Completing the Face of the Chinese Church in America

The ABC Handbook

Promoting Effective Ministries
to American-Born Chinese

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Introduction
David K. Woo

Purpose for Writing

During my teenage years I belonged to a Chinese church's youth group which numbered about thirty youth. By the time most of our group graduated from high school, about seven continued to be active in the church during their college years. Among the other Chinese churches in the Los Angeles area at that time, the casualty rate was even higher. Our church was one of the better ones in holding some of its young people. In these other churches just about all of their young people had left the church. Why was there such a large casualty rate among our peers? What had happened?

In any church in the United States, there can be a large drop-out rate between the high school and college years. These losses are due to many reasons. One reason is that those youth who had attended church for social reasons but who did not have a serious faith in Jesus Christ no longer needed the church to meet their social needs. Another reason for the large number of dropouts is that some young people were not well grounded in their faith and therefore easily fell away when they encountered the secular worldviews of the college campuses. These reasons for young people dropping out of the church are common to many churches in the U.S. For the Chinese churches in the U.S. there were added other reasons on top of these.

Many of the Chinese churches in the U.S. have seen large numbers of their young people drop out of their churches. Some have dropped out because of the reasons mentioned above. However, many more have left the church because the leadership of the Chinese churches has lacked

understanding and sensitivity for the needs of their young people. Many young people have dropped out in the past, they continue to do so in the present, and more will do the same in the future if the Chinese churches do not make major changes in the ways they do ministry for the American-born Chinese. (This handbook will use the abbreviation "ABC" which stands for "American born Chinese" to represent the Chinese born in the U.S. "OBC" will be used to represent the overseas-born Chinese.)

It is the premise of this handbook that ministries to ABCs within the U.S. Chinese churches can become much more effective than what is presently taking place in most of these churches. This handbook is written to help ABC and OBC church leaders find ways to improve their churches' ministries to ABCs. It is hoped that the suggestions in this handbook, although not comprehensive and exhaustive for all ABC ministries in the Chinese church, might help Chinese churches get started in this direction. The immense loss of young people can be curtailed if the Chinese churches would direct special efforts toward making their ministries more effective for their ABCs. These efforts will require sacrifices on the part of the churches' leadership. This handbook will detail some of the major adjustments and sacrifices that will be required from the leadership of the churches if they want to slow down the flood of dropouts from their churches. Listed below are brief summaries of these suggestions which will be developed further in subsequent chapters.

Appropriate Styles of Ministry

Styles of ministries that have appealed to OBCs, most often do not appeal to ABCs. Just because a particular worship format is conducted in English does not necessarily make it appealing to ABCs. Just because a pastor or church leader speaks English does not mean he/she is able to understand and relate closely to the needs of ABCs.

Even among the ABCs themselves, there is a large difference in their acculturation rate into the American culture. So that what is suitable for first generation ABCs may not work for third generation ABCs. Also, there is a difference between regions in the United States. ABCs in Los Angeles may differ from those in San Francisco or New York. Therefore a Chinese church in New York may minister to its ABCs in a different way than a Chinese church in Los Angeles. Also there are differences between ABCs in a Chinatown church compared with those in a suburban church. Therefore church leaders need to secure leaders for its ABCs who are

culturally sensitive to their needs and who will develop programs that are specifically planned for them. ABCs should not be expected to fit into the OBC programs of the church.

Suitable Organizational Structure

The format and kinds of ministries to ABCs usually need to be different from those to OBCs. Not only are special kinds of ministries required, but also the organizational structure of its pastoral and lay leadership needs to be modified in special ways to facilitate effective ABC ministries. Certain church organizational structures may be more effective than others in promoting ministries to ABCs. OBC church leaders and those working with ABCs need to know which organizational structures have or have not been conducive to effective ABC ministry in the Chinese churches in the past and which are more suitable for the present Chinese churches. Some of these organizational structures will be discussed in this book.

Harmony between OBC and ABC Church Leaders

A recurring problem in Chinese churches is the conflict that commonly arises between OBC and ABC leaders. Many of these conflicts are due to cultural differences and their resultant misunderstandings. Therefore OBC and ABC church leaders need to learn the biblical perspectives on their cultural values and to learn more about each other's ways of thinking, values, and styles of ministry. A chapter of this handbook will attempt to spell out a biblical perspective on the cultural differences between OBCs and ABCs.

Reasons for Focus on ABCs and Not on Asian American or Multi-Cultural Churches

A Narrower Focus Needed

This book will focus on ministry to ABCs within Chinese churches without minimizing the need for ministries to other cultural groups as well. Churches having Asian-American or multi-cultural ministries are meeting viable needs. However, this book will focus on ministry to ABCs within the Chinese churches. A narrower focus is necessary to best help the Chinese churches in the U.S. We must not disperse our energies in a focus

that is so broad that our efforts to help the Chinese churches will lose their impact. Trying to meet the needs of many cultural groups through a shotgun approach will benefit no one.

Continual Flow of Chinese Immigration

Another reason for this handbook focusing on the Chinese churches in the U.S. is the continual large flow of new Chinese immigrants into the U.S. As long as there are new immigrants arriving, there will be a need for Chinese churches, and conflicts will arise between OBCs and ABCs in these Chinese churches. Even if the immigrant flow were to be curtailed, Chinese churches would still be necessary for many decades in order to service immigrants who have such strong cultural values that move them to want to stay together even after several generations have been born in North America.

Numerous First-Generation Chinese Churches

A third reason this handbook will focus on ABCs is because ninety percent of the Chinese churches in the U.S. have been established in recent years to minister to the needs of the OBCs. These churches today still are ministering primarily to them. These churches need to make a breakthrough to increase the effectiveness of their ministries to ABCs.

Maintaining Family Integrity

The final and most important reason this handbook will focus on ABCs is because Chinese churches must minister to the whole family, adults and children. When the ABCs are neglected, they will drop out leaving only their parents to worship in their churches. Chinese who value very highly the unity of the family will find their own families divided. Their own children will be gone from their churches. Parents who do not pay attention to the needs of their ABC children within the Chinese churches will pay the price of losing their own children from their churches. This will cause them great pain. Also, without the children, their churches will have no future.

The FACE Organization

The directors of the Fellowship of American Chinese Evangelicals (FACE) have chosen to publish this handbook because they have personally experienced and witnessed the painful plight of neglected ABCs within the Chinese churches and the large numbers of ABCs dropping out of the Chinese churches. It was because of this gaping omission within the Chinese churches that the FACE organization was founded.

In 1974 at the North American Conference of Chinese Evangelicals (NACOCE) held in Wheaton, Illinois, OBC church leaders urged some of the ABC pastors present at that meeting to start some kind of work that would minister to the needs of ABCs within the Chinese churches. This idea incubated within the minds of these ABC pastors until 1978 at the NACOCE conference in Toronto when FACE was officially founded.

Over the years FACE has attempted to address the need to improve ministries to ABCs within the Chinese churches through various means. *ABOUT FACE*, a quarterly, attempts to help Chinese church leaders see the unique needs of ABCs and proposes means by which Chinese churches can increase the effectiveness of their ministries to ABCs. FACE has sponsored various seminars for OBC and ABC church leaders and seminars to encourage ABCs to enter the ministry. The FACE directors are often involved in counseling ABC church leaders to encourage them to persevere in their work within the Chinese churches. FACE seeks to assists the Chinese churches to recruit ABC workers for their churches. Also, FACE tries to promote morale among ABC church workers in local areas by sponsoring events at which they can encourage each other through regular fellowship together.

The founding directors of FACE were four pastors, Hoover Wong, Joseph Wong, Wayland Wong, and Peter Yuen. Hoover Wong has served in ministry for over forty years as a pastor and professor at Fuller Seminary. Two additional pastors, William Eng and David K. Woo, were later added to the directors.

Background of the Writers

The present five FACE directors who have written various chapters of this handbook write from a very personal perspective. All but one of

them are products of Chinese churches and at this writing are serving as pastors in Chinese churches or have recently retired from serving in Chinese churches. All have been closely connected with Chinese churches for many years, have been largely influenced by them, and presently have extended relationships with them. Although they feel a deep sense of debt to the Chinese churches because it was there that most of them came to know the Lord, they had often wished that OBC leaders in their childhood churches were more sensitive to the needs of ABCs.

At this writing William Eng serves as the senior pastor of the Chinese Baptist Church of Orange County, California, and has been serving in the pastoral ministry for twenty-four years. Joseph Wong has been serving for forty-three years in pastoral ministries in Seattle, San Francisco, Chicago, and San Diego. Wayland Wong, retired senior pastor of the Chinese Presbyterian Church of Orange County, California, has been serving in the pastoral ministry for twenty-five years and sixteen years as a missionary in Hong Kong. David Woo, retired pastor of the San Gabriel Presbyterian Church, San Gabriel, California, has been serving in the pastoral ministry for thirty-nine years in the Chicago and Los Angeles areas. He presently is a part-time missionary with Ethnos Asia Ministries. Peter Yuen, retired pastor of the First United Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, California, has been serving in the pastoral ministry for thirty-one years and as a missionary in Hong Kong and Singapore for eight years.

Out of the childhood pains the FACE directors have experienced in the Chinese churches, they have this promise that "The Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, has comforted us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." (2 Cor. 1:3-4)

It is their prayer that you receive the Lord's wisdom for the ABC ministry in your church, that He give you His love for them, that you persevere and not lose heart as you serve them, and that He be glorified by all that takes place in your church.

What Makes Us Tick?" *by Peter Yuen*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 11, No. 2, May 1989)*

A few years ago, one of the Chinese publications coming out of Hong Kong wrote to FACE and asked permission to translate and reprint an article. We consented and they did so, crediting the article to ABOUT FACE. *But in printing it they incorrectly translated the name* ABOUT FACE *into Chinese characters to mean "concerning face" or "regarding countenance." This is not surprising, for they had never been in the American military and heard a drill sergeant shout, "About face!" expecting his marching platoon to immediately whip around and vigorously step out in the opposite direction.*

ABOUT FACE*, the name of our little quarterly journal, means "turn around." It is not a forum but a definite advocacy to promote ABC ministry. Our intent is to bend the minds of Chinese church leaders so that they will give adequate—if not primary—attention to the tremendous need to minister to ABCs.*

For many years, decades, and even generations, Chinese church leaders have steered clear of ABC ministry, not wanting to contend with yet another irritation, even viewing it as a hindrance to the Chinese work they were trying to do.

"If only these ABCs would learn Chinese, we wouldn't have to translate our church services."

"If only these ABCs would simply cooperate and come and sit in the church services!"

"If only these ABCs would listen to the Chinese services they would learn enough Chinese to understand the sermons and then they would become Christians and grow in their faith."

But no… They cut church. They dropped out. In short, they were judged unspiritual. Not only did Chinese church leaders complain about ABCs in their churches, but as these leaders came together for national conferences they appeared corporately unacquainted with the nature and plight of ABCs. They seemed unfamiliar with what to do to prevent ABCs from dropping out. They were ignorant of the need and the ways to positively and aggressively evangelize them.

FACE was formed in 1979 by several older and experienced ABC Christian workers; their purpose was to enable Chinese church leaders to understand and effectively minister to ABCs, territory that is oftentimes unknown to overseas-born Chinese (OBC) church leaders.

When we began to outline the differences between ABCs and OBCs, enumerate some of the grievances of ABCs, and propose ways of reaching them with the gospel, it was understandable that OBC church leaders felt unsettled in uncharted waters. We were charged with "rocking the boat," with stirring up complaints among ABCs who had shown no dissatisfaction previously, and with dividing the church.

Since 1979, we have been sending copies of ABOUT FACE *to almost all the Chinese churches in the United States. A few of the leaders have responded positively while a few have reacted negatively and have asked us to drop them from the mailing list. But most seem to carefully read the issues in their closets, as it were, without passing copies on to the laity.*

Free copies have also been sent to individuals requesting subscriptions—"free" although we request a dollar from those who wish to be placed on the mailing list simply as a means of checking genuine interest.

Winds of change. *The tonnage of* ABOUT FACE *sent out to Chinese Christians over the years has significantly bent the minds of not a few leaders. Whereas they used to say there are no opportunities for ABC*

ministers in the Chinese church, none for those who do not understand the Chinese way of doing things, and certainly none for those who do not speak Chinese, we are now finding increasing numbers of Chinese churches seeking ABC ministers. The number of ABCs in the ministry has gone up tenfold in ten years.

When we advocated starting a separate English worship service for ABCs, we were often charged with dividing the church and on a few occasions were even accused of being "of the devil" (for he is divisive). Yet in recent years, many Chinese churches have been swept along in the triumphant wave of newly established English worship services and ministries relevant to ABCs.

In no sense is all the change in attitude attributed to the efforts of FACE. The Lord has worked by various means to bring the leaders of the Chinese church to the realization that they simply must put highest priority on ministering to ABCs. These, their own flesh and blood, the future leaders of the church. The church can ill afford to lose yet another generation as it has been doing right up to the present time.

What makes us tick? *The belief that the Chinese church must give top priority to promoting a viable ministry for ABCs. And we want to do all that we can to enable the Chinese church to succeed in that endeavor. Throughout this land, wherever Chinese churches exist, we want suitable places of worship, fellowship, and Christian service for ABCs. Strategically the ABCs are the emerging leadership of the Chinese church with the potential to make the largest impact in the world for Christ. (See ABOUT FACE, August 1988, "The Strategic Generation.")*

Where enclaves of ABCs live in locations without a viable place of worship we want to encourage Christians to plant a church for them.

What have we been doing? *Writing. Speaking. Holding interfaces in cities across the country. Consulting with particular churches on strategy. Encouraging ABCs to prepare for and take up the*

task of serving in the Chinese church. Providing a support structure for ABC ministers who are pioneering in Chinese churches as they establish their work among ABCs.

We are encouraging true Christian discipleship among ABCs as individuals, as church leaders, and as Christian families. Hence we have been holding annual adult-family conferences to which hundreds of ABCs attend and many participate as volunteer lay coordinators.

In realizing the demographics of ABCs in this country we have been promoting the planting of ABC churches. We recently sponsored an interface in the East, sending as facilitators successful ABC church planters from the West. (See article by David Woo, this issue).

What are our resources? *We have no paid staff; all of us are volunteers. Directors who are ministers, lay people who join hands with us—we are all volunteers whose hearts are weighted heavily with the tremendous need for developing a relevant outreach to ABCs. We squeeze out generous amounts of time from our jobs and from our own ministries to promote this task beyond*
the scope of our immediate work assignments. These are our human resources.

As for finances, it is obvious the one-dollar charge for putting an individual on the mailing list is not the source of support for FACE. Freewill gifts come from concerned churches and individuals sharing our vision. A few have written FACE into their budgets for regular support. These are the only financial resources.

Funds are utilized in publishing, mailing, purchasing supplies, traveling to hold meetings and conferences—all the work involved to advance the ABC cause. No one is salaried by FACE and no FACE volunteer receives any honoraria from FACE funds (although outside speakers are given honoraria).

If you affirm this ministry of FACE *to be a worthy work, we invite you to join us in promoting this vision…. Together we want to impact the Chinese church throughout this land for ABC ministries.*

Part I. Biblical Basis for ABC Ministry

Chapter 1

Biblical Basis for Promoting Effective ABC Ministries
By Joseph Wong

- How should a church treat the various cultural groups within its midst?
- The Example of the Jerusalem Church in the Book of Acts.
- Does treating the ABCs as a separate cultural group harm the unity of the church?

How Should a Church Treat Culture Groups within Its Midst?

The question for this chapter is whether it is biblical to extract the ABCs as a separate "people group" for ministry focus within the Chinese church. We believe the answer is "Yes." The differences in cultures require it. Inattention to these differences has created a crisis in ABC ministries.

What are the issues that justify a separate ministry focus for ABCs? Having been raised in a culture that is western, ABCs will not relate to many of the values or to the ways of doing things that are natural to the Chinese raised in Asia. The issue is not that ABCs do not have opportunities to hear the Gospel in their native language. The problem is the lack of a suitable environment in which ABC Christians can grow and do ministry. Although growth is possible in adverse conditions, it would

be desirable to have a situation that is designed for their growth. The errors in thinking and the problems of life that scripture must correct are different from those faced in a different culture. It is one of the basic reasons for recognizing differences between cultures. To focus only on similarities between cultures will cripple the distinct corrections needed in each culture.

Why does culture play such an important role? There are many causes for conflict and division in a church. Differences in personalities can cause serious conflicts. Selfish personal ambitions and differing personal expectations will also produce conflicts. To this list we must add culture. Each culture has its own set of values that identify the good and the evil in life. Each culture will also have its own acceptable methodology for pursuing its values. There are right ways and wrong ways to seek their objectives. These differences will determine the scriptural teachings that are necessary to transform lives in each culture.

In Isaiah 55:8-9, God indicated that His thoughts and ways are not the same as the thoughts and ways of men and women. Our thoughts are the convictions we hold as to what is good or evil. Our thoughts identify our life values. Our ways are the methods we choose to live out these values. Our methods can be right or wrong depending upon one's perspective. The thoughts and the ways of a people define for them what is good or evil, what is right or wrong. This forms the culture of a people.

People from different cultures will have different sets of values that are reflected in the various ways they think things should be done. Those from the same culture are able to appreciate and understand their culture, while those outside of that culture may disdain it as primitive or restrictive. It is easy for people from one culture to misunderstand the thoughts and ways of those from another culture.

These cultural misunderstandings occur in Chinese churches as well; and attempts should be made to minimize these conflicts. Chinese churches that have a separate ministry for each cultural group within their midst will greatly minimize the conflicts that might occur between these cultures. When one culture dictates how the other culture is to do ministry, division rather than harmony will ensue.

Example of the Jerusalem Church in the Book of Acts

The Jerusalem Church in the book of Acts for the first time had to deal with friction between members from different cultures. The manner in which they dealt with this problem provides an excellent example for the Chinese churches of today for ministering to the various cultures within its midst. In the sixth chapter of Acts, the leaders of the church discovered that there was neglect in the way food was being distributed to a segment of the Jews that were culturally different from the main body of Jews. This neglected group of Jews were called Hellenists. These people were also Jews, but born and raised in a different culture than the Palestinians. They were ethnically Jewish, but culturally Greek. From their cultural conflict we recognize a parallel situation in the North American Chinese churches of today

How could such a neglect, which might anachronistically be labeled discrimination, occur? It is easy to visualize the Jerusalem Christians gathering for instruction and worship in various homes. They had no large fellowship hall in which all could receive instruction or enjoy a meal. Food would be distributed to the various homes where the widows would meet. The church's failure to provide for the Hellenistic widows suggests that these widows had gathered in homes different from the Hebrew widows. The Hebrew servers who might not have been familiar with all the homes could have easily missed a home or two.

The problem was serious enough that it had to be addressed by the apostles themselves. Although a complaint had arisen among the Hellenistic Jews who were Christians, there was no rallying of opinions or attempts to take control of the ministry. The apostles, who were Palestinian Jews, quickly addressed this need, proposing a program to minister to that specific cultural group. This program involved selecting leaders from within that specific cultural group to deal with the problem. This was a wise decision on the part of the Apostles.

This evolving of the organizational structure of the Early Church resulted in a team of ministers, deacons, to address the problem. The target of the complaint and the name of those chosen for the additional team suggest the setting for the problem. Apparently, the initial team of food servers did not include Hellenistic Jews. Since the names of the newly approved team members were Greek, they were likely those who

shared in the language, culture, and life-style (values and ways) of the ones they were assigned to serve.

Thus the New Testament has provided a good example for a church that needs to minister to people from different cultural groups within its midst. Such a church needs to create a special ministry team made up of those from that particular culture. Besides their spiritual qualifications, the cultural orientation of the team members would be one of the most important considerations.

This same principle would apply to Chinese churches in the U.S. FACE proposes that Chinese churches in the U.S. need to provide a capable ABC ministry team to reach and disciple the ABCs in both its congregation and community. Ideally, an ABC would also lead this team.

There is more to this example. By the apostles laying their hands on these seven, it appears that the seven were being ordained to that ministry. There was a conferred authority along with the responsibility to carry out the ministry. This suggests that these new servers were not under the authority of the Palestinian servers as their assistants. Instead, they were co-workers.

Will Treating ABCs as a Separate Cultural Group Harm the Unity of the Church?

FACE has been accused many times of being divisive because it focused upon the differences between ABCs and OBCs. To determine the validity of this accusation, we must consider what kind of accusation it is. Consider the married couple that comes to see a counselor because of conflicts. If the counselor points out to them the differences between male and female, would he be working for separation or for unity? But, one may object, they are already one and only their similarities should be emphasized, differences only encourage separation. Such a conclusion pre-supposes there is a desire for separation. In such a case, additional reasons for divorce should not be presented. It will only hasten the divorce. However, if the motive in their hearts is to increase their ability to love and serve each other, then recognition of differences is essential to remove misunderstandings and give wisdom to strengthen their relationship.

Likewise, the accusation that FACE is being divisive by examining differences, is actually a prejudgment of FACE's motive. OBC church leaders are cautioned against making this misjudgment. In spite of the frustrations, many ABC believers are looking for ways to keep the church together. Because immigrant families are made up of members in both cultures, it is necessary that the whole family be able to find love and encouragement in one church. To do that, we must discover each other's distinctives and work together towards being faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. FACE does not believe the cultural differences require separation. Instead, FACE is trying to promote the concept that understanding each other's distinctives will help foster a sense of unity and oneness as both cultural groups work together within the same church to do the work of the Kingdom.

WHAT'S THE DIFF?...in Conversation
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 2, No. 4, November 1980)*

(Distinguishing ABCs (as from OBCs) is intended to enable the church to be more accurate in targeting a ministry to ABCs. To the degree that Chinese church leaders can understand ABCs, will effective work be possible with them. Pointing out differences between ABCs and OBCs is not aimed at dividing, as some might fear, but at bringing understanding and healing where there is misunderstanding. We trust that the fruit of the latter will be worth the risk of the former.)

The Healthy Homogeneous Psyche of the ABC

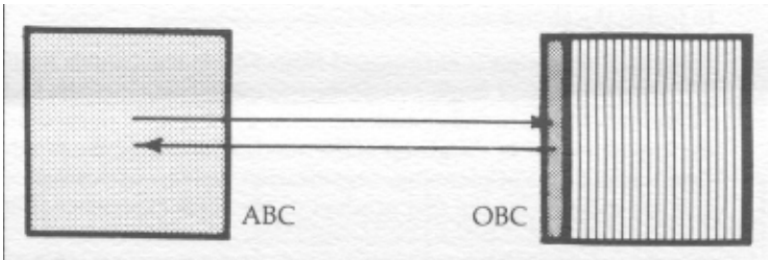
An ABC or an American is considered to be psychologically healthy if he is honest and open, expressive of his true feelings. He is considered neurotic if he lives defensively, covering up what are his innermost thoughts and feelings. Two ABCs or Americans can get along and understand each other perfectly well if they will each be honest and open in their communicating. True inner feelings, whether positive or negative, can best be spoken by one and understood by the other by speaking sincerely and listening caringly.

The Proper Bi-level Psyche of the OBC

A proper OBC is one who is reserved, well-mannered, and thoughtful as to how he comes across to others. One who speaks his mind indiscriminately is perhaps regarded as foolish and neurotic. Two proper OBCs will get along perfectly well if they treat each other with due respect and reservedly speak out what is properly fitting to say. If there are deep feelings inside, whether pleasant or unpleasant, these can be communicated by carefully chosen words that merely hint at what those deep feelings might be. The listener will hear the words, the tone of voice, sense of manner of delivery, and even see the body language and can interpret the true inner feelings in all its beauty—or ugliness—as the case may be, without upsetting the external demure of speaker or listener.

When They Get Together

When a proper OBC and a psychologically healthy ABC or American get into sharing of deep inner feelings, the dynamics of fellowship can become rather complex. The ABC or American, not being accustomed to interpreting what is below the surface, regards the words spoken by the OBC at face value. The OBC, expecting true and deep feelings of the American to be tempered by proper manners, is shocked to hear such stark, frank expressions interpreting that there is yet to be a quantum jump in the seriousness in inner meaning that is not expressed.



Because the OBC can understand the expressed meaning of the ABC, he might come away thinking how ill-mannered the ABC is, but he will understand his feelings. Because the ABC or American is unaccustomed to interpreting the inner feelings of the OBC by what his surface expressions are, he comes away shaking his head muttering, "The inscrutable Chinese!"

It would be well for ABCs to let open and honest, true feelings come across more gently and carefully to an OBC who is unadapted to western ways. And when he speaks, gently probe for true inner feelings. It would be well for OBCs to cushion themselves with patience and try to respond in like clarity. While disrespectful and ill-mannered conduct is never excusable (only forgivable) open honest is commendable.

ABC: Would you like a coke?
Thirsty OBC: No, thanks.

OBC: We'll have you over to dinner sometime.
Hungry ABC: Great! When?

A final word about the various concepts found in the word "unity." The word "unity" can refer to physical, intellectual, or spiritual unity.

• "Physical unity" can refer to a unity based on physical factors, such as location, time, language, or activity. This kind of unity describes a people as united in the same place at the same time, doing the same thing.

• "Intellectual unity" can be used to refer to our minds, a common thinking, in doctrine, philosophy of ministry, or cultural values. Being united in this case refers to those who hold to the same school of theology, mission statement or cultural view of life.

• "Spiritual unity" can refer to spiritual factors such as being forgiven, children of God, holy, and lovers of Jesus. We may have differences in time and location, differences in our doctrine and culture, but we can still possess the oneness that God has produced in each of us through His Son. This unity is worth recognizing because it is permanent and God given.

The first two concepts of unity we can endeavor to produce. But Jesus prayed for the Father to make us One, and He has already produced our spiritual unity. Let us all be "diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph.4:3) Thus we can experience unity in our diversity.

Part II. Christian Work Among ABCs Today

Chapter 2

Who Are the American-born Chinese?
By Wayland Wong

- Who are the ABCs?
- An ABC culture.
- Reasons ABCs are dropping out of the Chinese churches.
- Immigration and the church, opportunities and dangers.
- Alleviating the fears of OBC church leaders.
- Tilting toward ABC ministries.

The American-born Chinese (ABCs) are in many ways different from overseas-born Chinese (OBCs). Therefore, certain forms of ministry that might appeal to OBCs might not necessarily be effective with ABCs. To further compound these differences, ABCs vary from being very Chinese culturally to being very westernized depending upon the degree of their exposure to Chinese cultural values versus American cultural values in their childhood homes. Therefore, effective ministry to ABCs requires a thorough understanding of who they are and what forms of ministry might appeal to them. In this chapter we will discuss the differences between ABCs and OBCs and how these differences would affect methods of ministry to them.

Who Are the ABCs?

Chinatown ABCs

Our first example of an ABC is one born and raised in Chinatown, USA, who grew up speaking mostly Chinese. All his friends were Chinese. His home, his friends, and his Chinatown environment has had the primary impact on his life. He has thought of himself largely as Chinese rather than American. He would be an ABC who was very Chinese culturally.

Suburban ABCs

A second example of an ABC is one who grew up in suburbia, USA. His family members were the only Chinese in the community. All his friends and classmates were Caucasians. He always thought of himself as an American, no different from his friends. Other Chinese called him a "banana," yellow on the outside and white on the inside. While in college he spent a summer in Asia. After being exposed to an Asian culture he began to see himself differently. No longer a banana, but more of a peach. He now has some color within. He was not all white. There was something in his background that made him different. He would be an ABC who might see himself as only minimally Chinese in culture.

Asian-American ABCs

A third example of an ABC is one born and raised in suburbia of ABC parents. Although he sees many types of Asians in his community, instead of seeing himself as Chinese, he thinks of himself as an Asian American. Since the government also uses the term Asian American in many of its demographic statistics, he feels very comfortable using this politically correct term to identify himself. He feels very much at home with his Asian American friends whose ethnic roots stem from various countries in Asia. He would be an ABC who might see himself as possessing almost no Chinese cultural roots.

The above three examples identify some of the more obvious stages in the acculturation spectrum of ABCs. They would occupy various points along this spectrum depending upon how much of the American culture they have integrated into their lives.

ABCs and OBCs

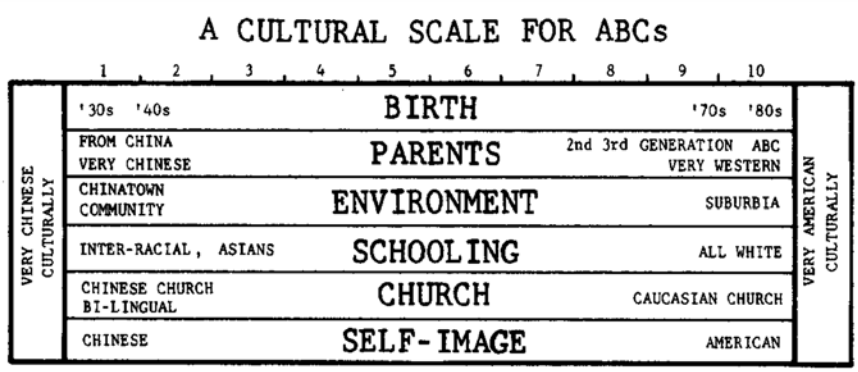
From the above discussion one sees that there can be great diversity among ABCs from being very Chinese in culture to being unaware of any Chinese culture within. Obviously this diversity is also reflected in the differences between ABCs and OBCs. The difference between ABCs and OBCs is not just a matter of the place of birth, but mainly a difference in cultural background. ABCs have an American cultural upbringing. And culturally speaking this may include many OBCs who came to the U.S. during their very early formative years. It must be stressed that making this distinction between ABCs and OBCs is not to say one is superior or inferior to the other, but simply to point out that the differences are real. And if the church is concerned with reaching ABCs, it must take this into consideration.

ABCs and ABCs

Are ABCs "bananas," "peaches," or what? Is there such a thing as a typical ABC? Let us look at two ABCs both born in the '30s. One lived on the East Coast in an all-Caucasian community, the other on the West Coast in an all-Chinese community. One is so American that there is hardly any difference between him and a Caucasian American, and the other so Chinese that most people would not realize that he is an ABC.

How Chinese? How American?

ABCs are a mixed lot. It is impossible to stereotype an ABC because of the wide acculturation spectrum into which they fit. So many different factors influence an ABC's culture that examples could be found from one extreme to the other. On a scale of one to ten from being very Chinese at "number one" to being very American at "number ten," most ABCs would probably fit somewhere in the middle. But more and more ABCs are moving toward "ten." They are becoming more American by the mere fact that they are of a later generation of ABCs in America.



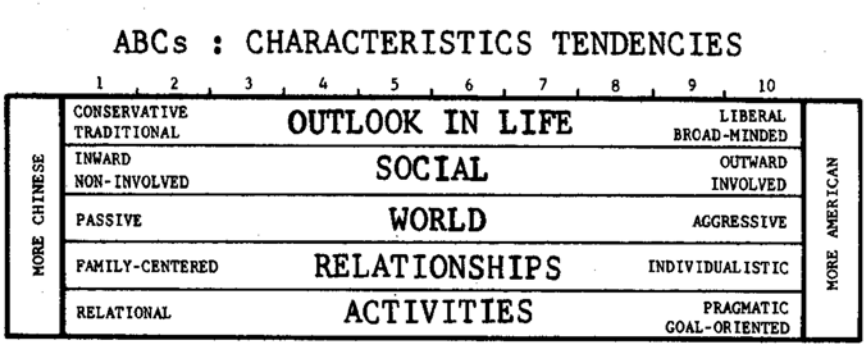
The Making of an ABC

The graph above is a very general scale by which we might gauge an ABC. There are several important factors that will influence his Chinese-ness or American-ness. Where he was born, where his parents were born and raised, the environment of his upbringing, his schooling, the kind of church to which he belongs, and how he sees himself. All these factors are interrelated, and some factors will affect a given person more significantly than will others. Thus given a set of factors, even the most sophisticated computer cannot prescribe accurately how an ABC is likely to turn out in the end.

Another element which must be taken into account are the three stages of a person's life—childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. Some factors may change in different periods of a person's life and therefore may be a major influence moving the person to the right or to the left in the scale.

Characteristics of ABCs

Generalizations may be misleading, for there are likely to be many exceptions. But the following chart will indicate some of the different characteristics of ABCs in the various aspects of their lives.



ABCs on which this Handbook Is Focused

Some ABCs, culturally more Chinese, fit well into the present Chinese churches, should continue to do so, and put their effort into service there. They may see no need for any special emphasis for ABC ministry. Other ABCs who are more American, culturally fit easily into the Asian American or Caucasian churches. They may not be able to understand why more ABCs do not join them. These should by all means continue to serve and fellowship within their selected church. Obviously the ABCs in these two examples have found their places and are quite satisfied.

