A white board and supplies.
9. CD and DVD players.
10. Basic office supplies.
11. Basic Nursery supplies.

What Outside Help Would be Helpful?

We note that just as some travel notable distances to attend Pawtucket, Lexington etc. we should not leave out notification to areas wider than Dartmouth, Fall River and New Bedford. When a wider field is considered, a greater potential base is made possible.

The assistance of a host church or churches would be very much advantageous to a new Chinese ministry in Southcoast. There is certainly a precedent for this as has been experienced in many other places. One good model is the Blacksburg Chinese

Christian Fellowship⁴ which is enclosed within the Blacksburg Christian Fellowship in Blacksburg, Virginia. This fellowship of approximately 150 people (mainly Chinese intellectuals and their families) functions within the larger church of 900, includes a Mandarin service, Bible studies, a Women's group and regular social and fun activities. It is governed by their own board of elders but shares some activities with the host church. A host church would provide space and facility for small groups, a worship service, Sunday school ministries, etc. for the new fellowship. This was the case with ACCC and WCGC.

A mentoring church may also be sought and queried for assistance. Several churches may be willing to help in this way. Leaders of the new fellowship could spend time being trained and equipped by existing leaders of a mentor church. This was the case with ROLCCB.

Additionally, affiliation with a denominational or missional organization may be desired. Recommended would be the Northeast Baptist Conference of the Baptist General Conference with which Dartmouth Bible Church is already affiliated, which is also a very church-planting minded ministry. Other possibilities might include the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention or the Evangelical Free Church of America, both of which have a presence in New England.

Most likely there will be Chinese Christians from the region who will informally come alongside to assist. Those contacts can be developed and queried for suggestions, prayer support and any other assistance which would be appropriate.

As has already been experienced that may also be itinerant Chinese Bible teachers or missionaries who would like to provide conference ministry to the new

⁴ Blacksburg Chinese Christian Fellowship, online: <http://civic.bev.net/bccf/home.html> (accessed 9 November 2007).

fellowship. These might be scheduled for conference, seminars and workshops to edify and enhance the ministries of the local teaching staff.

What Timing Would Be Possible?

After the steering committee is selected, a web site and weblog might be initiated; a launch date for the Bible study could be projected for three months later. Once the location was secured, a commitment obtained from a teacher or team of teachers, with adequate time for promotion and interaction, this study could commence at a time that is to be determined by the steering committee.

If the Bible study developed successfully and there appeared to be an adequate number of Chinese-speaking people interested, a first worship service could be scheduled for one year later. Intervening planning would include decisions about location for a worship service, materials and other resources obtained, the launch of an English class, with planning for child care and initial ministries for children and youth. Also a financial policy should be discussed and agreed upon early in the process. Some support from a host church, a mentoring church or a missional affiliation might be possible and should be explored early in the process. The following table summarizes a possible schedule. Having a schedule would advantageous because it provides a “map” for the steering committee to work with. Adjustments are possible, even probable but an initial target schedule would be advisable.

Table 5.2. Timing for New Ministry Start-up

Steering Committee	first step					
Seek Bible teacher(s)	→	3 months				
Secure location	→	3 months				
Decide about host church	→	3 months				
Obtain materials	→	6 months				
Launch Bible study	→	6 months				
Decide initial leaders	→	9 months				
Begin English class	→	9 months				
Establish financial policy	→	9 months				
Plan child care	→	1 year				
Begin pastoral search	→	1 year				
Launch Worship service	→	1 year				
Incorporation?	→	3 years				

Long Range Vision and Future Research

As ministry by and among the Chinese intellectual population and others in Southcoast expands, incorporation as a fully autonomous organization would be a long-range goal. If this is desired, a time-table could be proposed and the necessary steps employed, as outlined by the Internal Revenue Service.⁵

A long range goal might be to create within the new fellowship a heart and burden to support missions themselves. Many avenues and tools to instill missions awareness could be available but the creation of this urgency for any new fellowship should be given strong consideration from the earliest days.

Since the new ministry would be closely associated with a university community there should be opportunities to “be a blessing” to that community. Assistance in the work of helping international students and their families, cultural celebrations, mentoring and life-coaching could all present themselves as opportunities to render good works back to the university community as a demonstration of Christian authenticity.

Future research could serve the need to understand more fully the transitions of an immigrant Chinese population in their second and third generations. More should be investigated about how church and parachurch ministries can accommodate the “2’s” and “3’s.” In some ways these children and grandchildren are similar to those among other immigrant communities, and in other ways they are very unique. Victor Quan said (at ROLCCB), “you can always tell a Chinese youth group by the fact that they tend to have lots of Bible knowledge, they possess cumulative school averages of 3.90 and they desperately want to know if Christianity works.”⁶

⁵ Tax information for churches and religious organizations, *Internal Revenue Service*, online: <http://www.irs.gov/charities/churches/index.html> (accessed 8 November 2007).

