

CARING AND IDENTITY:  
A CASE OF YOUNG ADULTS IN  
THE CANADIAN CHINESE CHURCH

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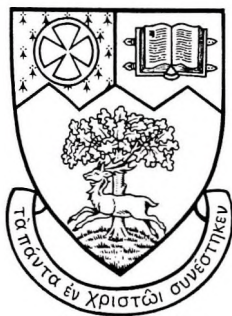
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A CASE OF YOUNG ADULTS IN THE CANADIAN CHINESE CHURCH

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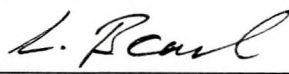
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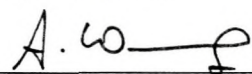
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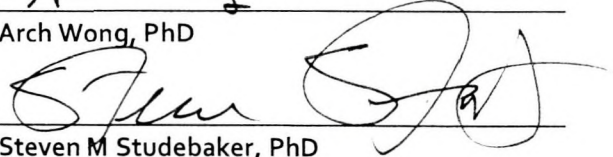
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## ABSTRACT

“Caring and Identity: A Case of Young Adults in the Canadian Chinese Church”

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The culture of the twenty-first century can be characterized by discontentment and hopelessness, especially among emerging adults or Millennials. They are generally lost in their orientation in life and are in search of who they are. There are many challenges to identity. Relativism has caused the loss of anchors in life; and individualism in neoliberalism promises freedom but does not deliver. Postmodernism also entails a paradigm shift in the demarcation of the human life cycle. This phenomenon prolongs the transition between adolescence and adulthood. Furthermore, people are suffering under the power of a neoliberal economic system. Men and women are stressed and exhausted by their everyday lived experience. For those who grew up in the immigrant Chinese church, the issue of identity is further complexified by culture and ethnicity. Many of them have chosen to leave the church where they grew up in search of a place of belonging, a home.

How can the church be that home for young adults? This dissertation argues that the church can be the caring community where they belong. Caring is paramount to those who are transitioning into adulthood. However, caring is no longer the central narrative in many churches. Today pastoral care in the church has been displaced by institutional

needs and a performance-driven mentality. Therefore, theological reflection on the praxis of care in generational ministry is necessary for the Canadian Chinese Church. The message of the holistic gospel speaks of life on earth as much as it does on life after death. Notwithstanding, salvation in Jesus Christ is still the grand-narrative. It is the bedrock of all that pastoral theology proposes. This research affirms that apart from the cross of Jesus, there can be no daily deliverance. The call to care for individual needs is not to preach another gospel but to fulfill it.

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In closing, I thank God for his amazing grace in providing this opportunity of learning and following Jesus. From beginning to end, this journey was marked by grace.

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## Chapter 1:

### THE STRUGGLE FOR IDENTITY AND THE SILENT EXODUS

#### Introduction

“Who am I?” is one of the key questions for young adults in the contemporary culture. The quest for identity is more than a philosophical question but a practical one. This question is more pressing now than for previous generations because of the dynamics that remove clear demarcations for adulthood and the changing social environment. All of which challenges available reference points passed down from religious and cultural traditions.<sup>1</sup> In modernity, career and family are primary demarcations for adulthood. However, that is no longer the case. The change in demarcation regarding human development is a paradigm shift that the church needs to pay attention to. Moreover, there is a tenacious culture of discontentment that is fueled by neoliberalism.<sup>2</sup> Neoliberalism is the philosophy behind neoliberal capitalism policies that cause tremendous stress for everyone but more so for Millennials who are now entering into young adulthood.<sup>3</sup> How relevant is the gospel message to a generation that is *generally lost*?<sup>4</sup>

Furthermore, how caring is practiced in the church affects the outcome of identity affirmation or erosion in young adults. One of the symptoms of identity erosion is found

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<sup>1</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 5–12; Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 45; Beach, *Church*, 22.

<sup>2</sup> Neoliberalism can be understood fundamentally as the philosophy that promotes ultimate individual freedom by lifting restrictions set by government policies so that free trade can be maximized between individuals and territories globally. This approach results in the global economic system of neoliberal capitalism. The new global economy has been a major cause of identity erosion in young adults.

<sup>3</sup> LaMothe, “State-Corporate,” 21.

<sup>4</sup> The phrase *generally lost* refers to the disorientation in life and the loss of identity and does not necessarily carry religious connotations to refer to those who are without salvation.

in the decline of church attendance.<sup>5</sup> Scholars generally agree that a degree of decline does exist among emerging adults.<sup>6</sup> In particular, this dissertation is interested in those who are affiliated with English speaking ministries in the Canadian Chinese Church (CCC). Moreover, it argues that the central role of pastoral care in the church has been distracted by the pastoral care movement in the twentieth century. The pastoral care movement has mainly been focused on “psychotherapeutic psychologies.”<sup>7</sup> Hence the nature of pastoral care needs clarification. Alastair Campbell advocates for the rediscovery of the true nature of pastoral care because of the “confusion about the true nature of Christian caring and by a feeling of alienation from traditional understandings of the pastoral task.”<sup>8</sup> When holistic nurturing and long term relationships are no longer the basis of pastoral ministry, the church is at risk of becoming irrelevant to a suffering world. Caring is paramount to young adults who are in a fierce struggle to find their identity.

Identity is the “self-referential description that provides contextually appropriate answers to the question ‘Who am I?’”<sup>9</sup> It is a multifaceted issue that comprises of purpose, freedom, relationships, transition, and ritualization generally.<sup>10</sup> For young adults in the CCC, questions of identity are further complexified by ethnicity, culture, and power structures. Chinese Canadians must grapple with the issue of bicultural identity. To understand the inner being of the human soul would require an interdisciplinary approach in pastoral theology and social science. Göte Bergen warns, “The mind and

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<sup>5</sup> The decline in attendance may indicate a shift in identity formation for postmodern adults.

<sup>6</sup> See Bergler, “Mapping,” 64–96.

<sup>7</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 16.

<sup>8</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ashforth et al., “Identification,” 327.

<sup>10</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 43.

body are the instruments through which the soul manifests itself in time. Therefore, the care of souls cannot be practiced in the deepest sense if either the spiritual or the psychological aspects of man's [sic] nature is emphasised or cultivated at the expense of the other."<sup>11</sup> The conversation on identity will inevitably involve the whole person—their physical, psychological, spiritual, and intellectual being. However, this research focuses mainly on areas that come under the categories of spiritual or psychological facets of the person.

Identity crisis is commonly understood to happen during adolescence.<sup>12</sup> Erik H. Erikson asserts that identity formation and identity confusion occur mostly during this stage.<sup>13</sup> This has been the focus of modern psychology and central to his life cycle theory.<sup>14</sup> However, pastoral theology needs to pay attention to the identity crisis in young adults in the postmodern era. In fact, Erikson has already alluded to the fact that identity formation is a long time process.<sup>15</sup> By engaging Erikson and other theorists on the subject of identity, the faith community has much to gain. The problem of identity confusion is played out in the phenomenon commonly referred to as the “silent exodus” where young adults are leaving the Asian immigrant church.<sup>16</sup> A pastor explains why the exodus is silent. He observes, “They leave with respect, saying, ‘You guys are doing your own thing. That’s good for you, but I have my own spiritual desires to go forth.’ And so they don’t stand up to criticize (but) rather to move on to find another church.”<sup>17</sup> However, another pastor contends, “In most Chinese churches, we do know that there’s a silent

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<sup>11</sup> Bergsten, *Pastoral Psychology*, 31.

<sup>12</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 12.

<sup>13</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32.

<sup>14</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 12.

<sup>15</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 113.

<sup>16</sup> Lee, “Silent,” 1. The term “silent exodus” was coined by Helen Lee in her 1996 article on why Asian American young adults are leaving the church.

<sup>17</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 403.

exodus or a loud exodus.”<sup>18</sup> The metaphor of exodus, silent or otherwise, has generated much interest among practitioners in the CCC.

Some of the young adults have gone to other churches including Caucasian, Korean, or other Chinese churches. However, this does not change the fact that they are disillusioned about the immigrant church where they grew up. While the problem of young adults leaving the church is not unique to the CCC, it is more prevalent here due to additional challenges of language, culture, and expressions of spirituality. Hence they are often at a loss with regards to what they are supposed to do when it comes to living out their faith. This is closely related to their search for a community that they can call their own. This community needs to be more than a place where they can gather with their peers but where they can make their own choices about relevant faith practices. As people of faith, they are looking to fulfill God’s calling and mission for their generation. This process is necessarily generational in nature and requires the collaboration and cooperation between those who currently hold power in the immigrant church and subsequent generations. Now is the time to build caring relationships that affirms their calling and identity. This requires true empowerment between generations.

This dissertation makes three key contributions to the field of pastoral care and identity. First, this research calls for the rediscovering of pastoral care as the central narrative to pastoral ministry, again.<sup>19</sup> It explores the current state of pastoral care, the roots of pastoral care through its history in the Christian tradition, and why it is important to restore caring as a central message and practice of the church.

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<sup>18</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 410.

<sup>19</sup> The call to rediscovering pastoral care in the church echoes the work of Alastair Campbell, C. W. Brister, and Thomas Oden.

Many churches today see the need for pastoral care but in the form of specialized ministries. This approach compartmentalizes the ministry of pastoral care. The field of pastoral care in the twentieth century has taken a new direction since the Clinical Pastoral Education (C. P. E.) movement introduced by Anton Boisen.<sup>20</sup> The movement was meant to equip the pastoral person to recognize symptoms of psychological conditions and to provide the appropriate types of care. However, the success of the pastoral care movement may have caused the narrowing of the discipline into pastoral counseling and psychoanalysis. In the process, the praxis of care has been separated from normal church ministries. Gerkin and Campbell are among those who attempt to bring together the therapeutic tradition and the faith community.

Second, pastoral theology needs to pay attention to the changing shape of human development. The change in the human life cycle from the modern to the postmodern is a paradigm shift. It has profound influence in eroding identity in young adults. This shift has been identified by Friedrich Schweitzer in his book *The Postmodern Life Cycle*.<sup>21</sup> The demarcations of adulthood between Baby Boomers who operate on the premise of modern social structures and Millennials in the postmodern era are markedly different. One of the key points in Schweitzer's postmodern life cycle is the significance of transitions especially for young adults. In response to the "Hemorrhaging Faith" report which examines the reasons of why young adults are leaving the Canadian churches, Karen Stiller in an article in *Faith Today* magazine confirms that many young people are lost during "transition points."<sup>22</sup> A decade ago, the focus of the discussion was on the

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<sup>20</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 251–63; Gerkin, *Introduction*, 53; Hiltner, *Preface*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Stiller, "Why They're Leaving," 20. The "Hemorrhaging Faith" report is commissioned by the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada.

transition from high school to university. However, this research asserts that the church needs to pay attention now to a more crucial transition, that is, from university to the marketplace—when students become young adults.<sup>23</sup> Thereby, the church can provide spiritual and moral guidance.

Third, this research wants to raise awareness of the rise of neoliberalism. This is an obscure but important topic. However, pastoral theology is beginning to have this conversation. This dissertation argues that one of the key sources of the tenacious culture of discontentment is neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is an ideology that underlies many of the world's economic structures. Neoliberal philosophy has influenced geo-politics and the global economy as neoliberal capitalism for over four decades. It is the driving force behind government policies and restructuring of corporations under familiar categories such as “deregulation” and “globalization.”<sup>24</sup> This systemic shift in the global economy has far reaching consequences. It causes an increase in inequality and heightens stress in every aspect of life.

Neoliberalism also poses significant threats to the well-being of young adults. Moreover, it seeks to redefine existential reality regarding the pursuit of happiness. It promotes a false sense of individual freedom through greed and fierce competition. Because of it, the average young man or woman carries significant burdens before they walk into the church. Hence it is no surprise that they are discontent but do not know why. Pastoral theologian Bruce Rogers-Vaughn had identified neoliberalism as a “principle source of human suffering.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is vital for pastoral theology and

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<sup>23</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 86.

<sup>24</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 2.

<sup>25</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 1.

practitioners to become aware of its presence and the profound effects that neoliberalism has on the members of the church as well as the general public.<sup>26</sup>

The conversation on pastoral care must take into consideration the centrality of care in the church, the paradigm shift in the human life cycle, and the rise of neoliberalism. So that pastoral theologians, practitioners, church leaders, parents, and even young adults might come to understand what is really happening to those in the stage of “postadolescence.”<sup>27</sup> Individuals need to guard against key challenges to identity by working out practical theological solutions. However, their well-being is not solely dependent on themselves. This is not to say that they do not have a responsibility for their own welfare; rather, there is a strong connection between their ability to mature and the presence of caring relationships with those who are further along the journey of life. Relationships strengthen continuity which is a key element of identity.<sup>28</sup> When their struggle to survive is met with interest and compassion, young men and women will have found a community that they belong. If it is not the church, they would find other communities of acceptance.

Caring relationships are not only crucial for the success of second generation ministry but also for the first generation to finish well.<sup>29</sup> The term *second generation ministry* is used as a general reference to pastoral ministry to English speaking congregations in the immigrant church. Ministry to the English speaking in the CCC presents particular challenges to pastoral ministry because of both language and the generational barrier. These barriers denote specific challenges yet they are intricately

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<sup>26</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 169, 171; Rogers-Vaughan, “Powers,” 1.

<sup>27</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 64.

<sup>28</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 139.



related in how they contribute to the tension that drives newer generations away from the church. Language is mostly viewed as non-negotiable. Hence the structure of two or three worship services in Chinese (Cantonese and or Mandarin) and English is deemed inevitable. The language barrier limits the possibility of cross-cultural integration and faith development of the children. Consequently, there are separate cultures under one roof of the church. It is imperative for leaders in the CCC to re-strategize so that the generational link is not broken.

Restoring pastoral care as the basis of ministry aims to unite congregations by crossing both language and generation boundaries. The church is a place where no one can truly succeed independently. Each member of the community is both dependent and inter-dependent on each other. Human flourishing can only happen when one is being cared for and when one cares for another. Human flourishing can be defined as a “life that is lived well, the life that goes well, and the life that feels good.”<sup>30</sup> This is true generally but more so in the faith community. Therefore, the ultimate goal of pastoral care, in this context, is to develop young adults from recipients of care to those reciprocating it.

### The Research Question

Researchers and practitioners have taken up the task to investigate the causes and solutions as to the why young people leave the church. While this research joins the cohort of other studies on the subject, it differs from other attempts in that it searches out a different research question. The common question is, “How can we make young adults stay in our churches?” This question is problematic. The phenomenon of young adults leaving the CCC is only symptomatic of a more profound systemic issue in the church;

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<sup>30</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, xi; Mayeroff, *On Caring*, 1–2.

namely, the displacement of genuine and sustainable care from pastoral ministry.<sup>31</sup> This question also carries the connotation of division between *us* and *them*. The question demonstrates the said division, how can *we* make *them* stay? This outcome is, of course, unintentional but not uncommon. There is a need to intentionally view young adults who are part of the English congregation in the CCC as true members of the faith community and equal partners in the gospel.

Perhaps the deeper question could be, “*How can we invite them to become one of us?*” This begs the question, “*Are we willing to open our circle and invite them in?*” The honest answers to these questions will be indicative of the true placement of caring in the community. If the answer is: *no, we are not willing*, then the problem has been identified. But if the answer is: *yes, we are willing*, then the investigation turns to what makes them feel unwelcome or precluded from the community. Even if those in the first generation are truly willing to open up its circle, then they may find that the English speaking young adults have already reach a point where they are not willing to join in. The practical theological process begins here by asking the deeper research question,

1. “How could the Canadian Chinese Church minister to the needs of young adults in the twenty-first century so they have a sense of belonging?”

This research conjectures that the main reason young adults do not feel that they belong to the CCC community is due to the lack of affirmation of their identity. As such, it raises another question in the context of identity loss and caring.

2. “What factors contribute to either affirmation or erosion of their identity?”

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<sup>31</sup> Even though some Chinese-Canadians young adults may attend Caucasian churches, it may be difficult for them to fully engage in the faith community. There is still a need to address the challenges in their lived experience.

The goal of this pastoral theological research is to determine the factors that cause English speaking adults to feel disenfranchised by their church. This dissertation argues that the loss of identity is due to the lack of proper caring at a time when young adults needed it most—during their transitions into adulthood. Further, it proposes that men and women who grew up in the CCC are being oppressed by two powers, one internal and one external. First, the internal power and politics of the immigrant church is an open secret. Unless something is done to correct the practice of excessive patriarchal authority, there will be further disconnection between the Chinese side and the English congregation. This will result in further estrangement of generations which could mark the decline of the Canadian Chinese Church.

Second, there is an external force that causes oppression to young adults in their everyday lives. This is the rise of neoliberal capitalism that imposes new economy policies and constructs which attempts to create new realities for the new generation.<sup>32</sup> This dissertation seeks to address to explore health development of identity and the oppressions that are eroding it. The church needs to address these relevant issues without compromising the gospel message. In a culture that seeks “self-actualization and self-realization rather than salvation,” there is a danger to cater to religious consumerism in pastoral ministry.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the answers to these research questions require theological reflection that remains true to faithful practice.<sup>34</sup> The goal is to guide young men and women beyond religiosity to the living God. For those navigating through the disorientation of life and are crying out for help, it seeks to be their voice.

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<sup>32</sup> LaMothe, “Neoliberal,” 14.

<sup>33</sup> Purves, *Pastoral*, 3.

<sup>34</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 9.

### Thesis Statement

This dissertation argues that strategic pastoral care in the church is paramount to identity affirmation in young adults in the Canadian Chinese Church. It argues that pastoral care in the church has been derailed to some degree by other dominant paradigms of ministry. Moreover, it explores the struggle for identity in young adults as a precipitating cause for what is metaphorically coined the “silent exodus.”<sup>35</sup> Identity formation is a complex issue. It involves transition, the human life cycle, purpose, freedom, and ritualization.<sup>36</sup> For those in the ethnic church, identity is further complexified by ethnicity, cultural dynamics. Furthermore, young adults face significant challenges of the unyielding power structures inside the church and the pervasive culture of discontentment fueled by neoliberalism outside. This work seeks to understand the process of healthy identity formation and causes of its erosion. If the church wants to minister to young adults with relevance, it must do so from a position of profound and strategic caring.

### Methodology

A methodology is the overall approach to the research and can utilize various methods. It sets the general direction of the research. “It implies a family of methods that have in common particular philosophical and epistemological assumptions.”<sup>37</sup> Although it explores social and psychological theories, this dissertation should not be viewed as a work in psychology or sociology. Rather, this research affirms the importance of social science in the pastoral theological discussion of caring in the church. Hence the first order of things is to establish the relationship between theology and psychology. The

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<sup>35</sup> Lee, “Silent,” 1.

<sup>36</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 43.

<sup>37</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 75.

overarching methodological approach for this research is what Donald Capps calls the “juxtaposition” model.<sup>38</sup> This method views theology and psychology as necessary but not the same. This discussion is further explained by the *revised model of mutual critical correlation*.<sup>39</sup> Within the interdisciplinary approach of theology and psychology, this research also follows the general framework of *practical theological interpretation* refined by Lartey’s *Pastoral Cycle*.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the context of this research is the struggle for identity among young adults in the Canadian Chinese Church. Consequently, this has resulted in young adults leaving the church, either directly or indirectly. This is at least partly due to the lack of caring that addresses the struggles in young adults. As such, this study will include qualitative research data from the works of Canadian sociologists of religion like Enoch Wong, Matthew Todd, Joel Thiessen, Reginald Bibby, and others. Data and interviews pertaining specifically to the Canadian Chinese Church are from recent publications. It is worth mentioning that the purpose of this research is not to provide a definitive answer to the problem. There is no quick fix. Rather, the purpose is to make a contribution to the scholarship in identifying challenges to young adulthood and to encourage further dialogue.

### The Juxtaposition Model

The overarching methodology of this study is the “juxtaposition” model proposed by pastoral theologian Donald Capps.<sup>41</sup> One of the key questions for pastoral theologians is

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<sup>38</sup> Capps, “Method,” 554.

<sup>39</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 63–91.

<sup>40</sup> The methods are based on Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 1–29; Lartey, *Living Colour*, 101–103.

<sup>41</sup> Capps, “Methods,” 554.

whether social science, e.g. psychology, can make a relevant and meaningful contribution to theology. The correlation between theology and social science is a complex topic within the field of pastoral theology. There is no denying that the church, as a cohort of human beings, exists in the social and cultural context of the world. The scripture is robust and speaks to all aspect of living. It does not preclude scientific knowledge for the betterment of life. Since the mid-twentieth century, the question is no longer whether pastoral theology acknowledges the use of social scientific theories. Rather, the focus is on how to integrate the vast knowledge afforded by psychology and theology.

Capps captures the essence of an approach methodology in pastoral theology by integrating Richard Niebuhr's five ways of correlating theology and psychology and Rudolf Arnheim's art theories illustrated in three paintings as considerations for researchers. The juxtaposition model is in line with traditional methods of theological interpretation. Oden proposes, "Since pastoral theology is theology, it proceeds by the same method as any well-formed theology, utilizing a well-known quadrilateral of sources of understanding God's self-disclosure in history: Scriptures, tradition, reason, and experience."<sup>42</sup> Theology is the relevant interpretation predicated on Scriptures and tradition. Psychology is the accumulation of reason and experience. Therefore, this methodology focuses on the common objectives of theology and psychology in its purpose for human flourishing. While this is true, the authority on which these disciplines stand are not set on equal grounds.

The tension between theology and psychology is a question of authority. In *Christ and Culture*, Niebuhr addresses this issue by introduces different perspectives to balance the two sides. Christ is the reality that is central to the Christian faith. "Jesus Christ of the

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<sup>42</sup> Oden, *Pastoral*, 11

New Testament is in our actual history, in history as we remember and live it, as it shapes our present faith and action. And this Jesus Christ is a definite person, one and the same whether he appears in flesh and blood or as risen Lord.”<sup>43</sup> Christ is uniquely distinct from any human philosopher, prophet, or founder of a religion but is the divine author of the Christian faith. “He can never be confused with a Socrates, a Plato or an Aristotle ... a Confucius, or a Mohammed, or even with an Amos or Isaiah.”<sup>44</sup> The work is theology and affirms Christ as the founder of all truths and revelation. Moreover, Christ is the holder of “various kinds of authority.”<sup>45</sup> This last point separates Capps’ juxtaposition model from his “convergence” model.<sup>46</sup>

On the other hand, culture exercises an authority that is not by authoritative demands but by influence.<sup>47</sup> Jakob Burkhardt asserts culture is “the sum of all [which] has spontaneously arisen for the advancement of material life and as an expression of spiritual and moral life—all social intercourse, technologies, arts, literature and science. It is the realm of the variable, free, not necessarily universal, of all that cannot lay claim to compulsive authority.”<sup>48</sup> This is generally true; but in a post-Christian world, culture as social norm can be dictated by a totalitarian agenda in the name of liberty and a false sense of tolerance.<sup>49</sup> This research acknowledges that both Christ and culture are associated with their respective authority; and the question of authority is paramount in academic research. As a work of pastoral theology, this research explores the realms of

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<sup>43</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 13.

<sup>44</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 13.

<sup>46</sup> Capps, “Methods,” 553.

<sup>47</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> Burkhardt, *Force*, 107.

<sup>49</sup> The official website of the Mont Pelerin Society: <https://www.montpelerin.org/statement-of-aims/>

psychology as an expert conversation partner with the acknowledgement that the authority of theology has the final word.

Capps illustrates his juxtaposition model with Pablo Picasso's *Family of Saltimbanques*.<sup>50</sup> It would be helpful to have these paintings in front, perhaps accessed online, to visualize the abstract concepts of what Capps is conveying to his reader.<sup>51</sup> The juxtaposition model views theology and psychology, like the figures in the painting, do not "make any greater claim for their relationship than they both appear in the same painting."<sup>52</sup> However, a closer look will reveal that theology and psychology are paying attention to each other. Capps observes in the painting that "there is a greater communication between the two boys and the woman despite their spatial distance."<sup>53</sup> This illustrates that there is no animosity between theology and psychology in this approach. Capps continues, "However, this does not mean that there is not a real relationship between [theology and psychology]. It's simply that nothing more is envisioned than what already exists between them. [More importantly,] their juxtaposition is potentially informative as far as the study itself is concerned."<sup>54</sup>

In this dissertation, the juxtaposition model is taken to point to Niebuhr's *Christ the Transformer of Culture*.<sup>55</sup> The relationship of Christ and culture may seem distant at first glance. However, a closer observation will reveal something profound. This model may seem to be merely a traditional view. However, it proposes a more open perspective to culture than it seems. Like the boys and the woman, theology and psychology "share a

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<sup>50</sup> Capps, "Methods," 554.

<sup>51</sup> An image of this painting is at:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family\\_of\\_Saltimbanques#/media/File:Family\\_of\\_Saltimbanques.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Family_of_Saltimbanques#/media/File:Family_of_Saltimbanques.JPG)

<sup>52</sup> Capps, "Methods," 554.

<sup>53</sup> Capps, "Methods," 554.

<sup>54</sup> Capps, "Methods," 554.

<sup>55</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 190.



similar longing” hinted by their gaze.<sup>56</sup> However, their common interest is not immediately obvious. There is synergy in the interdisciplinary approach between theology and psychology in the quest for human flourishing. However, whenever there are irreconcilable differences, this work will give priority to theology as revelation over psychology. This model “[holds] fast to the radical distinction between God’s work in Christ and man’s work in culture, they do not take the road of exclusive Christianity into isolation from civilization.”<sup>57</sup> The overarching methodology of the juxtaposition model remains hopeful for Christ to transform culture and the church.

#### The Revised Model of Mutual Critical Correlation

The “revised model of mutual critical correlation” delves deeper in wrestling with the relationship between theology and psychology.<sup>58</sup> This model is the result of the progress of practical theological interpretation over the past few decades. This model finds its origin in Paul Tillich’s “method of correlation.”<sup>59</sup> Tillich’s method of correlation seeks to explore “the content of the Christian faith through existential questions and theological answers in mutual interdependence.”<sup>60</sup> Tillich’s assertion of the correlation “between concepts denoting the human and those denoting the divine” is of particular interest.<sup>61</sup>

Theology has much to offer in terms of content. However, it must also take human experiences seriously before it can provide satisfactory answers to existential questions. Tillich says, “The Christian message provides answers to the questions implied

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<sup>56</sup> Capps, “Methods,” 554.

<sup>57</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 190.

<sup>58</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 88.

<sup>59</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 60.

<sup>61</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 60.

in human existence.”<sup>62</sup> In the correlational method, systematic theology is the starting point. It takes charge in evaluating the human situation “out of which the existential questions arise” and proposes that the answers are found within the Christian message.<sup>63</sup> The challenge for Christian theology is to remain relevant “within a rapidly secularizing social context.”<sup>64</sup> In post-Christendom, the church can no longer ignore the culture if it is to remain relevant yet true to the gospel.

The method of correlation model was further illustrated by the metaphor of a conversation between friends. Pattison calls the model “The Method of Critical Conversation.”<sup>65</sup> One of the key strength of this method is the acknowledgement that practical theology is “active enquiry, not just historical research or intellectual gymnastics.”<sup>66</sup> Professor and practitioner Warren Lai asserts, “Each generation must write their own theology.”<sup>67</sup> This concept is an imperative for the church. Like Pattison, Lai recognizes the dynamic nature of theology and the need for conversation between theology and the rapidly changing culture. As such, the method of critical conversation is a real event of theological reflection “even if the participants ... are not real people.”<sup>68</sup> Moreover, this method calls for “the willingness to listen and be attentive to other participants.”<sup>69</sup> Mutual respect and collaboration are crucial for meaningful dialogue between church and culture.

However, the method of correlation needs to be further developed for qualitative research in practical theology. Swinton and Mowat question Tillich’s correlation model

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<sup>62</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, 62.

<sup>64</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 78.

<sup>65</sup> Pattison, “Some Straws,” 139.

<sup>66</sup> Pattison, “Some Straws,” 137.

<sup>67</sup> Quote from Rev. Warren Lai during class at Tyndale Seminary circa 2001.

<sup>68</sup> Pattison, “Some Straws,” 139.

<sup>69</sup> Pattison, “Some Straws,” 139.

on whether “it is somehow possible to [distill] ‘pure theological truth’ which can then be applied to the questions produced by the world without these questions in turn challenging the theological response.”<sup>70</sup> Subsequently, Hiltner and David Tracy find it necessary to expand on Tillich’s model “and [to incorporate] a dialectical element which enabled the correlation between scripture, tradition, experience and reason to be *mutually* correlative and critical.”<sup>71</sup> Swinton and Mowat call this the model of “mutual critical correlation.”<sup>72</sup> Hiltner, Tracy, Browning, and Swinton and Mowat concur on the benefit and necessity of opening up a mutually critical dialogue between theology and social science.<sup>73</sup> The strength of this approach is that it opens up fresh understandings of the Scriptures and Christian tradition for faithful practice.

The question for the pastoral theologian is, “Can the social sciences really challenge theology at a fundamental level as the wider implications of this method would suggest?”<sup>74</sup> Swinton and Mowat contend, “If mutuality truly means that both parties have an equal voice in the research process and that the social science can actually override theology on central issues, then the danger of idolatry becomes a real possibility.”<sup>75</sup> Hence it is necessary to balance the tension between openness to new concepts and guarding foundational dogmas in Christian theology. Hiltner and Tracy seem to give equal voice to theology and psychology in their critical correlation method. However, a dialogue that is predicated on mere knowledge and exchange of information without qualification may be missing key elements in the context of theological reflection.

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<sup>70</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 78.

<sup>71</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 79; Hiltner, *Preface*; 21–22. Tracy, *Blessed Rage*, 32–34.

<sup>72</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 79.

<sup>73</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 78–79.

<sup>74</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 83.

<sup>75</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 83.

Again, the issue at hand is authority. While psychology and sociology are important conversation partners, the authority of theology predicated on Scriptures as revelation has priority over the authority of social science. Theology is not against science. On the contrary, the discussion on the role of caring in the faith community and identity formation in young adults necessitates an interdisciplinary approach to the discussion. Though the conversation ought to be agreeable and hospitable, theology and psychology cannot be said to be on equal grounds. Thus it is necessary for practical theology to develop a method that allows for a dialectical and hospitable discussion with psychology and yet remain faithful as theology.

The revised model of critical correlation is the preferred method. It raises four points. First, this model is predicated on the concept of “indissoluble differentiation” between theology and psychology.<sup>76</sup> It recognizes theology and psychology as fundamentally different disciplines but not mutually exclusive. Theology is predicated on the revelation of the Christian God and his dealings with human beings. Psychology is the science of human development predicated on observation and analysis. However, their common interest is in human flourishing. Therefore, theology and psychology are indissoluble, but they also must be differentiated. They have “specific roles to play and that they reveal specific forms of knowledge which should not be confused with one another.”<sup>77</sup>

Second, theology and psychology have an “inseparable unity” that is the other side of the first point.<sup>78</sup> The inseparable unity of theology and psychology creates a

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<sup>76</sup> Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology*, 68.

<sup>77</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 85.

<sup>78</sup> Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology*, 65.

“critical complementary tension” that promises to sharpen both disciplines.<sup>79</sup> Psychology offers important empirical knowledge to pastoral care that is helpful to understanding the human experiences. However, pastoral theology seeks to go beyond psychotherapy towards holistic healing that can only come from transcendence. The above two points deals with the correlation between the two disciplines of theology and psychology.

The third point of the revised model of critical correlation acknowledges that theology predicated on divine revelation has the higher authority in what van Deusen Hunsinger calls an “indestructible order.”<sup>80</sup> Theology seeks to provide answers to the “ultimate issues, of life death, God and the meaning of life” which is beyond the realm of social science.<sup>81</sup> This leads to the fourth point where theology will always have “logical priority” over all other conversation partners.<sup>82</sup> Theology as revelation is ultimately independent of data from qualitative research. However, findings in social science can provide “clarification and complexification.”<sup>83</sup> Theology as a discipline that includes the Scriptures and Christian tradition can speak into human situations. However, psychology as human science cannot speak for theology but rather is dependent on theology to make sense of its results.<sup>84</sup>

The final two points wrestle with the question of authority. Employing the *revised model of mutual critical correlation*, this dissertation will provide a “thick description” of the struggle for identity in young adults in the CCC. This includes exploring theories in identity and human development, social challenges, and theological reflection on the

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<sup>79</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 86.

<sup>80</sup> Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology*, 65.

<sup>81</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 86.

<sup>82</sup> Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology*, 67.

<sup>83</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 87.

<sup>84</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 87.

current praxis of care in the church. The task of practical theological interpretation seeks to complexify the situation to get to what is really happening inside and outside the church in its cultural and situational context. The end goal is to transform practice. The final task of this study seeks to provide pastoral theological constructs to revise the praxis of care in the church. These constructs are mapped to stages of the human life cycle. Furthermore, the progression of the pastoral constructs will provide the epigenesis of empowerment.

### Practical Theological Interpretation

Now that the relationship between theology and psychology has been established, this dissertation chooses to follow the process of practical theological interpretation. Pastoral theology and practical theology are practically the same discipline for the purpose of this research. The two disciplines are sometimes referred to interchangeably. They are “sometimes talked about as if they are completely different things; at other times, as if they were exactly the same thing.”<sup>85</sup> Nonetheless, more often than not practical theology and pastoral theology are mentioned in the same conversation because of their overlapping nature. Thus both practical theological tasks and pastoral theological methods will be taken into consideration in this investigative process.

What is practical theology? It is commonly said that “[it is a theological discipline that] takes the human experience seriously.”<sup>86</sup> However, this answer might be overly simplified. Behind this statement is a world of different schools of thought. More importantly, this may also imply that other disciplines of theology do not take the human

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<sup>85</sup> Pattison and Woodward, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>86</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 5.

experience seriously. A better way to differentiate practical theology from other disciplines of theology is to understand its starting point. Practical theology as a discipline begins with “the human experience [and seeks to] reflect theologically on that experience.”<sup>87</sup> Pastoral theology is also considered practical theology because it is defined as the “practical theology of care.”<sup>88</sup>

Practical theological interpretation focuses on specific human situations. “It seeks to explore the complex dynamics of particular situations in order to enable the development of a transformative and illuminating understanding of what is going on within these situations.”<sup>89</sup> The investigative process seeks to go deeper into issues surrounding each situation. The discipline goes beyond academic exercises or theological debates. It seeks to include “attentiveness to the dynamics of participation in a broken world.”<sup>90</sup>

Moreover, pastoral theologian Phil Zylla argues, “At the heart of all pastoral action is the deeply rooted comprehension of the reality of suffering. Pastors and chaplains risk involvement in the stranglehold of a universe gone awry with the hope of helping and of alleviating some anguish.”<sup>91</sup> This precisely is the motivation behind this research. This study seeks to be attentive to the dynamics in the world of young adults who are in search for meaning, purpose, and a place of belonging.

The deeper question that guides the practical theologian is, “[Is] what *appears* to be going on within this situation what is *actually* going on? [sic]”<sup>92</sup> For example, some of

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<sup>87</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, v.

<sup>88</sup> Browning, “Pastoral,” 91.

<sup>89</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, v.

<sup>90</sup> Zylla, *Virtue*, 4.

<sup>91</sup> Zylla, *Virtue*, 5.

<sup>92</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, v.

the common reasons given as to why young people leave their home church include worship styles, types of preaching, availability of programs, and the degree of autonomy. These are all important elements. Yet too often church leaders look for quick-fixes. At times, the process leads to division in the church. Therefore, practical theology seeks to ask the deeper question, “What is actually happening to young adults when they decide to leave the church?” The answer or answers to this question may be multifaceted. The *theological reflection of the situation* is what separates practical theology from other disciplines.

Practical theology seeks to delve into the complexity of human situations. It offers “a unique approach to theology and theological development [that] continues to offer a significant contribution to the wider field of theology and the practice of the Church and the world.”<sup>93</sup> The goal of practical theology, according to Pattison and Woodward, “is concerned with actions, issues, and events that are of human significance in the contemporary world.”<sup>94</sup> For Swinton and Mowat, the goal of practical theology is to “enable faithful living and authentic Christian practice.”<sup>95</sup>

Furthermore, “the work of practical theology is to help generate concepts, norms, and actions that will be of practical utility and make a difference. In this sense, practical theology helps to direct and shape the concrete service of the Christian community in the world.”<sup>96</sup> Pattison and Woodward present a mandate for practical theology to be missional in the broadest sense possible so that Christian service is done by the Christian community in the general public. As such, there is also a pedagogical objective in the

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<sup>93</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, v.

<sup>94</sup> Pattison and Woodward, “Introduction,” 7.

<sup>95</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 9.

<sup>96</sup> Pattison and Woodward, “Introduction,” 7.



process that seeks to inform the church and the academy so that its findings as practical theology can benefit the world.

What sets practical theology apart from other theological disciplines is in its tasks or methods. This research falls within the realms of both practical theology and pastoral theology. Hence methods in practical theological interpretation can be used for research in pastoral theology and vice versa. There are nuances between the two disciplines. Practical theology is pastoral in nature because it is rooted in the Christian tradition. This includes reflections on all aspects of pastoral practices and in the broader sense to take human situations seriously. Likewise, pastoral theology seeks to provide practical help to sufferers whatever their situation may be. The scope of pastoral theology can no longer be limited to ecclesial functions but it must also find its role in the public square. Therefore, the methods undertaken will be appropriated from both disciplines.

Human situations vary significantly. Therefore, the task of practical theological interpretation must be just as versatile in its complexity. All research requires careful consideration to find a suitable method in order to delve deeper and ask the difficult questions. Nonetheless, each method can still find its orientation in the basic tasks of practical theological interpretation. Osmer's tasks of practical theological interpretation, Swinton and Mowat's qualitative research in pastoral theology, and Larney's pastoral cycle are very similar. The practical theological interpretation is formed around four basic questions: "What is going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? How might we respond?"<sup>97</sup> This provides the framework to integrate other perspectives.

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<sup>97</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

The first task is the “descriptive-empirical task.”<sup>98</sup> This requires careful observation of the situation, the people involved, and all elements in a given situation, experience, or practice. The key is to gather helpful information so that the researcher can “discern patterns and dynamics in particular episodes, situations or contexts.”<sup>99</sup> The first responsibility of the researcher is to “provide as rich and thick a description of the situation in hand as possible.”<sup>100</sup> It is important to clearly identify the situation or “current praxis.”<sup>101</sup> In this study, the investigative process must begin with the “concrete experience” of the phenomenon.<sup>102</sup> In the current research, it requires exploring the history, cultural background, and lived experiences of English speaking young men and women who are worshippers and are part of the Canadian Chinese Church community. The usual tendency is to make simple observations and a quick conclusion, but to delve deeper into the complexity of the issue requires a “spirituality of presence,” “priestly listening,” attentiveness, and patience.<sup>103</sup>

The second task is “the interpretative task.”<sup>104</sup> This requires thoughtfulness. It asks, “Why is this going on?”<sup>105</sup> Osmer asserts that the congregational leader “is characterized by ... thoughtfulness, theoretical interpretation, and wise judgment.”<sup>106</sup> By that he alludes to both the need for empathy (being “considerate”) and the need for discernment (being “insightful”).<sup>107</sup> The interpretative task requires both heart and mind. The pastoral theologian must enter into the deeper layers of the circumstances. This

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<sup>98</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>99</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>100</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 46.

<sup>101</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 95.

<sup>102</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 101.

<sup>103</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 31–37.

<sup>104</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>105</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>106</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 82.

<sup>107</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 82.

requires the pastoral caregiver to be ‘all there.’ A purely interpretative or intellectual task misses the mark of the pastoral perspective. Attentiveness and priestly listening to voices of the hearts will yield honest inner yearnings. This step requires the “complexification” of the situation in order to get deeper into issues beneath the surface.<sup>108</sup> Theologian Edward Farley explains that every situation belongs within the context of other situations.<sup>109</sup> The goal of this stage is to get to the real issues causing concerns for individuals and communities.

In this second task, the pastoral theologian is the reader and the human situation or practice is the text. This examines the relationship between the reader and the text using Donald Capps’ methods. The situation is young people leaving the immigrant church. The reader is the researcher, practitioners, or young people reading this research. However, the text “also interprets the reader. It evokes a variety of responses which interprets us.”<sup>110</sup> Anton Boisen was the first to view each person that he studied as a “living human document.”<sup>111</sup> Since then the term has been widely used by pastoral theologians. They advocate a method of theological reflection that “[transforms] heartfelt inner experience into a theological resource [by employing] journal-writing, personal letters, verbatim accounts of pastoral encounters, spiritual autobiography, and other contemporary forms of creative writing, as the means to ‘turn-life-into-text.’”<sup>112</sup>

Here the pastoral theologian needs to see past the surface of what seems to be happening into what is actually happening. Careseekers, in all honesty, can communicate the sequence of events and offer up their own interpretation. However, it is up to the

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<sup>108</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 87.

<sup>109</sup> Farley, “Interpreting Situations,” 121.

<sup>110</sup> Capps, *Pastoral Care*, 19.

<sup>111</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 251–63; Holifield, *History*, 245.

<sup>112</sup> Graham, *Theological Reflection*, 18.

pastoral theologian to be the spiritual seer that guides individuals into seeing more of what is happening in the situation and issues within themselves. The process moves from genuine sensing and empathy to diagnosis of the symptoms that persist in particular human situations. This step is in search of the root cause. The root cause may have been something that happened in the past. Since the effects of past events still linger in the hearts of the congregation, it requires the attentiveness of the pastoral person to guide the careseeker through the interpretative process.

In the context of young adults in the CCC, this research also reviews the developments of English ministries in the Chinese church. The question of why second, or third, generation men and women are leaving the church has been raised many times by practitioners. However, have the deeper issues been raised? This research employs practical theological interpretation in order to arrive at the cause(s) of why young men and women are discontent with the church. This dissertation argues that individuals carry significant burdens with them as they enter the church. Hence it is necessary for the church to be part of this pastoral theological interpretive process to understand what is going on in the hearts of their congregants.

Once the situation can be sufficiently interpreted, the third task is to provide theological reflection on these “particular episodes, situations, or contexts, constructing ethical norms to guide our responses.”<sup>113</sup> The normative task raises the question “What ought to be going on?”<sup>114</sup> The goal is to establish what constitutes the normative or ideal situation in each case.<sup>115</sup> While the whole process of practical theological interpretation can be seen as theological reflection, the normative task is the most active step in the

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<sup>113</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>114</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>115</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 83.

process. The significance of this theological reflection is that it is rooted in the Scriptures and Christian tradition.<sup>116</sup> In other words, given the complexity of the situation what is the proper Christian response? Moreover, the process of critical reflection is not a one-way process for theology to criticize a particular practice. Rather, the process allows a correlated dialogue between theology and practice.

Both theology and psychology readily embrace a moral philosophy that guides human existence. Browning and Osmer both advocate for a “theological and ethical interpretation” of the situation.<sup>117</sup> Erik Erikson speaks of a code of ethics in the process of human development.<sup>118</sup> The goal for the practical theologian is to reconstruct a normative practice for the church. After the descriptive-empirical task and the interpretative task, it is time to construct theological and psychological assessments of the situation. This requires exploration of culture, psychological theories, leadership concepts, pastoral theology, and Christian tradition. All of the above are required to allow informative dialogues between theology and culture. However, since theology had historically held the balance of power in western culture, it would be important for theology to listen to empirical studies of social science. The idea is to allow theology to be sharpened by social science and vice versa.

The goal of practical theology is to transform practice. The final task in Osmer’s practical theology interpretation is the “pragmatic task.”<sup>119</sup> It seeks to determine “strategies of action that will influence situations in ways that are desirable and entering

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<sup>116</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 95.

<sup>117</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 139; Browning, *Religious Ethics*, 13, 37.

<sup>118</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 139.

<sup>119</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

into a reflective conversation with ‘talk back’ emerging when they are enacted.”<sup>120</sup> In the context of congregational practice, the focus is on leadership. The final step seeks out “transforming leadership [that] involves ‘deep change.’”<sup>121</sup> It requires theological reflection on values, traditions, “identity, mission, culture, and [operation]” of the organization (i.e. the church).<sup>122</sup> The goal is to start a conversation among church leaders on the theology and practice of care in order to renew relationships between generations.

The fourth and final step in transforming practice is the logical end predicated on the accumulative work done by the researcher up to this point. In any large scale project, it is easy to lose sight of the overall view of what was intended. Hence Swinton and Mowat call for the whole process of practical theological interpretation to be integrated so that the “conversation functions dialectically to produce new and challenging forms of practice that enable the initial situation to be transformed into ways which are authentic and faithful.”<sup>123</sup> That is, the end task must keep in mind the original question. The process of complexification and theological reflection really begins at the first step of investigation but is more pronounced at their respective stages. Pragmatic constructs for this research is the transformative placement of caring relationships, affirmation of identity, and authentic empowerment in the CCC.

Finally, Elaine Graham identifies that the “overarching goal” of practical theology is “commitment to praxis.”<sup>124</sup> Two things stand out in this. First, the key word is *commitment*. Second, this is clearly and strongly stated. The reason for the existence of

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<sup>120</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>121</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 177. The phrase “deep change” comes from *Deep Change* by Robert Quinn.

<sup>122</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 177.

<sup>123</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 97.

<sup>124</sup> Graham, “Practical Theology,” 132.

practical theology is not for leisure conversations or theological debates. The question has been raised many times in the CCC, “Would parents want their children to be Christian first then Chinese or the other way around?” The reply to this question cannot be an unqualified one word answer. It embodies cultural, ethnic, religious, and practical implications. The tension between culture and faith practices illustrates the problem of commitment to change. The challenge of commitment is far beyond discovering new paradigms for church leaders to test. The greatest challenge of the final step is whether leaders are willing to examine their own core values and become agents of change.

#### Lartey’s Pastoral Cycle

Emmanuel Lartey’s *Pastoral Cycle*, with its intercultural considerations, further refines the practical theological interpretation.<sup>125</sup> This approach is helpful for the current study pertaining to the cultural dynamics in the CCC. A good portion of literature in pastoral care and counseling for minorities are predicated on the situation “where the counsellor is Caucasian and the client a member of a racial or ethnic ‘minority group.’”<sup>126</sup> Seldom is the pastoral caregiver a member of an ethnic minority and the client is either Caucasian or from a visible minority group. The latter reflects the context of this research. Lartey’s methodology was formed with the backdrop of liberation theology and a strong sense of cultural reflection. Lartey’s process of enquiry consists of 1) Starting with *Experience*; 2) *Situational Analysis*; 3) *Theological Analysis*; 4) *Situational Analysis of Theology*; and 5)

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<sup>125</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 102.

<sup>126</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, vii.

*Pastoral Theological Response*. The following figure illustrates the five phases of the cycle.<sup>127</sup>

Diagram 1.1 Lartey's Pastoral Cycle



The pastoral cycle begins with identifying the concrete *experience* (situation or praxis). The first step focuses on meeting people where they are in their “reality of life experiences.”<sup>128</sup> This dissertation begins with not so much a problem of declining attendance but the lived experiences of Chinese-Canadian young adults. They struggle with stresses inside and outside the church.

Second, this entails the *situational analysis* (cultural/contextual analysis). The pastoral task is to “*complexify* and explore the *situations*” to get from “what *appears* to be going on?” to “what is really going on?”<sup>129</sup> At this stage, the researcher needs to be selective in choosing the tools and different methods that are helpful in providing a

<sup>127</sup> Lartey, “Practical Theology,” 132.

<sup>128</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 102.

<sup>129</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 13, 94.



“clearer understanding of the situation.”<sup>130</sup> This study employs psychological theories of identity and human development and surveys conducted for the Canadian Chinese Church as interdisciplinary experts to the theological discussion.

The third stage is the *theological analysis* of the situation (theological/critical reflection). This stage allows faith perspectives to “question both concrete experience and situational analysis.”<sup>131</sup> Some of the questions might be, “[What] questions arise from my faith concerning what I have experienced and the analyses of it? How have thinkers in my faith tradition approached the issues raised?”<sup>132</sup> The task is to make sense of the situation through the lens of theology and faith tradition.<sup>133</sup> It would be reasonable to contend that Christian tradition (with two thousand years of history, and arguably thousands of years of Judeo-Christian narratives from the Old Testament) has something to say in the interpretation of human situations. The goal is not to claim supremacy over other interpretations but to recognize that

Pastoral theology finds itself located within the uneasy but critical tension between the script of revelation given to us in Christ and formulated historically within scripture, doctrine, tradition, and the continuing innovative performance of the gospel as it is embodied and enacted in the life and practices of the Church as they interact with the life and practices of the world.<sup>134</sup>

Consequently, Lartey’s pastoral cycle includes the *situational analysis of theology* that allows the contemporary situation to question theology and practices of the church. It aims to enrich the understanding of theology and biblical hermeneutics; and goes deeper to provide the basis for faith practices. Has the faith tradition given sufficient consideration to the situation at hand in its culture context? At this stage, the Christian

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<sup>130</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 102.

<sup>131</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>132</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>133</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>134</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 5.

faith tradition is “subjected to the interrogation of the situation.”<sup>135</sup> This opens up the conversation to other dialogue partners and invites further opinions and questions. The purpose is to sharpen the focus of faith practices. This is a means of theological reflection in its cultural and situational context.

The final step in the pastoral cycle is the *response*. It seeks to turn out new perspectives and revised practices on the matter.<sup>136</sup> Again, the process requires attentiveness of the dynamic nature of the situation in question. Lartey reminds the researcher that “[there] is constant change in persons and circumstances.”<sup>137</sup> The challenge in doctoral research is that the culture and persons for which it has intended to bring transformation are fluid—they are not the same at the end as they were in the beginning of the process. Thus the researcher must be keenly aware of the situation in question, the cultural and political dynamics, and the ecclesial climate as these evolve over this period of time.

### **A Brief History of the Development of English Ministry**

This section provides a brief history of how English ministry was developed in Canada in order to put the current research in context. Even though there have been many discussions about challenges in English ministry among practitioners, this subject is relatively new in pastoral theology. Hence it is necessary to provide a brief history on the development of English ministry in the Canadian Chinese Church (CCC). The CCC is a particular community that comprises of ethnic Chinese. Cantonese speaking Chinese immigrants who arrived in Canada in the 1960s and 1970s became the dominant group.

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<sup>135</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>136</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>137</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

Later, in the 1980s and 1990s, Mandarin speaking came on the scene and the CCC took on various ministry formats. The common thread between Cantonese and Mandarin congregations is that both sides have children who are predominantly English speaking.

The term *English Ministry* may be foreign to some readers. The phenomenon of having two congregations worshipping in different languages between generations is a unique setup in immigrant churches. This is not exclusive to the Chinese church. This scenario can be found in the German or Ukrainian churches. The development of English ministry, also referred to as *second generation ministry*, began as a necessity for the children born to immigrants parents. Issues within English ministry began to surface over time; and by the time anyone paid attention to them, many young men and women have already left their home church.

The history of Chinese immigrants in Canada goes back to 1858. Ministry to the early settlers who worked as railroad workers and laborers already existed. Missions from local churches reached out to the Chinese.<sup>138</sup> However, it was not until the 1960s when Chinese churches took root and sprawled into the network they are today in major Canadian cities.<sup>139</sup> Timothy Tseng notes the development of Chinese immigrant churches in North America as follows,

Up to the mid-1970s, most Chinese evangelicals in North America worshiped at small urban congregations or in Chinese Bible study groups on college campuses. Though Mandarin was becoming the dominant dialect on campuses, the urban churches were still predominantly comprised of Cantonese-speaking and working-class immigrants. Over the past two decades, waves of highly educated and wealthier immigrants have made their way into Chinese congregations. A significant number of students found professional work and stayed in the United States and Canada.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Li et al., "The Chinese in Canada," 90.

<sup>139</sup> Con et al., *From China*, 13.

<sup>140</sup> Tseng, "Second Generation," 254.

Not long after the new wave of immigrants settled, practitioners and parents realized that there is a need to nurture the children born or raised in Canada. To accommodate this, many churches started some form of *children* or *youth* ministry. These new ministries catered to the English speaking new generation.<sup>141</sup> Eventually, the local youth ministry grew into *English Ministry* in immigrant Chinese churches. The mode of operation in English ministries has earned the nickname, 'babysitting service.' The term carries negative connotations that point to the struggle of cultivating a congregation that is considered insignificant by the church leaders. The nickname is also a cry for help from practitioners and congregants within English speaking congregations. It is also a cry for recognition that this ministry has grown up. It is more than a spiritual daycare while parents engage in more important spiritual matters.

The terms *parents* and *children* are sometimes used to denote the relationship between the Chinese ministry and English ministry of the church. This relationship is indicative of the patriarchal culture that is present at home and at the church. Community is formed around a culture where "individuals typically do not understand themselves as primarily independent actors, but members of a family and larger clan; this is the way the surname precedes the given name."<sup>142</sup> It is customary for extended families to gather for a meal at the restaurant with a large table for the adults and a smaller table by their side for the children. This arrangement is repeated at church. The adults worship in the sanctuary in the vernacular while the children, no matter how old, worship in English by themselves in another place or time. There is little modeling of corporate worship. The

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<sup>141</sup> Tham, "SCAC," 3.

<sup>142</sup> Li et al., "The Chinese in Canada," 91–92.

separation of worship services by language is a permanent arrangement. This dichotomy will soon become more problematic as the children mature spiritually and age-wise.

The development of English ministry had a good intention when the church organized the children into a separate worship in a language they can understand. The arrangement seemed good at the time. However, this setting would eventually cause problems. Church leaders never meant to neglect those in the English ministry. On the contrary, practitioners and parents want to see their children grow up and become future leaders of the church. Those in the first generation expect their children in English ministry to grow up and continue the spiritual legacy of their parents. So what is the problem? From the perspective of the leaders, providing an English worship, inviting young people to lead worship and so on would provide them an opportunity to serve and find joy in that experience. This model has never been tested before its inception. Two subtle problems emerged. First, the younger generation is separated from their parents or adults in the ritualization of corporate worship. In the theory of ritualization, modeling is an essential element for youths and children.<sup>143</sup> Second, ministries to the Chinese speaking have taken up time and attention from those in the first generation. Before they know it, the kids have grown up and grown apart from the first generation.<sup>144</sup>

There is a huge gap between reality and expectation. The children of the first generation want to contribute to their faith community. However, they have been raised in a completely different culture and expression of spirituality than their parents. More importantly, caring relationships have not been established. Modeling of worship and the Christian life have been mostly absent in the lives of young adults. The two

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<sup>143</sup> Erikson, "Ontogeny of Ritualization," 337.

<sup>144</sup> This case may fit the concept in "Tyranny of the Urgent."

congregations have been growing apart for years even though there are occasional joint events such as Christmas celebrations.

Despite the claim of success, the Canadian Chinese Church has been “simultaneously losing their children.”<sup>145</sup> Jonathan Kaan, a retired practitioner laments,

English speaking Chinese were a group of youth in our society. They are now married with children and many with successful careers. In the 30 years of growth, the number of churchgoers should have grown proportionately large [but that is not the case] ... Thus, we must ask ourselves, if a large number of English speaking Chinese does not attend our Chinese churches, where are they going?<sup>146</sup>

The Asian church has been facing the challenge of young adults leaving the church for more than two decades. It would have been alright if they simply formed new faith communities. But Helen Lee observes that “many young believers who have grown up in these Asian congregations are now choosing to leave not only their home churches, but possibly their Christian faith as well.”<sup>147</sup>

Furthermore, Pew Research Centre’s finding shows that “only 32% of Asian Americans and 36% of the General American public attend church weekly.”<sup>148</sup> Reginald Bibby notes church attendance in Canada in mainstream churches went from 53% percent in 1957, down to 23 percent in 1990.<sup>149</sup> In addition, there is the “Rise of the Nones.”<sup>150</sup> Thiessen notes that 24 percent of Canadian adults today say that they have ‘no religion,’ compared to only 4 percent in 1971.<sup>151</sup> That number for teens is at 32 percent today

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<sup>145</sup> Lee, “Silent,” 1.

<sup>146</sup> Kaan, “Pressing Opportunities”, 4-6.

<sup>147</sup> Lee, “Silent,” 1.

<sup>148</sup> Funk et al., “Asian,” 14.

<sup>149</sup> Bibby, *Unknown Gods*, 6.

<sup>150</sup> Thiessen, “Rise of the Nones,” 1.