The remaining ABCs are the ones on whom this book focuses its attention. Those who are in the middle of the chart and still in the Chinese churches but are not really satisfied or happy with them; or the vast majority of ABCs not in the churches today, who feel neither comfortable nor welcomed in the present Chinese, Asian American, or Caucasian churches. It is to these ABCs, both within and without the church that this book is addressed.

ABC Culture

ABCs are often asked by OBCs, “Who are you? What are you? Are you Chinese or American?” These questions point out the fact that there is confusion in the minds of OBCs as to an ABC’s identity. Are ABCs different? Is there something special and unique about them?

Bicultural, Misfits, or Unique?

The most popular view today is that ABCs are bicultural. Thinking that ABCs are half-Chinese and half-American, OBCs expect ABCs to act and behave in certain Chinese ways. When these expectations are not met, conflict, confusion and misunderstanding result. ABCs are looked upon as oddballs and misfits. They are not fully accepted as Chinese nor are they fully regarded as Americans.

On the contrary, ABCs are not bicultural. They are not "half-and-half." While most ABCs have been affected to some degree by Chinese culture, this influence on each succeeding generation will continue to decrease by greater degrees and the American or Western culture will become the predominant influence on their lives. From this interaction of Chinese and Western cultures, a new and different culture, a third culture, has emerged.

Unique Culture

ABCs are a special and unique people. They are different from OBCs and different from most Americans. Sure, they have been influenced by both Chinese and American cultures; however, this combination does not result in schizophrenic bicultural behavior but in characteristics and a culture unique to ABCs. This truth can be illustrated through several examples.

For instance, when you eat a nectarine, you never think that you are eating half a peach and half a plum. In fact, you realize that a nectarine has a special texture and flavor of its own. Even though a nectarine is the combination of a peach and a plum, it has its own singular qualities. Another example is the combination of tin and copper resulting in a new metal. Bronze has qualities that neither tin nor copper has; e.g., it has exceptional strength.

ABCs also have unique qualities different from those of OBCs. ABCs have been shown to have special qualities in areas like freedom, sensitivity, honesty, communication, and the capacity for sacrifice. Those touched by Christ have been responsive to the challenge of evangelizing the world.

The Chinese Church and ABCs

For the Chinese church in the U.S. to reach the over a million ABCs, it must recognize that it is trying to impact a distinctive group of people. Attempting to force ABCs into a Chinese-church mold will lead to conflict within families, resistance to the church, and rejection of the gospel.

To reach ABCs the church must be open to significant change. There must be greater efforts toward parallel ministries, the recruiting of ABC pastoral staff, and even the planting of new ABC churches. Subsequent chapters in this book will discuss how Chinese churches can make some of these changes. Will the church take up this challenge?

ABC Work
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 3, No. 1, February 1981)*

ABC work is thought to be work with youth,
ABC work is thought to be work with the English-speaking;
But ABC work is work with ABCs, young and old;
A work of a people
of a culture,
of a language,
of a land.

Should the Chinese church work with ABCs?
What are the other options?
She grows them,
She sends them to school,
to work,
to live;
She thrives in the culture,
in this language,
in this land.

ABC work is ABC work;
Your work,
Our work,
God's work.

Reasons ABCs Are Dropping out of Chinese Churches

Today, less than ten percent of the Chinese in the U.S. have any relationship with the church, and the great majority of this ten percent are overseas Chinese. This means that a vast proportion of ABCs are unreached and untouched by the church. Pathetically, many ABCs during their childhood were in Chinese churches, but as they grew up they became part of the staggering number of dropouts. Is this due to a lack of spiritual interest or are there cultural and social barriers diverting them from continuing?

An additional factor causing ABCs to curtail participation in the churches is that second, third, and fourth generation ABCs have moved out from the ghettos and Chinatowns. Not many Chinese churches have focused on this population of scattered ABCs. If ABCs were being reached by Caucasian churches there would be no need for concern, but most of these ABCs have become lost to the world.

Chinese churches will continue to be filled with the continued flow of new immigrants and their children. But most of these children will eventually also be lost to the world as they grow up. Again, their places in the pews will be filled by yet more new immigrants and their children. So the church will continue to appear to be healthy and growing, but she will be losing one generation after another. As a result, within each generation of ABCs, only a very tiny remnant is in the church as adults after years of work. What can be done to break this vicious cycle?

Basic to determining what to do is to realize what the problem is. A historical perspective of how the gospel crosses cultures needs to be understood in order to properly cope with this culture-crossing phenomenon within the Chinese church.

The Gospel and Culture

When the movement of the gospel is viewed historically, it must be seen not only as it moves from one period of history to another but also as it crosses from one culture to another. As Christianity moved from the Jewish culture to the Greek, and successively to the Roman, German, Western worlds and on to the Chinese, it took on new forms with each such move. Ideally, the truth of the gospel is not changed, but the dress or the outward appearance is adapted to its new and indigenous culture in

order to identify with that people. There may be radically different outward appearances with each change. Only in this way does the gospel become "our faith" and not a foreign religion.

The Jewish Christians with their Old Testament background found it hard to accept Greek Christians because they were different. Paul and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) realized that Greek Christians did not have to be culturally Jewish in order to become Christians. As the gospel passes on to different cultures, new Christians must be allowed to develop their own indigenous Christianity consistent with their own culture based on scriptural standards and according to the truth of the Bible.

Stumbling Block for ABCs

Historically when the Chinese received the gospel in Asia, it carried a western style dress (e.g. music, architecture, government, practice, etc.). In most of China, Christianity never really became culturally Chinese until after the Cultural Revolution. For this reason, Christianity was often identified as a "foreign" or "western" religion and thus was a stumbling block for Chinese believers in reaching their own kinsmen.

As the Chinese church expanded in America, it was aimed at immigrant Chinese. Chinese pastors raised in Asia were placed into leadership and many Christians transplanted from Asia became lay leaders. As a result the Chinese churches in America today are culturally Chinese, primarily using Cantonese or Mandarin and suited for Chinese from Asia. Now in the same way as was done by Westerners in China, the Chinese church in the U.S. in culture and language is posing a stumbling block for ABCs.

Barriers

ABCs have grown up in the context of American culture and language and yet have always had to endure being in a culturally Chinese church for worship, spiritual development and service. They had to sit through long bilingual sermons. Communication and real understanding were very difficult. The messages and lessons they heard were not particularly relevant to their lives and involvement. They knew they were alien and fringe participants in the church, and as their predecessor ABCs who had grown up and had by and large dropped out, they themselves

came to feel that they were temporary participants of the Chinese church. For most ABCs, fitting into a transplanted Chinese church from Asia appears to be too great of a hurdle. Not only is dropping out a common occurrence but the faithful who stay find the cultural and language barriers a great hindrance to their personal spiritual growth and outreach.

For most non-Christian ABCs, the Chinese church is absolutely irrelevant culturally. Essentially, they have rejected the Chinese church as a live option for meeting their spiritual needs. Many have even stopped sending their children to Chinese churches to find Chinese friends.

"Would an ABC Choose a Chinese Church?" *by Joseph Wong (*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 23, No. 1, February 2001)*

Is there a biblical basis for the Chinese churches in America to target ABC ministries? Yes, there are examples given by the early church which indicated an awareness of differences in cultural background and a conscious effort to care for those of a different background. The example of the Jerusalem church in responding to cultural diversity has long been ably presented. Acts 6 is a persuasive demonstration of how church leadership acted to resolve a bicultural problem

However, it was the apostle Paul who put into words the principle to be used when promoting ABC ministry. "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (I Cor. 9:22). This principle leaves it for the evangelist to adapt to the people he is seeking to serve rather than requiring them to adapt to himself. There are inadvertent violations when an ABC is asked to be more "Chinese" by the church.

I find that Chinese church leaders have a great love for our Lord and are eager that the life in their churches would be a sanctifying experience for all who attend. But what will enable the leaders to accept and encourage a comfortable atmosphere for the ABC Christians who do not share their Chinese values and ways? How can they guide the church

into being relevant to the unsaved ABCs? I believe the ABCs must be heard and understood.

"Would an ABC choose to attend a Chinese church?" This question was put to many ABCs, all of whom have had experiences in a Chinese church, and some are now attending one. They were asked to share briefly, and the following are some of their responses:

(Mature ABC who now attends a Chinatown church)

"I was brought up in both Chinese and non-Chinese churches. I think I have always felt a little more comfortable in a culturally diverse church, and I think that is because I grew up in a more assimilated context than my parents did."

(Mother in her early 40's)

"This ABC would not particularly choose a Chinese church even though that is what I grew up in. We tend to have a lot of Asian friends and may end up in a Chinese church but that it is Chinese would not be a criterion. I enjoy being in a church with mixed groups of Asians. I am almost as Chinese as the next Caucasian. I only have learned to understand things Chinese better through my in-laws, but I am not drawn to the Chinese culture. I have gotten to a point where I don't try to be unlike Chinese and don't mind being Chinese and appreciate things about the Chinese."

(Another mother in her 40's)

"I am an ABC and grew up in a bilingual Chinese church. So I feel very comfortable with both ABC and OBC Chinese of every generation despite my limited Cantonese. Now that I have three children of my own, I feel it is important for my children to maintain connections with Chinese people, have Chinese friends their own age, and be exposed to the Chinese culture and language. If we did not attend a Chinese church, we would know just a handful of Chinese people.

"We are blessed to be a part of a wonderful trilingual church. Through serving on the board and working on committees and projects with brothers and sisters from the English, Mandarin, and Cantonese congregations, my ministry is greatly enriched, and I am truly experiencing unity despite diversity. I hope my children will continue to attend a Chinese church when they are on their own."

(Grandmother in her 60's)

"It is a tough question to answer for there are many factors to consider, such as cultural and language differences, life styles, economics and social differences. All these play a hand in that it will make the ABC a little bit uncomfortable in the Chinese Church surroundings. It will take a lot of warmth, compromise, patience, understanding, time, love, etc., on both sides for the ABC to belong in the Chinese church. However, with God, all things are possible."

(Grandfather in his 60's)

"I, personally, will not attend a Chinese church. There are too many obstacles to overcome, and Chinese by nature are not friendly but stand-offish. They do not appear to wish to build relationships, especially if one does not speak Mandarin. In fact I feel like a second-class citizen there."

(Single female in late 20's)

"My answer is, 'probably not.' Here are my reasons:

The Chinese tend to see things and approach issues from a different perspective from mine, and in a Chinese church I could see myself struggling with their thinking (the cultural influence).

My fiancé is not Chinese and I do not think he would feel completely comfortable and at home in a Chinese church. It would be tougher for him to relate.

I enjoy a more diverse congregation. There are people from all different places that serve under one roof and have so many different

views, cultures, and perspectives to share. I love to hear testimonies of stories from people that lived in Zimbabwe, or a tiny town in Texas, or a city in China, etc. We have a lot of variety.

My past experiences in Chinese churches have been mediocre and I don't think my life was so much more enriched because I attended a Chinese church.

My only reason that I can think of that would encourage me to attend a Chinese church would be if I wanted to learn more and approach it for the sake of a learning experience."

(Father 40 years old)

"Personally, I would not, at my point in life. Being married with a family of young kids, I'm looking for a church where we can worship, grow, and serve with a congregation that we can relate with easily. Trying to accomplish this in a Chinese church could present certain challenges such as language, communication, culture, etc. This is not to say that we should always choose the easy way. Since joining our (a bicultural, Japanese/English) church, I think we have become increasingly sensitive and exposed to the Japanese culture and way of life…which is a good thing.

"Perhaps, if I were twenty years younger, I might be in a different mindset. I might consider it if my motivation was to 'get in touch' with my roots, develop more culturally, and at the same time be able to worship in a Chinese church."

(Mother 38 years old)

"This is determined by how 'Chinese' a Chinese church is. Since I'm more American, I'd prefer a congregation and leadership that is more American. Then I would feel identified with them, my issues would be addressed in a way I understand, and I would have more freedom to speak.

"There's always a feeling of belonging when you attend a Chinese church because you automatically relate based on ethnicity. When searching for a home church, it's always easiest to start there. But being a Chinese church is not enough reason to select such a church as your home church.

"I remember bilingual services made it difficult to follow the sermons because of the pauses."

(Male 47 years old and married at 47. He is reconsidering his non-alignment with a Chinese church. For the past 21 years, he has attended a predominantly WASP church.)

"I am frustrated over the Chinese way of doing things and their social courtesies. Expressing opinions and making suggestions the Chinese way is indirect, oblique. So I often miss the point, since the Western way is direct and to the point.

"I disagree when church decisions are made without proper process. At times, it seems that the opinions, advice, and preferences of the older members must be respected and deferred to simply on the basis that those people are older, even when the older person has been a Christian a shorter time than the younger person. Sometimes a person gets a leadership position because she or he is 'old enough' or has been around church long enough, instead of being based on whether that person has the maturity, spiritual gifts, talent, or training.

"The Chinese church appears to want to dominate your time. It seems that the more time you spend at church, the more 'holy' you are. More service to the church? Then you are more 'holy.'

Conclusion

How can a Chinese church provide an environment of acceptance for ABCs? It may be impossible if the church leaders consider the American values as bad because they violate the Chinese values and ways.

Perhaps with the above expressions by the ABCs, a Chinese church can better analyze whether or not it is capable of making the changes necessary to target ABCs in ministry.

Future Prospects

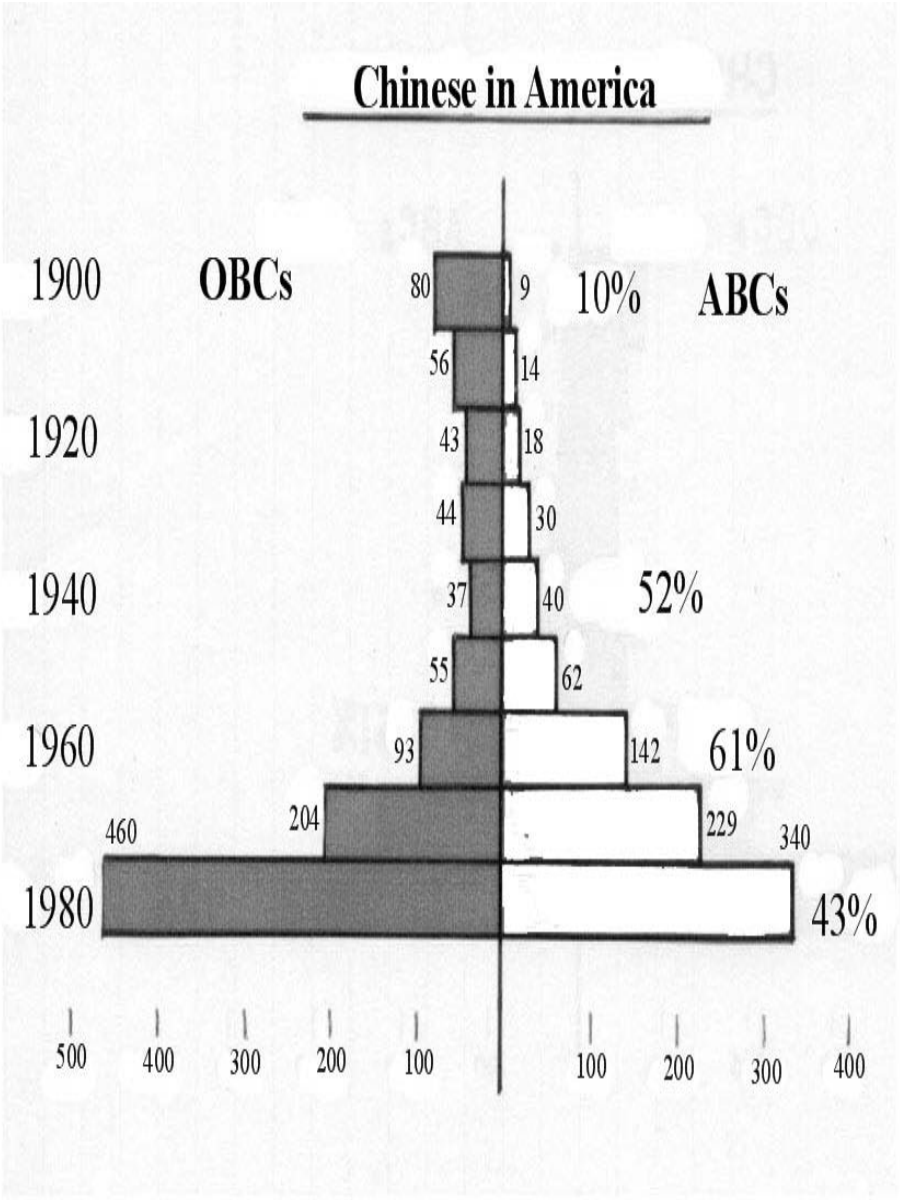
The leadership of the Chinese church in this land must realize that as long as there remains a transplanted church from Asia, there will be vast cultural and nearly insurmountable social barriers for most ABCs to hurdle. The tactic is not to make the children of the Chinese church culturally more Chinese in order to reach them. This is like the Jews requiring the Greeks to be more Jewish in order to become good Christians. Not only is this inconsistent with biblical principles, but it also cannot be done as is evident by the generations of ABC dropouts. They are not able to nor do they sense a need for taking on Chinese culture and language.

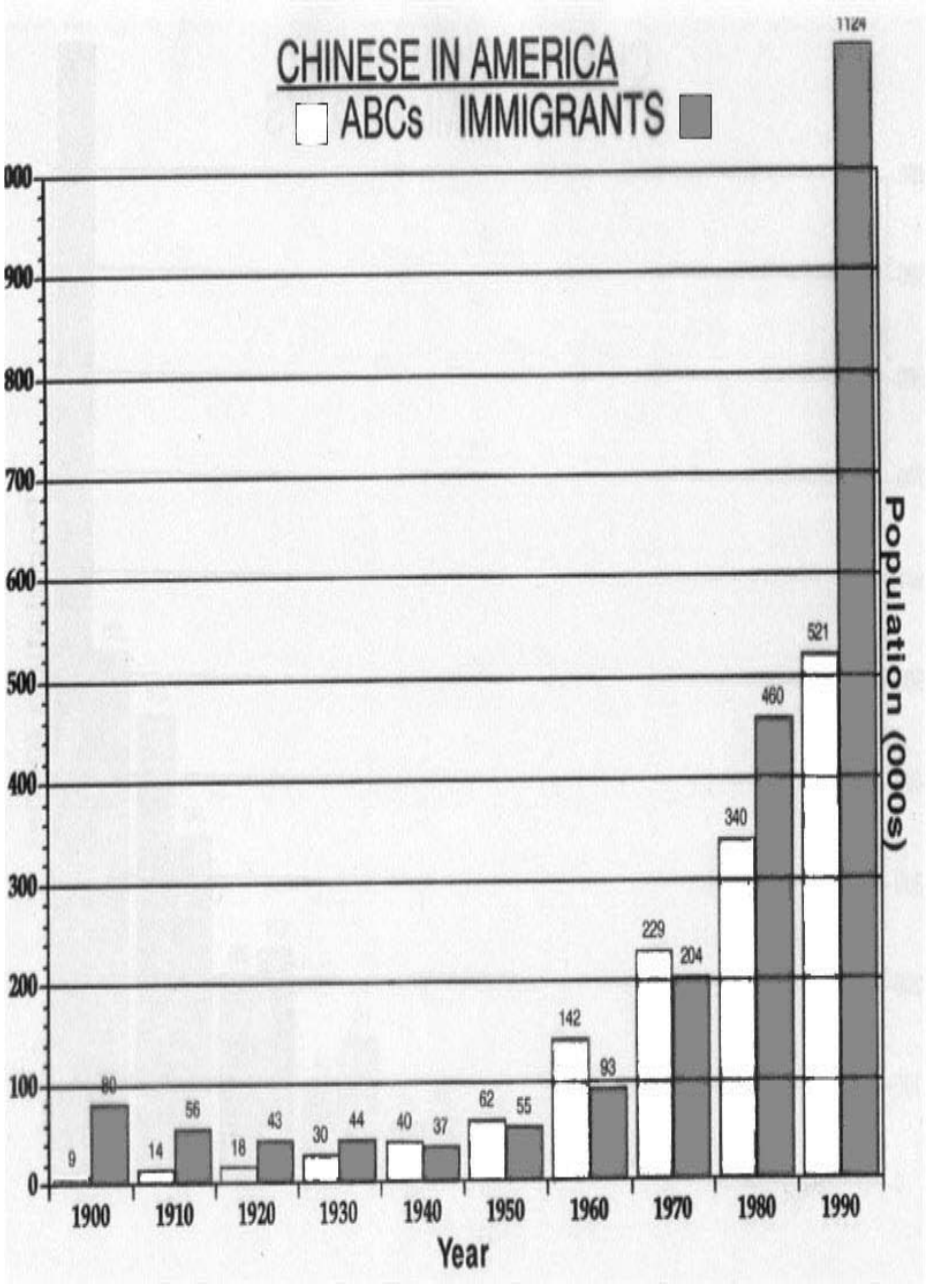
Alert and sensitive pastors and lay leaders in the Chinese church in America are steering their church ministry toward an indigenous ministry. Can leaders from overseas change? Just as we cannot expect ABCs to become more Chinese in culture, we cannot expect leaders from Asia to become like ABCs. Many such leaders have actually done a superb job of relating to ABCs. Yet this is only a temporary and stopgap solution. For both clergy and laity, radical changes and creative innovations must take place in order for the church to rise to the task of effectively ministering to the ever increasing numbers of ABCs in this land.

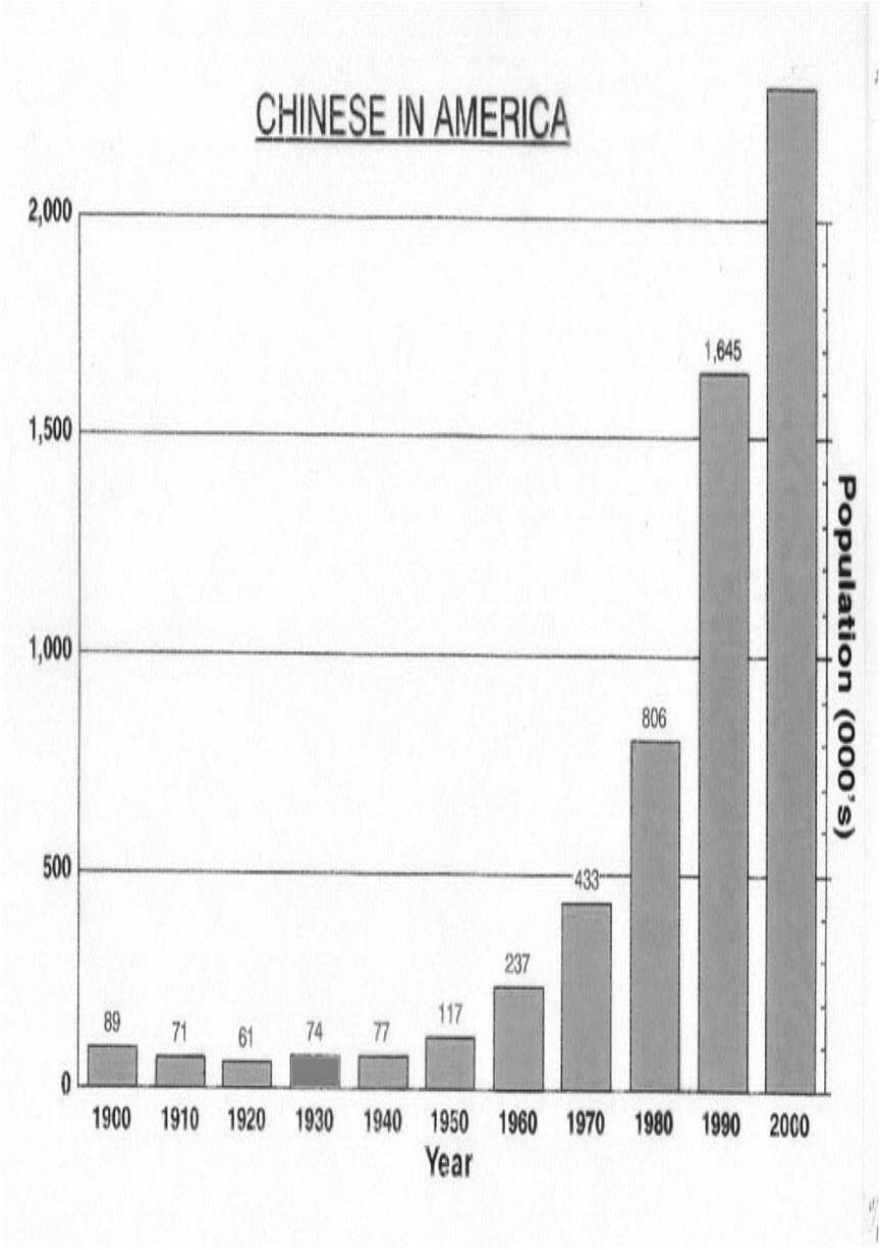
Immigration and the Church, Opportunities and Dangers

The flow of Chinese immigrants to America had always been restricted to small numbers until the immigration laws were changed in 1965 opening the door to an annual quota of 20,000 Chinese. Then in 1982 the Chinese quota was doubled to 40,000 immigrants per year. Most of these new immigrants have settled in the main Chinese centers in the United States. This has caused social, cultural and economic changes and adjustments to occur in the Chinese communities and in the Chinese churches.

On the other hand, the ABC population has had a slow but accelerating growth. In 1900, it was only 10% of the Chinese population. By 1960 it had reached 61%. But the large influx of immigrants in the 1960s reduced it to 52% by 1970. By 1980 it had dropped to around 40%. However, the actual number of ABCs increased over 100,000 in that decade. In 2004 there were over one million ABCs in the U.S.


Chinese in America
1900
OBCs
80
9
10%
ABCs
56
14
1920
43
18
44
30
1940
37
40
52%
55
62
1960
93
142
61%
460
204
229
340
1980
43%
500
400
300
200
100
100
200
300
400


CHINESE IN AMERICA
ABCs
IMMIGRANTS
1129
900
800
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
9
80
14
56
18
43
30
44
40
37
62
55
142
93
229
204
340
460
521
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
Year
Population (000s)


CHINESE IN AMERICA
2,000
1,500
1,000
500
0
89
71
61
74
77
117
237
433
806
1,645
1900
1910
1920
1930
1940
1950
1960
1970
1980
1990
2000
Year
Population (000's)

WHAT'S THE DIFF? … on How One Sees the ABC Ministry
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 1., No. 3, November, 1979)*

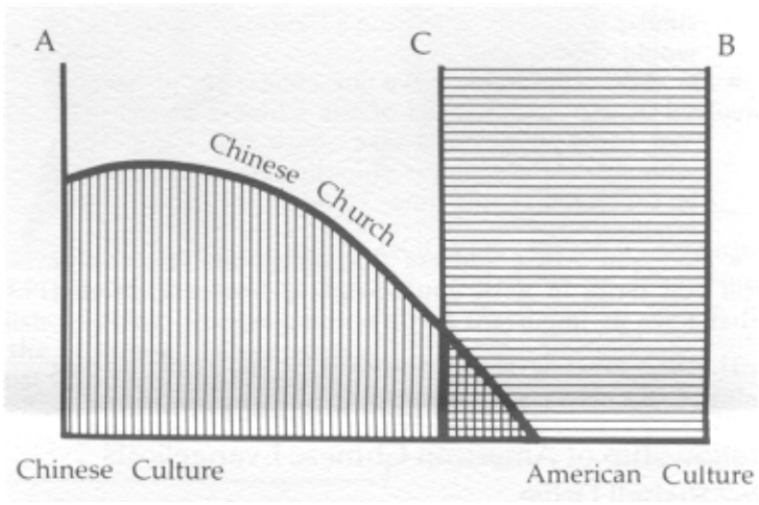
When you consider ministering to ABCs what do you understand this to mean? It varies with one's background. The overseas-born Chinese (OBC) with a firm Chinese cultural background finds himself satisfied in the church if the service and ministry are conducted completely in Chinese. But as the church continues to function through the years, OBC leaders discover that more and more of their children are English speaking. To meet their need, an English Sunday school class is started for them, and as these children get older, they are expected to attend worship service. Because they complain about not being able to understand the Chinese service, the church again adjusts to this by translating the service from Chinese to English. Meanwhile, there are many ABCs who, being old enough to decide for themselves, have dropped out of church. These who drop out and others who are inclined to follow their steps complain that they do not want to sit through long, boring worship services and that the teaching is not presented in a way interesting and relevant to them. The sensitive OBC leadership foresees this, or at least responds to this, and begins some concerted effort to do ABC ministry. What is understood to be ABC ministry here is usually an effort to meet the needs of the few young people who are bordering on dropping out.

The diagram on the next page depicts the span of cultures. At Line "A" is Chinese culture; at Line "B", American culture. The whole spectrum in between represents the milieu of Chinese in America. The area under the curve represents the people in the Chinese church. Those under the curve between Line "A" and Line "C" represent the OBCs in the church, most of whom, though somewhat bi-cultural after being in this country for a number of years, are strongly Chinese in culture. Those under the curve to the right of Line "C" represent the few ABCs in the church. This is usually understood by an OBC to be the target of ABC ministry.

On the other hand, when an ABC Christian considers ABC ministry, that sector under the curve is just a small though immediate part of it. He remembers the many friends he once had in Sunday school and church who have dropped out and gone the way of the world. He thinks of his many peers and relatives, his very own brothers and sisters and their children for whom the Chinese church has not had an effective ministry.

He realizes anew that over half the Chinese population in this land are ABCs, few of whom are reached for Jesus Christ; and this portion will be increasing as the years go by. In contrast to the OBC, he sees the whole span from Line "C" to "B" as the target of ABC ministry.

The believer with vision, whether OBC or ABC, will see that Line "C" will gradually move to the left side as the years go by – a larger and larger portion will be ABCs. This means that the Chinese Church must gear herself to an increasingly effective work among ABCs by enlisting pastoral staff and lay leaders capable of meeting these needs.



Dangers

The influx of many new OBCs into the Chinese churches has caused the Chinese churches to become more Chinese culturally than they had been. This has increased the danger of OBC church leaders becoming blinded by the influx of immigrants and not seeing the needs of two generations within the church. If the church is overwhelmed by opportunities, it may close its eyes to the needs of the ABCs both within and especially outside the church.

The church can also become so Chinese culturally that ABCs who are there may feel so out of place and neglected that they become dropouts. And every succeeding generation of ABCs will feel a greater alienation from the Chinese church. If so, we will have allowed a cultural factor to become a stumbling block for ABCs rather than allowing a spiritual factor to determine the course of ministry and Christian life for them.

Opportunities

Today the Chinese church must recognize that the OBCs and ABCs are culturally different and have their own particular needs. OBC and ABC pastors need to labor together to effectively serve the whole church. But this must be done in a spirit of love, respect and acceptance in the Lord. Their ministries will differ in many ways, but they need not be competing. It can be a single church with a yoked ministry, two separate churches under one roof, or even two churches next to each other. Each group has its own style and interests, and they do not need to look alike or always do things together. There will be opportunities for fellowship and even occasions for cooperation in ministry.

Today many ABC families still need the Chinese-speaking church to minister to many of their parents and relatives. There are still many ties to the OBC sector. ABCs are not seeking to break away from the church or to break their families apart. They want a church where they will feel comfortable and where they will not be looked upon as minorities and outsiders. They want a church that is able to minister to their particular situation and needs.

OBC families will also be feeding people into the ABC stream of the church. Will pastors feel threatened and insecure because they see this flow of people leaving their flock for another segment of the church?

Today, ninety percent of the Chinese in the U.S. are still outside of the gospel. Thousands of new immigrants are arriving each year, and thousands of new ABCs are being born each year. How can we remain on the sidelines? Let us join into what God is doing.

Alleviating Fears of OBC Church Leaders

It is necessary for Chinese churches in the U.S. to recognize the different needs of ABCs as distinguished from those of OBCs and to fully minister to both. We not only need to preserve and build up the few ABCs in the Chinese churches, but we also need to reach out to the vast majority of unreached and unchurched ABCs who have had nothing to do with the Chinese church. This will require changes that may be difficult to make, such as establishing parallel ministries, having a multi-staff, English services, etc. We need to encourage more ABCs into full-time ministries and prepare them for service in Chinese churches.