⁶ Victor Quan, talk given at “Storm” youth conference at River of Life Chinese Christian Church of Boston, 10 November 2006.

Secondly, further research would be appropriate to explore the kinds of cooperative support and shared ministry that have been engaged between Chinese churches in New England. What specific opportunities for joint Gospel work have been experienced and what kinds of shared ministry might be considered in the future?

Third, a study of existing contemporary Christian books and other printed works could be surveyed and documented with perhaps an annotated bibliography made available. This would assist churches and individual Bible study leaders for the selection of materials for use in their ministries.

Fourth, it would be appropriate for new research to be done on how the internet has come to enhance ministry among Chinese Christians, as well as a survey of church and parachurch web sites and on-line resources.

It is hoped that this research project may be of some utility to someone in the future who is thinking about ministry among Chinese-Americans. This research represents someone who began with almost no understanding of Chinese immigrant history, culture or how ministry has been done. What we have uncovered has helped this researcher and pastor gain a much greater understanding of the potential and challenges of working with this great community of very spiritually hungry and fine people.

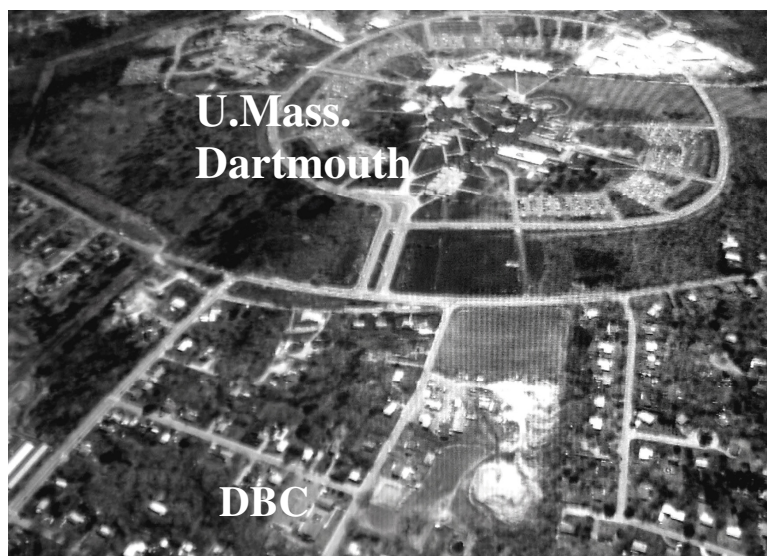


Figure 5.2. Dartmouth Bible Church in relation to U.Mass.Dartmouth

APPENDIX A

Survey of Chinese Church Planting
Spring 2007

Neil C. Damgaard, Th.M.
Dallas Theological Seminary

SURVEY for D.Min. Research Project

Answer all questions which are relevant to you. *Thank you*

The purpose of this **SURVEY** is to discover and to study the factors involved in the successful planting of an evangelical Chinese-language based church in southern New England, as experienced in three existing churches. **Your responses will be confidential and anonymous.** (Thank you for assisting in this research.)

I. ABOUT THE AREA WHERE YOUR CHURCH IS NOW LOCATED:

- Were you attracted to **your area** by any specific resources or opportunities specific to your area?

 1 2 3 4 5
 Definitely Not Somewhat Yes Definitely Strongly

- If so, **what** resources or opportunities were available to you there?
 Public transportation? _____
 Schools for children? _____
 University classes? _____
 English classes? _____
 Existing Chinese community? _____
 Chinese classes for children? _____
 Other: _____

- Can you say something about your *first* experience in a Christian church. What is your general background regarding Christian churches? Is church-life familiar to you? (You do not need to share anything specific if you do not want to).

- What do you feel is a minimum number of people needed to begin a church?
- Did there seem to be enough Chinese-speaking people in your area to sustain a church?

1 2 3 4 5
 Not Enough Probably Not Unsure Perhaps Yes, Enough

- Do most of the Chinese people in your area speak...

MANDARIN CANTONESE ENGLISH

II. WHAT ADVANTAGEOUS CONDITIONS EXISTED WHICH HELPED YOUR CHURCH TO SUCCEED?

- When your church began, how would you describe the interest level for a new evangelical church among the local Chinese-speaking population?

 1 2 3 4 5
 Poor Low Promising Good Excellent

- When your church began, how was a suitable *location* found in which to meet?

- Did the early meetings or services operate well?