<sup>151</sup> Thiessen, “Rise of the Nones,” 1.

compared to 12 percent in 1984.<sup>152</sup> The statistics are alarming. Thomas Bergler asserts that the decline begins as early as age 15 and “reaches a low of about 15% in the early twenties, at which point, weekly attendance levels off for the rest of the twenties at somewhere near the 20%.”<sup>153</sup> Bergler and Jonathan Hill also differentiate between the nominal Christians and those who attended weekly.<sup>154</sup> Whether the decline begins in adolescence, emerging adults today face formidable challenges in grappling with faith and life issues. In order for the church to help mitigate the trend, pastoral theologians, practitioners, and church leaders need to be informed about these challenges.

The *Hemorrhaging Faith* report also affirms that young adults who continue to attend church today highly valued their experiences at church as teenagers.<sup>155</sup> Kara Powell et al observe that “Even those who eventually will return to Christian faith face some of the most formative and turbulent years of their lives outside of a community of faith.”<sup>156</sup> According to Zhou, the demographics of Asian American youth “belongs to the 1.5 and second generations [sic], growing up in immigrant families, and are just coming of age at the turn of the twenty-first century.”<sup>157</sup> The statistics point to a challenging transition ahead for young men and women in the postmodern era. Nonetheless, members of this cohort who are in the church are seeking to be worthy partners in the kingdom of God. How this cohort turns out will have a significant impact on the future of the Canadian Chinese Church.

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<sup>152</sup> Thiessen, “Rise of the Nones,” 1. Also see *The Meaning of Sunday* by Joel Thiessen. Enoch Wong’s dissertation “How Am I Going to Grow Up?” is an extensive qualitative research on the experiences of young adults in the Chinese immigrant church.

<sup>153</sup> Bergler, “Mapping,” 65.

<sup>154</sup> Bergler, “Mapping,” 65; Hill, *Emerging*, 15–20, 22–24.

<sup>155</sup> Penner et al, “Hemorrhaging Faith,” 37.

<sup>156</sup> Powell et al., “Growing Young,” 5.

<sup>157</sup> Zhou, “Coming of Age,” 47.

## Summary

The struggle for identity in young adults in the Canadian Chinese Church cannot be left to the individual to fend for themselves. In the epigenesis of human development, growth whether biologically, psychological, or spiritually, requires nurturing that is received from caring adults. The presence of peers is important but so is establishing relationships with those who are farther on the journey of life and of faith. This dissertation argues that the church is not doing enough in caring for those who are going through the transition from adolescents to adulthood. One of the reasons for this situation is the misplacement of pastoral care in the church. Thus it is important to examine the recent development of pastoral care and how it has affected generational ministry in the church. Chapter 2 brings into discussion why rediscovering pastoral care as the central narrative is significant to generational ministry in the CCC. It begins with an exploration of the field of pastoral care characterized as the therapeutic tradition. It argues for the rediscovering of pastoral care from its roots in the Christian tradition. Finally, it reconstructs the role of the pastoral caregiver in the CCC so that they can provide effective ministry to those who are struggling with their identity.



## Chapter 2:

### PASTORAL CARE AS CENTRAL AND STRATEGIC MINISTRY

#### **Caring and Identity**

The current status of pastoral care as crisis management in the church contributes to the disenfranchisement of English speaking congregants, also broadly known as *the second generation*, in the CCC. This results in the hastening of the phenomenon of the “silent exodus.”<sup>1</sup> It would be misleading to say that church leaders in the CCC do not care. However, it is imperative for the church to reflect on their theology and practice of caring. Young adults who are just beginning to navigate through the social dynamics to establish their identity are faced with tremendous personal challenges. These include securing their role as adults in the immigrant church where they grew up and finding their place in the world. The unyielding patriarchal power structures predicated on Confucianism in the church can be stifling to their maturation. Moreover, the oppression of neoliberal capitalism is the hidden force that heightens stress in everyday life. The philosophy of neoliberalism has been realized in geopolitics since the 1970s and has been a major source for anxiety in the lives of people globally. Hence pastoral care today plays a significant role in nurturing men and women in their quest for identity. However, there is a difference in how the discipline of pastoral care is understood in the academy and in the church.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lee, “Silent,” 1.

<sup>2</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Care*, x.

The success of the pastoral care movement in twentieth century in bringing psychology into pastoral care brought benefits but also caused ambiguity in the theology and practice of caring. Its work ranges from a simple pastoral visit to referrals to psychotherapists or professional counselors for those who experience acute suffering. The prior already demonstrates the compartmentalization of the act of pastoral care; and the latter further detaches pastoral care from other ecclesial activities. Neither scenario reflects the significance of holistic care as foundational in faith communities. Pastoral care and counseling in the therapeutic tradition “has emphasized conversational methods of care and counseling almost to the exclusion of other traditional forms of religious care such as sacrament, sermon, prayer, and penitential practices.”<sup>3</sup>

Today pastoral care has been compartmentalized as a separate ministry of the church. Part of the problem is that the church is viewed more like an institution instead of the household of God. Peter Cha, Paul Kim and Dihan Lee calls for a return to the understanding of church as the household of God through Paul’s treatise to the Ephesian church.<sup>4</sup> Returning the church to the metaphor of the family instead of running a business is very helpful to the notion of care. Caring for individuals as family members is necessarily holistic and compartmentalized. Furthermore, seeing the church as God’s family instead of an institution provides a strong basis for unity in the Spirit. The mandate of the church changes from operation of a business to nurturing children. While the patriarchal system in the church presents problems, there are advantages as well from the biblical metaphor of the household of God. It is important not to reject the healthy aspects of the biblical home in reconstructing the power structures of the church.

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<sup>3</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 26.

<sup>4</sup> Cha et al., “Multigenerational,” 149.

Church operations, at times, may seem to adapt a business model of success. Thus the focus is to provide better products to increase consumer interests. Preaching, worship styles and fellowship have become deliverables. The focus is less on the congregant and more on the deliverables. Thus the neoliberal consumer mentality finds its way into the church. Oden is right to be concerned that pastoral care in the church is no longer associated with normative pastoral ministry such as preaching, worship, or fellowship.<sup>5</sup> At times, it seems that the pastor is busy with “public relations compendium ... and pushing a parish program.”<sup>6</sup> Caring for individuals is no longer the key focus of the church. This is particularly true for the CCC where a performance oriented mentality tends to focus on programs and attendance as measures of success. The root cause of the decline in the immigrant church is the lack of a clear vision of care for English ministry.<sup>7</sup>

Like the pastoral care movement, the CCC needs to embrace pastoral care as its central narrative in the “social change” of postmodernism and neoliberalism.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the centrality of care in pastoral ministry finds its root in the Christian tradition. This chapter highlights key topics in the field and seminal authors who are pioneers in the field such as Anton Boisen, Seward Hiltner, Edward Farley, Charles Gerkin, Don Browning, Donald Capps, James Woodward, Stephen Pattison, Bonnie J. Miller, Elaine Graham, Karen Scheib, Pamela D. Couture, Rodney Hunter, and John Patton. Furthermore, the discussion will draw from Alastair Campbell, C.W. Brister, Emmanuel Lartey, and Thomas Oden who are also proponents of the strategic significance of pastoral care in the church.

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<sup>5</sup> Oden, *Pastoral*, x–xii, 147.

<sup>6</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Care*, x.

<sup>7</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering*, 1–2.

<sup>8</sup> Couture and Hunter, *Pastoral Care*, 11.

This dissertation raises two key theological reflections on the subject of pastoral care. First, it is important for pastoral care to remain pastoral in nature. What is *pastoral* about pastoral care and counseling? Oden contends, “Suppose someone is called pastor yet never preaches or breaks bread or teaches Christianity. The question eventually must arise how that person can be a pastor without doing what pastors do.”<sup>9</sup> Oden is concerned about the theological reflection on the whole premise of what constitutes pastoral care. However, the shape of church is changing. Pastoral ministry can no longer be contained within the confine of religious institutions. Nonetheless, Donald Capps captures the essence of pastoral care in identifying pastoral caregivers as *agents of hope*.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps what is pastoral about pastoral care is the presence of hope afforded only by transcendence. By exploring the praxis of care from the Christian tradition (i.e. biblical models, practices of the church, and a structured approach to pastoral theology), this study seeks to align pastoral care with the holistic gospel. The line between the two schools of thoughts is blurred. The pastoral care movement did not intend to preclude pastoral nature from its practice of care; neither do those who propose the rediscovery of pastoral care reject the benefits of the integration of psychology and theology. The key point is to find balance between the two.

Second, the praxis of care must be firmly grounded in the centrality of Christ. If the pastoral caregiver is to be agents of hope, then he or she must connect the careseeker to the source of hope which is Christ. This dissertation affirms that an interdisciplinary approach between theology and psychology is highly valued. Nonetheless, it is important to remain faithful to the Christian message. Christ must be the ultimate source and reason

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<sup>9</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, xi.

<sup>10</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 1–2.

for caring. What separates pastoral care from other forms of care is the presence of transcendence; transcendence that is neither found in an ideology nor in the pastoral person but in the person of Jesus Christ. Since caring is necessarily Christocentric and intrinsic to the holistic gospel, then pastoral care is also the foundation of discipleship. Discipleship in most churches consists of programs and maybe a certificate at the end. This dissertation argues discipleship is much more than that. It is necessarily relational rather than program-driven. Discipleship must find its root in pastoral care. Subsequently, discipleship includes the provision of spiritual care and moral guidance. The goal of caring is to help the individual to be rooted in the person of Christ and in community with fellow believers.

### **The Pastoral Care Movement**

The pastoral care movement has contributed greatly to the understanding of the whole person. The following provides three major areas of contribution that the field has made to the overall practice of ministry. First, the pastoral care movement points to the necessity for the integration of spirituality and psychology in caring for the individual. The movement seeks to provide training for the pastoral person in knowledge of psychology. Second, the discipline of pastoral care can be understood as the therapeutic tradition. This tradition seeks to train pastoral care students and practitioners to focus on the needs of the careseeker.<sup>11</sup> The caring provided begins with the self-understanding of the pastoral person and the pastoral relationship. It also allows students to reflect

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<sup>11</sup> Acolatse, "What is Theological," 206; Pattison and Woodward, "Introduction," 2. The discipline of pastoral care today is a continuation of an ongoing pastoral theological discussion from the Christian tradition through the centuries. In the nineteenth century, the term "practical theology" emerged from the German tradition to denote the "theory of the church's practice of Christianity."

theologically and eventually to sharpen his or her traditional understanding of care. Lastly, the movement provided vivid images of pastoral care as important metaphors for the work of caring. Each of the above will be further expanded in the next section.

### Necessity of Integration between Spirituality and Psychology

The holistic approach to pastoral care necessarily includes all aspects of the person—the spiritual, physical, emotional, and psychological. The C. P. E. movement is “concerned with relating religion to the deepest experiences of human life. Boisen’s major concern was with the study of the mentally ill, hospitalized persons whom he understood as involved in a profound human struggle—a struggle that made them ill.”<sup>12</sup> William James raised much interest in relating psychology to religious experiences.<sup>13</sup> Both Boisen and James made a strong connection between mental illness and “even seemingly strange religious experiences.”<sup>14</sup> Today mental health issues are still met with stigma and often the sufferer is diagnosed as un-spiritual. However, the holistic gospel seeks to journey with those who are going through physical and mental illnesses, grieving, divorce, and other sufferings. Hence to love God and care for people requires a full understanding of

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<sup>12</sup> Patton, *Ministry*, 15. The majority of writings on pastoral care evolved from Anton Boisen’s Clinical Pastoral Education (C. P. E.) movement in the early part of the twentieth century. This approach is more than an inclusion of psychology in some theological curriculum but to incorporate psychology as a revision of theological method. Boisen, however, did not attempt to organize his work into a form of systematic pastoral theology. That final task was completed by Seward Hiltner.

Furthermore, Boisen pioneered the concept of the “living human document.” Boisen, *Exploration*, 185. This is an important idea that focuses on the sufferer of mental illness not only as a patient but as the text to be interpreted. The living human document as a pastoral theological method affirms the theology of care as science. Boisen argues, “I have sought to begin not with the ready-made formulations contained in books but with the living human documents and with actual social conditions in all their complexity.”

Hiltner is considered “the second pioneer” of the movement. He defines pastoral theology as the whole discipline of pastoral studies. The main focus is on aspects of pastoral care with an emphasis on the shepherding metaphor. Hiltner also insisted that pastoral students learn to document counseling cases. Gerkin, *Introduction*, 67; Hiltner, *Preface*, 50; Patton, *Ministry*, 16.

<sup>13</sup> James, *Varieties*, xi.

<sup>14</sup> Patton, *Ministry*, 15.

human dynamics. The pastoral care movement has advanced the task of pastoral ministry by its recognition of the multifaceted nature of being human. The church is to proclaim a gospel that provides holistic spiritual care that extends to individuals and communities.

It was the Enlightenment that theology began to accept the validity of spiritual experiences and became more open to embrace “new truths of science.”<sup>15</sup> William James, a physician and a religious person, raised much interest in relating psychology to religious experiences. His book *Varieties of Religious Experiences* was prompted by his lectures on “Natural Religion at the University of Edinburgh” at the turn of the century.<sup>16</sup> Boisen, on the other hand, became interested in the relationship between mental illness and religious experiences. This stemmed from his personal struggle with psychotic episodes. Both James and Boisen made a strong connection between mental illness and “even seemingly strange religious experiences.”<sup>17</sup> Their works have been cited by seminal authors such as Hiltner, Gerkin, Capps, Hunter and Patton, Couture, and Emmanuel Lartey.<sup>18</sup>

The original intent of the pastoral care movement was to equip practitioners so that they could differentiate mental disorders from spiritual conditions. This is an important step to connect theology and psychology. The pastoral care movement in the twentieth century has provided the aspect of psychological knowledge to practitioners to recognize conditions that require further professional assessment. Individuals with mental health issues should be acknowledged and accepted as such so that proper pastoral care

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<sup>15</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 33.

<sup>16</sup> James, *Varieties*, xi;

<http://www.bytrentsacred.co.uk/index.php/james-religious-experience/1-religion-and-neurology>

<sup>17</sup> Patton, *Ministry*, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 51; Gerkin, *Introduction*, 61–66; Capps, *Depleted Self*, 3; Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 32; Couture and Hunter, *Pastoral Care*, 11; Lartey, *Living Colour*, 100.

can be administered. When mental illness is not recognized, proper care cannot be provided. In some cases, misdiagnosis can lead to guilt and stigma that add to the pain of the sufferer. It is not required of the pastoral person to provide professional help but to make the necessary referral. The field of pastoral care offers opportunities for the church to reach out to those marginalized by mental disorder, poverty, abuse and other social ills.

An interdisciplinary approach between pastoral theology and psychology has long been affirmed by both sides. For Boisen, the conviction that there is a connection between psychology and theology came from his own experience as a patient with mental health issues that required hospitalization. Gerkin writes,

Boisen emerged from his psychotic illness with two deep convictions that gave to his disorganized life a powerful and persistent sense of mission. Boisen believed that he had undergone a profound religious experience in his battle with mental illness and thus that there was an equally profound connection needed somehow to be researched and brought into dialogue with theological inquiry. [With that conviction, he] likewise believed that the church had badly neglected its ministry to mentally suffering people and that his own future ministry should be among his fellow sufferers.<sup>19</sup>

However, Boisen was not concerned with constructing a systematic theology of care but only to raise an awareness of those suffering from mental illness. This became a significant step in transforming the nature of pastoral care.

Nonetheless, an interdisciplinary approach between psychology and theology is not without its challenges. Medical practitioners and religious leaders present different sides of sceptics. Boisen recalls, "Of course I spent much time puzzling about my own case. I tried to get a chance to talk with the doctor about it ... It was very clear that he had neither understanding nor interest in the religious aspects of my problem."<sup>20</sup>

Understandably, the doctor would be sceptical of a mental patient's self-evaluation

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<sup>19</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 61.

<sup>20</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 5.



especially if the claim is something out of the natural realm. Similarly, associating spiritual experiences with psychosis may seem too liberal to the religious traditionalists. The question is whether psychology is necessary in addition to piety and prayers in treating mental health crises. Boisen's experience raises an intriguing question for pastoral theology, "Who should treat the distress of the soul? Physicians? Ministers?"<sup>21</sup> The strength of the movement is in the acknowledgement of the significance of both the spiritual and psychological facets of human beings. This is an important step for pastoral theology as it was for psychology.

Pastoral theologians Donald Capps, Charles Gerkin, Elaine Graham, and Emmanuel Lartey are among proponents of the integration of spirituality and psychology. Likewise, psychologists Erik H. Erikson, William James, and Kenneth Pargament are among theorists whose works include religious aspects in psychology. Pargament also affirms that the collaboration of psychology and religion is particularly beneficial for people who need to cope with difficult situations. Theology needs not see social science as an intrusion; similarly, there is no good reason for psychology to reject religious experiences. Pargament says, "Religion has much to gain by opening itself up to scientific psychological inquiry ... On the other hand, we cannot invalidate theological claims either."<sup>22</sup> Moreover, he asserts that "The study of religion can enrich a psychologist's way of knowing the world. The traditional hallmarks of science ... may be too restrictive to understand religious life."<sup>23</sup> Proponents on both sides see mutual benefits with the common purpose of coping.

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<sup>21</sup> Couture and Hunter, *Pastoral Care*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Pargament, *Psychology*, 10.

<sup>23</sup> Pargament, *Psychology*, 11.

Swedish pastor and psychotherapist Göte Bergsten, founder of the *St. Luke Institute of Spiritual Counseling and Psychological Treatment*, is another proponent.<sup>24</sup>

The care of souls cannot be practiced if either the spiritual or the psychological is being neglected. Bergsten also affirms the priority of the spiritual aspect in soul care because there is a supernatural reality to being human. Yet the two cannot be separated. He explains,

There is an intimate and necessary connection between the spiritual and the psychological care of souls. However explicitly we affirm the supernatural character of the task of caring for the souls—and we do so because we affirm the supernatural reality of the being of man [sic]—we must yet insist that this reality can manifest itself and be apprehended only within that realm of life which is accessible to psychological as well as theological influence ... Therefore, the care of the souls cannot be practiced in the deepest sense if either the spiritual or the psychological aspects of man's nature is emphasised or cultivated at the expense of the other. We can speak of the care of souls in its fullest sense only when the two aspects are held together and treated together.<sup>25</sup>

Thoughtful caring requires time and attention to what is really going on with the person in a particular situation; and often *the situation is within situations*.<sup>26</sup> Swinton and Mowat assert, "Situations are complex, multifaceted entities which need to be examined with care, rigour and discernment if they are to be effectively understood."<sup>27</sup> The pastoral caregiver needs to take into account both the spiritual and the psychological aspects of the careseeker because the identity of the true self can only be revealed through the fusion of a person's theological conviction expressed through the practice of their spirituality and their psychological composite influenced by their background and environment.

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<sup>24</sup> <http://wp.ecpcc.info/history/>

<sup>25</sup> Bergsten, *Pastoral Psychology*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> Farley, "Interpreting Situations," 121.

<sup>27</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 15.

Hiltner welcomed the rise of modern psychologies that were becoming popular in the mid-twentieth century as helpful tools for pastoral care. His book *Preface to Pastoral Theology* is a milestone in the field of pastoral care. In it, he defines pastoral theology as a formal theology that is systematic in nature and which “begins with theological questions and results in theological answers.”<sup>28</sup> Hiltner advocates the importance of the study in pastoral theology because there is “development of new knowledge, new tools, and new professions that bear upon helping and healing.”<sup>29</sup> New knowledge in the social sciences are “not easy to assimilate; but its riches are such that no thoughtful person can set them aside.”<sup>30</sup> In fact, it would have been perilous if pastoral theology did not take into account the new findings in research on human development.

For centuries, the Christian church had cared for her congregants and careseekers by providing practical help, consolation, moral and spiritual guidance through the faith community. Practical help means providing bread for the hungry, water for the thirsty, visiting the sick and those in prison, and casting out demons for those impaired by spiritual forces.<sup>31</sup> Sometimes, caring involved prayers and, for some denominations, divine healing. For the most part, however, theories in psychology and social science were precluded both due to the lack of available knowledge and the church’s struggle with its mandate of what constitutes the gospel. Modern psychology began to gain ground with Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Jean Piaget, and Erik Erikson during the Enlightenment. Erikson’s work in human development has been of particular interest to pastoral theology. His theories in the human life cycle and identity are invaluable resources for

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<sup>28</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 24.

<sup>29</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Matt 25:34–40.

the struggles of young adults in the CCC. Donald Capps, pastoral theologian and Princeton scholar, integrated Erikson's theories into various constructs of pastoral care.

Furthermore, interest in "self-culture" caught the attention of pastoral theologians who "became even more concerned for the psychological processes by which the individual could simultaneously achieve a healthy, balanced sense of self and an experience of salvation."<sup>32</sup> An interest in self-care is not new but perhaps highlighted given the resources and opportunities in the postmodern era. However, self-culture in postmodern society is a reality that can mean opportunities for the church. Pastoral theology can view it positively as the self is rooted in the image of God and has great potentials to bless others. If channeled constructively, then self-culture could lead to self-understanding and healing. It can cultivate compassion in human beings and eventually lead to the worship of God. Worship means the broader scope of service both in liturgy and in charity.

This dissertation argues that both faith in God and faith in God's providence (science) are valid ways of dependence on transcendence. Thus the school of thoughts that healing grace is only confined to the institution of church for all human situations may be too limited. For Chinese evangelical churches, mental health issues and crises that require professional assistance such as marriage counseling are still viewed with suspicion. This is partly due to their theology that mental health issues are spiritual matters that require prayers. Causes of mental illness are often attributed to the person being unspiritual in the first place. Any remedies that involve medicine and psychotherapy would be conceived as further evidence of a lack of faith in God. Hence many crisis situations go unreported. Therefore, it is not only appropriate but imperative

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<sup>32</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 49; Holifield, *History*, 156.

for pastoral theology to affirm the integration of spirituality and psychology as proper resources in the generation operation of care and in crisis situations.

### Two Sides of the Therapeutic Tradition

It is necessary to understand the benefits and limitations of the therapeutic tradition in order to facilitate the current discussion of caring and identity. The nature of the pastoral care movement in the twentieth century can be generally characterized as the *therapeutic tradition*. However, there are two sides to the therapeutic tradition as the defining framework of pastoral care and counseling. On one hand, the therapeutic nature of the movement has helped pastoral caregivers and practitioners to pay closer attention to the specific needs of individuals. The early success of the tradition seems to have developed a momentum that is largely independent of the church. On the other, the therapeutic tradition may have inadvertently shifted the focus of pastoral care from its central role in pastoral ministry into the specialized field of pastoral care and counseling it is today. Therefore, this dissertation both celebrates key insights afforded by the tradition as well as cautions its limitations.

The pastoral care and counseling movement is labeled *therapeutic* because “of its fundamental commitment to healing or ‘therapeutics’ as its master metaphor and operative principle.”<sup>33</sup> The term therapeutic has a Greek root that means to “attend to or to treat” and “‘attending’ or ‘presence’ in illness and suffering with the intent and hope of healing.”<sup>34</sup> Healing, reconciling, and sustaining have been leading metaphors for the

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<sup>33</sup> Hunter, “Therapeutic,” 17.

<sup>34</sup> Hunter, “Therapeutic,” 18.

ministry of pastoral care.<sup>35</sup> Healing, in the fullest sense of the word, empowers pastoral care in bringing the good news of the gospel and practical help to individuals who are suffering from physical, spiritual, and psychological hardship. The pastoral care movement has brought new hopes and new ways that offer insights to interpret issues of identity in young adults.

There were two broad defining features behind the therapeutic tradition. First, it welcomes the inclusion of natural and social sciences as God's salvific and redemptive work. This affirms the centrality of God's act of salvation in "God's active immanence in the world, hope concerning the possibility of redeeming the world within the course of history, [and] a positive role assigned to human capacities and culture (including science)."<sup>36</sup> However, this school of thought has caused some to label it as *liberal theology*.<sup>37</sup> The tradition views psychology as a positive conversation partner yet gives priority to theology.<sup>38</sup> To deny access to social science would be to deny God's providence in the knowledge of science in general. By the same token, it would deny God's administration of grace in using technologies such as electricity as providence. While not all psychological theories are acceptable to theology, the process of practical theological interpretation provides safeguards to appropriate only those principles that are helpful in the practice of care.

Second, the therapeutic tradition takes spiritual experiences seriously in understanding the inner conflicts of persons. The movement is as much interested in bringing psychology into pastoral theology as it is in putting an emphasis on the spiritual

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<sup>35</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 64. Gerkin, *Introduction*, 25.

<sup>36</sup> Hunter and Patton, "Therapeutic," 33.

<sup>37</sup> Hunter and Patton, "Therapeutic," 33.

<sup>38</sup> Capps, "Methods," 553; Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Theology*, 63.

aspects in psychotherapy. The interdisciplinary approach of care in psychology and spirituality opens up new understandings and opportunities in the cure of souls. However, while the therapeutic tradition is interested in the exploration of spiritual experiences as a form of pietism, it does not care much for the spiritual disciplines.<sup>39</sup> The inclusion of spiritual experiences highlights the awareness of all aspects of the individual careseeker. Mental health can be affected by physical conditions such as sleep deprivation as it is by spiritual issues.

James theorised about a connection between religious experiences and the state of the mind. He was particularly interested in those who have had extraordinary religious experiences and are passionate about religion but to the world seem psychologically unstable. “These experiences we can only find in individuals for whom religion exists not as a dull habit, but as an acute fever rather. But such individuals are ‘geniuses’ in the religious line; and like many other geniuses who have brought forth fruits effective enough for commemoration in the pages of biography, such religious geniuses have often shown symptoms of nervous instability.”<sup>40</sup> George Fox of the Quakers was such an individual. His encounter with the supernatural or God would seem delusional to society.<sup>41</sup> Boisen points to the Apostle Paul whose testimony to the Roman governor about his vision on the road to Damascus was taken for madness.<sup>42</sup> Recognition of the connection between spirituality and psychosis presents a significant breakthrough in the treatment of mental illnesses.

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<sup>39</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic” 33.

<sup>40</sup> James, *Varieties*, 27.

<sup>41</sup> James, *Varieties*, 27–28.

<sup>42</sup> Boisen, *Exploration*, 58.

This section will use Hunter and Patton's argument as a platform to interpret situations where young adults struggle to affirm their identity in the CCC. The focus will be on the five characteristics of the therapeutic tradition that define the discipline of pastoral care.<sup>43</sup>

The first characteristic deals with the inner conflicts of the pastoral person (*Priority of the Person and the Pastoral Relationship of the Caregiver over the Formal Content of Its Religious Message*).

The second focuses on the methodology of care predicated on the commonality of human beings (*Priority of What Human Beings Have in Common over Ways in Which They Differ from One Another*).

The third point gives priority to the personal needs of the careseeker over the expectation of the church or agency (*Priority of Personal Needs over Institutional Needs*).

The fourth characteristic acknowledges the grace present in ordinariness. That God is working in and through ordinary circumstances of individuals and communities (*Priority of the Ordinary Experience and Language over Religious Experience and Language*).

The fifth and final characteristic allows the student of pastoral care to question or enhance the understanding of his or her religious tradition (*Priority of the Student's Evaluation and Appropriation of the Religious Tradition over the Tradition's Institutional and Traditional Authority*).

First, the practice of pastoral care rooted in the relationship between the pastoral caregiver and the careseeker. Hence it begins by addressing the pastoral person's own

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<sup>43</sup> Hunter and Patton, "Therapeutic," 35–39.



inner conflicts. The struggles within the pastoral pastor will inevitably affect the pastoral relationship and the efficacy of care. This resonates with the traditional emphasis on the person and the office of the pastor.<sup>44</sup> The genuineness of the pastoral relationship is imperative to the efficacy of care. The pastoral relationship cannot function properly unless, like the wounded healer, the pastoral caregiver has dealt with his or her own issues to a reasonable degree. Hunter and Patton are concerned with “unresolved problems of personality and personal relationships” of the pastoral person.<sup>45</sup> This point highlights the need for self-reflection and self-evaluation so that the inner conflicts of the caregiver do not become a hindrance to building trust in that relationship.

If trust is absent, then any message, religious or otherwise, will be discounted distorted or ignored. Thus the first task of C. P. E. training concurs with “examining personal meanings, motives, and relationships rather than communicating religious meanings.”<sup>46</sup> The perilous nature of pastoral ministry has a way of irritating or amplifying any personal issues in the pastoral person. These irritations have “the potential for distorting the message of faith.”<sup>47</sup> The pastoral caregivers must be given to honest self-evaluation. Without it, the task of deep caring would be difficult if not impossible.<sup>48</sup>

The significance of the pastoral relationship is illustrated in the “infant-mother relationship” as the infant first experiences hope.<sup>49</sup> Hope is developed through the “interactions that occur between the infant and the caring adult.” with whom the infant

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<sup>44</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 35.

<sup>45</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 35.

<sup>46</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 35.

<sup>47</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 36.

<sup>48</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 30.

<sup>49</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 35.

interacts.”<sup>50</sup> Likewise, “[the] infant’s smile inspires hope in the adult and, in making her smile, makes her wish to give hope.”<sup>51</sup> The first sign of hope for the careseeker is found in the relationship. The love that radiates from that relationship is the care that the person is looking for. Capps says, “We would not hope had we not first been the object of another’s love, and we would not hope had we not returned her love.”<sup>52</sup> Thus hope is developed at infancy. The adult in crisis situation continues to need hope; a hope that is now found in the pastoral care relationship.

In *Agents of Hope*, Capps contends that pastoral practitioners can bring hope in a way no other professional caregivers can.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, the message of eternal hope must be the underlying theme of pastoral counseling. Does this view contradict the therapeutic tradition? No, it does not. The hopefulness that the pastoral counselor brings to the given situation does not work against the principle of the well informed relationship. As in medical or social crises, pastoral care must be grounded in hope. Capps says, “When persons who are experiencing problems and difficulties seek assistance from a pastor [or any other caregiver,] they are, in this very act, seeking hope.”<sup>54</sup> Without hope, the pastoral care movement is powerless in the rapidly changing culture that lays heavy burdens on the well-being of individuals.

The pastoral relationship will gain significant grounds toward minding the generational gap in the Canadian Chinese Church. The relationship must come out of a genuine heart and faithful service of the pastoral person will be appreciated. This also aligns with the classical tradition of pastoral theology where the pastoral task is to care

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<sup>50</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 31.

<sup>51</sup> Erikson, “Human Strength,” 116.

<sup>52</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 78.

<sup>53</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 1–2.

<sup>54</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 8.

for the whole person.<sup>55</sup> Only under these conditions can hope flourish. Where hope flourishes, the affirmation of identity becomes possible. This generation is desperately hoping for a community of where they belong.

The second point of the therapeutic tradition focuses on the commonality instead of diversity among careseekers. It proposes that there is enough common ground among human beings to warrant a common practice of care. This concept has generated some controversies over time and is still in transition. Should the theology of care focus on what is common among human beings or how they differ? This also raises the question, “What is the fundamental core of being human?”<sup>56</sup> The therapeutic tradition seeks to filter different situations into a few prescribed cases based on that “which is universal, transcending differences of race, class, and culture.”<sup>57</sup> This resembles the early clinical movement that attempts to identify the “common core” in human beings through “varieties” of experiences.<sup>58</sup>

In light of recent incidents of racism, the rise of the Alt-Right, and *Black Lives Matters*, the focus on commonality in human beings is enticing. However, to dismiss what makes one person different from another, such as race, gender, and class, may lead to more serious issues. “To say that ‘it doesn’t really matter’ whether one is man or woman, black or white, Protestant or Catholic seems commendable as a moral rejection of racial, sexual, or religious prejudice. But it also tacitly devalues those particular ways

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<sup>55</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 3–5.

<sup>56</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 37.

<sup>57</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 36.

<sup>58</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 36.

of being human, and may conceal tendencies to equate the ‘core’ with one’s own cultural, racial, and gender identity and to regard other identities as secondary—second rate.”<sup>59</sup>

The way forward in generational ministry is to recognize the differences as well as the similarities between those who are born or raised in Canada from those born or raised overseas. Only then can the two sides come to terms with each other in reconciliation and fellowship. Otherwise, the English speaking congregants in the Chinese church will continue to feel like they are second class.

Not only is each person different in terms of race, gender, and ethnicity, but that each given situation is also unique as a pastoral care case. In *Living Stories*, Capps captures the vast spectrum and various approaches in caring for people. Here he relates two stories of women who came to Milton H. Erickson for advice on dieting. The request is the same but the methods used by Erickson were different for each individual.

In the first story, a woman had come to ask Erickson to help her to lose weight through hypnosis.<sup>60</sup> The reason for hypnosis is that the woman thinks it will make the task easier. Here is a concise version of the story,

A woman came to see me and she said, ‘I weigh 180 pounds. I’ve dieted successfully under doctor’s orders hundreds of times. And I want to weigh 130 pounds. Every time I get to 130 pounds I rush into the kitchen to celebrate my success. I put it back on, right away. Now I weigh 180. Can you use hypnosis to help me reduce to 130 pounds? ...’

Then I told her, ‘Let both your unconscious mind and your conscious mind listen. Here’s the way to go about it. Your present weight is now 180 pounds. I want you to gain twenty pounds and when you weigh 200 pounds, you may start reducing.’ She literally begged me on her knees, to be released from her promise. And every ounce she gained she became more and more insistent on being allowed to start reducing ... When she reached 200 pounds she was very happy that she could begin to reduce ... And when she got to 130 she said, ‘I’m never going to gain again.’<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 37.

<sup>60</sup> Capps, *Living Stories*, 69–71.

<sup>61</sup> Rosen, *My Voice*, 123–24.

The explanation was that this patient needed to see “the gaining of weight is no longer either rebellion or an expression of something she wants to do. It has become something she has been coerced to do. Therefore, just as she had previously resented having to lose weight, she now resents having to gain weight.”<sup>62</sup> The method was meant to change her attitude.

The next story is about another patient who also wishes to lose weight. But the treatment is very different. Similar to the woman in the first story, the girl can only stay on the diet for two or three weeks but is unable to stay on consistently.<sup>63</sup> But instead of asking her to gain weight first, Erickson prescribes another treatment,

Now I’ll give you a medical prescription. Continue the diet given to you by your doctor in the past. Stay on that diet for two weeks and three weeks, if you can. And then, on the last Sunday of that third week, gorge like hell, because it’s medical orders. You can’t gorge enough to offset your losses in the three weeks. And you can gorge without a sense of guilt because you’re under medical orders to gorge all day Sunday. And the following Monday go back to your diet. Stay on it three weeks, if you can, and then have another guiltless gorge day ... The gorging days gave her the strength to be on the diet for those three weeks.<sup>64</sup>

Both stories are about losing weight. In each case, the patients are female. Their race is unknown. Erickson could have easily prescribed the same treatment based on the priority given to the commonality to prescribe the same treatment. But he did not. While there is commonality that defines what is core about being human each individual even in similar situations is unique. Therefore, the diagnosis and prescription of care must reflect the uniqueness and complexity thereof.

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<sup>62</sup> Rosen, *My Voice*, 124–25.

<sup>63</sup> Capps, *Living Stories*, 71–72.

<sup>64</sup> Rosen, *My Voice*, 125–26.

The “curious irony” in balancing what is common in human beings and traits that make them different.<sup>65</sup> It is essential to affirm the equality of all persons made in the *Imago Dei* regardless of race, ethnicity, and gender. However, in order to minister to each person effectively, any approach of care must take into account what makes that individual different from another. The dismissal of one’s uniqueness misses the mark of the original intent of the therapeutic tradition and may cause identity confusion. While this dissertation attempts to formulate theories in the efficacy of generational ministry, it is important for practitioners as pastoral caregivers to take into account the unique make-up of each person and their situation.

Third, the priority given to personal needs over institutional needs provides significant support for the current research. It “[focuses] almost exclusively on matters of personhood and relationship” which has much to do with identity.<sup>66</sup> This point is particularly relevant in the context of generational ministry. However, it may pose challenges to the CCC. At times, institutional needs of the church are superimposed on individual congregants where their personal needs become unimportant or are ignored. Sometimes, this is done unintentionally and at other times intentionally for the greater good, so to speak. First generation leaders have been known to insist on certain things such as dress code on Sunday so to maintain a certain way of worship that fits traditional expectations. This has turned away people who see no need to conform. Should traditional (often personal) expectations override the needs of individuals for whom Christ died? Hunter and Patton advocate that “[in] situations of intense personal need, institutional agendas often appropriately need to be subordinated to personal needs. Institutional

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<sup>65</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 37.

<sup>66</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 37.

agendas can be relevant in caring for individual needs and problems, but they can also be asserted in ways that ignore or do violence to personal needs in given situations.”<sup>67</sup> When individual needs are ignored in favour of an institutional agenda, there may be earthly and eternal consequences.

The priority given to personal needs is further demonstrated by Henri Nouwen in his interpretation of interruptions. Nouwen recounts, “While visiting the University of Notre Dame, where I had been a teacher for a few years, I met an older experienced professor who had spent most of his life there. And while we strolled over the beautiful campus, he said with certain melancholy in his voice, ‘You know, [sic] ... my whole life I have been complaining that my work was constantly interrupted, until I discovered that my interruptions were my work.’”<sup>68</sup>

The common thread between Nouwen’s reflection and Hunter and Patton’s pedagogical focus is that personal needs of careseekers and congregants are, in fact, the ministry goal of the institution. Therefore, priority given to personal needs over institutional needs actually fulfills the ultimate goal of the institution that is to be present with persons during “crucial human situations.”<sup>69</sup>

This is also seen in the problem of ageism among older women. The issue occurs partly because older women could no longer fulfill the institutional needs of the church through service or financial contribution. As their ability to serve diminishes, church leaders seem to dismiss them from view. Scheib says, “We need a vision of the church that challenges individualism and values community while maintaining a dynamic

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<sup>67</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 37.

<sup>68</sup> Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 52.

<sup>69</sup> Oates and Lester, *Pastoral Care*, cover.

interplay between individuality and connection.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, the church also needs to pay attention to the unique care required for women in the social and ecclesial context.<sup>71</sup>

In the Canadian Chinese Church, one of the key issues is the performance-driven mentality. This causes burnouts among English speaking young adults. Peter’s story is indicative of the issue. He is a young professional.<sup>72</sup> While there were other factors, his experience of burnout as a worship leader sealed his decision,

At that time, Peter suffered from being overburdened by his ministry involvement. As a passionate musician and worship leader who sought innovation in the worship service delivery, Peter looked to delegate his work to other team members to balance the load. With no one stepping in to lighten his duty, he experienced deep frustration and feelings of ‘dread,’ of being ‘not motivated’ and ‘burnt-out.’ The spiritual dryness led to his feeling emotionally drained. Being so committed to the cause that he was unwilling to take a sabbatical leave, Peter saw himself caught in a rut of routine: ‘The week-in, week-out of having to lead worship, it burdened me and that’s when I started thinking maybe I should try another different church.’ ... Without relief, Peter found that exodus was a legitimate way to deal with his feelings of burnout.<sup>73</sup>

When institutional needs remain the ultimate goal, individuals who are in need of care may be missed (ignored) by the leaders of the church. Here is Eunice’s story. In transitioning out of the role of interim youth pastor, she became unimportant to the church. Her personal needs were not met. Eventually, she left this church. She recalls,

I was out of place, because if I wasn’t involved in doing ministry, I didn’t really know where I fit in. I didn’t know where I belonged. But I didn’t want to belong to serve. Or I didn’t want to serve to find my belonging. I wanted to not serve and feel like, ‘I still belong. But I didn’t feel like I did’ ... You need your own friends, people your age, people you can connect with. I was single and unmarried. And a lot of people older than me were married and had kids. So life stage was different as well. So it was difficult to connect with people.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Scheib, *Challenging Invisibility*, 45.

<sup>71</sup> Miller-McLemore and Gill-Austern, *Feminist*, 33, 79.

<sup>72</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 246.

<sup>73</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 247.

<sup>74</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 276.



The experience of stepping down weighs heavy on Eunice. She is left without peers in the church. Her singleness only adds weights to the stress. However, no one noticed her personal needs. It was overshadowed by the needs of the ministry. Todd notes that fourteen out of thirty young adults who left the church said “their life stage transition needs were unfulfilled within a Chinese church.”<sup>75</sup>

Fourth, the therapeutic tradition recognizes the grace of God in all of life. Priority given to the ordinary over religious experiences and language gives legitimacy to this study on the challenges of identity in young adults. It affirms ordinary experience and language over religious ones.<sup>76</sup> Caring for individuals must reach beyond religious and institutional boundaries in order to unite the sacred and the secular into one reality which belongs to Christ. It provides a platform for theology to connect to all of life by abolishing the great divide between the sacred and the secular. Oden affirms the validity of the workings of God in ordinary experiences. Oden asks, “Who is to say that ordinary modern people cannot grasp such powerful, moving, straightforward images (of the shepherd)?”<sup>77</sup> Furthermore, he objects to the idea that the religious language is superior to the language of the ordinary.<sup>78</sup> The everyday life is precisely where God is present and ordinary language is how God speaks into human lives.

In one of Erickson’s cases, he proceeded to help a medically retired policeman. This story resembles the story of the Samaritan woman where God can speak through ordinary experiences. Erickson writes,

A medically retired policeman told me, ‘I have emphysema, high blood pressure, and, as you can see, I am grossly overweight. I drink too much. I eat too much. I

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<sup>75</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 98, 99.

<sup>76</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 38.

<sup>77</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 52.

<sup>78</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 54.

want a job but my emphysema and high blood pressure prevent that. I would like to cut down on my smoking. I'd like to get rid of it' ... I said, 'Are you married?' He said, 'No, I'm a bachelor. I usually do my own cooking, but there is a handy restaurant around the corner that I often visit.' ... 'Where do you buy your cigarettes?' He bought two cartons at a time ... 'Where do you get your liquor?' ... 'Fortunately there is a nice liquor store right next to that grocery.' ... 'Now, your problem is simple. You want to jog but you can't. But you can walk. All right, buy your cigarettes one pack at a time. Walk across town to buy your pack ... Go to a grocery a half-mile or a mile away' ... He looked at me with the greatest anger. He swore at me. He left raging ... About a month later a new patient came in. He said, 'A retired policeman referred me to you. He said you are the one psychiatrist who knows what he is doing.' ... The policeman couldn't buy a carton of cigarettes after that!<sup>79</sup>

Erickson addresses the root problem of this policeman as Jesus for the Samaritan woman. Jesus kept talking about the one thing that bothered her. Both the Samaritan woman and the policeman were irritated by the line of questions. Both recipients of care later became witnesses of their *saviour*. Erickson may not have made a conscious effort to apply the biblical story. However, the similarity of the two stories points to the fact that ordinary language and experience has something to say.

One of the causes of exhaustion for Millennials could be traced to oppressions such as neoliberalism. This has not received much attention because it belongs to the realm of the ordinary. Is what is happening in the marketplace out of the scope of pastoral ministry? No, it cannot be. Pastoral ministry needs to meet people where they are and where they hurt. Traditional approaches to the retention of young adults focus on institutional needs such as worship styles, preaching, or leadership models. Excellence is important in all of these ministries. However, what is missing is the acknowledgement that all of life is sacred. Pastoral care needs to extend into the world of young men and women in all their lived experiences. When the pastoral care speaks their language, they will pay attention.

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<sup>79</sup> Rosen, *My Voice*, 149–50.

Lastly, the therapeutic tradition encourages the “integration of the pastoral person and their respective tradition” to a point of allowing the person to question the tradition.<sup>80</sup> This gives permission to the student to question his or her own traditional authority. This opens up possibilities of theological reflection on current practices. Furthermore, theology can be refined by actual cases. However, it also presents a danger because this seems to promote a form of relativism. The strength of this characteristic releases the pastoral caregiver from coming into a situation with presuppositions limited by the denominational or institutional tradition.<sup>81</sup> This encourages the student not to blindly follow traditions but to approach each situation with careful evaluation.

Furthermore, the findings can enhance traditional understanding of theology. Whenever reality does not fall neatly in line with the tradition, the student is to question the tradition as much as the tradition might question the situation. The situation is allowed to analyse or give feedback to theology in Emmanuel Lartey’s Pastoral Cycle.<sup>82</sup> Lartey asks, “How adequate is my tradition’s formulation in responding to the concrete experience encountered?”<sup>83</sup> This process empowers the pastoral person to have the authority to assess situations with new lenses and apply what is called the “redemptive-movement hermeneutics” to pastoral care cases.<sup>84</sup> The dialogue between theology and concrete experiences can either affirm the validity of biblical truths or allow the situation to challenge the understanding of theology. Young adults in the CCC are at a stage where

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<sup>80</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 39.

<sup>81</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 38–39.

<sup>82</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 102.

<sup>83</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 103.

<sup>84</sup> Webb, *Slaves*, 43–51. Redemptive-movement hermeneutics advocates a reading of the text not as a static document but a dynamic reading that moves with the times that sees possibilities of grace and relevance that speaks “into the modern world with power to change the social structures and direction to guide the renewal process.” This is also takes into consideration spiritual and moral principles that cannot be changed.

they want to question the theology and practice of the church. This provides opportunities for dialogue and refining praxis of effective generational ministry. A dialogue between experience and theology that does not allow mutual submission is questionable.<sup>85</sup>

In conclusion, the therapeutic tradition is not without its controversies. The five characteristics in the discussion bring a sharp focus on the profound needs of the human soul. It also challenges the Christian tradition to be dynamic and relevant to current issues. No one in the congregation is completely free from stress. Acknowledgement of their predicament brings comfort in the present and hope of an ending or solution. The priority given to individual needs and the pastoral relationship is commendable. However, when pastoral care becomes too focused on therapeutics, it can be misconstrued to be something outside the norm of pastoral ministry. The responsibility of the church is to provide holistic caring to their congregants as well as to those seeking help. As agents of hope, pastoral caregivers affirm grace in ordinary activities of life. The line between what is sacred and what is secular is eradicated and thus brings all of life into sacred space. The benefits of the therapeutic tradition outweighs its cautions. The priority given to personal needs may be the promising step that is needed in generational ministry. That someone would care enough to come alongside and to acknowledge their pain brings the much needed hope and comfort to young men and women.

#### Images of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care reaches deep into human situations. The task is dynamic and robust. It combines beauty and science. Pastoral care is the multifaceted expression of divine care. Hence it requires a collection of various metaphors and interpretations in an attempt to

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<sup>85</sup> Hunter and Patton, "Therapeutic," 39.

embrace the richness of the discipline. Hence pastoral theologians have employed various images of pastoral care to denote the various aspects of care. Many of them have biblical and prophetic roots. This section brings into discussion the image of the shepherd, the wounded healer, the gardener, the wise fool, midwife, and agents of hope.<sup>86</sup> There are also other popular metaphors of pastoral care.<sup>87</sup>

The *shepherding* image is “one of the predominant metaphors for pastoral care.”<sup>88</sup> Hiltner has emphasized shepherding as his key metaphor for pastoral ministry.<sup>89</sup> He not only defines the discipline in terms of the person and functions of the pastor, but he brings into the forefront the image of shepherding as the central metaphor that permeates the surface of mere activities.<sup>90</sup> Pastoral theology is “that branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all operations and functions of the church and the minister, and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflection on these observations.”<sup>91</sup> C.W. Brister, Seward Hiltner, Charles Gerkin, and others have also used the shepherding image as the guiding metaphor for pastoral theology.

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<sup>86</sup> References to various images of pastoral care are found in Alastair Campbell, “The Courageous Shepherd,” 54–61; Henri Nouwen, “The Wounded Healer,” 76–84; Campbell, “The Wise Fool,” 94–107; Karen Hanson, “The Midwife,” 200–208; Margaret Zipse Kornfeld, “The Gardener,” 209–217.

<sup>87</sup> For other images of pastoral care, see *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* by Robert C. Dykstra, “The Living Document” and “Reclaiming the Living Document,” 22–49; “The Circus Clown,” 85–93; “The Intimate Stranger,” 123–36; and “Agents of Hope,” 188–99.

For Chinese-Canadian young adults, a fitting image of the pastoral caregiver might be the “grandmother.” Whereas parents represent the power that seeks performance and success, the grandmother is the caring person who loves unconditionally and attends to the needs of the individual. Another Asian image of pastoral care might be the compassionate sage, or the Master in Confucianism. The Master is much more than a teacher in the classroom, but a mentor who cares for and nurtures the disciple much like Jesus and his disciples. Confucius, *Analects*, 33–39.

<sup>88</sup> Stevenson-Moessner, “Self-Differentiated,” 64.

<sup>89</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 18–19; Pattison and Woodward, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>90</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 96; Lester, *Angry Christian*, 159.

<sup>91</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 20.

The shepherding image is fitting to describe the role of the tender care between the pastor and the congregation illustrated by the shepherd and the sheep (Isaiah 40:11). The role of the pastor is represented by the biblical image of shepherding in both Old and the New Testament (Psalm 23; John 10:11).<sup>92</sup> The shepherding image comes from “the ‘good shepherd’ and ‘his sheep,’ i.e. his followers.”<sup>93</sup> The shepherd is “characterized by close involvement and great skill in guiding and protecting the flock.”<sup>94</sup> Shepherding includes the tasks of “healing, sustaining, and guiding.”<sup>95</sup> The shepherding metaphor provides a motif for theological reflection on the practice of care. Pastoral theology is just as concerned with the sheep as it does the shepherd.

However, Alastair Campbell finds Hiltner’s shepherding metaphor to be too focused on the operation of the church. This makes the functions of the shepherd “remarkably flat and uninteresting.”<sup>96</sup> What is missing is the courage of the shepherd, not the distorted image of masculine resolve but true shepherding revealed in biblical narratives that “saves them from the exploitation and neglect of false shepherds and untrustworthy hirelings.”<sup>97</sup> One of the key objections to the shepherding metaphor is the recognition that there is no shepherd but the Good Shepherd. In trying too hard to be the good shepherd, Jeanne Stevenson-Moessner argues, pastoral caregivers may actually become “the voice of strangers.”<sup>98</sup>

Moreover, the traditional shepherding metaphor in the church is mostly hierarchical and male-dominant. This poses particular problems for women generally and

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<sup>92</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 27.

<sup>93</sup> Pattison and Woodward, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>94</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Care*, 34.

<sup>95</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 96; Brister, *Pastoral Care*, 25.

<sup>96</sup> Campbell, “The Courageous Shepherd,” 59.

<sup>97</sup> Campbell, “The Courageous Shepherd,” 59.

<sup>98</sup> Stevenson-Moessner, “Self-Differentiated Samaritan,” 65.

in particular where abuse can take place.<sup>99</sup> Stevenson-Moessner calls for a ministry paradigm of “mutuality and interdependence ... [or] interconnectedness”<sup>100</sup> that speaks to the relationship between people and God demonstrated in the “interplay of love of neighbor, God, and self.”<sup>101</sup> The rural image of shepherding commonly adopted in western theology has much to offer but is perhaps incomplete without the help of other metaphors of pastoral care.

Nouwen’s *Wounded Healer* is an adaption of the story in the Talmud.<sup>102</sup> The story describes the condition of the Messiah and his way of healing. He is “sitting among the poor, binding his wounds one at a time, waiting for the moment when he will be needed.”<sup>103</sup> Although Nouwen does not make a direct reference, the metaphor of the wounded healer evokes the prophetic image of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53. The pastoral caregiver is one who empathizes but does not carry his “open wounds” because it does not bring healing.<sup>104</sup> So what does it mean to be a wounded healer? He explains, “Making one’s own wounds a source of healing, therefore, does not call for a sharing of superficial personal pains but for a constant willingness to see one’s own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men [sic] share.”<sup>105</sup> The metaphor of the wounded healer calls for attentiveness to the loneliness of the heart and hospitality as the proper response.<sup>106</sup>

Pastoral care is a process that requires unhurried time. Hence the metaphor of the *gardener* adopted by Margaret Zipse Kornfeld is fitting for the task of the pastoral

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<sup>99</sup> Stevenson-Moessner, “Self-Differentiated Samaritan,” 65.

<sup>100</sup> Stevenson-Moessner, “Self-Differentiated Samaritan,” 65.

<sup>101</sup> Stevenson-Moessner, “Self-Differentiated Samaritan,” 65.

<sup>102</sup> Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 76–77.

<sup>103</sup> Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 77.

<sup>104</sup> Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 80.

<sup>105</sup> Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 80.

<sup>106</sup> Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 80–81.

caregiver or the practitioner. The gardener and the farmer have been a common metaphor in prophetic writings and in the New Testament. The husbandry of God the Father and the patience of farmers point to the partnership between the minister and Christ (John 15:1–2 and James 5:7–12). Kornfeld echoes Paul’s understanding when she says, “The gardener does not make the plants grow God does.”<sup>107</sup> The pastoral person, like the gardener, must be diligent in nursing the plants. However, the outcome can only be guaranteed by the power, the grace, and the sovereignty of God.

Campbell captures the paradox of pastoral theology in the metaphor of the *wise fool*.<sup>108</sup> What is wise and what is foolish in pastoral practice requires contemplative prayers and discernment. The practitioner as a prophetic (timely) messenger, at times, may seem foolish to the world and maybe even to some in the church. Wisdom personified in Proverbs carries significant messianic overtones. The paradox of wise and foolish in the gospel narratives is played out over and over again in the life of Christ. Victory in the cross is the ultimate vindication. Paul uses the paradox of the fool in regards to the Christian message in First Corinthians. The way of the cross is totally unacceptable to the Jews yet absolutely brilliant in God’s soteriological administration.

The metaphor of the wise fool speaks deeply into the lived experiences of pastoral caregivers who may be ridiculed on every side. But who has the last laugh? There is “laughter in heaven.”<sup>109</sup> The wise fool brings back “an expression of the joyousness of faith ... to save churches from their obsession with decency, order, and respectability and allow them to offer a genuine alternative to the images of power and material

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<sup>107</sup> Kornfeld, “Gardener,” 209.

<sup>108</sup> Campbell, “Wise Fool,” 94.

<sup>109</sup> Campbell, “Wise Fool,” 106.



prosperity.”<sup>110</sup> Pastoral theology questions the practices of both society and the church. It seeks to be the prophetic voice “as a form of challenge to the accepted norms, conventions, and authorities within a society.”<sup>111</sup> However, pastoral caregivers need not be bearers of bad news. “[Our] folly need not always be such a solemn matter.”<sup>112</sup> Joy in the metaphor of the wise fool captures an essential element in pastoral care.

The theme of joy is echoed with the metaphor of the *midwife*. During her CPE residency, Karen Hanson had a peculiar request of ministering to a “very premature” baby.<sup>113</sup> She recalls, “As I watched, it occurred to me that my pastoral role here was to be a spiritual midwife.”<sup>114</sup> Midwives were pastoral caregivers first in the story of the Exodus when they liberated Hebrew babies.<sup>115</sup> Paul also uses the image of midwifery as a metaphor for pastoral ministry (Galatians 4:19). This is a fitting metaphor because of the comprehensive nature of pastoral care that includes “the travails of trauma and grief.”<sup>116</sup>

Joy cannot be gained without hope. Hence the image of *agents of hope* is necessary in all other metaphors. The overarching theme of living hope in the biblical mega-narrative provides the basis for hope in each specific situation. Donald Capps captures the essential characteristic of pastoral care in the metaphor of agents of hope. He argues, “[What] makes the pastor [and pastoral caregivers] unique among professionals is that the pastor is fundamentally an agent or bearer of hope.”<sup>117</sup> Capps expands on the workings of hope and how pastoral caregivers might be more effective. The significance of hope is a common theme in theology (Capps, Moltmann), psychology (Erikson), and

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<sup>110</sup> Campbell, “Wise Fool,” 107.

<sup>111</sup> Campbell, “Wise Fool,” 100.

<sup>112</sup> Campbell, “Wise Fool,” 106–107.

<sup>113</sup> Hanson, “Midwife,” 200.

<sup>114</sup> Hanson, “Midwife,” 200.

<sup>115</sup> Exod 1:15–21.

<sup>116</sup> Hanson, “Midwife,” 200.

<sup>117</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 188.

philosophy (Kant). Hope is a fundamental human need and therefore the ultimate goal of pastoral care. Erikson is right to say that hope is a fundamental human need and strength.