There will always be proposals for change. It is possible for change to take place in a spirit of unity. But first, those involved must understand what are the concerns and the purpose and scope of the changes. It is highly possible that many of our OBC brethren with their strong Chinese cultural background have misinterpreted what they have seen and heard regarding ABC ministries. Some of their thoughts have been as follows:

ABCs Are Trying to Split Churches and Compete with OBCs

The ABCs are not trying to split the churches; rather they are attempting to enhance the ministry so that all the Chinese, both OBCs and ABCs, can be fully ministered to. To do this will take a lot of ingenuity and energy and may take on many forms. It may start with separate English sermons in a worship service. It may eventually lead to parallel ministries wherever feasible. This is not competing with OBCs for ministry. It is really trying to have a complete ministry to the entire Chinese community where the whole spectrum is being reached. Today, most of our Chinese churches are much more suited for OBCs and their young children than for older ABCs.

ABCs Rejecting Chinese Culture and Are Not Very Chinese

ABCs are Chinese who are born and raised in America. They are Chinese, but they are not OBCs nor do they understand the Chinese language or their cultural heritage very well. ABC ministries can help ABCs to find and follow Christ without having to abandon their ABC identities. OBCs must be willing to acknowledge and accept this.

ABCs Attempting Take over of Chinese Churches and Wanting Power and Authority

Generally speaking, an ABC is not likely to be the leader of a Chinese church that is predominantly OBC, nor should he want to. ABCs only want the freedom to worship, serve and minister to other ABCs without too many cultural barriers. Whether one becomes the senior pastor should not be an issue. An ABC pastor is not in a church to compete with the OBC pastor but is there to make that ministry more complete by ministering to the ABC sector. To force out an OBC pastor from a church is not only unbiblical but it would also make that church incomplete and unable to fulfill its ministry. In the same way, to refuse to take on an ABC pastor when the need is there makes that church incomplete and unable to fulfill its ministry to the whole church.

ABCs Not Wanting to Mix or Work with OBCs

Being the body of Christ, we need each other. We are incomplete without the other. Through our fellowship we can enrich each other's lives. Advocating parallel ministries and more ABC pastors is not a denial of our need for each other. It is within our diversity and differences that we must manifest true unity in the Holy Spirit. We do not have to always be together in the same service to have fellowship and harmony. Emphasizing the strengths of the leadership, OBC pastors working with OBCs, and ABC pastors with ABCs, is true cooperation without one having to feel threatened by the other.

Although OBC ministries in America are very important, they are presently out of proportion to the needs of the whole Chinese population. We must lift up the vision so that the Chinese churches will not be in danger of having too many cultural stumbling blocks, thus preventing the next generation of ABCs from knowing the reality of the living God that is

found in Jesus Christ. Many of these will be the children of our OBC church leaders today.

Tilting toward ABC Ministries

In order for the Chinese church in American to be a vital and living church as the people of God in the world and fulfill the Great Commission, it must have a clear tilt toward ABC ministries. By tilt, it means favoring, planning and strategizing with the future of the ABCs in mind. Without this tilt, the church will remain an immigrant church to a small number of people and will lack a clear vision of where God wants it to go.

The Chinese church as a whole needs to be clear where it must be heading as it thinks and plans for the 21st century. In order to be a vital church that is fulfilling its mission locally and worldwide, it must have a clear tilt toward ABC ministries. ABCs are not better or more important than OBCs because everyone is equally important in the eyes of God. But ABCs are a key factor in enabling the church to fulfill its mission. We must tilt toward ABCs for the following reasons:

Because Chinese Churches Are Located in U.S.

The Chinese church in America, by virtue of its being located in the Western world, must help the Chinese Christians not only to survive in America but also to be a vital part of a larger social and cultural community. The danger confronting an immigrant church is the tendency to look inward and to be protective of its ethnic culture. The "ghetto" or "fortress" mentality gives it a sense of security from foreign intrusions, but it also cuts it off from the rest of society. Presently, many ABCs feel alienated from their own churches because they are expected to be more Chinese than they really are. They do not feel that they would be accepted in their churches unless they could adapt into that kind of Chinese fortress.

Because Parents Need to Understand Their Children

OBC parents who have ABC children need to realize that their children have a very distinct culture of their own, a fact which adds a unique dimension to the church. The church needs to help such parents understand their children and vice versa. Communication with and acceptance of each other are serious challenges being faced by a great number of families today. OBC parents must recognize that their children

raised in America will, unlike children raised in Asia, be strongly molded and influenced by Western culture. Oftentimes, cultural differences have been misinterpreted as theological issues and have divided families. So the church has a tremendous responsibility and opportunity to help OBC parents accept their ABC children with their cultural differences.

"Two Questions of Priorities for Church and Family"' *by Peter Yuen (*About FACE*, Vol. 3, No. 3, August, 1981)*

What is the more important? Our welfare or the welfare of our children? Parents who have not developed properly psychologically may choose their own welfare. But even instinctively, well-balanced parents choose their children's welfare just as a mother deer would decoy the deer hunter by running visibly in the opposite direction of her fawn. We can affirm a resounding choice for the welfare of our children. Within the family, this means that parents will be willing to forsake their own safety, security, comfort and enjoyment, if need be, to see that their children have what they need for safety, happiness and wholeness. Within the church, the adults and leadership will choose to give up time, attention, expenditure, even their own Christian welfare, if need be, to see that the children and youth have the opportunity, environment and experiences to grow in their Christian life and fellowship. The children's welfare comes before the parents' or adult leadership's welfare.

Now consider the second question: What is most important—their physical, their psychological, or their spiritual welfare? Parents who urge their children to drop out of school so as to work to further the family's income think erroneously that earning power to gain physical and material advantage is more important than training the mind. The antiquated view that daughters have less need than sons for a college education errs in believing that developing the capacity to think is unimportant for one will spend her life producing babies and preparing meals. The psychological is more important than the physical. The capacity to think and having a balanced emotional makeup is more crucial than being able to do physical tasks to earn for material ends.

But is not the spiritual even more important than the physical and psychological? Is not being rightly related to God for time and eternity of greater importance than being strong or smart? Is it not wiser to have peace with God through Jesus Christ than getting straight A's or being the

star athlete? The one who says he wants both for his children does not set his priorities aright. Of course we want everything excellent for our children. But if something has to give way, if our direction or our investment of time, energy, interest and money has to be allocated according to priorities, which is of highest priority? Our children's spiritual, psychological or physical welfare? The wise parent and church leader say, "The spiritual, of course!"

Now if we were called upon to sacrifice the psychological for the spiritual well-being of our children, would we advocate it? Is there such a choice? What would this mean? Culture and language are of the psychological realm. And holding tightly to the Chinese cultural reins upon the children who are growing up in an American culture, through no choice (nor fault) of theirs, is to drive most of them far away from the spiritual food and atmosphere of the church if that could be had only in the Chinese culture.

Wise, spiritual parents and church leaders will choose to give up their own interests in the realms of culture and language to see that their ABC children get the best, most relevant means to be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord and be developed in Christian fellowship and service through the church. For children raised in this country, that needs to be in the language and culture of the rest of life.

A Chinese man in Singapore who hardly knew English had eight children raised in English Western culture and language. But as this family attended a Chinese-speaking church, the man foresaw the spiritual tests ahead for his children. He was instrumental in helping an English service get started in his church, and he himself, who knew very limited English even after forty years, joined the English service right from the start. Today his children and grandchildren are going on in Christian life and service. This man made two right decisions.

Need to Produce Lay Leadership

Lay leadership and resources for Sunday school, youth ministries, choir, service and ministries in the church for the present and especially for the next generation will come predominantly from the growing ABC population. This is only natural if the churches are growing and are family oriented.

Wherever there is a large concentration of Chinese, ABC ministries should be directed to all ages and not just to children alone. It has been obvious that wherever the dropout rate is high among the youth and young adults, the church remains essentially an immigrant church with an ABC ministry intended only for children. Why are so many churches after decades of ministry without strong ABC families? The church must tilt toward building ABC lay leaders.

Need for Future Pastors and Missionaries

The most important reason for the Chinese church's tilting its ministry toward ABCs is to enable it to fulfill its mission to the world. Generally speaking, a growing church should be producing pastors, Christian workers, and especially missionaries from among its children. These workers should be the fruits of the Chinese church in America. Yet today many of our Chinese seminarians are committed Christians from overseas and the majority of them remain for ministries here instead of returning to serve in their homeland. Pastors are still being called from Asia to serve; many are having growing ministries. It is great to have these added and needed resources, but it gives us a false sense of strength and health. Where are the fruits of the last twenty to forty years of ministry from our local churches, especially; among the ABCs?

There are many more Chinese children born here than have emigrated from overseas. Therefore most of the future candidates for full-time ministry should come from the growing ABC sector. The smaller number of OBC young people are under a great deal of family pressures, obligations, personal struggles, and temptations to use their higher education for the family and to seek the security of the "good life" in America. OBC young people find it more difficult to leave America because of the more basic felt needs of security, citizenship, and material wealth. Immigration statistics prove this. Whereas ABCs, if discipled and challenged properly, will be more open and ready to give up what they have had all their lives to serve the Lord, whether in ministry locally or overseas. When this happens, the Chinese church will truly become a second-generation church, still able to reach the first-generation OBCs while producing more ABC fruit for ministry.

Therefore, tilting toward ABCs is essential. ABC ministry must be planned, for it will not happen automatically. Current leaders must now

steer the church toward strong ABC ministries. Favoring ABC ministries does not mean neglecting the OBCs; it is recognizing that the future of the Chinese church in America is dependent upon the succeeding generations.

Chapter 3

An Overview of Past and Present ABC Ministries within the Chinese Churches
By William Eng

- The Present Focus of the Chinese Churches
- Examples of Chinese Churches with Effective ABC Ministries
- Reasons for Their Success
- Chinese Churches with Ineffective Ministries to ABCs
- Reasons for Their Lack of Success

Present Focus of Chinese Churches

Since major changes were made in U.S. immigration laws in 1965, large numbers of Chinese began and are continuing to enter the U.S. This large influx of new immigrants has changed the focus of most Chinese churches. Ninety percent of today's Chinese churches minister to OBCs who are over sixty percent of the Chinese population. The other ten percent of Chinese churches minister to ABCs that make up the remaining forty percent of the Chinese population.

Some Chinese churches focus their ABC ministries upon the youth. ABC ministry is not just youth ministry. There are senior ABCs, a significant growing number included in the United States census who are part of the post World War II generation. More than sixty percent of ABCs are Baby-boomers. Another segment of the ABC population is the Baby-busters born after 1971; many of these are young adult singles.

More than fifty percent of ABCs are singles, not just young adults but those in their forties and above. This includes single-again ABCs, those who were once married but who have been widowed or divorced. As outlined in the previous chapter, ABCs can also further be described on a cultural scale from being more Chinese culturally to being more American culturally. ABCs can further be described by a spectrum of characteristics that can be from being more Chinese to being more American in many areas of life.

Examples of Chinese Churches with Effective ABC ministries

Any evaluation of ABC ministries in Chinese churches today must recognize that Chinese churches were not formed in the same way or by the same methods. Many Chinese churches located in most large metropolitan cities have been birthed in an environment associated with the early immigrants from southern China, primarily people who spoke Cantonese and the Toisan dialect and very much set within a Chinatown community. Most of these early Chinese churches were planted in the big cities such as Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York. Many of them have large, thriving, vital ministries to ABCs today.

In recent years because of the changes in immigration laws, new immigrants have come from other parts of China, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia. As the Chinese population increased in each of these and other major U.S. cities, the outward movement of better educated, more affluent Chinese to the suburbs has led to the starting of many other Chinese churches with growing ABC ministries as well.

The ABC ministries at some of these big-city and suburban Chinese churches will be briefly examined. Our first example of a Chinese church with a growing ministry to ABCs is Los Angeles First Chinese Baptist Church. Their children's ministry was started in 1952. In 1974 Greg Owyang was called to be the pastor to the ABCs and began preaching in the second service solely in English. This expedited the growth of the church. Key also was the growing ministry of the Sunday school in providing additional training for the English-speaking young adults. Their Sunday school attendance averages over 1000 each Sunday. In time an additional youth worship was started to meet the growing youth population that came from the surrounding Chinatown community of Los Angeles. The church continues to grow as those ABCs who grew up in the Chinatown community have returned to worship and serve in significant

numbers. The church must now re-emphasize outreach to their Chinatown community since their ministry to ABCs of all ages has become a large part of the church.

Another example of an effective church ministry to ABCs is Chicago's Chinese Christian Union Church (CCUC). The church started their English worship under the initial planning from Phil Heng and later Alvin Louie, students at Moody Bible Institute. David Woo, one of the five FACE directors, came to be the first pastor to the English-speaking in 1965. The church's sports ministry, Chinese school, and Christian day school have attracted many young people from the Chinatown community. Some of these have grown up to become lay ministry leaders to the next generation of ABCs. A few have served their internships in the church while attending seminary nearby. The church's significant mission outreach has challenged some of these ABCs to serve in the mission field. More than a handful of these have gone into full time ministry. Many of these career and short-term workers responded to God's call when they heard missionaries from the many mission agencies located in the Chicago area share in the English worship their call, struggle, and works of faith. No doubt, the ministry to the English-speaking of CCUC has grown due to many factors like these.

Another Chinese church with a strong ministry to ABCs is the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church whose current senior pastor, Steve Chin, is a product of the church's ABC ministry.

"God's Double Blessing on a Church" *by Steven Chin*
(ABOUT FACE, Vol. 6, No. 1, February 1984)

(Steven Chin, a native of the Boston area, holds master's degrees in industrial engineering and public administration and was a health planner in Boston until God called him to earn his master's in biblical studies at Dallas Theological Seminary. In 1977 he became the assistant to the pastor at the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church working with ABCs. In time he became the senior pastor of the church. He with his helpmate, Nancy, have two children, Stephanie and Matthew.)

Last year our church took a step of faith that has resulted in over a 25% increase in our average worship attendance in less than a year. We did this by expanding from one bilingual worship service to two worship services, one in English and the other in Cantonese. Of course, having separate worship services will not always guarantee that kind of growth. In our case, however, it was successful and perhaps our experience can be an encouragement to other Chinese churches considering such a move.

History

I suppose the history of our church, the Boston Chinese Evangelical Church, is typical of many Chinese churches in North America. The church was founded in 1961 by a small group of believers led by Rev. James Tan. It began by using Cantonese exclusively. However, as the children grew up, the sermons began to be interpreted, sentence by sentence, to English. Because Pastor Tan spoke very little English, the youth groups, led by a series of various foreign students who spoke English, were established to try to meet the needs of the ABCs.

By 1975, the congregation had grown to about 125 people, but the ministry to ABCs was still weak. The ABCs were bored with the service, and many dropped out or went to Caucasian churches. The ABC ministry was also hurt by the transient nature of its congregation. The leadership was not very stable with students moving in and out of the area. In 1974, an OBC worker (trained in the US) was hired to work with the young people, but he soon left because of conflicts. This led the church to be even more cautious in hiring a worker to work with the English-speaking members.

The attention of the church soon turned toward the need for a church building. The church had been sharing a building with a home for alcoholics and other homeless men. To my surprise in 1977 after I finished seminary, in the midst of the building program, the church offered me the position of assistant to the pastor. This certainly was a step of faith for the church as its financial resources were being drained by the

building program. The growing youth ministry, particularly with all the college students in the area, finally had a full-time worker overseeing it. The worship service became more "even" as the entire service, not just the sermon, was interpreted. Also, Pastor Tan graciously allowed me to alternate with him in preaching the sermons. Though I was not fully trained for preaching, the ABCs appreciated the sermons preached in English and geared toward their culture and needs.

In 1978, there was a case of "reverse discrimination" that I believe helped pave the way for the English worship service. Up to this point there had been just one college-career group in the church, and it was dominated by ABCs. There were some OBC young people, however, who were more comfortable in studying the Bible in Cantonese and wanted a Cantonese-speaking fellowship group. Despite fears of disunity, the Cantonese-speaking fellowship was formed, and both groups have grown. As a result, people in the church began to see more clearly the differences in ministering to the ABCs and the OBCs.

In 1979, we moved into our new building. Pastor Tan retired and Pastor Jacob Fung succeeded him. Both Pastor Tan and Pastor Fung were sympathetic to the needs of ABCs and were not against an English worship service. However, they wanted to wait until the congregation was more receptive to the idea. It should also be noted that the good staff relationships that existed helped relieve any tension between the OBCs and ABCs.

The church continued to grow steadily to approximately 250 in 1982 with about one-third English-speaking, one-third bilingual, and one-third Cantonese-speaking. As many of the children of church leaders were entering adolescence, more attention was focused on the needs of teens—so much so that youth coordinator, Diane Soo Hoo, was hired in 1982, and a teen worship was instituted. Meanwhile, talk about an English service began to grow especially as the one bilingual service became more and more crowded. The capacity of the sanctuary was 300. The Board of Deacons finally appointed a committee to study the need and the feasibility

of an English worship service. The committee reported that because of the language and cultural differences within the congregation and because of the growing space problem, an English worship service should be instituted. It recommended that on Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m., the English worship service and the Cantonese Sunday school would take place. After a refreshment and fellowship break, the Cantonese worship service and the English Sunday school would take place from 11:00 a.m. to 12 noon. Once a month, Holy Communion would be held together at 12 noon. There would still be one senior pastor, one board of deacons, one budget, and one congregation. The committee's recommendations were adopted without opposition at the church's Annual Congregational Meeting in October 1982.

Beginning in on March 6, 1983, the church moved to two worship services. The English worship service has averaged about 125; the Cantonese service, about 230. The total represents an increase of over 25% from the average of 280 prior to the expansion to two services. We thank the Lord that the fears of splitting up the church have not materialized and both congregations are happier and better ministered to.

Analysis

As I look back on how the English worship service became a reality, I can only thank God. Sometimes it was difficult and frustrating to wait for God to act in the midst of strong opposition against having an English service. For instance, some people said, "The church was originally formed for the Cantonese-speaking. It shouldn't have an English service." Other said, "The ABCs ought to learn Chinese." More legitimate complaints included, "It will break up the family," and "It will break the unity of the church."

Certainly the English-speaking and the Cantonese-speaking will not be able to sit next to each other during the worship service. Such unity, however, is only apparent. In reality, people usually sit in clusters with their friends, not with those of a different language or culture including family members. Under our alternating schedule, families can at least still come to church together and leave together.

Admittedly, the English-speaking and Cantonese-speaking congregations will get to see and know each other less and less. However, the church was growing to such a size that some division was necessary. Already people felt like strangers even with those in their own language/culture group. It could never be like the "good old days" when everyone knew everyone else at the church. Thus with growth, some sort of subdivision was unavoidable and necessary. Moreover, true unity is not based on attending the same service but upon our unity as part of the body of Christ. With people worshipping God in their own language and cultural setting, they will hopefully draw closer to Christ and consequently, closer spiritually to each other.

In terms of overcoming opposition and establishing an English worship service, I would like to cite four factors. One, there was always steady pressure for an English service but never to the point that it became a demand. The ABCs tried to let the leaders know they were not happy with the bilingual service but they never became rebellious or offensive in their complaints.

There was occasionally a temptation to bypass all the frustration and start a separate English-speaking church. But I realized the English-speaking and the Cantonese-speaking congregations needed each other. The English-speaking congregation needed the Cantonese-speaking congregation to minister to their parents. The Cantonese-speaking ministry needed the English-speaking congregation to minister to their children.

I suppose we could have gotten an English worship service faster if we had demanded and pressured more. But that could have created a lot of bad feeling between the two congregations that would mean more problems later. Establishing an English service after a bitter fight would only confirm people's fears of disunity. In our perhaps slower approach where unanimity was reached, people could point to our church as a model rather than as proof that having an English service would split the church.

A second factor in our establishing an English service was gaining the respect of the OBCs. ABCs are often seen as being irresponsible, rebellious kids. We ABCs needed to show them by our actions as individuals and as a group that we were mature enough to be responsible for our own worship service, We needed to make clear that we had no intention of splitting the church but wanted to help it grow. At the same time, we needed to help them see that ABCs and OBCs were best ministered to separately.

A third factor was our growth in numbers. It was difficult at first keeping the English-speaking coming to our church. But our success in doing this by making up for some of the deficiencies through other areas such as Sunday school and fellowship groups, showed that the English-speaking congregation was sufficiently large enough to support an English service. The growth in numbers also caused the church to take action to alleviate the crowded worship service. Believe it or not, some people suggested two bilingual services! Fortunately, most people saw having two separate language services as the only viable solution.

The fourth and most important factor in our gaining an English service was prayer. For many years the ABCs complained about the need for an English service, but they never seriously prayed about it until the year before it became a reality. Though the chances of an English service coming soon looked bleak at times, we needed to trust in the sovereignty of God. As people began to pray for an English service, the opposition began to melt. Some opposing church leaders left the area, some left for other churches, and some became inactive in leadership. For the others, God changed their minds about an English service, even those who were dead set against it.

In conclusion, God has shown to us that the process of gaining an English worship service is as important as the product. It was frustrating at times, but God showed us that He is certainly sovereign in His own church. We just need to do things God's way and wait for His timing. The

product has been two healthy, growing congregations working together to help build His church.

Other examples are San Francisco's Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Oakland's Chinese Independent Baptist Church, and the Los Angeles True Light Presbyterian Church.

Besides the Chinese churches in urban Chinatown communities, many of today's churches with effective ABC ministries are found in regions of the United States with newly growing Chinese populations. These have been in the metropolitan areas of Phoenix, Dallas, Houston, Washington/Maryland, Seattle, San Jose, and other areas.

The Sacramento First Chinese Baptist Church was started by predominantly English-speaking ABCs under Pastor Donald Gee in 1969. Their worship service was in English with a short Chinese summary of the sermon. This was the reverse of the traditional pattern used in planting churches in Chinatowns or other Chinese communities. By 1996 only English was used in their worship service.

Another example of an early ABC ministry success is the start of the Chinese Gospel Mission, Sacramento, by Frank Fung in the 1940s. Some of its members eventually went to the Multnomah School of the Bible and then ministered to ABCs in other churches. Chinese Gospel Mission is now called Chinese Grace Bible Church of Sacramento and is pastored by an ABC, Alan Ginn. This church now also ministers to the Chinese-speaking.

"One Generation of Church Life" *by William Eng*
(ABOUT FACE, Vol. 23, No. 2, May 2001)

Chinese Baptist Church of Orange County (CBCOC) has just celebrated its 27th anniversary. CBCOC was started in April 1974 by Dr. and Mrs. James Chiu after they shared a vision with the First Southern Baptism Church of Anaheim, which then sponsored the church as its mission. On the first Sunday, April 28, the mission had sixty in worship. In 1977, it became self-supporting.

Through the collective participation from both the English and Chinese-speaking during our annual "Dream Day" (visualizing what God would do through CBCOC) the church has defined what we are and for what purpose we exist.

Vision Statement: *"CBCOC is a loving, New Testament Chinese church whose purpose is to fulfill the Great Commission challenge of worship, evangelism, discipleship, and ministry. We exist to worship the Almighty God in the context of our Chinese heritage, proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ, nurture the body of believers in love under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and advance the Great Commission both in the United States and around the world."*

We thank the Lord that He has sustained and empowered the church since that first beginning. The main priorities of our work are to provide worship services in various languages so that each member of our body can experience worship in his or her own culture, to plant mission churches to proclaim the salvation we have received, to present the Word to equip the family of God to live out Christ's teaching as a community of light, and to prepare workers for the kingdom's work.

Core Values:
C *hrist-Centered Unity in Diversity*
B *iblical Truth Foundational*
C *itizens of God's Kingdom*
O *ne Another Members*
C *ommitment to Missions and Evangelism*

C *hrist-Centered Unity in Diversity*

"Our unity is based on our commitment to Christ, with appreciation of our diversity in cultures. We believe that unity is not necessarily uniformity."

In the past twenty-five years, God's power has made it possible for 500 to make professions of faith in Christ and be added to the church

by baptism. During a recent baptism, some of the new Mandarin members acknowledged the loving fellowship and unity expressed by the other members of the church.

Early in the church's history, brothers and sisters who were bilingual accommodated the English-speaking by making English to be the common language in our various planning meetings even though Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking members are in the church. This has strengthened the unity of the church. For many years there have been various Praise Night presentations from the various components of the church involving all three language congregations. Even though we have three different language worship services, we are bound to each other in Christian unity.

***B** iblical Truth Foundational*

"Teaching, applying and guarding the truth of the Bible, form the basic foundation of our church."

We believe each person should have the opportunity to study God's Word in his or her own language. This is seen in the seventeen adult Bible-study classes which outnumber the younger classes. Bible-study attendance in church was the highest on October 29, 2000, with 421 present. There are weekday Bible studies but the availability of Sunday classes in the language and age group of newcomers has helped the church to grow spiritually and numerically. Prior to the start of the English worship service, and later the Mandarin worship, emphasis was given to establishing three more adult classes to provide an ongoing support for that worship service.

***C** itizens of God's Kingdom*

"As citizens of God's kingdom, we pledge our allegiance to Christ's Lordship. We are guided by the Holy Spirit to Christ-like living. We are Christ's ambassadors to reach the lost world."

Because we desire to live out kingdom life, some of our young people are coming back after graduation to serve in the church as well as in short-term mission projects. Some have accepted God's call to ministry and there often are seminarians from within the church. Our Summer Volunteer and Internship programs provide our young people opportunities to help in the church. These cultivate our members to be servants of God in His kingdom work.

***O** ne Another Members*

"We believe that every member is a vital link in the growth of the church through their participation in exercising their gifts, loving care for one another, praying for one another, ministering to one another's needs, and fellowshipping with one another."

For a few years over 150 adults and youths have supported the Lord's work here through the Watchman Prayer Ministry by making commitments to pray for one hour each week. Prayers were answered resulting in professions of faith and the strengthening of the church. Our prayer ministry has helped to allow people to pray for one another and connect with others in the church.

The deacons of the church are selected to care for the needs of the various adults supported by their Bible-study support groups. Ministry done in the name of the Lord has strengthened the church in its growth.

The adults in the church, through the church's budget, have made commitments to provide for ministry to young people. Through the resources of staff, volunteers and finances, the next generation is experiencing God's love and the church's investment in their spiritual development.

***C** ommitment to Missions and Evangelism*

"CBCOC is committed to the fulfillment of the Great Commission."

All three language groups have teams who have participated in our Continuing Witness Training. The result has been over twenty professions of faith in the first four months of this year. Our Christmas Choir, together with our Youth and Children's Choirs, has presented a Christmas program of drama and music proclaiming the good news to over 800 people every December. Likewise, it was a joint effort of one-fourth of the church in sharing the Resurrection music drama last Easter with over 700 present. As a result, professions of faith were made. We are committed to share Christ both personally as well as through the whole church.

Instead of just focusing on our ethnicity, the various language groups work together to witness to God's work through the whole church to the world outside our walls. English, Cantonese, and Mandarin-speaking members have partnered together through visitation, drama, sports, crafts, medicine and VBS to the Mission Indians in San Diego County and Tijuana. Since 1991, a team has led VBS on the Navajo reservation in Arizona. Other teams have visited Dong villages and delivered medicine and relief funds. Some of our students have been part of a cultural exchange in Guiyang. Another team has gone to the Dominican Republic Chinese in the last two years. Three of our members continue to study in China; another couple will join them later in the year. We are excited at God letting us work alongside Him in the harvest.

We warmly welcome all to our fellowship and family through Jesus Christ our Lord. We want to become all that God wants us to be – to make the vision He has given us a reality at CBCOC.

Sen Wong, founder of the Chinese Bible Evangel, has been instrumental in planting a number of ABC Chinese Bible Churches spread

out over the San Francisco Bay area. Many young people have found the Lord through the focused ministry of these Bible churches.

In some areas of the country that had smaller numbers of Chinese, there were sufficient numbers to see small Chinese churches formed. A history of the Chinese Baptist Church in Greenville, Mississippi, gives a record of some of the ABCs who had moved out of the South and became important contributing members of other Chinese churches in the rest of the nation.

In Arizona, Phoenix First Chinese Baptist Church was started from Central Baptist Church by Rev. Stanley in 1944. He preached in English, gathering the children of the Chinese grocery storeowners and other Chinese-owned businesses. These young people grew up to be the lay leaders of the church. With limited Chinese migration into the area, the church would have been predominantly ABC. Later they added a Chinese translation to the church's worship, again the reverse of the pattern found in Chinatown churches. In 1969 they had two separate services, one in English and the other in Chinese. (Reverend Stanley had come from ten years of similar ministry at San Antonio Chinese Baptist Church. Alvin Louie an ABC from California became the pastor of San Antonio Chinese Baptist Church before becoming the senior pastor of Oakland's Chinese Independent Baptist Church.)

Many Chinese churches have planted new churches. These new church plants, second-generation churches, are visible demonstrations of how many ABC churches have been developed. In light of the church growth movement, inspired Chinese churches with long histories here in the United States have launched other Chinese-speaking churches with English worship ministries that were already integrated into their starting structure and focus. Some examples are the First Chinese Baptist Church of Fountain Valley and the Sunset Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco. First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles sent out Wilfred Chung to Sacramento to start Sacramento Chinese Baptist Church. Their English worship was begun in the late 1970s. Wes Ong, an ABC who grew up at the First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles is currently its senior pastor.

Some Chinese churches have even had the vision to plant ABC churches, churches established to minister primarily to ABCs. For instance the True Light Presbyterian Church of Los Angeles, in existence

for over a hundred years, (presently located in Alhambra, California) planted three ABC churches. These are the Chinese Presbyterian Church of Orange County pastored by Wayland Wong, an ABC; San Gabriel Presbyterian Church pastored by David Woo and then Ben Yu, both ABCs; and South Bay Presbyterian Church. Other Churches with effective ABC ministries are the Chinese Christian Alliance Church of Northridge, California; Chinese Alliance Church, San Jose; Chinese Christian Church of Houston; and the Bread of Life Church in Torrance, California.

Reasons for Success

The Chinese churches that have been mentioned above have developed effective ministries to their ABCs. What are some of the reasons for their success? A few of the reasons are mentioned below. These and other reasons will be discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this book.

Meet Needs of Various ABC Age Groups

Most Chinese churches have some ministries for their children; others will also have a youth program. Usually that is the extent of their ministries to ABCs. Chinese churches need to develop ABC programs for their youth, college students, young adults, couples, young families, and older adults as well.

Preaching in the Context of the ABCs' Life Experiences

Some Chinese churches will hire an OBC person to lead their ABC ministries simply because he speaks good English. Excellent English-speaking ability alone is not sufficient for effective ABC ministry. People who work with ABCs must be able to identify with, feel with, and see life from their points of views. It is a rare OBC who can do this. This is also best done within a separate worship service for the English-speaking.

Sports Ministries

ABCs respond well to sports ministries that channel their energy and provide greater fellowship. They are very much into sports. Chinese churches that develop effective sports programs for their young people will better be able to provide rich sources of fellowship for them. Also, the sports program can be used to reach out to the unsaved.

Meaningful Missions Projects

ABCs need meaningful missions projects that meet the interactive needs of ABCs to fulfill the Kingdom's work. They are very responsive to challenges to be involved in world wide mission projects. They are looking for kingdom causes that extend beyond the local church. They want to be involved in God's work in the world. Their involvement in mission projects will have a large impact in helping them to grow spiritually.

Chinese Churches with Ineffective Ministries to ABCs

Some ABC church-starts have not been deliberate but came out of conflict and dissatisfaction with inadequate English-speaking ministries to ABCs and their families in ineffective Chinese churches. Some may ask, "Why could not these ABCs humble themselves, suffer the lack of ministry, and have faith in what the Lord might be able to provide in due time." Yet in reality, it has been the ineffective ministry of some Chinese churches in which some of these ABCs have either grown up or have become Christian that has led to this flight from the Chinese churches. Some have gone to churches with English ministries. Some have joined Asian American churches with Christians of similar background from Korean, Japanese, Vietnamese, and other Asian upbringings.

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The large dropout rates have led to the loss of many generations of young people to the Chinese churches that have done little or nothing to stem the flood. Most ironic is that it is the children of the Chinese-speaking, even of the leaders, who have abandoned their parents' church. More than that it is the loss of the potential ABCs that should have been gathered into the Kingdom from the unsaved Chinese population around those churches. One can imagine how many more could have been reached.

One of the reasons that these churches have not been effective is their lack of understanding of the needs of their ABCs. It is a part of the Chinese culture to be patient in addressing any concerns. More important, however, to ABC young people is that they have only their elementary to high school years to have their emotional and spiritual needs met by the Chinese churches. By their college years they have already dropped out of the Chinese churches. For ABC adults, the need to be in a Chinese church

is outweighed by the need to belong where they can give a part of themselves. The lack of speed in addressing the needs of ABCs in the Chinese churches only compounds the problem. Indeed the observation that such ABCs do not have enough faith to persevere under ministries that inadequately meet their needs and ministries that are blurred in their focus to their needs can be explained by the lack of maturity of these young believers who have not been fed spiritually and who have not been understood.