 1 2 3 4 5
 Definitely Not Somewhat Definitely

- What did the founding leaders do well? (check all that are true)

- They were very friendly
 - They knew the Bible and taught it in an understandable way
 - They helped meet people's basic needs
 - They taught us how to know God
 - They communicated excitement about Christ
 - They were courageous and confident
 - They had a good emphasis on music
 - They possessed integrity and were good examples
 - OTHER:
-

- What languages were originally planned to be used:

Mandarin English Cantonese

- Did the original leaders and the original church minister well to *second generation* Chinese?

 1 2 3 4 5

Definitely Not Somewhat Definitely

- Was there support from any organization or *other* group of Christians?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Definitely Not		Somewhat		Definitely

- How would you describe the level of **spiritual** maturity of the founding leaders?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
Spiritually naive	Grounded	Growing	Mature	Very mature

- What good qualities in your leaders did you see which contributed to the continuance of your church?

- How were the children and teenagers ministered to?

- How did the first attendees of your church relate to the prevailing Catholicism in Massachusetts?
 - Didn't notice it; ignored it
 - Some early attendees attended Catholic churches also
 - Saw no difference between Catholic and Evangelical Christianity
 - Other: _____

III. WHAT PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETED TO INSURE SUCCESS OF YOUR CHURCH'S BEGINNING?

- What advertising was used to notify Chinese-speaking people of the beginning of your church?

- Were other methods of public notice or announcement used? (web site, mailings, signs, e-mail, etc.)

- Were people *personally* invited to attend your church?

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	2	3	4	5
None of	a few of	Some of	Most of	All of

them them them them them

- Was any cooperative standard agreed upon between people born in mainland China and those born in Hong Kong, Taiwan or in other non-Asian countries?
-

- Was a pastor invited to serve the new church? YES NO

- How was a pastor found?
-

- What qualifications was the pastor expected to possess?
-

- How was the new church governed in the beginning, and has that changed?
-

- What children's ministries were planned for in the beginning? Did they operate well?
-

- What children's ministries currently operate well in your church?

- Sunday School
- Nursery
- Children's Church
- Youth group
- Bible club
- Youth missions trips
- Children's choir

- What doctrinal or theological standards were assumed, or agreed upon in the beginning of your church?

- Bible believing and teaching
- Salvation by Christ alone
- Salvation by faith alone
- God = Father, Son, Holy Spirit
- Christ is coming again
- Angels, demons, Satan are real
- Christians should demonstrate their faith by good works
- Baptism by immersion
- Communion (the Lord's Table) for believers only
- Personal evangelism is important
- Spiritual gifts exist
- Spiritual gifts include supernatural abilities

- How appropriate or well-suited was the facility for the new church?

- How was security and safety communicated to potential attendees?

- How was music planned for, and who would participate?

- How were finances handled?

IV. WHAT QUALITATIVE FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING OF YOUR CHURCH?

- How did the first leader or leaders win or gain people's confidence?

- How well-trained in the Bible was it expected for leaders to be?

- What other qualities in leaders were necessary for the church to be sustained and grow?

- How determined was the first core of people to see the church succeed?

- Was regular attendance on Sundays expected?

V. WHAT RESOURCES WERE NEEDED TO BEGIN YOUR CHURCH?

- What was the initial number of adults participating in your church? _____

- How much money was needed to begin the church? _____
How was "giving" handled? _____ Were people expected to "tithes?" _____

- Was the first building adequate for the new church's needs? YES NO

What specific facility needs existed at the beginning of your church?

- Seating (chairs)
- Audio system
- Nursery room
- Sunday School/ youth rooms
- Signs
- Kitchen, dining
- Permitting
- Cleaning/decorating
- Library space; resource center
- Foyer, greeting area
- Musical instruments
- Parking
- Other" _____

- Was parking adequate? Was transportation offered and provided to potential visitors?

Thank you very much for helping with this survey. 😊

Rev. Neil C. Damgaard, Senior Pastor, Dartmouth Bible Church
www.DartmouthBible.org

APPENDIX B

Dallas Theological Seminary
Dallas, TX

Neil Damgaard, Th.M.
D.Min. student

Opinion Survey
Planting a Chinese Church in Southcoast, Massachusetts

Do you believe there is potential for a Chinese-language based church in the area of Dartmouth, New Bedford, Westport, Fall River, Massachusetts?

Yes No Not sure

What do you think would be the minimum number of regular adult attenders needed in order to launch a Mandarin worship service? _____

How many long-term resident Chinese-speaking adult attenders would be needed? _____

Is it important that the leaders of such a church speak
 Mandarin? Cantonese?

What kind of children's and teens' ministries would be needed?