### **Rediscovering Pastoral Care from the Christian Tradition**

There are two schools of thought in pastoral care. On the one hand, the pastoral care movement seems to have shifted the field towards psychotherapy and social science, and at times, detached from its root in Christian tradition. On the other, Oden, Campbell, Brister, and Lartey advocates for pastoral care to find its root firmly grounded in a Christocentric theology. A Christocentric pastoral theology does not preclude social sciences but rather it gives priority to transcendence over human science. Those who belong to the latter group advocate for the task of pastoral care to be carried out through normative operations of the church such as preaching, teaching, worship, liturgy, and sacraments. Steve Kang observes that some Asian American churches are now “rediscovering the meaning and function of sacraments in the life of the church.”<sup>118</sup>

Moreover, proponents of the rediscovery of pastoral care seek the profundity and intensity of caring. The pastoral caregiver is said to have integrity, courage, be willing to become vulnerable as in the wounded healer, and Lartey adds the dimension of interpathy (intercultural empathy).<sup>119</sup> Even those in the first group such as Hiltner, Gerkin, Acolatse, and so on have not detached their pastoral theological roots from the Christian tradition. Hence the task of rediscovering pastoral care does not seek to nullify the other school of thoughts but to find a balance between theology and practice. This section seeks to show that pastoral care is deeply rooted in pastoral ministry in the Christian tradition. Pastoral

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<sup>118</sup> Kang, “Truth-Embodying Households,” 46.

<sup>119</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 12, 37–46; Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 76–84; Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66.

care in the Christian tradition finds God as its subject, its work Christocentric, and caring is a ministry that is carried out in and through the people of God. Hence it is imperative to return pastoral care to its roots in the Christian tradition.

Pastoral care finds its root in the biblical narratives of Judaism and Christianity. Caring has been the embodiment of the gospel in and through the faith community. Acolatse asserts, “[Practical theology] was a term in theology before it was appropriated as a way of defining teaching that pertained to the formation of people for clergy duties.”<sup>120</sup> Browning makes a strong connection between “philosophical reflection” in Judeo-Christian tradition and human experiences.<sup>121</sup> Hiltner, Gerkin, Lartey, Miller-McLemore, Scheib, and Graham began their discussion of pastoral theology as a theology that is rooted in the Christian tradition. Literature in pastoral care has never abandoned its root in Christian tradition. Furthermore, Oden, Campbell, and Brister attempt to reconnect the praxis of care with its root in pastoral ministry.<sup>122</sup>

The term *pastoral* in pastoral care and counseling necessarily finds its root in pastoral ministry. In *Pastoral Theology*, Oden raises an important question about what is *pastoral* in pastoral care and counseling. He contends that whether someone who does not perform pastoral duties such as preaching, teaching, or the breaking of bread is a pastoral person.<sup>123</sup> He asserts, “Pastoral theology is a special form of practical theology because it focuses on the practice of ministry, with particular attention to the systematic definition of the pastoral office and its function.”<sup>124</sup> What constitutes pastoral work is

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<sup>120</sup> Acolatse, “What is Theological,” 206.

<sup>121</sup> Browning, “Pastoral,” 95.

<sup>122</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, x–xii; Campbell, *Rediscovering*, 2–17; Brister, *Pastoral Theology*, 30, 34, 36; Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*, xiii–xxxv, 1–18.

<sup>123</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, xi.

<sup>124</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, x.

much more than the administration and operation of a church. Pastoral ministry involves preaching, the breaking of bread, conducting worship services, pastoral care, and all religious activities that come under the jurisdiction of the church. His concern is the use of the term “pastoral” as in pastoral counseling when applied to caregivers who do none of the above duties.<sup>125</sup>

Oden defines pastoral theology as “that branch of Christian theology that deals with the office and functions of the pastor. It is theology because it treats the consequences of God’s self-disclosure in history. It is pastoral because it deals with those consequences as they pertain to the roles, tasks, duties, and work of the pastor.”<sup>126</sup> All pastoral work is pastoral care because it represents the presence and grace of God. The role of the pastor is to communicate God’s message and administer sacramental rites to foster well-being, growth and spiritual advancement for groups such as communities of faith or individuals seeking direction.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, pastoral care is a function of all believers.<sup>128</sup> The pastor does not only care for congregants but coaches them to care for others in the church and “in the world for whom Christ died.”<sup>129</sup>

Although Campbell concurs with the therapeutic tradition in the priority given to the pastoral relationship, he is sceptical about its approach that “makes us feel that we now have a much more sophisticated view of social interaction and of the ambiguities of care and counselling.”<sup>130</sup> Nonetheless, he views the traditional metaphorical description of the pastoral relationship of the sheep and the shepherd inadequate. The shepherding

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<sup>125</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, xi.

<sup>126</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, x.

<sup>127</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 31.

<sup>128</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Theology*, 3–6.

<sup>129</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Theology*, 4.

<sup>130</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 1.

image found in religious paintings of “an all-embracing, paternalistic style of care” that portrays the shepherd as the father figure and the sheep as weak, “errant, feckless, [and] easily led astray” is unhelpful.<sup>131</sup> Rather, the biblical image of the shepherd is characterized by courage. In order to capture the robust nature of pastoral care, Campbell, Capps, Nouwen, Hansen, Zipse Kornfeld, Gill-Austern, and Pruyser have employed various images for pastoral care.

The image of shepherding as a metaphor for pastoral care needs to revert back to its original setting that describes its nature as a “demanding and, at times, hazardous occupation.”<sup>132</sup> It is not that the image of shepherding is inadmissible as a metaphor for caring, but a proper revision is needed to capture the “tenderness, skill, and self-sacrifice” of the shepherd.<sup>133</sup> The pastoral person is not *the* Shepherd, but only a representative. The paternal image of the shepherd should be reserved only for the Good Shepherd, Christ himself.

The relationship between the pastor and the congregation needs to be re-visioned and re-imagined. It needs to be “a style of Christian caring that treats [congregants] as adults, not as errant children or feckless sheep.”<sup>134</sup> Moreover, the paternalistic image of the shepherd in the classical tradition limits the many possibilities of “mutual responsibility and mutual need.”<sup>135</sup> Mutuality and reciprocity are important elements that should guide the practice of care especially in inter-generational ministries.

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<sup>131</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 23.

<sup>132</sup> Campbell, “Courageous Shepherd,” 55.

<sup>133</sup> Campbell, “Courageous Shepherd,” 54–55.

<sup>134</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 1.

<sup>135</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 1.

### God is the Subject of Pastoral Care

Pastoral theology speaks of the acting of God. The narrative of caring is not so much that men and women are actively seeking God in their distress, but God is actively seeking them in his grace and mercy. Gerkin introduces the subject of pastoral care as “part of the Christian story and its tradition over many centuries of Christian history.”<sup>136</sup> This includes the Old Testament narrative of the people of Israel. Moreover, they make up the community that “worship the one God, Yahweh.”<sup>137</sup> In surveying healthy Asian American churches, the presence of God is paramount to the well-being of individuals and the faith community. Steve Kang observes that they “understand that the Word of God, who is very God himself, has graciously given the written Word of God, the Bible, and that it continues to become the Word of God to us in our meditation, proclamation and obedience through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.”<sup>138</sup> Caring is the embodiment of the presence of God. Pastoral care is not the heroic act of pastoral caregivers. They must be understood as agents of hope who act on behalf of a loving God.

Pastoral care begins with God, “a God who is moved by our pains and participates in the fullness of the human struggle.”<sup>139</sup> The act of caring is only possible because it comes from God. The grand-narrative of Christ’s soteriological administration must be the underpinning story of all pastoral care stories. The subject in the acts of pastoral care is, therefore, not the careseeker nor the pastoral caregiver, but God. Pastoral theology speaks of what God is doing among his people. All acts of caring is participation in what God is already doing. The pastoral caregiver shares in the extension of that work. Pastoral

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<sup>136</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 21.

<sup>137</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 23.

<sup>138</sup> Kang, “Truth-Embodying Households,” 47.

<sup>139</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 16.

ministry is rooted in '*participatio Christi*.'<sup>140</sup> The pastoral person, no matter how hard they try, cannot save a single soul. Cure for the soul is only possible when God acts.

Hence practical theology is not simply about how to provide training and tools for the pastoral person, but to connect the pastoral person to the work of Christ. When that connection happens, the work of pastoral ministry becomes practical. Pastoral theology is practical because it is about God who accomplishes the impossible. It is imperative that Christian ministry is understood to be participation in what God is doing. All pastoral practices are essentially derivatives from the divine initiative. Any ministry outside of God is in danger of being mere human effort and not the work of the Spirit. At best, it could maintain an outside appearance of success and at its worst causes division, exhaustion, and burnout.<sup>141</sup>

#### A Christocentric Pastoral Theology

Since God is the subject of pastoral care, then pastoral theology is necessarily focused on the work of Christ. Pastoral theology connects the human story to the Christ story.<sup>142</sup> The motivation of all caring acts is the love of Christ.<sup>143</sup> Pastoral care is "vigilant caring [as] an expression of Christ's own eternal caring."<sup>144</sup> Appropriation of various social sciences in pastoral care is helpful and necessary. However, it may also divert attention away from the divine acting of God. However, pastoral theologians like Campbell, Gerkin, and Brister advocate for a theology of care that recognizes the work of Christ without rejecting the appropriation of other interdisciplinary methods. Pastoral care is first and

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<sup>140</sup> Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*, 40.

<sup>141</sup> Smith, *Revival*, 10.

<sup>142</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 21.

<sup>143</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Care*, 6; Lartey, *Living Colour*, 8.

<sup>144</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 52.

foremost centred on the presence of Christ in human situations and the living hope we have in Christ's eschatological future coming to us.

Christ stands in solidarity with those who are suffering so that those who suffer can identify with him. He is the "God who suffers with us."<sup>145</sup> Moltmann argues, "Christian identity can be understood only as an act of identification with the crucified Christ, to the extent to which one has accepted the proclamation that in him God has identified himself with the godless and those abandoned by God."<sup>146</sup> It was the crucified Christ who first identified with the abandoned of the world. In so doing, the poor, the broken, the sinner, and the oppressed can affirm their identity and find strength in a God who understands their plight. In cases of acute suffering where careseekers are either so weak that they are debilitated or mentally unstable, Christ even speaks on their behalf. This is made possible by Christ's "hypostatic union" as basis for him to speak to the Father as one of us.<sup>147</sup> Through identification with the crucified Christ, the church is called to identify with the poor and all who suffer by engaging the world in realistic ways, to protest against suffering and injustice.

#### Pastoral Care in and through the People of God

Moreover, pastoral care in the Christian tradition is the acting of God carried out in and through the people of God. Hence the Bible must be recognized as the "most reliable source regarding the beginnings of pastoral care."<sup>148</sup> From the beginning, the Christian God in the Judeo-Christian tradition has reached out to individuals and communities in

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<sup>145</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 9.

<sup>146</sup> Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 19.

<sup>147</sup> Purves, *Reconstructing Pastoral Theology*, 110.

<sup>148</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 23.



holistic and salvific terms. The first act of caring occurred in Genesis when God's redemptive act made coverings for the guilty pair. The Exodus of the Israelites forms the basis of how God carries out his acts of caring in and through the people of God.

This model is expanded through the New Testament church. The nature of caring is both personal and communal. It seeks to restore broken individuals back to the community. How God delivers and cares for the people of Israel can be found throughout its history. Religious offices and social structures provide the framework for the administration of care. The profundity of the practice of caring is indicative of a mature church. "Acts 2:42–47 is a beautiful cameo of the inner life of the church."<sup>149</sup> In the Judeo-Christian tradition, pastoral care is God's acting carried out in and through faith communities as the embodiment of biblical hope.

The living human document constructs a theology of care that is grounded in human stories. Gerkin is one of the key proponents for the living human documents. He concurs with Boisen that human stories are "sources of theological insights of equal importance to those of the historic texts of the Judeo-Christian tradition."<sup>150</sup> If concrete experiences are given the same weight as theology, then what Boisen proposes is leaning towards the stage of *situational analysis of theology* in Lartey's pastoral cycle.<sup>151</sup> Barbara Howard asserts, "With the passage of time have come, however, significant developments in the behavioural science, spirituality, and Christian anthropology, resulting in a variety of theological and psychological understandings of what it means to

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<sup>149</sup> Trites, "Church Growth," 5.

<sup>150</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 15.

<sup>151</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 12.

be human.”<sup>152</sup> However, the human story as theology will require theological interpretation.

Gerkin captures the concept of God’s caring in and through the whole people of God by making a connection between “the communal story of the Christian community and the many life stories of people.”<sup>153</sup> Moreover, the human story is framed in the Christian story as a “fusion of horizons.”<sup>154</sup> Communal participation in the practice of care has gone through major shifts in history. Caring in biblical history was carried out by three categories of pastoral persons in the Old Testament. Gerkin asserts, “From very early recorded biblical history the custom was established of designating three classes of leaders: the priests ... the prophets ... and the wise men and women, who offered counsel of all sorts concerning issues of the good life [the abundant life] and personal conduct.”<sup>155</sup> The acts of healing, sustaining, guiding, organizing, and communicating are carried out through the offices of these men and women. As the church continues to respond to social crises, the task of pastoral care became more the responsibility of bishops and pastoral persons.<sup>156</sup> However, there is a turn towards the “broader participation in caregiving” again in the late twentieth century.<sup>157</sup>

Gerkin proposes pastoral care needs to “[reclaim] all three Old Testament role models as primary caring ministry of the Christian community. His model of care is provided in the following diagram,<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Howard, “Shifting,” 1.

<sup>153</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 111–12.

<sup>154</sup> Couture and Hunter, *Pastoral Care*, 7, 10; Gerkin, *Prophetic Pastoral Practice*, 19–20.

Gerkin’s “fusion of horizons” is an appropriation of the hermeneutic methods by Hans-Georg Gadamer.

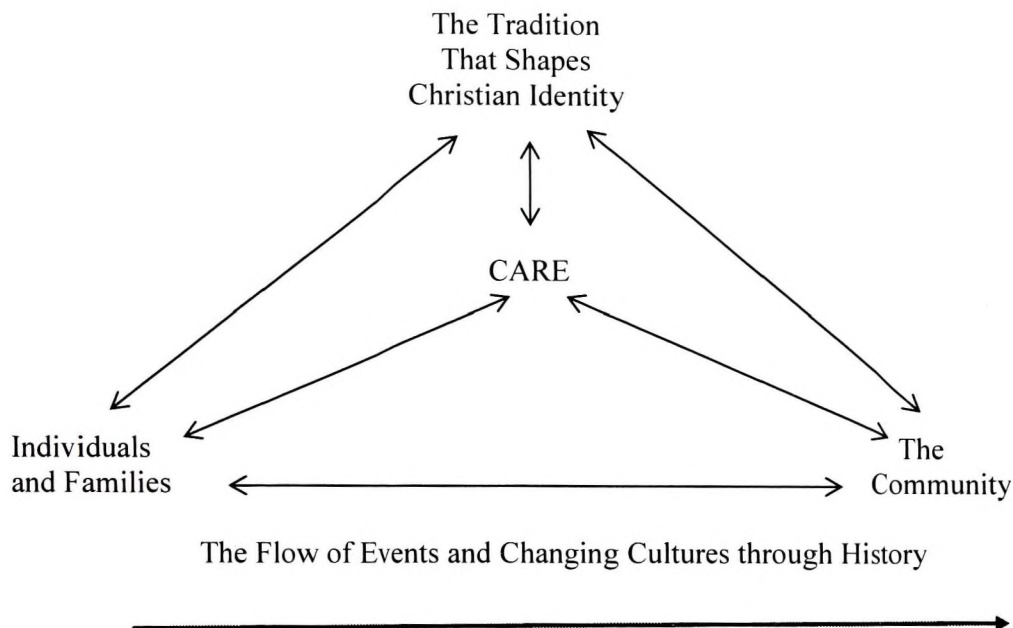
<sup>155</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 23.

<sup>156</sup> Sittser, *Water*, 63–71.

<sup>157</sup> Hunter and Patton, “Therapeutic,” 40.

<sup>158</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 26.

Diagram 2.1 Gerkin's Model of Care



This vision of caring ministry demonstrates the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence between Christian tradition (theology), the community (church), and individuals and families (societal, social fabric). There is a correlation between the functions of the Old Testament offices and the inter-connectedness and inter-dependence of pastoral care. Prophets represent those who uphold the Scriptures and are guardians of orthodoxy such as preachers and theologians. Priests represent those who are “ritual coordinators” that serve to provide the spiritual direction and worship for the Community.<sup>159</sup> Wise men and women are mentors who work closely with individuals and families on a daily basis. These models of pastoral care in the Old Testament are rooted

<sup>159</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle Theory*, 55–80.

in the religious, communal, and social structure of the Israelites and the New Testament church. Furthermore, God calls the church to be a community for broken people.<sup>160</sup>

### **Reconstructing Pastoral Care in the Canadian Chinese Church**

This call to rediscover pastoral care in the Canadian Chinese Church follows Campbell, Oden, Brister, and Lartey to deepen the understanding of pastoral care. In *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, Alastair Campbell addresses the confusion about “the true nature of Christian caring” that has been separated from the “traditional understandings of the pastoral task.”<sup>161</sup> He seeks to rediscover the ministry of care through clarifying the role of the pastoral person. Campbell recaptures three images of pastoral care for this role: the image of the courageous shepherd, the wounded healer, and the wise fool. The three prophetic images are brought together by the virtue of *integrity*.<sup>162</sup> The question for Campbell is the integrity and courage of the pastoral person in the care relationship. Integrity is developed through personal interaction when a “person who helps another in a pastoral sense does so because through such human experiences he has developed (however provisionally, however inadequately) a certain personal integrity.”<sup>163</sup> It is the unwavering character of holding on to one’s principles and beliefs. Pastoral care is central to pastoral ministry because the calling of the pastoral person is to extend divine care.

Traditionally, the CCC has been mainly focused on evangelism. There is a culture of shame within the Chinese tradition, hence marital or family problems are usually

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<sup>160</sup> Sittser, *Water*, 69.

<sup>161</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 1.

<sup>162</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 26–36, 37–46, 47–64.

<sup>163</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 12.

unreported and covered up so not to tarnish the glory of God. Only until recently, that immigrant churches began to pay attention to personal needs and crisis situations such as divorce, sickness, bereavement, depression, and other distresses among their congregants. Sometimes, the pastor will be directly involved in dealing with these cases. At times, careseekers are referred to professional marriage counselors or psychotherapists. Churches should be commended for providing pastoral care as crisis intervention.

However, pastoral care in most cases is limited to crisis management. It is not central to pastoral ministry in the church. The additional challenge of a performance-driven mentality further alienates individual needs from institutional agenda. First generation leaders tend to focus on the tangible measures such as attendance on Sundays and maybe the financial status of the church. Young men and women are desperately in search of a community where they belong; and that community is one that cares enough to pay attention to their lived experience both inside and outside the church. They are burdened by the culture of discontentment and hopelessness. The role of the pastor as moral guidance to this generation is greater than other times in modern history.

There are practical challenges in providing care to those who are in the English ministry. First, due to the shortage of volunteers, managing regular programs already means 'all hands on deck.' Attention is mainly on the production of deliverables such as worship, preaching, Sunday school, and missions. There is minimal time to attend to individual needs until crises arise. It seems that neoliberal philosophy has worked its way into the church where individuals become human sources for ministry.<sup>164</sup> Second, Dennis Loo, a Chinese American practitioner argues for the need for a liberation theology for Asian Americans. Loo contends that the dominate culture (American) assumes the myth

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<sup>164</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, x.

that the Chinese or Asian people are model citizens with less troubles in life; and to some degree the Chinese people and church leaders bought into that myth. Hence practitioners in the CCC do not expect their second generation to face life challenges like their Caucasian counterpart. Loo asserts,

Oppression works best when you get the subjective group to accept the dominant group's definition of them. It is said that the worst oppression operates among those who are not aware of their own oppression. Among Asians, one of the problems is that we have assimilated too well the values of the dominant society, to the point where we believe these dominant group myths ourselves—that we are the model minority, that we have no problems, and therefore, ‘Why should we worry?’<sup>165</sup>

This also contributes to the lack of attentiveness to the individual needs of English speaking congregants.

The pastoral person will do well in spending more time with congregants and less time in administrative and operational tasks. This reorients pastoral ministry to the task of caring for persons. For generational ministry to thrive, the focus needs to be caring for the individual. It means to understand their journey and their struggles. It means to formulate a theology that speaks into their reality. However, this is not to undermine the need for sacred communities which is an important part of identity formation. Caring for those in the postmodern generation requires practitioners to pay attention to both personal and communal needs.

### Integrity and Courage

To love another person requires integrity and courage. Campbell asserts, “To possess integrity is to be incapable of compromising that which we believe to be true.”<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Loo, “Why an Asian American Theology,” 53.

<sup>166</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 12.

Courage is revealed in “what true shepherding is and saves him [sic] from the exploitation and neglect of false shepherds and untrustworthy hirelings.”<sup>167</sup> These are fundamental and complementary qualities of pastoral caregivers. Integrity is the motivation for courage. The passion to live uncompromised means one has to muster enough courage to speak and act according to one’s own conviction of what is right. The functions of healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling associated with the general metaphor of shepherding are insufficient in describing the role of the caregiver.<sup>168</sup>

Even though Hiltner adds “communicating” to the shepherding perspective to broaden the scope of pastoral ministry, the image of the shepherd is still mostly “function-centered or logic-centered.”<sup>169</sup> Neither can the traditional patristic image of the strong and respected shepherd reflect the profundity of pastoral work. Hence Campbell and Oden advocate to delving deeper into the perilous nature of shepherding. To be a shepherd requires the kind of courage that takes the pastoral person “into the darkness of another’s pain, loss or bewilderment ... Caring is costly, unsettling, even distasteful at times.”<sup>170</sup> Oden develops the integrity of the shepherd from John 10 that speaks of the attention, protection, and sacrifice.<sup>171</sup>

Courage is also necessary to conquer a false sense of humility in Asian cultures. Helen Lee explains, “[False] humility occurs when a person knows deep within that they are competent and able to handle a proffered job but refuses the offer under the guise of humility, or when a person chooses not to make his or her opinions known to avoid

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<sup>167</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 33.

<sup>168</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 69. Brister, *Pastoral Care*, 21. Lartey, *Living Colour* 37–39. Gerkin, *Introduction*, 15.

<sup>169</sup> Hiltner, *Preface*, 20, 55.

<sup>170</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 26.

<sup>171</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 51.

potential conflict or embarrassment.”<sup>172</sup> Leaders in the CCC, like their American Korean counterpart, “have not had sufficient opportunities to [reflect and] practice healthy conflict resolution, either in their own personal relationships or in a congregational setting.”<sup>173</sup> False humility has become the accepted norm in Chinese social and ecclesial context. Courage wisdom and patience are needed to deal profound generational issues in the CCC.

Integrity and courage are precisely what is needed in caring for the new generation who are influenced by postmodernism and neoliberalism. Pluralism and cultural shifts can challenge the theological convictions of pastoral ministry to the core. Godly wisdom and courage are needed to protect the sheep. It is the responsibility of the pastoral person to broaden their knowledge of theology and the culture so as to formulate a well-informed theological conviction. The goal is to help men and women navigate through the complexity of life framed in the reality of the Christian mega-narrative. The challenge for practitioners is to balance the tension between the Christian tradition and the changing times. On the one hand, the pastoral person is to safeguard biblical truths without compromise to attract the crowd. On the other, they have to formulate a new theology that is relevant for the times without yielding to religious or cultural traditionalism.

Moreover, there are added challenges to the task of pastoring English ministries in the CCC. Pastoral persons are required to stand in the gap between young adults who live in the tension between western postmodernism and their Chinese culture. Furthermore, the English pastor and core leaders must have the courage to be both a bridge and a

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<sup>172</sup> Lee, “Healthy Leaders,” 63.

<sup>173</sup> Lee, “Healthy Leaders,” 67.



voice—a bridge to connect with the elders and Senior Pastor of the church; and a voice for the English speaking congregants. Nathaniel, a university student, describes a common situation where integrity and courage of the pastoral person is tested, “With every Chinese church I’ve heard of, it’s almost the same thing: there’s a white pastor or a pastor speaks (at) English services, and [the] Chinese congregation or someone in the Chinese community there isn’t happy with what they’re saying, or their values or whatever.”<sup>174</sup> The English pastor has the responsibility to be the bridge and to manage expectations; and at the same time, to be the voice that moves the church forward to embrace young people who are culturally and theologically nuanced from their counterparts.

Todd asserts that one of the key issues with English ministries in the Canadian Chinese Church is the patriarchal style of leadership. A pastor who had served in English ministries but eventually switched strategy sums it up this way,

I have concluded after nine years of staying with the English ministries, to mature and develop a vocational English group, [but] it is not workable because the Chinese churches don’t have a vision for the CBCs (Canadian born Chinese) that drift further away from their culture of origin. The hierarchical, patriarchal nature, lack of vision and leadership style creates a difficult atmosphere for English adults to stay and grow into fully mature and independent adult English congregations. I have now planted a second generation church to reach second generation Chinese, those that have left the Chinese church and those who are of other ethnicities.<sup>175</sup>

The priority given to the needs of the Chinese side of the church, whether Cantonese or Mandarin speaking, over the needs of English congregation seems to be a recurring theme in the CCC. A congregant, Nathaniel, recalls an incident that demonstrates this tension,

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<sup>174</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 322.

<sup>175</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 79.

We (English) want to change the time to this. They (Chinese) want a change of time for that. Then someone gets mad about this or that; some people who don't like change, and some people want more emphasis on [the] Chinese side because some of the people who spoke Mandarin ... saw it as more valuable. But then, you have this increasing population of Chinese kids in Vancouver who are like me who speak English as their primary language who are more comfortable listening to [a] sermon that is in English.<sup>176</sup>

The English congregants in the above scenario were already courageous enough to bring their issues to light but choose to back down to keep the goal of unity. Integrity and courage compel the pastoral person to speak up courageously with diplomacy that will bring real change however slowly. Raising questions in this environment can be misconstrued as disrespect. Today, many English ministries are in a rut because people are not allowed to voice their opinions except within the expectations of the elders. It takes integrity and courage for the pastoral person to stand in the tension between speaking up and making peace so that the embodiment of the gospel for a new generation is not compromised.

### Vulnerability and Healing

Pastoral care that brings healing requires the pastoral caregiver to be vulnerable as part of the process. The subject of vulnerability and healing is captured in the image of the wounded healer.<sup>177</sup> The nature of pastoral work is to delve deeper into the needs of the human soul. The efficacy of the pastoral relationship “does not depend primarily upon the acquisition of knowledge or skills. Rather it depends upon a caring attitude towards others which comes from one’s own experience of pain, fear and loss and our own release

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<sup>176</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 322.

<sup>177</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 37–46; Nouwen, “Wounded Healer,” 76–84.

from their deadening grip.”<sup>178</sup> Nouwen says, “[It] is my growing conviction that my life belongs to others just as much as it belongs to myself and that what is experienced as most unique often proves to be most solidly embedded in the common condition of being human.”<sup>179</sup> In *The Anxiety Cure*, Archibald D. Hart answers many of the questions that are on the minds of those who suffer from panic attacks.<sup>180</sup> The effectiveness of this book is that Hart does not speak only from the perspective of a physician but also as one who has experienced panic attacks.<sup>181</sup> The pastoral relationship between the caregiver and the careseeker is not one of condescension but of identification. It is grounded not only in expertise but mutuality.<sup>182</sup>

Pastoral care can be carried out even by those who carry in themselves wounds from the past. Nouwen encourages caregivers to be wounded healers who bind their wounds “only one at a time, always prepared for the moment when he might be needed [sic].”<sup>183</sup> While the wounds of the healer are treasured, Nouwen cautions the pastoral person not to walk around with open wounds because “[open] wounds stink and do not heal.”<sup>184</sup> The following story illustrates the power of a caregiver whose wounds have been dealt with. The story of “Walking on Glare Ice” is a collection in Sidney Rosen’s book *My Voice Will Go with You: The Teaching Tales of Milton H. Erickson*. Donald Capps has appropriated these stories in his epistemology of pastoral care. The story of a veteran who had overcome his own obstacles and was therefore able to reach out as a caregiver,

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<sup>178</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 37.

<sup>179</sup> Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 15.

<sup>180</sup> Reference to *The Anxiety Cure: You can Find Tranquility and Wholeness* by Archibald D. Hart.

<sup>181</sup> Hart, *Anxiety*, vii.

<sup>182</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 15.

<sup>183</sup> Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, 88.

<sup>184</sup> Dykstra, *Images of Pastoral Care*, 80.

During the war I worked at the induction board in Detroit. One day, as I was going to the induction board, I saw a veteran who had returned with an artificial leg, looking at some glare ice and eyeing it suspiciously because he knew that he was likely to fall on glare ice.

‘That is very smooth ice,’ I told him. ‘Stand where you are. I’ll come over and teach you how to walk on glare ice.’ He could see that I had a limp, so he knew I must be talking about what I knew. He watched me walk across that glare ice and asked, ‘How did you do it?’

I said, ‘I won’t tell you, I’ll teach you. Now, you just keep your eyes totally shut.’ And I turn him around, and walked him back and forth on the ice-free sidewalk. I kept walking him back and forth over longer distances and then shorter and shorter distances until finally I noticed his utter confusion. Finally, I got him clear across to the other side of that glare ice ...

I said, ‘Now you can understand. You walked as if the cement was bare. When you try to walk on ice the usual tendency is to tense your muscles, preparing for a fall’ ... It took me a long time to find that out.<sup>185</sup>

The caregiver in this story was able to help other veterans only after resolving his own challenge of walking on glare ice. Every pastoral person carries within them inner conflicts as the wounded healer. However, the pastoral caregiver need not wait for all wounds to be bound before he or she is qualified to help at a moment’s notice.

Those in the English congregation are marginalized in the CCC in the decision making process. Young men and women are struggling to have their voices heard and their identity affirmed. When their pastoral person attempts to speak on their behalf, he or she soon finds the same unresponsiveness and sometimes resistance. The English pastor is regarded as young and inexperienced by default. One young adult shared the reason for leaving the church is the unfair treatment of the English pastor and the congregation. He recalls, the senior pastor “was exercising unethical and unfair treatment on the English pastor, further he was manipulating congregations through his preaching, English ministry was marginalized and not respected in the board.”<sup>186</sup> The English pastor is a wounded healer who carries the wounds of marginalization like his or her congregants.

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<sup>185</sup> Rosen, *My Voice*, 110–11; Capps, *Living Stories*, 67–68.

<sup>186</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 180.

Those who serve in generational ministry do not lead from a place of power but of mutuality. The pastoral person becomes one of them, and encourages them from a place of identification and vulnerability.

Moving forward in generational ministry requires an authentic spirituality that allows transparency and acceptance of weaknesses and vulnerability when appropriate. A key insight in the C. P. E. movement is the assessment that seminarians are not being prepared for the “messy world.”<sup>187</sup> The church needs to be a safe place. It means that there needs to be a culture that acknowledges that the church is not heaven and members of the faith community are imperfect saints—sinners under grace. It means people do not have to pretend that everything is alright in order to belong. Such a church seeks to understand and to expand its coverage of care to deal with mental health, addiction, and moral issues. It is willing to have conversations on bullying, dating, marriage, broken relationships, betrayal, or any real life issue that falls outside the realm of religious talks. This is the start of the kind of church that will make young adults feel comfortable and give them a sense of belonging without compromising the truths of the gospel. In fact, this is the kind of church that will demonstrate the power of God in a broken world.

### Stepping Outside Order

No one puts new wine into old wineskins. Caring for a new generation requires new paradigms. It seeks out new possibilities in generational ministry for the twenty-first century. However, without filling in the details, *to think outside the box* is just a cliché. Campbell proposes that “[the] paradoxical insight that we heal most effectively by sharing our vulnerability leads to a third image by which pastoral care can be

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<sup>187</sup> Holifield, *History*, 231–32.

rediscovered ... the figure of the fool.”<sup>188</sup> The fool is not one that is out of order, but “steps outside order.”<sup>189</sup> The prophetic image of the wise fool inspires pastoral persons to work out new paradigms. This metaphor goes deep into what seems to be wise may not be; and what seems to be foolish has the upper hand. The paradox is also found in Paul’s exhortation that the believers ought to “become ‘fools, so that [they] may be wise.”<sup>190</sup> The Christian way seems to miss out in life but gains abundance beyond what the world affords. Likewise, the pastoral person, though trained in earthly knowledge, relies on heavenly wisdom in discerning the situation and deeper needs of the careseeker.

The cultural gap and tradition expectation are some of the key obstacles in implementing new paradigms in generational ministry. The CCC is at a stage when a new generation of children of the pioneers are entering adulthood. The unspoken expectation is that they are to carry on with the ministries of the church in order to continue the legacy of their parents. However, people from the Chinese ministry are often surprised that young adults are not interested in the old way of liturgy and faith practices. The cultural gap goes much deeper than language. The genre of songs, power structures, and social justice are some key areas that demonstrate the gap in the ethos of discipleship. Any ethnic church that wants to minister to the new generation with efficacy must step outside of tradition without straying away from orthodoxy. It is imperative for leaders to see the world through the eyes of those whom they seek to serve.

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<sup>188</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 47.

<sup>189</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 48.

<sup>190</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 47.

### Interpathy and Mutuality: A Cross-Generation Approach

The relationship between people from different generations is similar to people from different cultures. Hence it would be helpful to explore intercultural models of pastoral care to find ways to build trust and mutuality. Lartey employs the practice of *interpathy*, a term coined by David Augsburger as a practice of cross-cultural empathy. In his article “Interpathy Re-envisioned,” Augsburger describes interpathy as the shorthand for “inter-cultural-empathy.”<sup>191</sup> *Interpathy* is defined as “an intentional cognitive envisioning and affective experiencing of another’s thoughts and feelings, even though the thoughts rise from another process of knowing, the values grow from another frame of moral reasoning and the feelings spring from another basis of assumption.”<sup>192</sup> Empathy, according to Robert Dykstra and Kohut, “is one person’s attempt to ‘experience the inner life of another while simultaneously retaining the stance of an objective observer.’”<sup>193</sup> Interpathy is similar to empathy but goes deeper into the experience of the other by utilizing a different set of values and suppositions predicated on the other person’s cultural background.

What is needed in generational ministry is the practice of *interpathy*. Lartey explains that it is the practice of temporarily allow oneself to enter into another person’s world, “a very different world of beliefs and values.”<sup>194</sup> The practice of *interpathic caring*, according to Augsburger and Lartey, lets ‘a culturally different person [to] ‘fully entertain’ within their awareness ‘a foreign belief.’”<sup>195</sup> *Interpathy* becomes the theological reflection and rigorous practice of trying to put yourself in someone else’s

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<sup>191</sup> Augsburger, “Interpathy,” 1

<sup>192</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66.

<sup>193</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling*, 57; Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* 175.

<sup>194</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66.

<sup>195</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66.

shoes. *Interpathy* is identification with the other person without reservation. It demonstrates the presence of authentic Christian love.

There are significant cultural differences between the Chinese speaking and the English speaking sides of the church. Expressions of spirituality and hermeneutic tradition are among key variances that markedly separate the two, or sometimes three, congregations under the same roof. One of the manifestations of the differences is in the demand to dress up for Sundays. The dress down practice during the summer months is a common practice among the younger generation but may cause one to be reprimanded. Moreover, the culture of those in the first generation leans toward patriarchy while those who are born or raised in Canada are influenced by individual liberalism. Tradition is held in high honor by the former and the latter questions the meaning behind each cultural practice. The gap between the two sides is represented by a complex and dynamic relationship. Hence to build a bridge between the Chinese and the English ministries of the church would require an intentional cross-cultural approach.

Some of the reasons cited in Todd's study for leaving the CCC demonstrate the culture gap. They include, "The Chinese leadership tried to integrate the English-speaking into the Chinese congregation; I could no longer bear the situation."<sup>196</sup> Another says, "Someone once said that Sunday school should be taught in Chinese. Sentiments like this come from cultural pride."<sup>197</sup> The reason that this situation is unbearable is the total lack of understanding that there exists between the two cultures. The tension of the two cultures creates a unique problem of a culture dichotomy within the local church. *Interpathy* "seeks not only to recognize and respect another in their 'otherness' but also to

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<sup>196</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 181.

<sup>197</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 209.



attempt to share that otherness in as much as one is able to.”<sup>198</sup> There is no doubt that both sides recognize the differences and have some respect for each other at the fundamental level. However, sharing the *otherness* in the other is much more difficult.

It is necessary for both sides to cross the invisible border and explore the culture of the other. This is especially important for those on the Chinese side to enter into the culture and spirituality of the English speaking because they hold the power in the decision making process. The perpetuating scenario of parents dropping off their children in the Youth or English service and disappear into their own world of spirituality needs to be revisited. Parents need to become the foreigner who practices interpathy in order to understand the world of their children. Mutuality and interpathy takes time and patience. The goal is not to assimilate into either one of the cultures but to have *interpathy* (inter-cultural empathy). Unity does not require uniformity. But trust and mutuality are necessary for the flourishing of multigenerational and multicultural churches.

### Summary

Rediscovering pastoral care as the central narrative in the church is significant to the mandate of generational ministry. Those who are struggling with identity are not looking for something to keep them busy. Rather, they are seeking people of integrity who can come alongside them through the complexities of life such as vocation, marriage, faith practices. If the church can demonstrate genuine care and provide answers to the profound questions of life, then men and women would be eager to stay and explore. However, good intention alone is not enough. Caring must begin with understanding the deeper issues. Chapter 3 explores the intricate nature of identity which involves the

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<sup>198</sup> Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66.

human life cycle and theories in ritualization. The human development is a dynamic structure that moves with time. Thus it is important to note the paradigm shift in the postmodern life cycle. Ritualization theorizes the way individuals interact with their community. It provides helpful insights for consideration in the reconstructing of English ministry models in the immigrant church. In addition, culture, ethnicity, and biculturalism are important elements for consideration for those in the Canadian Chinese Church.

## Chapter 3:

### A QUEST FOR IDENTITY

#### Generally Lost

If a practitioner or a caregiver asks a young person, “how are you doing?” And if the young man or woman is honest, a common answer will be, “I am generally lost.”<sup>1</sup> Many young adults are experiencing a sense of uncertainty about the future, about who they are, what they are supposed to do, and where do they belong. Men and women alike are in search of their *place in the world*. Perhaps they might be thought of as the lost generation. Allen Wheelis asserts, “Our grandparents had less trouble than we do in finding themselves. There were lost souls, to be sure, but no lost generation.”<sup>2</sup> The term “Lost Generation” was first coined by Gertrude Stein for those who “came of age during World War I” almost exactly one hundred years ago.<sup>3</sup> ‘Lost generation’ was made famous by Ernest Hemingway in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*. Niklas Goeke, a Millennial writer and life coach explains, “‘What Hemingway alluded to in [*The Sun Also Rises*] isn’t lost in the sense of gone, missing or forsaken, but ‘*disoriented, wandering, directionless*—a recognition that there was great confusion and aimlessness among the war’s survivors in the early post-war years,’ as Samuel Hynes points out in [*A War Imagined*].”<sup>4</sup>

The topic of identity may seem like a concrete issue until someone tries to define it. What is identity? How is it defined? Who am I? The answers to these questions are

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<sup>1</sup> A typical response is common when talking to young people. See <http://www.lostgenygirl.com/>

<sup>2</sup> Wheelis, *Quest*, 17.

<sup>3</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost\\_Generation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_Generation)

<sup>4</sup> Goeke, “Dear Millennials,” 1.

elusive. Nevertheless, they must be brought into some containable intellectual boundaries for the conversation to begin. Identity is not abstract in the sense that it cannot be defined. Rather, it must be understood that the scope of identity encompasses every aspect of a person. Therefore, it is beyond the limit of any monograph. Erik H. Erikson explains, “The more one writes about this subject [identity], the more the word becomes a term for something unfathomable as it is all-pervasive. One can only explore it by establishing its indispensability in various contexts.”<sup>5</sup>

Though Chinese Canadian Millennials mark themselves as distinct from their parents, they seek recognition as adults by similar life demarcations of career, marriage, family.<sup>6</sup> Finding a job, getting married, and acquisition of their property are important milestones that define the good life. Not having an ideal job in their field of studies or remaining single a few years after graduation puts great pressure on young adults. Individuals in either of these categories understand this experience of *generally lost*. Even married individuals with good jobs are often unsure whether there is more to life. The object of this “sense of generally lost” is what psychologists and pastoral theologians define as a quest for identity.

This chapter brings into sharper focus the definition and various theories of identity; and its nature as the epigenesis of human development from the modern to the postmodern era. Erik H. Erikson provided the fundamental theories of identity and the life cycle. These provided the invaluable foundation for psychologist Daniel Levinson and pastoral theologian Donald Capps to further the discussion on human development. Joan Erikson, Erikson’s wife, also contributed much to his research on the subject. James

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<sup>5</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Pew Research defines Millennials as those born between 1981 and 1996.  
<http://www.pewresearch.org/topics/millennials/>

Fowler, James Hightower and others have built their pastoral theology predicated on Erikson's theories in human development. James E. Marcia's theory on ego-identity status focuses on the relationship between crisis and vocational commitment in young adults. His theory provides a framework to discuss religious commitment in the Canadian Chinese Church. As part of the cultural context of this work, it is necessary to delve into Asian identity theories by various authors such as Jennifer Lee, Min Zhou, Pyong Gap Min, and others. The intersection of psychology and pastoral theology provides the necessary intersection for the discussion on identity formation.

However, there is another important issue to which pastoral theology must pay attention. This is the shift of the human life cycle from modernity to postmodernity. Inevitably, the discussion on identity is closely tied to the movement of the human life cycle. The onset of this new situation is one of the major arguments of this dissertation. From vocational path to religious affiliations, the transitional stage between adolescence and adulthood is prolonged and more complex than previous generations. This paradigm shift from modern to postmodern life cycle demonstrates new realities and challenges for young adults. It also raises questions about the role and responsibility for pastoral theology in the twenty-first century.

Effective pastoral work requires pastors "to be experts of the self, its nature and functioning, its sicknesses and salvations."<sup>7</sup> Hence this section provides a primer on the topic of identity divided into three main parts: 1) The Nature of Identity, 2) Identity and the Life Cycle, 3) A Paradigm Shift in the Life Cycle, and 4) Cultural Identity, Ethnicity, and Biculturalism. The purpose is to facilitate an understanding of the multifaceted nature

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<sup>7</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 4.

of identity, to encourage further research in the academy, and to transform practices in the church.

The first topic, *The Nature of Identity*, defines what Erikson calls the “indispensability of identity in its various contexts.”<sup>8</sup> Here the discussion provides lenses or principles through which one distinguishes contexts of identity. For example, through these principles, ethnic identity can be brought into discussion in similar fashion as religious affiliation. Furthermore, the discussion also includes other factors that shape identity such as culture, vocation, and relationships.

The second topic is *Identity and the Life Cycle*. There is a strong correlation between identity and the human life cycle. The discussion of identity and the human life cycle belong together. Hence this section looks at the epigenesis of identity and healthy personality. Besides understanding the process of the human life cycle, it will also discuss the relationship between crisis and commitment, transition as crisis, and ritualization. The discussion on crisis and commitment is predicated on James Marcia’s four ego-identity statuses. By correlating crisis and commitment, Marcia’s model yields helpful insights for generational ministry in the CCC.<sup>9</sup>

The next section, *A New Paradigm Shift in the Life Cycle*, presents one of the key arguments in this dissertation. Pastoral theologian Friedrich L. Schweitzer is among the first to emphasize the shift in the human life cycle from the modern to the postmodern era. He coined the term “postmodern life cycle” to denote significant differences in the human life cycle between young adults in the twenty-first century and their parents.<sup>10</sup> This is an important topic for the church. A shift in the human life cycle means the terms

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<sup>8</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 9.

<sup>9</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 551.

<sup>10</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 10.

of reference have changed. Therefore, the strategy needs to change. It is imperative for pastoral theology to raise these issues so that practitioners, church leaders, and Millennials are aware of what is happening in the culture so that we can face the challenge together. This dissertation notes the shift in the human life cycle as a significant contribution to the field of pastoral care.

The fourth topic is *Cultural Identity, Ethnicity, and Biculturalism*. Culture and ethnicity are strong determinants of self-identification. This is a real struggle for visible minorities. They often have to balance the adaptation of two cultures. They live in the ambiguity of a bicultural identity.<sup>11</sup> Can a bicultural person be identified simply as a member of one culture or the other, e.g. Chinese or Canadian? The confusion related to identity becomes a dynamic variable that moves between the two dichotomies of biculturalism. Unresolved, it can cause frustration and even depression.

This section asks the following questions: “Why is culture paramount to identity?” “What are the challenges of biculturalism?” and “What role can the immigrant church play in helping those who are bicultural so that they can gain a sense of belonging?” The issue of ethnicity is an ambiguous one even for anthropologists and sociologists. For the purpose of this research, ethnicity can be viewed as rolled into the culture of an individual. Hence the struggle of bicultural identity is the tension between two not three variables. The conversation on biculturalism is of great importance to young adults who are members of visible minorities.

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<sup>11</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 355.

## The Nature of Identity

### Multifaceted and Dynamic

The quest for identity has been at the centre of human history and conflicts throughout the centuries. In *The Life Cycle Completed*, Joan Erikson opens with Shakespeare's "Seven Ages of Man."<sup>12</sup> Shakespeare's 'Seven Ages of Man' gives indication that a person goes through changes throughout his or her life. The identity of individuals develops and changes from one stage to the next even if it is just so slightly. Identity has to do with relationships, commitment, and so on. The biblical account also begins with a quest for identity. Adam and Eve, like young adults today, seek to find their place in God's creation by their own means. The fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden was a quest for identity; albeit it was an act of defiance and distrust. Paul Tillich agrees with Plato that, "Man [sic] is declared to be a creature who at every moment of his existence must examine and scrutinize the conditions of his existence. He is a being in search of meaning."<sup>13</sup>

Plato's description is helpful to begin the exploration of the indispensability of identity or its basic building blocks. It confirms that identity formation is both *multifaceted* and *dynamic*. Identity includes ethnicity, gender, vocational training, purpose, religious affiliation, and more. However, the nature of identity is also dynamic and changes through different life stages, transition, and ritualization.<sup>14</sup> These factors constantly change over time. In this day and age, even gender identity seems to be dynamic. It takes a lifetime to define a person. Perhaps that is why a person's identity is only finally defined in the legacy they leave behind.

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<sup>12</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 2.

<sup>13</sup> Tillich, *My Search*, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 43–45.



Erik Erikson's eight stages of the human life cycle form the foundation of understanding identity and healthy growth in personality.<sup>15</sup> How identity is affected throughout the life cycle is expanded in the next section. The dynamic nature of identity provides valuable insights in the caring of young adults. They are constantly and rapidly changing even as practitioners and the faith community try to minister to them. They are changing from students to non-students (from timid acceptance into adulthood); from non-students to young adults demanding their own dignity; and soon from young adulthood to full adulthood and church leaders need to treat them with respect as peers and equals.

#### Sameness and Continuity

Identity formation is a lifelong process, multifaceted and dynamic; yet it is predicated on two basic concepts: *sameness* and *continuity* at every stage.<sup>16</sup> Erikson's theory in identity is fundamental to other theories in this research. Capps's working theory on sameness is twofold: first, the declaration of individuality, "I'm me and anyone who thinks otherwise is mistaken";<sup>17</sup> and second, the affirmation of personality "There are the things that make me the *me* that I am."<sup>18</sup> Sameness and continuity form the basic building blocks of identity. These are lenses through which pastoral theology can talk about other facets of identity such as ethnic identity, cultural identity, a sense of belonging, community, professional guilds, and Christian identity. The two pillars of identity nurture a sense of

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<sup>15</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53–107.

<sup>16</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>17</sup> Capps, *Decades*, 84.

<sup>18</sup> Capps, *Decades*, 84.

belonging. When sameness and continuity are disturbed in any way, the person will experience a form of identity crisis.<sup>19</sup>

Furthermore, sameness and continuity necessitate the relational presence of others. Erikson asserts,

The conscious feeling of having a *personal identity* is based on two simultaneous observations: the immediate perception of one's selfsameness and continuity in time; and the simultaneous perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity. What I propose to call ego identity concerns more than the mere fact of existence, as conveyed by personal identity; it is the ego quality of this existence.<sup>20</sup>

*Sameness* denotes commonality in particular facets of identity. It exists as a moment in time. Those who are born or raised in the West or Canadian born Chinese (CBC's) feel comfortable with those who are brought up in the Canadian mainstream culture, watching the same television shows, and listening to the same music. They identify with them because they speak the same cultural language. When sameness is reciprocated by the group, there is acceptance and belonging.

In *Second Generation: Ethnic Identity among Asian Americans*, Pyong Gap Min identifies a common trend that Asian Americans young adults are increasingly finding affiliation among Chinese, Korean and Japanese. Because they are born and raised in America as second generation to Asian parents, it does not matter that they are ethnically different. They experience sameness as a visible minority of Asian descent. Therefore, they identify with each other as Asian Americans. Wai Han, a Chinese American, finds "a greater sense of social ease and receptivity" among a diverse mix of Asian

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<sup>19</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 16–17. The term *identity crisis* "was first used for a specific clinical purpose in Mt. Zion Veterans Rehabilitation Clinic during the Second World War [when most of the] patients ... lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity."

<sup>20</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

Americans.<sup>21</sup> She says, “I was working and didn’t have a lot of time. I lived at home part of the time. My friends were from classes. They were all Asian. I mean not just Chinese, but Korean, Japanese. It wasn’t planned, it just happened. I’ve noticed that Asians are more receptive to me in terms of friendship.”<sup>22</sup> This is also true for Asian Canadians. On university campuses and in the churches, Chinese Canadians and Korean Canadians often mingle together. There are new congregations that are intentionally geared towards Asian Canadian.

Similarly, if sameness is not recognized, isolation begins to take place. George, a Korean American, speaks of both the identification among Asian American students and more specifically the experience of rejection from a predominantly White college from the 1970s. He recalls,

I found myself mainly with Asian American friends. In fact there were three of us who were really close and they used to call us the ‘Three Musketeers.’ Interestingly, one guy was Chinese American, the other was Japanese American, and of course I was Korean American. Maybe it’s because [this university] is such an old, conservative, and white place. But we felt more comfortable with each other. I found a lot of the students snobbish, unfriendly. Asian Americans tend to have more in common, you know.<sup>23</sup>

George’s experience highlights a key element in identity theory—the pillar of sameness. Sameness, whether real or perceived, forms the basis for receptivity; and receptivity forms the basis for identity affirmation. Individuals need to see receptivity from their peers as well as their church leaders and pastors in a world that increasingly isolates human beings from one another. Receptivity that affirms identity in anyone is one that is genuine and deep.

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<sup>21</sup> Min, *Second Generation*, 191.

<sup>22</sup> Min, *Second Generation*, 191.

<sup>23</sup> Min, *Second Generation*, 192.

*Continuity* has to do with time. It denotes the dynamic nature of identity that situates the story of particular persons within a larger story. The dynamic nature of identity evolves over the course of one's life. Identity evolves and is rooted in the timeline of a community. In fact, the individual is rooted in multiple communities such as family, school, church, and other social circles. In the case of the CCC, the church is often the social community as well. Hence Gerkin builds a model of care situating the praxis of care in the middle of stories of individuals and the Christian story.<sup>24</sup> This is Gerkin's "fusion of horizons" between the human story and the Christian story.<sup>25</sup>

Park interprets the *fusion of horizons* as the story between the person and the pastor. Park argues, "For Gerkin, however, the pastor interprets the living human document and living community and guides the interpretive process of their stories with the Story, but their stories seldom influence the pastor and his interpretation."<sup>26</sup> This creates a problem for Park where pastoral caregivers become sole interpreters of the individual's story. However, Couture and Hunter understand the fusion of horizons as "the telling of one's story" and "the creation and re-creation of meanings in dialogue with the sacred stories of the faith."<sup>27</sup> The fusion of horizons is a story within the mosaic of the community (or even multiple communities) grounded in the Christ story.

In the context of young adults in the immigrant church, *continuity* plays an even more important role than *sameness*. The significance of continuity over sameness is in that continuity is not as visible and obvious in most cases. For example, the way people dress and the food they enjoy may gather them into categories of sameness. However,

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<sup>24</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 26; Park, "History and Method," 63.

<sup>25</sup> Park, "History and Method," 63.

<sup>26</sup> Park, "History and Method," 66.

<sup>27</sup> Gerkin, *Prophetic Pastoral Practice*, 19–20; Couture and Hunter, *Pastoral Care*, 10.

continuity is invisible, subtle, and usually neglected. It is easier for young adults to find a small group or community that they can identify with in terms of language, topics, and life stage. It is also easier for practitioners to attempt to group people together by their *sameness*. When sameness is disturbed, it can be detected like external wounds.

Treatment can be applied accordingly and immediately. However, one of the greatest challenges for young adults in the English congregation is finding a continuous narrative. Every time there is a change in leadership, the transition of the English pastor, the narrative for that community would have a new beginning. Continuity is broken and needs to be rebuilt. It is elusive and in categories uncharted. Hence the continuity of a shepherd is an important consideration for communal and individual identity.

According to the General Baptist research, the average tenure of pastors in America is about 3.6 year.<sup>28</sup> This is especially true for English pastors in the Chinese church. In *English Ministry Crisis in Chinese Canadian Churches*, Matthew Todd writes about the unsustainable tenure of English pastors. When a pastor leaves, continuity is broken. Individuals and the community are all wounded. Like internal injuries, the wound is real but not immediately obvious. On the surface, it may seem to be business as usual. A placement has been found. However, young people in the congregation experience the pain of broken relationships and disrupted identity. They would have experienced this multiple times by the time they graduate from university.

A comprehensive closure on the matter is not always available. The onus is on both the church and the pastor to affirm those who are affected. Impact of unresolved feelings can linger and multiply hurt and anger. Brokenness in continuity of the community can greatly erode identity in individuals. It also takes away the trust and

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<sup>28</sup> Dumond, "Eight Point Eight Two," 1.

caring relationships which has been established over time. By the same token, many pastors have experienced the erosion of identity and calling in the same event. The gospel of redemption and restoration must be exercised at the leadership level. Hence the church also needs to be a safe place for reconciliation between leaders and young adults who are generally lost.

### Relational and Communal

The nature of identity is also *relational* and *communal*. The two pillars of identity, sameness and continuity, each requires both subjectivity of self-perception and objectivity by the community or *society*.<sup>29</sup> Erikson acknowledges that “ego identity” is necessarily subjective so that it can “safeguard the sameness and continuity” in relation to others.<sup>30</sup> However, the interconnectivity between ego identity and group identity requires something more than being “interrelated” but “the mutual complementation of ethos and ego [that] puts a greater common potential at the disposal of both ego synthesis and social organization.”<sup>31</sup> These constructs are more than isolated consciousness within the self but must find mutuality in the labyrinth of relationships.

Relationship and community are paramount for young men and women in the quest for identity. The process of rooting identity in caring relationships and the faith community does not dismiss individuality. The role of practitioners, pastoral caregivers, and church leaders is not to groom a generation to look like the previous ones. Rather, the goal of caring is to provide tools and methods where men and women can think for themselves as global disciples predicated on the rich heritage of Christian tradition.

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<sup>29</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 23.

First, individual identity is necessarily grounded in the nature of the *relational self*. It follows that the isolated self is, therefore, incomplete. Archie Smith, Jr. theorizes that the self is formed in how it expresses and understands itself through the perception of others. Smith asserts,

Any discussion about the human self may begin with a confession, namely that the self cannot be grasped or known in its totality, but only in fragments. The self is always fragmented roles, functions, and appearances. All such roles and appearances express the relational character of the self. People are eminently relational beings. In order to be selves people must *ex-press* or *ob-jectify* their selves in order to come to know themselves through others. [sic]<sup>32</sup>

Social psychologist George H. Mead theorizes that the self is not something a person is born with but rather developed through “the process of social experience and activity [and] as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process.”<sup>33</sup> In *Counseling Troubled Youths*, Dykstra notes that youths who are even temporarily separated from caring adults, such as parents, experience abandonment, anxiety, and depression.<sup>34</sup> The self is not complete until the self has found its place as part of the whole.

