LISTENING TO THEIR VOICES

An Exploration of Faith Journeys of Canadian-Born Chinese Christians

By
Enoch Wong, Jonathan Tam,
Kwing Hung, Tommy Tsui,
and Wes Wong

Revised Edition

A report commissioned by CCCOWE Canada

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Dedication

To the intergenerational faith leaders: pastors and laity of the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches who have been faithfully toiling in the vineyard of the Lord for the sake of God's kingdom

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Abbreviation

A&A	**Agnostics and Atheists**
CBCC	**Canadian-born Christian Christians**
CCIC	**Canadian Chinese Immigrant Churches**
HE	**Highly Engaged**
HF	**Hemorrhaging Faith**
LA	**Less Affiliated**
LTTV	**Listening to Their Voices**
SND	**Spiritual "Nones" and "Dones"**

Foreword: Rev. Francis Tam

While serving as the Chair of CCCOWE Canada, there was great enthusiasm when CCCOWE Canada sponsored the research project *To Whom Shall We Go* undertaken by Dr. Enoch Wong in 2015. And when I was tasked to write a forward for this research report *Listen To Their Voices*, I turned to the Bible. So I read:

Those from among you will rebuild the ancient ruins; You will raise up the age-old foundations; And you will be called the repairer of the breach, The restorer of the streets in which to dwell (Isa. 58:12 NASB).

With respect to the context, some believe that the reference to ruins, foundations, and walls should not literally be understood to be the city of Jerusalem. In fact, there is no mention of Jerusalem in the entire chapter. What is being built is a people, described metaphorically as a city. In light of its contemporary meaning and application, one may reflect upon four practical aspects of rejuvenating the English-speaking ministry in the Canadian Chinese churches. Through sacred imagination, first, how to **rebuild the ruins**? Second, how to **raise up the foundations**? Third, how to **repair the breach**? And fourthly, how to **restore the pathway**? We do not expect this report to provide a definitive and immediate remedy to solve all our existing problems. However, with a prayerful heart, I am confident that this report can lead us into the right direction and in doing what is veracious for the next generation.

What will happen in 2050? What will the Chinese Church in Canada look like by then? To be honest, no one really knows. But one thing for sure, we must keep evolving, or if you so prefer to use the word CHANGE, we must embrace genuine and innovative change for Christ.

By listening to their voices, this generation may indeed lay a proper foundation and repair the circumstances for the next. May the Chinese churches in Canada today implement necessary changes as inspired by the Holy Spirit, even if it may seem radical to the populace, but for the benefits of the next generaton.

By God's grace, may CCCOWE Canada be a part of this pending breakthrough. Amen!

Rev. Francis Tam, D. Min.
Executive Director, CCCOWE Canada
June 22, 2018

Foreword: Rev. Peter Mah

華福加拿大聯區的事工有多方面，其中之一是為華人教會作守望。七年前 Evangelical Fellowship of Canada（加拿大福音聯盟）作了一個關於主流教會年青人流失的研究，研究報告出書名為 *Hemorrhaging Faith*（流血的信仰）。在主流教會中有 2/3 年青人（14 — 30 歲）會離開教會。這現象在華人教會也同樣發生。多年前美國一份雜誌 *Christianity Today*（今日基督教）也作了一個粗略的研究，他們發現華人教會“戰後嬰兒潮”這一代做得不錯，但是他們的下一代（年青人）竟然有 95% 離開華人教會。這兩個研究顫驚了華人教會，我們 一直都培育下一代，但流失的現象三、四十年多沒有改變。加國華人教會超過一半是兩文三語的教會，但英文堂很難發展，土生華裔的流失嚴重。

有見於此，正在完成博士論文的王健安博士（Dr. Enoch Wong）也深有同感，我們一起交通，立刻決定在他論文研究以外作一個加拿大華人教會土生華裔事工的研究，研究方法大致與 *Hemorrhaging Faith* 相同，當然內中的內容完全是針對加國土生華裔，起初我們定名為 *To Whom shall We Go?*（何去何從），後來改為 *Listening To Their Voices*（聆聽他們的聲音）。在王博士的努力設計及推動之下；並得多個宗派、神學院、個別教會及個人奉獻支持下，雖然因王博士身體軟弱（鼻咽癌復發）停頓了一段時間，在神的恩領之下，結果在今年春完成這研究計劃。神又感動人奉獻把這研究出版成書；並會印發中英文的撮要小冊子。

新任總幹事譚文鈞牧師將與王博士於今年的下半年走訪各大城市，與華人教會分享，研究找出對策。我們要祈求神給我們智慧，聆聽下一代的聲音，瞭解他們；並作出相應的改革及更新，使他們不再流失。否則沒有下一代承傳下去，華人教會前途堪危。讓我們謙卑地、勇敢地面對這嚴重的挑戰。加國華人教會一定要變，如何變？讓我們一起根據這研究作出實質有用的對策，使華人教會不再失血，要止血；並要補血。

在此我要多謝多個宗派、神學院、教會及許多個人對此研究的經費所作的奉獻、禱告支持。當然更重要的是多謝王健安博士，他是義工，完全的擺上，甚至帶病仍埋頭苦幹。求神使用此研究報告，使加國華人教會有一個新的轉捩點，進入一個新的里程！

馬英傑牧師，D. Min
前任華福加拿大聯區總幹事
二零一八年六月二十二日

Preface to the Revised Edition

The revised edition intends to correct the typographical errors in the earlier edition. No material changes to the content of the earlier version are introduced. Stylistic changes are also made to enhance the consistency of the presentation of the report.

Enoch Wong (Ph.D.)
Assistant Professor, Practical Theology &
Director, Centre for Leadership Studies
Canadian Chinese School of Theology

Preface

The idea of *Listening to Their Voices* (*LTTV*), formerly known as *To Whom Shall We Go? (TWSWG)*, was germinated in 2013 when a group of concerned pastors and leaders in the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches (CCIC)[1] examined the findings of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada's (EFC) study, *Hemorrhaging Faith (HF)*, on Canadian youth's religiosity. Though the findings of *HF* provided fresh insights into guiding the understanding of the issues at hand in addressing the youth's departure from their Christian roots, the study did not provide any ethnic marker on how immigrant parish communities, especially that of visible minorities, fared in Canada, having to adjudicate between the congregants' "back-home" culture and the "new-home" multicultural milieu. Nonetheless, *HF* piqued the pastors' interest in raising the following questions:

What would the journeys be for Canadian-born Chinese Christians (CBCC)[2]? What shaped their faith and values when growing up in such a context? What social forces have they encountered that seem to have influenced many of them to jettison their Christian roots? How can the CCIC leaders address such an exodus of the local-born, a phenomenon that can no longer be characterized as "silent" (Wong, 2015)? What resources and strategies would be supportive of their desire for growth, autonomy, and maturation? Many have offered individual suggestions as to why and how this

1. Unless otherwise specified, Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches are referenced and limited to Protestant denominations.
2. Unless otherwise specified, Canadian-born Chinese Christians are referenced and limited to Protestant denominations.

phenomenon has been taking place. Some of these may well be "popular wisdom" and "pet hunch" (Francis & Richter, 2007, p. 1). Few, however, have come forward with empirical studies that go beyond guesswork and speculation; fewer still have worked to incorporate viewpoints and sentiments of the cohort the church leaders have deeply cared about: Canadian-born Chinese Christians. In responding to these curiosities, a request was made to the EFC to utilize and modify *HF's* instruments to initiate a similar study in CCIC targeting the CBCC's faith journeys. Rick Hiemstra, Director of Research and Media Relations of EFC, together with the EFC's Youth and Young Adult Ministry Roundtable project, graciously and generously provided his approval and support on behalf of the project team.