In the beginning, should a new church plant be "hosted" by an existing English-speaking church or launched as an independent work from the beginning?

hosted by another church an independent work

Should an existing "mother" Chinese church be asked to facilitate or sponsor a new church in the Southcoast area by sending teachers, preachers, musicians, or church planters?

Yes Not necessary if such a "mother" church was available

In the beginning, there should be

a Chinese-speaking Bible study

a Chinese-speaking worship service

both English-speaking AND Chinese-speaking ministries

Other: _____

Would it be important to offer English classes as part of the outreach of such a church?

Yes No

What factors do you see are most critical in the beginning of a church?

Mature Christian leadership core

Time of service?

Have the minimum number of committed attenders before the church launches

Music

Opportunities to serve

A reliable nursery and good Sunday School

An effective web site

Our own facility/space

Financial base

Your Name (optional) _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C

History of Amherst Chinese Christian Church

(from their web site www.ACCCH.org)

Amherst Chinese Christian Church (ACCC) started in the 1960's as a small campus bible study group. In 1978, the group officially established a church and began their Sunday worship. During the past 27 years, ACCC has become a lamp stand in the region of Western Massachusetts, leading many Chinese living in Amherst, both local and temporary residents, out of darkness and into the light. Due to its close proximity to the University of Massachusetts, the congregation is mainly composed of Chinese students in UMASS, who came from Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. ACCC has become the 1st stop in their heavenly journey, as well as the cradle in fostering their spiritual growth. For many years, groups of foreign students got to know God through gospel meetings and bible study; they are saved and are born-again. Throughout their life in the university, they were nurtured and their spiritual life steadily matured. By the time they've become key co-workers in serving the Lord, they would have also attained their academic degrees. They departed the area according to where their career led them, and continued to serve the Lord in various states of America, Taiwan, Hong Kong, China, Southeast Asia and other parts of the world. In fact, over the past ten years, we've seen more who were baptized in ACCC, after being equipped spiritually, return to China to promote the gospel. Moreover, we have supported several alumni who accepted God's calling to receive seminary training and become full time workers of the Lord. Therefore, ACCC has always been doing the work of plowing, sowing, watering and sending out workers to advance the gospel. Our spiritual gifts and resources may be limited, yet our faith and mission to preach the gospel are not restricted. Recently, our church has become increasingly involved in short-term missions overseas. We've set foot in Trinidad of Tobago and Europe (England, Ireland and Spain). Indeed, the love of Christ compels us to seek for the lost souls for the sake of the Kingdom of God.

In the past, our congregation was composed mainly of graduate students and unmarried gospel friends. Lately, the composition gradually shifted to a higher percentage of locals and families. Although many students graduate and leave the area on a yearly basis, nonetheless, the Lord continues to add the number of believers among us. We are witnesses of God's abundant grace in Amherst Christian Chinese Church.

Amherst Chinese Christian Church has always used the facilities of First Baptist Church in Amherst until recently. In 2005, the church purchased and moved to its new property located along Belchertown Road (Route 9), Amherst.

APPENDIX D

RESOURCES IN CHINESE FOR CHURCH PLANTING FROM THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST NORTH AMERICAN MISSION BOARD

“Resources in Chinese,”¹ available in PDF format via .zip download:

Evangelism - Personal and Corporate

- Sharing Jesus Without Fear
- Special Evangelistic Events
- Evangelistic Block Party
- Personal Commitment Guide

New Christian Follow-Up

- Beginning Steps

Missions

- Your Passport to Missions
- A Basic Mission Education Guide

Leadership

- Basic Essentials for Christian Leaders
- Building a Powerful Ministry Team

Stewardship

- ABCs of Church Budgeting

Small Group Bible Study

- Small Group

Prayer - Personal and Corporate

- PrayTimer

¹ North American Mission Board website: http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/site/c.iiJTKZPEJpH/b.782505/k.CAD/Resources_in_Chinese.htm Accessed 25 July 2007 Permission granted for reprint by Joe Conway, Communications Consulting Team Director, North American Mission Board, in e-mail to the author, 25 September 2007.

- Prayer and the Church Planter

Church Administration

- Administration
- Church Constitution Guide

Church Planting

- Seven Steps to Planting a Church
- How to Develop a New Church

How to Relate to the Southern Baptist Convention

- Meet Southern Baptists
- The Baptist Faith and Message
- We Thought You'd Like To Know
- SBC: A Closer Look

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New Pastor Orientation Materials

- Introduction to New Pastor Orientation
- Life in the United States
- Baptist Faith and Message
- The Cooperative Program
- What is a Baptist?
- Mission Education for Every Church
- Southern Baptist Missionary Program
- Educational Opportunities for the Pastor
- Pathways
- Relating to Southern Baptists
- Meet the Church Planting Group
- Church Annual Profile
- The Local Church
- The Association
- The State Convention