Second, the self is not only relational but *communal*. The self is relational as long as there is at least one other, such as a spouse or parent. Pastoral theologians and psychologists agree that the self is both relational and communal; the knowledge of self is developed through social interactions and mutual affirmation. Karen Scheib asserts, “A basic assumption undergirding ... care is that human beings are not primarily autonomous but are essentially relational and communal.”<sup>35</sup> Similarly, faith development is focused on the relationship between the individual and God, but also requires

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Relational*, 55.

<sup>33</sup> Mead, *George Herbert Mead*, 199, 207.

<sup>34</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 26.

<sup>35</sup> Scheib, *Challenging Invisibility*, 8.

communal affirmation of the faith community. The Scriptures speak of an individual's personal faith in Christ as well as participation as a citizen in the kingdom of God. One cannot exist without the other.

Faith development is crucial during adolescence and young adulthood. Furthermore, it is formed in caring relationships with significant others such as friends, family, and God.<sup>36</sup> Fowler asserts, "With varying degrees of intensity [adolescents and young adults] bring to the service the desire to be in a relationship with God and with the important persons of their lives in which they feel that they are living up to the expectations these important others have of them."<sup>37</sup> Important others mean more than their spouse, boyfriend, girlfriend or parents but caring people who have invested time and emotional energy.

The relationship deepens significantly when the pastoral caregiver (a pastor, a big sister or brother) who shares a crisis moment with an individual. Trust is built over time when a struggling teenager feels accepted by a caring adult. When the pastoral person is present in crisis moments, the careseeker will find identification in the caregiver and the community. The relational and communal nature of identity offers significant insights for theological reflection of the practice in the caring. Therefore, it is imperative that the church nurture caring relationships and create a receptive community.

Men and women in the immigrant church find their identity in two worlds, the mainstream culture and the faith community. These are places where they work and where much of their social interaction takes place. Even though they cannot quite put their finger on it, they are seeking *sameness* and *continuity*. These pillars of identity are

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<sup>36</sup> Wikberg, "Intercultural Caring," 480; Fowler, *Faith*, 87.

<sup>37</sup> Fowler, *Faith*, 87.



found in relationships and community. However, their quest for self can be complicated by a culture of narcissism. American historian Christopher Lasch asserts, “[The] narcissist is the dominant personality of our time.”<sup>38</sup> However, this is different from the “‘rugged individualist’ of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; unlike the rugged individualist, who has a cause, the new narcissist is his or her cause.”<sup>39</sup> The new narcissism is a wandering of the self—generally lost. The influence of narcissism through the advance of technology, social media, affluence, and busy schedules makes it difficult for pastors to understand much less engage young adults.

Those in the *generally lost* category are crying out for help. According to Lasch, they are “haunted not by guilt but by anxiety.”<sup>40</sup> The fundamental need for caring relationships and community has not changed. Can they find meaning truth and a sense of belonging in the church? Emerging adults continue to search for consolation from those who are farther on the journey of life and who care enough to come alongside. They long for caring relationships in the faith community. These relationships need to be genuine, non-judgmental, and have garnered trust over time. Trust is particularly essential in leading change in the church. Jonathan Wu, executive pastor of Evergreen Baptist Church in Los Angeles says, “The most important commodity in change dynamics is trust. People are most open to influence and action when they are strengthened in their faith in God and in God’s good purpose for them, and when they have confidence in those who are leading them.”<sup>41</sup> Young adults seek out leaders whom they can trust to guide them in life and lead them in faith practices.

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<sup>38</sup> Capps, *Depleted Self*, 6.

<sup>39</sup> Capps, *Depleted Self*, 7.

<sup>40</sup> Lasch, *Culture of Narcissism*, 22.

<sup>41</sup> Wu, “Trusting Households,” 109.

Caring relationships and a supportive community fosters a sense of belonging. Men and women are under tremendous pressure today in their transition into adulthood, settling into their career, dating, and becoming adults in the church. Caring relationships and trusting leadership are signs that they have found their place in the world. It is in acknowledgement of their quest that a new vision of caring is needed in the overall vision of the church. This new vision must be theological and practical. The message has not changed. The gospel is precisely about the possibility of abundance for those who are spiritually and generally lost. The spiritually lost are in need of salvation. The generally lost are in need of navigation.

This dissertation adapts Fowler's vision of care and community. He asserts, "pastoral care consists of all the ways a community of faith, under pastoral leadership, intentionally sponsors the awakening, shaping, rectifying, healing, and ongoing growth in vocation of Christian persons and community, under the pressure and power of the in-breaking kingdom of God."<sup>42</sup> Fowler develops a praxis of care and community with the metaphor of an "ecology of care" that seeks to form and transform persons through "[honoring] the richness of relationships and in the interdependent community of the congregation."<sup>43</sup> The vision of caring and community is a matter of calling "in relation to the Christian story."<sup>44</sup>

This new vision is for mature ones in the church to establish long-term relationships with younger people; the ultimate goal is to transform them from recipient of care to those providing it. Fostering relationships requires long-term commitment from practitioners and church leaders. The high rate of turnover of pastors and lay leaders has

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<sup>42</sup> Fowler, *Faith Development*, 21.

<sup>43</sup> Fowler, *Faith Development*, 20.

<sup>44</sup> Fowler, *Faith Development*, 27.

subtle effects on the erosion of identity. Stability is imperative to fostering a caring environment where sameness and continuity can take root.

*Reciprocity* is an important element in theology and psychology. The ritual of adulthood is not only that they no longer need to be cared for, but that they can now care for others. Milton Mayeroff asserts that when young adults are able to reciprocate care, they would have found their place in the world.<sup>45</sup> Consequently, reciprocating care is a sign of spiritual maturity. Moltmann argues that faith is not “becoming radically unworldly, but by hopeful outgoing” to care for others.<sup>46</sup> This is a helpful insight for pastoral ministry. Strategies to reach young adults often focus on providing interesting worship experiences and engaging messages. But unless they are given the opportunity to care for others, they have not matured. The process may come with trials and errors. Reciprocating care is important in the development of the relational and communal self.

The vision of reciprocity begins with those who are spiritually mature. They are to take the first step. In the current context, it is the responsibility of mature adults to nurture identity in young adults, teens, and children. Identity affirmation in young adults cannot be a function left to their own resolve; it requires tremendous efforts from the coaches, mentors, and friends. Affirming identity requires a process of “simultaneous reflection and observation.”<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the ministry of older adults caring for younger ones has additional benefits as the process also affirms the identity of the coaching older adults. Thus a form of reciprocity is already taking place.

The human strength developed during mature adulthood is *generativity*. It means more than to generate more or being productive. By generativity, Erikson points to

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<sup>45</sup> Mayeroff, *Caring*, 68.

<sup>46</sup> Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, 163.

<sup>47</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 23.

“primarily the interest in establishing and guiding the next generation.”<sup>48</sup> The concept of generativity is found in the common notion of the *legacy* one generation leaves to the next. Milton Mayeroff asserts that caring for others can “actualize oneself.”<sup>49</sup> If an adult does not exercise the development of his/her generativity through shaping the next generation, they will fail to mature, leading to stagnation and indulgence in later life.<sup>50</sup> This explains the challenge of midlife crisis mature men and women seeking thrills to affirm their significance.<sup>51</sup> Hence the process of nurturing relationships is mutually beneficial for all generations.

Moreover, nurturing identity in young adults in the CCC requires leaders from the first generation to recalibrate their own identity. Pioneers of the church may feel more comfortable to continue ministry in the same role over time. They were the uncles and aunties when those in the English congregation were children. But now the children have grown up to be adults. It is imperative for the pioneers to re-establish their relationship with young adults. It means the necessity to relent from the traditional mindset. The process cannot be a rigid switchover but an intentional understanding of the need for recalibration. This would require what Rubem Alves calls *unlearning*.<sup>52</sup> In order for one to really learn, one must not be limited to given assumptions and paradigms. The aspect of recalibration of identity in church leaders is mostly neglected in the discussion.

The rise of young leaders is sometimes perceived as a threat to current leadership. Insecurity among pioneer church leaders can be detrimental in generational ministry. Ministry issues can easily be skewed by power struggles and become political in nature.

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<sup>48</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 103.

<sup>49</sup> Mayeroff, *Caring*, 1–2.

<sup>50</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 103.

<sup>51</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 198–200.

<sup>52</sup> Alves, *Poet*, 18–19.

This occurs because trust has not been built on genuine caring relationships. Hence, it is imperative for younger men and women to show due respect, especially in a patriarchal culture, to affirm the hard work, sacrifices, and success of the pioneers of the immigrant church. They are the *Elijah's* of the Canadian Chinese Church. Even though his pupil Elisha received a double portion of the Spirit, Elijah is still regarded as the representative of the prophets. Older pastors in the CCC may feel insecure and outdated because a new generation of pastors have more advanced theological degrees and many available new tools. However, a biblical model of leadership recognizes the legacy and contribution of the older generation without reservation.

The honor of the pioneers stands and younger pastors need to connect with the rich heritage of the past and extend our affirmation to those who laboured. By the same token, mature adults can reach out to young adults with empowerment. Empowerment through caring is crucial to the survival not only of the second generation but also for the first generation to finish well. The rise of younger leaders should not be a threat to the first generation leaders but a consolation. Caring is the necessary ingredient in cross generational ministries because identity formation is a generational issue.<sup>53</sup>

### **Identity and the Human Life Cycle**

It has been said, "You cannot step into the same river twice."<sup>54</sup> A particular individual in the pews today is not the same person today that they were last year; he or she is facing different challenges in life than they did a year ago. Moreover, this person will face

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<sup>53</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 29.

<sup>54</sup> A quote by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus of Ephesus. Online: <http://theinvisiblementor.com/you-cannot-step-into-the-same-river-twice/> and <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heraclitus>

different obstacles next year. Their environment and life stage will change. These are the main factors for a person's identity challenges. In order to facilitate the fullness of the gospel with relevance, practitioners need to be aware of the multifaceted and dynamic nature of identity. This includes the stages of the human life cycle. Therefore, pastoral theology must integrate foundational theories in the psychology of human development. The Greek concept of "seven identifiable stages of life" is found throughout the text of the New Testament.<sup>55</sup> The book of Ecclesiastes also alludes to the reality of life stages when the Qoheleth exhorted his readers to worship God in their youth before the days of old age (Ecc. 12).

The following provides a literature review of modern paradigms of theories in human development with emphasis on three areas related to identity. First, it will discuss the concept of growth in the *epigenesis of identity*. As mentioned earlier, the nature of identity is dynamic and varies at different stages in life. However, a healthy identity and personality needs to be grounded in fertile soil.<sup>56</sup> The concept of growth is important because identity formation never stops. The individual is constantly recalibrating his or her own identity at every life stage within its changing social context.

Second, researchers have highlighted the difficulties of *transition* whether it is from high school to university, from university to the marketplace, or from being single to being married. At each transition point, men and women are reliving the disorientation and are in need of help.<sup>57</sup> Finally, it is necessary to bring into discussion the theory of *ritualization*. Capps and Joan Erikson interpret Erik Erikson's theory of ritualization from

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<sup>55</sup> Overstreet, "The Greek Concept," 537–38.

<sup>56</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 52–53.

<sup>57</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 71, 191; Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman's Life*, 69, 117; Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 86.

everyday life as it pertains to pastoral care. Ritualization plays a vital role in the shaping of the individual by society, the church, and significant others.

The dynamic nature of identity spans a lifetime. Erikson observes this is mostly a “lifelong development largely unconscious to the individual and to his [sic] society.”<sup>58</sup> Each stage of Erikson’s eight stages of life cycle contributes to the process of identity formation. Yet identity is “so all-pervasive and yet so hard to grasp” because it is “a process ‘located’ in the *core of the individual* and yet also in the *core of his communal culture* [sic].”<sup>59</sup> He asserts that “[while] the end of adolescence thus is the stage of an overt identity *crisis*, identity *formation* neither begins nor ends with adolescence.”<sup>60</sup>

In *Decades of Life*, Capps expands and divides the human life cycle into ten stages where each stage is a decade of life. Levinson surveys the life cycle and concentrates on *Early Adult Transition* and *Mid-life Transition* for men and women in separate volumes.<sup>61</sup> William Sadler proposes that mid-life is a time of “life bonus” to make the most out of life.<sup>62</sup> Joan Erikson, McFadden, Brennan, and Patrick focus on the role of religion and spirituality for those in late life.<sup>63</sup> The quest for identity does not end in adolescence or young adulthood. On the contrary, it has only just begun.

### Growth and Crises in Human Development

There is common ground between theology and psychology which, when framed dialectically, is mutually beneficial.<sup>64</sup> In this section, spirituality means Christian

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<sup>58</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 113.

<sup>59</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 22.

<sup>60</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 113.

<sup>61</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man’s Life*, 20; Levinson, *Season of a Woman’s Life*, 18.

<sup>62</sup> Sadler, *Third Age*, xv.

<sup>63</sup> McFadden et al., *New Directions*, 225–32.

<sup>64</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 77.

spirituality unless otherwise stated. There is, of course, a great deal of interest in spirituality for young adults in the postmodern world that is either outside of the Christian faith or void of any religious affiliations altogether.<sup>65</sup> One of the key aspects of human nature is that it is developed over time from birth to death through various stages in between. Every stage involves the normal growth process and crises.

Erikson's life cycle theory is predicated on Freud's theory of "neurotic conflict."<sup>66</sup> However, Erikson focuses on the positivity and potential of human development than his predecessor. Whereas Freud built his theory mainly on the need to constantly "re-resolve [childhood psychological] conflicts," Erikson focuses on the vitality of growth throughout the life cycle.<sup>67</sup> By vitality, he proposes that a healthy personality is developed when an individual moves beyond being "merely free from neurotic symptoms" to becoming an active participant in the community.<sup>68</sup> An individual with a strong confidence of self and a healthy personality is one who is proactive, assertive, and full of life. An individual with a healthy personality is able to be consistent and manages his/her environment well. Moreover, he/she is has a correct perception of the self and the world.<sup>69</sup> This psychological profile resembles the theological possibility of an abundant life. This healthy personality and identity is the subject of this research. Furthermore, the goal of reciprocity is precisely within the realm of the epigenesis of healthy personality framed within the context of Christian identity, salvation, and vocation.

The foundational theory of Erikson's eight stages of the human life cycle is highly regarded by both social science and pastoral theology. He proposed eight stages of the

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<sup>65</sup> Gottlieb, *Spirituality*, 5, 42.

<sup>66</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 91.

<sup>67</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 91.

<sup>68</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 92.

<sup>69</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 92.



human life cycle. They are *Infancy* (ages 0 to 1 ½), *Early Childhood* (1 ½ to 3), *Play Age* (3 to 5), *School Age* (5 to 12), *Adolescence* (12 to 18), *Young Adulthood* (18 to 40), *Adulthood* (40 to 65) and *Old Age* (65 and older).<sup>70</sup> Erikson's research and observation yielded much more than a division of stages. He identified certain human virtues associated with each stage.

Donald Capps had done extensive work in the interpretation of Erikson's work for pastoral theology. The concept of virtue in pastoral theology is expressed differently in psychology. Erikson does not use the word "virtue" in the sense of 'moralities' but of 'inherent strengths.'<sup>71</sup> It seems that each human strength or virtue grows out of a crisis experience at various stages. These virtues are integral parts of a healthy personality that ensures development of caring relationships. The following is a basic chart to show the correlation of stages, psychosocial crises, and human strength.

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<sup>70</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 178; Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>71</sup> Capps, "Erikson's Schedule," 339.

Table 3.1 Erikson's Human Strengths in the Life Cycle<sup>72</sup>

Life Stages	Psychosocial Crises	Basic Strength
Infancy	Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust	Hope
Early Childhood	Autonomy vs. Shame, Doubt	Will
Play Age	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purpose
School Age	Industry vs. Inferiority	Competence
Adolescence	Identity vs. Identity Confusion	Fidelity
Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love
Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care
Old Age	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom

The purpose of including the chart is to assist in the understanding of how human strength can be derived from the psychosocial crises associated at each stage. These crises are not internal struggles but relational issues. Each virtue is “closely linked to the psychodynamics of a given stage of the life cycle.”<sup>73</sup> Erikson theorizes that *hope* is the first human strength developed during infancy. The workings of crises and the development of basic trust, according to Erikson, is rooted in “an attitude toward oneself and the world derived from the experiences of the first year of life.”<sup>74</sup> The infant develops basic trust through his or her experience with the mother in nursing and caring.<sup>75</sup>

However, if provision from the mother is neglected, then basic mistrust begins to take place. Furthermore, Capps confirms that the caring adult is indicative of the enduring quality of things as well as beings. Thus, the unique role of the caretaking

<sup>72</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 178; Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>73</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 29.

<sup>74</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 57.

<sup>75</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 58–59.

person as the basis of hope: “She must be that original verification, which, later, will come from other wider segments of reality.”<sup>76</sup> The basic human strength to hope is developed through the affirmation of a sense of basic security. Otherwise, the foundation of growth is compromised and the individual may require attention in adult life.

The genius of Erikson’s life cycle theory is not only in the division of the human life span into stages but in his grasp of the *epigenetic principle* of growth in identity and healthy personality.<sup>77</sup> The human life cycle is precisely the epigenesis or formation of identity.<sup>78</sup> Erikson asserts, “Among the indispensable co-ordinates of identity is that of the life cycle.”<sup>79</sup> Identity formation can be understood as the proverbial *work-in-progress*. This is the key to understanding human development at every stage in life. Capps concurs, “The major scientific concept underlying Erikson's life-cycle theory is the *epigenetic* principle. This concept has served as the scientific core of Erikson's thought from the beginning of his work.”<sup>80</sup> Levinson alludes to the image of evolution or an “unfolding of life.”<sup>81</sup>

Erikson borrows the epigenetic principle of physical growth from biology that is easier for the reader to visualize and understand. However, the transformation that takes place in the psyche is much harder for the imagination. The inner growth, whether it is labeled as the psyche or emotional self, is often ignored either because it is invisible or too difficult to grasp. Erikson explains,

Whenever we try to understand growth, it is well to remember that *epigenetic principle* which is derived from the growth of organisms in utero. Somewhat

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<sup>76</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 31; Erikson, “Human Strength, 117.

<sup>77</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53.

<sup>78</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 91–141.

<sup>79</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 91.

<sup>80</sup> Capps, “Erikson’s Life-Cycle Theory,” 121.

<sup>81</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman's Life*, 3.

generalized, this principle states that anything that grows has a *ground plan*, and that out of this ground plan the *parts* arise, each part having its time of special ascendancy, until all parts have arisen to form a *functioning whole*. At birth the baby leaves the chemical exchange of the womb for the social exchange system of his society, where his gradually increasing capacities meet the opportunities and limitations of his culture. [sic]<sup>82</sup>

The organic growth of a healthy identity requires a ground plan where its parts can flourish. The parts do not grow independently but, similar to development of a fetus in its mother's womb, must grow together into a functioning whole.

The eight stages of the human life cycle is the synthesis of ego identity. Various human strengths are developed throughout the stages and each one is built on the foundation of the previous ones. Hope is developed during infancy as the first human strength. "Hope is the basis for all other strengths."<sup>83</sup> This is the infant's first sense of trust. Hope is the anticipation that comes from trust.<sup>84</sup> Next the human will is developed during early childhood where the psychosocial crisis is autonomy versus shame and doubt.<sup>85</sup> The child learns to exercise his or her will. However, misbehaving would bring an experience of shame.<sup>86</sup> The strength at each stage is built upon the previous one.

The development of hope is not finished in the first year and a half of life, but continues to be an important and basic human virtue that carries the individual through various crises and transitions through the years. The development from stage to stage is "a gradual development of component parts; ... each [strength] ... is systematically related to all others, and that they all depend on the proper development in the proper sequence of each item; and ... that each item exists in some form before 'its' decisive and

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<sup>82</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53.

<sup>83</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 30.

<sup>84</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 55.

<sup>85</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>86</sup> Erikson, *Childhood*, 253.

critical time normally arrives.”<sup>87</sup> The ethos of caring in the overall strategy of pastoral ministry and caring relationships can provide fertile soil for Christian identity.

Erikson’s application of the *epigenetic principle* is also grounded in the process of crises. Strength is built through the struggle in crises. He proposes that growth results from “conflicts, inner and outer, which the healthy personality weathers, emerging and re-emerging with an increasing sense of inner unity.”<sup>88</sup> Hope is the virtue that comes out of the infant’s interaction with the maternal caring adult and basic trust is developed. However, when in the arms of a stranger, the infant experiences mistrust and cries. Hope for the maternal person can develop as a result of this crisis; and hope is affirmed when the mother returns. Hope is “the enduring belief in the attainability of fervent wishes, in spite of the dark urges and rages.”<sup>89</sup> Similarly, the will of a child is trained through the crises of what he or she can or cannot do. Their action will either result in shame and doubt or autonomy.

As the child continues to grow, purpose becomes clearer through the crises of good or bad initiatives. The sense of purpose grows from the development of the will; and autonomous will is anchored on perception of basic trust and basic mistrust which allows the child to hope.<sup>90</sup> “[Hope] is not a strength that suddenly disappears as we move beyond the life stage in which this strength emerged, but rather, it continues to influence our development throughout life.”<sup>91</sup> Hope as the most basic human strength empowers the person to navigate through various crises in life. The strength at each stage is not isolated but continues to grow in the process of healthy identity.

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<sup>87</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 54.

<sup>88</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 52.

<sup>89</sup> Erikson, “Erikson, “Human Strength,” 118.

<sup>90</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 52.

<sup>91</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 30.

### Crisis and Commitment in Identity

There is correlation between crisis and ego-identity statuses. This principle is predicated on the works of psychologists, James E. Marcia and Jane Kroger on crisis and commitment.<sup>92</sup> Erikson, Marcia, and Kroger confirm that there is a strong correlation between crises and commitment among young people. This is affirmed by observation within the faith community. Based on Erikson's theory in identity and identity confusion, Marcia proceeded to his own empirical study "into the age-old teenagers' question, 'who am I?'"<sup>93</sup> His study is focused on adolescence of the mid-1960s. However, there is much commonality between them and young adults in the twenty-first century. This research will explore the commonalities between adolescence in the modern era and postmodern young adults.

Marcia developed four ego-identity statuses to demonstrate the correlation between "crisis and commitment."<sup>94</sup> His research was carried out by studying over eighty male students and placing them in four categories of crisis experience and each with a corresponding level of commitment. The commitment in question is in the areas of "occupation and ideology."<sup>95</sup> However, the specifics of the crises are not provided. The subjects are divided into four ego-identity statuses. The order is from the most desirable status to the least: 1) *identity-achievement*, 2) *moratorium*, 3) *foreclosure*, and 4) *identity diffusion*.<sup>96</sup> Marcia further expands on Erikson's statuses of identity-achievement and identity-diffusion and added two more in between. Marcia's findings can also provide a

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<sup>92</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James\\_Marcia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_Marcia); [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jane\\_Kroger](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Jane_Kroger)

<sup>93</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 94–100; Marcia, "Development," 551.

<sup>94</sup> Marcia, "Development," 551.

<sup>95</sup> Marcia, "Development," 551.

<sup>96</sup> Marcia, "Development," 551.

theoretical lens for pastoral theology to interpret issues of identity, faith, and commitment generally.

Moreover, the correlation between crisis and commitment can be appropriated for commitment in the immigrant church. There are numerous scenarios that may be similar to one of the ego-identity statuses. The following illustrations are provided for the purpose of providing a lens to better understand the principles in Marcia's theory. However, faithful practices in pastoral ministry require further studies, discussion, experimenting, and patience. Moreover, it requires wisdom from the Holy Spirit administered through the ministries and the people of the church.

*Identity achievement* and *identity diffusion* are polar opposites in Erikson's ego-identity theory. He defines identity diffusion as "a split of self-images ... [and] a loss of center [sic] and a dispersion without feeling thoroughly confused."<sup>97</sup> Kroger and Marcia assert that identity diffusion occurs at late adolescence or young adulthood. Young adults are "[faced] with the imminence of adult tasks (e.g., getting a job, becoming a citizen, and planning marriage), the late adolescent must relinquish the childhood position of being 'given to' and prepare to be the 'giver.'"<sup>98</sup>

Erikson, in his later writings, prefers to use the term *identity confusion* instead of *identity diffusion*.<sup>99</sup> For him, *confusion* is "obviously the better word" since it provides a more precise description of the condition.<sup>100</sup> The struggle between identity and identity confusion then is the tension between the desire to be cared for and the vocation to care

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<sup>97</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 212.

<sup>98</sup> Kroger and Marcia, "Identity Statuses," 32; Marcia, "Development," 551.

<sup>99</sup> Kroger and Marcia, "Identity Statuses," 32.

<sup>100</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 212.

for others as adolescents struggle to become adults. In other words, the struggle for commitment can also be viewed as the adolescence stage of reciprocity.

Hence crises, growth, and commitment are closely related elements that will guide the epigenesis of identity. They will also guide the profound and long-term success of generational ministry. Crises are no longer viewed as obstacles to growth but catalysts. Practitioners need to pay close attention to youths and young adults when they face circumstances beyond normal situations. They can help men and women to navigate through the intricate complexity of it and not simply to try to eradicate crises.

The epigenetic principle is a familiar concept in Christian discipleship. This is not new. What is missing from the appropriation of growth in generational ministry is patience. The expectation is for steady growth in faith development. Struggles and doubts are viewed with negativity as hindrances to growth. In fact, the opposite is true. Crises are catalysts to spiritual maturation. To remove all perceived hindrances to growth may actually cause stagnation and confusion in an individual's Christian identity.

Furthermore, each ego-identity status is not static but dynamic. An individual could move from one status to another for the better over time given the right conditions and transcendent help from the Holy Spirit. Adolescents and young adults are often labeled as introverts and unspiritual too soon. They have not been given a chance to work out from crises to commitment. The principle of growth also implies the necessity of patience as a farmer wait for the harvest (Jas. 5:7). Each of the following scenarios involves various crisis situations and entails different levels of commitment over a period of time.



## Identity Achievement

First, *identity-achievement* is the most favourable scenario. It refers to someone who “has experienced a crisis period and is committed to an occupation and ideology.”<sup>101</sup> Those who have experienced a crisis and decide to stay are in the *identity-achievement* status and will likely commit to their church. These can be a general crisis or a crisis of faith (religious orientation). One of the key findings is that those in identity-achievement status have experienced crises and have come to make a commitment to an occupation “on their own terms” apart from “parental wishes.”<sup>102</sup> This is an important principle for young adults in the CCC. In particular, it is significant for those who make commitments of faith and be able to differentiate their decisions from parental expectations.

It would be helpful to include real situations to illustrate each status. James is a young man who has gone through the crisis of rejection. He tried to help his church but was rejected. He had no peers left in the church. However, his decision to stay and commit to the church resulted in having a sense of belonging. This narrative illustrates Marcia’s theory of identity achievement in progress. James was very close to making a decision to leave. He even prayed for God to open doors for him but that did not happen at first. But he stayed. James recalls,

I also connected back, joined a small group and started (being a) student ministry counselor. So I guess at some point ... like (God said): ‘I’ve opened the doors for you here, you’re deeply rooted. I don’t think it’s time for you to go. I think this is time for you to plant and grow and nurture people here.’<sup>103</sup>

His decision to stay is no longer predicated on his parents’ expectation or his friends being there but solely on his own terms with the exception of divine guidance. The crisis

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<sup>101</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 552.

<sup>102</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 552.

<sup>103</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 257.

of rejection served as the event that separated James from his parents' expectations. He had an excuse to leave the church but he did not. The crisis experience actually galvanized James's decision to get involved.

The above story exhibits in an individual who had the considered leaving the church, but chooses to stay on his own terms. Having experienced rejection or other crises, some would decide to move on. However, those who have gone through a crisis and made a decision to stay often turned out to be those with a strong commitment to the faith community. Once that choice has been made, the commitment is firm. The commitment to get involved and to be part of a faith community is no longer simply yielding to other people's expectations. James has successfully grasped the imminence of adult tasks and relinquished the childhood position of being "given to" and become the "giver" in his church.<sup>104</sup>

Marcia explains, "[The individual] seems to have [re-evaluated] past beliefs [of his parents and of his own] and achieved a resolution that leaves him free to act."<sup>105</sup> Those who have come to commitment on their own terms, like James, would no longer be easily persuaded by parents or other adults about their future. However, it does not mean that they have become hostile to those in the older generation because of their new found freedom. On the contrary, a sign of spiritual maturation, according to Erikson's schedule, is the virtue of love.<sup>106</sup> Young adults develop the capacity to love through the presence of healthy caring relationships with peers and people from other generations. Those in the *identity-achievement* status have reached a status of the autonomous self in their Christian identity and are ready to continue to grow in Christ.

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<sup>104</sup> Kroger and Marcia, "Identity Statures," 32.

<sup>105</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>106</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

## Moratorium

Next is the ego-identity status of *moratorium* in Marcia's schedule.<sup>107</sup> The term points to those who are experiencing a crisis but is also in "an active struggle to make commitments."<sup>108</sup> Marcia seems to suggest that the experience of crises strengthens identity. Once identity is affirmed then commitment to occupation or practice of faith is secured. Identity must be first affirmed through crisis; then commitment is made. Commitment is the result of or a function of identity affirmation. However, psychologist Kendra Cherry expands on this principle. She writes, "*Moratorium* is the status of a person who is actively involved in exploring different identities, but has not made a commitment."<sup>109</sup> Moreover, Cherry provides an interpretation of commitment for those in moratorium status. She contends, "According to Marcia and his colleagues, the balance between identity and [identity] confusion lies in making a commitment to an identity."<sup>110</sup> In other words, Cherry's definition implies the sequence of events is actually reversed. Identity comes out of a commitment, not the other way around. When an individual decides to commit to a task, whether it is an occupation or religious affiliation, identity is affirmed by that commitment. Cherry's perspective on commitment is a helpful way to understand how identity can be affirmed. There is a logical sequence of events.

Those in *moratorium* status are unsure of whether they have found their place in life.<sup>111</sup> They are looking for acceptance and a sense of belonging. There is constant struggle "to define themselves."<sup>112</sup> Moratoriums are still trying to appease their parents

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<sup>107</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>108</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>109</sup> Cherry, "What Is an Identity Crisis?" 1.

<sup>110</sup> Cherry, "What Is an Identity Crisis?" 1.

<sup>111</sup> Marcia, "Development," 553.

<sup>112</sup> Kroger and Marcia, "Identity Statures," 35.

and to conform to society's expectations. They would appear to be busy and committed to something until something else better comes along. Marcia says, "[They are] distinguished from the identity-diffusion subject by the appearance of an active struggle to make commitments."<sup>113</sup> According to Kroger,

[Moratoriums] are lively, engaging, conflicted, and sometimes tiring to be around ... They may try to draw others into their identity formation project, sometimes setting others up to take a position polar to their own stated one, so that they may be at least temporarily relieved of the internal conflict they are undergoing by converting an interior struggle into an external one. Moratoriums are often exquisitely morally sensitive. And, if they are articulate, they can engage others in their quest and appear, albeit briefly, as charismatic figures.<sup>114</sup>

This description is applicable for those in the church who are charismatic and unpredictable. The postmodern churchgoer may seem to be lively, busy, and committed until one day for unknown reasons disappear from the community. This is not a callous criticism on those in moratorium status but a hopeful quest to understand their struggles and what can be done to affirm their identity.

The following illustrates another case of moratorium. Lois is a local born Chinese-Canadian and a mature adult who had left her parents' church to go "a [multiethnic] Caucasian church."<sup>115</sup> After about seven years, she and her family moved again to another church where she feels a sense of belonging. Lois recalls, "My daughter is 20 ... I could see that her faith was not growing ... their population, their demographics were younger ... [this] was the first time after I've left my parents' church that is my home church."<sup>116</sup> There were two moves. The first move was really Lois' need to move away from her parents' control. This has little to do with the church itself. She

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<sup>113</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>114</sup> Kroger and Marcia, "Identity Statuses," 35.

<sup>115</sup> Wong, "How am I," 294.

<sup>116</sup> Wong, "How am I," 297.

stayed there until something better came along. Her first move has all the signs of a moratorium ego-status. Therefore, she was unable to make commitment at the church. The second move indicates that Lois has found a church where she belongs. There is hope that Lois will move from moratorium to identity-achievement status.

This story is complex and multilayered. Lois's story can be appropriated to illustrate the moratorium ego-identity status. During the interview, she was very direct to the question of why she left her parents' church. She says, "I didn't leave because of the church; it was more because of my parents."<sup>117</sup> Wong hypothesizes,

She then proceeded to tell a story of her journey filled with bitterness, rejection, betrayal, and with 'growing and healing.' Lois's decision to leave was cemented on the pivotal occasion of her younger brother's wedding banquet ... According to Chinese custom, close family members and relatives were to be seated at tables next or close to the head table. But Lois said, 'All the families including my daughter were sitting at the very front of the wedding banquet but then they placed me and my husband at the very back. We were at a table with neighbors that I haven't seen in 20 years.'<sup>118</sup>

The scenario at the banquet is typical of what happens within Chinese families where sons are valued more than daughters. The favoritism is played out but mostly denied by the parents. The crisis in Lois's life began in her relationship with her parents. She continues to experience tension in her relationship with her parents even after she left their church. Her leaving her parents' church was an act of defiance. It was supposed to catch her parent's attention.

What happened in Lois's relationship with her parents after she left their church is not documented. However, issues between Lois and her parents were never resolved or even discussed. Lois and her family committed seven years to the second church but

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<sup>117</sup> Wong, "How am I," 294–95.

<sup>118</sup> Wong, "How am I," 295.

perhaps in a state of *moratorium*. Perhaps it was unintentional on her part. Her decision to come to the church was mainly focused on her bitter protest against her parents rather than joyful participation in the new faith community.

After seven years, the unresolved feeling of being left out still lingers. Lois feels no one is paying attention to her and her daughter. The recurrence of favoritism resurfaces, whether it is actually or perceived. She was still experiencing a crisis. Her decision to attend the new church was different, she had already protested against her parents. The second move affords Lois a greater chance of success in growing roots in the new faith community.

In *Identity Youth and Crisis*, Erikson recalls the story of Jill from her childhood through adolescence where the status of moratorium is being played out. During her school age stage,

[Jill] was rather obese and showed many ‘oral’ traits of voracity and dependency while she also was a tomboy and bitterly envious of her brothers ... But she was intelligent and always had an air about her (as did her mother) which seems to promise things would turn out all right ... Then one autumn in her late teens, Jill did not return to college from the ranch out West where she had spent the summer. She had asked her parents to let her stay. Simply out of liberality and confidence, they granted her this moratorium and returned East. That winter Jill specialized in taking care of newborn colts, and would get up at any time during the winter night to bottle feed the most needy animals. Having apparently acquired a certain satisfaction within herself ... she returned home and reassumed her place.<sup>119</sup>

Erikson concludes that Jill’s overeating was a crisis in which she finally found “an opportunity to do actively and for others what she had always yearned to have done for her.”<sup>120</sup> In not returning to college to explore caring for newborn colts at the farm, Jill was experiencing a classic case of moratorium in which her commitment was temporarily

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<sup>119</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 130–31.

<sup>120</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 130.

detoured. However, once she is satisfied that she has found a resolution to her internal crisis, Jill is happy to continue her commitment in college.

Those in moratorium are not stuck in this status, but rather they can be on a journey to reaching full identity-achievement. An individual in moratorium maybe in search of something deeper within their heart; and until they can identify and fulfill that passion, they will be restless. For practitioners working with young men and women in the ego-identity status of moratorium, there is hope.

### Foreclosure

The third ego-identity status is *foreclosure*. This status refers to those who are willing to make a commitment to an occupation or practice of faith yet had not experienced a crisis.<sup>121</sup> They are willing to make commitment without the experience of particular struggles in life. Their commitment to church or career appears to be the same as those who are in the *identity-achievement* category. However, their commitment is based on convention or someone else's expectation. Marcia asserts, "It is difficult to tell where his [sic] parents' goals for him leave off and where his begin ... His beliefs (or lack of them) are virtually 'the faith of his fathers living still.'"<sup>122</sup> The danger of conformity is that the individual is limited by what they are good at without full "identity exploration."<sup>123</sup> The person becomes the "slave of his technology. [sic]"<sup>124</sup>

Whether the status of moratorium or foreclosure is better is debatable. Those who are in *foreclosure* status are still willing to serve in the church but their commitment is

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<sup>121</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>122</sup> Marcia, "Development," 552.

<sup>123</sup> Cherry, "What Is an Identity Crisis?" 1; Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 127.

<sup>124</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 127.

partly grown out of loyalty to their parents or peers. The fundamental problem with those in this status is that they are simply living out as an extension of their parents without seeking their own identity. They are not in a fierce inner struggle for identity.

Foreclosures seem content with the current situation. They follow directives. There are advantages to have committed people in the church. If the commitment is a direct result of their firm identity in Christ, it would be the most favourable status. It would have the same status as identity-achievement status. However, those in foreclosure miss an important element in the identity equation—a direct and unwavering commitment to *the* cause without the interference of parental or peer pressure. They are not even aware of the need to struggle for identity achievement. Hence those in moratorium may fare better in the long run.

The story of William James illustrates the need for the crisis experience. James' personal growth was considered to be slow because of his father's strong influence on him. At the age of twenty-six, James wrote to a friend, "Much would I give for a constructive passion of some kind."<sup>125</sup> Those in foreclosure have commitment but lack passion. Their commitment to their parents or societal expectation can only take them so far. James' expressed concern demonstrates his desire to move from foreclosure into moratorium. The inner struggle for his own identity is brewing. Foreclosures among young men and women are partly due to the struggle between parental expectations and their own passion.<sup>126</sup>

Those in foreclosure status may be under the strong influence of their parents or authoritative structure in such a way that both protects them and limits them at the same

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<sup>125</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 151.

<sup>126</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 151.



time. They are willing to make a commitment but their commitment has not been tested by the crucible. Kroger suggests that their commitment may seem strong but there is an “underlying fragility” to their commitment.<sup>127</sup> The foreclosures have great potentials because they are willing to submit to an authoritative structure—they are cooperative. However, until their submission is rooted in their own conviction, their commitment is not truly autonomous and their identity is still waiting to be discovered.

### Identity Diffusion

The final status is *identity diffusion*. This is the least desirable scenario. It implies “a split of self-images ... [and] a loss of center.”<sup>128</sup> Those in *identity diffusion* status are unwilling to make any long term commitment. This occurs whether there was a crisis experience or not.<sup>129</sup> This cohort is disinterested because one option seems as good as another and they are “not averse to sampling from all.”<sup>130</sup> However, identity diffusion is a more serious issue than a state of disinterest that occurs during adolescence. It is one of the main causes for youth delinquency in society. Confusion occurs when youths are generally lost in their “inability to settle on an occupational identity.”<sup>131</sup> They are “bewildered by some assumed role, a role forced on him [sic] by the inexorable standardization of American adolescence, runs away in one form or another; leaving schools and jobs, staying out all night, or withdrawing into bizarre and inaccessible

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<sup>127</sup> Kroger and Marcia, “Identity Statuses,” 35.

<sup>128</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 211, 212.

<sup>129</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 552.

<sup>130</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 552.

<sup>131</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 97.

moods.”<sup>132</sup> Identity diffusion is the inability to synthesize that identity from one’s societal experience or commitment.

Those in *identity diffusion* status, in most cases, are people who have experienced crises. Consequently, these crises impacted them in a negative way that induced a lack of commitment. There are fewer documented cases of identity diffusion available due to the fact that many who experienced crises have left the church quietly; whereas those who are willing to be interviewed are young men and women who remain attached to their faith community or have something they would like to say. Those who left the church often fall into this category where they have experienced hurts or doubts.

However, Marcia’s characteristics of identity diffusion still hold true whether the individual has experienced a crisis. Those in identity diffusion status tend to have many doubts about the present situation. They are not sure if the present is all there is, whether it is regarding their occupation or faith matters. To the question of whether they have doubts about religious beliefs, Marcia notes that those in diffusion status would typically answer, “Oh, I don’t know. I guess so. Everyone goes through some sort of stage like that. But it really doesn’t bother me much. I figure one’s about as good as the other!”<sup>133</sup> Their indifference or diffused response demonstrates a lack of motivation to search for answers. Those in identity diffusion status acknowledge that they are generally lost but are okay with it.

Perhaps Marcia has not yet asked the deeper question of, “what is really going on with those in diffusion status?” The majority of those who left the church and seem to be in an identity diffusion have had experienced some sort of crises. Kinnaman is right when

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<sup>132</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 97.

<sup>133</sup> Marcia, “Development,” 553.

he says, “One of the things we learned from this research is that there is more than one way to drop out [of church] and more than one way to stay faithful. Every person goes on a unique journey ... and *every story matters*. [sic]”<sup>134</sup> Pastoral theology as an interdisciplinary field recognizes the vast spectrum of scenarios and variations that might fit into this category. The stories in Kinnaman’s research may not fit neatly into Marcia’s four ego-identity statuses. However, these stories all reflect a lack of commitment in the church.

Kinnaman highlights three categories of young adults who left the church. First, “*Nomads* [who] walk away from church engagement but still consider themselves Christians. Second, *Prodigals* [who] lose their faith, describing themselves as ‘no longer Christian;’ [and lastly,] *Exiles* are [those who] still invested in their Christian faith but feel stuck (or lost) between culture and the church.”<sup>135</sup> The *exiles* of faith are the closest to identity diffusion in Marcia’s last and least favourable ego-identity status. The *nomads* and *prodigals* have already left the faith community and in most cases they decided to leave either after something happened to their parents or they perceived something is wrong with the faith community.

The individual’s experience of generally lost may be due to the absence of a framework of absolute where one can put his/her trust. Kelly is considered a *nomad* by Kinnaman.<sup>136</sup> She has left her parents’ evangelical Pentecostal church but still considers herself a Christian. Kelly’s crises began when she struggled with an anxiety disorder and felt she did not fit in at church. Her story is typical of the experiences of many young adults in crisis.

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<sup>134</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 25.

<sup>135</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 25.

<sup>136</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 25–26.

There are three main reasons that drove Kelly to leave the church. She recalls, “The first strike against the church was the youth group, where I didn’t fit in and no effort was made to help me. The second strike was in college when the campus ministry I attended started talking about their quotas for getting people saved. The third strike was the judgment my parents received from their church friends about me.”<sup>137</sup> Kelly is experiencing identity diffusion. She is not actively looking for another faith community because, in her own words, “I never lost faith in Christ but I have lost faith in the church.”<sup>138</sup> Unfortunately, these stories are also found in the Canadian Chinese Church.

Nathan’s case is categorized under *exiles*. Nathan’s story differs from Kelly’s in that his crisis experience is not directly related to his reason to leave the church. Nathan is a successful musician. His parents were “fixtures in an evangelical church during his childhood years.”<sup>139</sup> After his parent’s divorce, Nathan became disengaged with the church and his faith. In an interview with *Relevant* magazine he explains that he developed an “enormous cynicism toward all things institutional Christianity. [He continues, my bandmates and I were] all really embarrassed by and ashamed of a lot of the (Christian) subculture we came from, but not necessarily ashamed or embarrassed by the beliefs we had.”<sup>140</sup>

Kinnaman concedes that “Nathan’s faith is intact and largely saved by his association with other young artists who were honest about their struggles and willing to help each other heal.”<sup>141</sup> Nathan can be considered a borderline *moratorium* who is struggling to make a commitment to his beliefs by keeping an association with Christian

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<sup>137</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 26.

<sup>138</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 26.

<sup>139</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 26.

<sup>140</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 26.

<sup>141</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 26.

artists who are in the same predicament. Nathan's crisis began with the divorce of his parents though he does not attribute that experience directly to his reason for leaving the church.

On the surface, Nathan fits well into the *identity diffusion* status where there is no crisis and, therefore, no commitment. He did not cite any direct conflict with church leaders or any particular incidents that drove him to his decision. However, the divorce of his parents had profound effect on his identity with the faith community. It is a significant event that impacted Nathan's faith journey. The aftermath of divorce entails a "difficult period" for everyone around them, especially the children.<sup>142</sup>

Diana Garland confirms that, according to American national research, children of divorce "who are not living with both biological parents were more likely to repeat a grade."<sup>143</sup> Garland is a strong advocate of the family system in counseling. The family is "*the organization of relationships that endure over time and contexts through which persons attempt to meet their needs for belonging and attachment and to share life purposes, help and resources.* [sic]"<sup>144</sup> Nathan is actually in moratorium status. Like other exiles, he is still experiencing a crisis and is struggling to make a commitment to faithful practice.

Other important factors correlating identity crisis and commitment are circumstantial that is out of the control of the individual. Injustice is a real issue in this world. In *Counseling Troubled Youth*, Robert Dykstra documents an extended story of "John Turner," an African American Youth whose circumstances, some of his own doing and some due to injustice in the judicial system, trapped him in a difficult position to turn

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<sup>142</sup> Miller and Jackson, *Practical Psychology*, 408.

<sup>143</sup> Garland, *Family Ministry*, 543.

<sup>144</sup> Garland, *Family Ministry*, 39.

his life around.<sup>145</sup> John was committed to a steady job that he liked with good pay but due to a string of events he was let go by his employer. During a traffic stop, it was shown that he had not paid his probation fine landed him in jail for a couple of weeks. He was fired from his job.<sup>146</sup>

John's story conveys a vicious cycle of poverty and racism which fueled his identity crisis. His story demonstrates "in dramatic fashion the tensions and complexities of life for one caught in an urban web of racism, poverty, violence, and the allure of the streets."<sup>147</sup> There is a need to complexify the situation and get to what is really going on in the individual's life. The search for causes requires a lot of patience, time, and inquisitive questions into the family and background of the individual. It is imperative that the pastoral caregivers do not give up on those in identity diffusion.

#### Pastoral Theological Considerations

Marcia's research in crisis and commitment yields two key points for pastoral theological consideration. First, the ego-identity statuses are not static but *dynamic*. As the nature of identity is dynamic, so is the nature of identity statuses. The good news is that for those who may have "put their faith on the shelf" but it does not mean they will give up their faith completely.<sup>148</sup> Marcia did not imply ego-identity statuses would be set for life. Rather, the four categories provide practitioners and caregivers hope about how to help those in an identity crisis. When the intention is there, hope for breakthroughs is possible.

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<sup>145</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 64.

<sup>146</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 64–74.

<sup>147</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 72.

<sup>148</sup> Kinnaman, *You Lost Me*, 63.

Second, findings from Marcia, Kroger, and Cherry yielded an unexpected correlation among identity, crisis, and commitment. While Marcia's research advocates that commitment is a result of identity affirmation through the experience of crisis, Cherry makes the opposite assertion. Cherry proposes identity is predicated on commitment and not the other way around. The assertion that *commitment comes before identity* is a significant insight for pastoral theology. It is a milestone in identity theory because it clarifies and enhances Marcia's theory by connecting two major steps in identity formation; namely, that identity is predicated on commitment and commitment is predicated on crisis experience.

This is encouragement for young men and women to make commitment even if they are uncertain about their identity or vocation. At times, individuals cannot ascertain who they are until they are willing to make that commitment to an occupation, an ideology, or a system of beliefs and practices. Over the course of their lifetime, individuals may find themselves changing direction. Gordon Smith proposes that not everyone need stay in the same vocation all of his or her life. There are times when a change of vocation is legitimate and not a loss in direction. There is potential growth in "long-term vocational vitality" that leads to identity achievement.<sup>149</sup>

### Transitions as Crisis

This section focuses on the *epigenetic principle* in the growth process of Erikson's life cycle theory. The key idea in appropriating this biological principle for human psychological development is that not all the parts are present at birth but that they will

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<sup>149</sup> Smith, *Courage and Calling*, 127.

all grow out of a “ground plan” through human life cycle.<sup>150</sup> Growth does not jump from one stage to another mechanically but morphs in slow motion as in the case of the butterfly. The metamorphosis of the butterfly from an egg to a caterpillar and then finally to growing wings exemplifies this process. Similarly, the “prerequisites” of identity is not developed until it “[passes] through the crisis of identity.”<sup>151</sup> This crisis of identity has been noted by researchers in social science and pastoral theology as *transition*.

Every transition from one life stage to another is a crisis for individuals and their community. According to the Barna Group, six out of ten who are in this cohort were active in the church during their teens, “but have failed to translate that into active spirituality during their early adulthood.”<sup>152</sup> While the transition between high school and university poses certain challenges, the more significant transition comes after university when young adults enter the marketplace. In *Hemorrhaging Faith*, James Penner et al observed that transition points are “very obvious exit points when members of the younger generation end up leaving the local church. One can’t help but conclude that we must be far more proactive in finding out the reasons why and what we can do about it, and to make this quest a very high priority in the life of the church.”<sup>153</sup>

Karen Stiller agrees, “The significance of transition points—those pivotal moments that change a youth’s life because of changing circumstances in their home life or church, and/or significant birthdays that move them from one age group and one church program to another (or none at all)—may be one of the most startling insights

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<sup>150</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53.

<sup>151</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 91.

<sup>152</sup> Barna Group, “Most Twentysomethings,” 1.

<sup>153</sup> Penner et al., “Hemorrhaging Faith,” 3.



provided by *Hemorrhaging Faith*. [sic]<sup>154</sup> While it is true that every major growth and transitional stage from the first day of school at kindergarten, elementary school, junior high, high school and going away for university are stress points for young people, the key transition where young men and women need the most support is when they change move from students to young adults.

Levinson's study highlights the significance of transitions in young men and young women. His findings confirm that the transition for young adults between the ages of 20 and 40 "is the era of [both] greatest biological abundance and of greatest contradiction and stress."<sup>155</sup> In *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, he identifies four major transition periods predicated on Erikson's work in the human life cycle. In *The Seasons of a Woman's Life*, he omits the first transition in childhood but the other three transition periods for both men and women fall within the same age range.

The focus of this dissertation is on the "early adult transition" for both men and women between the ages of 17 and 22.<sup>156</sup> This spans the stages of *Adolescence* (12 to 18) into *Young Adulthood* (18 to 40) in Erikson's life stages.<sup>157</sup> This particular period in the lives of young Asian Canadians is the context of this research. The threshold of this transition can be a stumbling block for "emerging adults."<sup>158</sup> The other two major transitions are the "Mid-life Transition" from age 40 to 45 and "Late life Transition" from 60 to 65.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Stiller, "Why They're Leaving," 20.

<sup>155</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 22.

<sup>156</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 20.

<sup>157</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 21.

<sup>158</sup> Arnett, "Emerging Adulthood," 469–80.

<sup>159</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 23, 34.

The early adult transition, between ages 17 and 22, happens as high schoolers enter university or college. There are major challenges for students to leave the comfort of home and the security of a life structure. This period is no trivial matter. Suicides among university students highlight the fact that stress for those in early adult transition is a real issue.<sup>160</sup> Statistics Canada 2015 shows the rate of suicide among university and college students to be between 9.7 and 12.8 persons per 100,000.<sup>161</sup> The pressure of post-secondary education is compounded with dealing with a new life structure for those who studies outside of their hometown.

However, the *Age 30 Transition*, between the ages of 28 and 33, presents an even more significant challenge to young adults. The rate of suicide in the same year among young adults, ages 25 to 34, is even higher at between 14.0 and 13.2 persons.<sup>162</sup> The numbers for both transition points are alarming and cautionary for pastoral theology, social science and the church. Hence the Age 30 Transition marks a major transition point in the life cycle.

Why are transitions such stressful times for young men and women? A key component of identity in young adults is associated with the forming of and fitting in to a life structure. Human beings are creatures of habit. Hence the more concrete and long-lasting the life structure, the higher chance for identity affirmation and a stronger sense of belonging. However, when the life structure is disturbed in anyway, individuals experience disorientation and stress. What is considered a life structure? There are three

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<sup>160</sup> <https://www.therecord.com/news-story/8298413-uw-student-dies-by-suicide-at-student-residence/>

<sup>161</sup> The range is on suicide rate for those between the ages of 15 to 24.  
<https://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/hlth66d-eng.htm>;  
[http://dustinkmacdonald.com/canadian-suicide-statistics-2016/#Suicide\\_by\\_Age\\_in\\_Canada](http://dustinkmacdonald.com/canadian-suicide-statistics-2016/#Suicide_by_Age_in_Canada)

<sup>162</sup> <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/hlth66d-eng.htm>

ways to determine whether an individual has successfully established oneself in the life structure. Each of the following actually can be viewed through the lens of Erikson's identity theory of *sameness* and *continuity* and the "two simultaneous observations" of recognizing and being recognized.<sup>163</sup>

First, individuals might consider the social and cultural context or "*sociocultural world*" in which one functions as their life structure.<sup>164</sup> The adult life structure situated in the "various social contexts—class, religion, ethnicity, family, political system, occupational structure—and understand their relevance for him. [sic]"<sup>165</sup> Second, it is the "*aspects of self* ... [which] includes a complex patterning of wishes, conflicts, anxieties and ways of resolving them ... moral values ... character traits, modes of feeling, thought and action."<sup>166</sup> Lastly, individuals' life structure is viewed by their participation in the world and through their relationships. Identity is formed by their relationship as "citizen, lover, worker, boss, husband, [and] father."<sup>167</sup>

For Chinese Canadians between the ages of 28 and 33, the life structure is defined by finding suitable employment, getting married, moving out of their parents' home, and leaving their parents' church. If they are not married by now, they will struggle with the issue of shame. The age 30 transition is a period of deconstruction and maybe a second chance in the quest for identity. This is also a very stressful time for young men and women.

Transition is that disturbance which threatens the stability of the present without clear assurance of what the future might be. "A transitional period, as we have seen

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<sup>163</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>164</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 42.

<sup>165</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 42.

<sup>166</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 42.

<sup>167</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 42–43.

terminates the exiting life structure and creates the possibility for a new one.”<sup>168</sup>

However, transitions are usually experienced in real time. That is, the termination of the existing life structure happens first and the new one is only a possibility. Penner et al says, “[Transitions] by definition break patterns and routines, and establishing new ones that are very similar to the ones practiced earlier is more difficult.”<sup>169</sup> Moving from adolescence means that teenagers who are so accustomed to relying on parents and counselors must now be independent thinkers. They are forced from the security of one life structure to venture into the real world on their own.

Smith and Snell observe, “[Transitions] also tend to drain resources and attention, including those in the most basic areas of life—arranging transportation, setting up a new living situation, learning a new place and systems, and so on—usually consume time, energy, and money.”<sup>170</sup> Transitions are very stressful times because it requires new energies to cope with new schedules, social network, relationships, commute, and “opportunities and limitations” in the process of establishing a new life structure.<sup>171</sup>

Young adults are exhausted by having to make the many adjustments during the transition from studying where there is a great deal of flexibility to working full-time or part-time jobs that applies a much stricter rule to the life structure. Young adults are not only exhausted because they are going through transitional periods between adolescence and young adulthood, they are also living in the sociocultural context of a neoliberal world where the basic necessities of life such as job security and housing could be jeopardized.

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<sup>168</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 49.

<sup>169</sup> Penner et al., “Hemorrhaging Faith,” 15.

<sup>170</sup> Smith and Snell, *Souls*, 76.

<sup>171</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53.

However, transitions can also create opportunities for something new. There is a Chinese proverb that says, “A crisis is also an opportunity.”<sup>172</sup> The idea is that every crisis can be turned into an opportunity with the right attitude. Transition periods allow the deconstruction of the existing structure, explore new concepts and beliefs, and reconstruct and commit to a new life structure.<sup>173</sup> Transition also means new relationships and networks.<sup>174</sup> These “new relationships and new social behaviours” may not be what parents or church leaders hope to see which may include switching churches.<sup>175</sup> The transition from adolescence to adulthood is a stressful but an important process by which teenagers can differentiate themselves to become who they were meant to be.

Transitions can cause erosion to or affirmation of identity in men and women. These can be times of crisis or opportunity. The individual needs to work out their life journey with all its complexities. With proper guidance, transitions and other crises serve as catalysts to strengthen commitment; and commitment strengthens identity. Individuals are encouraged to seek advice from various sources including their parents. However, there is a difference between fulfilling parents’ expectations and receiving guidance from them. Pastoral care can step into the situation to provide moral guidance and support predicated on sound theology and biblical principles. These principles should be attested by Christian tradition but without rigidity and legalism.

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<sup>172</sup> A common Chinese cliché (translated). For more details, please refer to: <https://www.inspirationalstories.com/proverbs/chinese-a-crisis-is-an-opportunity-riding-the/>

<sup>173</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 49.

<sup>174</sup> Smith and Snell, *Souls*, 76.

<sup>175</sup> Penner et al., “Hemorrhaging Faith,” 16.