Needless to say, research into the faith journeys of CBCC requires assistance of CCIC stakeholders and participation of the local-born. Since this study employed a mixed methodology of investigation – eSurvey and interviews – we want to thank the churches and gatekeepers who promoted the eSurvey and helped recruit interview participants in their communities. Our gratitude also goes to the eSurvey respondents who took the effort to complete the questionnaire online, and the interview participants for their willingness and candour in sharing the unfiltered experiences of their hopes and dreams, joy and triumphs on the one hand; fear and agony, distress and frustration, disappointment and failures on the other about their faith journeys. It is because of the inspiration and lived experience of these local-born Chinese Canadian Christians that this report is named *Listening to Their Voices*, so as to capture both the spirit and the essence of their collective journey. Though their thoughts and feelings may have undoubtedly been missed or misinterpreted in some ways, it is hoped that they are represented well in this study.

Francis and Richter (2007) lament that research of this kind has often remained "largely unfunded and … relegated to those twilight zones where hobbies and matters of real concern are allowed their proper place" (p. viii). Indeed, *LTTV* would have never got off the ground without generous funding support. While the researchers of this study worked on this project on a voluntary basis, financial support was required to execute the survey, conduct the interviews, stage roundtable discussions, publish the report, and incur various sundry costs. Four major sources of funding have aided the project implementation. We wish to express our gratitude to The Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada, Canadian Association of China Graduate School of Theology, Mr. & Mrs. D. Wan, and Mr. & Mrs. N. Lam/D. Tam, for their generosity. In addition, the Association of Christian Evangelical Ministries, the Association of North America Chinese Evangelical Free Churches, and the Chinese Mennonite Brethren Churches are key financial partners in this endeavour. Furthermore, the Association of Canadian Chinese Theological Education, the Centre for Leadership Studies at the Canadian Chinese School of Theology, Carey Theological College, and the Hudson Taylor Centre for Chinese Ministries at Tyndale University College and Seminary are theological institution partners alongside our journey of research. Finally, gratitude goes to the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (CCCOWE) Canada for commissioning this project. Without its strong championing and the nation-wide platform with the Chinese immigrant churches in Canada it provided, this project could not have taken place. In particular, to Rev. Peter Mah, the former Executive Director of CCCOWE (Canada), has been a staunch proponent of the research and a wise counselor along the way in opening doors and providing guidance. For his intergenerational devotion to the Chinese churches in Canada, the research team is grateful.

While Enoch Wong (Principal Researcher) conducted the research, completed the analysis, and wrote up the report, credit must go to the research team: Jonathan Tam, Kwing Hung, Tommy Tsui, and Wes Wong for their contribution in the coding and analysis of data and overall design and execution of the study. Warren Lai and Tim Quek also provided general input for implementation of the eSurvey. In addition, part of the material in the introductory chapter is drawn from Wong (2015) and Wong (2016).

Finally, thanks must go to our Almighty God whose unfailing love and unwavering faithfulness has guided the entire study. The team is grateful for the opportunity to make a small contribution to the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches and has been acutely aware of the fact that: "Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain" (Ps. 127:1a)[3]. Whether this study covers known terrain, confirms familiar issues, or perhaps offers new insights, the research team's prayer is that it would stimulate healthy discussion and inspire fruitful actions for CCIC to forge a new path forward with CBCC. May the LORD of the church show favour in what the team submits, for the sake of Christ's church and God's kingdom.

Enoch Wong (Ph.D.)

Assistant Professor, Practical Theology &
Director, Centre for Leadership Studies
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3. Unless otherwise indicated, Biblical citations are taken from the New International Version.

A research initiative such as *Listening to Their Voices* that looks into the lived experience of the faith journeys of CBCC cannot be pursued in a theoretical vacuum. The study has to be conducted in the meaningful context of a local phenomenon nested in a global setting. This chapter attempts to provide a thumbnail sketch of such a landscape by first providing an overview of CCIC and CBCC. A brief discussion of the faith disengagement phenomenon is then introduced, followed by an overview of possible pathways of the faith journeys of CBCC. The scope and purpose of the study is then identified, and the chapter closes with an overview of the remainder of the report.

Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches and Canadian-born Chinese Christians

Theimmigrant church and its functions

When settling into the lesser-known setting of a “new home,” immigrants often struggle to find safety, a sense of meaning, and belonging while experiencing the metamorphosis of their social network and traditional values when they arrive in a destination country (Breton, 2012; Wong, 2015). Yet for newcomers and their offspring who were converted to Christianity either before or after their arrival in Canada, religious faith is not “merely one aspect of among many immigrant lives; it can encompass everything"(Connor, 2014, p. 4). Faith affects how they interact with non-immigrants, navigate the pathway of incorporation into the mainstream society, and shape their own future in that context (pp. 4-5). Thus, in addition to being a venue to maintain faith aspiration, worship, and proselytization, a religious institution can be a place that plays a vital role in the immigrants’ transplantation experience by facilitating the adjustment to a new culture and language, overcoming cultural or ethnic barriers, fostering social networks, alleviating the stress in transitioning in the destination country, and helping them prepare to become full-fledged members of the host country (Botros, 2005; Breton, 2012; Connor, 2014; Wong, 2015). In addition, religious institutions are also venues and space where foreign settlers find constancy and continuity of their ethnicity in terms of language, tradition, cultural values, and social support (Botros, 2005; Breton, 2012; Hirschman, 2004; Ley, 2008). In this regard, the role of religion in the process of adaptation of Asian immigrants in North America has been extensively analyzed (Chen, 2006; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Kim & Hurh, 1993; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999). Researchers suggest that, apart from evangelization efforts, these organizations carry out at least four functions for the adaptation of the new immigrants:

First, religious institutions function as a hub where a social bond is forged, networks established, and material and psychological support offered (Abel, 2006; Breton, 2012; Chen, 2006; Ley, 2008; Ng, 2002). Second, immigrant churches can be a venue for preserving ethnic culture, values, and traditions (Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Min, 2010), co-mingling with co-ethnics to create social capital (Breton, 2012; Hirschman, 2004; Ley, 2008; Portes & Zhou, 1993), as well as a force for assimilation and change (Botros, 2005; Breton, 2012; Cao, 2015; Li, Q., 2000; Rah, 2009). Third, religious organizations provide a space where tradition, cultural rituals, languages, and ethnic identity are passed on to subsequent generations, who in turn negotiate and constitute an identity of their own in that context (Connor, 2014; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Warner, 1998). Finally, immigrant congregations can be institutions where male immigrants restore their social status with a leadership role they used to occupy in their countries of origin, mitigating the downward mobility in the host country (Kim, S., 2010; Min, 1992; Rah, 2009; Warner, 1998).

Chinese Canadian Immigrant Churches

CCIC are no exception when it comes to realizing their roles. Deeply rooted in a history of nurturing faith and incorporation support to Chinese immigrants and their offspring for over a century, the institution traces its origin back to the 1858 gold rush (Yu, 2007), with the first-ever Christian Sunday service offered to Chinese immigrants exclusively in the Chinese language being held in Victoria in 1885 (Con, H., Con, R. J., Johnson, Wickerberg, & Willmott, 1982; Wang, 2003). In the ensuing decades, the

institutional vitality and advancement of CCIC relied principally on the influx of Chinese immigrants and the organic growth of local-born generations, with the former being significantly thwarted by exclusionary immigration policies. These obstacles are evidenced in the head tax levied in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1923 (Li, P. S., 1992; Roy, 1989; Tan & Roy, 1985; Ward, 1974), and the general anti-assimilation sentiment of mainstream Caucasian Canada (e.g., Chinese people being labelled as the "Yellow Peril") (Wang, 2006). Despite these severe social and policy barriers, Chinese Christian communities continued to stand their ground; Table 1.1 shows the Chinese population, the Chinese Christians in Canada, and the corresponding local-born in CCIC from 1931 to 1961.