APPENDIX E

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN INTERACTING WITH A CHINESE-AMERICAN

- Handshakes are common among Chinese-Americans, although many don't like other kinds of physical contact.
- A relatively large number of Chinese-Americans are affluent and highly-educated. Be prepared to present the gospel intellectually.
- Since the Chinese culture promotes harmony and abhors conflict, avoid arguments. If you feel a conversation is turning argumentative, drop the subject. You can pick it up later.
- Chinese-Americans tend to be Internet savvy. Exchange emails to keep in touch.
- Hospitality is prized so be willing to go over to your Chinese friend's house if invited. If eating with chopsticks, place them on the table after you are finished. Sometimes guests bring a gift of chocolate or fruit.
- Learn about Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. These religions place a lot of emphasis on leading a good life. The concept of salvation and life beyond death are not major concerns for many Chinese. Learn the chasm diagram (God on one side, man on the other, with Christ bridging the chasm of sin), and be prepared to talk about why it makes sense to believe in Christ not just in terms of eternity but while we are here on earth.
- Politeness is valued, and respect is very important.
- Safe topics for conversation include family and hobbies. You can also ask your Chinese friend about his or her culture.
- Be aware that practicing multiple religions is not uncommon. Be prepared to explain why Christianity is so unique.
- Quite a few elderly Chinese-Americans suffer from poverty. Find out ways you can show Christ's love in a practical way.
- If you have Chinese-Americans in your church, enlist their help in starting a ministry to Chinese-Americans in your community. Chinese-Americans will be more willing to come to a church event if invited by another Chinese person or if they know other Chinese people are going to be there.

SENSITIVE ISSUES

- Avoid giving gifts of knives, clocks or gifts made of straw these items are associated with funerals.
- Most Chinese- Americans find speaking mock Chinese very offensive.
- Avoid talking about politics or communism. If your friend brings it up, do more listening than talking.
- Don't criticize your Chinese-American friend in front of others. If you have to do it, do it privately.
- Avoid making any comments about Chinese dragons, customs or other items you might find displayed in their homes or places of business.
- Do not touch or make fun of idols of Buddha that you might see in the home or office of a Chinese American.

- Avoid discussing Hong Kong, Taiwan and Tibet. If your friend brings these topics up, do more listening than talking!¹

¹ Rajendra Pillai, http://www.churchplantingvillage.net/site/c.iiJTKZPEJpH/b.991903/k.815D/Chinese_American_Missions.htm, website accessed 2 February 2007. Permission granted for reprint by Joe Conway, Communications Consulting Team Director, North American Mission Board in e-mail to the author, 25 September 2007.

APPENDIX F

The Nestorian Stele

From <http://www.geocities.com/johnaugus/sutrastele.jpg>



Figure 10 The Nestorian Stele

Eulogizing the Propagation of the Illustrious Religion in China, with a Preface, composed by a priest of the Syriac Church, 781 A.D.

"Behold the unchangeably true and invisible, who existed through all eternity without origin; the far-seeing perfect intelligence, whose mysterious existence is everlasting; operating on primordial substance he created the universe, being more excellent than all holy intelligences, inasmuch as he is the source of all that is honorable. This is our eternal true lord God, triune and mysterious in substance. He appointed the cross as the means for determining the four cardinal points, he moved the original spirit, and produced the two principles of nature; the somber void was changed, and heaven and earth were opened out; the sun and moon revolved, and day and night commenced; having perfected all inferior objects, he then made the first man; upon him he bestowed an excellent disposition, giving him in charge the government of all created beings; man, acting out the original principles of his nature, was pure and unostentatious; his unsullied and expansive mind was free from the least inordinate desire; until Satan introduced the seeds of falsehood, to deteriorate his purity of principle; the opening thus commenced in his virtue gradually enlarged, and by this crevice in his nature was obscured and rendered vicious; hence three hundred and sixty-five sects followed each other in continuous track, inventing every species of doctrinal complexity; while some pointed to material objects as the source of their faith, others reduced all to vacancy, even to the annihilation of the two primeval principles, some sought to call down blessings by prayers and supplications, while others by an assumption of excellence held themselves up as superior to their fellows; their intellects and thoughts continually wavering, their minds and affections incessantly on the move, they never obtained their vast desires, but being exhausted and distressed they revolved in their own heated atmosphere; till by an accumulation of obscurity they lost their path, and after long groping in darkness they