It is sad to hear of the non-retention of children who have grown up in the church. Some of those who have grown up in the church desire to belong to it, but they lack the opportunity to participate and lead in the church. They have heard that they would be the leaders of the future. But the time came when some ABCs saw unconcerned church leaders making decisions that affected the ABCs where the ABCs had no input into the making of the decisions. Such ABCs may even be treated as "youth" even though they may have been quite successful in their careers and contribute to the direction of their companies. So desertion becomes a fact.

As alarming as the number of ABCs leaving the church, equally alarming is the rapid turnover of English-speaking staff. So many ABCs have experienced calls to serve in Chinese churches but have found their experiences very painful and deeply unsatisfying. One such minister asked whether churches are supposed to abuse their workers. Some of these ABC staff members who leave the Chinese churches go away feeling severely abused by their churches. Ronald Enroth has written two books addressing this problem: *Churches That Abuse* and *Recovering from Churches That Abuse*. If ineffective churches do not see the pain they are causing, they will only see another generation lost. Without stable ABC staff members, who can provide long-term ministry to its ABCs? These Chinese churches will become ineffective in their ministries to ABCs and give the ABCs another reason for leaving these churches. Who will care for them? No minister, no ministry, no ABCs. Thus many leaders of ineffective churches are shocked to hear that their own children are drawn by the attractiveness of Asian American churches or by a larger Chinese church that has significant ministries for ABCs.

Reasons for Lack of Success

- Addressing the message to a limited population of OBCs and not to ABCs.
- Spiritual problems in the church: there might be pride and holding on to authority and no desire to share in the decision-making of the church with adult ABCs.
- Unbelief i.e. a lack of faith: some due to the lack of spiritual training and personal ministry.
- Crystallization of the organization: not allowing expansion for ABC members and leaders.
- Failure to decide to grow.
- Strategies not designed for growth - planning too small.
- Repeat of same mistakes of early Chinese churches.
- Smaller Chinese population.
- Small-size church limited to one staff.
- No critical numbers to attract other ABCs.
- ABCs leaving for metropolitan areas for education and work.
- Reluctance to accept the high financial ministry cost for ABC ministry.

Today's generation of ABCs come from an age of narcissism, focusing on self-consciousness and self-actualization. They live in a virtual reality flowing with an overload of information feeding that self-identity framed by confusion, loneliness and frustration. Such ABCs are missing true inner reflection and the spiritual awareness of the Lord of life. Like the roller coaster feelings of exhilaration, this age reacts and responds to motion, speed and the stimulation of emotions. They need stable, inner moral character that can be developed as disciples of Jesus Christ. The Chinese church should be the one discipling these believers to overcome these traits of the sinful nature.

It is easy to focus on the problem and not see the potential solutions. Anyone can see the number of apples on a tree, but not many people can see the number of trees in an apple. Andrew found his Peter and brought him to Jesus. The Lord saw beyond the denials of Peter to the Rock who so ably led His church. Paul found his Timothy; but remember it was Barnabas who first found Paul and brought him to the believers to be accepted and incorporated in the Early Church. And Barnabas saw beyond the quitter, John Mark, and dedicated his ministry to developing the future writer of the Gospel of Mark. This was the process of the great

work of the first church. The Way of the Cross is lined with believers who found others who would join them on the way of the Lord Jesus Christ. We in the Chinese church must find the ABCs who will continue the journey of faith. We are called together to be the Lord's church. And we must overcome the barriers that hinder ministry to ABCs. We must call out the ABCs for a new generation. We need ABCs who have grown up within the church and who will contribute both ministry and leadership to the church, particularly to other ABCs.

Part III. Factors Contributing to Effective Ministries with ABCs

Chapter 4

Culturally Sensitive OBC Leadership
By Joseph Wong

- Need for Wise OBC Church Leaders
- Culture Shapes Our Value System
- Church's Value System Must Be Based on Biblical Values
- Churches Are to Provide an Environment Conducive to Growth and Service.
- Need to Develop Parallel Ministries
- Need to Recognize that There Is a Christian Culture
- Have a Healthy Suspicion towards the Correctness of Your Own Culture
- Accept the Members of Your Church Regardless of Their Cultural Background
- Establish a Complete Ministry for Those from Each Culture
- Essential Qualities for Leaders of a Bi-cultural Church

In the previous chapter we have taken a brief glance at some Chinese churches that have effective ministries to ABCs. We also have identified some of the reasons for their effectiveness. In this chapter we want to discuss in greater depth some of the key reasons that these Chinese churches have been effective in their ministries to ABCs.

If we were to identify the most important requirement for a Chinese church to have an effective ABC ministry, that requirement would be that the church needs to have OBC leadership that is culturally sensitive to the ABCs. Because the ABCs differ from the OBCs in their cultural perspectives, the OBCs need to recognize this difference. They need to see that because of these differences, forms of ministry that have worked for OBCs may not necessarily work for ABCs. And most likely, different forms of ministry are required for ABC work. For OBCs to recognize this cultural difference is fundamental to a Chinese church's ministry to ABCs. This recognition of cultural differences becomes the foundation on which ABC ministry is built. Without this foundation, any attempts at ABC ministries will fail.

The most basic conflicts that occur in Chinese churches between the ABCs and the OBCs are cultural ones. Cultural conflicts are common and occur over many issues when people of different backgrounds come together. The reason that people of one culture may reject those from another culture is because their values and their perceptions of what is acceptable or unacceptable may differ. Each culture develops its own values and biases of what is right and what is wrong. These differences can produce clashes when people of different cultures are brought together. Sometimes these clashes appear to be over physical differences rather than cultural ones. For instance discrimination between the races is more rooted in cultural differences than in the color of one's skin.

Let us look at one area where ABCs and OBCs may have cultural conflicts within the church. This involves their perceptions of what it means for a Christian to be spiritual or holy. Some of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century missionaries who went to China were of a holiness or puritan background. From these missionaries many Chinese Christians came to see holiness or spirituality from the missionary's point of view. Some outward signs of this view are one who is prayerful, one who does not adopt the signs of a worldly person in appearance, and one who is faithful in church attendance. On the other hand, some ABCs tended to assign spirituality to a Christian who was active and diligent in serving in the church. These two differing perceptions sometimes caused misunderstandings between the two groups.

Need for Wise OBC Church Leaders

Cultural differences among church groups must be wisely handled by the church leadership. In Chapter One of this book, we noted how the leaders in the Early Church, the Apostles, effectively handled the problem of the neglect of the Hellenist widows. The timely response of the Apostles showed their readiness to involve themselves and to give guidance for the appropriate action. Their response is more than example for us. It can be seen as a basic leadership principle which can be stated as follows: "The church leadership must assume the responsibility and give guidance over significant issues in the life of the church." The response of the leadership is the key. And in order to make this timely response, they need to be culturally sensitive to the differing needs within their church.

Dr. Samuel Ling, author, director of China Horizon, and outspoken advocate for ABC ministries, gave a short answer to the question, "What were the adjustments OBC leaders needed to make to allow the ABC ministry to flourish?" He said, "The need is for them to look inside and evaluate themselves." How are OBC leaders to do this?

When studying the Chinese churches in America, the most significant issue is the reality that the churches are made up of overseas born (OBC) and American born (ABC) Chinese. Each is the product of a significantly different culture. This reality provides the challenges that have plagued the North American Chinese churches for over a century. The church is, of course, a reflection of the Chinese immigrant families in America made up of OBCs and ABCs. Just as it is unacceptable to ask the ABC children to leave their own families because of their cultural differences, the church must not entertain the idea of letting their ABC members go their own way. The leadership must find a way to keep family and church together as a whole.

"Bridging the Gap" *by Joseph Wong*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 12, No. 1, February 1990)*

As a pastor in a Chinese church here in America, I find that its bicultural characteristic (ABC/OBC) is often the dominant controversy in church life. (It also affects the family life of three generations living in the

same household.) It shapes our approach to doing church ministries and influences our way of seeing and understanding one another. It frequently overshadows any theological or social issue.

At times its dominance has been felt in the energy given to denying its importance. Instead of understanding the distinctives of the two cultures and finding resolutions toward appreciation and acceptance of the differences, strong emphasis was focused on non-differences and on our commonality (e.g., "we're Chinese" or "we're one in Christ"). This unfortunate minimizing of differences has in the past been articulated by OBC leaders who remained outside of the confusion and frustrations ABCs experienced in trying to serve under them. Many ABCs in the Chinese churches were allowed to drop out while church leaders made little effort to discourage the exodus. They simply ignored the differences between ABCs and OBCs rather than adapt to the particular needs of ABCs. (FACE has discovered the ABC casualty rate in the Chinese churches to be well over 75%. And the loss of leadership is reflected in the sparse number of mature ABC pastors in spite of a century or five generations of Chinese church history.)

Nevertheless, the concern for unity and harmony in a bicultural congregation is a valid one. Unity should be sought diligently for it is consistent with our doctrine of oneness in Christ and His command for us to love one another. It is also a sign of God's blessing (Ps. 133:1-2). However, the achievement of real oneness in a church is far from easy. I see the need for both wisdom and grace from heaven to bridge the gap between Asian and western thoughts. How can this be accomplished?

THE SPECIAL KIND OF PEOPLE

There is a segment of the Chinese church that has an OBC background but is well acculturated to America. These individuals usually are ones who came for their education and have decided to make the United States their home. They have adopted the western ways without losing their Chinese cultural foundation. They are ideal individuals to

reach across the gap between OBCs and ABCs and become a bridge for understanding. They have already wrestled with the new culture and ways to assimilate into it without denying the value of their own cultural heritage. By interpreting the thoughts and ways of one culture to the other then can increase understanding and appreciation. I have seen the effective efforts of these well-acculturated OBCs at the Bread of Life Church in Torrance. It was mostly they who spearheaded the establishing of an English worship service and the securing of an English-speaking pastor. Being sensitive to the need, they spoke on behalf of the ABCs' future, seeking to organize a church that would minister effectively to acculturated OBC and ABC young adults as well their ABC children. They were willing to extend themselves, to experiment by setting up programs to meet needs not addressed before. Today, after five years, an English ministry exists that involves over 150 in worship, six fellowship groups for all ages, and a Sunday school program that reaches approximately 100 people each week.

Recognition should be given to the acculturated OBCs special role in the Chinese church. They are unique and may be our most valuable asset in trying to bring understanding and harmony in our churches. In a sense, they belong to neither side resulting in a neutrality that enables them to serve as bridges in the church. I propose that we welcome them in partnership in the process of building true harmony within the Chinese churches in America.

The concept is exemplified by the wisdom of God in choosing a Savior to reconcile fallen man to Himself. To bring us together, God appointed a God-Man, Jesus Christ, to be our Mediator. A Mediator Who knew the holiness of God and also could "sympathize with our weaknesses, having been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).

These who play the role of the peacemaker ought to be able to identify with each side of a conflict in order to enhance understanding and effect reconciliation. Peacemakers are called blessed, perhaps because it's the characteristic of children of God (Matt. 5:9). I believe the most

suitable peacemakers in the Chinese churches are the acculturated OBCs. They need to realize their unique position and be encouraged and coached in ways to fulfill a vital role in the Chinese churches. Let us not forget, however, the ABCs who have had extensive experience with Chinese culture either by living with it in the States or by extended service as missionaries overseas. They too can and have served as bridges in the OBC/ABC issue.

THE ROLE OF THE ACCULTURATED OBCs

What can these special people do? First, they can use their position to provide better communication. They must be ready to speak to each side on behalf of the other in acceptable and healing terms. They also need to learn diplomacy in dealing with those in positions of authority as well as members who have little or no power.

Secondly, they can fulfill their role by implementing means to gain acceptance and equality for ABCs. Hoover Wong shared an important principle with several ABC pastors: "Interdependence can only be achieved between independent parties." The steps are from "dependence" to "independence," then to "interdependence." If one of the parties is still dependent on the other, cooperation will not be truly interdependent. Instead, any joint decisions will be the result of submission by one side or the graciously giving in by the other side, and not a result of mutual agreement. Therefore it is important for both sides that the ABCs first achieve equal status, becoming truly independent.

Thirdly, they can help ABCs in the understanding and appreciation of the OBCs' culture. The OBCs' words and actions can be respected when their thoughts and motives are understood. By discovering their values we can more fully appreciate why certain actions are held important by them. Moreover, by talking to these acculturated OBCs we can learn how to communicate with OBCs so that they can learn and adapt to western ways in carrying out the church's ministry in America.

To begin the process of reconciliation it is necessary that acculturated OBCs recognize the importance of being bridges in the church. They must assess their own preparation and ability to act neutrally with understanding and wisdom to fulfill this task. Their contribution must be recognized by both ABC and OBC members. May all well-acculturated OBCs, being prayerful, motivated by a love for the church, and full of faith, make a commitment to this good work.

The first and most obvious challenge to keeping family together is in communication. Which language shall be primary in the church? The idea that it is good to know more than one language has promoted the demand that children should not lose their mother tongue. So the Chinese language was the primary language in worship services and in business meetings with translations provided by ineffective novices. After stumbling over this language barrier for some years, most church leaders have come to see the wisdom of providing separate Chinese and English worship services when feasible.

The far more difficult challenge in being a multi-cultural church is to recognize the effect that cultures have upon people. To understand the affect of culture on a person, it is imperative to gain insight into the nature of culture and its grip on our lives. The OBC leadership must earnestly seek this wisdom so that they can choose to deal wisely with the tensions that such cultural diversity will produce.

Culture Shapes Our Value System.

The presence of more than one culture in a church means there is more than one set of values. The convictions we have as to what is good and what is bad are rooted in the way we were raised and taught. Culture provides for each society, the common consensus of what are the good or evil in life, and what are the right or wrong ways of doing things. The traditions and customs, the law of the land, spoken and unspoken, are the results of what a culture considers to be good or bad. Their intent is to perpetuate these values. (For example, it is customary among Chinese, that specific dishes are prepared for a new mother to eat; pigs feet cooked in vinegar and chicken cooked in rice wine. Observing this custom is more than simply a tradition. These dishes are considered beneficial for the health of the new mother. They are considered the right things to feed the mother and are good for her.)

The OBC leadership must be aware that the belief of what is good and right is very different between the East and the West. It is very likely that what one culture views as good, another might view as not good. An example can be found in the way a young person relates to an older adult. An ABC may seek to be friendly by addressing a person by his first name. This is often considered as too familiar and improper to an OBC. This leads to a conclusion that the ABC is "bad" and not the sort of example wanted.

This disagreement in beliefs becomes critical when put into the context of a Christian church. By its nature a church's commitment is to pursue what is good and avoid what is bad. Therefore, any pastor will struggle over accepting as a colleague a person whose actions are considered "not good" by his own culture. This pastor will also be faced with the need to defend the ways of his colleague to the rest of the church.

The challenge for the culturally sensitive leader is to understand the other culture's view of what is good. To understand means to be able to answer why one believes that certain practices or traditions are good. Why do the ABCs prefer change and diversity over traditions? Is it merely joining their peers, or is it connected to the belief that truth is relative? Why do ABCs speak so disrespectfully towards their elders? Is it related to their idea of how good friends speak to each other?

Dr. Samuel Ling's articles on cultural differences are a valuable resource. His article, "Beyond the Chinese Way of Doing Things: Contours of OBC-ABC Cultural Differences," can be viewed at www.chinahorizon.com. In this article he calls attention to some differences between the OBC perspective and the ABC perspective.

- The family or church vs. the individual, as priority in commitment. The OBCs value community rights over individual rights.

- Relationship vs. theory, as an important factor. The OBCs value harmonious relationships over concept issues.

- Deference vs. equality, for defining relationship among leaders. The OBCs see the need for the lesser to defer to those above them.

- Respect vs. love, as the governing attitude in relationships. The OBCs evaluate attitudes from a respect question before a love question.

- Humility vs. self confidence, in representing self to others. The OBCs cherish humility while seeing self confidence as arrogance.

- Organization vs. organism, to describe the nature of the church.

- Credentials vs. service record, in qualifying for leadership.

- Secular credentials vs. spiritual gifts, in judging suitableness for ministry.

- Conciliators vs. confrontation, in dealing with differences and offenses. The OBCs value relationships so highly that they would prefer to conciliate than to confront.

It is natural to design ministry programs on the basis of one's own cultural perspective and values. In order to bypass this tendency when designing ministry programs for ABCs, it is necessary for OBC leaders whenever possible to lay aside their cultural values and methods in order to allow the ABCs to minister through their own cultural values and methods. OBC leadership must at least accept (if not seek for) counsel from the ABC leadership to achieve this development.

Church's Value System Must Be Based on Biblical Values

It is imperative that cultural values do not automatically determine absolute values. Church leaders must understand and appreciate those of a different culture. Besides the need to understand why ABCs act and think the way they do, OBC leaders must beware of the assumption that their dominant view of what is good is the valid view. In each culture lies the assumption that their views of what is good are correct. Thus their cultural views may be seen as absolute. Church leaders can easily succumb to this narrow thinking.

Some Human Approaches for Dealing with Cultural Differences

- The dominant culture imposes it ways on the whole group.
- Allow a dual value system to exist.

- Synthesize a new value system from the values found in both cultures.

All of the above approaches are based on human thinking rather than biblical truth. No human culture or combination of world cultures will produce God's Kingdom culture.

God's Kingdom culture is a radical one that is totally unobtainable by any human effort. It can only be obtained by faith in Jesus Christ who comes to live in the believer in the person of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit within the believer gives the person a new system of values, a new purpose in life. The believer becomes a new person. He/she becomes a member of God's Kingdom and now lives according to this new Kingdom culture. The scripture indicates that the purpose of the Gospel is to transform the way people live by changing the way they think. This suggest that a new value system and methodology is to be developed within the Church. This would be true regardless of the culture the Gospel has contacted. Even those who grew up in a so-called Christian country cannot claim that their thinking and ways are the same as God's. Being a good American is not the same as being a good Christian.

The challenge for church leaders is to evolve the church's value system into the Kingdom's values. Yes, it is necessary for the church to apply biblical values into its life. Church leaders must be wary of thinking that their culture's view of what is good and evil, is the same as God's. God has said that His thoughts and His ways are different from those of all human thoughts. The church must not look to human cultures for the thoughts and ways of God

Here is another way for the OBCs to appreciate the ABCs. Those who are raised in a different culture are more adept at recognizing false values in the dominant culture, and vice versa. An ABC is more inclined to raise questions about whether OBC values are truly biblical values. This quality has produced quite a few heated discussions, often leading to accusations of the other's evil intent. Instead, individuals from either culture need to exercise a humility that will allow them to profit from sincere help offered by those of a different culture. Let us keep in mind that our goal is to be more like Christ rather than being more Chinese or more American.

Churches Must Provide Environments Conducive to Growth and Service

Teaching and training ought to be done in the context of one's own environment. Churches are already providing programs for the various age or social groups within their churches. Provisions are made for children's ministries, for youth or teen programs, for single careers, young family fellowships and for seniors. The reason is clear. Each age or social group faces different needs and challenges.

As each age group might need different forms of ministry, the same will hold true for those of different cultures within a church. Not the same approach will fit people of differing cultures. Forcing a Christian to learn or train in the context of an unfamiliar culture will often produce misunderstandings rather than clarity. What is valuable for one culture might appear irrelevant to those in another culture. Language, vocabulary and illustrations may be barriers to learning. The applications of biblical truths for the OBC culture will often be irrelevant to those from an ABC culture. Placing a person in the context of a strange culture will require an extraordinary effort for him to relate and participate. Using qualified ABCs to teach and counsel other ABCs will more likely produce growth. The student can more easily relate to the teacher. The behavior of the teacher will become an example to imitate. Thus it is necessary to provide an ABC environment with ABC leadership to maximize effectiveness in ABC ministries.

Need to Develop Parallel Ministries

Adding to this challenge is the need to enable those of a different and minority culture to have a sense of belonging, not just to each other, but to the whole church. One of the common observations of ABC young people is the feeling that "this is not my church." Although some attended regularly and served diligently, they still spoke of it as "the OBCs' church."

Somehow the ministry to the ABCs must become more than a niche in the church. It is not just a fellowship group. It may start off that way, because the numbers are usually small in the beginning and concentrated within a particular age group. The OBC leadership must understand this and encourage a planned process for evolving the ministry into a parallel arm of the church.

For a church to develop a parallel ministry, it must have equivalent leadership provided for each ministry. Each culture is provided with indigenous pastoral leaders and lay leaders. Both OBC and ABC leaders must seek to maintain harmony through the practice of servant leadership which is the attitude of helping the other leaders to succeed. Both ABC and OBC leaders must develop a team concept by sharing church events in which the leadership can be rotated.

A word of caution is needed. In all situations avoid the practice of comparing and competing. Such a practice nurtures the sense that one or the other culture is where the church should be. There is no culture on earth which can compete against the Kingdom culture to which the church aspires. The good which God's truth reveals is what the church is seeking. We must keep II Cor. 10:12 in mind; "We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who commend themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another, and compare themselves with one another, they do not show good sense." [NRSV]

The thinking of the leadership from each culture must be equally valued and sought. Although the church begins with one culture that has the greater role and importance, the aim should be to nurture a sense of belonging in the leadership from each culture. Each culture needs to have equal hearing; their voices being equally respected by the leadership in the church. On the other hand, their voices are to be equally challenged from scripture. It is vital that the church structure enables those from each culture to feel that they fully belong to the church.

Leaders in each culture should have the freedom to do what they need to do, limited by scripture rather than by culture. Since not everything good and required for the OBCs will be the same for the ABCs, nor will every privilege needed or wanted by the ABCs be wanted by the OBCs, then for both groups to be equal is not the same as being identical. Equality refers to equal opportunity to meet their needs and fulfill their aims.

The power of authority is to be shared in the same manner. There needs to be a sense of accountability between the cultures. However, the OBCs must be accountable to the ABCs in the same manner that the ABCs are expected to be accountable to the OBCs. This will be truly holding

equal power. It is best to limit this accountability to areas in which both cultures can agree as biblical.

Need to Recognize Existence of a Christian Culture

In Acts 15 we see how the church at Antioch had to deal with the pressure of a dominant culture within the church trying to become the controlling culture of the church. The church at Antioch was told to adopt Jewish customs and traditions in order to be good Christians.

vs. 5, "But some of the sect of the Pharisees who had believed stood up, saying, 'It is necessary to circumcise them and to direct them to observe the Law of Moses.'"

vs. 6, "The apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter."

However, the conclusion reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem was that the Jewish culture was not to define the Gentile church - that the Jewish culture can survive apart from the Christian Church.

vs. 19, "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, 20, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. 21, For Moses from ancient generations has in every city those who preach him, since he is read in the synagogues every Sabbath."

Is there any culture that should represent the Christians? From Jesus Christ a Kingdom culture was to evolve. The revelation of Jesus Christ was to transform His followers from living according to their old culture. It is of great significance that the Jewish culture, which had its origin from the oracles of the true and living God, was still disqualified in the Christian Church. Surely those cultures whose origins are from superstitious darkness or great philosophers will not be qualified. If the Jewish culture was not to be the controlling culture in the Church, then no other culture in the world deserves to be. The Chinese culture as good as it is must not become the controlling culture of the church. It is important not to confuse the word, "Chinese" in the name of a church as indicating its controlling culture. Let the Chinese churches be taught and led by their

leadership to form their customs and traditions from a careful study of God's Word.

Need for Healthy Suspicion towards the Correctness of One's Own Culture

As disciples of Christ, there must be a healthy suspicion towards the correctness of ones own culture. It is easy to use the standards of our own culture to judge others, rather than using the Bible's standards. In our study of the church at Antioch (Acts 15) we saw how the church had to struggle with a problem involving traditional values. What guidelines did the apostles use to resolve that conflict?

vs. 28, "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: 29, that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell. "

The apostles concluded that the Jewish culture, that is, its customs and tradition, would not be the culture of the Church of Christ. No human culture should become the culture of Christ's church. The people from any culture touched by the Gospel should be evolving toward the Kingdom culture, not another human culture, not even when the Law from Moses formed that culture.

We cannot avoid the fact that we are products of our own culture. But we have to be careful not to presume that the thoughts and ways of our culture are the same as God's thoughts and ways? In Isaiah 55:8-9 we are told they are not the same. In fact the difference is as far as heaven is from earth. Our goal is to renew our minds with God's Word and so transform the way we live from the ways of those in our culture. This must be a fundamental direction for church leaders. We must not adopt the values of Americans nor are we to cling to the thoughts and ways of the Chinese. We must be suspicious of any goodness that our culture seems to have, ready to give it up for a biblical insight. We must regularly ask ourselves, "Is it my culture's view, or does the Bible mandate it?" There is so much in our upbringing and in our family pressures that make this exercise difficult to do. Sometimes it is almost impossible for a person to recognize one's cultural blind spots. A good and caring leader must have a readiness to abandon his cultural views so that he can see the Bible's view.

Otherwise he will not be able to escape his own limitations. The OBC church leader needs to look within and examine himself to differentiate what is cultural and what is biblical. Sometimes the problem is not in lacking a solution but in the willingness to change and adapt to the needs in our churches.

Accept Members of Church Regardless of Their Cultural Background

Remember that both OBC and ABC believers are members of the same family of God. We are one family, and both groups are our brothers and sisters. We have the same Holy Spirit living within us. We have the same desire to live holy lives. We have the same quest to be like Jesus and to please him in all that we do. We are determined to not let anything come between us. We will weep together, rejoice together, and serve together.

Establish Complete Ministry for Each Culture

Will there be adequate focus to develop a church life that enables those from each culture to sense that they FULLY BELONG to the church and that their needs are being addressed?

Essential Qualities for Leaders of Bi-Cultural Church (by Sam Ling).

Leader Must Be Aware of Traps from One's Own Culture

- There is a natural resistant, due to my culture, to the values and ways of a different culture. This is coupled with the assumption that my culture is better, more in harmony with God than the other "inferior" culture.

- There is a natural fear that negative influences from strong leaders of the other culture may affect my family or church. They may influence my children by hindering them from producing the good qualities I want to see in them.

- A leader might avoid trying to minister to people from the other culture because of a lack of experience in dealings with their kinds of problem.

- There is a lack of understanding of the other group that produces less patience.

- There is a tendency to use guides and controls for ministry based on one's own culture.

- The practical question for the OBC is "how am I to raise my children in this American society?" Their desire is to seek what is best for their children. The adult OBC see the bad characteristics in the American culture that need to be replaced by the good values in the Chinese culture. However, his children have a hard time accepting the values in the Chinese culture as good.

- Use of a biblical mandate that has been interpreted and applied through the grid of one's personal culture.

- Escape from the bondage of one's culture requires the renewing of one's mind.

- One needs to begin to re-think what is the biblical value system and methodology.

- One needs to risk abandoning Chinese cultural values and ways, not just the ones that are viewed as wrong and evil, but those which are held to be good but are not the same as the Bible's.

- One needs to adopt a process of sanctification based upon biblical truths.

Leader Must Accept the Need to Understand Differences between Cultures

- A leader must be able to identify and learn the primary characteristics of the OBC and of the ABC.

- A leader must understand why he might be offensive or unacceptable to those from the other culture.

- A leader must determine whether his offensives are based on true biblical teaching, or because they violate a cultural practice or teaching. He needs to find the biblical response to such offenses. The response should not divide, but promote peace.

- A leader must learn his strengths and weaknesses, especially blind spots, from the biblical perspective.

- A leader must understand the degree of importance of a particular matter to a person of the other culture. This is called the impact factor.

- When it comes to the Chinese churches in America, a significant issue is the reality that the churches are made up of Chinese from two significantly different cultures, Asian and Western. The leader must give up any attempts to suppress or silence such discussions.

- A leader must beware of the trap of comparing commitment and style between the cultures.

- A leader must understand that having diversity does not require division.

- A leader must adopt a higher view of unity than what is found in a physical or intellectual unity

- Leaders must recognize the evolving status of the immigrant church.

The characteristics and mission of the church will evolve along with the changing of the membership. An all-immigrant church will soon have ABC children that will become teenagers, young adults, and families. The immigrant leadership must adapt its position and influence to the church's changing profile. Wise leadership does not simply respond to needs that are pressing but will plan and be ready for the coming needs.

- Recognizing the need for parallel ministry

- Be aware of a whole-people ministry, not just a side ministry to youth. Embrace the need to evangelize adult ABCs and their families.

- Christianizing comes out from a Western cultural orientation but not TO an Asian cultural orientation. Accept the responsibility which the Chinese church has for ABCs.

Provide Leadership in Establishing a Capable ABC Ministry Team

- Secure trained and mature pastoral leadership.
- Mentor and train ABCs to be effective in a Chinese church (culturally sensitive).
- Provide guidance from an OBC perspective while emphasizing biblical qualities.
- Earmark financial and material resources.
- Challenge the church lay people to take up the ministry.
- OBCs can serve; some may do it temporarily (set time period).

Danger of Bondage from One's Own Culture

- A biblical mandate that has been interpreted and applied through the grid of one's personal culture.
- Renewing of our minds requires biblical truths objectively defined and understood.
- Other cultures can be a safeguard against my own cultural bias.
- Cultural blind spots are easily recognized by those from other cultures.

In this chapter we have identified what we believe to be the most important requirement for a Chinese church to have an effective ABC ministry, that it must have OBC leadership that is culturally sensitive to the ABCs. The OBC leadership needs to recognize that ABCs have a different cultural perspective from OBCs. Therefore, forms of ministry that have worked for OBCs may not necessarily work for ABCs, and most likely, different forms of ministry are required for ABC work. For the OBC

leadership to recognize this cultural difference is fundamental to a Chinese church having an effective ministry to ABCs. This recognition becomes the foundation on which ABC ministry is built. Lacking this, any attempts at ABC ministries will fail.

"Who Takes the Lead?" *by Peter Yuen*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 20, No. 2, May 1998)*

A Chinese church, established by and for Chinese who are born and raised overseas, eventually raises up American-born Chinese children and families here in America. As these children grow, how will they come to know, love, and serve the Lord? The church will find it necessary to change in its life and ministry to meet the needs of its families so that the members can be nurtured in the faith from childhood to mature adulthood. Who spearheads this change? The growing children? The pastor? Or the parents of the children?

The Children

While the children are the ones who feel the boredom, discomfort, and stress when a church does not have programs to suit them, seldom is it they who take the lead in gearing ministry to ABCs. Where such initiative has taken place it is done by ABCs who have made a life commitment to Jesus Christ, who have had a good Christian discipleship experience, and who have seen fit not to drop out of the church. They, realizing how difficult it was growing up in a Chinese church, hold a burden in their hearts for the younger children in the church. They then decide to do all they can to make the Christian experience more relevant and palatable for those who follow them.

Establishing an ABC ministry in a Chinese church often meets with much resistance from overseas-born Chinese leaders who are insecure about starting a ministry in a language and culture unlike theirs. Change is not welcome. It could be seen as disturbing, uncomfortable, disruptive, counterproductive, and even threatening. So it is not easy

initiating such a new work. Against such odds, still, some who have a deep and mature faith have launched ABC work in Chinese churches. Some have even planted churches targeting ABCs, with or without the support and encouragement of OBC leaders in their original home church. It takes much patience, dogged perseverance, and clarity of vision to transcend the hurdles that are naturally, inadvertently, or intentionally placed along the path.

In general, ABCs do not have the power or authority to initiate an ABC ministry. After all, they are the children; they are expected to comply with the guidance of their elders who are usually OBCs. Because their plight is not understood by OBCs, they are sometimes mistakenly regarded as complainers, rebels and troublemakers.

"Good" ABCs are those who do not express objection to the boredom of worship services in a language they don't understand and illustrations that are irrelevant to their daily lives; they don't complain about the tedium of hearing translated services. However, as soon as these "good" ABCs see a possibility of absenting themselves from these OBC worship services, whether it is to go away to college or find a Sunday job or some other acceptable excuse, they slip away not only from the Chinese church, but many stop going to church completely.

Rare is an ABC who is able to influence the OBC leadership to allow and encourage the launching of ABC ministry in its midst.

The Pastor

It is unusual to find an OBC pastor who takes the initiative to launch a work for ABCs in a church. In most cases he is fully occupied in ongoing responsibilities shepherding the OBC adults, which appears to be the highest priority in his pastoral duties. They are the ones he can best and most helpfully serve; their language and cultural background are similar. They usually make up the bulk of the church, and they are the ones who are responsive to the pastor's preaching and who appreciate his pastoral care and support the ministry of the church. It is when these OBC

adults begin to feel the static from their ABC children about their unhappiness with their church involvement that the pastor senses the pressure to give attention to the needs of the ABCs.