Table 1.1: Chinese Population in Canada, Local-born, and Chinese Christians in Canada (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 67, table 5.2; Wang, 2006, pp. 79-80, 85, table 4.2 & 4.4)

Year	Chinese in Canada	Chinese Christians in Canada	Local-born (%)
1931	46,519	8,354	12
1941	34,627	9,841	20
1951	32,528	16,231	31
1961	58,197	31,950	40

The Chinese population in Canada went through a disruptive transformation as a fundamental shift in immigration policy was introduced in 1967 in response to demographic and economic demands (Li, P. S., 1998). Designed to replace a long-held system aimed at privileging applicants based on their country of origin that had exclusively favoured Europeans and their Caucasian heritage, the new immigration policy championed a universal point system that assessed, among other things, applicants' "education and training ... adaptability ... occupational demand and skill, age ... knowledge of French and English, and employment opportunities in the area of destination" (Marr, 1975, p. 197). The radical shift in policy cracked the immigration entrance wide open for the Chinese, both from the diaspora and from China, to emigrate. The Chinese population in Canada skyrocketed to 118,815 by 1971, compared to 58,197 in 1961 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 89). Among the new Chinese immigrants were Christian students, ministers, and church leaders from their home countries who, upon arrival, started mobilization movements such as "Chinese Christian Fellowships" on campuses (Matthews, 1997; Wang & Yang, 2006; Wong, 2015) as well as established ethnic congregations to meet the spiritual needs of the immigrants (Clements, 1997). Principally Cantonese-speaking, this group of immigrants constituted the primary actors and agents of the Chinese ethnic churches in Canada and provided the impetus for their rapid development since the 1970s (Clements, 1997; Mak, 1997). In the following decades, with the support of the arrival of additional religious leaders and spurred by a deep conviction of evangelicalism, Chinese immigrant congregations grew from 30 in the 1950s to 230 in the 1990s, and to more than 350 in the 2000s (Guenther, 2008). It is speculated that there were over 400 such congregations across Canada in 2015 (Wong, 2015).

The Chinese diaspora can be misunderstood as a homogeneous ethnic entity based on similarity of physical appearance and the apparent congruence in customs, values, and culture. However, many distinctive subethnic groups indeed exist among the overseas Chinese that can be traced to their place of origin, dialects, and

ancestral cultures, reflecting the divergent variations of regional and clannish differences among them (Nagata, 2005; Salaff, 2005). It is further observed that in Canada, five ethnic sub-groups can be identified that correspond to their time of arrival, each forming a different but integral cohort within the larger CCIC communities. These five subethnic groups are: (1) Pre-1960s immigrants from the Southern province of Guangdong with the Toyshan dialect, reflecting the Siyup (Four County) regions of Southern China; (2) Hong Kong immigrants who began to emigrate in 1970s; (3) Mainland Chinese who moved to Canada since the 1980s; (4) Taiwanese who arrived in the 1970s and 1980s; and (5) the Chinese diaspora from South Asia who came in the 1960s and 1970s (Guenther, 2008; Lam, 2000; Li, P. S.,1998; Nagata, 2005; Wong, 2015).

Canadian-Born Chinese Christians

In addition to the groups of five subethnic first-generation immigrants, firmly situated in CCIC is the CBCC cohort, most of whom are the children of the first-generation believers who settled in the immigrant churches. The National Household Survey of Canada (2011) indicates that of the 1,324,700 who identified themselves in the 2011 Census as being of Chinese ancestry, 358,500, or 27 % (see Table 1.2), are local-born (i.e., non-immigrants), comprising the second and subsequent generations (Statistics Canada 2011a). More than 90 % of Chinese immigrants' children (see Table 1.3) were born after the 1967 open-door immigration policy, with 85% being Millennials – the generation who were born after 1980 in general, and by and large represents the proxy of the CBCC cohort this research is designed to investigate (Statistics Canada, 2011b). CBCC number about 54,000, including those who are affiliated with mainline Protestant denominations, and over 45,000 in this group are second-generation. A majority of the local-born, over 39,000, declared affiliation with evangelical denominations (Statistics Canada, 2014). This is not surprising given that many of the Chinese mainline Protestant congregations in Canada are evangelical in faith and practice, given that their priests or ministers tend to have been educated in evangelical-oriented seminaries at home or aboard.

Table 1.2: Chinese Canadians and Chinese Canadian Evangelicals (Immigrants and Non-Immigrants) and Their Places of Residence (Statistics Canada, 2014)

	Total Chinese	Total Evangelical	Non-Immigrant	Non-Immigrant Evangelical	Immigrant	Immigrant Evangelical
Canada	1,324,745	150,045	358,565	39,385	920,795	107,550
Halifax	4,620	390	1,355	140	2,170	230
Quebec City	2,445	45	400	0	2,015	40
Montreal	74,375	3,935	19,240	800	52,115	3,025
Ottawa-Gatineau	37,135	3,375	12,050	1,065	23,790	2,270
Kingston	2,005	215	610	65	1,300	155
Toronto	531,635	61,820	134,455	14,765	383,260	46,045
Hamilton	11,545	1,120	3,505	205	7,280	825
Kitchener-Waterloo	11,800	1,275	3,225	375	7,570	895
London	7,405	415	2,100	115	4,655	295
Windsor	6,945	755	1,790	245	4,690	505
Winnipeg	15,165	1,260	4,425	510	8,985	705
Regina	3,710	625	1,025	300	2,065	310
Saskatoon	5,375	725	1,875	310	2,700	400

Calgary	75,465	9,620	25,260	3,315	48,740	6,170
Edmonton	51,675	6,635	17,195	2,155	31,850	4,290
Vancouver	411,475	51,040	102,965	12,555	297,120	37,330
Victoria	12,770	1,055	5,185	450	6,845	585

Table 1.3: Second- and Third-Generation Chinese Canadians and Chinese Canadian Evangelicals (Statistics Canada, 2014)

	Second-Generation		Third-Generation	
Age	Chinese	Evangelical	Chinese	Evangelical
Total	316,915	34,945	37,200	3,995
<15	141,615	13,515	19,710	2,330
15-24	79,285	9,740	7,900	775
25-34	50,550	6,425	2,865	290
35-44	22,055	2,985	1,930	120
45-54	15,715	1,695	2,340	250
55-64	3,850	300	1,685	175
>65	3,855	286	940	60

Collectively referred to as the "new second generation," CBCC, similar to their American counterparts, are capable of asserting autonomy and forging their identity (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Reitz & Somerville, 2004). In this regard, CBCC's growing up experience is not unique in Canada. As children of the post-1967 so-called "new immigrants" (Breton, 2012), CBCC share a number of key characteristics with the broader cohort of local-born children of Canadian visible minority immigrants in general (e.g., South Asian, Korean, Japanese, and Vietnamese) when it comes to shaping their faith identity. For example, the local-born children of visible minorities tend to refashion their parents' religion in innovative ways so as to reinterpret it in the Canadian multicultural context (Ramji, 2008). To that end, their religiosity tends to exhibit the following traits (Beyer, 2013; 2014):

First, to the extent that this cohort practises religion according to their faith tradition, they value and place it in high regard. At the same time, religious diversity practised by others is also respected (2013, pp. 55, 71). In addition, religion is treated as a "privatized" matter, not in the sense of being restricted to some "private sphere" but rather in the sense that its role is to give the lives of practitioners meaning, structure, and purpose, not to impose itself on everyone as some kind of authoritative system of belief and behaviour (2013, p. 71; 2014, p. 90). Finally, religious practice for this cohort is highly personalized in that they take responsibility for working out religious life for themselves, reflecting an individual choice they make in attributing significance and meaning to their own practices rather than merely following their parents' faith tradition (2013, p. 56).

In addition to their faith expression, another key aspect of the CBCC's growing-up process is related to how they negotiate their ethnic (i.e., Chinese) and national (i.e., Canadian) identity in the Canadian multicultural terrain. Apart from how the immigrant church functions as a venue to mediate and transmit faith and Chinese ethnic traditions, three additional markers can be identified that are perhaps unique in how the CBCC's view of ethnicity is shaped (Wong, 2015):

First, the perception of the ascending prominence of China in the international arena has perhaps aroused some interests among the second-and third-generations to be "re-Sinified," (i.e., to become

identified as Chinese), incentivizing them to align with their parents' ethnicity (Wickberg, 2012, p. 140). Second, the rising trend of globalization has bridged both the cultural and the traveling gaps between the immigrants' host country and their home country. Aided by the advancement of the Internet and social media, local-born children can connect with the culture of their ancestral homeland through mediums such as digital public media at a low cost with relative ease. In this regard, the local-born tend to be more transnational in their outlook (Wong, 2015, pp. 64-67). Finally, as Ooka (2002) observes, one of the key determinants shaping Chinese Canadian youth's ethnic identity is the extent of the ethnic socialization in which the youth have come to engage. In other words, the structural environment in which the socialization occurs determines the level of retention of ethnic identity for Chinese Canadian youth in their process of acculturation into the broader society. Raised in CCIC, many CBCC are challenged to navigate their ethnic identity in the faith context, which may either strengthen their ongoing alignment with the immigrant church institution or steer them away to worship elsewhere (Wong, 2015).