were unable to return. Thereupon, our Trinity being divided in nature, the illustrious and honorable Messiah, veiling his true dignity, appeared in the world as a man; angelic powers promulgated the glad tidings, a virgin gave birth to the Holy One in Syria; a bright star announced the felicitous event, and Persians observing the splendor came to present tribute; the ancient dispensation, as declared by the twenty-four holy men [the writers of the Old Testament], was then fulfilled, and he laid down great principles for the government of families and kingdoms; he established the new religion of the silent operation of the pure spirit of the Triune; he rendered virtue subservient to direct faith; he fixed the extent of the eight boundaries, thus completing the truth and freeing it from dross; he opened the gate of the three constant principles, introducing life and destroying death; he suspended the bright sun to invade the chambers of darkness, and the falsehoods of the devil were thereupon defeated; he set in motion the vessel of mercy by which to ascend to the bright mansions, whereupon rational beings were then released, having thus completed the manifestation of his power, in clear day he ascended to his true station.

Twenty-seven sacred books [the number in the New Testament] have been left, which disseminate intelligence by unfolding the original transforming principles. By the rule for admission, it is the custom to apply the water of baptism, to wash away all superficial show and to cleanse and purify the neophytes. As a seal, they hold the cross, whose influence is reflected in every direction, uniting all without distinction. As they strike the wood, the fame of their benevolence is diffused abroad; worshiping toward the east, they hasten on the way to life and glory; they preserve the beard to symbolize their outward actions, they shave the crown to indicate the absence of inward affections; they do not keep slaves, but put noble and mean all on an equality; they do not amass wealth, but cast all their property into the common stock; they fast, in order to perfect themselves by self-inspection; they submit to restraints, in order to strengthen themselves by silent watchfulness; seven times a day they have worship and praise for the benefit of the living and the dead; once in seven days they sacrifice, to cleanse the heart and return to purity.

It is difficult to find a name to express the excellence of the true and unchangeable doctrine; but as its meritorious operations are manifestly displayed, by accommodation it is named the Illustrious Religion. Now without holy men, principles cannot become expanded; without principles, holy men cannot become magnified; but with holy men and right principles, united as the two parts of a signet, the world becomes civilized and enlightened.

In the time of the accomplished Emperor Tai-tsung, the illustrious and magnificent founder of the dynasty, among the enlightened and holy men who arrived was the most-virtuous Olopun, from the country of Syria. Observing the azure clouds, he bore the true sacred books; beholding the direction of the winds, he braved difficulties and dangers. In the year of our Lord 635 he arrived at Chang-an; the Emperor sent his Prime Minister, Duke Fang Hiuen-ling; who, carrying the official staff to the west border, conducted his guest into the interior; the sacred books were translated in the imperial library, the sovereign investigated the subject in his private apartments; when becoming deeply

impressed with the rectitude and truth of the religion, he gave special orders for its dissemination.

In the seventh month of the year A.D. 638 the following imperial proclamation was issued:

"Right principles have no invariable name, holy men have no invariable station; instruction is established in accordance with the locality, with the object of benefiting the people at large. The greatly virtuous Olopun, of the kingdom of Syria, has brought his sacred books and images from that distant part, and has presented them at our chief capital. Having examined the principles of this religion, we find them to be purely excellent and natural; investigating its originating source, we find it has taken its rise from the establishment of important truths; its ritual is free from perplexing expressions, its principles will survive when the framework is forgot; it is beneficial to all creatures; it is advantageous to mankind. Let it be published throughout the Empire, and let the proper authority build a Syrian church in the capital in the I-ning May, which shall be governed by twenty-one priests. When the virtue of the Chau Dynasty declined, the rider on the azure ox ascended to the west; the principles of the great Tang becoming resplendent, the Illustrious breezes have come to fan the East."

Orders were then issued to the authorities to have a true portrait of the Emperor taken; when it was transferred to the wall of the church, the dazzling splendor of the celestial visage irradiated the Illustrious portals. The sacred traces emitted a felicitous influence, and shed a perpetual splendor over the holy precincts. According to the Illustrated Memoir of the Western Regions, and the historical books of the Han and Wei dynasties, the kingdom of Syria reaches south to the Coral Sea; on the north it joins the Gem Mountains; on the west it extends toward the borders of the immortals and the flowery forests; on the east it lies open to the violent winds and tideless waters. The country produces fire-proof cloth, life-restoring incense, bright moon-pearls, and night-luster gems. Brigands and robbers are unknown, but the people enjoy happiness and peace. None but Illustrious laws prevail; none but the virtuous are raised to sovereign power. The land is broad and ample, and its literary productions are perspicuous and clear.