### Ritualization in Caring and Identity

Erikson's foundational theory of ritualization is invaluable to the church because it is relational, reciprocal, and generational. Ritualization, religious and otherwise, is the process of integration of individuals into communities. More specifically, it offers insights on the rite of passage for children to become adults in the community. Rituals already play a significant role in all aspects of society. Companies like Starbucks often "attempt to develop a self-brand connection with their customers ... [and] can achieve a sacred status through rituals."<sup>176</sup> Ritualization also plays a key role in the shaping of gender stereotypes. Jennifer Johnson's research shows how social ritualization of "doing gender" will "craft gender identity."<sup>177</sup> However, ritualization in the religious context has not received much attention in scholarship.<sup>178</sup> Capps contends, "Religious ritual is a woefully neglected area of research in the psychology of religion."<sup>179</sup> This research focuses on the ritualization as a link between psychology and spirituality.

There are many parallels between the integration of individuals into a social community and pastoral ministry. Some form of ritualization already exists in the church. However, the general consensus is that the current process is insufficient. Therefore, it is necessary for the current research. The following discussion explores what needs to happen in the ritualization in generational ministry. 'The sum is greater than its part' applies to the theory of ritualization. While it is necessary to step through the process, the focus must be on the overall goal of ritualization—the integration of generations.

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<sup>176</sup> Sharma et al., "Ritualization: A Strategic Tool," 1.

<sup>177</sup> Johnson, "Gender Ritualization," 229.

<sup>178</sup> Driedger, "Individual Freedom," 226; Capps, "Erikson's Theory of Religious Ritual," 337.

<sup>179</sup> Capps, "Erikson's Theory of Religious Ritual," 337.

Freud, James, and Allport were predecessors on the topic of rituals. Freud focuses on private rituals and obsessive behaviours while James and Allport explore personal religious experiences. Therefore, the discussion is predicated on the works of Erikson, Capps, and Driedger. Erikson's "ontogeny of ritualization" provides the fundamental construct. It is also the basis for Capps and Driedger to expand on the subject in separate studies. Capps was the first to make a direct link between the theory of ritualization and the study of religious experiences. He appropriates Erikson's theory but moves toward the social nature of religious ritualization. Capps draws on Erikson's *judicial* stage in the case of Ann Hibbens who was unfairly excommunicated from her religious community.<sup>180</sup> In a separate study, Leo Driedger examines the case of Johann Driedger's attempt to integrate into a Mennonites community with new innovates but ended up being rejected.<sup>181</sup>

Ritualization originated as Erikson's brainchild as an experiential layer to the growth of healthy personality. In "Ontogeny of Ritualization," Erikson provides an in-depth explanation of the "[ontogenetic]" and "phylogenetic" nature of ritualization.<sup>182</sup> Both terms are adopted from biology and used to describe the development of individuals and society. *Ontogeny* describes the process of growth in organisms or individuals; whereas *phylogeny* is the study of the social development between individuals and communities.<sup>183</sup> Erikson associates the ontogeny of ritualization only up to the life stage of adolescence. Ritualization is derived from observation in anthropology. Rituals of

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<sup>180</sup> Capps, "Erikson's Theory," 342.

<sup>181</sup> Leo Driedger is the grandson of Johann Driedger. <https://mhss.sk.ca/A/fonds/PP/Johann-Driedger.shtml>

<sup>182</sup> Erikson, "Ontogeny of Ritualization," 337.

<sup>183</sup> <http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Ontogeny>; <http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Phylogenesis>.

adults in the community are “witnessed by children or participated in by youths.”<sup>184</sup> The process of ritualization provides a path for the church to reflect on the worship models in the immigrant church.<sup>185</sup> There is a separation between communal worship services of parents and children in the immigrant church. The process of ritualization may be able to remedy what is lost and foster continuity between generations.

The relationship between human strengths and elements of ritualization is that elements of ritualized experiences all come to fruition or become meaningful in adulthood. The elements of ritualization are: *numinous*, *judicial*, *dramatic*, *formal*, *ideological*, and *generational sanction* as illustrated in the following chart.

Table: 3.2 Erikson’s Ontogeny of Ritualization<sup>186</sup>

Infancy	Mutuality of recognition					
Early Childhood		Discrimination of good and bad				
Play age			Dramatic elaboration			
School age				Rules of performance		
Adolescence					Solidarity of conviction	
Elements in adults rituals	NUMINOUS	JUDICIAL	DRAMATIC	FORMAL	IDEOLOGICAL	GENERATIONAL SANCTION
Relational Strengths	Hope	Autonomy	Initiative	Industry	Identity	Generativity

The *numinous* element creates a sense of transcendence—“a hallowed presence.”<sup>187</sup> The theory of ritualization is rich with religious connotations. In *Toys and Reasons*, Erikson observed a link between playing games in childhood and politics and

<sup>184</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny of Ritualization,” 337.

<sup>185</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny of Ritualization,” 337.

<sup>186</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny of Ritualization,” 348; Erikson, *Toys and Reasons*, 114.

<sup>187</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 338.



the reality of wars.<sup>188</sup> For adults, *play* is a separate arena from serious work. However, play is serious for children because it is their *work*. The ritual of play moves from childhood to adulthood and, therefore, adds another dimension to the human life cycle. Play is a part of ritualization. Taking play seriously is indicative of the importance of religious affiliation. For instance, hope developed between an infant and the mother through daily rituals of feeding and comforting creates a *numinous* experience. The daily ritual of the infant of presence, feeding, and calling the infant by name affirms mutual recognition that creates in the infant a sense of transcendence.<sup>189</sup>

However, Erikson contends that at every stage, ritualization could also be “perverted into what could be called pseudo-ritualization, or ... *ritualism*. [sic]”<sup>190</sup> In the *numinous* stage, the excess of ritualism is “*idolism*.”<sup>191</sup> The perversion of the human need for the numinous is the misuse of the hallowed presence—idolatry, theologically speaking.

The *judicial* element corresponds with autonomy where the individual determines acceptable boundaries of the faith community.<sup>192</sup> When the individual crosses the proverbial line, they will experience shame. Shame is feeling “completely exposed ... in a word, self-conscious.”<sup>193</sup> Erikson concedes, “[The judicial] becomes an important aspect in all human ritual; for there is no ritual that does not imply a discrimination between the sanctioned and the out-of-bounds—up to the Last Judgement.”<sup>194</sup> Theology and biblical truths must undergird the practices of pastoral ministry. In the same way,

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<sup>188</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 23–5.

<sup>189</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 338.

<sup>190</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 90.

<sup>191</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 90.

<sup>192</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 92.

<sup>193</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 71.

<sup>194</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 342.

grace and truth must work together to provide safeguards and compassion for acceptance and caring. This allows for healthy development of separateness that embraces both conformity to norms and creativity in new ways of thinking.

However, when creativity deviates too much or too fast from the social or cultural norm, there will be resistance from the community. When conformity is held too tightly, it results in “*legalism* [sic]” and causes rebellion.<sup>195</sup> Such is the case of Ann Hibbens.<sup>196</sup> Faith communities can easily become content at the judicious stage which deals with issues solely on the basis of guilt or shame rather than embrace innovative ideology. This challenges generational ministry where the community has not moved beyond the judicial to allow for new initiative in faith practices.

The *dramatic* element in ritualization focuses on stories of individuals and the community. The collective cameos and narratives is what define a community. There web of stories within stories creates the basis for continuity. Here the individual takes the initiative to create their own story with toys and characters, like the young adults in the CCC. Not only does theology and liturgy form the elementary framework for ritualization where the child learns to play by the rules, the adolescent or young adult now understands the world through the context of situations. This “offers the [individual] a micro-reality in which he can use [opportunities] (put at his disposal by those who sanction his [participation]) in order to relive, correct, and re-create past experiences, and anticipate future roles and events with the spontaneity and repetitiveness which characterize all creative ritualization. [sic]”<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>195</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 97.

<sup>196</sup> Capps, “Erikson’s Theory of Religious Ritual,” 342.

<sup>197</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 99–100.

This can be a psychological tool for children to retell traumatic stories.

Nonetheless, stories are a significant part in generational ministry where love and fellowship are rooted. Perhaps the profound insight is the need of stories in the human heart. They want more than to survive but to belong—that is, to be part of a greater story. The Christian story is the basis where individuals can find their own story. Their story framed in the story of God and held together by rituals.

The *formal* element facilitates the “perfection of performance” as the child seeks to develop competence and competitiveness.<sup>198</sup> The formal element focuses on conformity and methods. Joan Erikson asserts that the significance of ritualization in the context of “the growing child and the caring adult.”<sup>199</sup> Likewise, young adults are in “search for models to emulate.”<sup>200</sup> The school and the church are perhaps the most formal framework of ritualization in society. Rituals of classroom, teachers, tests, assemblies, speeches, awards, and graduation provide meaning to demarcate the journey.

Capps asserts that “the word ‘rituals’ brings to mind formal religious observances, ceremonies, sacraments, and liturgies.”<sup>201</sup> The church “enjoys the status of a ‘rite’ in most congregations.”<sup>202</sup> Hence he proposes that the pastoral person is also the “ritual coordinator.”<sup>203</sup> The role of ritual coordinator is a new but important paradigm for the pastoral person. Young adults are not seeking to be freed from all rituals. Liturgy as ritual is important for postmodern worshipers even if the worship style seems to suggest casting off restraints.

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<sup>198</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 345.

<sup>199</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 43.

<sup>200</sup> Driedger, “Individual Freedom,” 229.

<sup>201</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle*, 55.

<sup>202</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle*, 67.

<sup>203</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle*, 55–80.

The last two elements of the ontogeny of ritualization are *ideological* and *generational*.<sup>204</sup> It is not enough for adolescents and young adults to participate in formalities such as graduation or religious services. Adolescents and young adults have entered into the complexity of real life where there are joys and conflicts. However, the church need not cast away liturgy but to present them with meaning. The Christian tradition is full of meaning. The sacraments of baptism, the Holy Communion, prayers and praise are all means of grace that opens the way for the worshiper to encounter the Divine. Furthermore, the ideological element points to the spiritual maturation of men and women who are no longer *kids*.

The goal of ritualization is provide a comprehensive Christian worldview. Vocation, dating and marriage, and attending church on Sundays are all part of the mosaic of life. It is important for the church to help young adults make sense of the chaotic world. The church often underestimates their capacity to think and receive solid teaching. Hence the focus remains at the elementary level of trying to keep them happy. What is needed is to keep them informed, inspired, and empowered.

However, the appropriation of ritualization may not always conclude with generativity. The case of Johann Driedger at the Old Colony Mennonites demonstrates the difficulties in introducing new ideas to an established community. This story illustrates one of the tensions between the English ministry and the Chinese side in the CCC. The Old Colony is a closed community that demanded dependence where “individuals may be restricted in their development.”<sup>205</sup> The young man, Johann, was able to integrate through the numinous and judicial stages. The story of Johann is slowly

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<sup>204</sup> Erikson, *Toys*, 106, 111.

<sup>205</sup> Driedger, “Individual Freedom,” 227.

becoming part of the mosaic of the Old Colony Mennonites community. He is given the opportunity to “elaborate and innovate” and play a role in that community.<sup>206</sup> However, because the elders seek to “control their members in numinous villages by judicious means” and Johann’s innovation went beyond their boundaries, the integration ended abruptly by excommunication.<sup>207</sup> The process of integration is always a complex issue as it deals with human dynamics. Suffice to say that for an individual to successfully integrate into a community, one must be mindful of the stages of ritualization and limitations of the group.

Ritualization is intrinsically *relational*, *reciprocal*, and *generational*. At the core, ritualization is the behaviour predicated on “an agreed-upon interplay between at least two persons who repeat it at meaningful intervals and in recurring contexts; and that this interplay should have adaptive value for both participants.”<sup>208</sup> In a word, *ritualization is relational*. The ontogeny of ritualization presupposes the context of relationships between at least two people whether it is between infant and the mother or a child and their friends or in the formal setting of the school with teachers and pupils. Human beings are “born with the need for ... regular and mutual affirmation and certification.”<sup>209</sup> The ontogeny of ritualization points to the social psychological need of persons for healthy relationships at every stage in life. Ritualization provides fertile ground for healthy relationships. The need for relationships throughout the human life cycle highlights caring at the core of pastoral ministry.

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<sup>206</sup> Driedger, “Individual Freedom,” 229.

<sup>207</sup> Driedger, “Individual Freedom,” 226.

<sup>208</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 337.

<sup>209</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 338.

Embedded in the ontogeny of ritualization is the seed of *reciprocity*. From the first stage of the numinous, there is a sense of mutual recognition that is “based on the *reciprocal needs* of two quite *unequal* organisms and minds.”<sup>210</sup> Reciprocity is based on mutuality not equality. This opens up the channels of caring beyond the confines of age, gender, or class. However, prudence is required to determine the appropriateness of caring. Erikson’s use of the term reciprocal needs is bilateral between the two parties involved. Person A cares for person B; and person B in turn reciprocates the care for person A. In his example, the mother cares for the infant. She smiles and feeds her (or him). The infant has the need of being fed, cared for, affirmed, and recognized. The mother also has the need to be affirmed and recognized by the smile of the infant. Mutual recognition remains within the two persons.

However, *reciprocity* can be taken to a deeper level. When Person A cares for Person B and care is reciprocated, Person B can also extend care to Person C. Supposed Person B is an infant girl. One day she will become a mother. Now Person B is the maternal person who can feed and care for her own infant. The caring relationship between person A and B still exists. But now the mutual recognition has extended into the third generation; namely, Person C. The mutual recognition between Persons A and B has not diminished but now includes Person C. The mother in the original scenario now becomes the grandmother, and the grandmother can also extend care for the grandchild and vice versa. This model is very similar to the faith community as a spiritual family. Reciprocity is and must be inter-generational.

Ritualization is not only relational and reciprocal, it is *generational*. Ontogenesis of species acknowledges the perpetual goal of procreation and nurturing of the young.

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<sup>210</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 339.

The final element in ritualization is to lay “the groundwork for lasting mutual identifications between adult and child from generation to generation.”<sup>211</sup> From the first element of *numinous*, ritualization is generational with the mother caring for her infant. The child eventually matures to form her own ideology about her world. The yearning for learning is a cry for help in the natural sense without being overly anxious on the part of the child. Young men and women in the CCC are now at the ideological phase where they are on a quest to be adults in the faith community. The role and responsibility of mature adults is to fulfill their generational task.

Finally, ritualization requires a ritual coordinator. Capps captures this role among mature adults in religious communities. He “[emphasizes] the pastor’s role as ritual coordinator” in various capacities.<sup>212</sup> He proposes that the pastor plays the role of the “mystic [and the] seer ... the saint, judge, [and] sage ... the prophet, evangelist, [and] reformer, and the [pastor/teacher]” in formal rituals.<sup>213</sup> The church as a faith community is much more than a school or a formal institution but a deep community. It is the people of God. Ritualization is an important part of community life. The theory of ritualization speaks less of programs but more of ethos. The generational sanction of Erikson’s ontogeny of ritualization provides language for pastoral theology to continue the quest for future generations.

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<sup>211</sup> Erikson, “Ontogeny,” 341.

<sup>212</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle and Pastoral Care*, 88.

<sup>213</sup> Capps, “Erikson’s Theory of Religious Ritual,” 342.

### A Paradigm Shift in the Human Life Cycle

There is a shift in the human life cycle from the modern era to the postmodern. This paradigm shift offers significant insights in understanding the lived experiences of young adults in the twenty-first century. Therefore, it is imperative for pastoral theology to be aware of this paradigm shift and to formulate new paradigms that can address the reality of contemporary life. Nonetheless, this discussion is necessarily predicated on modern theories of human development. Erikson's work has been fundamental to the whole premise of the epigenesis of identity and healthy personality. However, Friedrich Schweitzer argues that practical theology "has not fully dealt with the issue postmodernity."<sup>214</sup> The issue at hand is the shift in the human life cycle between adolescence and adulthood from the modern to the postmodern era. If postmodernity is markedly different from modernity and practical theology has been "a child of modernity," then postmodernity is "a most pressing issue for practical theology."<sup>215</sup> Consequently, it is important to explore a postmodern understanding of human development for identity. Gabrielle Klappenecker rightly proposes that pastoral theology is "to accept responsibility *for* the life of the individual ... under the conditions of the Postmodern Age."<sup>216</sup> This goes beyond an understanding of the paradigm shift from the modern to the postmodern era. The pastoral theological task is to reconstruct life for the individual within the new paradigm.

Signs of a paradigm shift were already found in the works of Donald Capps and Daniel Levinson. Capps extends the stages of the life cycle into decades of life; and

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<sup>214</sup> Schweitzer, "Practical Theology," 169.

<sup>215</sup> Schweitzer, "Practical Theology," 170.

<sup>216</sup> Klappenecker, "Being Conscious," 171.



Levinson highlights early adult transition as one of the key transitions.<sup>217</sup> The issue is more than new ways of dividing the life cycle stages. The implication of a new paradigm in the human life cycle entails a new paradigm for pastoral practice.

The purpose of raising the issue of a new paradigm in human development is largely because this discussion has been overlooked by the immigrant church. English ministry in the CCC has focused on many fronts such as worship, preaching styles, and authoritative models. Furthermore, it operates with the presupposition that congregants fall into the modern categories of children, youths, college students, and adults. However, contemporary research has already pointed out a shift in the human life cycle.

The difficulty for pastoral theology to make sense of postmodernism is perhaps wrapped up in the question, “Does postmodernity really exist?”<sup>218</sup> Another difficulty lies in the fact that “it is of course impossible to approach phenomena like postmodernity in an exclusively empirical manner.”<sup>219</sup> Yet there is no denying that postmodernity has been the underpinning culture in the west for decades. Postmodernism is elusive because it is characterized by precisely the absence of a framework. Nonetheless, its influence can be understood to be individualistic and pluralistic. The result of postmodernism is that it shapes culture, experiences, and their interpretation. However, Schweitzer argues that “[the] experience of postmodern life is ambivalent. It holds promises and perils alike.”<sup>220</sup> It means “new chances and new potentials for human life which may be liberated from the narrow visions” of the past.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 20.

<sup>218</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 169.

<sup>219</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 171.

<sup>220</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 171.

<sup>221</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 173.

The first major development in the paradigm shift is ambiguity in the demarcation of adulthood—hence, emerging adulthood. In the modern era, the demarcation for adulthood is clearly defined by a steady job and family. Adulthood for Baby Boomers means to have a job, to get married and to settle down.<sup>222</sup> Western social institutions such as schools, hospitals, and housing were established based on their needs. For men in the modern era, occupation is a major demarcation in life. Their identity is tied to their occupation. “A man’s occupation is one of the primary factors determining his income, his prestige and his place in society.”<sup>223</sup> For women, adulthood means marriage, family, occupation, “separation from family of origin, and lifestyle.”<sup>224</sup> The clarity in demarcation of adulthood applies to both modern men and women. Levinson already hints at an obscure phase of transition that points to the gradual shift in postmodern lifestyle.

However, it was Friedrich Schweitzer who articulates a categorical shift in our understanding of the life cycle in the postmodern era. Demarcations of life stages in the postmodern era are blurred by “a tearing down of former beliefs and patterns in life.”<sup>225</sup> Schweitzer rightly coins the changing shape of the contemporary life cycle as the “postmodern life cycle.”<sup>226</sup> A comparison of modern and postmodern life by Schweitzer would be helpful.

In the 1950s, a picture of the modern family consists of,

A car, small and simple [in the center] ... the car in the picture is clearly more than a car. For many people and in many different countries, such a car was a

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<sup>222</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 15–19. The term “identity crisis” has profound meanings beyond general teenage rebellion. The term was first coined by Erikson in his interviews of veterans of the Second World War in the Mt. Zion Veteran’s Rehabilitation Clinic.

<sup>223</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man’s Life*, 45.

<sup>224</sup> Levinson, *Season of a Woman’s Life*, 25.

<sup>225</sup> Beach, *Church*, 22.

<sup>226</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 10.

powerful symbol indeed. It was the symbol of personal achievement and of individual mobility for everyone. But the car ... has implications for the family. The number of seats available in this vehicle tended to define the ideal size of the family: two adults and a maximum of two or three children—a limited family size that would also make it affordable to take a car vacation in the mountains ... And unless they had their own car, grandparents could not come along.<sup>227</sup>

By contrast, the picture of the postmodern life is decidedly different,

The simple car of the 1950s has been replaced by a much more sophisticated vehicle, which is not only a means of transportation and not only a symbol of personal achievement. This car appears to be some kind of toy that testifies to the new affluence of many middle-class families at that time. The family does not have to go to the mountains anymore to enjoy life—it may do so in their own backyard. And again, the family has become smaller. Paid work and family life are also clearly separate ... The older generation of grandparents is not visible anymore, not even in the home of the family.<sup>228</sup>

A man would find his identity mostly in his occupation and *his* nuclear family unit. A woman might also find her identity in her occupation but more so in her marriage. However, postmodernity has changed the picture of the family. In the postmodern era, “Career has lost at least some of its power and persuasiveness.”<sup>229</sup> This is partly due to the rise of neoliberalism as explained briefly in the introduction. Ambiguities in demarcation are fueled by individualism and pluralism. This results in the disappearance of loyalty between employers and employees. Occupation is no longer the secure anchor for identity.

The two pictures above are typical and possibly stereotypical of the era they represent. Hence the fine details may be of less interest to the current discussion. Life in modernity is defined by simplicity of life with a wife, a job, and a couple of children symbolized by a simple car. But the postmodern picture shows sophistication of the car. The car is a toy that is needed as an enhancement to identity. The postmodern man or

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<sup>227</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 7.

<sup>228</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 7.

<sup>229</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 10.

woman wants to define self by their preferences at a grand scale. The car becomes a visible symbol of the inner quest for identity. Modern life cycle theories place *identity* versus *identity confusion* during adolescence.<sup>230</sup> However, identity is settled when one finds a job. In a postmodern era, identity crisis is carried much further into young adulthood. “Who am I?” and “What am I supposed to do?” become perpetual questions in the postmodern life cycle. While young adults will make new friends, there is no need to separate from old ones. Social media plays an important part in this.<sup>231</sup> Thus demarcation for adulthood is blurred.

The second major development in the paradigm shift is a new stage in human life cycle. The word *toy* is significant. A recent celebration of university graduation is marked taking photos with a teddy bear—a *toy*. This symbol demonstrates that adulthood in postmodern young men and women have been prolonged. There is a new stage of young adulthood which Friedrich Schweitzer coins “postadolescence.”<sup>232</sup> Third, this new stage is not static but a *dynamic transition* between adolescence and adulthood. The subject of transition has been dealt with earlier in this chapter. Schweitzer places postadolescence between the age of 18 and 30.<sup>233</sup> Capps places young adulthood in the third and fourth decade.<sup>234</sup> Jeffery Arnett coined the phrase “emerging adulthood” for the same cohort but placed them between the ages of 18 and 25.<sup>235</sup> Jaco Hamman focuses on Millennials as those between the ages of 18 and 35 and asserts that society has differing

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<sup>230</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33. Joan Erikson refers this crisis as identity vs. identity confusion. Erik Erikson used the term identity diffusion in *Identity Youth and Crisis* page 212.

<sup>231</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 173.

<sup>232</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 64.

<sup>233</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 66.

<sup>234</sup> Capps, *Decades*, xxv.

<sup>235</sup> Arnett, “Emerging,” 469–80. Please see Todd Hall’s “Spiritual Development,” 206–17.

opinions on them.<sup>236</sup> Levinson puts early adult transition between the ages of 17 and 22 for modern men and women.<sup>237</sup> However, this dissertation argues that transition for postmodern Chinese-Canadians is extended from 17 to 35 due to cultural and social dynamics.<sup>238</sup>

What does it mean for the church? It seems that young adults are still ritualizing with toys. The ritualization of adolescence is the pursuit of ideology. This is true in their search for that dream job. They are also in search for meaning. The profundity of their search is found in the phrase, “There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man which cannot be satisfied by any created thing but only by God the Creator, made know through Jesus Christ.”<sup>239</sup> The message and practice of the church have been mostly *judicial* as a means of keeping order. However, post-adolescents are in search of something worth living and dying for. Struggles of the immigrant church can be characterized as survival. Young men and women are looking for more than experiential fulfillment or a consumer theology but rather the true gospel that preaches true discipleship that demands self-denial, bearing the cross, and to follow Jesus.

### Religious Affiliation in the Postmodern Life Cycle

Postadolescence is also a time to determine religious identity. Whatever practice of spirituality they choose, young adults must be able to own their faith. Fowler theorizes that faith development is a lifelong process which begins in adolescence (Stage 3).<sup>240</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Hamman, “The Millennial,” 162.

<sup>237</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 20; Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman's Life*, 18.

<sup>238</sup> Levinson marks an Age 30 transition for women. This would probably be closer to the situations of both Chinese-Canadians men and women.

<sup>239</sup> <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/801132-there-is-a-god-shaped-vacuum-in-the-heart-of-each>.

<sup>240</sup> Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 151.

Adolescence is when young people begin to develop “a new and more independent identity.”<sup>241</sup> Consequently, young adults in the transition of postadolescence continue in this struggle. In the complexity of pluralism and relative truths, young men and women are still formulating their own theology and religious affiliations. However, they continue to require the “eyes and ears of a few trusted others” to affirm their own faith, personality, and identity.<sup>242</sup> Faith becomes more personal for young adults (Fowler’s Stage 4). They think critically and recalibrate the validity of their faith.<sup>243</sup> Hence it is important for the church to “address the special needs and interests of those who are at this stage.”<sup>244</sup>

Schweitzer raises three possible areas of change in religious life: pluralization, individualization, and privatization.<sup>245</sup> *Pluralization* refers to the availability of religious choices. The Christian story is no longer the dominant or only narrative in western society. Pluralism has also increased in western culture. Furthermore, Schweitzer is right to point out the existence of “inner pluralism” of the Christian church.<sup>246</sup> There are various denominations, the tradition church, the contemporary church, the emerging church, and more. Young adults are exposed to more choices than ever when it comes to religion and different forms of spirituality. For young adults in the immigrant church, they can choose to worship with another English congregation in the CCC, or go to a Caucasian church, adopt another religion or no religion at all.

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<sup>241</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 44.

<sup>242</sup> Fowler, *Stages*, 151.

<sup>243</sup> Fowler, *Stages*, 174.

<sup>244</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 77.

<sup>245</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 14.

<sup>246</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 14.

*Individualization* is the natural progression of religious pluralization. Religion is personalized. An individual's choice of religious affiliation is no longer just between different closed systems or different denominations of Christianity. Spirituality in the postmodern culture means a quest for inner peace without attachment to any religion. Roger Gottlieb, the contemporary guru of secular spirituality, asserts, "Spirituality helps us face difficult questions more calmly and think more clearly about them, a commitment to love and compassion may guide us toward gentler and less harmful actions, and spiritual acceptance may help us face the times when things go badly."<sup>247</sup> No source of spirituality is mentioned in this definition. This type of spirituality is marketed as an inner road to peace without the need of the Christian God or any other gods. A person can even choose to combine Christianity with other religious practices.

Not only is religion personalized, it is a private matter. *Privatization* is "the emergence of a private sphere in modernity—a sphere that is separate from work, economy, and politics."<sup>248</sup> There is no need for individuals to be a part of communal rituals or have corporate expression of spirituality. Put it another way, privatization points to the compartmentalization of religion. Religiosity is on demand and for one's self-fulfillment. Religious orientation, as Schweitzer would call it, is both a private matter and only one of many compartments in life. However, this seems to have taken place during modernity. The religious identity is not something to be discussed in the public square. 'Practice your faith at home.'

Hence the Christian identity is hidden from view. Culture discourages public display of any religious affiliation. Ironically, the visible symbols of some religious

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<sup>247</sup> Gottlieb, *Spirituality*, 42.

<sup>248</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 14.

groups seem to be readily found in the public sphere. Religion is no longer the open conversation in society but a private one. Henri Nouwen asserts that the postmodern generation “is not only anti-authoritarian and anti-institutional, but is also very self-centred.”<sup>249</sup> This is not only happening “‘out there’ in the culture but also ‘in here’, among practising Christians.”<sup>250</sup> Changes in religious attitudes in the postmodern era require pastoral theological responses which must be predicated on grace and truth built on caring relationships.

Postadolescence continues to be a “normal time of [identity] crisis.”<sup>251</sup> Hence this remains “the stage of an overt identity *crisis*, identity *formation* neither begins nor ends with [post-adolescence].”<sup>252</sup> Erikson, Levinson, Capps, and Hightower all have made the observation that identity crisis lingers long after adolescence. All the signs point to a cry for help from a whole generation that is generally lost because they are not really adults, not really adolescence, but are *postadolescence*. Much research and theological reflection is still needed to understand the prolonged stage of transition and changes in religious affiliations. Ministering to post-adolescents requires godly wisdom and great patience.

### **Cultural Identity, Ethnicity, and Biculturalism**

Cultural identity is a constant battle for those with an ethnic background especially for visible minorities. Culture is a challenge to identity because culture is more than a description of one’s external environment but something that has been internalized. It is not something that individuals can enter and exit at will. A person may choose to identify

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<sup>249</sup> Nouwen, *Wounded Healer*, 33.

<sup>250</sup> Capps, *Depleted Self*, 60.

<sup>251</sup> Hightower, *Caring*, 70.

<sup>252</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 113.



with a particular culture. But once that identification becomes second nature, it cannot be easily changed. Cultural identity reflects a person's "integrated identifications with a particular race, gender, place, history, nationality, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and/or ethnicity."<sup>253</sup> In practical terms, cultural identity is an intrinsic sense of self-identification that seeks affirmation by belonging to a community. In other words, culture and ethnicity are actualization of sameness and continuity.

The concept of culture seems straight forward until one tries to define it. Pastoral theologian Gerald Arbuckle asserts, "The concept of culture is contentious and complex. Anyone who writes today on culture is confronted with a disheartening task, because the word is applied indiscriminately to vastly different situations. So we read about 'global culture,' 'youth culture,' 'pop culture,' 'postmodern culture,' ... 'gun culture,' [etc.] ... Rarely is any serious thought given to what these expressions mean."<sup>254</sup> Further, in the postmodern era, a neat definition of culture will not suffice. It is important to note the different characteristics among classic, modern, and postmodern cultures. Culture is dynamic and not static. Not only do the trends in culture changes, but the very nature of culture changes over time. While there are vast differences between cultures, the concept of culture embraces a vast amount of shared values and norms. Culture captures the social ethos of the people in a particular place at a particular time.

Recent studies in anthropology seem to suggest that ethnicity is a function of culture and not the other way around. This provides fresh insights and practical implications for those living with biculturalism. Many Chinese (or Asian) Canadians bemoan their ethnicity as they struggle with their bicultural identity. However, this

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<sup>253</sup> Huh, "Embracing Your Bicultural Identity," 356.

<sup>254</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, xx.

research seeks to bring a positive perspective on the subject so that they can fully embrace their identity as Chinese Canadian. This section begins with an understanding of modern and postmodern theories of culture and ethnicity before moving towards the topic of biculturalism. Finally, this will lead to a discussion on faithful practices for those living with bicultural identity.

### A Modern Perspective of Culture

The term *culture* in modern theory was first coined by Edward Tylor to describe the “complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws and customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.”<sup>255</sup> Tylor’s definition aligns with Malinowski’s theory of functionalism.<sup>256</sup> Functionalism is one of the key modern perspectives on the theory of culture. Culture is the collective sum of “the spiritual, intellectual, and aesthetic aspects of human society.”<sup>257</sup> It describes how people can best collaborate and work with each other. For modernists, the purpose of culture is to promote the common good for the betterment of society. Clyde Kluckhohn and William Kelly assert that culture is a “historically derived system of explicit and implicit designs for living, which tends to be shared by all or specially designated members of a group.”<sup>258</sup> Though functionalism may not suffice in their description of postmodern life, it provides the necessary framework for further exploration on the subject.

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<sup>255</sup> Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1.

<sup>256</sup> Malinowski, *Freedom and Civilization*, 33.

<sup>257</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 2.

<sup>258</sup> Kluckhohn and Kelly, “The Concept of Culture,” 98.

## A Social Phenomenon

First and foremost, culture is a social phenomenon. Niebuhr asserts that culture is “inextricably bound up with man’s life in society; it is always *social*.”<sup>259</sup> The social aspect of culture has been highlighted first by modern anthropologists. It is the unspoken ethos of group dynamics that exists in a particular community. Franz Boas asserts, “Culture embraces all the manifestations of social habits of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group which he lives, and the products of human activities as determined by these habits. [sic]”<sup>260</sup> Bronislaw Malinowski theorizes, “The essential fact of culture, as we live and experience it, as we can observe it scientifically, is the organization of human beings into permanent groups. Such groups are related by some agreement, some traditional law or custom, something which corresponds to Rousseau’s *contrat social*.”<sup>261</sup> The social aspect of culture is a fundamental characteristic that transcends time. Socializing is a form of identity affirmation where human beings are constantly seeking culturally based acceptance.

Moreover, Arbuckle argues that what constitutes culture are “those human attributes that are learned and learnable and are therefore passed on socially and mentally rather than biologically.”<sup>262</sup> This concept is significant for two reasons. First, as a social phenomenon, culture cannot be ignored. It affirms that humans are social beings are relational and in need of each other. To deny the paradigm of culture where one lives may lead to anti-social behaviours that can become dangerous to self and others. Second, it means that culture is not something that a person is born with but rather it is something

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<sup>259</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 32.

<sup>260</sup> Boas, “Anthropology,” 79.

<sup>261</sup> Malinowski, *Scientific Theory*, 43.

<sup>262</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 2.

imparted. If so, cultural identity is also not something an individual is born with but something imposed on and or accepted by them. Hence the formation of cultural identity is a complex process of multifaceted cultural assimilation and social interaction that informs one's self-identification.

When the process of assimilation and social interaction confirms the cultural identity of the individual, there is identity affirmation. However, when there are contradictions between external factors and self-understanding, it may lead to identity diffusion.<sup>263</sup> Robert Dykstra proposes that confusion in (cultural) identity is one of the causes of despair in young people.<sup>264</sup> The social environment becomes paramount to how one formulates self-identification. Cultural identity is not a simple dichotomy of whether one is Chinese or Canadian, but it is the dynamic and varying degrees of perception somewhere in between. Family upbringing, where one attends school, regular church attendance, and other social circles are all part of the equation that either affirms or denies one's cultural identity. With the advance of technology, social media has provided individuals a reach beyond their immediate community. Hence the individual may be more culturally affiliated with others in their generation halfway around the world than their parents who are under the same roof.

### Survival

Furthermore, culture is significant to identity because it is a matter of survival. Culture provides a structure where individuals can function as members of society. Hence

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<sup>263</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 212; Marcia, "Development," 551.

<sup>264</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 11–12.

ritualization, religious and otherwise, is necessarily a subset of culture.<sup>265</sup> It provides the cues for everyday life. How so many people can live in the suburbs and work downtown in a North American city is made possible by the availability of public transit. This is a culturally acceptable routine of work life. The costs associated with their mode of commute must be taken into account in their calculation of income and expenses. The work routine which must work around the family is a culture of survival. This includes the work hours, the commute, taking the kids to school, grocery shopping, and going to church. Malinowski's functional theory asserts that culture is at its core the framework by which humanity is able to fulfill all their needs. However, culture interpretations may vary significantly from one community to the next.

The family is one of the most enduring institutions in any society. Yet this seemingly simple structure must be understood in its own cultural context. One of the ways in which culture functions is in the explanation of lineage. The Jewish culture gauge ethnicity based on the maternal lineage. Salzman asserts, that "people in many societies say that they are descended only from their mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers."<sup>266</sup> Shaye J. D. Cohen writes, "According to rabbinic law, from the second century to the present, the offspring of a gentile mother and a Jewish father is a gentile, while the offspring of a Jewish mother and a Gentile father is Jewish."<sup>267</sup> Salzman argues that the function of kinship "must be the result of differences in culture."<sup>268</sup> Social status, family, vocation, health, safety, and recreation are all ingredients of survival. Survival

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<sup>265</sup> Please refer "Ritualization" in Chapter 3.

<sup>266</sup> Salzman, *Understanding Culture*, 19.

<sup>267</sup> Cohen, "Origins of the Matrilineal Principle," 19.

<sup>268</sup> Salzman, *Understanding Culture*, 19.

understood as how a person functions from day to day in society forms the cultural basis of his or her identity.

### Human Ingenuity

Culture is also necessarily the product of human ingenuity and intentionality in reshaping nature and society through the advancement of knowledge and technology. For example, “A river is nature, a canal is culture.”<sup>269</sup> These human achievements are predominantly concerned with what is “good for man. [sic]”<sup>270</sup> The advancements in technology, arts, ideologies, and even religion have the common intentionality of survival. However, survival for the modernists is predicated on a culture that is “static, discrete, and homogeneous.”<sup>271</sup> Hence functionalism works well for and reflects the construct of social norms and shared values in the modern era.

During the Enlightenment, conformity to social structures was to be propagated through education. Society was said to be “held together in a fixed manner of structures of juridical rules, status, and moral norms.”<sup>272</sup> Furthermore, modern (European and western) life was collectively centred on the family over personal adventures.<sup>273</sup> Hence functionalism works well for and reflects the construct of social norm and shared values of that era. The means of survival are tangible items such as a steady job, a house, and a family. However, all this is about to change with new generations that seek to be freed from the constraints of the past.

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<sup>269</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 33.

<sup>270</sup> Niebuhr, *Christ*, 35.

<sup>271</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 4.

<sup>272</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 4.

<sup>273</sup> Schweitzer, *Postmodern Life Cycle*, 6–9.

### A Postmodern Perspective of Culture

Postmodern culture is the crossover and transition of different paths. In his postmodern critique of culture, Arbuckle argues that to work with a modern theory such as functionalism is to be in danger of “trying to dialogue with something that does not exist!”<sup>274</sup> However, Arbuckle is only partially correct. The shift from modern and postmodern culture is not a clearly defined dichotomy but a complex transition. There are shared characteristics between the two. The postmodern culture continues to be a social phenomenon. It is still about survival. Furthermore, modern and postmodern cultures do coexist in one society. Baby Boomers continue to have strong influence in the twenty-first century. While Millennials seem to be the dominant generation, Bloomberg economic news has already predicted that Generation Z will outnumber them within a year.<sup>275</sup> Hence people must learn to coexist.

Even though functionalism is no longer the dominant ethos of western culture, there are institutions that still cater to a modern paradigm such religious, social, and ad-hoc organizations. Nonetheless, post-adolescents have been in pursuit of freedom, relativism, and pluralism, with the goal to *fit in* and *belong*. They are constantly acquiring new social skills in order to survive. Survival is a constant whether one embraces a modern or a postmodern view of culture.

#### From Shared Values to Individualism

The broader cultural shift from modernity to postmodernism entails the move from shared values to individualism. The modernist is a pragmatist. The betterment of society

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<sup>274</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, xxii.

<sup>275</sup> <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-20/gen-z-to-outnumber-millennials-within-a-year-demographic-trends>

means what is good for society is also good for the individual. However, in a pluralistic culture, what is good for society may not suit the lifestyle of the individual. What is good for one person may hold no value for another. Postmodernity had made a significant impact on cultural anthropology.<sup>276</sup> The nature of postmodern culture is one that is internally “fragmented” rather than “homogeneous.”<sup>277</sup> It seeks diversity rather than conformity. The metaphors that describe society as “chaos” instead of “order,” the good news is postmodernist is more open-minded in seeing other cultures “as inter-dependent” rather than “inferior.”<sup>278</sup> When the definition of culture moves from a European construct to the global village, it is defined by the mosaic of multiculturalism and pluralism. Furthermore, even this mosaic is not a new constant but fluid.<sup>279</sup>

#### Functionalism vs. the Search for Meaning

One of the key differences between modern and postmodern understanding of culture is the move from *functionalism* to a search for *meaning*.<sup>280</sup> The purpose of postmodern culture is no longer to provide functional paradigms predicated on some form of social contract. The framework of modern culture presupposes absolute truths or shared ideologies. The idea of progress during the Enlightenment is a powerful example.<sup>281</sup> Culture is inevitably dependent on the economy. Without a strong economy, human survival and flourishing is limited. Hence modern anthropologists favour functional

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<sup>276</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 5.

<sup>277</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 5.

<sup>278</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 5.

<sup>279</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 115.

<sup>280</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 4–7.

<sup>281</sup> Bauckham and Hart, *Hope*, 10.



paradigms. For postmodern young adults, however, culture is a way of “becoming.”<sup>282</sup> A cup of coffee is functional, but a cup of Starbucks is symbolic.

Postmodern culture, according to anthropologist Clifford Geertz, is “an experiment not in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning.”<sup>283</sup> For the postmodern adult, culture is “a system of shared symbols and meanings; symbolic action needs to be interpreted, read, or deciphered in order to be understood.”<sup>284</sup> The significance for pastoral theology is that postmodern culture is fragmented and privatized. Therefore, caring for post-adolescents will require on the part of the modernist immense effort of unlearning, and relearning.<sup>285</sup>

Volf captures the difference between functionalism and the search for meaning in the illustration of a pen. He says, “Consider an ordinary object—a pen, for instance. You might think it’s a mere material thing. It’s not ... In feeling my gold-nibbed Pelikan fountain pen between my fingers, I don’t just touch an object, I relate to my father, who gave it to me.”<sup>286</sup> Functionalism will focus more on the pen as a social tool for school and work. But symbolism focuses more on the relationship between Volf and his father represented by that pen. The pen becomes a symbolic presence of his father. Holding on to the pen becomes a memorial activity. Now the pen has what is commonly known as *sentimental value*. Something highly valued.

Similarly, Sunday can be viewed functionally as a day of rest so that the worker is refreshed and ready to return to work on Monday. However, when Sunday is interpreted as “a day toward which all days are aiming and from which they all gain meaning

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<sup>282</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 6.

<sup>283</sup> Geertz, *Interpretation*, 5.

<sup>284</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 7.

<sup>285</sup> Alves, *Poet*, 18–19.

<sup>286</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, 203.

[Sabbath], human striving comes to an end, and the joy in the world as the gift and in God as the giver reigns supreme.”<sup>287</sup> Sunday is full of meaning. Functionalism and meaning can coexist.

The quest for meaning as a cultural norm is a subtle but important shift that can help the CCC understand the culture of those in their English speaking ministries. The dominant culture within the immigrant church is patriarchal (classical) and functionalistic (modern). Both of these systems will cause friction with those who are raised in the postmodern era. The performance-drivenness in the older paradigm seemed to have worked well for decades. However, this paradigm may no longer be the only approach for how the church should operate. This is articulated by a young man, James, who was attending a relatively new church at the time. He was excited to share what he had learned where attending church south of the border. But his good intentions were met with scepticism. He recalls,

First-generation (congregants) would never question and would just do what’s been done in the past. (But local-born) generational people would start questioning: ‘Is this effective? Is it something that works for us (and) helps us worship corporally? Or is it just out of tradition we do these things? What’s the background behind this tradition? Is it just because we’ve done it this way or is it something biblical about it that we have to do it this way?’<sup>288</sup>

This scenario is typical in the immigrant church. The traditional way of doing things falls under the functionalist mentality. However, James was concerned about the meaning behind the tradition. It reflects the search for meaning and symbolism in the new generation.

The cultural shift in the search of meaning need not be a hindrance to pastoral ministry. On the contrary, this can open up opportunities for the church to dialogue with

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<sup>287</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, 205.

<sup>288</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 256.

postmodern young adults. Anthropologists have noted that religion as otherworldly is full of symbols and meanings that deal with survival and life issues. Religion is full of rituals, storytelling, and social drama.<sup>289</sup> The cross, the liturgy, the homily, and the sacraments are full of symbols and meaning. Geertz argues, “As religion on one side anchors the power of our symbolic resources for formulating analytic ideas in an authoritative conception of the overall shape of reality, so on another side, it anchors the power of our ... symbolic, resources for expressing emotions—moods, sentiments, passions, affections, [and] feeling.”<sup>290</sup>

Christianity as a cultural system can and must respond to the problem of suffering and life issues “by means of symbols, of an image of [an orderly world] which will account for, and even celebrate, the perceived ambiguities, puzzles, and paradoxes in human experience.”<sup>291</sup> The Christ story precisely addresses the human condition and suffering. Its message is re-enacted through the worship and storytelling. Its ministry properly administered should be a channel of divine blessing and intervention to the broken and hurting. This requires the church to regain its heritage in spirituality, creativity, and symbolism of a mighty God whose tangible and intangible relationships with humanity is full of meaning.

### Cultural Identity and Ethnicity

The conversation on cultural identity will inevitably include the topic of ethnicity. However, the science behind the ethnic label remains a debatable topic.<sup>292</sup> Increasingly,

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<sup>289</sup> Arbuckle, *Culture*, 81–83.

<sup>290</sup> Geertz, *Interpretation*, 112.

<sup>291</sup> Geertz, *Interpretation*, 116.

<sup>292</sup> Driedger, *Race*, 120.

anthropologists are focusing on the cultural aspect of ethnicity. Culture plays a more significant role than ethnicity in identity formation. They argue that “the key and complex role of culture that helps us understand differences among ethnic groups.”<sup>293</sup> An ethnic group is a people group drawn together by their shared culture rather than physical appearance. That is, people who have the same appearance may not necessarily belong to the same ethnic group. Eloise Hiebert Meneses argues,

*Race and ethnicity*, along with the idea that people can be classified into types, are a product of about three hundred years of Western science. In the nineteenth century, anthropologists, who study both physical and cultural aspects of human beings, began to measure, identify, and classify the so-called races ... Yet now, essentially all anthropologists have given up the attempt to identify races of human beings. This is very simply because the best evidence indicates that there are, physically, no clear boundary lines between the various communities of people around the world.<sup>294</sup>

Ethnic identity seems to be defined by how “a segment of ... society whose members are thought, by themselves or others, to have a common origin and to share important segments of a common culture.”<sup>295</sup> The idea that ethnicity is more a function of culture offers new insights on cultural identity.

Ethnicity is also affected by the social and economic class.<sup>296</sup> This makes sense only under the concept of ethnicity as a function of culture. The education, profession, and sociocultural environment are lenses through which the perception of ethnic identity is formed or can be changed. Studies of immigrants in the United States show, “A racial gradient continues to exist in U.S. culture so the darker a person’s skin is, the greater the social distance from dominant groups and the more difficult it is to make his or her

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<sup>293</sup> Jindra, “Cultural Matters,” 64.

<sup>294</sup> Meneses, “Science and the Myth,” 34.

<sup>295</sup> Yinger, *Ethnicity*, 3.

<sup>296</sup> Centrie, *Identity Formation*, 21.

personal qualifications count.”<sup>297</sup> Moreover, Carlos Pozzi argues ethnicity (or race) among “Latin Americans ... is fluid and can be negotiated or changed. Race is defined by social status and other social mediators. When one of these mediators can be changed, then the perceived race or skin color is changed.”<sup>298</sup> Since ethnicity can be negotiated, the science of ethnicity remains ambiguous.

Even though in theory race and ethnicity are human invention, lived experiences of visible minorities suggest otherwise. Jenell Williams Paris says, “Despite wide scientific consensus that race is not biologically legitimate, we continue to experience race as very real.”<sup>299</sup> For Asian Canadians, ethnicity is an important consideration in identity formation. There is no escaping from the ethnic label. When asked about ethnic identity, James says, “I see myself as Chinese. I think by the color of my skin and my hair and the language that I try to speak, I have a Chinese heritage.”<sup>300</sup> Even when self-identification is decisively Canadian, the perception by others may not come to the same conclusion. Identity requires both subjectivity and objectivity. Ethnicity is a “powerful contributor to ethnic group formation, maintenance, and social ties.”<sup>301</sup> It has to do with “one’s own ethnic group membership.”<sup>302</sup> When there is confusion about one’s ethnic identity, one can experience “helplessness and powerlessness.”<sup>303</sup> Ethnicity may be a perceived issue in cultural identity but one that cannot be denied. Practically, the term *cultural identity* has already incorporated the element of ethnicity.

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<sup>297</sup> Portes and Rumbaut, *Legacies*, 47

<sup>298</sup> Pozzi, “Race,” 55.

<sup>299</sup> Paris, “Race,” 20.

<sup>300</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 259.

<sup>301</sup> Bernal and Knight, “Introduction,” 1.

<sup>302</sup> Bernal et al., “Development,” 33.

<sup>303</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 11–12.

## Bicultural Identity

The struggle to resolve the issue of bicultural identity is a constant battle for many Chinese Canadians regardless of age; but more so for those in the transition of postadolescence. According to statistics provided by Driedger, there is a strong sense of ethnic self-identification among Chinese Canadians with 88% who indicated “frequent ingroup language use” compared to 84% and 46% for Italian and German Canadians, respectively.<sup>304</sup> Biculturalism is sometimes viewed as disadvantageous by those who carry two cultures. This is the result of negative experiences of racism and subtle discrimination in the school and in society. Though some have attempted to deny their ethnic root completely, the internal angst remains.

This section seeks to demonstrate that those who are bicultural are not at a disadvantage. There is no need to suppress one culture or the other. Rather, biculturalism opens up unique opportunities as the third culture that is neither Chinese nor Canadian. This provides new insights for the ministry of caring.

Biculturalism is defined as “an individual who identifies with two distinct cultures.”<sup>305</sup> For those of Chinese ancestry but are born or raised in Canada, sooner or later they will need to come to terms with their ethnic root. The question, “Am I Chinese or Canadian?” is an ongoing struggle. Aesop’s fable “The Birds, the Beasts, and the Bat” illustrates the point,

The birds were at war with the beasts, and many battles were fought with varying success on either side. The bat did not throw in his lot definitely with either party, but when things went well for the birds he was found fighting in their ranks; when, on the other hand, the beasts got the upper hand, he was to be found among the beasts. No one paid any attention to him while the war lasted. But when it was over, and peace was restored, neither the birds nor the beasts would have anything

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<sup>304</sup> Driedger, *Race*, 130–31.

<sup>305</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 356.

to do with so double-faced a traitor, and so he remains to this day a solitary outcast from both.<sup>306</sup>

The moral of the story is “to discourage people from betraying others in order to fulfill their selfish desire.”<sup>307</sup> However, there is much more to be gained by comparing the dilemma of the bat with the struggle of Chinese Canadians who carry a bicultural identity.

### Biculturalism as Progressive Self-Understanding

The young adult is in constant recalibration of his or her identity. This coincides with the theory that identity is not static but dynamic. It is subject to change as self-understanding progresses. Russell Jeung, professor of sociology at University of California, Berkeley agrees that “racial identities [for bicultural individuals] are not fixed, but fluid.”<sup>308</sup> As the social and cultural environments move with time, so identity is fluid generally. It follows that the nature of bicultural identity is also a progressive self-understanding at a given moment. The bicultural person can recalibrate his or her identity as self-understanding increases. This does not necessarily mean identity confusion. Rather, this allows for honest self-evaluation. Formation of bicultural identity is a necessary and healthy process.

Self-identification of Canadian born Chinese (CBC) with the Canadian culture is mostly solidified by their experience in school and the workplace. Albeit there may be incidents of racism, the social environment and the pop culture will shape their self-understanding mostly as Canadian. On the other hand, they have been brought up with a

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<sup>306</sup> Ashliman, *Aesop's*, 156. There are many versions of this fable.

<sup>307</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 356.

<sup>308</sup> Jeung, “Asian American,” 2.

diet of ethnic foods, participation in ethnic rituals, and communication in the mother tongue. The Chinese culture in them is being constantly reaffirmed. The tension between the two cultures begins when they step outside the ethnic environment. The problem with carrying two cultures is that sometimes neither one seems to fit. Eunice recalls, “I didn’t know who I was because I was really Chinese in a small town. And when I went to China, I was very White. And then I was like, *I don’t know what I am.* [sic]”<sup>309</sup>

The issue of biculturalism is compounded in the immigrant church where ethnicity is emphasized because the church is more than a place of worship but also a centre for social activities. The analogy of the bat in the company of birds is helpful to understand the cultural gap. The birds don’t understand that being in the light is out of the comfort zone for the night creature. People in the immigrant church are slow to realize that CBC’s are not the same culturally as their parents. They may eat the same food but they do not have the collective cultural experiences and memories. This cultural background includes everything from the smell of food offered by street vendors back home to major societal events. The bicultural individual may feel like the bat in the companies of birds when cultural norms and spiritual expressions are imposed on them. Even for churches that aspire to become multicultural, often time the cultural gap is missed between generations.

Cultural identity is one of the key issues in how English ministries are conducted. Wayland Wong, Wong, Peter Yuen, and Timothy Tseng are among those argue for a need for a contextualized culture for English ministries from the tension of Hebrew-speaking Christians and Hellenistic Christians in the early church.<sup>310</sup> One of the issues in

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<sup>309</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 281.

<sup>310</sup> Tseng, “Second-Generation, 256.



the CCC is the desire to maintain the Chinese culture among second or third generations. The Chinese church is still the Chinese church. Tseng cites the writing of a seasoned pastor, Stephen Chan, who “defended the maintenance of Chinese culture with strong nationalist overtones.”<sup>311</sup> This sentiment in the mandate of the church generally still holds true today among many first generation pastors. In his article “For My Kinsmen, My Flesh,” Chan contends,

In my opinion, Chinese Christians who have immigrated all over the world and obtained different nationalities should ponder and give heed to the examples set by Moses, Daniel and Paul. If the Hebrews, who are only a small portion of the world's population, are capable of withstanding the many years of persistent assimilation by foreign cultures, how can we Chinese Christians forsake our responsibility towards our Chinese brethren who make up one quarter of the world's population?<sup>312</sup>

The point is to give priority to the evangelization of the Chinese people. However, this argument raises the question of loyalty between the Chinese culture and the gospel mandate. It also entails keeping the Chinese language and culture alive for future generations in the immigrant church. This puts tremendous pressure on those who are bicultural to assimilate to the worship culture of the first generation.

There are two ways to resolve the tension of biculturalism. Young adults can either take the tradition of the first generation as the cultural norm. Or the Chinese ministry leaders can host events that cater to the culture of the ‘second generation.’ The first option is also known as *assimilation*. Assimilation as the process “in which the minority group becomes part of the majority or dominant group, [but] losing its uniqueness. [It] results in the minority group accepting the norms of the dominant group

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<sup>311</sup> Tseng, “Second-Generation, 257.

<sup>312</sup> Chan, “For My Kinsmen,” 95–96; Tseng, “Second-Generation, 257.

or by the majority group rejecting the minority group.”<sup>313</sup> Differences in culture and expression of spirituality in English ministries are often viewed by their counterpart as too casual and not spiritual enough. Participation in joint services means losing their own identity in the event. Hence the culture of the English congregation has been assimilated into the dominant culture of the ethnic church.

The second option to resolve the tension of biculturalism is *acculturation*. This “implies an acceptance of the minority and majority group. Over time the norms, values, and behaviors of both groups are modified through contact.”<sup>314</sup> Over the past decade, there are movements from assimilation to acculturation. As leadership skills begin to grow in the English congregations, they are given more responsibilities at joint events. The keynote speaker can even be a non-Chinese person. Acculturation in the immigrant church allows for cross-pollination of culture and spirituality. The cross-cultural experience will enrich both sides. Moreover, caring effort will mean affirmation of bicultural identity in young men and women over time. Nonetheless, acculturation in this scenario is *not* simply between the Chinese and Canadian culture because there is a third culture.

### Biculturalism as a Third Culture

Individuals who possess both the Chinese and the Canadian cultures belong to a group on their own. Biculturalism is a *third culture*. Their culture is distinct from the ethnic ingroup and from the western culture. Huh argues,

As a particular group of bicultural individuals, then [Chinese Canadians] are persons whose cultural identity is defined by both [Chinese] and [Canadian]

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<sup>313</sup> Rotheram-Borus, “Biculturalism,” 86.

<sup>314</sup> Rotheram-Borus, “Biculturalism,” 87.

heritage and ethos. In other words, [Chinese Canadian] identify with two distinct sets of cultural norms and values, [and] philosophical traditions ... Although [they] identify with both distinct sets of heritage and ethos, they also dwell in ‘a third culture’ that exists outside the boundaries of these two cultures. More accurately put, [Chinese Canadians] experience a third culture that exists where the boundaries of the two culture overlap ... [It must be emphasized] ... that they have a ‘both and’ and ‘neither nor’ cultural identity.<sup>315</sup>

Huh calls this the “in-between identity.”<sup>316</sup> Korean-American theologian Matthew Kim says, “I have never felt completely comfortable in white America, nor am I at ease among Korean nationals and first-generation Korean immigrants.”<sup>317</sup> His sentiment resonates with the experience of many Chinese Canadians. The concept of a third culture is significant for young men and women who are in the process of recalibration of their identity.