Faith Disengagement of Youth and Emerging Young Adults: A Global Phenomenon

The phenomenon of younger generations disengaging from religion is not an exclusively Canadian occurrence. While some may argue that unbelief is not a severe phenomenon in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, or the Islamic world (Sanchez de Toca, 2006), religious disenfranchisement of youth and emerging young adults has been evident over the last few decades in countries of the Global North which have a historically strong affiliation with Christian faith. In the North American context, for instance, the faith journeys of Millennials has been well discussed (Beyer & Ramji 2013; Dean, 2010; Kinnaman, 2011; Penner, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy, & Hiemstra, 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Smith [with Snell], 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Longest, Hill, & Christoffersen, 2014; Thiessen, 2015). This collective cohort tends to be much more pluralistic in its outlook, in most part due to influences of secularization that have been permeating North America and the Western world for decades (Baker & Smith, 2015; Breton, 2012; Thieseen, 2015; Zuckerman, 2014). These forces of secularization have exerted themselves in a way that has shaped the identity of the younger generation to be less religious and more tolerant and inclusive. One of the profound influences secularization has exerted on the values and beliefs of Millennials is in the area of sexuality. Brown (2015) observes that in the Global North, a growing trend of liberalizing views on pre-marital sex and homosexuality in younger evangelicals is detected (p. 55), a trend corroborated by a recent study among British Christians in their attitudes of accepting same-sex relationships, which increased rapidly from 35 % in 2013 to 57 % in 2016 (British Social Attitudes, 2017). In addition, Millennials tend to carry a distaste for the traditional political landscape that has generally been embraced by the Christian right in the U.S. (Dillon,

2015). In addition, an anti-institution sentiment is palpably present among them, reflecting not merely a disposition toward religious institutions, but rather broadly against all forms of institutions (e.g., media, government, and labor market) (Pew Research Center, 2015c). As such, Millennials typically have a high degree of mistrust on leadership and authority specifically. Sexual scandals in the Catholic Church and political corruption are but some examples that serve to fuel the mistrust. As a result, Hout observes in an interview that "across all denominations, [there] is a gap emerging between politically liberal and moderate young people and leadership among conservative churches who are taking political positions on abortion, gay marriages and other social issues" (Masci, 2016). Many in this cohort who grew up in a religious setting have dislodged their institutional religious identity in favour of being spiritual "nones," a term derived from those participants in the surveys and polling who claim that "their religious affiliation is precisely that: none"(Kenneson, 2015). Some in this group may maintain spirituality but claim no attachment to any religion (Ammerman, 2013; Mercadente, 2014). Other Millennials simply abandon any belief in God altogether (Baker & Smith, 2015; Brewster, 2014; Zuckerman, 2012).

Furthermore, in the U.S., the Pew Research Center (2015b) reports that the religious nones jumped from 16% in 2007 to 23% in 2014, or from 36.6 million to 55.8 million in absolute numbers respectively. The portion of the nones indicating religion as not important in their lives rose from 21.0 million to 36.1 million during this period, representing an increase from 57% to 66% of the total number of religiously unaffiliated adults in the U.S. The trend continues when probed further about their religious practices such as prayer, attending religious services, and belief in God, pointing to the direction that this cohort is increasingly secularized (pp. 3, 5, 6, 14, and 19). An earlier report by the same institution (Pew Research Center, 2015a) sheds light from a different perspective, focusing on the generational difference of the total cohort of the nones. It suggests that with many religious groups in the U.S. aging over time, "the unaffiliated are comparatively young – and getting younger, on average" (p. 5). In addition, the report provides further details on the age bracket:

> *As a rising cohort of highly unaffiliated Millennials reaches adulthood, the median age of unaffiliated adults has dropped to 36; down from 38 in 2007 and far lower than the general [adult] population's median age of 46. By contrast, the median age of mainline Protestant adults in the new survey is 52 [up from 50 in 2007], and the median age of Catholic adults is 49 [up from 45 seven years earlier]. (pp. 5-6)*

Looking at the cohort from the perspective of evangelicals, Millennials represent 22% and 19% in the older (i.e., born from 1981 to 1989) and younger contingent (i.e., born from 1990 to 1996) respectively, compared with the overall Protestant population of 38% and 36% in these categories. Yet the nones occupy 34% and 36% of the overall U.S. Millennial population respectively (Pew Research Center, 2015a, p. 11).

As astounding as the portion of the nones in the Millennials cohort is, so is its growth: it has risen from 25% to over 34% from 2007 to 2014 (Pew Research Center, 2015a, p. 12). The alacrity of the exodus surprises even seasoned experts. Greg Smith of Pew Research Center, for example, remarks in a CNN report: "We've known that the religiously unaffiliated has been growing for decades. But the pace at which they've continued to grow is really astounding" (Burke, 2015) .

Turning to other regions of the globe, the phenomenon continues. In Australia, Mason (2010) observes: "The expectation of a decline of traditional religion among youth was strongly confirmed ... with only a very small proportion of Australian youth were turning to … alternative spiritualities" (p. 56). Citing Brierley (2006) and Garnett, Grimley, Harris, Whyte, and Williams (2006), Day (2010) echoes that in Britain, "the current generation of teenagers and young adults … is less religious than previous generations" (p. 95). Basing upon an analysis of Teenage Religion and Values Survey in England and Wales, Robbins and Francis (2010) report that while 41% of the sampled youth (aged 13-17) indicate they believe in God, 49% of them never attend church or other venues of public worship (pp. 51-52). Similar trends and observations on youth religiosity are consistent with a general wider pattern of declining religious identificatoin, affiliation, and practice in Euro-American countries (Day, 2010). In Singapore, the General Household Survey 2015 indicates that those who identify themselves as having no religious affiliation constitute 18.5% of the resident population, up from 17% in 2010. Of this group, about 65% are between ages 15 and 44. Roughly 23% belong to the group aged between 15 and 24 and 22.4% between 25 and 34, compared with 14.6% among residents age 55 and above (Department of Statistics of Singapore, 2015, pp. 7, 24). A similar phenomenon of a decline in religious affiliation is reported in Korea, with 56% of the population identifying themselves as having no association with religion in 2015, up from 47% in 2005. The decline is more pronounced in the group aged 20 to 29, where a drop of 12.8% in religious affiliation (from 47.9% to 35.1%) was registered (Statistics Korea, 2016). Meanwhile, Gallup Korea (2015) finds that 31% of South Koreans in their 20s identify themselves as religious, down from 45% a decade earlier (p. 17). A similar phenomenon has been observed in surveys studying university Christian cohorts in Hong Kong. Enrollment in institutions of higher education corresponds to a decline in faith defection as Hui, Lau, Lam, Cheung, and Lau (2015) conclude that "being a full-time student in the university is another factor of faith exit," most likely due to their exposure to acquaintances (i.e., students and professors) of different worldviews, and not receiving support from faith communities (p. 12). In China, religious "'Nones' are growing across generations, at least relative to traditional Chinese religions" although there are in general "the structural mobility parameters [that] suggest an intergenerational growth of Islam [&] Christianity" (Hu & Leamaster, 2015, p. 79, 95).