Many OBC pastors find the world of ABCs so very difficult to understand, and the bridge to it, nearly impossible to cross. Their lifestyle may even be objectionable from an OBC's viewpoint. Some pastors are afraid or at least reluctant to deal with ABCs because of the vast language and cultural gap. Such being the case, how can the church meet the needs of the ABCs? Should the pastor invite ABC help? The risk in bringing in ABC staff members looms large to some OBC pastors who find it difficult enough to handle the ABC children in the church; how much more hard-pressed they would be to have to supervise an ABC leader among them. What some pastors would like is a compliant OBC lay leader who is capable of being a volunteer counselor or advisor for the ABCs. This setup would be easier to control and much easier on the church budget.

In many churches the OBC pastor has been in America for a shorter duration than have some of the OBC lay leaders. The latter may have raised ABC children, some of whom have dropped out or are threatening to. But the pastor, having not yet raised ABCs to adulthood in his family, does not fathom the urgency of the need for giving high priority to establishing an ABC ministry. He thinks he can train his own young children to love the Lord and serve in his church. Not realizing the enormity of the task of raising children through to adulthood in America and keeping them appreciating and perpetuating OBC mores in the church, these pastors minimize the problem of addressing ABC needs, as urgent as they are.

The Parents

Meanwhile, the parents, who are mainly OBCs, want to take action to provide the kind of church life suitable for ABCs. They sense a multifaceted motivation. As their ABC children grow up they begin to express their misgivings and objections to continuing to participate in a Chinese church that is irrelevant to them. Some of them have been lost to

the world because their anguish while they were in the church was ignored. Therefore, these parents are most likely to develop a vision and spearhead a movement to reorient its ministry toward meeting the needs of ABCs.

In addition, these parents have much at stake in seeing to the establishment of a ministry that is right for ABCs. They are the ones who can look to the future and see their own children along with all the next generations take up leadership roles in the church. Why should it be that a church should go through scores of years and not have some of their children develop into the decision-making leaders?

Yes, parents and other lay leaders are the ones who have a long-term stake in the local church. Pastors tend to come, serve, and move on. Seldom is an OBC pastor found to remain as the beloved leader and shepherd of a congregation for decades. As pastors leave churches, it is on the shoulders of lay leaders to provide the continuity for the church family year after year, pastor after pastor. And the calling of a pastor who holds as high priority the ministry to the children and young people is crucial to the future of the church.

Parents have the voice and the financial resources to support an ABC-oriented work. With a God-given burden and vision, and with the spiritual welfare of their children at stake, they must be the prime movers to steer the church in the right direction for future growth.

- Lay leaders, will your children be taking up leadership roles in your church in the future? Or will they join the vast majority of ABCs who grow up, drop out, and lose their way? It is crucial to work now for the future of your church and of your children.

- Would that pastors who are parents catch the same vision and the fire in their hearts to lead the Chinese church in America where it ought to go.

- And how great is would be for ABCs to stay on steadfastly in the church and give their lives to the work of building a strong ministry for all who come after them, generation after generation.

"A Letter to Leaders" *by Anonymous*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 18, No. 1, February 1996)*

Editor's note: We were sent a copy of a letter that a member of a Chinese church somewhere in America wrote to the leaders of his church regarding the calling of a new pastor. The writer is an OBC Christian family man who has faithfully served his church. Out of his concern for others around the country who are facing the same situation, he gave us permission to share this letter anonymously with the Chinese churches. We decided to print it unedited, just as he wrote it, to let the readers sense the nature and depth of the writer and his concern.

Letter to the Leaders

(date)
To: Pastor A, Pastor B
The Deacons (names)
The Pastoral Search Committee (names)

From: (name of writer)

Ref: New Pastor for (name of church)

Dear Respected Leaders of the Church,

I have thought of writing this a long time ago, but procrastination and the thought that this may not be the right thing to do have prevented me from doing it. But it is becoming more clear that I am not the only person who wants to pass the following thoughts to you. I am discovering that parents after parents share the same feeling and that

someone, if not everyone, should do his/her/their duty and communicate their feelings and thoughts to the leaders. Time seems to be running out and I must bear this blunder of speaking out.

It seems that the leaders' plan to hire new pastors for (name of church) is to hire a Chinese congregation pastor first, and then let the "main" pastor find a pastor for the English congregation. On the surface, this seems to be the right and logical thing to do: the Chinese congregation is larger and therefore more considerations should be given to them, plus: Most of the adults are Chinese speaking and form the core of the church. It therefore seems that the English congregation should sacrifice a little. All this is fine. Even fair. Even if it is not fair, that is still Ok – nonetheless, we are in a family.

But if we examine it in more detail, it may seem that we should do it the other way. That is, hire an English "main" pastor for the English congregation first, then the pastor for the Chinese congregation. Please consider:

1. There is much more need for a leader who can take care of the English congregation. There are the youth. They need nurturing. If they do not have a good foundation while they are in junior high and high school, then they may easily get lost when they go to college.

2. Which group needs more attention? If we were in politics, then the answer is obviously the larger group. But we are not in politics. We are in a church and in a family. The group with the most "need" should be attended to first. Not the group with the most "want." The English congregation comprises mostly of young Christians, and a lot of us think there lies the most need.

3. The size of the younger generation is growing. Many of us saw them bringing friends from school. Many of these friends are not believers yet. If we do want to bring more people to Christ, we should do our best to help the youth. But the fact is, we have seen, yes, we have seen it happen time

after time: new young people came, got bored. Got little. Never came back. They liked the youth groups, such as (name of group). But should we let them stop there? If they do not get to like Sunday worship, it will be very hard for them to "come to church." We must have a pastor that is catered for the younger generation, which is tied very much to the English congregation.

4. Most of the Chinese congregation and almost most of the adults, like me and many parents I talked to, are either matured Christians, mediocre Christians, or die-hard Christians. There is not much you can do about them or for them. If there is not a good pastor, they'll still stay around. If there is a wonderful pastor, perhaps their size will grow a little bit. But what if we have a wonderful English pastor that can minister to the youth? The younger generation will grow by leaps and bounds. They will go away and be strong Christians in colleges. They will help the local churches and bear more fruit.

5. Over the past many years, many of my Sunday School students have graduated from grade 6 and into junior high. Junior high is exciting. But joining the adults in Sunday worship? "Boring." (I do not like that word at all. I teach my kids and kids in Sunday School that it is not a good word to use. But I must do my duty and report it to you.) They do not, most of the time, relate much to the sermon. We should be glad that they do value the worship time and think that they should go, at least for the worship. That is for kids with parents who are regular church members. But look at the other kids: those who liked to come to Sunday School at the beginning (kids who were ministered to by other kids, kids who started because of VBS, and kids who were sent by non-Christian parents, etc.) and thus brought their parents with them. These kids, after they graduated from 6th grade, joined the English service, got bored, and did not come back. Of course their parents did not come back either.

6. If we look around many of the Chinese churches in America, we can see that the most successful churches (by successful I mean the ones with a lot of young people, a lot of new Christians) are the ones which do give

emphasis to the local born English speaking generation. They invest in the youth and entrust to the youth. Those that do not will stay mostly with immigration Christians.

7. Time has run out for some of us. According to the church's original plan, it will take a year or two to find a main Chinese pastor, then it will take another year or two to find the English pastor. By that time, some of our kids will be in college, including two of my own. Time will be running out for others. We must act soon. There is only a short time frame within which we must serve our youths.

8. We have missed two great opportunities: people like (name of ABC Christian worker #1) and (name of ABC Christian worker #2) would have been great. But we lost them, because of our wrong idea of must having a Chinese pastor first. We never gave them due consideration. (When we plan to hire an English pastor, let us hire someone who is more or less born here, not someone from a different background.)

9. I trust that all reasons as given above should be easily understood and taken because most of us, if not all, are Chinese parents. Our traditions and our values tell us to invest in our children and in the future. We move to the better school districts. We want them to go to college instead of going to work right after school. Let us do the same thing in the church. Invest our best in our youths. Give to them more than to ourselves.

Doing this in the Service of Our Lord, Your Servant,
(name of writer)

Chapter 5

Having an Effective Model for ABC Ministry within the Chinese Church
By William Eng

- Church Growth Assumptions
- Program Models
- Staffing Models
- Leadership Styles
- Team Philosophy
- Mentoring.

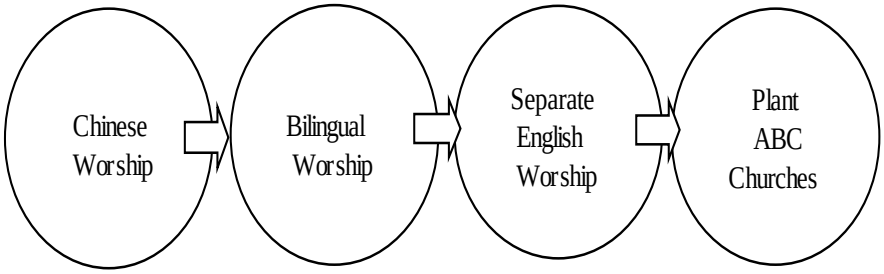
The first requirement for a Chinese church to have an effective ministry to ABCs is for its leaders to be culturally sensitive to ABCs. This is the foundation upon which any ministry to ABCs is built. Without this foundation, a church's ABC program will not succeed. Assuming that the leaders of the church are culturally sensitive to ABCs, what would be the next step they must take? Next, a church needs to have an effective model by which it structures its ABC ministry within the church. In this chapter we will look at some of these models. These models are built around seven basic assumptions about church growth. Let us take a quick glance at these assumptions.

Seven Basic Assumptions about Church Growth.

To address the factors that contribute to effective ministries with ABCs, some basic assumptions must be made.

1. Church growth is the will of God.
2. Church growth principles apply in all places, at all times, and to all churches.
3. Growth is the sign of a healthy church where growth is possible.
4. Hindrances to church growth can be identified, isolated, and overcome.
5. Planning is essential to church growth.
6. Leadership is the key to church growth.
7. The Holy Spirit is the dynamic of church growth.

These assumptions can then lay the groundwork for describing an effective model for ABC ministry within the Chinese church. The following suggestions for ABC ministries should be taken with the following understanding. No one model is possible for the diversity of settings from which many Chinese churches have originated. Total Chinese language immersion worship service was the only way that some ABC children could experience church. Some had a brief summary of the sermon in English. But all these are limited and do not do justice to ABCs who need to hear God's Word in the heart language they can understand. There are more advanced models as suggested by the following diagram:



Chinese churches have attempted to minister more effectively to their ABCs by creating new models to meet their needs.

Program Models

Model #1, Bilingual Worship Service

This model involves having the worship singing in Chinese and English and having the prayers and sermon translated from one language into the other. Such bilingual translated worship service can partially accommodate both the needs of the OBCs and the ABCs, especially if the church itself is small and ministering to a smaller Chinese population. The

need for an adequate translator is evident. In most areas the OBCs who are bilingual will facilitate and assist the pastor to provide not only translation but also leadership. This model would allow ABCs to not just be worshippers but also to participate in leading in worship, reading Scripture, giving testimony, singing spiritual songs, and praying in the service. This model recognizes the reality of a church's limited resources and as soon as possible should move toward the next model.

Model #2, Separate Worship Services, One in English and the Other in Chinese

This model involves more than just a weekday fellowship meeting for young people. It anticipates the need for a separate worship service to reach ABCs of various ages. More than fifty percent of ABCs are singles, not just young adults but those in their forties and above. More than sixty percent of ABCs are born after World War II (ages forties to sixties). Next, there are the younger senior ABC adults, a significant growing number who are part of the post World War II generation.

To develop this model of parallel Chinese and English worship services, there must be provisions for adequate space, funding, and leadership. The way the English service is conducted should not merely be the English version of the Chinese service. It is to be designed so that worshippers can worship the Lord in the heart language of the congregation and in the context of the life and generation of its constituents. The music may be traditional, contemporary, or a blend of the two, but the goal is for ABCs not to become worshippers but to worship the Lord. The preaching of the Word is not just to be in English but to direct the Lord's teaching to the needs of the worshippers.

What Does an ABC Congregation Need?

1. Spiritual development

2. To reach unreached English-speaking Chinese Americans, Asian Americans, etc.

3. Freedom to maximize the ministry's effectiveness.

4. Contextualization of the ministry.

5. Contemporary styles of ministry.

6. Self-determination.

7. Some fellowship with the first generation.

8. Ethnic fellowship with other Asian and non-Chinese believers.

9. Consistent leadership.

10. Development of lay leadership in ministry and decision-making.

11. Fellowship with mainstream Christianity, e.g.. Promise Keepers, etc.

"Why Stay in the Chinese Church?" *by Willard Ping*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 7, No. 1, February 1985)*

I am an ABC from St. Louis. My mother was born in Hannibal, Missouri. Spiritually, I was born again and discipled in a Caucasian church. I participated in Pioneer Boys, then in Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship while attending university in St. Louis.

As I journeyed from St. Louis to San Francisco and have experienced several Chinese churches along the way, I have noted the diversities between the American and Chinese cultures. The many differences that exist between ABC and OBC styles, priorities, and mindset raise the banner question, WHY? Why stay in the Chinese church? Having always the available option of breaking off, should and can the ABC survive within the Chinese church today?

SURVEY

Before we decide this, we should survey the situation. What factors continue to draw ABCs to the Chinese church?

<u>Family ties</u>. We Chinese are a family-oriented bunch. It is tough severing family ties and relationships. In many of our Chinese churches, we commonly note a large clan or several large families dominant in a particular congregation. Chinese families choose to attend church together.

<u>Identity</u>. ABCs still have some affinity and identity to things Chinese. Drs. Ralph Winter, C. Peter Wagner, and Donald McGavran, noted authorities in the areas of missions and/or church growth, see the church as a mosaic. They contend that faith, evangelism, and fellowship flow freely within but one piece of the mosaic but resist transcending racial, linguistic, and cultural boundaries. They describe windows or bridges whereby like kinds of people best minister, fellowship, or evangelize. The Chinese can best reach the Chinese, the ABC can best minister to the ABC, and the OBC can best disciple the OBC.

<u>Our children.</u> There is a continual desire among Chinese parents that their children associate and fellowship with, date, and marry Chinese. Among Chinese Christian parents, this wish can best be fulfilled within the Chinese churches.

<u>Fellowship.</u> Many ABCs remain in the Chinese church and they will continue to draw other ABCs into their congregations. A natural bridge or network exists between ABCs which enhances fellowship and closeness. The Chinese church still offers that ground for good Christian fellowship for ABCs.

<u>Ministry.</u> Many ABCs stay in the Chinese church for the sake of the ministry available to preach and teach the gospel. In evangelizing and discipling, we will quickly realize that the community we are reaching is a mixture of ABCs and OBCs. Often families are of OBC parents and ABC youth. So if the priority of the church is to effectively reach the Chinese community, to reach the family unit as a whole, the Chinese church is seemingly the best suited for the task.

STAY

The Chinese church will be here for some time to come. It will continue ministering to the many immigrants from Asia. As long as ABCs feel a strong kinship to these churches or are born into them we should consider working within these environs. For ourselves, for our families, for our children, for our fellowship, and for our ministry, we as ABCs should remain in the Chinese church. All of us as Christian ABCs should work towards church growth through evangelism and discipleship. As our numbers and ministries grow, church leadership will acknowledge the valid needs of ABCs.

SURVIVE

I like the term used by Peter Yuen in the February 1984 issue of ABOUT FACE: We are "survivor ABCs." As laity we see the needs, we feel the hurts, we experience the frustrations, and we must be the ones to survive as we determine to stay. We must feather a nest for our spiritual well-being and for our children. Running from a problem does not solve it. Only by staying and surviving do we have an opportunity to amplify, clarify, pray for, and work to meet the needs of ABCs.

How do we survive? By establishing programs and ministries suitable for ABCs. There can be Bible studies, fellowship groups, Sunday school, etc. Above all else, seek to begin an effort to evangelize and disciple. No matter how adverse the situation, seek to serve and minister within the church.

Surviving is also a matter of attitude and trust in God to deliver. We should survive in <u>patience</u>, rejoicing in hope and being patient in tribulation (Rom. 12:12). We should survive in <u>love</u>, facing problems in purity and genuine love (2 Cor. 6:6), honoring all men and loving the brotherhood (1 Pet. 2:17). We are to <u>study the Word</u>, drawing from it

encouragement and guidance. We are to <u>pray</u>, offering up our petitions to

Him Who hears and will respond in His sovereignty and time (Mark 11:24). We are to encourage, seeking to bear up one another. Finally, we survive to serve.

SERVE

A primary means of making an impact is by seeking to supplement your pastoral staff and leadership in service. Remind one another of 1 Corinthians Chapter 12 as we each have gifts, talents, and contributions to offer for the wholeness of the church. There are few superstar pastors who can preach eloquently, witness flawlessly, counsel lovingly, administrate orderly, and integrate ABC/OBC diversity sensitively. The pastor, too, is but a part of the whole. Let us take our place and give our service to the Lord and His church. The laity is the answer to the ABC/OBC diversity. The laity is the answer to the lack of ministry to ABCs.

SUCCEED

Finally, we need to succeed! Too many ABCs have left the church, and too many are threatening to eventually do so…unless we provide convincing reasons and answers to stay. Many have decided to stay for valid reasons, and yet they continue to long for ministries specifically geared for them, to meet they needs.

The concept of parallel ministries has been presented in various issues of ABOUT FACE. In this, ABC and OBC ministries function side by side. Neither side is expected to become like the other in practice and form. Each may have its own leadership and pastorate; each may have its own goals and programs. They may share a common building, a common budget, and a common constitution. More importantly, they may share a common ministry evangelizing and discipling, a common love, and a common respect because of a common Lord.

The church I attend has parallel programs. And it is working.

The English and Chinese congregations are each growing at its own rate. Needs are being met, whole families are being brought into the fold with facilities and ministries for all…whatever the age, in English or Chinese, whether culturally Chinese or American. Certainly there are flaws; wherever there are two groups sharing anything there is friction. But these things can be worked out. Our church has seen that the benefits of parallel ministries far outweigh the problems. As long as we keep sight of the Lord as Head of the church, His Word as rules of order, His love as exemplary of the love we have for one another, and His commission to evangelize and disciple as our mandate, He will reward.

Model #3, Two Separate Churches

As the English members of the church increase, the facilities may not be adequate for two congregations. There may be the opportunity for the church to plant a new mission church. This new work could be a new English-speaking service in a new location or a new Chinese-speaking service. Or if space is available and there are sufficient personnel, two parallel services could be provided.

True Light Presbyterian Church, Los Angeles, was involved in planting four ABC churches in the outlying suburbs using its members as the core families for the new churches. Several of its ABC families living in the San Fernando Valley were involved in the planting of the Chinese Alliance Church. Some years later, about ten ABC families living in Orange County became the core families for planting the Chinese Presbyterian Church, Orange County. In 1988, with the core families coming primarily from True Light, the South Bay Presbyterian Church was planted. Then in 1992, about one hundred ABC members were sent from True Light to merge with a declining Anglo church which subsequently was renamed the San Gabriel Presbyterian Church.

The Chinese church needs people who can look beyond the ABCs' outer appearance to discern their ultimate potential for becoming disciple makers and co-laborers in ministry. Spiritually dead ABCs cannot respond to Christ except as the Holy Spirit through the church's witness draws them. When Christians bear witness to them, then they can repent and put their faith in Christ's sacrifice and receive eternal life. The church must be

that disciple-maker who can help ABCs to become spiritual children of the Heavenly Father and also help these ABCs to grow and become spiritual disciples. As they mature, if the church does well, they will learn to disciple others in the same growth process. As the church is faithful, it will go full circle with these ABCs becoming co-laborers with the OBCs in the ministry of the church. The church will see them continuing to reach the lost and making disciples of all the nations.

Those ABCs who become born-again Christians need to see their connection to the larger Christian community that is in the local church. This is essential if the church is to grow. They must not be kept out, chased out, pushed out, or left out from the Chinese church if the church would be whole. There must be unity through the diversity of ABC believers being enfolded into the larger Chinese church. These potential workers and leaders of the church must be given the truth fleshed out by the local body of believers. But if the identity of most ABCs is to be complete, it would have to be found in the context of the Chinese church. It would be seen in the genuine spiritual modeling of Chinese living under the authority of Christ.

Staffing Models

Model #1, Volunteers

The simplest way for a Chinese church to start its ministry to ABCs is to utilize volunteers. The church may be small with limited resources and so cannot afford calling and paying for additional staff. So volunteers must be found. These could include those from within the church. There may be a young adult who has experienced spiritual growth. Like Timothy whose reputation was recognized by the brethren in Lystra and Debra, there might be a Timothy in the church whom God has assigned to help in ministering to the English-speaking second generation. Their language skill and upbringing would be similar to those that need ministering. And if volunteers cannot be found from within the church, then search for workers by enlisting from the local Bible college or seminary. These students have become interns in the church. Some can just come to teach for a few hours and do a youth or college ministry. Others may be able to preach if an English worship is possible. If the church can fund their transportation expenses, this would be appreciated. Some need financial support for living expense, and the church may be able to afford this rather than the funding needed for full-time staff. As the Lord directs, some

interns may eventually experience the call to serve full-time in that same church's ministry to ABCs when the church may experience a need for additional staff.

Model #2, Full-Time Staff

This involves the church committed to the calling of a full-time ABC worker. That person may be first a youth worker, or an associate pastor, or senior pastor. The sequence is not as important as the church's vision for ministering to its ABCs. If the goal were limited to ministering to its own young people, then a youth worker would be a natural decision. But that may limit the church from moving on to starting a separate worship service in English unless that youth worker can progress and become the preacher minister for that worship service. Some churches have enough ABCs to even warrant having both an English pastor and a youth worker. Multiple ABC staff requires an understanding of team ministry. No one model fits every church's community demographics. (See the FCBC – LA example in chapter 3)

Some Chinese churches, especially the larger ones in an area where there is a large Chinese population, have developed to the point that the vision of the church allows for a senior pastor who is an ABC. For instance, in 2005 at least a dozen ABCs were serving as senior pastors. Sometimes the leadership of the church has become the kind that allows for a team ministry structure. Sometimes the senior pastor becomes the team leader who allows each language congregation the freedom and flexibility to develop its own language ministry under its own pastor. (Note Boston's Chinese Evangelical Church)

"ABC Senior Pastors in Chinese Churches" *by Peter Yuen*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 20, No. 4, November 1998)*

This year marks the 20th year of FACE's ministry. In the beginning, a few of us middle-aged ABC pastors tallied some of our failures and successes in ministry and extended ourselves by exporting to other Chinese churches what had been found effective in the enhancement of ABC work in Chinese churches throughout this land. We incorporated as a non-profit organization in the State of California in November 1978,

and we published our first issue of About FACE in April 1979. We have been participating in holding conferences, seminars and consultations to

help churches in their outreach to ABCs. Over the years we have made some profitable observations.

The changing scene

On the one hand, things never seem to change. Immigrants continue to come to America, and there remains a need to minister to them in Chinese, the language of their hearts, and in a cultural style suitable to their minds. So we keep on searching for immigrant pastors who can serve the people in Cantonese, Mandarin, or Taiwanese. As their children grow up in America, it is necessary for the leadership to catch up to the cultural and language requirements of these children lest they lose them to the secular and evil influences prevalent in America.

On the other hand, significant changes have taken place in the churches and leaders over these twenty years. Most have become well aware of the necessity to orient their ministry to ABCs if there is to be any success in building Christian families in the church.

Two decades ago many Chinese leaders felt that any effort to begin an ABC ministry in a Chinese church was divisive. They thought that it was imperative that their children learn the Chinese language and culture and so comply with the mores of the Chinese church. These leaders have now raised their own families and have come to realize the urgency to tailor the ministry to serve the people rather than to change the people to fit the mold of the Chinese church.

ABC Senior Pastors

Twenty years ago Chinese leaders saw no way in which ABCs who did not know Chinese could possibly be effective serving in a Chinese church. But today there is more demand for ABC workers than there is supply. OBC leaders are realizing that they must concentrate their outreach to whole families as more and more ABCs grow up in and take

leadership in their churches. During the past twenty years there have been an increasing number of large Chinese churches that have called ABCs to serve as heads of staff or senior pastors. Excluding newly started ABC churches, I can count eight significantly large churches in major metropolises in America that have called ABCs as their senior pastors. These were originally OBC churches, and they have taken major steps of faith going into the 21st Century. Such churches have decided to orient their main thrust on their families, being unwilling that any should stray from their flock due to language and cultural limitations.

Such a step is not be taken lightly by Chinese church leaders. As the children grow up in a healthy Christian church environment, some become lay leaders. Soon the language of the board meetings shifts from Chinese to English. Adding staff means adding only those who can communicate adequately in English whether they speak Chinese or not. With an ABC as head of staff, it is likely that an assistant or associate pastor is brought in to promote the Chinese-speaking ministry.

There is a growing trend. As we move into the next decade and into the next century there will be increasing numbers of churches that find it necessary to provide effective ministry to whole families, parents and children alike. To maintain an exclusively Chinese-speaking leadership down through the years is to lose the children along the way. While many unfortunately have actually done this, no Christian leader intends for such a future in their church. And the best way to keep the church family intact is to raise up the children in the Lord and launch their growth in the Christian faith so that they can stand strong in the world and not drop out.

How is it that ABCs emerge into positions of pastoral leadership in Chinese churches? To begin with, they are spiritual people who know in practical terms what it means to take up the cross and follow the Lord. Often such humble servants begin as youth workers. They serve the church wholeheartedly, always endeavoring to be sensitive to the needs of the people and the wishes of the church leadership. They demonstrate to OBC lay leaders and pastors that they are readily adaptable and can get

along with virtually everyone. They understand the limits of seminary education in an American context and are creative and open about adjusting what they have studied to fit the culture and language of the church. They take up every challenge responsibly. Such versatile ABC workers develop a reputation of being able to fit into any church situation. From such a position they could well be called to lead a church that is ready for an ABC senior pastor.

Some ABC workers have stayed in the same church and have demonstrated their faithfulness to the Lord and to the work. And having shown their willingness to adjust to a variety of church situations, they are promoted to senior pastor. This happens when over the years the culture of the church changes and becomes increasingly accommodating to the culture of this land. As the families continue in their progress in their life in America, church leaders alter their requirements in selecting a pastor. ABC workers who rightly earn a good reputation among the people in humble service do not strive to exert pressure for change, but they serve the church as it changes. And in due course such faithful workers are rewarded as the Lord opens the way to greater roles of service.

OBC Associates

As we can observe in the Chinese Christian community, there will be increasing numbers of OBCs newly trained in the seminaries in Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, and China, who will be immigrating to America, desirous and ready for service. There are also several Chinese seminaries now in America that are training OBC workers. It will be important for some of these workers to learn how to serve the Lord in Chinese churches that are primarily English speaking and perhaps under an ABC senior pastor. Such situations already exist in some of the large and significant churches in America. The role of such Chinese-trained workers may be to minister to immigrants. They will shepherd the flock of new or older immigrants who do not wish to learn or worship in an English context. And as long as immigration continues, there will be need for OBC workers.

Into the new century we will continue to find new immigrants populating the Chinese churches and new churches planted to minister to them. But we will also increasingly find Chinese churches zeroing in on ministry to whole families. As children grow up, as the culture of the churches adapts to ABC young adults, married couples, young families, and Christian leaders, churches will be shifting their targets toward English-speaking and ABC families. And Chinese churches will be multiplying ABC laborers for the work of evangelism, discipleship, and mission as the kingdom of God continues to prosper.

Please be aware that each church must not think that this ministry for ABCs is progressive, moving from one program and staffing model to the next. Sometimes it is possible for an evolution of ministry to occur without following a sequential route. A church may experience the revolution of a God-directed proportion. Remember no one model will fit every single local Chinese church.

Leadership Styles

Supportive and Directive Style

To have effective team ministry with ABCs, a redemptive leadership style or styles need to be incorporated into any multiple staff team. The leadership styles discussed below are from the book *Church Staff Teams That Win* by Jerry W. Brown. He proposes a biblically based explanation of leadership styles that incorporates the supportive and directive need of staff members in a Chinese Church.

Prophet-Director Style

The prophet-director leadership style focuses on the whole kingdom and on key persons responsible for leading the kingdom. It emphasizes a director behavior of the senior pastor toward staff with little or no social-emotional support given by the pastor. Some Chinese churches and their leadership strongly embrace the Confucian teaching of high respect for elders. This teaching is transferred into the church where the pastor is treated as the spiritual father, and those younger than he is do not challenge that position.

Bishop-Executive Style

The bishop-executive leadership style refers to the ongoing administration of the early church as it grew in number. The senior pastor is the bishop who oversees the other leaders of the church. It sets high standards for task performance and gives emotional support to individual differences as needed.

Priest-Developer Style

The priest-developer leadership style focuses on the people as individuals, interceding and mediating God's grace and forgiveness. It supports the developing of staff members' personalities and gifts.

Disciple-Colleague Style

The disciple-colleague style of leadership focuses on the mutual sonship of all staff members and treats fellow leaders of the Master on equal terms. As sons of the Heavenly Father, we are all equal. It involves sharing the leadership role with the whole pastoral staff.

Different ABC staffs need different leadership styles. The prophet-director style is effective with less mature ABC staff members whose needs are met best by a feeling of competency and job-related efficiency set by the senior pastor. The bishop-executive style is effective when ABC staff members' needs are met through strong support by the senior pastor and through having a sense of task accomplishments. The priest-developer style is effective with staff members who need personal growth with healing and not as much emphasis on task achievement. The disciple-colleague style is effective in modeling group behavior with personally mature, well-trained, professionally experienced, inner-motivated, self-controlled staff members.

Robert D. Goette, a Southern Baptist church-plant mobilizer, in his presentation on *Transitioning an OBC Church to Reach More of its ABC Target*, lists some serious liabilities in developing parallel ministry to ABCs:

- Control by OBCs & lack of freedom.

- Caring only for the children & youth.
- Multiple meetings to attend.
- Decision-making process takes longer; top down communication process.
- Difficult to gain agenda harmony between English ministry and OBCs' cross-cultural communication problems.
- Patronizing, paternalistic, and over-protective attitudes that hinder the group's ability to maximize its potential.
- Difficult to reach beyond one ethnic group.
- Difficult to reach multi-racial families.
- Scheduling problems – difficult to get prime times and facilities.
- Contextualization takes longer.
- OBC-ABC leadership clashes.

Team Philosophy

God can help ABCs to be a part of the church's leadership and ministry to unchurched ABCs. The Holy Spirit can enable both first generation and the next generation to work together in effective partnership and fellowship. Teamwork involves winning excellence, discipline, and fundamentals.

Ten Questions Team Members Should Ask Themselves

- Do we trust each other? When the concept of work teams and quality circles was new in the U.S. in the 1970s, critics said that the work teams could not succeed because individuals are conditioned to compete with each other, not to work together. Are your team members proving the critics wrong by trusting each other and working together?

- Do we have a concern for each other? Are you honestly interested in the welfare of your coworkers?

- Do team members feel free to openly communicate? If the team were to have only one ground rule, a good one would be that members encourage each other to communicate freely and openly? In such an environment, teams can achieve anything.

- Do we understand our team's goals? Without a clear focus on team goals, even the best teams will drift?

- Do we have a commitment to these goals? Teams need to believe in their goals and not simply see them as something abstract or demanded by "outside" forces.

- Do we make good use of each member's abilities? Do members feel they are making a worthwhile contribution? Do we look for the best talents of each member and put them to work in the groups?

- Do we handle conflicts successfully? Conflict is natural in any group situation. Success is judged by how it is handled by the team members.

- Does everyone participate? One symptom of a team on the decline is that one or two members begin to dominate. The others allow it to happen because they have grown indifferent.

- Do we respect our individual differences? There are team members with whom you personally may never find yourself in agreement. But do you respect those team members nonetheless? The individual differences make your team unique and special.

- Do we like being members of this team? True success depends on enjoying what you do – and that includes enjoying your team and liking the people with whom you work.

Mentoring

Ministry coaches are mentors to equip God's people for the work of ministry by helping them develop their God-given potential so that they grow personally and make a valuable contribution to the kingdom of God. Good coaches keep a balance between personal growth and ministry contribution. Too much emphasis on personal growth can allow the team to get spiritually fat. But too much emphasis on ministry contribution leads to burnout. God is concerned with both our growth and our ministry. Keep the leader accountable to God for personal and spiritual growth. Coaches need to be grace-givers and understand truth-telling. Grace-giving is the art of empowering or encouraging someone in their ministry or their station in life.