Huh has done a tremendous favour for young adults in raising the issue of the third culture. The answer to the question, “Am I Chinese or Canadian?” can never be resolved by taking either side. Both answers are insufficient. Each is not the wrong answer, just unsatisfactory. Furthermore, many Chinese Canadians are not only bicultural but multicultural. This is due to their live experiences in the cultural mosaic that exists in Canadian society.<sup>318</sup> Cultural pluralism is “often viewed as an arrangement in which distinct groups live side by side in relatively harmonious coexistence.”<sup>319</sup> Nonetheless the struggle for identity is the pendulum that swings between the two dichotomies. When individuals decide to settle for the Chinese community, suddenly something will trigger a crisis. Likewise, when they desperately try to reject or hide their ethnic identity, they

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<sup>315</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 357–58.

<sup>316</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 358.

<sup>317</sup> Kim, *Preaching*, xiii.

<sup>318</sup> Driedger, *Race*, 29.

<sup>319</sup> Driedger, *Race*, 29. Also see “Biculturalism among Adolescents” by Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus, 86–89.

often find that they are suffering in private. If the church can inform English speaking young adults about their uniqueness, it would bring great consolation and affirmation to them.

The solution for CBC's is not found simply in attending a Caucasian church because the culture seems to be a good fit. There needs to be an acceptance of a third culture. In *English Ministry Crisis*, Matthew Todd both affirms the need for the immigrant church and at the same time, he contends, "[There] needs to be a recognition that bicultural CBCs ... [are a] third culture [people]."<sup>320</sup> There are bicultural Asian Americans churches planted by those who "choose to establish and maintain their own churches ... rather than assimilating into existing white ... churches."<sup>321</sup> There is a high level of similarities in Pan-Asian cultures among second generation Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans. Jeung observes the change in relationship between Chinese and Japanese in the new generation. He says,

Chinese and Japanese American congregations are [now] undergoing a significant transformation into pan-ethnic congregations. Groups who were once at war now pray and worship together with common songs, liturgies and religious understandings. Those who distanced themselves from the other now unite under a single group identity and new subculture. In fact, half of this study's churches in the San Francisco Bay Area now target Asian Americans instead of focusing on a single ethnic group.<sup>322</sup>

This is in recognition of their unique third culture identity. The degree of self-doubt varies depending on the acceptance by the mainstream ingroup. It is one thing to join the worship service, but quite another to become a full member of an ingroup.

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<sup>320</sup> Todd, *English Ministry Crisis*, 130; Pollock and Van Reken, *Third Culture Kids*, xxi, 123.

<sup>321</sup> Tan, *Asian American Theologies*, 59.

<sup>322</sup> Jeung, "Asian American," 1.

### Biculturalism as Advantageous

Individuals with bicultural identity may find it necessary to switch sides depending on the circumstances. They feel “stuck in-between two conflicting sides.”<sup>323</sup> They are “born with [this] ambiguous identity [and are] forced to resolve the confusion that develops from having an in-between identity.”<sup>324</sup> This struggle heightens their anxiety. They need to know this is not their fault. For some, Canada is the only place they have ever called home. For most young adults, being bicultural is a disadvantage. Some may ask, ‘Why me?!’ They “can be easily tempted to deny the complexities of one’s true identity and adopt a pre-existing identity created by others.”<sup>325</sup> Whether to give in to this pre-determined identity is a dilemma for those in the CCC. Neither can they fit into the Caucasian church inconspicuously. Paul Wang observes that “in spite of their western lifestyle and value system, [Canadian born Chinese] are still not perfectly comfortable in assimilating into a purely Caucasian church.”<sup>326</sup> They are in search of a faith community that will embrace their full identity. Russell further affirms that Asian Americans “[upon] entering the labor force ... find themselves within a globalized economy where transnational Pacific Rim ties are valued.”<sup>327</sup>

The church and individuals can also embrace biculturalism with positivity.

Bicultural individuals are uniquely gifted and they need not be ashamed of who they are. Huh asserts that “a person with a bicultural identity can face additional challenges, but she can also benefit from her in-between identity.”<sup>328</sup> The bicultural person is usually

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<sup>323</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 356.

<sup>324</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 356.

<sup>325</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 361.

<sup>326</sup> Wang, “Study on Cross-Culture,” 136.

<sup>327</sup> Jeung, “Asian American,” 3.

<sup>328</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 361.

bilingual as well. The individual have access to two worlds. This means “versatility, flexibility, and creativity” that informs theology and practice.<sup>329</sup> Some are able to embrace the uniqueness of their bicultural identity. One person says, “I really feel that being bicultural is not a crutch but an advantage.”<sup>330</sup> Others are comfortable with who they are. Lois identifies herself as “Canadian first and Chinese second.”<sup>331</sup> However, that it would be naïve to suggest “that one can constantly pick and choose which side of the hyphen she wants to embrace for survival.”<sup>332</sup> There is no need for that.

This is not to suggest that bicultural individuals are conniving and often switching identities to their advantage. On the contrary, pastoral theology encourages young adults to see their bicultural identity as a good gift and not a burden. Furthermore, for those who grew up in the church, their bicultural identity finds common ground in Christ. When asked about how her “religious identity compared with her cultural identity,” Lois is confident that her Christian identity comes first.<sup>333</sup> The higher goal of caring in generational ministry is not to help bicultural individuals to affix their cultural identity either way but to affirm their identity in Christ.

Biculturalism is not a new issue but migrants has been the biblical narratives for centuries. “They describe a particular immigrant family—that of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and the God who called them out of their native land into a new land, culture, and particular relationship with God.”<sup>334</sup> Moses, Esther, Jesus, and the disciples all carried a bicultural identity. Sharon M. Tan, professor of religious and social ethics at United

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<sup>329</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 362.

<sup>330</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 126.

<sup>331</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 298.

<sup>332</sup> Huh, “Embracing Your Bicultural Identity,” 361.

<sup>333</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 257.

<sup>334</sup> Tan, “Marriage,” 55.

Theological Seminary, calls for a positive adaptation to the new way of life while “[retaining] the best of the Asian cultures ... and identity.”<sup>335</sup> The quest for identity is in essence the longing for a home.

One of the hidden fears among bicultural adults is that they will, eventually, become outcasts from both camps resulting in being *spiritually homeless*. There is a deep yearning in young adults for home whether they are well provided for or living in poverty. Currently, there are many young men and women who are in the category of spiritually homeless and generally lost. What does the gospel have to say to them? In *The Church in Exile*, Pastoral theologian Lee Beach speaks of the significance of a home, an eschatological one. This captures both this sense of generally lost in post-adolescents and their hope for belonging. Beach says, “The hope of restoration, of once again being home, is at the heart of living in exile.”<sup>336</sup> The eschatological home is a powerful image that forms the basis for the present hope. Nonetheless, this hope does not come to full fruition because “the ultimate end of exile is always eschatological, and until then we live in a time when we are never fully ‘at home.’”<sup>337</sup> The Christian community can be that home where people of all stripes can journey together.

### Summary

Generational ministry requires a vision of a home for bicultural individuals. A home is where identity is forged in liberty. A home is a safe place that is free from oppressive powers. The next chapter focuses on two areas of power under which oppression occurs for post-adolescents. First, the power structures have created an atmosphere of

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<sup>335</sup> Tan, “Marriage,” 55–56.

<sup>336</sup> Beach, *Church*, 213.

<sup>337</sup> Beach, *Church*, 214.

oppression. The praxis of patriarchal authority in the church requires honest theological reflection. How much of this authority is biblical? How much of it is cultural or part of a personal agenda? Post-adolescents often feel powerless under this patriarchal system. It is very difficult to break free. Unless there is a change of heart among first generation leaders, the only option to liberation for post-adolescents is to sever ties with one's root. Another oppressive power that erodes identity is neoliberal capitalism. This has been identified as an economic force that has heightened anxiety for the average citizen. The power inside and outside the church are some of the key challenges to both liberty and identity in young adults. Therefore, it is necessary for pastoral theology and the church to engage in the conversations on power.



## Chapter 4:

### POWER STRUCTURES AND THE RISE OF NEOLIBERALISM

#### **Power and Identity**

There are forces that can work against healthy identity formation. These can cause the erosion of identity through various situations and in varying degrees. It would be impossible to provide an exhaustive list of specifics. This chapter attempts to explore two major categories of power that contribute to the erosion of identity. They are the power structures within the Canadian Chinese Church and the rise of neoliberalism. This work acknowledges the reality of spiritual powers and principalities at work but that subject would be for another time. When an individual experiences “helplessness and powerlessness,” there will be identity confusion.<sup>1</sup> The former power has to do with what happens inside the church; the latter looks at the culture outside. Each addresses a specific threat to the problem of identity. Documented cases will be presented as evidence. These include interviews conducted by Enoch Wong in *Listening to their Voices*. This 2018 survey consists of over 500 individuals who “identified themselves to be Canadian-born Chinese Christians” with 37 of them interviewed.<sup>2</sup>

The first concern is power structures within the Canadian Chinese Church. The problem of power structures within the church is paradoxically the open secret of the Canadian Chinese Church. Power and politics in the church is never meant to be played out before the congregation or to the general public. Yet young adults are keenly aware of

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<sup>1</sup> Dykstra, *Counseling Troubled Youth*, 11–12.

<sup>2</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 52.

power struggles in the church. The power structures in the CCC are intricately connected to the Chinese culture. Confucius thoughts “continue to have ramifications for today’s East Asian Americans. In particular, Confucianism is defined by hierarchy and patriarchy—in the simplest terms, there is a distinct leadership structure defining who is above whom; that is, those who are younger serve those who are older, and women serve men (the latter is more prominent in Korean culture than Chinese).”<sup>3</sup> There are virtues in filial respect for elders. The patriarchal system facilitates the framework that allows familial love and genuine friendship to flourish in society and in the faith community.

However, when this authority is used to promote certain personal agendas, whether it is intentional or not, it can have detrimental results. The misuse and abuse of power for personal agenda may not be talked about openly due to the culture of shame; however, its existence is undeniable. For the purpose of this research, the following discussion is focused on best scenarios within good intention. Those who hold power believe that there is already a provision of empowerment to the English ministry. However, there is a lack of ownership for those in the English speaking ministry. What is amiss? Why is the sharing of power so important for the success of generational ministry? What is true empowerment? Why is it so difficult to share power? These are some of the hard questions that the church needs to wrestle with.

The second discussion on power may present an even greater urgency for pastoral theology and the church. The rise of neoliberalism in late twentieth century has created a tenacious culture of discontentment. There are many sources of discontentment such as injustice, poverty, political unrest, atrocities of war, and financial crisis. However, much of the social and political unrest can be attributed to the rise of neoliberalism. What is

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<sup>3</sup> Lee, “Healthy Leaders,” 61.

neoliberalism? How does it affect the everyday life of the average citizen? Neoliberalism is an ideology of individual liberalism. But it is more than a philosophy. It has already shaped the global economy in multifaceted ways that have profoundly influenced western culture. It is rightly identified as a global hegemony.<sup>4</sup>

Some argue that neoliberalism, or neoliberal capitalism, has become a major source of human suffering.<sup>5</sup> It has been the driving force behind much of the economic changes globally for more than four decades. It has something to do with power in the name of individual freedom. Neoliberal capitalism has been causing havocs in the marketplace. It has cause men and women to be exhausted and discontent regardless of race or social status. This cohort includes post-adolescents who walked into our churches. Yet the alarming fact about this power is that the majority including business people, pastoral theologians, and practitioners have never heard of it. Therefore, it is a timely subject for the discussion on caring for Millennials. They are most affected by this because they are just starting to transition into adulthood. Hence it is important for this chapter to explore the subject of neoliberalism and the possible Christian response so that people can find hope and abundance in a neoliberal world.

### **Internal Threat: Power Structures in the Canadian Chinese Church**

The distribution of power is a contentious issue within the Canadian Chinese Church. Power structures in the CCC are inevitably tied in with the Chinese culture; and one of the key tension points is found in how power is distributed between leaders on the Chinese side and those in English ministry. The general consensus on the leadership in

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<sup>4</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 9.

<sup>5</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, "Powers," 75.

the immigrant Chinese church “is not cast in a positive light.”<sup>6</sup> There is a gap between theology and practice in leadership in Asian churches in North America. John Stott argues, “Our model of leadership is often shaped more by culture than by Christ. Yet many cultural models of leadership are incompatible with the servant imagery taught and exhibited by the Lord Jesus.”<sup>7</sup> Helen Lee contends, “This is nowhere truer than in the Asian American community, where culture continues to influence how leaders conduct themselves, whether the leaders realize it or not.”<sup>8</sup> This is also indicative of the Canadian Chinese churches.

In Wong’s survey, over 50% of those who have left the church cited dysfunctional leadership as an issue.<sup>9</sup> Of those less engaged in the church, 29.3% cited “dysfunctional leadership of the [CCC is what] frustrates their growth in faith and aspiration.”<sup>10</sup> Even those who are considered highly engaged reported that 23.9% are dissatisfied with the leadership.<sup>11</sup> However, not all of the participants are leaders or may have direct involvement in the leadership of the church.

In Matthew Todd’s survey, 22 out of 30 young adults cited the issues of power and leadership as their reason for leaving the church.<sup>12</sup> Todd rightly asserts that leaving the church was their “protest towards [the] Chinese church.”<sup>13</sup> Here are some of what they have to say,<sup>14</sup>

“Power and politics was an issue in leaving my church,”

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<sup>6</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 94.

<sup>7</sup> Stott, *Basic Christian Leadership*, 113; Lee, “Healthy Leaders,” 60.

<sup>8</sup> Lee, “Healthy Leaders,” 60.

<sup>9</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 94.

<sup>10</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 94.

<sup>11</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 94.

<sup>12</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 99.

<sup>13</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 161.

<sup>14</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 215–16.

“I think it is important to have a balance of power,”

“I think people would rather have democracy, rights; and rather not be controlled,”

“Power and politics weren’t an issue in my leaving, but it was the cause of my parents and many others (old and young) leaving that particular church.”

Besides the cultural gap, the exercise of power in the church posts a major challenge to young adults. Emerging adults often find their efforts and ideas are not being valued. The powerless have no ownership and no sense of belonging.

### Power and Leadership

Theories on power and leadership provide necessary reference points for understanding power structures in the Canadian Chinese Church. Effective leadership requires appropriate exercise of power and authority. However, there are differences between leadership in the church and in the corporate world. Much of the literature on power and leadership is written for businesses. Their ultimate goal is financial gain or *the bottom line* for the organization and the greater economy. The focus is on organizational goals and self-actualization through planning, managing, and achieving successes.

However, there are significant differences between business theories and the theology of leadership in the church. Christian leadership belongs to the realm of mystery. Philip Collins asserts that Christian leadership is “a gift, apostolic in nature, [and] given to all leaders of the church, laity as well as professionals ... [In] talking about leadership, we are not talking about an office or position, but rather, we are thinking about a mystery.”<sup>15</sup> Christian leadership by nature is a spiritual gift. While power

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<sup>15</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 23.

structures follow protocols and patterns in behavioral science, Christian leadership must be ultimately rooted in its divine call and empowerment by the Spirit.<sup>16</sup>

There is a strong relationship between leadership and power. “To understand the nature of leadership requires understanding of the nature of power.”<sup>17</sup> The subject of power sharing in the CCC must be viewed as relational and not organizational. The church as God’s family entails that power sharing ought to be understood in the context of being in step with the Spirit. In the present power struggle between first and second generation leaders, a move towards reconciliation is needed. Hence the following discussion attempts to bring different generations to the table. Each needs to see the other as coworkers and comrades laboring for the same kingdom. The universal church exists in challenging times. Both spiritual wisdom and available social and leadership theories can be applied to counteract the tyranny of culture and dark spiritual forces. At times, the church seems to have lost sight of the real enemy and undermined its true calling as a community—the household of God. Re-distribution of power encourages empowerment which can foster synergy between generations is a step in the right direction.

There are two essential aspects to the nature of power, namely “motives and resources.”<sup>18</sup> Pioneers of the immigrant church, in most cases, are Baby Boomers. They are founding members of the church. They hold both motives and resources. This explains why the current distribution of power belongs to those in the first generation. As mentioned earlier, the church has been their social and religious community. The church has become a strong symbol of identity for the early immigrants and visa students. Their passion for the work of the gospel and loyalty to this community is to be commended.

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<sup>16</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 27.

<sup>17</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> Gill, *Theory*, 6.

There is strong motivation to guard the church against any apostasy or change. The preservation of cultural and religious traditions is a subtle struggle for ethnic churches. On the one hand, they call for change. On the other, the tradition is difficult to let go.

The Baby Boomers, regardless of their economic status, contributed financially to the ministries of the church and beyond. Not only do they have the resolve to build the church, they have the means to do so. They devoted both money and time. The majority of Canadian Chinese churches have been established as a result of their labour. Pioneers provided the resources for building projects and church ministries. They gave sacrificially and worked with denominational officials to obtain land and property. They built the church, literally. Hence there is a strong sense of ownership. They also hold the balance of power in the CCC.

Moreover, power and authority has to do with the relationship between “power holders” and “power recipients.”<sup>19</sup> Pioneers of the church belong to the first generation. They are sometimes referred to as the ‘Chinese side’ because the early immigrants were not native English speakers. Worship is always preferred in the vernacular—the language of the heart. Those on the Chinese side are the power holders. Those in the English speaking ministry belong to the so called ‘second generation.’ The majority are children of the pioneers. The venue of worship has been built by others in their parents’ generation. In this scenario, they are the power recipients. The parent-child relationship is naturally extended from the home to the church.

Doehring says, “Power is always a feature of *relationships*, hence the term ‘power dynamics.’”<sup>20</sup> Power dynamics describes the intricate and fluidity of change between

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<sup>19</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 18.

<sup>20</sup> Doehring, *Practice*, 21; Burns, *Leadership*, 15.

power holders and power recipients. The word ‘dynamics’ articulates the complex negotiation process “within and between people, that is, patterns involving power that occur in relationships.”<sup>21</sup> Any change in the relationship can mean significant changes in the welfare of power recipients. This is important in the context of generational ministry. Power dynamics is a continuum. Hence it is in the interest of both sides, especially power recipients, to maintain good relationships. Where power exists, it can be used for good or it can be misused or abused. The abuse of power can happen in a variety of ways. Power holders have the responsibility to be conscientious of the power vested in them.

The vast domain of leadership entails various images and meanings. Leadership is a topic that has “probably more written about and less known about [it] than about any other topic in the behavioral sciences.”<sup>22</sup> Because leadership is complex and elusive, “we have invented an endless proliferation of terms to deal with it: leadership, power, status, authority, rank, prestige, influence, control, manipulation, domination, and so forth, and still the concept is not sufficiently defined.”<sup>23</sup> The three key characteristics of leadership that are most relevant to this study are influence, vision, and moral authority.

In the church as it is in the corporate world, leadership is first and foremost about *influence*. Maxwell argues, “The true measure of leadership is influence—nothing more, nothing less.”<sup>24</sup> Yukl asserts, “Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how to do it, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish shared objectives.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Doehring, *Practice*, 21.

<sup>22</sup> Bennis, “Leadership Theory,” 260.

<sup>23</sup> Bennis, “Leadership Theory,” 260.

<sup>24</sup> Maxwell, *Irrefutable*, 16; Collins, “Mystery,” 21.

<sup>25</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 7.



Northouse asserts, “Influence is the sine qua non of leadership. Without influence, leadership does not exist.”<sup>26</sup> Leadership results in the “shaping of behaviour.”<sup>27</sup>

Leadership and power are inseparable twins. People who are in the position of power are those who “have the potential to influence us.”<sup>28</sup> Power is the ability and efficacy to influence others.<sup>29</sup> A pastor who is new to the church may have constituted authority or “legitimate power” but may not yet have influence with those who have been gained the trust of the people.<sup>30</sup> The pastor can gain influence only after spending time to building trust with the congregation.

Leadership in the church is carried out by providing spiritual guidance and influence to the congregation so that together they can fulfill the divine call in response to the signs of the times. Hence leadership in the church is more than power and influence, but is “a gift.”<sup>31</sup> Regardless of denominational authority structures, those who can influence people and affect positive change are the true leaders of the church.

A key responsibility of the top leadership in an organization is to cast *vision*. In a discussion of Christian leadership, Philip Collins argues that “To lead is to possess a vision.”<sup>32</sup> Vision casting is helping the church to understand “God’s purpose for the church and appreciate the more unique calling and priorities for its particular community.”<sup>33</sup> Leadership is more than management. In fact, management science provides a completely different set of functions between management and leadership. Richard Daft provides the following distinctions. He theorizes,

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<sup>26</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 3.

<sup>27</sup> Shawchuck, *How To Be*, 6.

<sup>28</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 7.

<sup>29</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 7.

<sup>30</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 7.

<sup>31</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 19.

<sup>32</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 20.

<sup>33</sup> Wu, “Trusting Households,” 119.

Management entails organizing a structure to accomplish a plan; staffing the structure with employees; and developing policies, procedures, and systems to direct employees and monitor implementation of the plan.

[Whereas,]

Leadership is concerned instead with communicating the vision and developing a shared culture and set of core values that can lead to the desired future state. Whereas the vision describes the destination, the culture and values help define the journey toward it.<sup>34</sup>

Theorists such as Yukl, Daft, Richards and Engle all concur that leadership is focused on the vision, values and corporate culture.<sup>35</sup> The key difference between a leader and a manager is that the leader casts the vision and the manager does the planning and budgeting accordingly.<sup>36</sup> In the corporate world, leaders are to connect with their followers while managers must keep an “emotional distance” so that the task of managing is not hindered.<sup>37</sup>

The church needs both leaders and managers. The leadership of the local church consists of the lead pastor and elders or deacons who together seek a vision for their congregation. Leaders set the direction and shared values for the church. Once the vision is cast, it is executed by managers, deacons in some denominations, whose key role is to manage. Managers carry out the detailed planning and budgeting in order to make it happen. However, the line between leaders and managers in the church may be blurred because it consists of mostly volunteers. The vision of the church is not determined by a single person but by the process of collective discernment. The pastor is de facto one of the key leaders. The planning and budgeting of ministries are usually done by both different levels of leaders.

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<sup>34</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 16.

<sup>35</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 16.

<sup>37</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 16.

In the case of English ministry in the CCC, the situation is complexified by dual layers of leaders and managers. The English leadership team, the English pastor and core members, have the responsibility to lead the congregation. Consequently, they are to set the vision and ministry direction. However, there is another layer of leadership that oversees the English leadership team. In the larger power structures of the immigrant church, they are subject to the direction and approval of the Senior Pastor and elders who are the actual “power holders” of the church.<sup>38</sup> On one hand, the English pastor and core members play the role of leaders to their congregation; and on the other, they are managers in the grand scale. Nonetheless, their primary responsibility is to seek a vision for the English ministry. One of the issues in power dynamics is the push to maintain the Chinese culture in English ministries.

There are different types of leadership. James MacGregor Burns suggests there are three basic types of leadership. The first type is *transactional leadership* where the relationship between leaders and followers are based on exchange of what the other person needs. Political figures are examples of this type of leadership. “[Leaders] approach followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another: jobs for votes, or subsidies for campaign contributions.”<sup>39</sup> This relationship works for business leaders and entrepreneurs who are “seeing opportunities and going after them.”<sup>40</sup> The relationship between the leader and followers are transactional. This mode of leadership is predicated on the exchange of goods and services. Long term relationship is not required. Burns asserts that this “[comprises] the bulk of the relationship among leaders and followers.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 18.

<sup>39</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>40</sup> Maxwell, *Irrefutable*, 14.

<sup>41</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

Ray Kroc who took a local hamburger business and made it into the international brand of MacDonald's franchise belongs to this group.<sup>42</sup> This type of leadership can be effective in the church for short term projects such as mission trips or event driven activities.

The second type is *transforming leadership*. This type of relationship goes beyond the simple exchange of goods or skills. The leader engages motivated followers who can provide "mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents."<sup>43</sup> The transforming leader capitalizes on "an existing need or demand in a potential follower."<sup>44</sup> Their operation is not based on a form of exchange but on an ideology. There is a common purpose in the partnership. Political leaders who have an ideological or Utopian agenda belong to this higher order of leadership. Abraham Lincoln whose Gettysburg Address moved a nation during the American Civil War is a transforming leader.<sup>45</sup> One may argue that Mao Zedong who transformed China into the modern unified nation also fits into this mode.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, there is a danger in this model of charismatic leadership. In building relationships with followers predicated on a common ideology, transforming leaders can also use their skills to exploit their followers. Lincoln and Mao are significantly different in their ideologies. However, the common thread is in their extraordinary leadership. Hence good leadership alone is not enough. It is not enough for human government; and it is certainly not enough for the church.

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<sup>42</sup> Maxwell, *Irrefutable Laws*, 2–5.

<sup>43</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>44</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," 93–94.

<sup>46</sup> Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," 93–94.

The third type is *moral leadership* that goes even further in affecting change in their followers. Arguably, Lincoln's legacy goes beyond transforming leadership to moral leadership. This model of leadership is the type that can build bridges between generations. They are leaders who have *moral authority*. Moral authority is separated from constituted authority. The latter has to do with position in the power structures. First, moral leaders "have a relationship [with their followers] not only of power but of mutual needs, aspirations, and values."<sup>47</sup> The moral leader is not above his or her followers. The leader leads by modeling. Moral leaders do not lead with condescending power. They operate as one of the members of the group.

The moral leader feels the pain of his or her followers. Martin Luther King, Jr. is a moral leader because he identifies with those he led in the Civil Rights movement. Second, fairness and honesty are trademarks of a moral leader. King could not have had the legacy he did had he not advocated a non-violent and Christian response to the injustice that resonated with his fellow Black Americans. Moral leaders do not lead by coercion or by power but by showing their followers "adequate knowledge of alternative leaders and programs and [allow them] the capacity to choose among those alternatives."<sup>48</sup> People follow moral leaders because they have examined their agendas and motives and found them to be genuine.

Lastly, moral leaders are responsible leaders. "[If] they promise certain kinds of economic, social, and political change, they assume leadership in the bringing about of that change."<sup>49</sup> This mode of leadership can affect change "that will satisfy followers' authentic needs." Burns argues that this type of leadership is "less the Ten

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<sup>47</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>49</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

Commandments than the Golden Rule. [However,] even the Golden rule is inadequate, for it measures the wants and needs of others simply by our own.”<sup>50</sup> Moral leadership is inviting not demanding. Like transforming leadership, moral leaders seek to nurture followers to their full potential—even becoming leaders in their own right.

In the church, it might be interpreted as *making disciples into disciple-makers*. Much of what is exemplified by first generation leaders is constituted authority—top down, no contest. They are power holders. They have the constituted authority to make changes; and they can exercise that power. But until they operate as moral leaders, their leadership is limited in vision and efficacy.

#### The Current Distribution of Power

There are patterns and recurring themes between senior leaders and the English team that needs to be addressed. The letters of the law is dead but the spirit of the law is alive—*dynamic*. Power structures may be set in church constitutions but the distribution of power is up to interpretation; and that interpretation is highly dependent on the relationships between power holders and power recipients. Relationships play a significant role in the power dynamics especially in the Chinese culture. Moreover, the relationship between senior leaders and the English core team members is paramount to the future of the Canadian Chinese Church. The shame and honor culture of the east must also be taken into consideration. Saving face or losing it is a major factor in negotiating power. Relationships are fragile constructs which must be guarded with care. Once relationships are broken, the mending efforts would be costly.

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<sup>50</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

There are four notable characteristics of power in the CCC. First, the hierarchy in the church represented by a parent-child relationship between the two tiers of leadership—the Chinese side and the English ministry. How can this relationship evolve so that it could be beneficial to both first and second generation leaders? This is a key issue for consideration. Caring is the evolution of relationships for the English speaking in the immigrant church. Second, the paternalistic approach to decision making often puts the English ministry at a disadvantage. This is a tension point for young adults who seek to be acknowledged as equal partners. A key problem with the decision making process is that power holders do not see a problem in the process. No real change can happen until power holders can see it from the perspective of the powerless.

Third, the success and performance mentality from the world has crept into the church in the name of growth. Performance-drivenness is not only coming from the Chinese culture. Competitiveness is human nature.<sup>51</sup> It is a driving force in the marketplace.<sup>52</sup> Performance-drivenness is deeply rooted in the culture. The ministry philosophy of the Canadian Chinese Church is highly performance-driven. It has been shaping pastoral ministry to be less people-oriented and more task-oriented. This is more evidence when it comes to the evaluation of their English ministries. Finally, the rejection of ideas is another recurring theme among post-adolescents. Those who have experienced innovative ways at other churches are eager to bring new ideas back to their home church. However, the common experience is that their ideas are quickly rejected. Why is it so difficult to implement new ideas in the ethnic church? All of the above are related to the systemic issue of power structures in the Canadian Chinese Church.

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<sup>51</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 17.

<sup>52</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 87–89.

## Parent-Child Relationship

Power dynamics between first and second generation leadership strongly resembles the power play in the familial system. The Chinese culture is strongly influenced by Confucianism which promotes a patriarchal and social system that teaches people to be “loyal to their rulers, filial to their parents [and] their older siblings, correct in their relations to their spouses, and honest with their friends.”<sup>53</sup> From social etiquette to how to govern, it provides a comprehensive system of social and practical philosophies. The patriarchal culture in society and at home is translated into the hierarchical structure in the church. The parent-child metaphor is often cited by leaders on both sides to describe power structures in the church. This relationship also provides the framework for the current discussion.

People in the first generation congregation are commonly referred to as the *Chinese side* because they worship and function in the vernacular, whether it is Cantonese or Mandarin. It is worth noting that the Chinese side may also include younger people. They are still considered *first generation* by virtue of their proximity and association to the Chinese culture. The second generation is commonly referred to as the *English ministry* or EM. Similarly, this cohort also includes a wide age range generally. They are also known as Second Generation Ministry because of their preferred language and culture. The number of older people in most English congregations is few. There are exceptions. The demographics of EM is made up of mostly students and a dwindling pool of young men and women.

The parent-child relationship in the Chinese culture is vastly different from the west. The patriarchal expectation of respect of the elders is deeply rooted in the Chinese

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<sup>53</sup> Baker, *Korean Spirituality*, 42.



family and the ethnic community. Children are expected to show a high degree of respect and even obedience not only to their parents but to older siblings and those who are older than them. It would be considered disrespectful for younger sibling to address their older brother or sister simply by name. They are to address an older sibling with the prefix of *gar-gar* (older brother) or *jie-jie* (older sister). Also, it is not uncommon to hear children calling people who are not related to them “uncles” and “aunties.” The culture of respect is deeply ingrained in their psyche. It would be inconceivable for Chinese Canadians to address their parents by their first name as it is sometimes done in the west. This familial structure has permeated into the social and ecclesial settings of the Chinese diaspora. The parent-child relationship is played out in the church since many parents are actual power holders to the English ministry where the child is a member.

The parent-child relationship in ministry is good and even necessary in the beginning. There are no issues until the children reaches adolescence. By the time they return from university and college, they have been exposed to various philosophies and critical thinking. They are now independent thinkers. This is their first major life transition. The second transition is when they graduate and enter the marketplace. They return to their home church as professional men and women but found themselves still being treated like children. They feel marginalized. The church has become a place that they have outgrown. Christian identity, Brister argues, is developed “in terms of one’s age, personal history, mental ability ... relationship patterns, physical and emotional health, intentional goals, community of faith, and cultural milieu.”<sup>54</sup> It seems that identity cannot be compartmentalized. When their Christian identity is in doubt, their whole identity is in crisis.

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<sup>54</sup> Brister, *Pastoral Care*, 55.

Some have chosen to leave quietly. This is partly due to their upbringing as Chinese and as Christian. The added element of religious tradition may be viewed as a particular type of culture—the *Chinese Christian Culture*. This culture tends to avoid confrontations. However, some are willing to share their thoughts honestly. Martha says, “Growing up in the church, it felt like there’s always going to be uncles and aunties [and we are being treated as] underlings, the kids.”<sup>55</sup> Julia recalls similar experiences, “We’re still perceived as children. When we have forums, people – aunties and uncles – go up and they talk about me being in pigtails when I was in elementary school and they bring all that up, but I still believe we are not viewed as leaders of the church, the English side.”<sup>56</sup> Julia belongs to the group of less engaged which “indicate a detachment from the community and immigrant generation.”<sup>57</sup> Abigail who belongs to the same group expresses her frustration as follows,

They are the big uncles. Oh, they’re rooted. And they’ll look at me as ‘little Abigail,’ right? He’s the uncle: ‘Uncle so and so, uncle so and so.’ Of course, they saw me grow up; they’ve seen me grow up right as a teen. So, they taught me Sunday school, right? [But] they don’t know about me, they know of me. So, this is the part of the whole story we’re talking about, right? They know me, but they don’t know me. They know me as Abigail from their lens, but they don’t know me as Abigail from God’s lens or from a deeper lens. And that’s the part that actually is quite [frustrating].<sup>58</sup>

This is a typical scenario for the twenty-somethings in the church. The intention is well-meaning. Perhaps it is a way of reaffirming close relationships and that the affection has not changed; and that is precisely the problem. This type of action produces resentment. Men and women coming home to the immigrant church do not want to be the children of

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<sup>55</sup> Wong, “How am I Going to Grow Up?” 240.

<sup>56</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 96.

<sup>57</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 51.

<sup>58</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 97.

the church anymore. They often find a lack of acknowledgement that they have become adults. They seek affirmation as adults and as equals from the community.

### Decision-Making Process

One of the major points of conflicts is in the decision making process. The question is whether decisions affecting English ministry are made after sufficient consultation with the English team. Martha, observes, “The (overall) style of the culture and practices (with the top leaders) are a little bit different from the (English) side I was used to ... The Chinese side will decide what’s going on and then we’ll just follow along.”<sup>59</sup> Todd observes, “English ministries are in the weaker position in relation to the Chinese congregation. They are kept dependent and not given real autonomy, independence, freedom, and power to make decisions for EM. This lack of power for (the English ministry) is tied in with organizational structure.”<sup>60</sup> The parent-child relationship plays a key role in the tension in the decision-making process. Everyone in the English congregation is often viewed as young and inexperienced. Therefore, decision making is not carried through due process. This can create power struggles between the English pastor and the Elders board. First generation leaders may be set in their ways so that they simply cannot see the situation the way that English congregants see themselves.

An English congregant recalls, “Groups in the English congregation were being micromanaged. Our prayer group was shut down and people in the EM were being hurt; I felt unsafe within the church ... I could not worship and felt that the church was a

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<sup>59</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 238.

<sup>60</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 79.

sham.”<sup>61</sup> Another says, “Tension was building up between me and the senior pastor; he was exercising unethical and unfair treatment on the English pastor ... English ministry was being marginalized and not respected in the board.”<sup>62</sup> Nathaniel remembers the negotiation of changing the worship time at his church. He says,

We [English ministry] want to change the time to this. They [Chinese ministry] want a change of time for that. Then someone gets mad about this or that; some people who don't like change, and some people want more emphasis on [the] Chinese side because some of the people who spoke Mandarin ... saw it as more valuable.<sup>63</sup>

The fact that *someone gets mad* is indicative of the power play or politics in the patriarchal system that almost always ends in favour for Chinese ministry. Individuals in English ministry are left to deal with the frustration. The English congregants were already courageous enough to bring their issues to light but chose to back down to keep the unity.

Seeking clarification might also be seen as a challenge to authority; and therefore, it is discouraged. Business decisions can be taken very personally in the church. It is a “taboo” to be critical of the leadership.<sup>64</sup> However, one should not jump to conclusion that Confucius teaches a totalitarian approach. In fact, he teaches the need for clarification and “the correction of terms.”<sup>65</sup> He promotes an attitude of continuous learning. He says, “A wise man, in regard to what he does not understand, maintains an attitude of reserve.”<sup>66</sup> That is to say, think and ask questions before making decisions.

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<sup>61</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 94.

<sup>62</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 94.

<sup>63</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 322.

<sup>64</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 94.

<sup>65</sup> Confucius, *Analects*, 73.

<sup>66</sup> Confucius, *Analects*, 73.

As a whole, everyone who is involved with the English ministry is in the weaker position in the power structures. Leaders on the Chinese side act as parents. Hosting a BBQ would require *parental-like* approval from the leadership on the Chinese side. Wong rightly points out that the “paternalistic model created a culture of control with authority in place such that permission had to be sought to conduct ministry on the English side.”<sup>67</sup> Moreover, information sharing is generally insufficient. Major endeavors such as missions, building projects, and budgeting are all directed by the Chinese ministry. However, some churches have adopted various administrative models and methods to share power with their English speaking congregations. This is an encouraging development when English ministry leaders are being invited to the table.

#### Performance-Driven Mentality

There is also a strong performance-driven mentality in the CCC. The success of the English ministry is evaluated based on results. The need to perform puts pressure on English congregations. This can distract the young adults from seeking a deeper relationship with God. The demand to perform becomes a form of control in the parent-child relationship. The undue pressure to perform well in school is carried into the church. Performance takes away the attention needed to nurture post-adolescents. The leaders of the church, like parent, want to make sure English ministry is *performing* well at all time. This may include starting on time, technical excellence, proper attire, and increase in attendance. They are constantly under the watch and evaluation of parents/leaders to perform without attentiveness to their struggles and what is really

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<sup>67</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 239.

going on in their lives. The emphasis on different aspects of ministry may vary, but attendance seems to be the benchmark of success.

There are many factors that can affect the outcome of attendance. The dynamics of the Chinese speaking and English speaking congregations are very different. They come from very different backgrounds. This can partly account for the success of the pioneers in the early 60s and into the 70s. In those days attendees were mostly visa students who were here alone without their family. Therefore, the church became their family, community, and social centre. Their social life was centred on the Christian fellowship. They studied together, ate together, and went camping together. Their social life and religious affiliations were synchronized. The church was their social life. Their ethnic and cultural identities were unified except for an injection of Canadian campus life. The immigrant church was and still is a refuge for foreign students. On the other hand, second generation CBC's are well established in the Canadian society. They grew up and played with multicultural friends. They have social circles outside the church. The church does not have the same meaning for them as it did for their parents. Many come to church because their parents come to church. However, the church is not the only social centre for the English speaking young people. To impose the same expectation of attachment, meaning, and spirituality from them would be unrealistic.

Performance is important for English speaking Chinese Canadians because they have been taught that who they are will be defined by how they perform. This is not just in the Chinese culture. William Graham Tullian Tchividjian argues,

Performancism is the mindset that equates our identity and value directly with our performance. It casts achievements not as something we do or don't do but as something we are (or aren't). The money we earn, the car we drive, the schools we attend, aren't merely reflective of our occupation or ability; they are reflective

of us. They are constitutive rather than descriptive. In this schema, success equals life, and failure is tantamount to death.<sup>68</sup>

When the performance of their faith practices is deemed unacceptable, young adults receive the message that they are of little value to the faith community. The way they feel about the church is subtly translated to the way they feel about God. Hence they may feel abandoned by God. Failure to meet the expectations of the church (and God) causes identity confusion.

The idea that their worth is a result of performance is not only unhelpful but is also unbiblical. The gospel is the administration of God's unmerited grace in Jesus Christ. The church needs to find ways to affirm the value of individuals that is based on their uniqueness as image bearers of God; not based on their usefulness to the church. They are not human resources for the church but are precise children of God. Their participation in ministry is the fulfillment of their commitment to Christ. Efficacy in ministry is not the result of performance. True success in ministry comes from the work of the Holy Spirit through the loving actions of the people of God. Performance is competitive and follows the way of the world. It is not that results are unimportant. However, the biblical model of success in ministry is dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> The article, "The Missing Message in Today's Churches," by William Graham Tullian Tchividjian was first posted in The Washington Post, October 17, 2013. Subsequently, this article has been reposted in various blogs.

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/geneveith/2013/10/whats-missing-in-todays-churches/>

<sup>69</sup> Please refer to 1 Corinthians 3:5–8.

## Rejection of Ideas

Many young adults are excited to share creative ideas that they have learned with the church. However, their ideas are often rejected. The following story illustrates the point. While working in the States, James attended an Asian American church. He was excited to bring new ideas back to his church. Although the proposed changes were not considered “outrageous,” his attempt was met with “resistance.”<sup>70</sup> This narrative is a recurring theme among individuals who have ventured outside and returned. They have experienced fresh new ideas and would like to share it. Too often leaders view this gesture as prideful and they come up with reasons of why the idea is not acceptable. Consequently, ideas from eager individuals are not valued or even criticized. This causes frustration and confusion for young adults who want to contribute to the future of their spiritual home. When their ideas are not valued, they feel that they are not being valued.

## Toward a Theology of Empowerment

The conversation on empowerment is not new in the Canadian Chinese Church. However, the focus has been mainly on the administrative procedure of power sharing. In this scenario, there are two common dichotomies. On the one hand, permission granted is considered empowerment by first generation leaders. This is not satisfactory to English congregations. On the other, a free hand is given to the English ministry without much guidance from experienced leaders. In leadership theories, empowerment “[enables] people to do what needs to be done to pursue a vision, purpose, objective or strategy and to fulfil their potential.”<sup>71</sup> A vision which is deemed by both sides as acceptable is an

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<sup>70</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 256.

<sup>71</sup> Gill, *Theory*, 232.



imperative to move forward in generational ministry. Only then can true empowerment begin to take place.

Business leaders understand the significance of empowerment for the sake of productivity and profitability. Employers have taken the time to train management staff to exercise a level of empowerment that allows employees to participate in the decision-making process. By the same token, the church with a mandate carries greater value is encouraged to reflect on its theology and practice of empowerment. Currently, when a request is submitted by the English ministry to the church board, empowerment means permission is granted. Whenever an activity is planned, the English core leaders need to seek approval from the senior pastor, elders or deacons. Senior leaders see no problem with empowerment because whenever a request is made, permission is usually granted. For them, this is empowerment. However, true freedom that empowers is the granting of independent thinking and action. Therefore, *permission is usually granted* is not true empowerment.<sup>72</sup> First generation leaders feel that there is a lot of freedom for the English congregation because permission is usually granted. However, they miss the point. Permission should not even be required because true freedom means permission is no longer necessary; but consultation still is welcomed.

Relationship, mentorship, and good advice are important elements. There is a considerable difference between granting permission and giving advice. Advice is given in recognition of the autonomy of the recipient. Permission granted is the affirmation that the recipient is under the authority of the one who has the final word. Empowerment in the church embodies cooperation as peer-to-peer. This is not be the case in business

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<sup>72</sup> Permission is usually granted is a common phrase used in the CCC to denote empowerment by first generation leaders.

theories. Empowerment must be grounded in trust. Without trust ministry issues can easily be skewed by power struggles.<sup>73</sup> The movement towards empowerment does not imply the end of relationships. Fellowship within the faith community must always preside regardless of ranks. The presence of caring relationships is beneficial to both sides of generational ministry.

### Change in Relationships

The movement towards empowerment begins with a change in relationships. In many ways, inter-generational issues are, in fact, inter-cultural. Here Lartey's pastoral cycle provides valuable insights for the context of young adults in the CCC. However, intercultural pastoral theology works best when based on one important but subtle element—a peer-to-peer relationship. This is a hurdle for the immigrant church. Before interpathy can be exercised, the two sides of the CCC must come to terms with their relationship. A condescending perspective from either side would hinder the progress. A fundamental change in how people in the first generation relate to emerging adults is required. When this happens, it will make way for change in power structures. The parent-child relationship can never be fully eradicated because many are actual children of the pioneers; neither should it be. However, the way they relate to each other can evolve. The complaint from young adults is not that the parent-child relationship exists, but that they are being treated as little children. This dissertation calls for a *re-vision* of the parent-child relationship in generational ministry and not the objection of it.

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<sup>73</sup> The Canadian Chinese Church is at a transitional stage. Many first generation pastors are ready to or have already retired. There may be possibilities for change in leadership models. Leaders in the ethnic church can play a pivotal role in empowering young adults to find their own vision and purpose.

The parent-child relationship is first a relationship before it is a power structure at home. The adult child did not become independent at birth. At each stage of the life cycle, the child grows until he or she becomes an independent adult. When the child becomes an adult, the parents will no longer impose curfews and other rules. Neither does the adult child seek permission to go out. This is predicated on a simplified view of the western culture. In various cultures, parents may still impose rules for their adult children. Furthermore, parents play a significant role in being benefactors for their children through the provision of room and board, and so on. In a 2015 article, *Money Sense* estimated that it would take over \$ 240,000 CAD to raise a child until they are 18 years old.<sup>74</sup> Parents gladly give and the child willingly receives. The immigrant churches were planted and sustained by the pioneers. The English congregation in most cases benefited and contentedly accepted the situation. The parent-child relationship offers provision and protection. English ministry can benefit from its mother-church for financial help as a new church plant. It can also explore the rich Christian heritage and spiritual tradition to safe guard against apostasy and pluralism. As it is at home it is in the church, the parent-child relationship is first a relationship before it is a power structure.

The parent-child relationship in the church is not necessarily a hindrance. It can be viewed as a blessing. The parent-child relationship still exists, but the relationship has evolved. Autonomy and relationship do not preclude each other. The hope in young adults is to be accepted as full members of the community. The parent-child relationship at home evolves towards an adult-to-adult model. The adult child is neither alienated from nor hostile towards the parents. The relationship must remain for the sake of

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<sup>74</sup> <https://www.moneysense.ca/save/financial-planning/the-real-cost-of-raising-a-child/>

continuity which is a key pillar of identity.<sup>75</sup> As the parent-child relationship evolves at home, so it does in the church. Power structures in the church are necessarily rooted in apostolic authority within the realm of Trinitarian fellowship. Authority can only be administered properly with mutual submission and in submission to God. Power that is coerced will breed resentment and revolt. The parenting style at home has changed from parenting school kids to parenting adult children. Similarly, empowerment between generations means for power dynamics in the church to be modeled after parenting the adult-child. In other words, the relationship between first and second generation leaders moves toward an adult-to-adult model.

### Closing the Power Gap

The change in relationships requires a change in ethos not only among leaders but for the whole church. When relationships change, then true empowerment is possible. When the parent-child relationship evolves to parenting adult-children, the working relationship between generations can move from a top-down to a peer-to-peer model. Currently, the focus of power in the CCC usually rest upon one single person, a strong leader. Wong explains,

[CCC] leaders who were brought up in Asian cultural backgrounds and trained in traditional philosophies of ministry tend to postulate a focused view of leadership practice primarily defined by power and authority, based more on the “Strongman Theory” (i.e., success and failure is determined by one single individual who occupies the top role in the hierarchical ladder). Such leadership practice enconces the decision-making responsibilities safely in the hands of a chosen few.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>76</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 258.

The high view of success galvanizes the strongman mentality and performancism in the church. It also entails “a fear of failure” in every ministry.<sup>77</sup> Failure is brings shame rather than becoming a part of the learning process. Moreover, there is a “command culture ... [where] no attempt appeared to be made by the leaders to instill a sense of autonomy or empowerment.”<sup>78</sup> When this happens, power can easily become oppressive to those who desire to participate in building up the faith community.

No room for failure stifles creativity in young adults. Martha comments, “We have to go (and) ask the Chinese side first to get permission on any kind of (action), there was no empowerment ... it felt like control ... It felt like [the English ministry] was more passive because a lot of times, they’re ... just sitting there in the sense that the Chinese side will decide what’s going on and then we’ll just follow long.”<sup>79</sup> There are two significant points that require pastoral theological reflection. First, Martha notes that permission is not empowerment. This may surprise many leaders on the Chinese side. From their perspective, permission granted is empowerment. This view continues to be problematic. English congregants are looking for more than permission but partnership.

Second, English congregants have been labeled as a generation of introverts. Perhaps the cause of passivity is not an inert nature of quiet disposition but the result of the lack of empowerment. Their lack of enthusiasm may be due to the fact that they do not believe whatever they say or do will be taken seriously. They are not encouraged to take initiative. When they do, they are scrutinized. Those who dare to share new ideas face rejection. How can they grow if not by trial and error, within reason? Concerns are often raised under the heading of theological correctness. If theological correctness is the

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<sup>77</sup> Yuki, *Leadership*, 42.

<sup>78</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 239.

<sup>79</sup> Wong, “How am I,” 239.

issue, then let there be friendly discussions and good hermeneutics. Otherwise, permission becomes a form of control. The power issue may be indicative of other issues such as insecurity and the lack of genuine fellowship. The mandate of senior leaders is to nurture a new generation of post-adolescents to follow Jesus passionately through providing visions and opportunities to serve.

The decision-making process also reflects “the presence of high power distance between leaders and followers.”<sup>80</sup> High power distance is when “people accept inequality in power among institutions, organizations, and individuals.”<sup>81</sup> Power distance is taken from evaluation of political systems and their social values. High power distance is not desirable but accepted in secular settings due to the need to survive. An employee remains in an organization for various reasons. Their decision to stay or to leave will have immediate effect on their livelihood. Therefore, he or she is willing to stay under the structure of a high power distance within reasonable limits. Volunteers in the church may not be as willing to accept inequality. They will either speak up or get out. Inequality is a strong word. However, it is helpful in conveying the experience of English speaking young adults.<sup>82</sup>

The change in relationship entails closing the power gap so that “people [can] expect equality in power.”<sup>83</sup> Power structures in the church must reflect a biblical ecclesiology and exceed the expectation in the business world and political arena. In the business world, empowerment means leaders are to “provide people with the power, information, and authority that [enable] them to find greater intrinsic satisfaction with

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<sup>80</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 259.

<sup>81</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 308.

<sup>82</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 259.

<sup>83</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 308.

their work.”<sup>84</sup> They empower their subordinates to do the job and to have a sense of achievement. The ultimate goal is not to share power with their followers. The business model focuses on the economic reality and class power. However, power in the church is predicated on the authority of Christ the founder and head of the church. Leaders as ambassadors of the gospel receive this authority for the purpose of proclaiming the good news. Power sharing is a sign of success when young adults are called and mentored to be partners of the gospel. Closing the power gap in the church is counter culture in that power sharing is synergy. The one who shares power does not lose out but gain honor and fellowship.

#### Christian Leadership and Power

The nature of Christian leadership is fundamentally different from its secular counterpart. Christian leadership begins with the divine call. Furthermore, it is a gift. Collins argues that Christian leaders are not ‘hired’ but “called into service” and are gifted with leadership.<sup>85</sup> He defines Christian leadership “as a revealed mystery, is a gracious gift from God to the Christian leader, whether clergy or laity, imbued of servanthood, visionary, characterized by the art of persuasion.”<sup>86</sup> The key difference between Christian leadership and that of the business world is in their ultimate purpose. Wong asserts, “[Spiritual] leaders can exercise authority not so much for the purpose of holding onto the positional power, but rather deriving the spiritual one that is based on the calling from the Lord.”<sup>87</sup> However, Collins affirms that the nature of Christian leadership shares some

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<sup>84</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 217.

<sup>85</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 27.

<sup>86</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 26.

<sup>87</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 259.

theoretical principles with its secular counterpart. Though the aspect of spiritual gift is significant, the practitioner is encouraged to acquire the knowledge of leadership and management.

The character of the Christian leader is more important than his or her leadership skills. Theories in leadership deal with its efficacy in affecting change in policy or behaviour. However, Christian leadership seeks to inspire not only by what they do but who they are. Empowerment requires inspiration in addition to instruction. Faith practices require consistent modeling from character to ministry. Wong asserts, “[Leadership] influence can be distributed through delegation and the inspiration of the leaders’ character.”<sup>88</sup> To be more accurate secular theories, as mentioned, already separates leaders into categories of transactional leadership versus transforming and moral leadership. Moral leaders are those who can lead with moral authority.

The authority of the Christian leader can only come from the ultimate source—God. The Christian leader recognizes “that real authority is that of the Father working through the leader.”<sup>89</sup> Authority does not come from the power structures of the church but from Christ. On the contrary, the power structures in the church facilitate Christ’s authority through the office of the pastoral person and the elders. Biblical leadership is building up God’s people. It is “not so much task-oriented as it is community-oriented.”<sup>90</sup> Furthermore, power is to be shared with all believers. Luther argues, “The church is founded on Christ’s priesthood. Its inner structure is the priesthood of Christians for each other. The priesthood of Christians flows from the priesthood of Christ.”<sup>91</sup> Thus the

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<sup>88</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 259.

<sup>89</sup> Collins, “Mystery,” 27.

<sup>90</sup> Anderson, *On Minding*, 94.

<sup>91</sup> Althaus, *Theology*, 313–14.



sharing of power is the natural flow from Christ to all believers. It empowers from generation to generation.

The goal of raising the issue of power is not to eradicate the power structures. The patriarchal system in the CCC will always be there; and it can be beneficial. For the new generation to sever ties with its rich Christian heritage and cultural narrative of the Chinese church would mean a loss of identity. Rather, the aim is to start the conversation that brings understanding and empowerment to both sides. Acknowledgement of the differences in perspectives empowers the first generation to examine their leadership practices which are filled with good intentions. Understanding how actions and words are perceived empowers the younger generation to know the language of the patriarchs. So that post-adolescents can communicate their theology and practice for the best outcome.

### **External Threat: The Rise of Neoliberalism**

Power and politics are subtle forces that can either affirm or erode identity in postmodern young adults. The issue of power structures in the Canadian Chinese Church is only one of many ways that can erode identity. This research argues that neoliberalism has been an oppressive force affecting those who are in the pews and beyond. Pastoral theologians have raised the alarm. Bruce Rogers-Vaughn warns that neoliberalism is a “global paradigm, or hegemony, and thus has the capacity to govern why, how and from what human beings suffer.”<sup>92</sup> Ryan LaMothe rightly separates the philosophy of neoliberalism from its State-corporate policies which has heightened anxiety for the average citizen. It has been affecting individual health, family life, and accelerating injustice.

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<sup>92</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 75.

While discontentment can be fueled by many sources such as social unrest or personal crises, neoliberal capitalism has been identified as one of the key sources of discontentment.<sup>93</sup> In order to provide effective caring to young adults, practitioners need to understand the complexities of the postmodern world. This includes identifying the stress points on young adulthood. The reason for raising the issue is that most practitioners are unaware of this oppression that exists in the culture. Neoliberal capitalism is an area that affects the livelihood of young adults; and livelihood is vital to identity. There is urgency in confronting neoliberalism as a new form of human suffering. Now is the time for pastoral theology to “foray into economics.”<sup>94</sup>

It is no surprise then to observe emerging adults walk into the church stressed and exhausted. Men and women in the CCC, like everyone else, are facing an invisible and formidable force that has been putting pressure on their very existence. Perhaps this pressure is heavier for Chinese Canadians who are brought up in a highly performance driven mentality in areas of education and vocation. A survey done within the CCC shows that over 70% of those who left the church identify with the following statement: “These days, I am too busy to attend church regularly.”<sup>95</sup> An interviewee laments, “I have to work on certain Sunday ... Sundays [sic] are my only day off ... and I just don’t want to wake up for [church]. It’s either I feel terrible or laziness for me.”<sup>96</sup> This is indicative of many young adults who are just starting out in their careers. Neoliberal capitalism been affecting the global economy for over four decades but it is just beginning to be discussed in pastoral theology.

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<sup>93</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 1–4, 21, 37; Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 18–19; Connolly, *Fragility*, 22.

<sup>94</sup> LaMothe, “Neoliberal,” 7.

<sup>95</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, xi, 137.

<sup>96</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 139.