Finally, in Canada, census data indicate that religious nones rose from 4% to nearly 24% in four decades from 1971 to 2011 (Pew Research Center, 2013; Statistics Canada, 2011b). Recent researches (Bibby, 2012; Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015; Thiessen, 2015) also identify a general trend of faith disaffiliation among Canadian youth and young adults, although this phenomenon appears to be more salient in non-evangelical denominations while evangelicals have enjoyed a stable level of attendance (Bibby, 2012; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015). In particular, Penner, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy, and Hiemstra (2012a) note that only one in three of young adults who attended church weekly as a child continue to do so in their adult years (p. 1).

In short, Millennials are less religiously inclined than previous generations in many regions around the globe, and this phenomenon is extended across the Protestant denominations both domestically and globally, forming a part of the context for this study which looks into CBCC's faith experience, a cohort predominantly falling into the Millennials category as mentioned previously.

Pathways for Faith Journeys of Canadian-Born Chinese Christians

The faith journeys of CBCC in the context of CCIC is a multi-layered and multi-directional lived experience. One can problematize this collective journeying reality, seen in four different pathways, with their associated religious types – each with its own identity-defining characteristics. First, the "Stay-On" cohort represents those who grew up in and continue to worship at CCIC. The second group is "Move-On," referring to those who are still active in faith engagement but have chosen to leave CCIC in favour of participation in non-Chinese churches. The third one is "Drop-Out," representing those who, for a variety of reasons, have left CCIC and seldom, if ever, attend any religious services. Finally, members of the "Boomerang" contingent are those who left CCIC, be they Drop-Out or Move-On, but have chosen to return to CCIC after a period of time for a variety of reasons. While these four groups represent generically the entire scope for examining the faith journeys of CBCC, this study focuses on the experience with the Stay-On and Drop-Out cohorts. A brief discussion of the background for each group will be provided in the next section.

Stay-On

Despite the faith defection phenomenon that has been occurring in multiple geographical regions around the globe as discussed earlier, many researchers continue to focus on religious practitioners who register a strong adherence to their faith. For instance, Sherkat's analysis (2014) of 40 years of General Social Survey (GSS) data concludes that religious identification in the United States remains "robust and salient", indicating "80% of Americans still identify with a religious tradition or denomination," painting a more sanguine picture than the Pew Research Center's findings (2015b, p. 4). Reimer and Wilkinson (2015) suggest that teens in evangelical churches in Canada who can relate to a heightened sense of God's presence tend to be stronger in their adherence to their faith and faith community (pp. 180-181). Penner et al. (2012b) reference higher participation in religious activities such as camp and short-term missions that help sensitize experiences with God as a key positive factor in creating stickiness of teens' faith (pp. 47-51). In addition, Smith (with Longest, 2009) highlights parents, intergenerational influences, deep religious experience, and religious devotional disciplines as the adhesive factors for teens' engagement with the church and faith (p. 224-229). Powell and Clark (2011) point out the positive impact of mentoring adults in the faith of emerging young adults (p. 100). Along the same vein, Dean (2010) echoes the critically important role of mentors in creating robust faith adhesion in teens and young adults (p. 121). On the other hand, Francis & Richter (2007) and Wong (2015) point to the relationship that teens and young adults establish in faith communities as a key influential factor for them to remain engaged in their faith. In addition, Wong (2015) pinpoints visionary church leadership (or lack thereof) as one of the deciding factors that sways CBCC to stay or leave CCIC (pp. 544-557).

Finally, perhaps the most critical factor in shaping the religiosity of teens and emerging young adults and their engagement with faith communities is their parents and their practice of – and attitude toward – faith adherence. As will be examined in detail in the next chapter, a cornucopia of research points to a variety of ways that parents – father or mother, both or either – positively or negatively impact the faith formation of their children (Bengtson, 2013; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008; Hunsberger & Brown, 1984; King, Furrow & Roth, 2002; Myers 1996; Nelson,

2014; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Smith [with Snell], 2009; Voas & Storm, 2012; Winston, 2006; Zuckerman, 2012).

Move-On

For the church-leavers in North America or elsewhere, many have come to be characterized as "disengaged"; "disaffiliated"; "dropping out"; "exiting"; or "distancing" (Francis & Richter, 2007, p. 4). Yet as mentioned earlier, once CBCC leave CCIC, there are two pathways for further pursuit: (1) they can choose to stop attending any church; or (2) move on to worshipping at churches other than CCIC. For the latter cohort, the reasons for departure may not have been due to a lack of engagement with faith. Many in this group continue to value their religious belief and identity but desire to express them in settings other than the Chinese immigrant churches. Factors such as ethnicity, church leadership and culture, and faith conviction have been identified as precipitating factors for many Asian Americans to seek a more meaningful engagement with communities that exhibit clarity of vision and distinct purposes, as well as ministerial orientations more in line with their own faith expression (Alumkal, 2003; Jeung, 2005; Kim, J. C., 2003; Kim, S., 2010; Kim, S. & Kim, R. 2012). Wong (2015) reiterates many of these influences and highlights relationality, ethnic proclivity and identity, stagnation of growth, internecine conflict, and dysfunctional leadership at CCIC as key determinants for CBCC exiting CCIC in favour of worshipping at other churches. As CBCC move on to seek out alternative communities to continue their faith journeys, four distinct options present themselves: (1) local-born Chinese evangelical churches; (2) Asian evangelical churches; (3) multi-ethnic churches; and (4) Caucasian congregations (Wong, 2015).

Drop-Out

While the Move-On cohort continues to engage their faith in communities other than CCIC, there is a group of former CBCC who have severed their relationship with CCIC and no longer attend any church service or declare any institutional affiliation. Some within this group make an intentional decision to leave the church and institutionalized religion because they share the same "push" factors of the Move-On believers about the immigrant churches: frustration, humiliation, judgment, and broken relationships.

Many researchers conjure up different typologies to characterize this group of "unchurched" individuals. For instance, Packard and Hope (2015) portray them as the "Dones": "They are tired and fed up with the church" and are "done" with it (p. 14). The church as an institution, in essence, is the barrier keeping them from God and they claim that their faith journeys are better traversed outside the boundary of organized religion (p. 16). Similarly, Kinnaman (2011) conceptualizes three "broad ways of being lost" (i.e., not engaging in institutionalized religious practices) (p. 25). Nomads are those who step away from church engagement yet still think of themselves as believers, while Prodigals have lost their faith and no longer register themselves as Christians. Finally, Exiles are still interested in their faith but feel stuck between the broader culture and the Church. Baker and Smith (2015), on the other hand, assert that as an overarching designation, "nones" is appropriate to refer to those who are "religiously non-affiliated – individuals who claim no affiliation with an organized religion" (p. 15). Yet from the perspective of belief, they can be further categorized into the following: First, "atheists," those "who do not believe theistic claims"; and second, "agnostics," those "who assert that theistic claims are unverifiable in principle" (p. 15). Reflecting the trend of "believing and not

belonging," the third group is the "non-affiliated believers," those who "claim no religious affiliation but maintain some form of theistic belief" (p. 16). Finally, from the perspective of religious practices, there exists a group of individuals who "claim religious affiliation and theistic belief, but rarely [if ever] attend religious service or pray privately" (p. 17), a cohort that Fuller (2001) refers to as "spiritual but not religious" (SBNR) (pp. 2-5).

Taking a step further, Roof (1993) offers a starker but perhaps simplistic clarification on the distinction between being religious and being spiritual. For him, "to be religious conveys an institutional connotation: to attend worship services, to say Mass, to light Hanukkah candles." Conversely, "to be spiritual" is "more personal and empowering and has to do with the deepest motivations of life" (pp.76-77). On the other hand, Kenneson (2015) argues that the nones are those who could be SBNR but draw "moral boundaries between themselves and those who embrace a religiosity that SBNR regard as intellectually, theologically, or morally deficient" (p. 9). Finally, postulating from yet a set of different lenses, Mercadante (2014) suggests that SBNR hold a collective view that essentially rejects traditional conceptions of God (especially those contained within Christianity), instead of altering them to fit their own framework of spirituality. Abandoning a God who is "stereotyped as a judgmental overseer," this cohort replaces it with "the idea of a sacred force which is impersonal and benevolent" (p. 230). Mercadante further indicates that SBNR she has studied disavow the following spiritual world-views:

> An exclusivism that rejects all religions but one's own;
>
> A wrathful and/or interventionist God;
>
> A static and permanent afterlife of glorious heaven and torturous hell;
>
> An oppressively authoritarian religious tradition;
>
> A non-experiential repressive religious community; and
>
> A view of humans as "born bad." (p. 230)

The variety of typology suggested by research points to the complexity of defining the faith journeys of this cohort. Different shades of characterizations exist as Kinnaman (2011) aptly points out: the faith journeys of this cohort "are not monochromatic or one-size-fits-all" (p. 26).