Some Suggestions for Mentoring

- Pray for an ABC and see the potential in him. See God's future minister for the Gospel's sake.

- Teach that ABC to know Christ, to know his identity in Christ, that he has been freed from condemnation. And so by knowing His Lord, that ABC comes to know himself.

- Teach him the way of the Cross, the path of suffering, and self-denial even as John the Baptist said: "He must increase and I must decrease."(John 3:30) No one can be first; first he must learn to be last.

- Teach that ABC that nothing he does, nor anything Satan does, can snatch him out of the Father's hand. No one can belittle him if he magnifies the Lord in his life.

- Teach the potential ABC worker to pray. Help him learn that God trains us for heavenly authority by yielding to the Lord and being under His authority in faith.

- Pray that the potential ABC's leadership experience will produce character.

If the Chinese church is to prepare workers for Christ's kingdom, ABCs must be able to interpret the teachings of Christ and apply them in

the cultural setting of who they are as Chinese raised in American society. Leaders are needed who know their spiritual personhood and exemplify Christ as those bridge-builders to the next generation in the Chinese church. By observing the strong faith and Spirit-directed examples of these mentors will the next generation have the inner orientation to tap the spiritual power to minister to and reach a growing number of ABCs
.

Finding and keeping ABCs in the Chinese church means giving them ownership to what the ministry for ABCs would be like. This also means that authority must be delegated to those ABCs who are qualified to fulfill that ministry. Let them earn the position given. Mature OBCs and ABCs alike must model brokenness. Allow these potential workers to fail; allow failure to shape their character. If they leave, they cannot learn. The Chinese church must invest and pour itself into potential workers for the kingdom, and sometimes this may mean not necessarily in itself. The church must mentor those who are the up-and-coming generation. The church must direct their ABCs' search for the Christ-life in the inner man, not some outward program or agenda. The church must help them to shape their desire for Christian purpose and yearning so that they will not quit when the ministry becomes harsh. Longsuffering and perseverance can be the Christ-like character God wants for ABC workers.

The first requirement for a Chinese church to have an effective ministry among its ABCs is that the OBC leadership be culturally sensitive to the needs of its ABCs. This chapter has outlined the second step which is that the church needs to have an effective model by which it structures its ABC ministry within the church. This approach involves selecting program and staffing models that fit the size, needs, and resources of the church. Particular attention must be paid to leadership styles, having a team philosophy, and mentoring. With these two steps in place, the church is well on its way to developing an effective ministry to its ABCs.

Chapter 6

Spiritually Mature ABC Leadership
By Peter Yuen

- From ABC Laity to ABC Pastors.
- What Makes for an Effective Full-time Christian Worker?
- Possessions Possess the Possessors.
- The Call.
- Leader or Servant?

In this section we have been looking at factors contributing to effective ministries with ABCs and have identified two of the most important ones. First, the most important requirements for an effective ABC ministry is that the church have culturally sensitive OBC leaders. Second, another critical factor is that the church have an effective program and staffing model for ABC ministry. In this chapter we will examine a third major requirement that is essential for fruitful ABC work. This is the need for spiritually mature ABC leadership.

We will briefly look at some of the basic characteristics necessary for spiritually mature ABC leaders. These qualities are basic to every believer whether laity or clergy. When Satan seeks to hinder the work of Christian leaders, he often attacks in the areas of the fundamentals. It is our hope that the discussion in this chapter will remind ABC workers of the importance of keeping their eyes on the ball.

From ABC Laity to ABC Pastors

Where can we find a suitable pastor for our ABC ministry? These requests come to the FACE directors frequently. In recent years this has become an increasingly urgent question. Since the 1980s, the demand exceeds the supply. There are more realized needs in the churches for ABC pastors than there are available resources. The seminaries and the Chinese churches are not developing enough qualified ABC Christian graduates to fill the vacancies that exist. Those who do come forth and enter the ministry often stay a short time then leave their church. Some leave pledging never again to work in a Chinese church; tragically, some of these leave the ministry altogether.

Many ABC believers are well aware that there is a special place for ABC work in the Chinese churches. Some sense this unique need and write research papers on it. Others attempt to do something about it in their own churches. They realize that the next generation is coming right along and must be taught, mentored and encouraged to live the Christian life. Also, these present day ABC Christians hope that the next generation of believers will grow through the church and receive better nurturing than what the present followers are experiencing. As lay people they do what they can voluntarily to provide support.

In the above process, some of these lay people find the ministry so worthwhile and fruitful that they consider making a career change to go into full-time service. Not a few ABCs were in other career paths before choosing the ministry.

It is not difficult for a person who aspires to the church ministry to jump through all the hoops along the way. To have one's church pastor approve, to have the church board confirm, to enter into seminary, to take all the classes, do well all along the way, graduate, and even finding a place of service in some church is possible, especially for a bright student. But why are so many able, dedicated ABC workers leaving the ministry after a few years? It takes more than brilliance and social grace to become a minister who is effective for the long run.

What Makes for an Effective Full-time Christian Worker?

First, the person must be a true Christian. That is, one must receive Jesus Christ as Savior and commit oneself to him as Lord. Those who have accepted him as Savior but have not surrendered themselves to the lordship of Christ cannot know what it is to serve him. As the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 10:9, "But if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." The bottom line is that a true Christian is one who believes Jesus is not only his Savior but also his Lord. With Jesus as Lord comes a multitude of lessons along the journey of faith.

The believer realizes that the life of faith is a call to sacrifice. Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34) The Cross is the way of sacrifice. Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice of himself for our sake. For the Christian, serving people in the name of Christ is to take upon oneself the disadvantages such a call entails, to labor and pay the cost for the benefit of those who are served. One who takes up the Cross is self-giving, generous, and unselfish. As Paul said, "I will gladly spend and be spent for your souls." (2 Cor. 12:15) Consequently, how could there be a selfish person who is a faithful, true servant of the Lord?

Possessions Possess the Possessors

To spend means to pay the cost of time in serving others. And that is a precious commodity as one grows in life and service. When we give time to work and to perform a service to benefit others, we accomplish something that bears fruit in their lives, and it is most rewarding. We do not mind paying the cost for the joy of knowing that what we do makes a difference. Even though we may never personally live to see the outcome and value of our acts, if we have been faithful stewards in the opportunities afforded us, we are assured that the Lord is pleased with our service.

Under the lordship of Christ we learn that the way of the cross is to surrender what we as earthly human beings would strive for -- prestige, position, and possessions. "What you are driving" fades in the light of "what is driving you." No longer does the disciple of Jesus have to have a car that indicates his status; all he needs are wheels that function in the Lord's service. What drives him is the desire to please the Lord in accomplishing his will in the world.

The size of one's office or the furnishings in it should not be the position barometer of one's life. Whether one chooses a high-back office chair or a stool to sit on, the decision is based not upon one's status but on what is needed to do God's work. Function determines form. The disciple must be delivered from the shame of materialism. He must let the "things on earth grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace."

As Christians who know Jesus as Lord, we yield to him the key to our possessions. That key is money. Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and mammon." (Luke 16:13) Once you accept a position with a company, be it in the marketplace or with a church, never strive over wages. Separate your work from money. Do your work as unto the Lord; receive your pay or profits as a gift from God. Mixing pay and work or struggling for more pay throws us into turmoil. Striving for money is inappropriate for a disciple who has taken up the cross to follow "the Son of Man who had no place to lay his head." (Luke 9:59)

As we walk with the Lord, he will challenge us as he did every one of his disciples, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." (Matt. 4:19) Or, "Do you love me more than these? Feed my sheep." (John 21:17) The call of Jesus is a call to discipleship and service. Our career path needs to pass his test. The question we must ask is "Lord, what do you want me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

The Call

It may be at this point that the ABC lay Christian makes a decision to obey the calling to full-time ministry. If that is not God's calling for you, he will indicate by his Word and his Spirit what indeed is his will. That leading is as clear to one called to lay ministry as to one called to full-time service.

It is most important for the one who is called into full-time ministry to prepare to become a well-equipped guide, shepherd, and teacher of other Christians. Much of this comes with time and maturity; but to begin with, it is important to be well established in the knowledge of the mind of God through the Word of God. It is crucial not only to know the general content of the Bible, but how to interpret a particular passage. While it is not possible to learn all of this in a few years in seminary, two objectives stand out as high priority in seminary studies—getting a solid foundation

in scripture and theology, and acquiring good tools to enable one to continue to study, learn and grow on his own. Thus, in addition to the content of ministry, getting good training on the ways and means of ministry is important. Solid preparation under specialists in various fields of ministry is best done in a strong, evangelical seminary.

Leader or Servant?

One of the special challenges faced in the pastorate is the way we work with people in the church, both colleagues on staff and members of the flock whom we are called to serve. Difficulty working with people is probably the number one reason for failure. It seems that the basic problem is the difference between the manner is which one approaches the work—as a leader or a servant.

Some go into a work as a leader. They believe they know how to lead the flock to successfully do what that flock is called to do. They come on the scene ready to turn the world upside down with their strategy in mind. And they run headlong into the church leadership, locking horns, which either destroys the church or results in the pastor's short stay in the church.

Then there are those who go into a work as a servant. A quote from William Eng's interview in *ABOUT FACE* will help one to see how a Christian worker can be a servant. "We need to see what God has already stirred church members to do and make every effort to equip them to accomplish his will in their lives through the church." (*ABOUT FACE*, vol. 23, no. 2, May 2001) Yes, a servant comes and serves the people.

Often an ABC serves under an OBC senior pastor who perhaps because of language and culture is unable to do what the ABC is called to do. Yet, the senior pastor remains the one responsible for the overall ministry of the church. An ABC pastor who has a servant attitude must realize that his task is not just to see that the ABC ministry goes well. His task is first to enable by helping the senior pastor to succeed in his assignment which includes the oversight of what the ABC is invited and assigned to do. Like any employee in any business, the subordinate's task is to enable the superior to succeed in his task. A servant attitude in Christ frees a worker to accomplish that with all his strength and will.

Sometimes an ABC has subordinates working under him, whether employed or voluntary. Again, it is the task of the ABC servant minister to enable the subordinates to succeed in their work. And the same is true when an ABC servant minister has colleagues of equal position on the organizational chart. The task of a servant is to serve and enable superiors, subordinates or other co-workers to succeed in their servanthood and stewardship.

The secret to success for an ABC worker is simply this – be a faithful servant of the Lord. In the journey of faith, there has to be not only a relationship with the Savior and a commitment to his lordship, but a consecration of one's whole being on the altar to him. Taking that step and making that offering of presenting oneself totally as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, (Rom. 12:1-2) is the step that one makes and is mindful of all along the way. Nothing is held back. There is no private area or realm of life that a believer keeps to himself. Everything is placed on that altar. The Lord is Lord of All.

Whether it is lay or full-time ministry in the body of Christ, in all that we do we are intent on pleasing the Lord, for his will shall indeed prove out to be good, acceptable, and perfect.

Too often ABC workers find it so difficult to continue under extremely trying conditions that they cannot or will not endure. And it might even be possible to find some proof-text to justify giving up or quitting. But remember, "Faithful is he who calls you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24)

ABC workers, whether volunteer or full-time staff, who are fully given over to the lordship of Jesus Christ are enabled to follow his leading and adapt to various working conditions. They enter the work, being led by the Word and the Spirit of God; they do not leave unless they are led out by just as certain an indication as the original call. No matter what the task is, such servants of Jesus Christ will serve him, crossing language and cultural gaps, eager and willing to do whatever God leads them to do.

The need for spiritually mature ABC leadership is a must for fruitful ABC ministry within the Chinese church. In this chapter we have taken a brief glimpse at some of the basic spiritual qualities of a leader. Some readers might think that the requirements of a mature leader discussed in this chapter are too basic and that most church leaders have advanced far

beyond them. However, when leaders fail, it is usually in some area involving basic morality, basic relationships involving a willingness to humble one's self to be a servant, or in failing to walk in love toward the brethren. It is usually not in the deeper truths that we run into trouble but in the simple ones. Therefore the mature leader must always "keep his eyes on the ball!"

Chapter 7

Church Programs that Minister Effectively to ABC Christians
By William Eng

- Ask for Volunteers
- Children Ministry
- Youth Ministry
- College Ministry
- Young Adult Ministry
- Middle and Older Adult Ministries.

The essentials for an effective ministry to ABCs within the Chinese church must include OBC leaders who understand that ABCs are culturally different from OBCs. The church must have a program and staffing model that is suitable for ministry to ABCs. And, the church must have spiritually mature ABC leaders. After these essentials are in place, then a workable program can be implemented.

However, at this point the church encounters its greatest obstacle in implementing its program for ministering to ABCs, a shortage of workers. There always is not enough Sunday school teachers, group sponsors, children's workers, group officers, etc. What is the church to do at this point? Volunteers must be recruited. Listed below are a few guidelines for the recruitment and nurturing of volunteers.

Ask for Volunteers

Guidelines for Working with Volunteers

- Ask God for laborers, for volunteer workers - Matt. 9:35-38
- Look for leaders from within your congregation.
- Use a spiritual gift test to see who is gifted for English ministry.
- Expose possible leaders to the ministry.
- Sell the benefits of the particular ministry.
- Share your vision of that ministry with them.
- Share your commitment to their development.
- Provide a specific assignment.
- Let them pray about the opportunity.
- Orient them & involve them.

Children's Ministry

James W. Fowler, director of the Center for Faith Development at Emory University, traces the development of a person's faith. Children's ministry must understand the stage of faith defined as Intuitive-Projective Faith. Ranging from age two to six or seven, this stage is the "fantasy-filled, imitative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of primary-related adults." ABCs who become believers later in life also move through this stage as new babes in Christ. Young ABCs do not need to be exploited by adults who enforce doctrinal or moral teachings by filling their imagination with images of destruction and fear. Instead they need mature Chinese role models who can provide loving, non-manipulative examples of Christian faith to imitate.

The next stage of faith in children is known as Mystic-Literal Faith. This second stage usually takes form in the elementary school years but could be found in a few adolescents and adults. In this stage an ABC begins to hold on to the Bible stories, beliefs, and observances that belong to his or her church. Such ABCs are characterized by a literal-mindedness that makes symbols take literal form. They have moral understandings based on storing up credits for doing good in a divine bank account in exchange for God's help when things go badly. A Sunday school teacher once said to her children, "If you aren't good boys and girls, God won't love you." Literal-minded ABCs at this stage need Chinese Christians who are solid, concrete models that do not spiritualize God or their faith in words and ways that are misunderstood.

Children's ministry should be designed with parents' desires in mind. Parents expect a safe, happy learning environment. There must be evidence that their children were cared for and were enjoying themselves. As children grow up in the Sunday school and youth groups, regular teaching of the scriptures in relevant terms for their age group is essential. The result will be that there is proof that they have learned Bible truths. Discipleship training is needed to equip them to stand firm and grow in the faith through prayer and personal Bible study. Instruction to share the message of the gospel with others is essential so that they are able to convince their friends to put their faith in Christ. Such training also prepares them to face opposition and false teaching that they will encounter in the world. Build into the students the conviction that when they go away to college they go as missionaries into the world to reach people for Christ.

Some children's ministry focus on children from non-Christian homes, e.g. a Chinatown community in which both parents work even on weekends and do not come to church. Others are more suitable for children who have Christian families. The following list of programs are just examples: Awana, Pioneers, Child Evangelism, and Institute in Basic Life Principles. Children seminars, Bible memory clubs, children's choir, and other Bible based character development programs can be used.

Raising a child is like growing a plant in a papier-mâché pot purchased from a nursery. The roots are developed in good nurturing soil in the pot. Then the plant is brought to a home garden and planted into the ground, pot and all. As the roots continue to develop they will eventually grow through the papier-mâché and get rooted into the ground in which it

is transplanted. Likewise, the nurturing of a growing child begins in the home and in the church; and as he reaches outside to friends on the campus, it is like the plant roots stretching outside the original pot, out into the new soil for nourishment.

Youth Ministry

How can a youth ministry be purpose-driven to be truly a part of the church? Is there a real intention to incorporate young people into the church's life? Are there adequate available resources as well as leadership trained in understanding and integrating this age group into the vision of the church? What the Chinese church formerly thought of as youth ministry has changed. It is no longer a ministry to the Baby Boomers of the pre-1960s, nor to the Baby Busters of the mid-1960s to mid-1970s, nor to the Generation Xers of the 1980s; it is now a youth ministry to those known as Generation Y of the 1990s.

The language and culture of Gen Y are distinctly different even from those of the generation preceding it. A youth minister of that earlier decade had to relearn the language and socio-cultural characteristics of Gen Y. Most English-speaking Asian immigrants who desires to minister to this age group will not readily identify with and relate to the unique dynamics associated with Gen Y. This generation is immersed with gigahertz-speed computers, CDRW and DVD, the Internet, multimedia sensory reception, multifaceted learning, and high-energy music. It has never heard of LP vinyl records, the Cold War, the Berlin Wall, segregation and race rioting, or nuclear annihilation.

Relational Ministry

Youth ministry should understand Fowler's Stages of Faith known as *Synthetic-Conventional Faith*. The interpersonal relationships of ABC youths are so important because their beliefs and values are mainly shaped by the expectations of the groups that are significant to them. Such ABC Christians copy and conform to the Christians they know. Beliefs and values may be deeply held, but they usually are held without being carefully examined. In some cases, the expectations of others may be so strongly internalized that the individual's judgment and action are undermined. An individual in this stage sees authority in traditional authority roles. This stage arises during adolescence, but many adults stay

in this stage permanently. ABCs in this stage need other Christians who do not impose their own personal ideas of Christian beliefs.

Precious personal bonding occurs in weekly caring groups, that is, in small groups that allow personal sharing. This is done in the context of confidentiality and non-threatening acceptance. Bonding also occurs during weekend retreats away from home. Retreats seem to many parents to be too free and not very structured. And yet many young people have experienced God's presence and God's calling to salvation. Some have felt God's call to full-time ministry and missions work in retreat settings because they are without the distractions of home, school, non-believing friends, and family conflicts.

Purposeful Ministry

Youth ministry in Chinese churches is often assumed to be the only component of English ministry. Too many high schoolers have been forced by their well-meaning Christian parents to attend the youth program of their local Chinese church. Too many church leaders and parents expect quick results in seeing young people transformed into maturing believers. But when these have graduated from high school and have the freedom to choose for themselves whether to return to their parents' church, many will not make that connection to that church. It is not their home church.

The underlying premise for this dilemma is that the church's program was just a babysitting effort to keep the young people from being bored and not attending. If youth ministry is just an afterthought to what the church is doing, these young people will not become the next generation of leaders of the church. The solution is not a quick fix. There must be an intentional purpose-driven focus to this target group. Energy, personnel, and other church resources must be expended in ministering to these young ABCs. Many not only from church families but also from outside the church with no church experience can then be reached.

Interactive Learning

Many Chinese church leaders have questioned the rationale and methods of youth ministry as well as the entire English-speaking ministry. The Lord's teachings should always be the central truths given to the church's young people. But biblical truths and authority cannot be communicated solely through the Chinese concept of the church as a

teaching association (*jiao-tang*), someone standing in front of a group lecturing. There are many other ways by which scriptural truths can be taught and caught.

The underlying philosophy for junior-high discipleship is integration, whereby all the biblical truths taught at an earlier grade-school level are being processed and integrated into the lives of pre-teens. On the other hand, the core philosophy of high-school discipleship is relationship building. Biblical truths are passed on to new and growing teenagers through the bonding developed between other teenagers as well as the adult youth minister and church volunteers.

Not Unspiritual to Have Fun

Many youth programs begin with spirited fun-packed icebreakers and mixers. Indeed, according to some parents, the inclusion of these energetic fun activities seems less productive and inconsistent with spiritual instruction. And yet the channeling of the energy of young people with their ever-changing physical development to wholesome fun activities is a great alternative to holding rave parties and dances.

Not all youths will want to play ball but most will join in a rousing game that challenges and channels their zeal and eagerness. After a stressful week in school, such fun times can do much to relax overwhelmed teenagers. And after the energy is spent, meditative praise worship can help refocus hearts and minds to what God would do in an individual's life.

Interaction with others in the group, whether during a Bible-learning time or playing basketball, is most conducive to applying biblical truth into young lives. "How can I use what Jesus teaches in what I am doing now – whether playing ball, relating to my parents or my peers or my Father in heaven?" And when that enthusiasm and energy are directed to service in the local church, in Christian outreach ministries and in missions, the spiritual fruit of such youth ministry can only be the measure of how these teens can be significant parts of the church.

Discipling Key Leaders

Not all youth are at the same point in their spiritual journey. A church cannot always offer something for everyone. But it can reach those

who have not found in other places outside the church what they have needed. Adult leaders can model how to communicate spiritual truths to others. There are some youth who have matured through the training they received in the Christian home and in children's Sunday school. These can be the ones who are trained to lead and plan the activities that will draw other youths into the church.

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College Ministry

*"**Away They Go**" by Peter Yuen*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 24, No. 2, May 2002)*

There are church leaders who believe that if they can get their ABCs through high school and off to college, the church will have finished its responsibility with them. Such is their reaction to the ABCs who are making increasing demands for change in the church as they grow older. Unfortunately, such an attitude in getting them out the door often sends them off into the non-Christian world for good. Rather than having to respond reactively to the pressing needs of their youths, leaders would do better with a proactive approach because their young people need preparation to face a world that challenges their faith. When away at college, they need occasional follow-up and contact by representatives from the home church. And when on holidays or vacation, they need caring reconnections with the home church.

In most families, all significant decisions are made for the children by the parents until their junior year in high school. These decisions involve where they live, what kind of friends to cultivate, where to go to school, what extra-curricular activities to participate in, where to play, what to study in school, and if the parents are Christians, where to go to

church. In their junior year in high school, the young person begins to investigate the possibilities and options about going to college. While parents may have some input to or even veto power over their child's choices, generally the decisions on where to study and the field of study to pursue are the first major ones that the child makes for himself. In addition to parental guidance one may be influenced by friends at school or church. For many it is here at this point when they begin to seek the will of God for their lives, and it is here where spiritual guidance made available in the church or the home is essential.

A student going off to college and out of constant contact with his home and church is embarking on a new adventure, and every option is available to him. And the "wrong crowd" is ubiquitous and ever enticing. It is obvious that proper training in his younger years is foundational to enable the student to make good decisions. A mere heart-to-heart talk before he goes off is not adequate to prepare him to make good decisions every day. Development of the psyche that holds on to the desires, expectations and values of the parents, respected relatives and friends, and people at the home church as well as the desire to please the Lord are essential for a person to make the right choices. This kind of spiritual preparation will enable him to face the challenges of college life.

In many cases in Chinese churches, the young person, having grown up in the church Sunday school and youth groups, will go off to college and have virtually no more guidance or input from the church. The freshman is dropped off on campus to face a completely new world. He may have e-mail and a cell phone by which to reach the family and friends, but often there may be little other connection with home and church. And the connections will likely and naturally become less and less as the student finds familiarity among new surroundings, classes, and friends.

A wise and spiritually alert Christian student will seek out friends in fellowship groups of believers. At the very beginning of life on campus is the best opportunity to connect with a Christian fellowship group such as Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, Asian-American Christian Fellowship, Navigators, and Campus Crusade for Christ. It is also important to be connected to an evangelical church for worship and nurture.

With all the options available to the student and the freedom to choose for himself without any parental controls, how is he to make sound decisions? It is the daily fellowship with the Lord together with a conscience conditioned by the Word of God that is the controlling measures of guidance. It is here that one's sense of responsibility to one's family and friends in the home church comes into play. It is here that the commitment to Jesus Christ as authority over one's life is tested for reality and truth.

In addition to the reality of the spiritual trials of the soul in the presence of a multitude of temptations, there is also on campus the formal philosophical influence in the classroom that can undermine a Christian's faith. Some of these courses are taught by secularist professors who are professionals at dislodging a Christian and diverting him away from faith in Christ and the Bible.

What can the home church or Christian parents do for their students away at college? Pray and assure the student that Christians back home are praying for his welfare. Stay in touch through e-mail and correspondence. There is so much traveling going on for business and pleasure today that people from the home church need to plan to drop in and visit these students and take them out to dinner. And during holidays and vacations when the student returns home are crucial occasions to build, reconnect, and promote loyalty to the family, the church and to long-established friends. Too often a student returning home is hardly recognized or acknowledged at church because of the long absence. He comes back like a stranger or visitor to a fellowship of students who have been worshiping and involved regularly throughout the year because they attend local schools. Thus it is important during holidays and vacation times that there are well-planned activities to renew connections with the church, family and old friends.

It is this kind of effort by parents and church staff that enables the students who go away to college to feel they still belong to their church. When friends whose relationships were established over the years become reconnected, they often become lifelong friends and lifelong members of the church.

Young Adult Ministry

Fowler's Stage 4 of Faith is *Individuative-Reflective Faith*. This stage is characterized by individuality and thinking reflectively about one's beliefs and values. People in this stage take responsibility for their own beliefs rather than simply conforming to those cherished by the community. This is a time when one steps outside his own belief system and examines it critically to know the why as well as the what of his beliefs. A person must achieve some emotional distance between himself and the community that previously shaped his beliefs to move to this stage. One often moves to this stage, therefore, at the point of leaving home. This typically occurs during the early adult transition. This is a time when one's beliefs and values become truly one's own. But the danger is that the individual can become so hardened in his own views that he no longer takes into account the perspectives of others. Such ABCs need wise leaders who give them freedom to re-examine and possess the Christian faith of his parents or church as his own.

Church leaders can view this ministry as the possible beginning of a new church. Matt Brown has started a ministry to Gen Xers called Sandals Church in Riverside, California. Today, the congregation averages 750 in attendance. Another Sandals church plant in Mission Viejo, California has 200, and a third in Corona, that is ten months old, had 850 in worship on Easter Sunday. Sandals reaches young adults by giving them leadership, not relegating them to a college department within a one-size-fits-all church. Sunday night services are established first because students do not respond well on Sunday mornings.

The church, not just Chinese churches, may have already lost this next generation. This generation is so confused about the church with all the failings and problems that can be seen by these observant young people. This has happened too often in many Chinese churches. So many of today's young adults grew up affected by scandals involving religious leaders such as the abuses involving Roman Catholic priests.

"Helping Parents Who Are in Pain" *by Peter Yuen*
(ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 19, No. 2, May 1997)*

A middle-aged Chinese parent, himself full of vitality for the

Lord, is bearing a burden.

"It hurts very deeply, deeper than anything I've known. I don't know where to start to share or where to get help and encouragement. There

are a lot of Chinese Christian parents in the same situation. I suspect that even among pastors, there is a lot of hidden secret pain."

This was written in response to my article, "An ABC Christian Wedding," in the last issue of ABOUT FACE. Our respondent understood and appreciated the main thrust of that article. It was more targeted at Christian parents than at young people contemplating marriage. In essence, the message of that article was: Parents, establish a family that is truly Christian so that your ABC children will grow to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ on their own initiative. Make sure that your church provides strong, relevant Christian nurture and challenge suitable for your family from childhood to adulthood; then grown-up children will more likely choose the way of the Lord when they leave home.

Too few families and churches are providing suitable Christian discipleship in the Word, Spirit, and practice for their ABC children; and when they get to the place where they can opt out, these children, unfortunately, more often than not, do just that.

So our brother wrote, "There must be a lot of Christian parents in pain and struggling with the agony of how to bring back their children to God. They are crying out for help. I know, because I am one of these parents."

It tears our hearts as we sense what they are going through. We ABC pastors who are directors of FACE have seen too many ABC friends dropping out. It is for this very reason that we have been doing our best for about two decades to stem this loss. We have been trying to help church leaders to see what needs to be done to be more effective in ministry to ABCs; and in the mercy of God we have witnessed some

improvement. But we have done virtually nothing to help parents whose

ABC children opted to leave the church and forsake their walk with the Lord when they were free to choose their own paths.

Just recently the five of us FACE directors met to begin the process of revising and updating our mission statement. It is obvious that we must not only encourage the Chinese churches to become more effective in ministry to ABCs; we must draw alongside of parents, and particularly OBC parents, who are in great anguish over the loss of their children from the life of the church. In this effort we face two fronts: (1) Restoring grown-up ABC dropouts to Christian living and fellowship, and (2) Helping OBC parents to cope with their pain and providing guidance for them in their efforts to bring healing with their ABC children who are dropouts. For now, perhaps the following observations and suggestions will help.

WHAT BRINGS ABCs BACK

A prior question must be, "Why did the grown-up ABC drop out?" A high priority of junior-high and high-school students is to establish friends outside the home. They also need a formidable challenge in their lives, one which the church should be able to provide if only it is focused on fulfilling the needs of its young people. How do we expect growing young people to choose to continue participating in a church where they are bored because the activities are tailored for some other culture? Thus, it is understandable when they go outside their church home to find camaraderie and challenge.

Radical measures

Reprogram. *It is a rare church that, having failed one year to provide for its youth, is able to mobilize rapidly enough to meet their needs the next year. It would take a Herculean effort by a very cooperative leadership who together sense the Holy Spirit's leading to accomplish this. But a few churches have done it to bring their young people back.*

Switch churches. *Where it is unlikely that a given church can reprogram quickly enough, some parents have switched to some other church for the sake of their rapidly growing children. Sometimes this has worked to keep their children interested in Christian fellowship.*

Move family. *In cases where the young people have already quit the church and have established their best friends elsewhere, sometimes a family has to actually move to a new city so as to break those outside connections. Then in that new location where the children have to find new friends, the new church is a likely and attractive place for them to begin again.*

How some return

The very reason why many ABCs have quit the church sheds light on how to bring grown-ups who have dropped out back into the fellowship of the church.

Senior ABCs. *There are some good examples of ABC senior citizens who grew up in the church, dropped out for decades, then re-entered the fellowship. What brought them back was their finding new social connections with friends of their own age and with similar interests.*

Young marrieds and young families. *Must parents wait so long, until their children are mature adults, even senior citizens, before they can find them responding to the Lord? There are some other common windows of opportunity for their children to return to the Lord. One is when the young adult dropout gets married, and another is when they have children and these young ones begin to need exposure to their peers outside the home.*

Dropouts, not blackouts. *Many of these ABC dropouts do not acknowledge that they have given up their faith. They left because they were dissatisfied with the church they were attending. When they marry they wish to establish a Christian home, and when they have children they come to realize that Christian values are important to build into their*

children. Or when they retire they are moved to take a more serious and mature look at their faith. If they were to return to the church in which they were raised, they would be motivated to do what they could, now as young families or older adults, to help shape the church so that it would have effective ministry for ABCs. At the time of their re-entry, if the church has a good Bible-teaching ministry to adult ABCs, they personally begin to seriously reconsider the claims of Jesus Christ.

EASING THE AGONY

Try as one might to raise a child in "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), and to "train up a child in the way that he should go" (Prov. 22:6a), there is no guarantee that "when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. 22:6b). It is not that the promise of God's Word is invalid, but that our method of nurturing, admonishing, and training is faulty. To say this is not aimed at increasing one's sense of guilt or resentment, but to encourage a serious look at what was lacking.

When parents are raising young families, because it is their first attempt, they are on an experiment. They are not professionals; they come at the task without expertise. Especially in view of the greater cultural expanse, OBC parents need to bridge with the environment in which their ABC children are being brought up. In addition, the fact that OBC parents themselves are having to make so many personal adjustments – moving across an ocean and leaving their familiar surroundings in Asia, adapting to a different educational system, establishing themselves in new neighborhoods and in their professional careers, etc., -- it is all they can do to find a good church in which to worship and serve.

A church which is suitable for them is not likely to be suitable for their ABC children because they are of a different culture. For the sake of the children, the adaptation should be made by the parents in favor of the children, and not by the children in favor of the parents. Few OBC parents, however, realize all this until their children begin to feel intensely uncomfortable in the Chinese church. To attempt to make changes quickly enough to meet their rapidly growing children's needs is often too great a

hurdle. So the children suffer and drop out, and the parents feel angry, guilty, disappointed, regretful, ashamed and helpless.

Too often these parents, wanting to be proud of their children, will highlight their academic and economic successes and attempt to ignore or conceal their spiritual failures.

Obviously, true healing help for these parents will first require some personal soul-searching on their part. Why the guilt, anger, shame, and pride?

On the other hand, dwelling too much upon the question, "What have I done wrong?" – a question many parents of every culture ask – is not constructive and could be harmful. Remember that "all things work together for good to them who love God and who are called according to His purpose? (Rom. 8:28). There are very few irreparable mistakes we make in life as we walk with the Lord.