Neoliberal capitalism is generally understood with the following eight characteristics provided by pastoral theologian Ryan LaMothe,

[First,] human well-being is best achieved by providing entrepreneurial freedoms so that actors can act out of their ‘rational’ self-interests, [second,] social goods will be maximized by expanding the reach and frequency of market transaction, [third,] anything and anyone can be commodified, [fourth] the state is not to intervene in trying to control markets or restrict the reach of commodification, [fifth,] the state functions to ensure private property rights and deregulation so that there can be free markets and free trade, [next,] where markets do not exist, entrepreneurs and the state work together to ensure both privatization and deregulation (e.g. privatization of public education, prisons, healthcare, etc.), [seventh,] corporations are to inform the state as to the laws that will enhance profit and expansion, [lastly,] greed can actually be used to benefit society.<sup>97</sup>

The last characteristic of greed as a benefit to society is both a moral deception and a cause to oppressive experiences in the workplace. Rogers-Vaughn asserts that neoliberal capitalism has “become so pervasive, inclusive and powerful that it may be considered a global paradigm, or hegemony, and thus has the capacity to govern why, how, and from what human beings suffer.”<sup>98</sup>

Therefore, if this is a major area where people, especially those in transition, are suffering, then bringing a message of hope is an urgent ministry at hand. The first step is for the church to gain a good understanding of the causes of their discontent. What is neoliberalism? How can the church become relevant to those who are oppressed by this power? This section seeks to provide a primer into the subject from four perspectives: its *appeal* of ultimate individual freedom, its *method* through political and economic policies with the *goal* of changing the soul and the culture, and its *driver* of competitiveness in human nature. These perspectives will help expand LaMothe’s eight characteristics of neoliberal capitalism. This discussion will necessarily involve a reflection on the human

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<sup>97</sup> LaMothe, “Neoliberal,” 15.

<sup>98</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 9–10.

cost of neoliberalism and the possible Christian response of true freedom, compassion, and community.

### Ultimate Individual Freedom

Neoliberalism can be understood fundamentally as the philosophy that promotes *ultimate individual freedom* by lifting restrictions set by government policies to so that free trade can be maximized between individuals and territories globally. David Harvey explains, “Neoliberalism is in the first instance a theory of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private rights, free markets, and free trade.”<sup>99</sup> At the individual level, this definition is very attractive to post-adolescents who have been waiting for their moment to become full member of the adult population.

Patrick J. Deneen, professor of political science at the University of Notre Dame, argues that the American economy promotes a form of “autonomous individualism.”<sup>100</sup> Furthermore, he argues that the political debate in the United States is not between liberalism and conservatism but between “classical liberalism” and “progressive liberalism.”<sup>101</sup> He defines classical liberalism as “the founding philosophy of America that stress natural rights, limited government, and a relatively free and open market.”<sup>102</sup> Progressive liberalism, on the other hand, “longs for a liberalism not yet achieved, one that strives to transcend the limitation of the past and even envisions a transformed

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<sup>99</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 2.

<sup>100</sup> Deneen, “Community,” 45.

<sup>101</sup> Deneen, “The Tragedy,” 38; Deneen, *Why Liberalism*, 46.

<sup>102</sup> Deneen, “The Tragedy,” 38.

humanity.”<sup>103</sup> The significance of this comparison is that both the liberal left and the neoliberal right are promoting an ideology of individualism.<sup>104</sup>

It is worth noting that neoliberalism is a complex system that is not easily defined. Connell asserts,

The neoliberal agenda cannot be regarded as a single doctrine or program, or even as a single package of policies. It is, rather, a sprawling family of related policies that get proposed and implemented in different sequences and in a variety of institutional forms. They are linked, however, even if imperfectly, through the mechanisms of global markets, the circulations of neoliberal doctrine ... and the mutual support of neoliberal states, under the hegemony of the United States.<sup>105</sup>

Hence to give a comprehensive economic view of neoliberal capitalism is out of the scope of this research. The current discussion only seeks to start the conversation among pastoral theologians and practitioners in the area of caring for those in transition into adulthood.

Practically, neoliberalism takes a step further than the classical liberalism’s value of freedom from “coercion and servitude.”<sup>106</sup> It seeks to alleviate or minimize social injustice by allowing individuals to maximize his or her ability to pursue happiness by the revised structure of the “free market.”<sup>107</sup> Hence it necessarily embraces social reforms that include, for example, gender and race equality in the marketplace. Social-economic inequality has been a major concern among post-industrial researchers.<sup>108</sup> The modernist

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<sup>103</sup> Deneen, “The Tragedy,” 38.

<sup>104</sup> Deneen, *Why Liberalism*, xiii. Deneen argues that liberalism in western politics has deviated from its classical concept of liberty. “By ancient and Christian understandings, liberty was the condition of self-governance whether achieved by the individual or by a political community.” It involves “self-command and self-discipline” which has to do with social norms. In contrast, liberalism is “understood to be the greatest possible freedom from external constraints, including customary norms.” Hence liberalism is no longer the fight for liberty from the political left but it can be embraced by those from the right who are in favour of ultimate individual freedom.

<sup>105</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 32.

<sup>106</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing,” 7.

<sup>107</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 23.

<sup>108</sup> Cucca and Maestriperi, “Varieties,” 21.

marketplace is based on a male dominated system. However, postmodern theorists are more conscious of the struggle of women for advancement and fair pay. In the neoliberal culture, the feminist agenda is beginning to take shape in the western societies. It even challenges the functional binary gender identity of men and women.<sup>109</sup> The goal is mainly to redefine the role of men and women in the workplace and not necessarily bearing on the transgender issue. Its theory seeks to “make no discrimination based on race” and to address aboriginal rights.

Raewyn Connell argues, “Indeed to the leadership of some oppressed and marginalized groups, neoliberalism can appear to offer a path forward.”<sup>110</sup> In theory, “[neoliberalism] treats men and women as formally equal market agents, and neoliberal organizations usually have policy of ‘equal opportunity.’”<sup>111</sup> However, Rogers-Vaughn argues, “One the one hand it offers women and racial minorities ‘equal opportunity’ under a system based on individual merit. On the other, the acceptance of these benefits requires accommodation to a structure in which racism and sexism remain deeply inscribed.”<sup>112</sup> The proposed structure fails because of its powerless to change the natural tendency in human nature for self-preservation and greed. What is needed in reducing social injustice is love and transcendence which are beyond any economic structure.

This appeal of freedom is powerful. Harvey goes as far as calling neoliberal freedom “compelling and seductive ideals.”<sup>113</sup> The American Dream is built on the right to “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”<sup>114</sup> The history of democracy in the western

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<sup>109</sup> Gibson-Graham, *The End*, 13–14.

<sup>110</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 34.

<sup>111</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 34.

<sup>112</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 31.

<sup>113</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 5.

<sup>114</sup> The American Dream online: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American\\_Dream](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Dream)

world is built on the fundamental belief in human dignity and freedom. Individual freedom is highly valued. Wars are fought even if its definition of freedom differs.<sup>115</sup> This is of course very appealing those who are enticed by the abundance of toys as a status symbol.<sup>116</sup> However, neoliberal capitalism promotes consumerism to the extreme. This power is exercised through greed and consumerism. LaMothe asserts that in North Americans in the twenty-first century “live lives of unquiet desperation.”<sup>117</sup> Neoliberal philosophy claims that discontentment can be resolved through entrepreneurial freedom. Roberto De Vogli contends, “at best, conspicuous consumption can produce only ephemeral advantages.”<sup>118</sup> Moreover, Mary Jo Leddy asserts that the individual under the influence of consumerism is not free but held captive by the “culture of money.”<sup>119</sup>

Already economists and sociologists are warning against the gap between theory and practice in this new found freedom. Neoliberalism promotes a freedom that gives power for individuals to act without bounds. The pursuit of happiness through materialism entails longer working hours and deeper consumer debts.<sup>120</sup> When greed and consumerism drives the economic and social agenda, “[true] freedom is threatened. Perhaps this contributes to the higher rate of clinical depression in young adults than previous generations.<sup>121</sup> Moreover, Susan Braedley and Meg Luxton, professors of health services and women’s studies respectively, argue that “neoliberalism’s reliance on the

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<sup>115</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 5.

<sup>116</sup> This concurs with Erikson’s observation of the significance of toys from childhood to adulthood. Erikson, *Toys*, 23–25.

<sup>117</sup> LaMothe, “State-Corporate,” 15.

<sup>118</sup> De Vogli, *Progress*, 43.

<sup>119</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 19.

<sup>120</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 302.

<sup>121</sup> De Vogli, *Progress*, 29.

‘free self-actualizing individual’ as the subject limits its capacity to analyze the social relations within which individuals are born, raised and live out their lives.”<sup>122</sup>

Not only does neoliberal philosophy ignore the greater good or social contract, it negates the social context of the individual. This actually hinders the potential for self-actualization in achieving ultimate individual freedom. As mentioned, this freedom is devoid of relationships. Human beings are relational creatures. Even those who seem to be sceptical and unresponsive to goodwill are really in search of authentic relationships. In this sense, neoliberalism as an ideology is already less than ideological in nature. Hence French philosopher Daniel Dufour warns of the self in the neoliberal system is being “abandoned, rather than free. That is why they are such easy prey to whatever appears to satisfy their immediate needs.”<sup>123</sup>

The main difference between neoliberal freedom and Christian freedom is *relationships*. Neoliberal freedom is predicated on self-actualization and self-realization—to reach one’s potential for oneself and by oneself. When unchallenged, the possibility of unlimited personal freedom can be mistaken for freedom in the Christian God. Some may even argue that this is what the gospel promises. This freedom is predicated on self-actualization and materialism without a grand-narrative. Without continuity, this freedom is rootless and identity is weakened. Without a grand-narrative, the individual is also generally lost or homeless; that is, there is no home where one belongs because he or she is all there is. The latter differs significantly because the gospel provides a continuous story, a home, and relationships where freedom is rooted in transcendence and can flourish.

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<sup>122</sup> Bradley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 11.

<sup>123</sup> Dufour, “Individual,” paragraph 22.



True freedom is exuberating. God intends for human beings to enjoy life and the goodness thereof. He wants to bless and to provide for them. Rubem Alves asserts that freedom in the Old Testament points to a “freedom to find joy in the good things that life gives man. [sic]”<sup>124</sup> There is joy in true freedom which may include material goods. However, the focus should not be on materialism. Leddy argues, “Consumerism works only as long as we are even slightly dissatisfied with what we have. [Furthermore,] dissatisfaction is not natural. It is culturally induced dissatisfaction that is essential to the dynamic of the culture of money.”<sup>125</sup> The craving for more means one is never satisfied with what they have. Hence the individual is encouraged to purchase goods but are prevented from the satisfaction of that purchase. Leddy argues that the antidote is “radical gratitude”<sup>126</sup> True freedom is “spiritual psychological, political, and economic liberation” from consumerism.<sup>127</sup>

Moreover, the holistic gospel promises abundance that includes a freedom that is disciplined. True freedom not only seeks to find goodness, but to fulfill one’s duty. Biblical freedom seeks the “supreme good, which transcends the material goods of this world and consists in nothing other than the union of virtue and happiness.”<sup>128</sup> Freedom at its best is liberty with “law and moral obligation” not self-gratification.<sup>129</sup> Christian freedom is rooted in the relationship with God and finds its fulfillment in its duty to fellow human beings. Therefore, true freedom must be grounded in communal narratives. When the individual is rooted in the community, he or she is free to reach their potential.

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<sup>124</sup> Alves, *Human Hope*, 145.

<sup>125</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 23.

<sup>126</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 40.

<sup>127</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 40.

<sup>128</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 121.

<sup>129</sup> Finney, *Systematic Theology*, 182.

True freedom but is found not in the possession of toys but in the person of Christ. It also safeguards human dignity for all.

### Neoliberal Political and Economic Practices

Neoliberalism started as a reaction to the failed economy of capitalism and the “breakdown of liberalism.”<sup>130</sup> J. K. Gibson-Graham characterized capitalism as “the ‘hero’ of the industrial development narrative, the inaugural subject of ‘history,’ the bearer of the future, of modernity, of universality.”<sup>131</sup> It has been the hegemony of world economies that “brings the end to scarcity ... [Furthermore, capitalism] is an architecture or structure of power, which is conferred by ownership and by managerial or financial control.”<sup>132</sup> As liberalism was tied to capitalism, so neoliberalism is tied to “post-capitalism.”<sup>133</sup> Neoliberalism is called the “unfettered capitalism on a world scale.”<sup>134</sup> It pushes back against “Keynesian economics [which is] focused on state intervention and regulation in limiting the inevitable boom-bust cycles of classical capitalism.”<sup>135</sup> The dichotomy between capitalism and neoliberal capitalism is sometimes referred to as “Fordism” versus “post-Fordism.”<sup>136</sup> Fordism refers to the advance of the industrial age and assembly line made famous by the automaker Henry Ford. Neoliberalism moves business models to be more fluid beyond the industrial structure.

However, capitalism, which began as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century, flourished in the Golden era during the 1950s and 1960s was coming to an end by the 1970s. This was

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<sup>130</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 12.

<sup>131</sup> Gibson-Graham, *The End*, 7.

<sup>132</sup> Gibson-Graham, *The End*, 8.

<sup>133</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 1.

<sup>134</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, ix.

<sup>135</sup> LaMothe, “Neoliberal,” 15; Harvey, *Brief History*, 23–24.

<sup>136</sup> Gibson-Graham, *The End*, 29.

when the global economy made a paradigm shift. The global market has been operating under new rules since that time. Neoliberal capitalism is the game changer that has been affecting men and women in Canada and the United States. The open market makes it difficult for professionals and the labourers to compete with others from countries where wages are much lower. This puts tremendous pressure for average wage earners if they want to keep their living standard. The effects of neoliberalism are not immediately felt because while companies do not pay fair wages, neoliberal culture promotes credit or borrowing as a viable way of purchasing. This subtle shift is casting serious doubts on young adults in areas of vocation finance and identity.

The *new* liberal philosophy began in 1947. The “Mont Pelerin Society” was formed to promote a new construct of freedom.<sup>137</sup> Ironically, the new liberalism which suggests a left-wing bent is actually the product of “right-wing think-tanks.”<sup>138</sup> After World War II, the United Nations was formed to prevent such atrocity to repeat itself and western countries seem to flourish under capitalism. While all that was happening, a group of elites gathered to promote a *new world order*.<sup>139</sup> Friedrich von Hayek, Milton Friedman and a group of “academic economics, historians, and philosophers” were concerned about the future of individual freedom.<sup>140</sup> Their theory earned them the Nobel Prize in 1974.<sup>141</sup> “Neoliberal theory, particularly in its monetarist guise, began to exert practical influence in variety of policy fields.”<sup>142</sup> The official statement of the Mont Pelerin Society says,

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<sup>137</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 20.

<sup>138</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 29.

<sup>139</sup> Novak, “Moral Imperative,” 294; Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 2.

<sup>140</sup> Novak, “Moral Imperative,” 294.

<sup>141</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 22.

<sup>142</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 22.

The central values of civilization are in danger. Over large stretches of the Earth's surface the essential conditions of human dignity and freedom have already disappeared. In others they are under constant menace from the development of current tendencies of policy. The position of the individual and the voluntary group are progressively undermined by extensions of arbitrary power. Even that most precious possession of Western Man [sic], freedom of thought and expression, is threatened by the spread of creeds which, claiming the privilege of tolerance when in the position of a minority, seek only to establish a position of power in which they can suppress and obliterate all views but their own.<sup>143</sup>

One needs to read the above statement carefully. The above statement is concerned about the *arbitrary power* of the liberal left. However, Hence Hayek and Friedman “rejected the label ‘conservative.’”<sup>144</sup>

Furthermore, neoliberalists propose that not only political but economic policies are the culprit that will limit individual freedom. The group believes that freedom cannot be preserved without removing “power and initiative associated with these institutions.”<sup>145</sup> However, it was not until 1970 when Capitalism had reached its limit that paved the way for the actualization of neoliberalism. Connell explains,

Neoliberalism is most familiar to us as a set of economic policies and their supporting ideas and images. The ‘free market’ is the central image, and the deregulating measure that ‘freed up’ markets, especially capital markets, were among the earliest and most important neoliberal policies. Controls over banking, currency exchange, and capital movement were all loosened or abolished, as one country after another came under the neoliberal control from the late 1970s on.<sup>146</sup>

In other words, neoliberal capitalism intends to liberate the market and advocates for less government intervention and move towards more private ownership. This system of trade is not limited within the boundary of one country.

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<sup>143</sup> <https://www.montpelerin.org/statement-of-aims/>

<sup>144</sup> Deneen, “Counterfeiting Conservatism,” 18.

<sup>145</sup> <https://www.montpelerin.org/statement-of-aims/>

<sup>146</sup> Connell, “Understanding Neoliberalism,” 23.

Scholars at the Mont Pelerin Society hold the view that those in power cannot be trusted. Thus a restructuring of class power was inevitable. The Capitalist class is defined by *power, property ownership, and exploitation* (volume of production).<sup>147</sup> As an example, Harvey notes the rise of the pop culture in 1960s which “both mocked and challenged the traditional structure of [British] networked class system ... Its disrespectful attitude towards class privileges (whether of aristocrats, politicians, or union bureaucrats) was to ground the later radicalism of the postmodern turn.”<sup>148</sup> In reality, the ideology intended to wrestle class power from the few had a different outcome.

Deregulation began in the 1970s under the Carter administration as “one of the answers” to the economic slowdown.<sup>149</sup> In 1978, Deng Xiaoping opened up China “from a closed backwater to an open centre of capitalist dynamism.”<sup>150</sup> The redistribution of class power is evident in China which once advocated for equality among its people. It is now “the largest market in the world for Mercedes-Benz car.”<sup>151</sup> Capital accumulation is made available to some while the majority continue to live in extreme poverty. The following year, Margaret Thatcher was elected Prime Minister in Britain with the mandate to wrestle the power from the hands of the trade union. Her administration aimed to “restore class power—as opposed to dismantling working-class power—played a more subconscious role in her political evolution.”<sup>152</sup> In 1980, U.S. President Ronald Reagan supported Paul Volcker’s the financial reform to slow inflation and “curb the power of labour, deregulate industry, agriculture, and resources, transforming the

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<sup>147</sup> Gibson-Graham, *The End*, 49.

<sup>148</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 57.

<sup>149</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 22.

<sup>150</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 1.

<sup>151</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 142.

<sup>152</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 62.

economic at home and abroad.”<sup>153</sup> The effect of neoliberal capitalism was so great that Blair and Clinton “could not help but sustain the process of restoration of class power even against their own better instincts.”<sup>154</sup> In other words, global class power has been distributed from the hands of the few into the hands of some other few.<sup>155</sup>

However, economists Gerard Duménil and Dominique Levy observe that the construction of neoliberalism was based on “fragile financial structure ... and very questionable practices.”<sup>156</sup> They identify neoliberalism as hegemony on an international scale.<sup>157</sup> Braedley and Luxton call to attention the human costs of neoliberalism in areas of health, family life and fair wages.<sup>158</sup> De Vogli argues, “The market renaissance of the late 1970’s reflected a shift in power distribution that favored the top social class.”<sup>159</sup> Deregulation of labour laws allows companies to exploit their workers. In 2001, the Employment Standards Act (ESA) officially increased “the weekly maximum hours of work from forty-eight to sixty” in Ontario.<sup>160</sup> People in North America are working longer hours in general and receive effectively lower wages. These are key factors “in deepening economic insecurity.”<sup>161</sup> There is increasing evidence that the neoliberal economies “has been systematically and progressively undermining social, interpersonal, and psychological well-being” for the working class to which post-adolescents are now entering.<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 2.

<sup>154</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 62–63.

<sup>155</sup> De Vogli, *Progress*, 157.

<sup>156</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 23.

<sup>157</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 9.

<sup>158</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 23.

<sup>159</sup> De Vogli, *Progress*, 101.

<sup>160</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 76.

<sup>161</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 78.

<sup>162</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 10.

Furthermore, when the market is unleashed and individuals are free to realize their dreams, the level of social justice should increase, theoretically. However, after almost four decades, the results are just the opposite. That is why Bradley and Luxton contends, “[Neoliberalism] is not advancing social justice and equality, but is, instead reinscribing, intensifying and creating injustices and inequality.”<sup>163</sup> The rich will get richer and the poor will get poorer. This is because “[values] of individual freedom and social justice are not, however, necessarily compatible. Pursuit of social justice presupposes social solidarities and a willingness to submerge individual wants, needs and desires in the cause of some more general struggle for, say social equality or environmental justice.”<sup>164</sup> Ultimate individual freedom for everyone then is theoretically impossible. It stands in contradiction to social justice. The poor is still blamed for their poverty. Those who are unable to find work are blamed for their lack of rigor. Areas of social justice and equality are areas that require further research. The church can acknowledge, speak up, and stand in solidarity with those suffering injustice.

In theory, ultimate individual freedom is appealing. In practice, however, only the rich and powerful can and will maximize their prosperity at the expense of the poor and the powerless. For example, in analysis of religious freedom laws in the United States, Deneen asserts that the culture war is won by those with money. He says, “[Today’s] cultural power elite is entirely aligned with the economic power elite, and they’re ready to steamroll anyone in their way.”<sup>165</sup> In actuality, the average citizen suffers under the influence of neoliberal policies. The reality is that “in many parts of the world ... real wages have declined, while capital accumulation has proceeded to amass unprecedented

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<sup>163</sup> Bradley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 6.

<sup>164</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 41.

<sup>165</sup> Deneen, “Power Elite,” 18.

wealth ... This is the deepening of class division.”<sup>166</sup> It is no coincidence that there is a correlation between neoliberalism and the postmodern life cycle. Schweitzer notes that “global economic development [influenced by neoliberalism] ... threaten the status of adulthood.”<sup>167</sup> The mandate of pastoral care then is to reach out as agents of hope to the young and the old who are experiencing social injustice. They may be hidden from view. This is especially true for Chinese Canadians who would be reluctant to talk about money problems regardless of age. Talking about money is a taboo in the Chinese culture.

### Changing the Soul and the Culture

The key difference between capitalism and neoliberal capitalism is that the former is focused on economics; but the latter seeks to change the way people think. Bradley and Luxton warn that neoliberalism seeks to change “the ways we understand who we are and how we live our lives.”<sup>168</sup> This intentionality is alarming. During the “stagflation” of the 1970s in the United Kingdom, Margaret Thatcher was adamant in the effort to rid the nation of its “social institutions and political ways of the social democratic states.”<sup>169</sup> The outcome is a society that is no longer cohesive but individualized. She seeks to dismantle the modern social structure developed under capitalism. Thatcher made a profound statement that is rooted in neoliberal thoughts. She states, “Economics are the method ... but the object is to change the soul.”<sup>170</sup> Neoliberal capitalism is much more than an economic system it is a new world order. It intends to change minds and the culture. In other words, it seeks to create a new utopian society where individuals must conform to a

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<sup>166</sup> Bradley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 19.

<sup>167</sup> Schweitzer, “Practical Theology,” 173.

<sup>168</sup> Bradley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 8.

<sup>169</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 23.

<sup>170</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 23.



new identity. Hence Rogers-Vaughn asserts that it is now necessary to refer to the present time as a “‘culture’ of neoliberalism.”<sup>171</sup>

However, this culture produces a series of constructs that may not necessarily constitute reality. These constructs merely provide a lens through which life can be interpreted; but is this the only perspective? This is a simple but important question to ponder. This dissertation argues that there are alternatives to a neoliberal view to the meaning of life. Unlike natural science, the epistemology of philosophy, social science, and to some extent, pastoral theology seeks to provide a particular lens to interpret the world. Hence Swinton and Mowat alert the researcher, “An important underlying epistemological assumption within qualitative research is the perspective of *constructivism*. [sic]”<sup>172</sup> Constructivism understands that truth and knowledge are “perceived by human being and human communities ... to a greater or lesser extent, [are also] constructed by individuals and communities.”<sup>173</sup> The field of arts is a good example of constructs versus reality. The cliché, “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” offers a fitting simile.<sup>174</sup> Neoliberalism seeks to redefine a new set of values for the world. The Christian tradition predicated on the Bible as revelation presents a different set of values. Individuals must wrestle between the two. There are not “multiple realities” but only “various interpretations” of reality.<sup>175</sup> What is commonly referred to as reality is often merely some interpretation of it.

Neoliberal philosophy seeks to create a utopian society where ultimate freedom is the underlying value. In changing the way people think, they are shaping the culture.

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<sup>171</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 18.

<sup>172</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 35.

<sup>173</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 35.

<sup>174</sup> <https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/beauty-is-in-the-eye-of-the-beholder.html>

<sup>175</sup> Swinton and Mowat, *Practical Theology*, 35.

Rogers-Vaughn argues that neoliberalism has “took on a life of its own in the larger culture” which is very different from its inception.<sup>176</sup> Erikson’s theory provides hints on what recreation means for adults in play. He argues that when an adult engage in play, “He steps out of his reality into imaginary realities for which has made up arbitrary but nonetheless binding rules.”<sup>177</sup> Neoliberal culture, like adult play, constructs its own set of arbitrary rules—a different set of arbitrary rules from the ones it tries to oppose.

In a neoliberal world, the individual is enticed to exit from God’s reality and into arbitrary realities of competition and consumerism with binding rules. Survival in the neoliberal game becomes real human suffering. The suffering is real because in some paradoxical way neoliberal constructs do cross into reality. The game of neoliberalism is played with real monies. The pressure is heavy when individuals think this is the only reality and there is no way out. Anxiety is also heightened by competition. This is the world in which young adults must struggle in order to survive. They are generally lost because of the loss of known life structures such as the university schedule or parental protection. They are on their own. They must navigate through the labyrinth of what is truth. Of course they are anxious and exhausted. The mandate of the pastoral caregiver is not tell them what to do but how to think. This task involves among other things to help men and women anchor their identity in Christ who is the hub for all of life.

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<sup>176</sup> Rogers-Vaughn, “Powers,” 20.

<sup>177</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 89.

### Competitiveness in the Marketplace

Neoliberal capitalism draws its power from competitiveness in the marketplace.<sup>178</sup> The philosophy advocates “that individual freedom of choice is maximized through competition.”<sup>179</sup> This includes competition between individuals as well as between territories. Competition “is perceived as a naturally occurring social good, and the best method of social organization, enacted primarily through the mechanisms of price.”<sup>180</sup> Competitiveness is characteristic and driving force of neoliberal capitalism. Everyone is allowed to compete in the free market but without guarantee of the same starting point. Individuals are set up in fierce competition against one another. This produces constant anxiety about not being able to keep up. For university students, the GPA becomes survival. For people in the marketplace, they do not know who they can trust. For those transitioning to adulthood, they can easily become disheartened by the harsh reality of market competition. The workplace is no longer a community where one belongs but an arena where one competes for survival.

The expectation is that the open market will drive out monopoly and increase competition. However, monopoly in various fields actually becomes stronger and more powerful. There is a correlation between competition and monopoly in the neoliberal market. De Vogli observes,

It is natural that the most profitable companies, once they become successful, try to purge other small competitors out of the market. This is exactly what happened during the neoliberal globalization era. Neoliberal policies that were supposed to promote free competition and free markets worldwide ended up generating almost the opposite result: the concentration of power and wealth in a few hands.<sup>181</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 12; Harvey, *Brief History*, 64–119.

<sup>179</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 8.

<sup>180</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 8.

<sup>181</sup> De Vogli, *Progress*, 156.

Under neoliberal capitalism, monopoly increases when powerful companies can force competitors out of business. This has been the case with classical capitalism. What post-capitalism seeks to oppose becomes its own reality; creating a new form of monopoly perhaps more hegemonic than ever before. The problem with neoliberal capitalism is that it promotes human rights and equality only as far as it is “the right and equality to compete, but not from the same starting line, with the same equipment, or at the sound of the same gun.”<sup>182</sup> The absence of due consideration to the existing systems and social context is a key weakness in the system.

Neoliberal capitalism is marked by “[competition] between territories (states, regions, or cities).”<sup>183</sup> While competitiveness in local markets can be a factor in social inequalities, the greater challenge is globalization such as NAFTA. Deregulation opens the market to China and South American countries.<sup>184</sup> Businesses can now manufacture products much cheaper outside its borders. However, this also means that local people will not be able to compete given comparable living standards. Duménil and Levy explains, “Globalization placed the workers of advanced capitalized countries in a situation of competition with workers of the periphery. The imports of cheaper consumer goods from countries where labor costs are particularly low decreased the nominal wages necessary to buy a given basket of goods within advanced countries. They, thus contributed to the ... (decline) of the purchasing power of the bulk of wage earners.”<sup>185</sup> Competitiveness works its way into the everyday life in terms of job security and stress.

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<sup>182</sup> Braedley and Luxton, “Competing Philosophies,” 8.

<sup>183</sup> Harvey, *Brief History*, 87.

<sup>184</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 324–25.

<sup>185</sup> Duménil and Levy, *Crisis*, 53.

Dehumanization is another serious issue in the new open market. Barbara Rumscheidt argues, “The imperatives of ‘globalization’ compel all members of the human family to secure their livelihood in competition against each other, in a global marketplace.”<sup>186</sup> Human beings in a neoliberal system are reduced to “human resources.”<sup>187</sup> Rumscheidt calls for examination of globalization as “dehumanization” which is causing harm to human beings and to community.<sup>188</sup> She argues that this requires a “critical consciousness” to apprehend and comprehend the outcome of by globalization.<sup>189</sup> By dehumanization, she means “the deprivation of human characteristics” in the labor force.<sup>190</sup> The harm in question is exemplified in the exploitation of child labor and “anti-human atrocities.”<sup>191</sup> It is not hard to understand that globalization gives entrepreneurs the competitive edge in the marketplace; but at the same time, it oppresses poor labourers in under-developed worlds.

Technologies and global competition are diminishing of the work force in global manufacturing.<sup>192</sup> It is no surprise that *Psychology Today* (2008) reports the heightened stress and anxiety among young adults. Robert L. Leahy asserts, “In any given year about 17% of us will have an anxiety disorder—and over our lives, about 28% of us will have an anxiety disorder. And, if you have one anxiety disorder, then you probably have two or three anxiety disorders—and, possibly, depression.”<sup>193</sup> However, the alarming point in his report is this: “The average high school kid today has the same level of anxiety as the

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<sup>186</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, ix.

<sup>187</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, x; Spider Robinson, “The Scent of a Done Deal,” *Toronto Globe and Mail* (August 4, 1997).

<sup>188</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, 23–29.

<sup>189</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, 24.

<sup>190</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, 26.

<sup>191</sup> Rumscheidt, *No Room*, 26.

<sup>192</sup> Cucca and Maestriperi, “Varieties,” 26.

<sup>193</sup> Leahy, “How Big a Problem is Anxiety?” *Psychology Today*, April 30, 2008: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/blog/anxiety-files/200804/how-big-problem-is-anxiety>

average psychiatric patient in the early 1950's.”<sup>194</sup> The competitive edge is heightening anxiety for everyone including high school students. If high school students are at the breaking point, how much more so for young men and women who are now fending for themselves in the marketplace?

### Compassion, Contentment, and Gratitude

Competition is a way to life. It is survival. However, it is also a construct. There is an alternative way of seeing the world. Henri Nouwen advocates for a life of compassion instead of competition. It is possible to live with compassion without the fear of losing out on life. Compassion is not an excuse to be lazy. Rather, it is a positive disposition towards life that allows the individual to be secured and assertive. However, compassion is easier said than done because it is not our natural inclination. Nouwen asserts that compassion is frightening because “[when] we take a critical look at ourselves, we have to recognize that competition, not compassion, is our main motivation in life.”<sup>195</sup> Living with compassion does not only drive out competitiveness instilled by neoliberal thought, it empowers the individual to reach out to those oppressed by it.

Compassion and competition are dichotomies at the fundamental level.

Neoliberalism draws its strength from brutal competitiveness. It calls for people to compete with each other without due consideration of the situation of the other person. Abundance is rooted in compassion that is predicated on the nature of God. Henri Nouwen says, “By calling God Emmanuel, we recognize God’s commitment to live in solidarity with us, to share our joys and pains, to defend and protect us, and to suffer all

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<sup>194</sup> Leahy, “How Big a Problem is Anxiety?” *Psychology Today*, April 30, 2008.

<sup>195</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 17.

of life with us.”<sup>196</sup> However, being compassionate would require “giving up dividing lines ... and distinctions” which are neoliberal constructs.<sup>197</sup> Nouwen suggest that being compassionate might mean risking our identities.<sup>198</sup> This causes resistance in people because they are under the illusion “that we can forge our own identities [by] the trophies and distinctions we have won.”<sup>199</sup> Competitive people will “compulsively cling to [their] differences and defend them at all cost, even to the point of violence.”<sup>200</sup> This is happening around the world today.

Furthermore, compassion also exhibits hope in a neoliberal world by standing in solidarity with those who suffer. Compassion means “to suffer with.”<sup>201</sup> The word compassion in Latin is made up of two parts: “‘suffer’ (Lat. *patis*) and ‘with’ (Lat. *cum*).”<sup>202</sup> Pastoral theologian Phil Zylla asserts that to stand in solidarity with people is already an act of compassion.<sup>203</sup> To be compassionate means to take on

[the] disposition of Christ. This results in a particular way of being in the world and in a particular way of seeing the world (posture and perspective). A disposition of solidarity is not simply the act of the will; that is, a determination to be selfless. Rather, it is the active adopting of the heart and concern of God as our own ... this involves the virtues of compassion and love as the ultimate extension of God’s own heart for the suffering world.<sup>204</sup>

Zylla and Nouwen both trace the root of compassion to the compassionate God. Thus the power to live compassionately rests upon constant communion with the Spirit of God.<sup>205</sup>

Thus to be compassionate produces an identity grounded in the *Imago Dei*.

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<sup>196</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 13.

<sup>197</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 18.

<sup>198</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 18.

<sup>199</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 18.

<sup>200</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 18.

<sup>201</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 102

<sup>202</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 102.

<sup>203</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 103.

<sup>204</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 103.

<sup>205</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 105–106.

To stand in solidarity with the sufferers means to adopt a posture of “compassionate protest.”<sup>206</sup> Moltmann argues, “[The resurrection] is not merely consolation in suffering; it is also the sign of God’s protest against suffering.”<sup>207</sup> The mandate of the church is to seek out those who are suffering in order to alleviate their burdens. It is necessary for the church “to participate in God’s own protest of suffering by aligning ourselves with the spiritual posture of resisting suffering, moving into the place where suffering is acute, and actively seeking to overturn the root causes of suffering in [a neoliberal] world.”<sup>208</sup>

Discontentment is not so bad if there is “hope of an ending.”<sup>209</sup> Erikson and Capps recognize hope as a basic human need.<sup>210</sup> The problem of discontentment in the postmodern era is the lack of a vision of hope. Compassion brings hope to the discontent. Compassion restores the *Imago Dei* in humanity. Hence Moltmann contends, “That is why whenever faith develops into hope it does not make people serene and patient; it makes them restless.”<sup>211</sup> Compassion is not quiescent empathy. Rather, compassion is the virtue that seeks to restore what it means to be human with the hope of abundance. It also means that Christ followers need to exemplify the possibility of abundance by living in the alternative realities of hope.

Contentment and gratitude are important virtues that can displace the heightened stress of competition. In a culture of discontentment, Leddy asserts, “The craving for more is inversely experienced as the sense that what we have is NEVER ENOUGH [sic]

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<sup>206</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 107.

<sup>207</sup> Moltmann, *Experiences*, 12.

<sup>208</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 107.

<sup>209</sup> Bauckham and Hart, *Hope*, 42.

<sup>210</sup> Erikson, “Human Strength,” 116; Capps, *Agents*, 8.

<sup>211</sup> Moltmann, *Experiences*, 12.



... Consumerism works only as long as we are even slightly dissatisfied with what we have ... This dissatisfaction is not natural. It is a culturally induced dissatisfaction that is essential to the dynamic of the culture of money."<sup>212</sup> Furthermore, Miroslav Volf argues that competition stands against human flourishing.

Discontentment is harmful to human flourishing because it is a distraction from the good things in life such as relationships. Volf says, "Rather than being a dominate dimension of the good life, worldly goods are a subsidiary one; indeed, all of these traditions underscore that the pursuit of world goods is harmful to genuine flourishing as it empties life of deeper purposes."<sup>213</sup> Contentment, on the other hand, "is an essential part of flourishing [where] individual human beings find happiness, environmental degradation is slowed down, and a significant cause of social conflicts is removed."<sup>214</sup> Contentment invites individuals back into the human community for the greater good and personal happiness.

Moreover, Leddy asserts, "We will be liberated from the captivity of craving for more only by an attitude of radical gratitude ... This attitude is much more than the occasional thank you note and cannot be confined to a spirituality in which the self is [sheltered] from the harsh realities of the world."<sup>215</sup> Radical gratitude is not oblivious to the outside world or simply positive thinking. It is a spirituality grounded in transcendence. Radical gratitude often comes out of the blue "as momentous, earth shattering and sky opening ... [and] more often than not it appears in a deft sort of way."

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<sup>212</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 23.

<sup>213</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, 171.

<sup>214</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, 171.

<sup>215</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 40.

Leddy retells the wonders of how her parents met near the end of Second World War.<sup>216</sup>

This divine appointment points to Leddy's own miraculous birth. Radical gratitude requires daily reflection on the miracles of life. Materialism creates a false sense of identity. But by giving up that false identity, individuals will gain a new one that "depends not on what we can achieve, but on what we are willing to receive."<sup>217</sup>

Discontentment is in fact a distraction from everyday miracles. Contentment and gratitude acknowledges the satisfaction of providence and the presence of transcendence.

Compassion already implies community. The nature of compassion and the nature of identity share the traits of relational and communal. Paradoxically, neoliberal theories actually support the construct of community. Bradley and Luxton explains, "Advocates of neoliberalism are fundamentally opposed to state provision of care, arguing instead that care is a personal responsibility and its services should be provided by either voluntarily by family and friends or by market where for-profit-services may be purchased."<sup>218</sup> While neoliberalism promotes individual freedom, ironically, it also agrees that community is the place to find care. Neoliberal theory proposes that "individuals and their families should take more responsibility for their own care [because] government provision of services is inefficient and costly."<sup>219</sup> There is some truth to this. Further, it recognizes that community is important for "individual initiative" and family ties.<sup>220</sup> On one hand, neoliberalism promotes individualism. On the other, it acknowledges the significance of community. Fostering hopeful communities provides alternatives from a culture of hopelessness and discontentment.

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<sup>216</sup> Leddy, *Radical*, 41–42.

<sup>217</sup> Nouwen et al., *Compassion*, 19.

<sup>218</sup> Bradley and Luxton, *Neoliberalism*, 164.

<sup>219</sup> Luxton, "Doing Neoliberalism," 166.

<sup>220</sup> Luxton, "Doing Neoliberalism," 166.

Hopeful communities are set in the reality of God. The gospel is an invitation for individuals to come into fellowship with God and with one another. The nature of community takes root in the Trinitarian reality of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Abundance is possible when community and fellowship with the Trinitarian God is restored.<sup>221</sup> Why is community so important? Zylla asserts, that “loneliness [is] the suffering in suffering.”<sup>222</sup> Those suffering under the pressure of neoliberal capitalism are in desperate need of community. The church has the important role of “not only imitating the Trinitarian pattern of relationship but also recognizing the deeper alienation and brokenness that comes with suffering alone.”<sup>223</sup> Zylla proposes that the Christian community has a significant role for sufferers. He explains,

The movement out of isolation involves an acceptance of suffering, which will lead to an experience of community ... Solidarity in this deeper sense, allows the afflicted to live fully their place in the human community ... The hope that someone will come is an expression of the hope of true communion. All human beings, regardless of the anguish of their situation, long for participation in an authentic community. The place of suffering is not only the place of godforsakenness, as it is sometimes felt by the afflicted, but is rather a cry for participation in the compassionate community of God.<sup>224</sup>

Those oppressed by neoliberal constructs long for not just any community but one where humanity can be restored. The church can become that symbol of hope and a place of refuge in the neoliberal world.

M. Robert Mulholland calls for a spirituality that is for the sake of others.<sup>225</sup>

Otherwise, spiritual disciplines can become merely “a spiritualized form of self-

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<sup>221</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 122.

<sup>222</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 122.

<sup>223</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 122.

<sup>224</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 14.

<sup>225</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation*, 4–44.

actualization”.<sup>226</sup> Nouwen speaks of community as “a place of forgiveness and celebration”<sup>227</sup> It is not only a place of social refuge where individuals find consolation; but a place of divine appointment. The church, *ἐκκλησία*, is a community called out to journey together rooted in an alternative narrative. Community provides the bedrock where human flourishing is possible in the abundance of a transcendent God. When people are able to see beyond the constructs of neoliberalism, abundance can be found.

The fundamental belief of pastoral care which makes living with abundance possible whatever the circumstances is predicated on the living hope afforded in Christ. Neoliberalism promises a form of freedom but does not deliver. Both classical liberalism and neo-liberalism share the same fate because they follow the same fundamental principles. Deneen says,

Liberalism has failed—not because it fell short, but because it was true to itself. It has failed because it has succeeded. As liberalism has ‘become more fully itself,’ its inner logic has become more evident and its self-contradictions manifest ... A political philosophy that was launched to foster greater equality, defend a pluralist tapestry of different cultures and beliefs, protect human dignity, and, of course, expand liberty, in practice generates titanic inequality, enforces uniformity and homogeneity, fosters material and spiritual degradation, and undermines freedom.

Ultimate individual freedom for everyone without due consideration for co-existence is theoretically contradicting. It can only create further “unquiet desperation.”<sup>228</sup> It proposes that the competitive edge is supposed to bring meaning through constantly gaining without satisfaction of what has been obtained. Therefore people are left wanting. It negates the relational and communal aspect of being human. True freedom can only be achieved when the person is rooted contentment, gratitude, and community.

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<sup>226</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation*, 41.

<sup>227</sup> Nouwen, *Spiritual Direction*, 93.

<sup>228</sup> LaMothe, “State-Corporate Capitalism,” 15.

### Summary

Post-adolescents are negotiating their identity within the power structures in which they exist and function. The above discussion on neoliberal capitalism aims to bring awareness of the issue to pastoral theologians and practitioners. The goal is formulate practical theological responses to the situation. To change the structure within neoliberal capitalism is out of the scope of this research. In contrast, as a work in pastoral theology this dissertation proposes pastoral constructs of care for the church. The four pastoral constructs of care in the Chapter 5 form the epigenesis of empowerment. The word *epigenesis* is used to highlight the organic nature of caring relationships. The four constructs are also mapped to Erikson's eight stages of the human life cycle because relationships require a process of growth that is similar to ritualization. The key to empowerment is transformation through relationships between caring adults and post-adolescents.

## Chapter 5:

### PASTORAL CARE CONSTRUCTS

#### **Epigenesis of Empowerment**

Generational ministry is as important a mandate for church as it is for society. “All institutions by their very nature codify the ethics of generative succession.”<sup>1</sup> However, generational ministry is more than succession planning. It is organic more than it is administrative. It is natural more than it is technical. Thus an interdisciplinary approach is not only helpful but necessary to address the topic of nurturing identity in young adults. This final chapter moves to constructing a model of pastoral care that empowers the new generation. It proposes four constructs of care as a way of reaching out to them. These constructs step through the progression of *friendship*, *mentorship*, *partnership*, and *fellowship*. They are predicated on interdisciplinary principles drawn from theories in leadership, social science, and pastoral theology. Furthermore, the four pastoral constructs of care represent an important progression that can be viewed as the *epigenesis of empowerment*.

Caring for the next generation is a natural phenomenon in all species.

Furthermore, Erikson argues that “generativity” is a natural phenomenon in human development.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the pastoral care constructs are mapped to the stages of the human life cycle.<sup>3</sup> These constructs are progressive stages that build on the previous one much like the virtues in Erikson’s life cycle. The four pastoral care constructs are not

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<sup>1</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 139.

<sup>2</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 139.

<sup>3</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 51–107; Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

independent concepts. Each is connected to the other more so by a continuum of relationships rather than by administrative appointments. Moreover, caring is empowerment. The generativity of first generation leaders is realised in the commitment to the new generation through the caring relationships and empowerment. In the process of empowering the next generation, the congregants and leaders of the first generation will also strengthen their own identity.

The first pastoral care construct is *Friendship*. Karen Scheib asserts, “A basic assumption undergirding ... care is that human beings are not primarily autonomous but are essentially relational and communal.”<sup>4</sup> It is mapped to the stages of *Infant* and *Early Childhood* in the human life cycle where basic trust and autonomy are developed.<sup>5</sup> The foundation of any caring relationship is the trust between two people. The previous chapters have discussed the concepts and challenges to identity. Young adults in the transition of postadolescence are in search of anchors in a culture of relativism. The construct of friendship begins with mature individuals reaching out to young adults. Friendship is necessary to sustain young adults in their life situations by providing genuine care.

The next pastoral care construct is *Mentorship*. Only when basic trust is in place can caring move to its second phase. Mentorship is mapped to *Play Age* and *School Age* where learning takes place. Young men and women are ready to take the initiative and participate in ministry or industry. However, they need guidance. Mentorship is the natural progression that follows friendship. It provides guidance, counseling, and

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<sup>4</sup> Scheib, *Challenging Invisibility*, 8.

<sup>5</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

coaching to young adults in areas of life skills and faith practices.<sup>6</sup> Mature adults can play a significant role in the lives of post-adolescents as they navigate through the complexity of life.

The third construct is *Partnership*. It mirrors the stages of *Adolescence* and *Young Adulthood* where they seek to establish their unique identity in and intimacy with the faith community. Post-adolescents are in search of their place in the world and in the church. The acknowledgement that they are ready to partner in the ministries of the church is very meaningful to young adults. They desire to know God and to serve the community. Leaders can take individuals under their tutelage and invite them to participate as coworkers.

The final pastoral construct of care is *Fellowship*. The word fellowship carries significant theological inference. This is the final goal which is predicated on the biblical concept of equal partnership. Similar to *Adulthood* and *Old Age* in the life cycle, mature discipleship finds fulfilment in generativity and integrity. The ministry of caring seeks to transform disciples into disciple makers. Young men and women in the church are eager to make a difference in the world as Christians. They need to find their role in the kingdom of God as someone who is worthy to have a seat at the table. The construct of fellowship fully reciprocates the epigenesis of empowerment. Hence the cycle of caring is set in motion for future generations. The four pastoral theological constructs form a progressive movement of true empowerment through genuine, caring relationships.

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<sup>6</sup> Gill, *Theory*, 239.



Table: 5.1 Epigenesis of Empowerment and the Erikson's Life Cycle<sup>7</sup>

Pastoral Constructs of Care	Stages in the Life Cycle	Epigenesis in Empowerment	Basic Strengths
Friendship	Infant	Basic Trust	Hope
	Early Childhood	Autonomy	Will
Mentorship	Play Age	Initiative	Purpose
	School Age	Industry	Competence
Partnership	Adolescence	Identity	Fidelity
	Young Adulthood	Spiritual Intimacy	Love
Fellowship	Adulthood	Generativity	Care
	Old Age	Integrity	Wisdom

The end goal of empowerment in the church is different from that which is in the corporate world. The goal of businesses is to increase revenue year over year. In the process there is a need for innovations through research and development (R&D). The role of leaders and managers in the corporation is to meet those goals with the resources that are available to them. Employees are human resources and nothing more. They are hired to achieve these goals for the company. The job of the management team is to provide an environment where employees will gain a sense of achievement so that they can maximize their productivity. If an employee does not meet the standard of the company, he or she is no longer useful. The employee is terminated and so is the

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<sup>7</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

relationship. Empowerment in the corporate world is transactional in nature. It is based on the exchange of work for compensation.<sup>8</sup>

However, empowerment in the church is to nurture young men and women for the sake of the kingdom of God. The process of nurturing comes to fruition when they become mature followers of Jesus. Unlike the corporate model, the outcome of discipleship may not bring direct benefits to the mentor or to the organization. This process of empowering young adults in the church is similar to parenting. Natural parents nurture their children so that they can become fully mature and independent adults. Similarly, spiritual parenting is generativity from one generation to the next. However, there are difficulties in exercising empowerment in the church. There may be many causes; one of which is the absence of a natural parent-child relationship. The objective of the pastoral care constructs is to establish a strong spiritual bond. This demands more than constituted authority but moral authority. Empowerment requires transforming leadership and moral authority that reaches out with vision and genuine caring. Moreover, empowerment is discipleship. Hence this dissertation argues that caring is discipleship.

### **Friendship**

Generational ministry in the Canadian Chinese Church must begin with genuine *friendship*. “All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action is for the sake of friendship.”<sup>9</sup> James Penner et al assert that “There is a strange paradox that arises when it comes to young adults and community. The emerging

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<sup>8</sup> Burns, *Leadership*, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Macmurray, *Self*, 16.

generation is fiercely independent and self-reliant. Yet its members say there's nothing more important to them than friendship."<sup>10</sup> The value of friendship, especial among post-adolescents, cannot be overstated. However, this topic is seldom found in the conversation on mentorship and discipleship. This may be due to the lack of tangible intrinsic value. C. S. Lewis explains, "Friendship is unnecessary, like philosophy, like art, like the universe itself (for God did not need to create). It has no survival value; rather it is one of those things that give value to survival."<sup>11</sup> The construct of friendship does not only give meaning to survival, but it may mean survival for generational ministry.

John Swinton and Charles Taylor are proponents of building friendship, especially "Christian friendship."<sup>12</sup> Both Swinton and Taylor advocate that friendship plays a significant role in identity. They concur that identity requires simultaneous observation and recognition.<sup>13</sup> In *Raging with Compassion*, Swinton speaks of friendship as hospitality in the context of caring for strangers who are sufferers of human atrocities. This can be appropriated for the current research which calls for caring for young adults who are suffering under the oppression of neoliberal capitalism. Swinton asserts, "Friendship is a basic and vital human relationship that forms the social fabric of our lives. It is in and through friendships that we discover our identity, gain our sense of value and place in the world, and learn what it means to participate in community."<sup>14</sup> Taylor asserts,

The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them

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<sup>10</sup> Penner et al., "Hemorrhaging Faith," 52.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, *Four Loves*, 103.

<sup>12</sup> Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*, 216.

<sup>13</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>14</sup> Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*, 216.

a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being.<sup>15</sup>

Post-adolescents are constantly receiving feedback about their identity from the neoliberal culture and those who are supposed to be friends. However, this image may represent misrecognition and distortion of who they are. Therefore, Christian friendship plays an essential role in providing accurate and positive recognition to shape their identity.

Moreover, Swinton argues that friendship is also “a form of resistance to evil.”<sup>16</sup>

He references John 15:15-17 where Jesus addresses his disciples as friends. In doing so,

[Jesus] offers them a mode of recognition and a form of identity that was not available previously. In making this shift, Jesus acknowledges and embodies the fact that human beings can become friends of God. Friendship with God radically changed the identity of Jesus’ disciples and enabled them, in turn to recognize God differently and, by extension, to recognize one another differently. In this graceful act of recognition, Jesus makes friendship with him the basis of their understanding of who they were and what they were in the world to do.<sup>17</sup>

Radical friendship forms the basis for caring for men and women who needs to be recognized for who they are and to recognize the pastor, elders, ‘uncles’ and ‘aunties’ in the church differently. This friendship is not condescending and does not demand anything from the other person. Christian friendship is rooted in Jesus who calls all his disciples friends. Hence no one can demand of another a master-servant relationship in the faith community. This calls for theological reflection on the patriarchal power structures in the Canadian Chinese Church.

Roy Fairchild asserts that friendship is an important part of the shepherding role.

He says, “The focus of shepherding is the individual person in need. But this does not

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<sup>15</sup> Taylor, *Multiculturalism*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*, 219.

<sup>17</sup> Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*, 219.

limit its resources to pastoral counseling, popular as that approach is. Nor does it ignore the social milieu in which the individual lives.”<sup>18</sup> Campbell provides an image of a friend who is a true companion. He says, “The person who seeks companionship on faith’s journey is often unaware that his greatest need is for a friend who will refuse to take his anxious striving too seriously.”<sup>19</sup> Friendship invites mature adults to be that friend who shares the burden of emerging adults and in turn console the anxious hearts. Moreover, “The essential thing about all friendship is that it puts a different value on time. There is no such thing as being efficient at friendship (not genuine friendship), since it is not an activity which aims at achieving something.”<sup>20</sup> Genuine friendship is fertile soil for caring and empowerment.

The paradox in reaching out to post-adolescents is that on the one hand, they seem to reject any attempts to help by those in the first generation. But on the other, they are also looking for guidance from those who are ahead of them on the journey. They need someone to come alongside and listen to them and to provide guidance. Capps argues that one of the roles of the pastor is to be the “moral counselor” for parishioners because of the challenges of moral confusion.<sup>21</sup> In the postmodern and neoliberal culture, individuals are in need of a friend who can be a moral counselor. A holistic caring requires mature adults to be friends to younger ones. Post-adolescents may seem unresponsive or unappreciative at first. However, trust can be built over time and with patience. Members of the faith community must not give up hope of reaching this generation.

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<sup>18</sup> Fairchild, “Meaning,” 62.

<sup>19</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 93.

<sup>20</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 93.

<sup>21</sup> Capps, *Life Cycle*, 14.

Friendship between the older adult and the post-adolescent can be characterized as pre-mentorship. Like a mentor, the friend is “ordinarily several years older, a person of greater experience and seniority in the world the young man is entering. [sic]”<sup>22</sup> The presence of friendships can mean the difference between success and failure academically and in terms of emotional well-being. Alecea Standlee and other researchers concur that “strong friendships and stable social networks are key” to the success and identity in college students.<sup>23</sup> Her study is focused on peer friendships. However, friendship in the current works advocates for older adults in the church to become friends to younger ones. Mature adults can help postadolescence to “[embrace] ordinary ... life as a place of faith” through this transition.<sup>24</sup> This is to lay the ground work for caring relationships.

Friendship is Jesus’ model of leadership and discipleship. Christy Morr, associate professor of *Spiritual Formation and Women’s Ministry* at Grace Theological Seminary, argues that understanding “the role of friendship in spiritual formation provides new rationale for a change in leadership practices and for the programs which value, promote, and teach about deep friendships.”<sup>25</sup> She advocates that friendships are important for spiritual transformation that goes beyond religious individualism into spiritual communities.<sup>26</sup> Jesus is the perfect example and teacher of friendship. Morr says, “Jesus not only taught about deep friendship, but he modeled it as well.”<sup>27</sup> The close relationship between Jesus and Martha, Mary, and Lazarus provides the background for the narrative

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<sup>22</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man’s Life*, 91.

<sup>23</sup> Standlee, “Friendship,” 771–72.

<sup>24</sup> Miller-McLemore, *Midst*, 26.

<sup>25</sup> Morr, “Role of Friendship,” 46.

<sup>26</sup> Morr, “Sacred Companions,” 84.

<sup>27</sup> Morr, “Role of Friendship,” 46.

of raising the dead. Furthermore, Morr points to Jesus's investment in the disciples, especially Peter, James, and John. "This special inner circle of relationships reveals that Jesus had different relationship patterns with different people. Some were more intimate and trusting than others."<sup>28</sup> Jesus was even accused by his opponents of being a "friend of sinners."<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, the practical aspect of this construct follows Gerkin's model of care that relies on the theology of the priesthood of all believers.<sup>30</sup> In most cases, churches are birthed from a church plant with a team of dedicated leaders. Hence the first task of pastoral ministry is to shepherd those who are core leaders whether they are volunteers or staff. They require support, guidance, and spiritual feeding. They need to be cared for before they are ready to care for others. This is the basis of a caring community.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, the priesthood of all believers entails the centrality of the headship of Christ. Coworkers in ministry, volunteers and pastoral staff alike, do not serve out of obligation but out of a deep sense of calling and community.

The stage of friendship is mapped to the infancy and early childhood stages of the relationship. Similar to Erikson's theory on human development, the basis for empowerment is trust. Hence the first task of friendship is building trust. Friendship can be intentional but it must go deeper than an administrative task. It "involves an orientation of our (moral) selves towards another person, rather than a process which merely happens to [us]."<sup>32</sup> Men and women living in a neoliberal culture are in search of a refuge. They are seeking individuals who are willing to receive them in a posture of

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<sup>28</sup> Morr, "Role of Friendship," 46.

<sup>29</sup> Morr, "Role of Friendship," 46.

<sup>30</sup> Please refer "Pastoral Care in and through the People of God" in Chapter 2.

<sup>31</sup> Gerkin, *Introduction*, 102.

<sup>32</sup> Blum, *Friendship*, 73.

friendship. Post-adolescents need to know that people in the church genuinely care before they are willing to commit to service.<sup>33</sup>

Friendship is not a gimmick or a slogan to entice them to work for the church. Rather, it draws on the principle of Christ's love for the church. Reaching out with authentic friendship "requires faithfulness and solidarity unto death."<sup>34</sup> Only this kind of friendship is trustworthy. Sometimes church leaders can become too focused on programs and miss the opportunity to connect with young people. When performancism and church politics are allowed to dominate the central narrative, they can become stumbling blocks to real growth. Re-building trust is an important step for the church to regain relevance and moral authority to minister to the new generation. In the sophistication of postmodern culture, trust becomes a scarce commodity. When post-adolescents enter the marketplace, men and women would face betrayal, anxiety, and deep hurts. Hence it will become harder for them to trust anyone.