Boomerang

The last cohort involves those who left CCIC for a period of time, either moving on to attend non-immigrant churches or having disassociated themselves from religious affiliation, and have now returned to their faith or religious attendance. Dubbed as the "boomerangs" (i.e., those who left immigrant churches and congregate somewhere else) (Lee, 2014) or "returnees" (i.e., those who left institutionalized religion all together) (Francis & Richter, 2007), these local-born decide to reconnect with Christian faith either through their ethnic root or start afresh in non-immigrant church venues. Sherkat (2014) underscores two principal reasons for the boomerangs to return to faith or re-engage with faith communities: (1) old age tends to lead to higher social participation such as religious involvement due to stability in social ties and exibility in work and familial obligation; (2) families of "procreation often leads people to return to religious participation and identification" (p. 90). In addition, Francis & Richter observe that "in broad terms, the people most likely to return are those whose church-leaving was associated with life transitions and life changes, and alternative lives and alternative meanings" (pp. 302-303). On

the other hand, those who are least likely to return are broadly speaking "those whose church-leaving was associated with matters of belief and unbelief; growing up and changing; incompatible life-styles, costs and benefits, disillusionment with the church, problems with relevance and problems with conservatism" (p. 303).

Thiessn (2015) further identifies a set of possible turn-around factors as motivation for reengagement that are suggested by research participants who have disengaged from involvement with a religious group. Firstly, discovering a positive experience of community (such as connectedness and deeper or newer friendships) with a religious group is registered. Secondly, a change of family stages occurs, such as "getting married, having children, finding a religious group with enjoyable programming for children, or children moving out" (p. 151). Thirdly, discovering religious groups are less exclusive. Fourth, encountering more relevant teaching with applicable lessons, more dynamic religious leaders with higher competency in communication, and contemporary worship have emerged. Fifth, evidence of putting religious beliefs into meaningful humanitarian practices that define the identity of the community is salient. Sixth, close proximity of the institution and finally, a less-busy lifestyle can also be a factor. However, Thiessen cautions that whether reengagement with religious groups is sustainable for these participants, even when these factors are found to be true, remains to be seen (pp, 150-153).

Scope and Purpose of Study

The overview of the four cohorts points to a viable framework for further investigation upon the CBCC population with respect to their faith journeys. However, a comprehensive study of the Move-On cohort was completed recently by Wong (2015); problematizing the Boomerang cohort is challenging methodologically at best, as it is difficult to qualify whether a participant in the research is a Boomerang or not (e.g., church hoppers and attendance hiatus are two examples that complicate this boundary). While deserving exclusive attention in the future, findings on Boomerangs would most likely emerge when studying the Stay-On cohort given the natural ebb and flow of individual religious affiliation. Therefore, the scope of *LTTV* targets the Stay-On and the Drop-Out groups of CBCC, with the purpose of exploring the shaping influences on their faith identity and commitment as well as disengagement of religiosity in the context of CCIC. With the juxtaposition of disparate groups leading to contrasting findings, this study highlights themes and ideas that may otherwise be neglected if we merely look at a group individually, as the cross-case and within-case studies approach indicates (Yin, 2014).

In completing this study, a qualitative-driven mixed method of survey and interview is adopted to maintain consistency with the approach of *Hemorrhaging Faith,* with a modified set of eSurvey questionnaire and interview questions tailored to address CBCC in the CCIC context (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). A detailed discussion on research methodology can be found in Appendix A.

Overview of the Report

The following chapter focuses on a literature review of the determinants affecting the faith journeys of youth and emerging young adults, positively and negatively. The review examines salient factors such as intergenerational influences, community practices, mentoring experiences, religious disengagement, and apostasy. Readers who are less interested in the literature review can proceed to Chapter 3, where the attention of the report turns to the identification of four different religious types in the context of CBCC's faith journeys (i.e., Highly Engaged and Less Affiliated of the Stay-On group; Spiritual "None" and "Dones" and Agnostics & the Atheists of the Drop-Out cohort) together with a discussion on the findings of ten emerging themes across these four different religious types. The report concludes in Chapter 4 with a set of directional action recommendations to address the findings of the study. Together with the findings, these recommendations are designed to promote a healthy reflection in CCIC on the shaping influences of CBCC and foster a contextual dialogue among intergenerational leaders to address the findings. To aid such a reflection and dialogue, a set of suggested discussion questions for each directional action recommendation is provided in Appendix F.

Understanding Religious Affiliation and Behaviours

2

Understanding Religious Affiliation and Behaviours

Religious affiliation is a complex phenomenon shaped by a variety of determinants grounded in individually nuanced contexts which can be examined through religious, cultural, social, economic, and political lenses. Traditional studies on personal faith commitment and its salience tend to focus on such measures as church attendance, social network influences, and parental impact (Chaves, 2011; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Wuthnow, 2015). Yet according to Cornwall (1989), research on determinants of religious behaviours can be further postulated around four categories of variables: (1) group involvement; (2) belief-orthodoxy; (3) religious socialization; and (4) social-demographic variables (p. 573). Rather than merely examining church attendance and friendship connections within the same religious community, Cornwall delves into group involvement, examining personal community relationships with respect to in-group, marginal, and out-group ties in the congregants' social network that determine the degree of supportive, intimate, and enduring relationships (pp. 573-575). Closely related to group involvement is the belief-orthodoxy variable. While acknowledging that the stronger is one's belief-orthodoxy, the stronger will be one's religious participation, Cornwall argues that mutuality exists between group-involvement and belief-orthodoxy: the more friendship connections and in-group involvement, the stronger the attachment to belief-orthodoxy (i.e., cognitive impact) and behaviours (i.e., affective impact) (pp. 575-576). As for religious socialization, Cornwall (1987) asserts that social interaction "is important not only because it provides the individual with a world view, but because it channels individuals into [a] personal community and sustains a particular world view through adult years" (p. 54). Three agents are typically responsible for such religious socialization: family, peers, and church. Of these, Cornwall (1989) and others (Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Erickson, 1992; Pearce & Denton, 2011) observe that traditional researches tend to point to family as the primary agent for religious socialization, whereas religious institutions and peers are secondary. Finally, social-demographic variables refer to such factors as education, age, gender, social class, and occupation. In general, these characteristics are indicators of one's standing in the social structure which, in turn, influences religiosity, and can function as a correlation of social ties within a religious group (Cornwall, 1989; Pearce & Denton, 2011). Together these four sets of variables create a collective influence in shaping one's religious affiliation and behaviours. However, while belief-orthodoxy measures the cognitive dimension of religiosity, commitment examines the affective dimension of religiosity and is a measure that reflects the saliency of religion in one's life. Cornwall (1989) argues that "one can believe, but congruent behaviours can occur only when one is truly 'committed' to the belief" (p. 576).

While Cornwall's research provides a foundational theoretical framework for this investigation, several adjustments are required when examining CBCC in the context of CCIC. Recent researches highlight additional determinants relevant to the scope of the current study. For instance, with respect to social-demographic variables, research on CBCC suggests that additional focus ought to be placed on how ethnic social influences that are salient in the immigrant generation and their children may have played a role in affecting the religiosity of the local-born (Wong, 2015). In addition, the role of mentors in the religious community as a positive actor in modulating the mentees' religiosity is also singled out (Dean, 2010; Parks, 2011; Smith [with Longest], 2009). Finally, focus can also be placed on how issues encountered during major life-stage transitions from high-school into college years and from university to work life

may have altered faith engagement or disaffiliation of adherents (Bowen, 2010; Francis & Richter, 2007). To provide a theoretical framework for this research, an incorporation of these insights together with Cornwall's will be further discussed in the remainder of this chapter by examining literature on determinants for religious affiliation and behaviours in four areas that are germane to the study: intergenerational influence, community engagement, mentoring experience, and religious disengagement/apostasy.