The very fact that parents carry their burden in such pain shows the degree of love they have for the Lord and for their children who have dropped out. As they shift their focus from their anguish to their love for the Lord and for their children, there are three efforts they could launch that would be constructive: prayer, reconciliation, and service.

Prayer. *Heightened intensity on prayer for their children would release the blessings of God to work in the circumstances of life around those children. Joining with other parents who are carrying the same kind of burden and sharing one's load would be a means to interact and fellowship honestly about the burden being borne. Ask God to place around those children other Christians in their place of work or on the campus, and in the marketplace. Appeal to the Lord to spark an interest in them to seek Him. Keep pursuing the Lord about bringing those children back to Him.*

Reconciliation. *This may be the most difficult task for parents, but they actually have a way available to them to communicate with their grown child so that what is said would be received and taken to heart. It is not the giving of advice; it is the making of a heartfelt confession. When a parent confesses to a child that he has made a mistake, and asks, "Will you forgive me (us) for …..?", you can be sure that the child will be all ears.*

The crucial matter is how you fill in the blank. It is not a time to charge that child with any of his/her errors. It is only a time to acknowledge one's own ignorance and anxiety and anger and authoritarianism. It is a time to repent and acknowledge that decisions made before the child dropped out were not decisions to meet the needs of the child, but to keep the parents themselves comfortable in their church setting. A parent's confessing that he should have been more concerned for the child's total need than for his own would be readily received by the child. There is an amazing capacity in young people to sort out the matter in their minds and join with the parent sympathetically to do what they can to make reparations for the harm that has been done.

Service. *Where adequate and relevant Christian encouragement is lacking in the church and in the home, a major effort needs to be launched to rectify the situation. One such father whose children have dropped out has turned his pain and energy outwards to do everything possible to reach ABCs and to improve their lot in the church and in their families. To take one's own loss as a challenge to double the effort to help others succeed in raising their children so that they will choose to love the Lord is a worthy goal and yields precious eternal fruit.*

Building the Lord's church requires sacrifice and suffering – suffering that may strike right close to home. But let not failure be the final note. May the Lord hear the prayers of His servants and bring those children back to Himself, and may He use the devoted effort of their parents to bring glory to His victorious name.

Young adult ministry must refocus on a return to basics because this generation has largely no familiarity with the Christian faith since they were not raised in the church. The church must clearly tell them the fact that they are guilty before a holy God and that is why they need Jesus. This next generation does not just want to feel good about themselves. Some churches may have to start with the Ten Commandments because today's young adults do not know them. Paul said that the law is a tutor to lead people to the gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ. The Christian faith must be seen in both leaders and adults experiencing the "I-you" relationship with the living God in worship as well as in daily living.

Give them a lot of freedom from the very beginning. Disciple a few key leaders. Indeed when these young adults serve together with each other as well as caring leaders, the relationships formed in such an involvement will lead to long-lasting ones. This will draw other young people into the church. And the long-term effect will be that these college graduates or working young adults will be the local church. They will develop long-term friendships, maybe made during high-school years. Another beneficial outcome is the development of relationships that lead to Christian marriages and further strengthen the church's ABC adult component.

Middle Adult Ministry

Fowler's Stage 5 - *Conjunctive Faith* is rarely seen in persons before they have reached mid-life. This stage is marked by openness of attitude. Such faith permits one to see both sides of an issue and does not have to settle every issue immediately or file every belief neatly into its proper category. An ABC in this stage of faith development is open to insight from those who are of different religious communions of other cultures. A person in this stage does not automatically accept other points of view but is willing to listen to them. This position implies no lack of commitment to one's own faith. Conjunctive-faith's openness to the truth of the other stems precisely from its confidence in the reality of the Christian faith. ABCs of Stage 5 need leaders who will guide them to experience Christ's principles. Such ABCs then will be able to test other religious claims to truth by the truth that they have learned from God's Word.

Looking Beyond to See the Potential

The Chinese church needs people who can look beyond persons' outer appearance to discern their ultimate potential for becoming disciple makers and co-laborers in ministry. See beyond those ABCs who are spiritually dead without Christ, dead in their sins. Spiritually dead ABCs cannot respond to Christ except as the Holy Spirit through your witness draws them. When Christians bear witness to them, then they can repent and put their faith in Christ's sacrifice and receive eternal life. You may be that disciple-maker who can help ABCs become the spiritual children of the Heavenly Father. And if you continue to disciple them, you can help these ABCs to grow and become spiritual disciples. As they mature, if you do well, they will learn to disciple others in the same growth process. And if God is willing and you are faithful, these ABCs will go full circle to become co-laborers with you in the ministry of the church. You can see them continue to reach the lost and make disciples. The mission, then, is to develop disciples as Jesus did, who will make disciples of all nations.

Overcoming Barriers to Join the Church

Those ABCs who become born-again Christians need to see their connection to the larger Christian community that is the church. They must not be kept out, chased out, pushed out, or left out from the Chinese church if the church would be whole. There must be unity through the diversity of ABC believers being enfolded into the larger Chinese church. These potential workers and leaders of the church must be given the truth fleshed out by the local body of believers. But if the identity of most ABCs were to be complete, it would have to be found in the context of the Chinese church. It would be seen in the genuine spiritual modeling of Chinese living under the authority of Christ.

Finding and keeping ABCs in the Chinese church means giving them ownership to what the ministry for ABCs would be like. This also means that authority must be delegated to those ABCs who are qualified to fulfill that ministry. Let them earn the position given. Mature OBCs and ABCs alike must model brokenness. Allow these potential workers to fail; allow failure to shape their character. If they leave, they cannot learn. You must invest and pour yourself into potential workers for the kingdom, and sometimes this may mean not necessarily in your own church. Mentor those who are now in your church. Focus their search on the Christ life in

the inner man, not some outward program or agenda. Help them to shape the desire and yearning that will not quit when the ministry becomes harsh.

Older Adult Ministry

Babyboomers born after the World War II are entering retirement age. Below is an *ABOUT FACE* article describing how some Chinese churches have been trying to reach these older ABCs.

"Kill the Fatted Calf for the Older ABCs" *by David Woo*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, vol. 12, no. 2, May 1990)*

In the late 1800s Chinese began immigrating to the U.S. in large numbers and settled primarily in the major cities. There they worked as houseboys, laborers for other Chinese proprietors, or operated their own restaurants, laundries, grocery stores, produce markets, etc. Today in these metropolitan areas are found considerable numbers of ABCs over the age of fifty who are the descendants of these early settlers.

Most of these older ABCs grew up in Chinatowns or in other areas where Chinese concentrated. As it was in these enclaves that the first Chinese churches were planted, most older ABCs had some contact with a Chinese church during their childhood because they attended either the Chinese language school, Sunday school, or fellowship group sponsored by the neighborhood Chinese church. There were generally no secular Chinese social organizations in existence for children and young people (the family associations had little appeal to the youth); consequently, much of the social life of the young people of the Chinese community centered around the neighborhood church. As a result, most older ABCs had some extended contact with a Chinese church sometime during their growing-up years.

Many of these ABCs dropped out of church during their younger years because the church had not yet learned to be sensitive to the needs of ABCs and because they became so involved with raising families and/or achieving worldly success that they found the church irrelevant.

Today, at True Light Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, the Chinese Presbyterian Church of Orange County, and perhaps some other Chinese churches, we are beginning to see the fulfillment of God's promise

that if we train up a child in the way he should go, when he is old, he will not depart from it. We are witnessing the return of the prodigal children. Some older ABCs who have stayed away from the church for twenty to thirty years are returning home. They have had their fling in the world, attained a measure of success, and yet have not had the God-shaped vacuum in their hearts filled. Now they are finding in the church the water of life that quenches their previously unsatiable thirst.

Without a doubt their pilgrimage into the world and back again to the church is not the desirable route for Christians. Older ABCs who have gone this way have missed the priceless opportunity of raising their children in Christ-centered homes, and they have missed the supernatural work of the Spirit in enabling them to be the kind of spouses and parents that God wanted them to be. But, it's better late than never.

What were the factors that led these older ABCs back to the church?

1. Some had Christian children that prayed for them, witnessed to them, and invited them back to church.

2. Older ABCs already in the church made a special effort to invite these dropouts back and warmly reached out to them when they came to visit the church.

3. Regular social events were planned specifically for this age group so that they could enjoy themselves and feel comfortable with their peers in the church.

4. Contacts with some unchurched people were developed through informal tennis or ping pong get-togethers on a regular basis.

5. Because of the necessity of a soft-sell approach in reaching turned-off older ABCs, in some but not all the social events, short devotionals or personal testimonies were shared. At other events no formal talks were given because only personal fellowship was relied on to develop relationships.

6. Evangelistic Bible studies were held in the church during the Sunday school hour and in homes on week nights. These studies were purposely kept simple and informal by emphasizing that participants were not expected to know anything about the Bible and could ask any kind of questions.

7. After people attended these church activities regularly for about six months to a year so that they began to feel a part of the group, efforts were made to share the gospel with them on a one-to-one basis.

Although significant numbers have been turning to the Lord, there are still many attending regularly who have not yet received Christ. We think it is only a matter of time until they do.

Today all over the U.S. there is a large crop of unsaved older ABCs who are ripe for the gospel. Since they are beginning to see more of their contemporaries dying and since their worldly success has not filled their emptiness, they are becoming more open to reconsidering their childhood faith which stemmed from their early roots in the Chinese church. Now they are ripe for picking. Who will harvest them? At the eleventh hour the Lord directs us, "You also go and work in my vineyard." (Matt. 20:7)

Realize that these older ABCs have lost their children who have grown up outside the church. These are now returning to the church they themselves left as teens. They are returning, hoping to get their grandchildren to come to church. They remember the hymns they sang then and are not familiar with the praise songs of the younger generation. Traditional forms of worship are what they are comfortable and more familiar with. So some churches have added a second English service to accommodate a ministry suitable for this older adult generation.

Fowler's sixth stage, known as *Universalizing Faith*, may apply to those of this generation who continued in the church through their middle adulthood. This final stage seems to imply that the essential difference between conjunctive faith and universalizing faith is not so much a difference in belief, but in the willingness to act upon belief. ABCs at Stage 6 put into practice and externalize what Jesus taught regarding His kingdom. At stage 5 these teachings are just partially understood and internalized. Leaders are needed who themselves have experienced that universalizing faith and have moved into Kingdom life. However, there are so many new believers in this stage, and they need discipleship just as those in children's Sunday school. There are also those born prior to WWII in the 1930s and early 1940s.

Senior ABCs can be found on cruises, recreational facilities at local community centers, volunteers at local charitable organizations, traveling in the national parks and on guided tours. Many have the time and financial ability to do this. They also have the time and energy to do volunteer work in your church with the nursery, children, and even some youth ministry. Ask them to volunteer. See them as potential Kingdom workers as well. Your church's short-term mission efforts will find a ready supply from retired seniors who are committed to missions.

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. [36] When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. [37] Then he said to his disciples, ‘The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. [38] Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.’" (Matthew 9:35-38 NIV)

What You Can Do

1. Pray for an ABC and see the potential in him. See the product as God's future minister for the Gospel's sake.

2. Teach that ABC to know Christ, to know his identity in Christ, that he has been freed from condemnation. And so by knowing His Lord, that ABC comes to know himself.

3. Teach him the way of the Cross, the path of suffering, and self-denial even as John the Baptist confessed, “He must increase and I must decrease.” (John 3:30) No one can be first, but first he must learn to be last.

4. Teach your ABC that nothing he does, nor anything Satan does, can snatch him out of the Father's hand. No one can belittle him if he magnifies the Lord in his life.

5. Teach your potential ABC worker to pray. Help him learn that God trains us for heavenly authority by yielding to the Lord and being under His authority in faith.

Chapter 8

Effectively Promoting Missions among ABC Christians
By Peter Yuen

- How earlier ABCs went out in missions.
- Societal Changes Affecting ABC Missions
- ABCs Need to See Examples of Sacrificial Service.
- Who Is Qualified to Send Out Missionaries?
- Should OBC Leaders Send ABCs into Missions?
- The Need for Broader Horizons

The purpose for this book is to assist Chinese churches and their leaders to increase the effectiveness of their ministries to ABCs. Up to this point we have outlined some of the basic factors that would help a Chinese church to accomplish this goal. The first requirement was that a Chinese church must have OBC leaders who are sensitive to the differing cultural needs of their ABCs. A second requirement was that a Chinese church needed to have an effective model for ABC ministry within their church. A third essential was that a Chinese church needed to have spiritually mature ABC leadership. Fourthly, the church needed to have programs that minister effectively to ABCs. In this chapter the focus will be on the fact that Chinese church must be able to promote a vision for world missions among its ABCs.

How can the Chinese church help its ABCs gain a deeper vision for God's plan for the world? First, let us look at how earlier ABCs developed their vision for the world and went out as missionaries.

How Earlier ABCs Went Out in Missions

Before considering how ABCs could be encouraged to participate in missions in another land today, it would be useful to review how ABCs in the past determined to go to the mission fields. What motivated them, and what obstacles they cleared before they successfully went forth, would be helpful to today's prospective missionaries and helpful to those who feel called to guide and encourage them to go.

Basic in the heart of every missionary is the personal response to the Great Commission. For some it is simply the ultimate answer to the call to belong to Jesus Christ. He calls every believer to follow him. When a Christian grows to know the Lord and walk with him, his understanding of the need to give of himself as an obedient disciple ultimately results in personal sacrifice. Surrendering himself to do what God wants becomes ever clear.

Jesus came to do God's will, so it is now up to the followers of Jesus to do his will. Jesus said, "As my Father sent me, even so I send you" (John 20:21).

Some ABCs were convinced to go to the mission field because of a special unmistakable in-breaking of God. It might have been a growing conviction of the Holy Spirit in the heart. Or it might have been an occasion when special words from scripture were especially impressed upon one's soul. When this happens, one can do no other than to obey in order to find peace and a sense of rightness in the path of life.

Armed with such a firm heart conviction, the ABC lives a life ever open and alert to the leading of God. In that process of walking daily by faith, some possibilities may emerge as a realistic option to go to the mission field.

For earlier ABCs who have gone into missionary service, the factors that entered into their decisions were generally the same kinds of factors that might have led Caucasian believers. Both groups were convinced by similar reasons that it was the will of God to go into missionary service.

Having said this, there were some early limitations for ABCs that did not restrict Caucasian believers. Before 1965, many Western mission-

sending boards restricted themselves to send only Caucasians. But over the years, the Holy Spirit enlightened these mission board members to see that their discriminatory practices were inconsistent with the gospel of Christ. Therefore, these boards began to change their policies and welcomed ABCs.

Despite such restrictions by mission boards, some ABCs were still able to find their way into missionary service. They were challenged and motivated in the same way that their young Caucasian counterparts were. They read the same devotional books and the same missionary stories like *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*. They followed the same examples of self-sacrificial missionaries. They understood the same cost of discipleship; they made the same kind of dedication to place themselves on the altar just as any Caucasian brother or sister did. Some of these ABCs were able to discover mission-sending agencies that were not discriminatory toward non-whites and went under their auspices. Others had to develop unique and creative ways to enlist supporters to pray and to give to enable them to go.

*"**I'm Going, Anyway…an ABC in Asia**" by Madeline Wong (*ABOUT FACE*), Vol. 13, No. 4, November 1991)*

EARLY INFLUENCES AND PREPARATION

"But do you know what your gifts are?" asked Bob Downs, the mature, spiritual leader of the Chinese Mission in Philadelphia's Chinatown. Mil quickly replied, "I don't know yet what they are, but I'm going." And so an ABC missionary was born that day, resolved to cross a culture and learn a language while serving Christ among the Chinese in Asia.

Mildred Young's spiritual journey began in the 1930's when, as a young girl, she began attending Sunday school in a storefront mission up the street from her home. This was maintained by American Christian women from affluent churches in the Greater Philadelphia area. Early on, Mil's heart responded to the invitation and promises of Christ as Margaret Carter led her to accept Him as Savior and Lord. Happy Sunday afternoons were filled with scriptural teachings and lessons on the Christian life. Occasionally, in the ensuing years, she had opportunities to hear great Chinese evangelists such as Andrew Gih and Leland Wang. Then one day, in her high school years, she listened to a Henry Webb

speak of his work in China under the China Inland Mission … and that very evening, "all things worked together for good" as she sensed an undeniable calling to world mission and Asia.

At the urging of a Christian acquaintance and her high school principal, Mil enrolled at Wheaton College to major in Bible and Greek. Daily campus prayer meetings for China, close friendships with several students from China, and the weekly Foreign Missions Fellowship meetings kept clear her focus and the glow for missions. Following graduation, she remained on the Wheaton faculty as a Greek instructor while pursuing a master's degree in biblical literature. She enjoyed her teaching and interacting with students, all of which were shaping her for mission work abroad. God was disclosing now what she had not fathomed then before Mr. Downs.

Subsequently, Mil returned to the Philadelphia mission now known as the Chinese Gospel Church. Recognizing her commitment and endorsing her call, the membership of approximately twenty people commissioned and sent her forth in 1953 under the Far Eastern Gospel Crusade (now SEND International). The members undertook her full support, believing this was the biblical pattern in the Early Church. Mil's missionary career had begun! God had faithfully shown the way and provided the means.

OVERSEAS MINISTRY AND FRUITFULNESS

Thirty-eight years of conscientious ministry ensured, beginning with the Far Eastern Bible Institute and Seminary in Manila. Following the completion of her term there, she began an extensive period of time in Hong Kong working with the Fellowship of Evangelical Students (FES), the China Graduate School of Theology (CGST), and finally, with the Wanchai Church. At convenient intervals she served two-year stints in Ethiopia among the university students and at the Discipleship Training Center in Singapore. Though she enjoyed teaching Greek, Mil longed to touch students in a more personal and spiritual way. She then began mentoring students in Bible study skills, opening up broader and deeper vistas of God's truth. For to her, a disciplined and careful study of the Word was basic to spiritual growth and maturity in service.

The Reverend Lawrence Chan, dean and lecturer of CGST and one of Mil's earlier protégés, underscored the effectiveness of her ministry in Hong Kong as follows: (1) As FES staff worker, she had a keen and

quick analytical mind which challenged the staff and students to probe and think deeply about the inspired Word. Mr. Chan himself remembered that the basic Bible study skills he acquired helped him greatly in his biblical and theological studies in seminary. (2) As lecturer on the faculty at CGST, Miss Young developed the course, "Principles of Bible Study," which remains today as a core course in the school curriculum. "It is not too much to say that Mildred initiated the 'Bible Study' movement at CGST," attests the dean. Finally, (3) as resident missionary at Wanchai Church, she introduced solid Bible studies and their practical life applications to the church members. She became their beloved teacher and a gentle, winsome influence by her life and personality.

During her twenty-nine years of ministry in Hong Kong, Mil's natural gifts of love and friendship extended beyond the classroom as she personally cared for those who needed encouragement and direction. Her spirituality, sensitive and listening ear, and wise and insightful counsel made her a friend and mentor to her students and the members of Wanchai Church. In time, Mil saw many of them go on to useful and strategic ministries, doing effective work as respected leaders. This was her joy and satisfaction.

CONTINUATION AND IMPACT

June, 1991, marked Mil's retirement from SEND International and her long-term commitment overseas. Now settled in Pasadena, California, she hopes to continue training English-speaking Chinese Christians in Bible study skills. Doing this is doing what she does best and loves most. For she still believes that to know and obey God's Word is to experience the fullness of life in Christ.

In sum, Mildred Young is a thoroughly committed and focused ABC herself. She is an example for us all. Her thirty-eight years of service abroad speak for themselves. Acculturation and language-learning were disciplines she accepted as basic to the ministry she was called to do. In all this and more, Mil was a model, going out with little ABC precedence and at a time when ABC awareness of mission involvement and prayer support was rare. These things did not just happen … the stamina of her ministry lay in a deep love for God and a resolute decision to do His will. She obeyed the very Scriptures she taught others to obey. Her statement, "… but I'm going," resonates loud and clear for us to hear … and to emulate!

The challenge resonates before us ABCs as well. For the Chinese segment makes up the largest unreached people bloc today. Beyond that, half the population of this teeming global ball is yet unreached. And the Lord of the harvest is still calling and sending. As part of the Asian mosaic, ABCs can play a unique role in frontier mission, to others as well as to the Chinese.

If you feel the Spirit nudging you into mission work, never mind now your gifts, or your circumstances, or plans now laid yet to be fulfilled. Keep a clear and focused heart on this calling and take active steps of faith toward that goal. God will keep moving you in the direction of that faith, providing signposts to steer you along the right path. And he will not only send you but accompany you every step of the way. May your next thirty-eight years of life truly count for Christ!

During the era of the early1950s, several ABCs went overseas serving as missionaries on a long-term basis. In those days no one went on short-term missions. Like Caucasian missionaries of that period, by and large missionaries traveled to the mission field by ship and anticipated staying terms of four to seven years before returning to their homes and families for a furlough. They all were open to making missionary service their careers.

For virtually all of these earlier ABCs, unlike many of their Caucasian counterparts, their parents were not Christians. These parents sought to discourage their children's involvement in the church and in the practice of their faith. Above all else, they opposed their children going abroad as missionaries. So parental opposition had always been a major hindrance to ABCs serving in foreign lands.

Societal Changes Affecting ABC Missions

Several factors in the world impacted the old time missions pattern. In the latter 1960s, American churches and mission boards were finding it increasingly difficult to recruit new missionaries. At the same time air flights were becoming more prevalent and cheaper so that they competed against ship fares favorably, to say nothing of travel time. Some mission agencies began to encourage short-term missions. In these the prospective missionary would be able to go to a mission field for a few months or weeks to see if they would adapt favorably to missionary life. Short-term

missions made a commitment to missions not a complex ordeal. Preparation for a short term was much simpler than preparing for a missionary career.

At the same time, as young Caucasian missionaries became rare commodities for mission boards, it became more feasible to change the policies of the boards to include "international" workers. Mission boards saw the need to drop their policies of restricting the membership of the mission to Caucasians only. This factor also encouraged ABCs to join boards from which heretofore they were not welcomed. So both in long term as well as short term missions more ABCs were encouraged to enlist.

However with new doors opening to service abroad, there were also growing hindrances to serving in overseas ministry. Materialism became an increasingly larger barrier. Not only did higher education and professional status with all its material benefits make the contrast of life style a greater challenge, but all things being equal, the standard of living in America for all Americans, ABCs or otherwise, had taken continued leaps upward over the last several decades. A family with one car forty years ago now "needs" at least two or three or more. And to contrast this kind of living with life on the mission field where a bicycle may be a standard means of daily transport, climbing to greater spiritual heights is indeed sometimes a downward material journey.

The prevalence of higher education became an important deterrent to long term missionary service for ABC Christians because each had to weigh the life of a professional living in the comforts of America to going abroad and adapting to life on the mission field. This was not only a greater challenge for the ABC believer, but also for his or her parents who in many cases were not believers. Their opposition created greater resistance to their son or daughter leaving their professional work and salaries for missionary life.

ABCs Need to See Examples of Sacrificial Service

Since there are new barriers continually being erected to discourage ABCs from going into missions, Chinese churches must do everything possible to overcome these barriers. What helps an ABC to take personal initiative to move forward in his/her missionary career is seeing and knowing living examples of those who have personally taken steps of faith to follow the Lord’s leading to sacrificial service. For earlier generations

of ABC missionaries, those examples were from Caucasian Americans and British missionaries who have demonstrated a walk of faith and followed God's leading to foreign fields of service. More recently there are some ABCs who have themselves experienced the adventures of walking by faith as the Lord led them out to the field. These also serve as examples and sources of encouragement to upcoming generations of ABCs who consider serving in missions. And of course, there are also OBCs who have demonstrated faithfulness in following the Lord's leading to fields abroad.

Who Is Qualified to Send Out Missionaries?

Another way the Chinese church can encourage its ABCs to consider a call to missions is be sure that its local leaders are growing in their own spiritual maturity. Generally those who send out missionaries are local church leaders or mission board members. These senders must be fully surrendered to the Lord and willing to go abroad for mission work if the Lord were to lead them. If no realistic personal sacrificial steps have been taken by senders, they will have a difficult time finding followers. Perhaps it is not whether one has been on the foreign field or not, but whether one has a genuine self-sacrificial faith and would certainly go out if God were to open the door.

Senders who emerge through the leadership ranks of the home church structure as "arm-chair" missionaries become mere theoretical missions officers. Such need to do some soul searching to determine whether they are doing with their lives all that God wants them to do. Effective church missions leaders need to demonstrate self-sacrifice in their personal lives. It would be of great value that church missions leaders are also those who have experienced the life of faith on the mission field. To be leaders in missions departments making decisions to deploy resources of money and personnel would be hollow if their dedication and experience in Christian life is only theoretical.

Should OBC Leaders Send ABCs into Missions?

Some OBC church leaders believe that sending ABCs overseas as missionaries is a logical goal because ABCs know English well. Also, since ABCs are more Americanized, they are less expected to obey their parents who would want them to be well educated and earn a good living in America as professionals. These ABC Christians who feel freer to cut

the apron strings and do what they themselves choose to do may feel freer to go overseas as missionaries than those who are more tightly controlled by their parents. Some OBC parents have such tight control over their children that they could require them to stay close to home to work.

Some OBC church leaders who would not allow their own children to serve in foreign missions would not hesitate to send out ABCs. They themselves might never want to go to the mission field, but they would be happy to send others. OBC leaders in the church who have never personally made sacrifices cannot be models for or senders of ABCs. No one can successfully send another out who has not gone down that road of self-sacrifice. OBCs or ABCs who do not have a background of personal self-sacrificial service do not qualify to be senders. To qualify, they need to get that background. They must have given life-long self-sacrificial service before they can qualify to be senders of others. And it takes a lifetime or a generation to gain that qualification.

OBC and ABC church leaders who are living examples of self-sacrifice for the Lord would have the greatest impact on helping ABCs become effectively involved in God's plan for reaching the world. Are there such qualified mission leaders, whether OBC or ABC? Have they lived a life of sacrificial service themselves first? These kinds of leaders will be able to help prepare and send workers to do missionary work that would be effective for the Kingdom of God. This is the way to advance missionary service in the world, one generation building the next generation of servants.

The Need for Broader Horizons

The first ABCs to become missionaries served primarily in Asia. Today, a new generation of ABCs have a broader vision involving the whole world. Many are serving throughout the world and even in the Muslim countries of the Middle East, Africa, and Asia.

The Chinese churches in the U.S. used to have a mission vision primarily directed to Chinese living in various parts of the world. That narrow view has subsequently expanded to a whole-wide one. They are beginning to think of world missions from a strategic viewpoint. They are starting to ask themselves, "What is the most strategic way in which our church can be God's instrument in bringing about the final goal of having people from every ethnic group in the world gathered around the throne of

God praising Him?" The Chinese Christians of the world are waking up to see themselves as one of God's strategic instruments to reach the world. They are growing in their knowledge of God's calling that they are to be "Chinese for the world!"

Chapter 9

Planting ABC Churches
David Woo

- Are ABC church plants necessary?
- Reasons for planting ABC churches.
- Steps for planting ABC churches.

Are ABC church plants necessary?

There are some who think it is unnecessary to plant ABC churches. They state that if the Chinese churches have effective ministries to their ABCs, then it is unnecessary to plant ABC churches. Is this true? No! Even if Chinese churches have superb ministries for their ABCs, additional ABC churches are still essential.

Reasons for Planting ABC Churches

Cultural Diversity of ABCs.

Could ABCs attend Anglo churches in the neighborhoods where they live? Some ABCs would be willing to do so, but not all because of their differing rates of acculturation. In Chapter 2, "Who Are the ABCs?," it was stated that ABCs can be so different from one another in terms of the rates of their acculturation to the American culture. These differences could be so vast that a wide range of culturally diverse churches would be necessary to meet their needs. Perhaps the following descriptions might

serve to illustrate how ABCs might fit into a diversity of churches. These descriptions would vary from urban to suburban areas and from region to region in the U.S.

- Small numbers of ABCs might feel most comfortable in a Chinese-speaking church.

- The vast majority of ABCs might feel most comfortable in an ABC church.

- Large numbers of ABCs might feel most comfortable in an Asian-American or multi-cultural church.

- Small numbers of ABCs might feel most comfortable in an Anglo church.

Some sociologists estimate that it takes about seven generations for a person to be fully acculturated. Since the Chinese culture is such a strong one, it is likely to take even longer. Therefore, the above descriptions might hold true over many generations. This means that the need for ABC churches will continue for several generations. Continual Chinese immigration also adds to this necessity.

ABC churches will be necessary for many years into the future; however, the ethnic ratio of their congregations will be changing. English-speaking ethnic churches are often in a state of flux regarding the ethnic ratio of their members. For example, since an ABC church uses the English language in its services, it will also attract non-Chinese who feel comfortable in that church. Therefore, what might have begun as an ABC church will possibly in time become multi-cultural to some degree. However, for many more years there will be a need for churches geared to the needs of ABCs.

ABCs Living Far from Chinese Churches

It is necessary to plant ABC churches today because existing Chinese churches are not able to minister to those ABCs who live beyond a reasonable commuting distance to their churches. It takes a strong commitment for one to drive a long distance to church. There are some ABCs who live in a distant suburb who are willing to drive into the central city to attend a Chinese church. However, those with weaker

commitments will easily drop out. Therefore, the geographical location of a church must not become a barrier to one's growth in faith. There must be a church conveniently located in one's neighborhood if possible.

Distance to One's Church Becomes Major Barrier to Evangelism

It is almost impossible for an ABC living in the suburbs to invite his unchurched neighbor to attend the ABC's church in the central city. Therefore, the ABC often does not even try to do so. ABCs living a far distance from their churches often have a non-existent or very weak view of local evangelism. Since they know their unsaved neighbors would not be willing to drive such a long distance to their churches, the thought of inviting them does not even come to mind. Church becomes the place where they feel comfortable with no thought to reaching out to the unsaved.

This barrier can be overcome by planting ABC churches where ABCs live. Geography must never become a barrier to evangelism. Evangelism must always be an integral part of one's faith. We are uniquely placed in our neighborhoods to reach those around us.

Some believers might say that this geographical barrier can be overcome by using local cell groups for evangelizing one's neighbors. Yes, this is a better way to reach one's neighbors. However, where do you plug them into a local church after they receive Christ? Do you send them to a neighborhood church while you drive into the central city to attend your own church? Does a mother give birth to a child and then turn him over to someone else to raise?

The Most Effective Means for Evangelism - Church Planting

"The most effective means of evangelism under heaven is church planting." (Peter Wagner) More people are saved through church planting than through any other form of evangelism. Church planting involves more lay people in evangelizing their friends and neighbors than any kind of mass crusade or any other organized effort to reach the unsaved. Church planting makes it easier for believers to reach out to non-Christians and to incorporate them into a local church. Since we are called as Christians to reach the lost, church planting must always be a part of the strategy of churches.

God Is Glorified

We are called to build the Kingdom. Everything we do must contribute to the net gain of the Kingdom. We exist to glorify God. We must declare his glory among the nations. We must do everything possible to increase the glory given to him by humankind. We plant churches to give more glory to God.

We ought not to plant churches for personal gain, to foster our pride, out of anger or jealousy, or for any other unhealthy human reason. We do not do it to gain authority and power in a church. We do not do it out of anger at the immaturity of the church leaders and their neglect of the church. We do not do it because we think we can do a better job than they can. We do it to glorify God.

Steps for Planting ABC Churches

In this section only some of the basic steps in church planting will be discussed briefly so that one can see the total picture. Much more detailed planning will be required. Many books have been written on this subject and should be consulted.

Promote the Vision

Pray that the leaders of your church will catch the vision for ABC church planting. This is a must. Chinese church leaders need to spearhead the vision rather then simply allowing it. They must give leadership to church planting. They must come to see it as an effective means for ministering to her ABCs both saved and unsaved. They must be willing to give up some of their ABCs for church planting in order to further the Kingdom. They must be willing to promote the Kingdom even at the expense of their own local church. As they give up their people and resources to this new venture, God will bless them with far more than they have given up

Pray for Workers

Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send out workers into his harvest. A pastor, lay leaders, and other workers will he needed for the church plant. Ideally these should be ABCs although it is possible to use

some non-ABCs to assist in an ABC church plant. Workers must have the vision for an ABC church plant. Pray that the Lord will provide such workers.

Need for a Call

At the beginning of the church plant, it is important for many of the lay workers to have a call from God to be involved in the church plant. They should have a firm conviction that the Lord wants them in the work. This calling will give them assurance and perseverance to carry them through the difficult times that any new church plant will face. Everyone gets excited about getting on board a new church plant. They are enthusiastic and have high hopes. They have grand visions of how the church will quickly multiply.