The Emperor Kau-tsung respectfully succeeded his ancestor, and was still more beneficent toward the institution of truth. In every province he caused Illustrious churches to be erected, and ratified the honor conferred upon Olopun, making him the great conservator of doctrine for the preservation of the State. While this doctrine pervaded every channel, the State became enriched and tranquility abounded. Every city was full of churches, and the royal family enjoyed luster and happiness. In the year A.D. 699 the Buddhists, gaining power, raised their voices in the eastern metropolis; in the year A.D. 713, some low fellows excited ridicule and spread slanders in the western capital. At that time there was the chief priest Lohan, the greatly virtuous Kie-leih, and others of noble estate from the golden regions, lofty-minded priests, having abandoned all worldly interests; who unitedly maintained the grand principles and preserved them entire to the end. The high-principled Emperor Hiuen-tsung caused the Prince of Ning and others, five princes in all, personally to visit the felicitous edifice; he established the place

of worship; he restored the consecrated timbers which had been temporarily thrown down; and re-erected the sacred stones which for a time had been desecrated.

In A.D. 742 orders were given to the great general Kau Lih-sz', to send the five sacred portraits and have them placed in the church, and a gift of a hundred pieces of silk accompanied these pictures of intelligence. Although the dragon's beard was then remote, their bows and swords were still within reach; while the solar horns sent forth their rays, and celestial visages seemed close at hand. In A.D. 744 the priest Kih-ho, in the kingdom of Syria, looking toward the star [of China], was attracted by its transforming influence, and observing the sun [*i.e.*, the Emperor], came to pay court to the most honorable. The Emperor commanded the priest Lo-han, the priest Pu-lun, and others, seven in all, together with the greatly virtuous Kih-ho, to perform a service of merit in the Hing-king palace. Thereupon the Emperor composed mottoes for the sides of the church, and the tablets were graced with the royal inscriptions; the accumulated gems emitted their effulgence, while their sparkling brightness vied with the ruby clouds; the transcripts of intelligence suspended in the void shot forth their rays as reflected by the sun; the bountiful gifts exceeded the height of the southern hills; the bedewing favors were deep as the eastern sea. Nothing is beyond the range of the right principle, and what is permissible may be identified; nothing is beyond the power of the holy man, and that which is practicable may be related.

The accomplished and enlightened Emperor Suh-tsung rebuilt the Illustrious churches in Ling-wu and four other places; great benefits were conferred, and felicity began to increase; great munificence was displayed, and the imperial State became established. The accomplished and military Emperor Tai-tsung magnified the sacred succession, and honored the latent principle of nature; always, on the incarnation-day, he bestowed celestial incense, and ordered the performance of a service of merit; he distributed of the imperial viands, in order to shed a glory on the Illustrious Congregation. Heaven is munificent in the dissemination of blessings, whereby the benefits of life are extended; the holy man embodies the original principle of virtue, whence he is able to counteract noxious influences.

Our sacred and sage-like, accomplished and military Emperor Kien-chung appointed the eight branches of government, according to which he advanced or degraded the intelligent and dull; he opened up the nine categories, by means of which he renovated the Illustrious decrees; his transforming influence pervaded the most abstruse principles, while openness of heart distinguished his devotions. Thus, by correct and enlarged purity of principle, and undeviating consistency in sympathy with others; by extended commiseration rescuing multitudes from misery, while disseminating blessings on all around, the cultivation of our doctrine gained a grand basis, and by gradual advances its influence was diffused. If the winds and rains are seasonable, the world will be at rest; men will be guided by principle, inferior objects will be pure; the living will be at ease, and the dead will rejoice; the thoughts will produce their appropriate response, the affections will be free, and the eyes will be sincere; such is the laudable condition which we of the Illustrious Religion are laboring to attain.

Our great benefactor, the Imperially conferred purple-gown priest, I-sz', titular Great Statesman of the Banqueting-house, Associated Secondary Military Commissioner for the Northern Region, and Examination-palace Overseer, was naturally mild and graciously disposed; his mind susceptible of sound doctrine, he was diligent in the performance; from the distant city of Rajagriha, he came to visit China; his principles more lofty than those of the three dynasties, his practice was perfect in every department; at first he applied himself to duties pertaining to the palace, eventually his name was inscribed on the military roll. When the Duke Koh Tsz'-i, Secondary Minister of State and Prince of Fan-yang, at first conducted the military in the northern region, the Emperor Suh-tsung made him (I-sz') his attendant on his travels; although he was a private chamberlain, he assumed no distinction on the march; he was as claws and teeth to the duke, and in rousing the military he was as ears and eyes; he distributed the wealth conferred upon him, not accumulating treasure for his private use; he made offerings of the jewelry which had been given by imperial favor, he spread out a golden carpet for devotion; now he repaired the old churches, anon he increased the number of religious establishments; he honored and decorated the various edifices, till they resembled the plumage of the pheasant in its flight; moreover, practicing the discipline of the Illustrious Religion, he distributed his riches in deeds of benevolence; every year he assembled those in the sacred office from four churches, and respectfully engaged them for fifty days in purification and preparation; the naked came and were clothed; the sick were attended to and restored; the dead were buried in repose; even among the most pure and self-denying of the Buddhists, such excellence was never heard of; the white-clad members of the Illustrious Congregation, now considering these men, have desired to engrave a broad tablet, in order to set forth a eulogy of their magnanimous deeds.