Intergenerational Influences

In identifying the most critical determinant in how the religious commitment of younger generations is being shaped, Myers (1996) summarizes succinctly: "One's religiosity is determined largely by the religiosity of one's parents" (p. 858). The profound and enduring effect of the influence and role of parents in the ever-changing spiritual development of adolescent and emerging adults have been well examined. A large number of studies point to a clear correlation between the parents' religiosity and the complex nature of the retention or rejection of faith of their children (Bader & Desmond, 2006; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Erickson, 1992; King, Furrow & Roth, 2002; Nelson, 2014; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011, Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith [with Snell], 2009; Voas & Storm, 2012; Winston, 2006). For instance, Zuckerman (2012) pins the chief reason for apostasy of the children on parents' hypocrisy (p. 153). Smith (with Longest) (2009), on the other hand, asserts that parents, together with agencies such as mentors and religious practices of the teens, are a predominant determinant of the adolescent's retention of, or drifting from, their faith (pp. 224-231). Furthermore, he argues that emerging adults who grew up with deeply religious parents are more likely to internalize their parents' religious worldview, process the necessary religious "know-how" to lead a deeper religious life, and embody "the identity orientation and behavioural tendencies toward continuing to practicse what they have been taught religiously" (p. 232).

In examining how the parental relationship might impact children's religiosity, Myers (1996) further points out that the well-being of the parents' marital relationship as well as how they discipline children with moderate strictness affect their ability to transmit religious beliefs and practices to children (pp. 864-865). On the other hand, Zhai, Ellison, Stokes, and Glenn (2008) focus on the marital changes of the parents and conclude that offspring of divorced parents "are significantly less likely to identify themselves as 'religious' but no less inclined to self-identify as 'spiritual'" (pp. 379, 392).

To further tease apart the parental care agency, some researchers highlight youth-oriented, rather than parent-oriented, communication with children on religious issues as a significant influence on an adolescent's religiosity (Dollahite & Thatcher, 2008; King, et al., 2002). In the same vein, Bengtson (2013) argues that parents who maintain a warm and affirming relationship with their children are more likely to see a higher saliency of religiosity in them. Conversely, those parents who are either cold, distant and authoritarian, ambivalent with mix-messages between themselves, or strained and preoccupied with other issues such as health or finance are likely to see their children with less saliency in their religiosity (p. 186).

As to who exerts greater influence in the children's religiosity, mothers tend to be stronger than fathers when adolescents perceive the parents to be accepting to their children (Bao, Whitneck, Hoyt,

& Conger, 1999). Acock and Bengston (1978) echo the higher impact of mothers' religiosity on the children's religious orientation while Hunsberger and Brown (1984) conclude that the religiosity of mothers, more so than that of fathers, represents a stronger predictor for the children's apostate and non-apostate status. However, though affirming that mothers do play an important role in supervision in religious activities, Hayes and Pittlekow (1993) assert that fathers play an equally important role in moral supervision.

Vibrant Community

As Cornwall (1989) points out, group involvement in the context of religious communities serves as a key indicator for understanding the saliency of faith adherents. Many researchers agree with such a viewpoint. For instance, Penner et al. (2012b) identify community as one of the four broad variables that function either as a barrier or as an enabler for shaping Canadian youth in terms of their religiosity (the others are: parents, experience with God, teaching and beliefs). They conclude that community functions as an enabler which facilitates believers to grow in faith, provides them with assistance in the midst of hardship, helps the faithful navigate through emotional rehabilitation, equips the followers to actualize their gifts, and collectively makes a difference in their community. To espouse these positive elements, the ethos of the community practices ought to be cross-generational, authentic, and inclusive. On the other hand, behaviours such as judgementalism and exclusivity are negative factors that deter the spiritual growth of young adults in faith communities (pp. 52-64). In addition, Mammana-Lupo, Todd, and Houston (2014) suggest that individuals who have experienced higher levels of conflict in religious institutions are "less likely to feel that they belonged. [As] conflict in congregations may decrease social support and increase negative interactions … when social support decreases due to conflict, congregants feel a decreased sense of belonging" (p. 113).

Furthermore, congregations create faith connection through a dual-function according to Whitney and King (2014): (1) identity-formation through enhanced collective cognitive aptitude as well as religious conviction and stickiness with the community; and (2) a meaning-making locale in framing the ideological, social, and transcendental context (pp. 140-148). Abo-Zena and Ahmed (2014), on the other hand, highlight how religious practices in faith communities, such as worship with music, act as strong socializing agents for congregants to create an affinity to both faith and the inherent culture they help promote (pp. 229-230). Flory and Miller (2010) further suggest that churches which are adaptive in introducing and integrating "various forms of rituals and symbol into their worship services along with new forms of religious and community life" in a manner that is innovative enhance the sense of belonging for the congregants (pp. 12-14). In the same vein, Cooksey and Dooms (2010) assert that the stronger the ties young adults can forge in a spiritual community, the more supportive, enduring, and intimate the sense of belonging they can create and experience. They remark:

> *The feeling of belonging is a key concept. Adolescence is a time when individuals are impressionable, the opinions of others, particularly peers, become central to the process of identity shaping, and when [a] religious conversion is likely to take place ... [In this regard, faith community] serves as a social entity, poised to present a network of adults and peers that may influence them, as in their identity formation, and provide a sense of group belonging. (p. 109)*

The yearning for belonging can manifest itself as a form of homophily on how different ethnic and religious followers seek connection with others who share similar or identical roots, tradition, and beliefs (Sepulavdo, Penta, Hachen, & Lizardo, 2015). In the case of the Chinese immigrant churches, promoting such a sense of belonging may also help CBCC extend ethnic values, create stronger cultural ties, as well as mediate faith with their religious traditions that are rooted in the immigrants' home countries (Wong, 2015).

Attachment to a congregation can be strengthened through religious socialization with peers in that community. Barry and Christofferson (2014) identify four peer relationships that can play out in shaping the identity and religiosity of the adherents:

Sibling relationship is one such factor, since siblings can spur each other on in their religious development, as this bond offers the closest interaction in a familial setting (pp. 78-79). In addition, friendships play an instrumental role in providing affective stability, warmth, and loyalty throughout adolescence, at times even "tak[ing] precedence over parents" (pp. 79-83). Furthermore, romantic relationship is central to late teens' and adolescents' spiritual development as romantic partners share values, life aspiration, and faith together (pp. 83-85). Finally, regular peer relationship shaped in a faith community can create a sense of togetherness in pursuing like-minded religious purpose and goals, depending on how religious groups are structured and run (pp. 85-87).

Building on the last point, one of the key considerations in shaping the identity and purpose of faith adherents is rooted in how religious communities structure themselves in their ministry spiritually, physically, and socially. Longenecker (2002) asserts that formation of a Christ-like, God-loving, and Spirit-filled ecclesiastical community always has to do with "the way the Christian church is structured and its life expressed" (p. xi). Similarly, Ammerman (1997) points out that "the social processes of community formation govern the rise and fall of congregations, and the spiritual energies generated in congregations help to shape the social structure of communities" (pp. 2-3). For that reason, religious communities, in addition to being a venue to fulfil their core faith values, vision, and mission, function as "a space of sociability where real commitments are made and where persons are thereby formed and transformed" (p. 354). Because of these attractive characteristics, members would join or stay in those communities that "hold out the promise of self-transformation and nurture and that multiply [their] individual efforts at influence in the world" (p. 354). To this end, CCIC are unique and distinguished from their mainstream counter-part as they typically structure themselves along tri-literate bilingualism (i.e., English, Cantonese, and Mandarin) in worship services and ministry orientation to match the most convenient tongues of the congregants, so as to create the closest possible engagement with their respective worshippers.