However, earnest prayer and persevering work are required in this pioneering endeavor to release the power of the Spirit to convict the unsaved of their sin. Most non-Christians may require a long, slow process by which they come to conviction of sin. The conviction process may take a year or two in which the believer is the Spirit's instrument in the watering process to bring the plant to fruition. This slow process might cause the believer to get discouraged because he does not see any of the immediate fruit which he had expected from the church plant. Having a clear sense of the Lord's call to this work will help the believer persevere.

Find a church-planting pastor

Ideally the church-planting pastor would already be a part of the pastoral staff of the Chinese church. The mother church would then send out one of its ABC pastors together with ABC families from its church to plant the new church. If no ABC staff from the mother church is available for this undertaking, one must be recruited from outside the church.

Build a Core Group

The core group must have lay leaders and workers who will be recruited, trained, and led by the pastor. Many workers will be needed because in order to attract Christians and to reach non-believers, there must be an effective program in place at the beginning if possible. The larger the core group, the better. It takes people to attract people. There ought to

be a core group of at least fifty people if possible and with families being an important part of the core.

The core group can be ABCs and non-ABCs; however, a significant number should be ABCs because the church plant is trying to attract them. The core members can come from other churches that are not a part of the sponsoring churches.

Some Models for Planting ABC Churches

Sponsored by a Single Church: Mother Church Sends a Pastor and Members

The least complex model is for the mother church to send out its ABC pastor with some of its ABC members who live in the area where the new church will be planted and who have a call from God to be involved in the project. ABCs who do not live in the area where the church plant is located, if called by God, can also be involved.

The mother church will provide financial support for the church plant. Financial support should be provided on an annually declining basis. For instance, support could be provided for five years with each successive year's support twenty percent less than the first year's support. Thus the church plant would be expected to be self-supporting in five years. Adjustments and allowances can be made for special circumstances.

Sponsored by Multi-Churches: Group of Churches Jointly Sponsoring a Church Plant

A denomination or several Chinese or non-Chinese churches may cooperate to jointly sponsor an ABC church plant in an area where the ABCs from their churches live. Pastors, lay leaders, and workers would come from these churches and could come from non-sponsoring churches as well. Financial support from all sponsoring churches would be provided on an annually declining basis over a certain number of years as specifically outlined in the previously described mother-church model.

No Church Sponsorship: "Lone-Wolf" Church Plant

The "lone-wolf" model is not recommended; however, it is described because some church planters do follow this model. This involves an individual leader or a group of people who try to plant a church on their own without any church backing or support. This approach is fraught with many dangers. Seeking church backing can be a way of confirming God's call to this new work. If no church is willing to support the project, perhaps the church planters should have second thoughts about the Lord's call to the project. Also, church planting after the initial euphoria, can be discouraging because of the difficulties of the work. Having church sponsorship can be a source of prayer, encouragement, and financial support. Also, church sponsorship provides oversight over the project and requires accountability from the leaders of the church plant.

In the past, some "lone-wolf" church plants have been very slow in growing and have not thrived. However, if a church planter has a very clear call from the Lord to be a "lone-wolf" church planter, he must by all means obey. William Carey, was discouraged by some local church leaders from going to India even though he had a very clear sense of God's call to go. He obeyed the Lord and went. God blessed his labors in India, and he has become known as the father of the modern mission movement.

There is no question that ABC churches should be planted. The primary questions to be asked are:

Have I been called to promote ABC church planting?
Is our church called to sponsor an ABC church plant?
Have I been called to participate in an ABC church plant?

Part IV. The future of ABC ministries.

Chapter 10

Is There a Future Need for ABC Ministries?
By Joseph Wong

- ABC ministries are essential for the future immigrant Chinese Churches.
- Relationships between OBC and ABC church leaders as equal partners.
- The future picture of ABC ministries.
- Asian American churches.
- Parallel ministries within an ethnic church.

ABC Ministries Are Essential for Future Immigrant Chinese Churches

"Change and decay all around I see,
O Thou who changes not, abide with me."

The above portion of a hymn points out the contrast of life in this changing world with the constancy of God's truth. Human and earthly change is always taking place around us. The business world recognizes this inevitability of change and tries to stay ahead of it by recognizing new trends and adapting to the new environment. Some businesses that were

slow to change used to be number one in sales in the U.S.; but now they are left behind by new upstarts who have far surpassed them.

No matter how much the American society changes, the immigrant Chinese churches will always have a need for ABC ministries. An irrefutable fact is that immigrants will birth and raise ABC children. Parental love and care for their children require an effective ministry to the ABCs in their churches. To commit that ministry to another church is to choose death for their church.

As long as the annual influx of Chinese immigrants continues to be in the tens of thousands, the immigrant church will flourish. Contributing to the growth of the immigrant churches is the immigrant's need for a social and community center, a gathering place for immigrants of the same culture, speaking the same language. Due to the gracious nature of Christianity, churches easily become care and help centers for those arriving in this country. But each immigrant church must not ignore their need to provide good ABC ministries.

Counsel and guidance are needed for these churches to understand and develop healthy ABC ministries as discussed in earlier chapters of this book. Should this not happen, these immigrant churches will have great difficulty surviving. Not only will there be the sad experience of seeing their children abandon the church, but also because of inadequate teaching, they will also see them even leave the faith of their parents. This has already been the experience of many in the Chinese churches in the United States and will continue to be so unless the Chinese churches give high priority to developing healthy ABC ministries. Chinese churches that have difficulty developing such ministries must seek outside counsel and guidance from churches having healthy ABC ministries.

Relationships between OBC and ABC Church Leaders as Equal Partners

A critical characteristic of future ABC ministries is the need for comradeship among the OBC and ABC church staff. It is not easy for the leadership of one culture to embrace the importance of a different culture in the church. However, the OBC leadership must take the initiative to seek out ABC leaders and welcome them into their church’s life. Such a partnership must abandon the paternalistic pattern, where one group sees themselves as the parents and the others as children, or as teachers and

students. Still there is wisdom in seeking to learn from each other without the imposing of one view on the other.

Future Picture of ABC Ministries

Developing ABC ministries in the Chinese churches has been slow, and they face a catch-up condition as well. What the Chinese churches have done in the past in their ministry to ABCs, largely have not succeeded. This means that an evaluation of past efforts in order to improve them is only part of the process. Some rather forward thinking on the part of the church's leadership is needed to address the changing ABC culture. The ingredients used for a successful ministry in the past will provide insight into a future ministry that can be successful. But there are few examples of successful efforts in the past which leave the Chinese churches with a great challenge.

It is hoped that future development of ABC ministries can be dynamic and fruitful. Therefore, deliberate and large-scale efforts to recruit and train future pastors are essential. ABC seminarians must learn the pitfalls, as well as the ingredients in effective ABC ministries and not just learn to survive in a Chinese church. In the American society there has been a practice of relaxing the qualifications to give the people of a newer ethnic background the opportunity to catch up. This might be a practical approach to assist those inexperienced with the Chinese culture to gain expertise.

The future of ABC ministries will remain not only in immigrant churches. There already exists ABC churches which are ministering to third, fourth, and even fifth generation ABCs. Acculturated OBCs who have become comfortable in a Western style church life will also participate. In these churches the Chinese language will be unnecessary.

Since ABC churches will use only English, other Asians will also be attracted to these churches. In time these churches will attract Asian Americans in varying degrees. Other Americans of Asian origin will readily relate to an ABC church's life style. Their national and cultural identity is American while their racial roots will be Asian. It seems to be close enough for a common identity. The hostilities resulting from the history of their ancestral countries do not exist among the Asian Americans today.

Since the needs of Asian Americans have been neglected in the immigrant Asian churches, Asian American church leaders have planted churches that minister to English-speaking Asians. However, many of these new Asian American churches have a common weakness. What has developed are Asian American churches that have no relationship with a mother church or with any immigrant churches. They are missing the mature counsel and wisdom of the leaders from the established immigrant churches or a denomination.

By far, the greatest weakness of the Asian American church is its inability to minister to the needs of the Asian American's immigrant parents who are not comfortable with English. Asian American churches sometimes produce divided families where the children attend an English-speaking church while the parents attend a non-English-speaking one. Sometimes concerned Christians attending an Asian American church will call a pastor of an immigrant Asian church for help in reaching their immigrant parents. The challenge given to immigrant churches to be concerned for their ABCs is also valid for Asian American churches to be concerned for their immigrant parents.

In spite of these weaknesses in the Asian American church, it is a concept which has quickly caught on. The Asian American church possesses great potential. The unreached Asian American is an exploding community. It is probably true, that the future belongs to the Asian American church.

"ABC vs. Asian-American Ministries" *by David Woo*
*(*ABOUT FACE*, Vol. 20, No. 1, February 1998)*

I have noticed that many American-born Chinese seminarians or recent seminary graduates prefer to serve in Asian-American (by Asian-American I also mean multicultural) churches rather than Chinese churches. They have this interest for various reasons. Some of them do not want the extra hassle of working in a church with more than one language or culture. Others do not like the idea of working under an overseas-born Chinese senior pastor or OBC-controlled church board both of which may not be culturally sensitive to the needs of ABCs. Other

ABC seminarians and recent graduates look upon Asian-American ministries as the wave of the future, and consider ABC ministries today to be anachronistic, applicable to the 1960s but not to the 1990s. And there are those who have a legitimate call from the Lord to minister specifically to Asian Americans. The problem I want to address is whether ABC ministries are being neglected or overlooked today because they are seen as out-of-date while Asian American ministries are seen as being on the cutting edge.

Before I continue this article, I need to give you my own background in ministry so that you may know the perspective from which I write. I was born and raised in Los Angeles, attended a bilingual Chinese church from the age of eight, and was saved and active there for eighteen years until I graduated from seminary and moved from the area. Then I served as an associate pastor for seven years in a bilingual Chinese church in Chicago. From there I was involved in planting an Asian-American church in the north suburban area of Chicago in 1971. This church plant was possibly the first church founded in the United States specifically targeting Asian Americans. (If someone can inform me of a church planted before 1971 that was established specifically to target Asian Americans, I would like to know about it.) I served as the pastor in this Asian-American church for fifteen years. From there I was called to serve as an associate pastor in a bilingual Chinese church in Los Angeles where I served for six years. My present ministry in the Los Angeles area, where I have been serving for five years, is as the pastor of a multicultural congregation. In summary, I have served in Asian-American churches for twenty years and Chinese bilingual churches for twelve years.

First of all, I would have to say that there is a legitimate case for Asian-American ministries. I do not wish to denigrate this need. There are many unsaved Asians that cannot be reached by mono-ethnic churches and can only be reached through Asian-American works. More power to these ministries. May the Lord richly bless and multiply them through evangelism to the unsaved. (Church growth by transfer-growth is valid but I would much more rather see growth by evangelism.) May the Lord send

more workers into this harvest.

Although the case for Asian-American ministries is legitimate, I believe that more ABC seminarians and graduates should be open to the Lord calling them into ABC ministries. The case for ABC ministries is strong and valid. Here are a few reasons:

1. The number of Chinese bilingual churches looking for ABC workers far exceeds the need for workers in Asian-American ministries. Chinese churches throughout North America are looking for ABC workers while Asian-American ministries are few in number and primarily centered on the West Coast.

2. Some Asian-American churches tend to minister to the dropouts from the Chinese churches. But by the time these Christians leave the Chinese churches, many of them have been so turned off that they are extremely difficult to reach even by the Asian-American churches. Why not strengthen the ministries to the ABCs while they are in the Chinese churches rather than wait until the damage is done and then try to pick up the pieces? Let's correct the problem at its source.

3. Many ABC seminarians and graduates are products of Chinese churches. They know firsthand the needs and opportunities in the Chinese churches and are the most suitable ones to minister in these situations. Could the Lord be calling so many of them away from ABC ministries? Perhaps the Lord has His ways, but I wonder about it.

4. ABC ministries by and large tend to be more difficult than Asian-American ministries because most ABC ministries take place in the context of a bilingual church, unless one serves in a church specifically planted for ABCs. Should the degree of difficulty be the measure of God's call? Does the Lord not call people to leave easier ministries to go into more difficult ones?

5. ABC seminarians and graduates who were saved and nurtured in OBC churches have managed to survive the many barriers that have caused many ABCs to drop out of the OBC churches. These survivors have hearts of compassion for those remaining. Do we who managed to survive now pull up the rope and walk away saying to those remaining, "I survived on my own; now you do the same"? I do not want to accuse ABC pastors who do not serve in Chinese churches as being deserters because the Lord calls each into a particular ministry, and I must not question whom the Lord calls into what ministry. It is between each person and the Lord. But I would wish that more ABC pastors, having come out of OBC churches and having a heart of compassion for the ABCs in those churches, would be moved to serve among them.

6. Today, the Chinese churches are filled with ABC children and young people who are much in need of sensitive pastoral leadership. Do we write them off? Do we say to them, "You are not a part of the wave of the future"?

The title of this article is a misnomer. There is not a conflict between ABC and Asian-American ministries. Both are valid ministries, and the Lord calls people to both. Let us rejoice and celebrate with those whom the Lord has called to each – while not forgetting the ABC part.

Parallel Ministries within the Chinese Church

Few, if any, immigrant churches of Asian ancestry have caught the vision to start English-speaking versions of their ethnic churches, much less start Asian American churches. Though such a situation is unfortunate, it is understandable. The immigrant church is so concerned for her immediate needs, that many of them have over-looked the other need in the Chinese populace, the ABCs. These also are the children of earlier immigrants who have yet to come to Christ.

Are the Chinese churches in North America able to address this challenge? Will they acquire a vision for this ministry? It will happen when some church leaders are able to lift up their eyes to this need and

realize it is a ripe harvest field. The challenge will not be simply reaching and discipling ABCs, but reaching and discipling Asian Americans as well.

The future of ABC ministries is NOW! May the churches in the U.S. that minister to immigrants in Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, etc., catch the vision for Asian American churches and consider taking on the responsibility for establishing them. A characteristic of being a biblical Christian is learning to look beyond one's personal needs and in love, undertake the task of meeting the needs of others. It is time for the Chinese churches to look into her role for the future of ABC ministries.

The developing Asian American or ABC churches are themselves faced with the significant question that was addressed above, "How shall we minister to the immigrant parents of our Asian American members?" Leaving that ministry to the immigrant churches will result in dividing the families. This problem confronts the Chinese churches in America, whether they are ABC or OBC churches. Is it acceptable to be a mono-cultural church while dividing the bi-cultural Chinese families?

An ABC church can theoretically ignore the OBC culture by ministering to second, third and later generations Chinese in America. Some first generation Chinese who were raised in America may find these churches comfortable. Still, it is not improbable that ABC young people who are being evangelized, will have parents who find it very difficult to fit into an ABC church.

FACE recommends that although the planting of Asian American churches are viable options, the Chinese churches in America should give their first priority to providing parallel ministries to OBCs and ABCs within their churches. In time, perhaps there will be a significant lessening of the need to minister to immigrants. But for the foreseeable future, the need for Chinese churches with parallel ministries will remain and is the ideal church structure for providing suitable ministries to both OBCs and ABCs.

Chapter 11

Power for future ABC Ministries
By David K. Woo

- Obstacles to effective ministries to ABCs.
- Need for God's passion to burn within us.
- Need for power of the Holy Spirit to enable us.
- Need for consistent practice of the spiritual disciplines.
- Need for persevering prayer.

In previous chapters we have been offering practical suggestions for making ABC ministries more effective within the Chinese churches. Among the ideas promoted are the need to have culturally-sensitive OBC leadership, have an effective model for ABC ministry within the Chinese church, have spiritually mature ABC leadership, design church programs that minister effectively to ABCs, and the need to plant churches for reaching ABCs.

Implementing these ideas within a Chinese church can go a long way toward making its ministry to ABCs more effective. However, we all know the problem. It is easier said than done. We can have great ideas that when applied within a church can improve that church's ministry one thousand percent. The problem is always in the application. How do we go about starting or implementing it?

Besides knowing the right steps for implementing these ideas, and knowing when and how to go about taking these steps, church leaders

needs to be aware of the obstacles that will be encountered as they go about attempting to put these steps into practice. The obstacles will be formidable and require great perseverance. Church leader must know that many other optimistic and enthusiastic church leaders have quit in mid-stream while attempting to implement these ideas. The road is littered with exhausted church leaders who have tried and failed. They became discouraged, burned out, gave up after meeting so much resistance, and quit the Chinese church to attend a more flexible church.

What will be some of the obstacles that church leaders will face as they attempt to improve their church's ministry to ABCs? And how can they effectively deal with them? These obstacles cannot be overcome by laboring in our human strength alone. There is power to overcome them. How can we appropriate that power? Although the barriers can be almost countless, only a few of the common obstacles will be identified at this point. Some of these obstacles have been discussed in more detail in previous chapters.

Obstacles to Effective Ministries to ABCs

Sinful Pressures of the American Culture

ABCs and OBCs can easily be caught up in the sinful pressures of the American culture. They face the same pressures that the average American Christian faces in this country. The American culture is very materialistic. Since the average American is much better off economically than people of most other cultures of the world, it is easier for American Christians to be caught up in accumulating material things. The financial pressures connected with owning a home, driving more than one late-model automobile, owning a house full of electronic gadgets, going on expensive vacations, wearing the latest designer clothing, spending large sums on personal recreation and eating out, owing large balances on one's credit cards, etc., consume many American Christians. These financial pressures are a major distraction for many American believers and keep them from living fruitful Christian lives.

Many ABC and OBC Christians are easily caught up in this same consumer mentality. They may be so distracted from being effective servants for our Lord that they cannot provide the Spirit-led leadership for ABC ministries within the Chinese churches. They are likely to lack the wisdom and perseverance that is required of ABC leaders who have to

labor against the tide of OBC leaders who may lack sensitivity to the needs of ABCs within the Chinese churches.

The American culture is becoming increasingly more secular. Politically correct thinking is rapidly growing in its antagonism to Christian values. For instance the importance of the individual has overshadowed the worth of the family or corporate values. Relative morality has replaced absolute morality. Each individual has the right to decide for himself what is right or wrong. No one has the right to impose his morality upon another. Inclusive thinking has now become the rule. No one is to be excluded from exercising his personal freedom to live life the way he chooses. Freedom of speech protects the purveyors of pornography. Some Christians have become trapped in pornographic addictions while other Christians may take adultery very lightly. Tolerance has become the standard by which people are to live. Anyone who is intolerant of another's lifestyle or personal habits is a bigot. Narcissistic thinking gives one permission to satisfy one's own lustful desires.

Many American Christians as well as ABC and OBC Christians have been blindsided by the onslaughts of politically correct thinking. They have incorporated secular values into their Christian worldview without even realizing that such thinking is contrary to scripture. They think that they are good Christians because they have adopted the politically correct values of our society. ABC and OBC Christians can easily fall into step with this kind of thinking.

These kinds of Christians are almost of no value within the churches. They are often detriments within the churches diverting the churches from becoming fruitful for the Lord. They block the churches from being lights on the hilltop to guide society into knowing the truths of God's Word. They prevent the churches from being the salt of the earth, from being God's moral compass for the world. They nullify any attempts on the part of churches to practice evangelism. They are satisfied with a maintenance mentality. These kinds of ABC and OBC Christians would be major obstacles within the Chinese churches preventing them from being effective or fruitful.

ABC Leaders Need to Learn to Be Sensitive to OBC Leadership

ABC Christian leaders need to learn to look at life through OBC eyes. ABCs need to learn about the values that OBCs place on the family and on Chinese culture. ABCs need to learn to think on a corporate level instead of just looking at everything from an individualistic viewpoint. ABCs need to learn how important the concept of "saving face" is to the OBC. The ABC needs to learn to pick his battles. Some things are worth fighting for while others are not. The ABC needs wisdom to discern the difference. Otherwise, there will be times where he will win the battle but lose the war. When the ABC chooses to battle with OBC church leaders over low priority items and wins, he may be setting the battlefield for a major loss over higher priority items in the future. The ABC needs the wisdom to know when to yield and when to stand his ground, when to overlook a minor infraction, and when to confront in love.

Preservation of Chinese Culture

OBCs may easily fall into the temptation of seeking to preserve Chinese culture at the expense of building the Lord's Kingdom. The OBC attaches high value to the Chinese culture. The need to transmit Chinese cultural values to their offspring could likely be their highest and most all-encompassing aspiration. This desire can be so strong that it could occupy a higher priority than any longings that their children be Christians or mature fruitful Christians. This desire can move the average OBC to strongly prefer that their children attend a bi-lingual worship service so that their children can be more exposed to the Chinese language and culture at the expense of their greater spiritual growth through a separate English-language worship service.

The ABC Christian leader working within a Chinese church containing strong OBC leadership may encounter this battle on many fronts. The priority of a separate English-language worship service will become a major battleground. The priority of a Chinese-language school over Sunday school, church fellowship groups, or other important biblical teaching programs, may become a hot issue. The priority of the use of church facilities by non-Christian Chinese cultural groups versus their use for essential programs of the church may become a large issue.

The ABC Christian leader must patiently and wisely try to help OBC church leaders who have the wrong priority of placing Chinese culture over the Christian faith. These kinds of OBC church leaders must be helped to see that it is far more important that their children experience eternal life with the Lord than to be steeped in the Chinese culture. What would it profit them if they become experts on Chinese culture and lose their own souls.

ABCs Tend to Be Good Administrators But May Be Weak in Spiritual Fervor

Because ABCs are raised in the U.S. they tend to easily pick up American ways of being well organized and efficient in their work. They learn to be excellent administrators through their secular jobs. As a result they may think that because they have extensive administrative skills, they are well qualified for leadership in the church. They may rely purely on human experience and overlook the importance of spiritual maturity or spiritual fervor. They may be great administrators but lack the fire of God burning deep in their bones. However, they may see themselves as well qualified for church leadership. They will tend to run the church like a secular corporation. They may be very well organized and efficient in running the church. However, the church will lack spiritual power to do God's work. Without spiritual power the church will be open to attacks from the evil one, and the church will languish and be unfruitful. These kinds of church leaders may easily become involved in fighting among themselves which may cause some to leave the church with bitter feelings.

ABCs May Be Weak in the Practice of the Spiritual Disciplines

The American culture tends to promote outward action rather than inward meditative skills. The American way emphasizes what one accomplishes rather than waiting on the Lord. In the American style of life, it is the tangible results that are most important. "We want action; we want to see results!" Meditation tends to be an eastern practice that has no vital role in the American way of doing things. ABCs while growing up in the U.S. pick up the way of thinking which places action over meditation. Therefore, they tend to be people who prefer outward activity rather than inward contemplation. They want to do it now!

Americans tend to be self-confident and to act independently. Self-reliance is one of the basic qualities of the American culture of

individualism. They see themselves as capable of taking care of themselves and able to handle things on their own without outside help. They tend to think that they can do it all themselves. "Do it yourself" is a slogan that reflects the American way of thinking.

I once overhead two young single women talking about an attractive young man. They mentioned many of the strengths of his personality. However, they disappointedly added, "But, he still lives at home with his parents." These two women were caught up in the American way of thinking that young adults after getting a regular job are expected to move out of their parents' home and live on their own. Those who do not follow this "American norm" are looked down upon. This is an example of American individualism at work

This independent thinking which says "I can do it all by myself" tends to affect American and ABC Christians to a large degree. As a result ABC Christians tend to be weak in the practices of the spiritual disciplines because they do not see any need for the extra spiritual power which comes through practicing them. In many Christian ministries in which ABCs are involved, little is said about the importance of the spiritual disciplines. The value of meditation is seldom heard. As a result much of the work of ABC church leaders operates on a sub-par level because they have not been experiencing the power of the Spirit which comes through the practice of the spiritual disciplines.

ABCs Can Be Satisfied with Biblical Knowledge at the Expense of Application

The American society is an information society. Knowledge is heavily promoted and highly regarded. "Experts" are often interviewed on TV talk shows. Their knowledge is highly valued. Christians growing up in the U.S. tend to have this same high regard for knowledge. "It is what you know that really matters." Therefore knowledge of the Bible is held in high esteem.

ABC Christians place a similar high value on Bible knowledge. I have found many ABC Christians with healthy appetites for Bible study. Many of them meet together regularly in small groups for Bible study. Those who have been meeting regularly for many years have come to know the Bible very well. Their knowledge of the contents of the Bible is extensive. Many of them make regular use of commentaries to increase

the depth of their knowledge. Their efforts at Bible study are commendable.

However some ABC Christians do not go much beyond Bible knowledge. Their efforts to apply the Bible into every segment of their lives are weak. The average small group Bible study may spend one to two hours studying the content of the Bible and five minutes discussing the practical application of the passage. The incongruity between their Bible knowledge and its application goes largely unnoticed. As a result their labors for the Lord may be largely in the flesh without fully experiencing the power of the Spirit in their work.

ABCs and OBCs Can Be Weak in Their Vision for Outreach

Among many of the ABC Christians I have known, I have found them to be hard working. They were willing workers who were eager to serve in the church and very capable in carrying out the work entrusted to them. They were excellent teachers of the Bible and possessed many other gifts for serving the Lord. However, I did notice a weakness in the spiritual maturity of many of them. This weakness was in their vision for outreach. This vision seems to be lacking in many Christians. Many very capable and effective Christian workers are strong in every other area except in the area of having a vision for the lost. Some ABC and OBC church leaders are among those lacking this vision and do not sense this omission.

The Solution

Need for God's Passion to Burn within Us

Because of the numerous obstacles OBC and ABC church leaders face in attempting to do ABC ministries, they have many personal needs that have to be filled before they can be fruitful in their attempts. First, both OBC and ABC church leaders need to spend so much time in the presence of the Lord that their faces shine with God's glory like the face of Moses after he had spent extended time in God's presence. Chinese church leaders need to walk so closely with the Lord that the fire of his heart ignites a fire within their own hearts.

One time some mischievous boys who wanted some excitement threw a lighted match into tall dry grass. The grass instantly ignited, and the flames began to spread rapidly. The boys who numbered about six began to stamp out the fire with their shoes and with shovels. They succeeded in extinguishing the fire but only after it had burned an area of about fifty feet in diameter. They learned that day that dry grass could ignite very quickly and burn very fast.

The hearts of ABC and OBC church leaders need to be like that dry grass, highly combustible with the fire from God's heart. Their hearts need to be tender and sensitive to God and close enough to him to be ignited from the sparks leaping from his heart. ABC and OBC church leaders need to have hearts that are after God's own heart. As Jesus looked on the crowds and wept for them with great tears of compassion, so we must walk so closely with him that our hearts are consumed with his same compassion for the lost. We need to have Jesus' vision for the world and his passion for the lost. We need to catch what is on his heart. Without God's passion burning within our hearts, we will not be able to do effective ABC ministry.

Need for Power of the Holy Spirit to Enable Us

ABC and OBC church workers need to be fully convinced that "Unless the Lord builds the house, the laborers labor in vain that build it." They need to see that trying to do spiritual work without the power of the Spirit is fruitless. They need to be reminded that unless the Holy Spirit is working through their efforts they are merely spinning their wheels on the slippery ice while their car is not moving. It is only the Spirit who can convict people of their sin. It is only the Spirit who can empower a person to change his life from living in sin to living a holy life and becoming more like Jesus.

ABC and OBC church leaders need to be reminded of Jesus living within them in the form of the Holy Spirit and of his promised work within them. Some of the verses upon which leaders need to dwell are as follows:

> "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

> "But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth... He will bring glory to me by taking from what is mine and making it known to you" (John 16:13,14).
>
> "But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you" (John 14:26).
>
> "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
>
> "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Gal. 5:22,23).

ABC church leaders need to overcome their American tendency to feel self-reliant, remind themselves that trusting in their own human wisdom and strength will be fruitless in the spiritual realm, and seek to live their lives through the Spirit's power. They need to see that they cannot do it in themselves. They need to know that the Holy Spirit will enable them to do all that God wills for them to do. They need to act on this knowledge by faith by believing God will enable them and then venturing out in obedience and actually trying to do it.

Need for Consistent Practice of the Spiritual Disciplines

How can Christians live their lives through the Spirit's power? A person cannot change himself into becoming more like Jesus. Only the Holy Spirit can do this. And he does it through the tools he has made available for us to use. The tools that the Spirit uses to change us are the spiritual disciplines such as prayer, meditation, worship, solitude, fasting, etc. As Christians diligently make use of these tools, the Spirit will empower the believers to do that which they could not do in their own human strength. The Spirit uses the spiritual disciplines to enable a Christian to live on a supernatural level rather than merely on a human level. As Christians run the race of life practicing the spiritual disciplines, the Spirit will enable them to complete the race fruitfully and victoriously.

Diligently practicing the spiritual disciplines can ignite our hearts with fire from God's heart. The spiritual disciplines will enable us to walk

very closely at his side. This involves spending much time in his presence through daily times and extended times of prayer and meditation on his Word. Perhaps once a month or every other month a person can set aside a half-day or full day for extended solitude, reading, prayer, meditation, and journaling. Such practices will enable the Spirit to change our hearts and make us more like Jesus.

Need for Persevering Prayer

The most important spiritual discipline is prayer. Prayer does make a difference. Richard Foster in his book, *Celebration of Discipline*, says, "To pray is to change."

> *To pray is to change. Prayer is the central avenue God uses to transform us. If we are unwilling to change, we will abandon prayer as a noticeable characteristic of our lives. The closer we come to the heartbeat of God the more we see our need and the more we desire to be conformed to Christ.* (p.33)

Prayer Really Does Result in Changes that Would Otherwise Never Occur

ABC and OBC Christians need to develop extensive habits of persevering prayer. They need to learn to wait regularly upon the Lord for his will, his plan, his timing, his power, and his results. ABC and OBC Christian workers in their own personal prayer lives need to model to their congregations the critical need for prayer. Answers to prayer should be shared with the congregation so that they can be encouraged to pray.

If one were to conduct a study of all the healthy, growing Christian churches in the world, one would be able to identify certain factors that all these churches have in common that could be regarded as essentials for healthy church growth. One common factor is that all of them have strong ministries of prayer. In all the churches of the world that are growing at a rapid rate and effectively winning and producing fruitful believers, there is a strong emphasis on prayer. Prayer is given highest priority in these churches. Without such a high value given to prayer, these churches would be weak and ineffective. Prayer is the primary key to their fruitfulness.

God's work in all parts of the world runs into fierce opposition from the evil one. There is severe spiritual warfare fought all over the globe between the forces of the Holy Spirit and the forces of the evil one. This warfare is primarily waged through prayer. Paul after naming the spiritual armor for which we are given to wage warfare against the devil's schemes, concludes by identifying prayer as the essential hand for holding and using the armor. "Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, … And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests" (Eph. 6:17,18).

Jesus' disciples were trying to cast out a demon from a boy and were unable to do so. When Jesus came upon the scene, he succeeded in casting out the demon. Later, in private, his disciples asked Jesus why they were unable to cast the demon out of the boy. Jesus said, "This kind can come out only by prayer" (Mark 9:29).

Certain levels of spiritual warfare can only be waged by prayer. Without prayer the believer cannot be engaged in victorious spiritual warfare. Prayer is the most effective weapon against our spiritual enemy. Therefore, healthy, growing churches must have strong prayer ministries. One would never find a fruitful church that does not also have a strong ministry of prayer. In the same way one would never find strong, healthy ministries to ABCs in Chinese churches that do not also have powerful ministries of prayer.

Conclusion:

In previous chapters of this handbook we have outlined suggestions by which Chinese churches might make their ministries to ABCs more effective. We have glanced at some of the obstacles Chinese churches will face in attempting to implement these suggestions. We have been reminded that these obstacles are so formidable that they cannot be overcome by human effort alone. Again we have had to go back to the basics, the spiritual disciplines. The spiritual disciplines are the backbone by which the Christian life is lived, by which spiritual warfare is waged, and by which ABC ministries will bear abundant fruit.

This entire book can be summarized in one sentence.

> *Effective ABC ministry will result when both OBC and ABC church leaders are being changed by the Holy Spirit as they fervently practice the spiritual disciplines and are earnestly obeying him as he gives them wisdom and power to do his work.*

In this way they will hear the voice of God giving them vision and wisdom to do ABC ministries. They will receive his power to do it. As they trust in his power to enable them, they will work diligently and witness the fruit of the Spirit being manifested within themselves and within the ABCs they are serving. Because it is all accomplished in the Spirit's power, he alone will receive all the glory.

With the Spirit's help, you can make a difference in your church's ministry to ABCs. It is in your hands. God can use you to affect the direction of the ABC ministry in your church. God can use you to make a difference; and he will be glorified through you.