Deborah Van Deusen Hunsinger points out, "There is a divine drama hidden in each person's story that cries out to be heard."<sup>35</sup> Young men and women are seeking unconditional, unselfish, and sacrificial love in relationships. They are looking for full acceptance. Furthermore, they are struggling to find alternative ways to interpret life. There is a subtlety in the suffering of postmodern adults whose deep cries are masked by materialism and performancism. Beneath the accumulation of gadgets and toys, the human soul is suffering alone. "Loneliness is the *suffering in suffering*. [sic]"<sup>36</sup> Individuals are suffering alone because people are too busy to pay attention to the plight

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<sup>33</sup> Zylla, *Roots of Sorrow*, 14.

<sup>34</sup> Swinton, *Raging with Compassion*, 220.

<sup>35</sup> Van Deusen Hunsinger, *Pray*, 52.

<sup>36</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 11; Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 46.



of those transitioning into adulthood. Caring for people in their distress builds a strong bond of trust. Moreover, one of the factors that help youths remain strong in their faith commitment in adulthood is the presence of a caring Christian community that stood by them in their crises.<sup>37</sup>

Belonging, or the lack of it, “appears to be an issue.”<sup>38</sup> Todd reports 8 out of 30 of his respondents cited loneliness as the reason for leaving the church.<sup>39</sup> The experience of “abandoned, forgotten, neglected, and forsaken smother[s] one’s sense of belonging and identity in the wider spiritual community.”<sup>40</sup> Moltmann is right when he says, “[The] suffering of abandonment is overcome by the suffering of love, which is not afraid of what is sick and ugly, but accepts it and takes it to itself in order to heal it.”<sup>41</sup>

Acknowledging the sufferings of post-adolescents is an important step. Friendship is the beginning of that acknowledgement. The presence of caring relationships restores the hope of goodness in humanity and in God.

Moreover, there is mutuality in trust. In Erikson’s theory, it is through the experience of caring interactions that the infant and the caregiver develop a mutual trust. A sense of “what *must* happen” and “what *must not* happen” is established until both parties are comfortable with each other.<sup>42</sup> This mutuality in the relationship fosters an “experience of friendly otherness.”<sup>43</sup> Mutuality across generational and cultural gaps is predicated on *interpathy*.<sup>44</sup> The construct of care requires both parties to be vulnerable

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<sup>37</sup> Martinson, “Life and Faith,” 44.

<sup>38</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 98.

<sup>39</sup> Todd, *English Ministry*, 98.

<sup>40</sup> Zylla, *Roots*, 11.

<sup>41</sup> Moltmann, *Crucified God*, 46.

<sup>42</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 59–60.

<sup>43</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 60.

<sup>44</sup> Augsburg, “Interpathy,” 1. Lartey, *Living Colour*, 66. Please refer to “Mutuality and Interpathy” in Chapter 2.

and transparent to each other when appropriate. Furthermore, the development of trust between an infant and the caregiver produces a desire to reciprocate care. From the experience of being cared for, “the baby also develops the necessary groundwork to get to be the giver, to ‘identify’ with her.”<sup>45</sup> This sense of reciprocity is not instilled through instructions or commands but by modeling. The child experiences love and seeks to return it.

The second stage of the human life cycle is where the young child learns to develop their “autonomous will.”<sup>46</sup> By becoming more independent, the child is not becoming rebellious or alienated from the parents. By the same token, identity in young adults is affirmed by “‘holding on’ and ‘letting go’” of relationships.<sup>47</sup> Holding on to relationships that are genuine and letting go of relationships that may be best kept at a distance without inducing guilt. Moreover, the individual needs to find support in the community without feeling being coerced into becoming human resources for some ministry. The autonomous party is free to choose their own paths. Friendship seeks to come alongside an individual without exercising control over that person.

The goal of caring is not to recruit them to work for the church but to support them in their lived experience. Otherwise, they can easily become human resources for church projects in the tyranny of success and performancism. This friendship must be genuine without hidden agendas. The ultimate goal is to help them reach their potential so that they are able to take the opportunities in front of them. Healthy relationships entail autonomy. Both independence and belonging are important aspects of relationships.

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<sup>45</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 60.

<sup>46</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 107.

<sup>47</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 107.

Trust in friendship also produces hope.<sup>48</sup> In Erikson's life cycle, "Trust, then, becomes the capacity for faith—a vital need for which man [sic] must find some institutional confirmation."<sup>49</sup> He acknowledges religion, without qualification, is that strong institution where humanity believes that goodness will prevail against evil. The belief in a sense of order in the world, much like in the infant and mother relationship, produces "the vital strength of hope."<sup>50</sup> Hence this hope is not only rooted in the presence of caring persons, the mother, but also in God or a god. Divine providence is for the most part carried out through human agents. Hence Capps captures the essence of the pastoral caregiver as the "agent of hope."<sup>51</sup>

Friendship seeks to encourage mature members of the church to play the role of pastoral agents of hope. This relationship must be predicated on the unconditional, unselfish, and sacrificial love of God. Where there is hope there is abundance. In a neoliberal culture where discontentment and competition have become the dominant narrative, men and women are hopelessly trying to define themselves against the ever rising tides of expectation. Genuine friendship is the sacred space where true freedom, compassion and community are offered as ways of human flourishing. This sacred space is the fertile soil where hope can grow. Only the man or the woman who is freed from the bondage of neoliberal constructs can begin the journey of empowerment.

Friendship is the "ground plan" of empowerment.<sup>52</sup> Erikson argues that a sense of basic trust is essential to the epigenesis of a healthy personality.<sup>53</sup> All components

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<sup>48</sup> Erikson, "Human Strengths," 116.

<sup>49</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 106.

<sup>50</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 106.

<sup>51</sup> Capps, *Agents*, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 53.

<sup>53</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 57.

developed during childhood are “integrated into adulthood [and blended] into the total personality.”<sup>54</sup> If trust is impaired in adulthood, it may lead to behavioural issues of mistrust, withdrawal, or more serious problems. Thus it is imperative for mature adults to reach out to younger men and women so they know that there is someone who cares and in whom they can trust. The twenty-somethings are searching for meaning and purpose in life. They are trying to plant themselves in fertile soil, metaphorically speaking, so that they can achieve human flourishing in the fullest sense.

Volf defines human flourishing as having visions of our future. He says, “Visions of flourishing—those visions we have articulated for ourselves as well as those that remain inchoate but are embedded in our institutions and social practices and sedimented in the deeper growth regions of our souls—set the direction, so we know where we are heading.”<sup>55</sup> For those who grew up in the church, this includes growing roots as part of a faith community. Friendship is the fertile soil for human flourishing. Post-adolescents want to grow in their understanding of God as well as in exercising their faith. Friendship is paramount in building a vibrant faith community.

### **Mentorship**

The second construct in the epigenesis of empowerment is *mentorship*. The movement from friendship to mentorship is a natural progression. Where friendship between mature adults and post-adolescents involves listening without passing judgement, *mentorship* begins when guidance, coaching, and directing can emerge in the relationship. The mentoring process begins with “getting to know each other, to being progressively open

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<sup>54</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 58.

<sup>55</sup> Volf, *Flourishing*, 21.

with each other and finally ending in what each party described as friendship.”<sup>56</sup> Lanker asserts that “both mentors and mentees almost unanimously described their relationships as friendships.”<sup>57</sup> Not all friends are mentors, but all mentors ought to be a friend to the mentee. The word mentor originated “from Greek mythology and refers to one who inspires and helps a person in resolving difficulties and in personal development.”<sup>58</sup> In practical terms, mentoring is the “intentional and appropriately reciprocal relationship between two individuals, [usually] a younger adult and an older, wise figure who assists the younger person in learning the way of life.”<sup>59</sup> Various researches have indicated that the presence of a mentor, a “role model,” or “an authority figure” who have taken the time to care for young adults have had positive influence on their faith journey.<sup>60</sup>

The role of the mentor is dynamic and versatile in nature. However, it can be categorized under two key areas—support and development. Post-adolescents are in need of support in their lived experience and personal crises from someone who is farther along on the journey of life. They are also in need of mentors who can help them develop in the areas of faith practices, leadership, and career. Hence Levinson argues that the mentorship relationship is “one of the most complex, and developmentally important, a man [sic] can have in early adulthood.”<sup>61</sup> Mentorship is also practiced in the corporate world both to support and develop newer and maybe younger members to the team. The goal of mentorship in businesses is to increase skills and knowledge so that one can advance in career.<sup>62</sup> Nonetheless, this is exercised in the context of life situations.

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<sup>56</sup> Lanker, “Life-long Guides,” 37.

<sup>57</sup> Lanker, “Life-long Guides,” 37.

<sup>58</sup> Gill, *Theory*, 363.

<sup>59</sup> Parks, *Big Questions*, 165.

<sup>60</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 54–55.

<sup>61</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Man's Life*, 97.

<sup>62</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 309; Gill, *Theory*, 239.

Christian mentorship takes this a step further. It empowers individuals through coaching and sustaining to live all of life in the context of a Christian worldview.

In Wong's survey of young adults, 82.8 percent of those who are highly engaged (HE) in the church reports a strong or very strong positive experience of mentorship. Likewise, 73% of the less affiliated (LA) had relatively good mentoring experiences.<sup>63</sup> There is a large disparity in the experience of those who left the church. Over half of the spiritual *nones* and *donees* (SND) reports a strong to very strong negative mentoring experience; and 88% among the Agnostics and Atheists (A&A).<sup>64</sup> Rebekah, who is highly engaged, says,

When you are younger, you are more (vulnerable) to other influences because of friends or peers pressure or at school. So having someone you can talk about these things, asking tough [questions,] is really important in the church.<sup>65</sup>

Eve, who belongs to the cohorts of the disinterested, recalls,

We had a girls group that we were a part of, and we were mentored by the older generation and an intern in university would mentor the kids. It was like a [passing the baton] kind of thing.<sup>66</sup>

Another recalls that mentors "opened my eyes to the idea that there is something (extra in faith) that is part of your life."<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore the stage of mentorship is mapped to Erikson's stages of play age and school age in the human life cycle. The goal of mentoring relationships is to develop *initiative* and *industry* in the progression of empowerment.<sup>68</sup> The key word is *imagination*.<sup>69</sup> This is an exploration stage that requires mentors who can provide

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<sup>63</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 55–56.

<sup>64</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 55–56.

<sup>65</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 56.

<sup>66</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 58.

<sup>67</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 58.

<sup>68</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>69</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 78.

objective feedback and encourage imagination. Mentors empower individuals through guiding, coaching, and sustaining. Therefore, Christian mentorship is a form of shepherding. The mentee is given a channel to share deeper concerns without fear of reprisal or unfavourable evaluation. However, if the mentor is the direct supervisor of the mentee, the mentoring relationship requires openness and objectivity. The individual can expand their kingdom horizon by participating in new ministries and missions as well as discovering their giftedness. The presence of mentors empowers individuals with possibilities and creativity. Creativity inspires the basic strength of *purpose*.<sup>70</sup> This opens up possibilities for ministry whether new ideas come from their imagination. Their participation in ministry is no longer simply fulfilling someone else's vision. Mentors are windows to imagination. From imagination comes a sense of purpose and passion and vice versa.

There are two types of mentoring relationships, formal mentors and natural mentors. Formal mentors could be supervisors or experienced ministers assigned as part of training or internship respectively. Ricardo Saludo, President of the Civil Service Commission in Philippines, wrote an article "In Praise of Mentors" in which he credits his success to three of his formal mentors.<sup>71</sup> One of them is Onofre 'Pagsi' Pagsanghan, a high school drama teacher who exemplified a "Christ figure" for his students.<sup>72</sup> Besides teaching the course materials, Pagsi modeled what it means to be a righteous, good, and caring person. Pagsi and Saludo became lifelong friends. Saludo asserts that mentors are especially important for adolescents. He asserts,

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<sup>70</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>71</sup> Saludo, "In Praise," 7.

<sup>72</sup> Saludo, "In Praise," 7–8.

Adolescence is a time when youth acquires identity: the perspectives, principles, personal ties, physical attributes, and other personality aspects that one carries through most of one's life, and which set directions and moral imperatives that guide and shape one's actions and decisions in the coming three or four score years. Absent [of] proper mentoring at this stage and one may be lost all his or her life.<sup>73</sup>

In a 2010 research of 181 Christian college students in the United States between the ages of 18 and 20, Lanker and Issler found 77% of those who identified as Christians had a positive mentoring experience during their adolescence years.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, many of them had what Lanker and Issler identified as "natural mentors."<sup>75</sup> They conclude that "the natural mentoring experience during mid-adolescence have a tremendous impact on how committed adolescents are to those long-term, interpersonal relationships that are beneficial for both them and others."<sup>76</sup> In particular, studies suggest that "natural mentors as opposed to formal ones" work well in faith communities.<sup>77</sup> Natural mentoring takes place when "non-parental adults, such as extended family members, teachers or neighbours provide support and guidance as a result of a relationship developed without the help of a program specifically designed to connect youth and adults to form such a relationship."<sup>78</sup> Denise, a mentor, recalls how she became one, "My mentoring relationship actually started long ago, through my son's t-ball. Those boys just kept hanging around. I just listen to them and try to help them find their way."<sup>79</sup>

Studies show that 87% of those had "non-familial mentors that were developed through relationships within the church [which] outweighed connections with familial

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<sup>73</sup> Saludo, "In Praise," 8.

<sup>74</sup> Lanker and Issler, "Relationship," 97.

<sup>75</sup> Lanker, "Life-long Guides," 32.

<sup>76</sup> Lanker and Issler, "Relationship," 103.

<sup>77</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 39; Lanker and Issler, "Relationship," 93.

<sup>78</sup> Zimmerman et al., "Natural Mentoring," 143.

<sup>79</sup> Lanker, "Life-long Guides," 34.



mentors.”<sup>80</sup> Natural mentoring relationships are usually developed when caring adults “connect with [young people] outside of the prescribed time.”<sup>81</sup> Furthermore, mentorship is especially important for those who come from broken homes or an underprivileged background where “their involvement in the religious community as a means of compensation.”<sup>82</sup> Natural mentoring relationships also play a significant role in the overall “health and well-being” of adolescents, especially for at-risks youths.<sup>83</sup>

Lanker and Issler asserts that the average time of natural mentoring relationships to take effect in adolescents is from 6.7 years.<sup>84</sup> Dubois and Silverthorn put the average time that adolescents know their natural mentors is 9.1 years.<sup>85</sup> This is the duration adolescents have known their non-familial mentors. For Lanker and Issler, it means the mentors were present in the lives of these adolescents “when they were about 11 years old.”<sup>86</sup> The results seem to suggest that for natural mentoring relationships to reach maximum efficacy for post-adolescents (18 to 30), mentors need to make the connection anywhere between the ages of 9 to 24. If maturation is desired in young adults, the time for mentoring relationships is early adolescence.

In an empirical research on the correlation between the role of mentors and gratitude in underprivileged youths in Hong Kong, Eddie Chi Wai Ng and Charles C. Chan conclude that the importance of mentors is not only in “sharing their religious faith and personal life lessons in the development of gratitude, but also demonstrated that religious mentors’ influence on gratitude was entirely mediated through adolescents’ self-

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<sup>80</sup> Lanker and Issler, “Relationship,” 98.

<sup>81</sup> Lanker, “Life-long Guides,” 35.

<sup>82</sup> Lanker and Issler, “Relationship,” 95.

<sup>83</sup> Dubois and Silverthorn, “Characteristics of Natural Mentoring,” 522.

<sup>84</sup> Lanker and Issler, “Relationship,” 103–104; Dubois and Silverthorn, “Characteristics,” 522.

<sup>85</sup> Dubois and Silverthorn, “Characteristics,” 522.

<sup>86</sup> Lanker and Issler, “Relationship,” 103.

esteem, spirituality, and understanding of Christianity.”<sup>87</sup> They follow the development of 101 adolescents in mentorship programs over a three year period. Using the statistically significant method of bootstrapping (resampling of data), they were able to provide empirical results. They report,

The indirect effect from mentors sharing religious faith to gratitude was statistically significant (with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of .01 to .09) and that from mentors sharing life experience to gratitude was also statistically significant (with a 95% bootstrap confidence interval of .05 to .22) Thus, the religious mentors’ influence on gratitude was entirely mediated through the psychological (i.e., self-esteem) and religious (i.e., understanding of Christianity and spirituality) routes.<sup>88</sup>

The mentors in the above report can be considered natural mentors even though the subjects of this study are part of a mentorship program. The relationship is non-formal because these mentors were not teachers or supervisors to the adolescents. There is no direct consequences should the teenagers not comply with the authority of the mentors. Moreover, the significance of this report is the fruition of the dual nature of mentorship to support and to develop. The psychological benefit of increased self-esteem is the result of support in the lives of underprivileged youths. Their interest in spirituality and understanding of Christianity is religious development.

Post-adolescents are at a new stage of social learning. They are welcomed into the community with a new identity of adult. Like the child whose first entrance of life is the school, young adults make their entrance into the same church as if for the first time. This re-orientation involves all areas of life such as career, dating, financial independence, and ministry. They are seeking opportunities where they can develop initiatives as part of their identity achievement. They need to know they are accepted with their new identity

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<sup>87</sup> Ng and Chan, “Gratitude,” 140.

<sup>88</sup> Ng and Chan, “Gratitude,” 143.

as adults, albeit they are in the transition of postadolescence. The role of mentors is to provide up-close and personal affirmation. This is an exciting time as the world is waiting for them. There are hopes and dreams as well as times of discouragement. The presence of mentors at this stage is invaluable as young adults negotiate a path to become worthy members of the faith community.

The individual seeks to contribute. However, she or he would need to have “a sense of being useful” from their own initiative.<sup>89</sup> The role of mentors is to walk them through their imagination and what they can do.<sup>90</sup> The earlier narrative of James whose new ideas were rejected is typical of individuals who had wanted to contribute to their faith community. They have been inspired by experiences beyond the convention of their own church. With the advance of technology, adolescents and young adults have access to a wide variety of theological and ministry reflections. Coupled with their creativity and imagination they search for opportunities to make an impact on the greater community.

Mentors can help them to develop this “*sense of industry*. [sic]”<sup>91</sup> Emerging adults are not satisfied to just spend an hour in passivity on Sundays. Like learning anything, the learning is in the doing. There is a profound desire to be useful. The sense of industry is an important part of identity affirmation. The search for meaning is the exploration of how to make a difference in the world. In a subconscious way, the search for meaning asks the question, “What kind of legacy do I leave behind?” However, the search for meaning must be nuanced between self-actualization and self-realization as opposed to following a sense of calling. The sense of industry in Christian identity is necessarily rooted in the ultimate sameness and continuity of the mega-narrative of the Christ story.

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<sup>89</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 91.

<sup>90</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 87.

<sup>91</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 91.

The industry stage is where competence is developed. The child at school age learns to “handle the utensils, the tools and the weapons ... used by the big people.”<sup>92</sup> For young adults, they now learn to handle the tools and weapons of the faith community. Competence in ministry is developed through participation.<sup>93</sup> The individual now learns to be the adult in handling the liturgy, prayer, and the spiritual warfare. However, the observation may be that they have been doing just that since they were teenagers. They were asked to be competent in ministry before they were inspired or had received training. This opens up the topic on the importance of timing in mentorship.

In *The Seasons of a Woman's Life*, Levinson relates mentorship to the dream of the mentee. The goal of mentoring is more than helping someone to survive but to thrive. Levinson contends, “A full, complex, [mentoring] relationship supports the evolution of the Dream. A true mentor foster the young adult's development by nourishing the youthful Dream and giving it her or his blessing, believing in the young woman, helping her to define her newly emerging adult self in its newly discovered world, and creating a space in which she can move toward a reasonably satisfactory life structure that contains the Dream.”<sup>94</sup> This principle is true for both men and women especially if the mentor is in an advisory role.

Saludo credits his career to his teacher and mentor Pagsanghan, ‘Pagsi,’ who inspired him to dream and nurtured the confidence to pursue that dream. He says,

My constant drive to be of service to others and society and to do what is right and just, I owe in large part to Pagsi own man-for-others, no-compromise ethic. Indeed, there have been crucial moments when I asked how Pagsi would act in those situations, not unlike many Christians pondering in the face of moral issues, ‘What would Jesus do?’ Moreover, my career path through theater, journalism,

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<sup>92</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 123.

<sup>93</sup> Hagberg and Guelich, *Critical*, 79.

<sup>94</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman's Life*, 239.

and government, was set on its trajectory by the delight in drama and writing as well as the self-confidence engendered by Pagsi in Dulaang Sibol.<sup>95</sup>

However, mentorship in the corporate world can be especially challenging for women since there are many more men in supervisory roles than women. The cultural norm is for men to be in managerial positions and women as subordinates. While the situation has improved, women still experience limitations in the workplace and in mentoring relationships. Northouse notes that gender inequality is still a major hurdle in the workplace. Even though women are increasingly occupying managerial positions, “they have few development opportunities at work than do men. Many of the gender differences in developmental opportunities may be driven at least in part by the prejudice women experience in the domain of leadership.”<sup>96</sup>

A number of women students were interviewed and were asked about their past mentoring experience. Pam recalls,

I had a lot of trouble deciding about a major and no idea what I would do graduation. I had an adviser who was sort of out there, in his office. If I ever wanted to ask for his advice I could, but I never particularly did. There were lots of women teaching the lower level courses, but men were the full professors. I was not exposed to any female role models at all. The general feeling was that you got out of college and got married and raised a family.<sup>97</sup>

Pam points out the lack of caring mentor-mentee relationships between male faculty members and female students. While cross-gender mentoring is possible, it must be conducted with professionalism and integrity. The faculty member in Pam’s experience may feel that his duty is confined to guiding students to pass the course, to survive. But Pam is looking for a mentor who can clarify her dream and help her realize it. The

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<sup>95</sup> Saludo, “In Praise,” 8.

<sup>96</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 308.

<sup>97</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman’s Life*, 237.

professor saw the mentoring role as academic and administrative while Pam's expectation for a mentor is relational and inspirational.

The mentoring relationship is further complexified by the different life situations between the mentor and the mentee. Another student, Stacey, was able to find two female faculty members at Seven Sisters College as her mentors.<sup>98</sup> The mentoring relationships seem to be more relational than Pam's experience since both mentors and the mentee are women. Nonetheless, Stacey felt the faculty members were limited in their roles as mentors because they were single. She explains, "[They] had limitations in terms of being role models for me because they were single. I don't think I had any female teacher who was married with children." Young women are at the transition into adulthood which may include motherhood. They want to have mentors who can do more transfer information about motherhood but mentors who have lived it.

How can mentorship be adapted practically in generational ministry of the CCC? In "The 2004 Princeton Lectures on Youth, Church, and Culture," Roland Martinson explores eight "faith factors" of vibrant young men and women which were adopted by the Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota. Those interviewed are college students are likely in their twenties. However, many of the interviewees recall how their religious commitment was rooted in the Christian faith during their experiences in high school. First, these individuals "integrated faith into their family identity and practice. It's one of the top factors that emerge. One woman said it this way: "In our family, God was in our armpits and pores. It was like we fought with God when we were angry; we danced with God when we were happy; it was like God was in the water that we drank." Families

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<sup>98</sup> Levinson, *Seasons of a Woman's Life*, 237.

matter. Family practices matter.”<sup>99</sup> The awareness of God’s presence and the authenticity in which they wrestle with God was vital in their faith practices. God was not a topic for discussion, but a Person with whom they engage with on a continual basis.

Second, Martinson notes that these young adults “have three or more adult mentors of vital faith. And what they’re talking about here most often is having living examples, living icons of the diversity of how faith functions in the lives of different people. So they get a sense of “is this authentic, is this real, might it work for me?”<sup>100</sup> The next most important thing from God in the vitality of faith connection among youths is the presence of mentors. These men and women lived out their faith with transparency and authenticity not just in the church but in all life situations.<sup>101</sup> The way they worship and their quiet disposition of trust in God in the face of trials and sufferings are already wordless mentoring to the new generation. Moreover, engaging in relevant conversations with young adults in caring relationships will both inspire and encourage them. Mentoring comes second in eight factors to faith and it comes only second to directly encountering God.

The immigrant church can focus more on cultivating a presence of God through modeling by parents, practitioners, leaders, and mature adults. If God is in the air they breathe and in the water they drink, then faith practices will be transformational for a new generation. Furthermore, if each young man or woman have two or three godly man or woman are willing and able to live out their faith without compromise to the world and who are willing to pay attention and spend time with post-adolescents, then young adults would be inspired to the vitality of faith and to the spirituality of these mentors.

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<sup>99</sup> Martinson, “Life and Faith,” 42.

<sup>100</sup> Martinson, “Life and Faith,” 42–43.

<sup>101</sup> Martinson, “Life and Faith,” 42–43.

Martinson has identifies still other faith factors that contributes to the vitality of faith in these young people. The third and the fourth factors are early experiences in Christian service and apprenticeship that flows theologically and practically to partnership which is the next phase in the epigenesis of empowerment.

### **Partnership**

The third pastoral care construct is *partnership*. This phase focuses on the opportunity for post-adolescents to serve alongside mature men and women in the church. Partnering relationships differ from mentorship in that the individual is now invited into specific roles in ministry. Moreover, partnership is a form of *apprenticeship*. The mentoring continues; so does the friendship. Partnership seeks to empower young men and women into a variety of ministry roles whether these come with official titles or not. When a younger person joins the ministry team in partnership, it allows the individual to observe how the church operates from a vantage point. The goal is to immerse the new generation of young adults in the rich Christian heritage and to provide opportunities for them to make meaningful contributions to the vision and ministries of the church. Warner and William argue, “the most effective transmission of religious involvement seemed to come from those who took public and honored roles in the main religious institutions while they themselves [were] still dependent minors ... [and with] adults on hand to serve as models, coaches, and an appreciative audience for what the youth were learning and enacting.”<sup>102</sup> Young men and women seek to transition into full partners in the gospel and are looking for opportunities to enrich their experience. Partnership empowers them to learn and to lead with the advantage of a spiritual guide.

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<sup>102</sup> Warner and William, “Role of Families,” 164.



The term *partnership* is preferred to *apprenticeship* in the current study due to its relational nature. Apprenticeship in its classical definition carries a legal obligation between the master and the apprentice.<sup>103</sup> However, Paul Nicholson, a Jesuit scholar in the U.K. argues that there is a place of apprenticeship in the training of spiritual directors. He lists three benefits of apprenticeship in ministry training. First, the aim of apprenticeship is to develop “practical and other skills needed to practise a skilled (or learned) profession.”<sup>104</sup> Second, the duration of apprenticeship usually means “a period of years.”<sup>105</sup> Third, Nicholson focuses on the “and that mutual relationship between the master and the apprentice.”<sup>106</sup>

The above defines the purpose, duration, and the nature of apprenticeship which is called partnership in this section. The concepts of partnership and apprenticeship are interchangeable in a relational and religious context. The focus on the relationship between the master and the apprentice is paramount in the pastoral construct of care. The aim of partnership in ministry is generally agreed upon without debate. The duration of years in that relationship is at first less than inviting. However, if the partnership is built upon a caring relationship and mutual trust, then the duration should not be an issue. A partnership that is built on caring without personal agenda would want to propel the apprentice to the next level as soon as he or she is ready to take on more responsibilities. However, if the partnership is not built on trust, then even a few weeks would be unbearable.

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<sup>103</sup> Ontario laws regarding apprenticeship. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/apprenticeship-ontario>

<sup>104</sup> Nicholson, “Forming,” 83.

<sup>105</sup> Nicholson, “Forming,” 83.

<sup>106</sup> Nicholson, “Forming,” 83.

Involving youths and young adults in service is an imperative in generational ministry. To empower individuals in the new generation is neither to control them nor to abandon them to be on their own. Partnership finds a balance in preparing them for autonomy with full support of mentors and a caring community. The intermediate phase between mentorship and fellowship acknowledges leaders in the new generation as fellow coworkers in Christ. This is an imperative for healthy spiritual growth of those in English ministries of the immigrant church. This is demonstrated in Martinson's third and fourth faith factors of participation in service and apprenticeship.<sup>107</sup>

The phase of partnership aligns with the *dramatic* phase in ritualization when the individual becomes a part of the cameo of the community through participation. The third faith factor in Martinson's article points to the experience of service among peers. Together young men and women can share in experiencing God and talk about "how the reality of God has in fact come alive among them."<sup>108</sup> However, participation in partnership takes the reader to the fourth faith factor of apprenticeship. Martin states,

[Young men and women] were apprenticed early into leadership and ministry. These young men and women point to someone who discovered that they had strengths, gifts, and passions; and invited them to use that in leadership in the body of Christ.<sup>109</sup>

These and other faith factors resulted in the strengthening of their religious commitment as college students and young adults. A young woman who is an accomplished violinist recalls how her service in the church had strengthened her belief in God,

People came to me and told me how the strings of my violin healed broken strings of their hearts. I never doubted that God existed. Sometimes I had questions. I was angry with God and upset with God, but I never doubted that God existed

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<sup>107</sup> Martinson, "Life and Faith," 43.

<sup>108</sup> Martinson, "Life and Faith," 43.

<sup>109</sup> Martinson, "Life and Faith," 43.

because I regularly had people bear witness to the fact that God was at work healing people through my music.”<sup>110</sup>

Partnership facilitates opportunities for post-adolescents to know God through their own experiences in ministry. The divine cameo played in the faith community is no longer hearsay but has been witnessed by the individual and often in the first person.

The construct of partnership is inviting not demanding. Individuals are not told what to do, but are invited to participate in the discussion of what needs to be done and how it is carried out. It seeks to inspire passion in ministry. The opinion of younger leaders matters greatly to the church in understanding the current issues among the masses. In *Forbes* magazine, Alexa Sordato, VP of Marketing at Andela, advocates for the importance of involving young people in business decision. She was cited to have said, “We need to think about reverse mentorship and pairing young people with seasoned executives. We need to stop thinking about it as an ‘us versus them’ conversation. It’s a two-way street.”<sup>111</sup> The young man and the young woman in the ethnic church need to know that the church leaders value what they have to offer.

Partnership addresses the issues of dysfunctional leadership by reducing the “power distance” in the hierarchical structure.<sup>112</sup> The comments by the English speaking young adults are indicative of the preclusion from power sharing. Young adults in Wong’s survey use words such as “Paternalistic” and “Dictatorial” to describe pastors from the Chinese ministry who hold the power.<sup>113</sup> Leah, who is highly engaged in the church, says, “Members from the Chinese ministry who will be deacons make the

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<sup>110</sup> Martinson, “Life and Faith,” 43.

<sup>111</sup> Quast, “Reverse Mentoring,” 1.

<sup>112</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 308.

<sup>113</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 94.

decisions for us.”<sup>114</sup> The observation is that congregants in English ministry are not given the opportunities to make their own decisions. This has been a major hurdle in the development of English ministries in the CCC. This phase seeks to bridge the two sides through mutual trust and relationships.

The phase of partnership is fundamentally a step towards power sharing. It is only possible “when power and control shift away from [senior leaders to younger ones.] Partners have a right to say ‘no’ to the other party. They are totally honest with one another, neither hiding information nor protecting the other from bad news. In addition, partners (leaders and followers) are jointly responsible for defining vision and purpose and jointly accountable for outcomes.”<sup>115</sup> Power sharing is a leadership strategy in the “normative decision model”<sup>116</sup> The efficacy of business strategies is highly dependent on the particular situation. Executive decisions must take into account observations and analysis by subordinates who hold relevant information. Hence employees are “given equal partnership in the decision process.”<sup>117</sup> The goal of this partnership is to foster a “buy in” of the company’s objectives for the best outcome.<sup>118</sup>

Businesses also recognize the importance of servant leadership.<sup>119</sup> The servant leader goes beyond “self-interest to serve the needs of others, help others grow and develop, and provide opportunities for others to gain materially and emotionally.”<sup>120</sup> Partnership fosters a creative working environment where subordinates are respected for

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<sup>114</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 95.

<sup>115</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 156.

<sup>116</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 87.

<sup>117</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 87.

<sup>118</sup> Northouse, *Leadership*, 208.

<sup>119</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 152–60.

<sup>120</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 156.

their ideas. Involving employees in the decision making process also creates an emotionally healthy environment.

Identity is affirmed in their usefulness to the overall success of the company. It is also part of the on-the-job training process for personal development. Likewise, partnership in ministry will nurture maturation and affirm identity. Practitioners and elders as servant leaders have the responsibility to move young adults from followers to stewards.

Partnership is important because the learning is in the doing. Jennifer Courduff emphasizes the need to foster a “community of practice” in the discussion of vocational apprenticeship.<sup>121</sup> She argues that community can be very effective especially in preparing those who is in the vocation of teaching or mentoring. There is “evidence that the approach to apprenticeship used by Jesus and Paul aligns with the model and even extends it.”<sup>122</sup> Apprenticeships were practiced in the Old and New Testament “where the apprentice could observe, practice, and eventually take over the practice of the Master, or teacher.”<sup>123</sup> The Lukan account “presents a series of important new development for the twelve and the larger group of disciples ... The twelve are no longer passive observers of Jesus in his mission; they have progressed to the point that they can be active participants. To be sure, they are still apprentices.”<sup>124</sup> From Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, Jesus and the Twelve, to Barnabas and Paul, apprenticeship was practiced through the community.

Partnership is also mapped to the stages of *Adolescence* and *Young Adulthood* where the nurturing of identity and intimacy takes place. It seeks to affirm *identity* and

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<sup>121</sup> Courduff, “Community,” 334.

<sup>122</sup> Courduff, “Community,” 334.

<sup>123</sup> Courduff, “Community,” 336.

<sup>124</sup> Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 215.

*spiritual intimacy* in post-adolescents predicated on their religious affiliation and commitment. It is the desire of every parent that their son or daughter would become a mature adult someday. This includes the prospect of vocation, marriage, and financial independence. At the appropriate time, parents will involve the adult child in the decision-making process regarding the family's welfare. This is particularly important during crisis moments. The adult child who is part of the discussion will experience a deep sense of belonging. Their identity as a full member of the family is affirmed.

Likewise, partnership in ministry is the acknowledgement that graduates who have returned from college will be taken seriously by the *uncles* and *aunties* in the church. The qualification for partnership is also dependent on spiritual maturation. The question of who is qualified to be brought into partnership requires spiritual discernment and a fine balance between the preclusion of relevant changes and the guarding of truths. The process of partnership must be done in mutual submission with humility and honesty. However, the notion that every man and woman who grew in the church must become an elder may undermine the specific calling of the individual. Ministries in the church require the priesthood of all believers and in various capacities. Every person must follow the divine call in all its complexity and flexibility.

The emerging adult is faced with a spiritual revolution at this stage.<sup>125</sup> The transition from university to the marketplace is paramount to post-adolescents. It signals a milestone that requires a reconstruction of their identity. Eugene Peterson argues that the spiritual journey that counts really begins when one enters into (emerging) adulthood. This follows Erikson's logic in *Toy and Reason*. Peterson asserts, "Work is the primary context for our spirituality. Most children's play is practice for adult work. We play our

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<sup>125</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 94.

way into adult work; our games are apprenticeships. The spiritual begins—seriously begins—when we get a job and to go work.”<sup>126</sup> Every transition up to this point has been capped for the duration of about four years—from primary school to junior high (arguably two sets of four yours), from junior high to high school, and from high school to university. However, the professional life means the beginning of a 40-years stage until the next transition point. This is a time for reorientation. The quest for identity is at a crucial point.

The individual ends his or her journey as a child and emerges as *something* of an adult. That something is the new *identity* that young adults must construct as a lens in which they conceive of themselves and how others might see them.<sup>127</sup> This lens provides the simultaneous observations necessary to the reorientation into the faith community.<sup>128</sup> The pillars of past sameness and continuity are not severed yet must not remain as before. This new identity is the “successful alignment” of the individual’s imagination and inspiration, their contribution based on competence, and the opportunities to partake in ministry involvement.<sup>129</sup> When partnership is aligned competence and passion, identity is affirmed. The decision to commit or not is no longer dependent on playing along in the hierarchal system. It is “out of free choice ... [and not] forced” by the elders or parents.<sup>130</sup> Once “ego-synthesis” is established, confidence and experience will increase. In this phase, the strength developed is “fidelity.”<sup>131</sup> The individual is now ready to make long-term commitment. As vocation played a major role in the demarcation of adulthood in

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<sup>126</sup> Peterson, *Leap over the Wall*, 27.

<sup>127</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 87.

<sup>128</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 22.

<sup>129</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 94.

<sup>130</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 129.

<sup>131</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 94; Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

modernity, affirmation for postmodern adults in the church is found through usefulness of their giftedness and contribution.

Partnership matures into the capacity to love. The capacity to love those who they serve is vital to meaningful Christian service. Spiritual intimacy is found in serving with others. Commitment to love matures into a sense of belonging. Camaraderie further affirms identity and a bond of love grows from it. It may be that they will meet their future spouse in the process. A true sense of community is maturing between individuals. “It is only when identity formation is well on its way that true intimacy—which is really a counterpointing as well as a fusing of identities—is possible.”<sup>132</sup> Without affirmation of identity, intimacy is in danger of relationships “without true fusion or real self-abandon.”<sup>133</sup> Without true intimacy, a sense of insecurity will develop even when they are in highly regarded positions. Insecurity is also a subtle but common symptom among Christian leaders. Insecurity among leaders causes conflicts and competition in ministry. This can be the results of childhood experiences or past hurt.

The pastoral construct of partnership does not advocate a theology that links identity to achievement. To do so would allow performancism to creep into ministry based activities. As the child may “[accept] work as the only criterion of worthwhileness,” the young adult may also be coerced by the pre-occupation of self-actualization in the process.<sup>134</sup> In this case, the individual will play right into the expectations of success and performance in order to please others. The lure of success overlooks the significance of progress. “Sometimes recognition is necessary for unsuccessful efforts to perform an important activity with a low probability of

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<sup>132</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 135.

<sup>133</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 135.

<sup>134</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 127.



success.”<sup>135</sup> There is a fundamental difference between identity predicted on results and one that is predicated on commitment. Followership of Jesus does not guarantee success, only the joy of participation. Christ calls his disciples to bear the cross. What can be certain is that the future joy and glory will outweigh the present suffering.

Partnership seeks to develop an identity that is predicated on one’s participation in Christ. Those who are unable to separate their loyalty to Christ from that to senior leaders or their parents fall into James Marcia’s ego-identity status of *foreclosure*.<sup>136</sup> Their ministry will be task-oriented rather than people-oriented. Failure in ministry will be unbearable because it is part of their identity and the fall will be taken personally. When identity is predicated on results then competition instead of compassion becomes the driving force. This form of faith practice is self-centred and self-serving. Authentic spirituality is a pursuit of God for the sake of others and for the glory of God.<sup>137</sup> The lure of performancism may also come in the form of attempting to repeat past successes of the CCC in English ministries. This objective sounds noble but negates the intricate differences between the two cultures. It also forces English ministries to conform to a culture that is not their own. Imagination will decrease; and passivity will be on the rise. Success in ministry for bicultural individuals will require its own observation and interpretation.

Partnership is empowerment through caring. Furthermore, the invitation to partnership is not a method but a calling of the Spirit. It is not programmatic but organic. This process must begin with friendship and mentoring. Otherwise, the invitation can easily be construed as asking for free labour and will be met with rejection or even

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<sup>135</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 72.

<sup>136</sup> Please refer “Crisis Commitment and Identity” in Chapter 3.

<sup>137</sup> Mulholland, *Invitation*, 4–44.

hostility. Most of those who have the potential to be invited are already serving in multiple capacities. The feeling of being used by the church may be a deterrent to further participation. Building trust and mentoring is not for the sake of coercing them into working for the church. Partnership is motivated by the fulfillment of the gospel mandate and for the sake of the invited. Young adults are not looking to get busy with religious activities, but for a vision. The “absence of an overall ... vision” is one of the key concerns.<sup>138</sup> Hence partnership must be a mutual process in which post-adolescents can be confident that their voices will be heard.

### **Fellowship**

The final stage of pastoral care in generational ministry is *fellowship*. Fellowship is defined as the full acceptance and acknowledgement of young adults, and others, into the circle of leadership as full partners of the gospel. This is the ultimate goal of empowerment. The word *fellowship* is rich in biblical and theological meaning. This is the vision of reciprocity across generations.<sup>139</sup> Fellowship is the fruition of the epigenesis of empowerment through friendship, mentorship, and partnership. This is the movement from walking alongside to walking side by side. Those who are invited to fellowship are now ready to repeat the pastoral cycle of care. Fellowship is not only a picture of power holders inviting power recipients into their circle. There is no more separation between *us* and *them*. There is only *we*—brothers and sisters in Christ and fellow citizens of the kingdom. Power distance is flattened between leaders of different generations. Fellowship is an invitation to be in communion with the Triune God, Father, Son, and

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<sup>138</sup> Wong et al., *Listening to their Voices*, 98; Northouse, *Leadership*, 186, 191.

<sup>139</sup> Zylla, “Practices,” 703.

Holy Spirit through the blood of Christ and with all the saints. The vision of fellowship is to reimagine the local ethnic church as one community.

Corporate leaders seek to provide a sense of fulfillment to their employees. This includes how to integrate [the employee's] spiritual journey and job life."<sup>140</sup> Spirituality is a relevant topic in western culture without any attachment to specific religions.<sup>141</sup> The concept of spirituality in the workplace is to provide support for better mental and physical well-being that in the end will benefit the company.<sup>142</sup> Gottlieb defines spirituality as an orientation in life that "gives rise to certain characteristic experiences, and certain characteristic experiences may prompt the adoption of a spiritual perspective and motivate a spiritually oriented life."<sup>143</sup> Fulfillment in the workplace is necessary for longevity of employment and overall wellness of the employee. Nonetheless, the employee is never an equal with the executives until he or she is promoted to that position.

Yukl argues that in order for employees to have a sense of fulfillment, they need to experience two things, "transcendence" and "fellowship."<sup>144</sup> However, these terms may have different meaning than what is generally understood in theology. Yukl uses the term *transcendence* to mean a sense of calling in the self beyond the need for livelihood. However, this does not necessitate a relationship with a deity. But in fact, the theology of vocation points to a divine calling whether one is aware of it or not.<sup>145</sup> The term *fellowship* in the corporate world means the need for community. Yukl asserts that

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<sup>140</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 397.

<sup>141</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 397–400; Yukl, *Leadership*, 360–67.

<sup>142</sup> Daft, *Leadership*, 397.

<sup>143</sup> Gottlieb, *Spirituality*, 5.

<sup>144</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 360.

<sup>145</sup> Please refer to "Crisis and Commitment in Identity" in Chapter 3.

fellowship “is manifest in the need for meaningful relationships and being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of joy and wholeness.”<sup>146</sup> This definition carries a religious overtone but falls short of the experience of biblical fellowship.

There are similarities between the development of healthy personalities and healthy spirituality. The maturation of adulthood is defined by the desire and ability to nurture the next generation. The construct of fellowship draws on the final stages of *Adulthood* and *Old Age* as reciprocity of care is markedly the sign of spiritual maturity.<sup>147</sup> The strength developed during adulthood is the ability to care. Care “is a widening commitment to take care of the persons, the [ministries], and [new visions] one has learned to care for.”<sup>148</sup> When young men and women have reached the stage of fellowship, meaningful service is found in caring for others. Caring includes the oversight of ministries to foster an environment where others can experience care and growth.

Erikson asserts, “[The] mere fact of having or even wanting children does not ‘achieve’ generativity.”<sup>149</sup> Parenting is hard work. The well-being of the child is highly dependent on the efforts of his/her parents. Their tasks include acquiring the necessary knowledge of raising children and careful observations to understand the child as a unique individual. Generational ministry is also hard work. Generativity is contrasted by “*self-absorption and stagnation*. [sic]” As in parenting, it is possible for church leaders to have blind spots and to be self-absorbed which prevent them from seeing the pressing needs of the new generation. Thus the desire to see the flourishing of the English ministry

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<sup>146</sup> Yukl, *Leadership*, 360.

<sup>147</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 32–33.

<sup>148</sup> Erikson, *Life Cycle Completed*, 67.

<sup>149</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 138.

is not enough. This desire must be accompanied by knowledge and commitment to be attentive and present in their crises.

The spiritual crisis for post-adolescents at this stage is a “pervading sense of stagnation.”<sup>150</sup> This subtle issue of the identity confusion can be resolved in finding meaningful participation in ministry. They are looking for opportunities to exercise generativity. They are adolescents and adults at the same time. Hence they need to be cared for and to care for others. However, they are seldom invited to the table or even an apprenticeship. Hence they remain inexperienced in the operations and ministries of the church until they get tired of religion. They are not ready for partnership because they were not mentored through genuine friendship. The lack of opportunities to participate will eventually lead to self-indulgence.<sup>151</sup> Yet people in the church often wonder why English congregants seem uninterested and passive (stagnate) unlike their overseas born counterparts.

The pastoral care construct of fellowship is further mapped to the life stage of *Old Age*. The individual not only becomes generative but develops good character—*integrity*. Experiences of life and ministry will challenge the limits of good character. Christian pilgrimage is a journey that also encompasses spiritual battles and sufferings. When crises arise, individuals are called to discernment and action. Those who ministers to others not only carry their own crosses but they also carry the burdens of the community. Capps says, “[Individuals] experiencing crisis points (whether personal or communal) ...

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<sup>150</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 138.

<sup>151</sup> Erikson, *Identity and the Life Cycle*, 103.

are faced with two basic orientations to life—the way of sinfulness and the way of virtue.”<sup>152</sup> Demands of ministry and relational issues can test the depth of one’s character.

Pride and self-righteousness can cause one to compromise integrity. Integrity stands firm in times of crisis and acts according to grace and truth. It is also very much a function of emotional health. Integrity “implies an emotional integration which permits participation by followership as well as acceptance of the responsibility of leadership: both must be learned and practiced in religion and politics, [etc.].” Emotional health is an area least discussed in the Chinese culture. Recent research in “neurosciences make separating emotion from reason impossible.”<sup>153</sup> Therefore, to maintain integrity, one must not neglect the invaluable gift of emotion. Participation in leadership roles presents challenges to integrity by stirring up emotions. Those who have clear visions and are willing to serve sacrificially must persevere with integrity and trustworthiness.

The epigenesis of empowerment reaches its final virtue in *wisdom*.<sup>154</sup> The legacy of ministry leaders is found in the wisdom they leave behind for the next generation. Erikson concludes the life cycle with a reminder of its brevity and the need to make sense of it. Wisdom is the “accumulated knowledge, mature judgement, and inclusive understanding” passed on from one generation to the next. The certainty of death causes individuals to be unsatisfied just to get by without achieving meaning and purpose in life. Wisdom is not just for survival but to leave behind a legacy; a contribution to the community and maybe to the world. Even without religious connotation, wisdom is transcending because it goes beyond an individual’s “one and only life cycle within the

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<sup>152</sup> Capps, *Deadly Sins*, 6.

<sup>153</sup> Lester, *Angry Christian*, 24.

<sup>154</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 140.

sequence of generations.”<sup>155</sup> Hence, wisdom is often found in “philosophical and religious systems” in dealing with ultimate questions of life and death, and truth.

Collective wisdom provides “clarity and strength” for future generations.<sup>156</sup> In the same way, the construct of fellowship seeks to leave behind a spiritual legacy rooted in the mega-narrative that began in Genesis, culminated in the cross and the resurrection of Christ, and embellished throughout the history of the Church. The concept of wisdom is to provide tools for practices in life and in faith. The wise man or woman is not only a doer of ministry but a teacher. There may be a natural tendency to impose traditional practices onto a new generation. However, godly wisdom properly administered teaches young adult not what to think but how to think. Wisdom does not limit imagination; imagination is safeguarded by collective wisdom.

There is no other theoretical equivalent of the pastoral care construct of fellowship except that which is rooted in the biblical narrative. The theological meaning of fellowship comes from an image of the early church. The image of the “right hand of fellowship” exemplifies beauty in the biblical model of empowerment (Galatians 2:9). Fellowship (Gk: *koinonia*) means “one who takes part in something with someone, [a] companion, partner, [or] sharer.”<sup>157</sup> It conveys a “sense of unity, community, and participation in the lives of others that emerges among Christians and in the church from common experience of faith in Jesus Christ.”<sup>158</sup> The Apostles were the patriarchs of the early church. Paul and Barnabas represent a new generation of leaders. In extending the

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<sup>155</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 140.

<sup>156</sup> Erikson, *Identity Youth and Crisis*, 141.

<sup>157</sup> Bauer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 553.

<sup>158</sup> McKim, *Westminster Dictionary*, 103.

right hand of fellowship, the Apostles acknowledged them as now full partners in the gospel.

The right hand of fellowship resembles the ordination of Christian ministers. “The laying on of hand has been symbolically employed from ancient times publicly, formally, and openly to commission person to office, as well as to grant blessings, offer gifts, and sacrifices, and [to] heal.”<sup>159</sup> It signifies the acceptance of the newly minted worker as one of them. Ordination is the sharing of power among practitioners. This is the sharing of power “on behalf of the whole church ... not just on behalf of the local church but on behalf of the historical church, ecumenical church.”<sup>160</sup> Moreover, Pentecost is power sharing by the Triune God. The “continuity of mission” is from Christ to the church.<sup>161</sup> The sharing of power demonstrates the humility and the recognition that power does not originate from the leaders but it has been received from the Spirit. The invitation to fellowship today is in recognition that God’s Spirit and his grace have been extended to a new generation.

Another perspective of fellowship is what Alastair Campbell calls “companionship.”<sup>162</sup> This is the closet image of fellowship in pastoral care. In *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, Campbell captures the essence of caring in the “needs of people as they journey through life.”<sup>163</sup> The realm of caring goes beyond any one particular category whether it is serving in a specific ministry or establishing a career. It recognizes the difficulties at various stations in life. Campbell proposes three movements

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<sup>159</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 27.

<sup>160</sup> Oden, *Pastoral Theology*, 27.

<sup>161</sup> Tannehill, *Narrative Unity*, 295.

<sup>162</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 90.

<sup>163</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 90.



in companionship, “sharing of bread,” “sharing of repose,” and “comradeship at journey’s end.”<sup>164</sup> Each provide a perspective on fellowship as a way of caring.

Companionship and fellowship both find their roots in sharing. “The root meaning of ‘companion’ is ‘he who shares bread. [sic]’”<sup>165</sup> The basic human need for bread to survive is shared by all of humanity. Daily bread is a symbol of survival in any culture. At the basic level, companionship acknowledges that people are all equal. The need for bread transcends the differences proposed by a neoliberal culture and binds individuals into fellows on the journey of life and the spiritual pilgrimage. “It is out of this knowledge of fear and fragility that we support the other in word and action when faith seems far way.”<sup>166</sup> Regardless of apparent position of power or giftedness, all are fellow recipients of grace and entrusted with the task of sharing the bread of life. Church leadership then is not the tyranny of competition but a sharing in the cross and in the life of Christ.

True companionship matures to comradeship. A friend can share in the joys of life, but a comrade stands by in moments of danger and despair. A comrade is a trusted friend when others fail. Furthermore, the comrade is a fellow soldier in the spiritual battle. There is no room for distrust among fellow coworkers in the church. Campbell asserts,

The comrade, then, is a fellow-soldier who helps us fight a common enemy. He does this by taking our anger and our fear with the utmost seriousness, not by making us feel ashamed of such emotions or by offering a ‘religious’ consolation which denies the affront of death. But the comrade is a fighter. He strengthens our determination that death shall not have the final victory.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 91–97. The discussion on the movement of “sharing repose” is found in the pastoral construct of friendship.

<sup>165</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 91.

<sup>166</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 91.

<sup>167</sup> Campbell, *Rediscovering Pastoral Care*, 96.

This is a description of the companion who will journey on to the very end, namely, even as one faces death. However, Campbell is describing more than a morbid postlude but a victory cry in the pilgrimage. Companionship that grows into comradeship is predicated on the fertile soil of friendship. Collective leadership in the church, the board of elders or any other administrative body, must transcend its administrative role into companionship, comradeship, and fellowship.

Furthermore, fellowship is predicated on the relational and functional aspect of the Trinity. Augustine asserts that the Trinity consists of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as “mutually related persons, and a unity of equal essence.”<sup>168</sup> The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are each distinct from the other yet complements each other in their soteriological mission. Calvin argues that while there are differences in their administration, there is no “distinction of order.”<sup>169</sup> For “the Father is also the eternity of the Son and Spirit, since God never could be without his own wisdom and energy; and though in eternity there can be no room for first or last.”<sup>170</sup>

The fellowship of equality is found within the Trinitarian power structure. Reformed theology states that “as Christ is related to the Father, so the Spirit is related to Christ; as the Son witness to and glorifies the Father, so the Spirit witnesses to and glorifies the Son. By the Spirit we have communion with no one less than the Son and the Father themselves.”<sup>171</sup> Power is shared without reservation because they are united in love and in purpose.

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<sup>168</sup> Augustine, “Augustine on the Trinity,” 100.

<sup>169</sup> Calvin, *Institute*, 126.

<sup>170</sup> Calvin, *Institute*, 126.

<sup>171</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 220–21.

Furthermore, the Christian religion is founded on the eternal “fellowship with God.”<sup>172</sup> Salvation is not only forensic but relational. Similarly, ministry is not about success as much as it is focused on fellowship. Therefore, it cannot be built on competition. Christian service, clergy or laity, must be compelled by the love of Christ for His people. Fellowship is an extension of that service. The Triune God graciously invites people into fellowship with himself and into participation of his work. Hence it would be inconceivable that those who are invited into fellowship with the Trinity would exclude others from this relationship. To do so would be a grave error in theology and practice. The inference of fellowship is visually represented at the Lord’s Table.<sup>173</sup> Participation in the body and the blood of Christ is to be in union or fellowship with him and with fellow believers. The Last Supper as a lasting ordinance is a strong symbol of acceptance, participation, power sharing, and identification.

### Summary

The pastoral care constructs highlight two important aspects in generational ministry. First, this research argues that caring is empowering. The goal in generational ministry is not to provide a babysitting service as a comfort zone, but to nurture and empower them to exercise their full potential as Christ followers. The constructs also highlight the relational aspect of empowerment. For generational ministry to be meaningful and successful, it requires the foundation of caring persons who can walk alongside the cohort of young adults and to send them off as Christ followers. This process seeks to provide a general framework for further dialogue in generational ministry. The practice of pastoral

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<sup>172</sup> Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 771.

<sup>173</sup> 1 Corinthians 11:17–22. Althaus, *Theology*, 347–48. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 680–90.

care requires spiritual wisdom and courage to deal with each unique situation.

Furthermore, the epigenesis of empowerment pays attention to the emotional aspect of those who are in transition. Perhaps the Canadian Chinese Church can move towards providing training in health emotional selves for young adults in the caring for souls.

## CONCLUSION

There is urgency in reaching out to a generation that is generally lost. Young men and women who are, or were, in the Canadian Chinese Church are looking for answers. If they cannot find them from the faith community they once held with high regards, they will look elsewhere. Practitioners and parents in the immigrant churches collectively have also been eager to keep their English speaking congregants in the church. However, traditional efforts to remedy the situation seem to have fall short of satisfying their needs. Without addressing the issue of the great divide of *us* and *them*, there is little hope of moving forward. Solutions sought without consultation with English ministry leaders and congregants have often resulted in more hurts than healings.

The epigenesis of empowerment seeks to provide practical steps to power sharing. However, power sharing is impossible without mutual trust and caring relationships. In addition, Power sharing is a two way street. It is not enough to suggest that those in the first generation must change their ways of governing. Leaders in the new generation are equally responsible to reach out to affirm the pioneers of the immigrant church. Both sides must come to the table with humility and move towards reconciliation. This work hopes to ignite further interests in understanding the challenges of postmodern life cycle, neoliberal capitalism, and biculturalism. Further research is required on the rippling effects of neoliberalism and how the church can help alleviate its sufferings. The call for the church to address issues of the oppression in everyday life is not to preach another gospel but to fulfill its promise of abundant life.

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