ODE

The true Lord is without origin,
 Profound, invisible, and unchangeable;
 With power and capacity to perfect and transform,
 He raised up the earth and established the heavens.

Divided in nature, he entered the world,
 To save and to help without bounds;
 The sun arose, and darkness was dispelled,
 All bearing witness to his true original.

The glorious and resplendent, accomplished Emperor,
 Whose principles embraced those of preceding monarchs,
 Taking advantage of the occasion, suppressed turbulence;
 Heaven was spread out and the earth was enlarged.

When the pure, bright Illustrious Religion
 Was introduced to our Tang Dynasty,
 The Scriptures were translated, and churches built,
 And the vessel set in motion for the living and the dead;

Every kind of blessing was then obtained,
And all the kingdoms enjoyed a state of peace.

When Kau-tsung succeeded to his ancestral estate,
He rebuilt the edifices of purity;
Palaces of concord, large and light,
Covered the length and breadth of the land.

The true doctrine was clearly announced,
Overseers of the church were appointed in due form;
The people enjoyed happiness and peace,
While all creatures were exempt from calamity and distress.

When Hiuen-tsung commenced his sacred career,
He applied himself to the cultivation of truth and rectitude;
His imperial tablets shot forth their effulgence,
And the celestial writings mutually reflected their splendors.

The imperial domain was rich and luxuriant,
While the whole land rendered exalted homage;
Every business was flourishing throughout,
And the people all enjoyed prosperity.

Then came Suh-tsung, who commenced anew,
And celestial dignity marked the Imperial movements.
Sacred as the moon's unsullied expanse,
While felicity was wafted like nocturnal gales.

Happiness reverted to the Imperial household,
The autumnal influences were long removed;
Ebullitions were allayed, and risings suppressed,
And thus our dynasty was firmly built up.

Tai-tsung the filial and just
Combined in virtue with heaven and earth;
By his liberal bequests the living were satisfied,
And property formed the channel of imparting succor.

By fragrant mementoes he rewarded the meritorious,
With benevolence he dispensed his donations;
The solar concave appeared in dignity,
And the lunar retreat was decorated to extreme.

When Kien-chung succeeded to the throne,
He began the cultivation of intelligent virtue;

His military vigilance extended to the four seas,
And his accomplished purity influenced all lands.

His light penetrated the secrecies of men,
And to him the diversities of objects were seen as in a mirror;
He shed a vivifying influence through the whole realm of nature,
And all outer nations took him for example.

The true doctrine, how expansive!
Its responses are minute;
How difficult to name it!
To elucidate the three in one.

The sovereign has the power to act!
While the ministers record;
We raise this noble monument!
To the praise of great felicity.

This was erected in the 2d year of Kien-chung, of the Tang Dynasty [A.D. 781], on the 7th day of the 1st month, being Sunday.

Written by Lu Siu-yen, Secretary to Council, formerly Military Superintendent for Tai-chau; while the Bishop Ning-shu had the charge of the congregations of the Illustrious in the East.

[The Following are written in Syriac, running down the right and left sides of the Chinese inscription above].

"Adam, Deacon, Vicar-episcopal and Pope of China. In the time of the Father of Fathers, the Lord John Joshua, the Universal Patriarch."

[The Following is in Syriac at the foot of the stone].

"In the year of the Greeks one thousand and ninety-two, the Lord Jazedbuzid, Priest and Vicar-episcopal of Cumdan the royal city, son of the enlightened Mailas, Priest of Balkh a city of Turkestan, set up this tablet, whereon is inscribed the Dispensation of our Redeemer, and the preaching of the apostolic missionaries to the King of China."

[After this, in Chinese characters, follows:]

"The Priest Lingpau."

[Then follows in Syriac:]

"Adam the Deacon, son of Jazedbuzid, Vicar-episcopal.

The Lord Sergius, Priest and Vicar-episcopal.

Sabar Jesus, Priest.

Gabriel, Priest, Archdeacon, and Ecclesiarch of Cumdan and Sarag."

[The following subscription is appended in Chinese :]

"Assistant Examiner: the High Statesman of the Sacred rites, the Imperially conferred purple-gown Chief Presbyter and Priest Yi-li."

[On the left-hand edge are the Syriac names of sixty-seven priests, and sixty-one are given in Chinese.]

Source

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