For CBCC, navigating their faith journeys in the context and structure of CCIC is not without challenges. Indeed, Magyab-Russell, Deal, and Brown (2014) caution that "without a [healthy] communal environment, emerging adults may lack sufficient continuity to guide them through the rebuilding process" of spiritual identity, which may have been deconstructed and reconstructed through their process of doubt, search, affirmation, and validation in their faith journeys (p. 51). To address that challenge, Cha and Jao (2000) postulate that as part of the daunting task of understanding who they are and navigating that identity both in a faith community and the broader society, young Asian Americans are on a journey of searching for a religious experience of belonging that reflects a process of the gradual

shifting of societal value from being individual-centred to being community-centred as part of the movement from modernity to post-modernity (p. 232). Congregations would do well in welcoming this cohort by first transforming themselves into a loving community with three key characteristics:

First, Asian American congregations must learn to be a community of grace, a space and place that "brings healing to those Asian Americans who are weighed down with toxic shame" (p. 233). In addition, these congregations need to learn to be a community with the Biblical practice of power and authority, an expression or demonstration that "the Biblical notion of power and authority is neither abusive nor self-seeking" in order to counter the "hermeneutics of suspicion" of the local-born who carry the post-modern narrative of perceiving themselves as victims of deceptions and manipulations of power (p. 236). Finally, faith institutions must become a community of the Word, not just merely telling the truth in terms of what the message is, but who they are as messengers. In addition, as such a community, congregations must learn not only to interpret the Word faithfully but "perform" the Word authentically and passionately (p. 237). Further to Cha and Jao's research, Wong (2015) establishes that those CCIC that create stickiness for CBCC tend to be communities whose leadership is broad-minded, with a clear vision, and willing to engage with teachings that tackle CBCC's ethnic values and identity in a multicultural context (pp. 551-557).

As much as postmodernists are mired in individualism and a self-centric culture that celebrates the famous triumvirate of "me, myself, and I," there is a yearning on their part to find expression of their identity in connection with others in caring, loving, and healthy communities, valuing the authenticity with which they are accepted. Examining Christian college students' community experience through the lens of authenticity as a key dimension that differentiates a Christian community from others, Thoennes (2008) concludes that though other factors – such as commonality, diversity, living together, leadership, interaction, and activities – have been identified as being important for establishing Christian communities, authenticity emerges as a prominent one. Furthermore, the study points to two key markers that define authenticity: be known, and no judging. A religious community that is marked by authenticity has members that are known to one another, a "knowledge that is highly valued because it results in the individual[s] feeling loved" (p. 80). Such knowledge requires the members to be willing to divulge their weaknesses and needs, which are to be received with mutual trust and sensitivity in the community, in order to hear their struggles. Trust, in turns, fosters transparency, especially being open in discussing one's vulnerability, as one participant in Thoennes' study declares: "Christian community has to do with holding one another up, [with] vulnerability and being able to be in a place to be free to be who you are" (p. 80). Closely related to "being known" is the characteristic of "no judging" when defining an authentic community. Thoennes observes that in the process of "being known", full acceptance of those who share their brokenness and vulnerability rather than rendering judgment on them by the community is critically vital in building up authenticity: "That is, even when their ugliness is apparent, they want to be loved unconditionally [with full acceptance]. This element of 'no judgment' is vital to understanding [the] concept of authenticity in [a] community" (p. 82).

Mentoring Experience

Similar to intergenerational influences and vibrant community, mentoring as a significant variable in affecting the religious development of adolescents and emerging adults has also been broadly researched (Abo-Zena & Ahmed, 2014; Bowen, 2010;

Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Dean, 2010; Erickson, 1992; Lanker, 2009, 2012; Magyab-Russell et al., 2014; Martinson, 2004; Parks, 2011; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith, Longest, Hill, & Christoffersen, 2014). In its classical sense, mentoring can be defined as "an 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" (Parks, 2011, p. 165). Assuming a critical role in shaping the life of emerging adults, mentors and mentoring communities offer recognition (i.e., knowing) and support, issue challenges to mentees, and engage in dialogue with them; in so doing, mentors inspire mentees to explore their own potential and discover meaning, values, and a faith of their own (pp. 167-176). Consequently, mentors and mentoring communities collectively create a network of belonging for the mentees, raise their awareness of bigger and more meaningful questions the mentees need to confront in their search of, and encounter with, meaning, purpose, and faith (pp. 176-184). Parks conceives the idea of faith engagement as "the activity of seeking and discovering meaning in the most comprehensive dimensions of our experience"; emerging adults are engaged in the discovery of "the limits of inherited or otherwise socially received assumptions about how life works and what counts … compos[ing] more adequate forms of meaning and faith on the other side of that discovery" (p. 10). Mentors and mentoring communities can play a vital role in the development of the emerging adults' "inner-dependent faith" (p. 269).

Along the same line, Magyab-Russell et al. (2014) state that spiritual mentoring and modelling has the following effects for emerging young adults:

Providing "validation about transitioning into adult roles with faith communities"; functioning as "an enormously significant resource for the value formation and development of religiousness in emerging adults"; becoming "a robust construct in the psychology of religiousness and spirituality" and fostering spiritual growth "by illustrative exemplars who function as a 'catching force'" (pp. 49-50). They further point out that caring and authentic mentors do not demand a "blind obedience" but rather create "an atmosphere of open encouragement for young adults in mentoring relationships with elders and spiritual and religious exemplars" (p. 50). Bowen (2010) also echoes in his study: "the human relationship that rates highest for helping people keep their faith is with a mentor" (p. 40).

When it comes to the aggregate presence of mentors, Martinson (2004) asserts that of the eight factors that sustain young adults in their relationship with God in courage and strength, the presence of three or more mentors with vital faith in their lives ranks number two (p. 42). Powell and Clark (2011) further suggest that a ratio of five mentoring adults to one adolescent is required to support and sustain the journey of his or her faith (p. 101). Many of these mentoring adults are referred to as natural mentors as opposed to the formal ones. Zimmerman, Bingenheimer, and Behrendt (2005) define a natural mentoring relationship as a particular type of mentoring relationship in which "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" (p. 143). As to the process of mentoring, Lanker (2012) identifies different stages: "It generally moves from getting to know each other, to being progressively open with each other and finally ending in what each party described as friendship." (p. 37). The natural mentoring process, according to

Erwin (2016), usually goes through the following phases: listening and asking probing questions; mutual self-disclosure; wrestling with issues together; serving as a guide; and genuine caring – authenticity (pp. 207-208).

Yet mentoring as a practice is not necessarily consistently observed across faith communities. Dean (2010) surmises that the reason is in part due to the fact that such an undertaking challenges the mentors in the confidence of their own faith formation and may expose their inability to translate faith into practices that others can follow. Yet those who are effective in mentoring practices, especially the natural or informal ones, are good at transmitting their experience to the mentees through modelling their faith (pp. 121, 125). It is with this practice of natural mentoring in mind that Smith (with Longest) (2009) concludes that teenagers who have "more adults in a religious congregation to whom he or she can turn for support, advice, and help" are associated with stronger emerging adult religiosity (p. 233). He further reasons that "the more relationships in their religious congregations that teenagers enjoy with non-parental adults whose social statuses are superior to their own, the more likely they will be to experience involvement in their congregations as enjoyable and rewarding" (p. 233). Finally, for the North American youth in the context of immigrant churches, a particular way to affect positively the transmission of religion inter-generationally is through leadership apprentice and intentional mentoring engagement. Commenting on the findings from the Youth and Religion Project that focuses on immigrant multi-faith communities, Warner and Williams (2010) observe:

> *As a generalization ... the most effective transmission of religious involvement seemed to come for those who took public and honored roles in the main [that is to say, adult-dominated] religious institutions while they themselves [were] still dependent minors ... [with] adults [being] on hand to serve as models, coaches, and an appreciative audience for what the youth were learning and enacting. (p. 164)*

Religious Disengagement and Apostasy

As mentioned earlier, not all who were raised in a religious setting when younger continue to associate with their faith and religious community when they grow older. For those who have defected from the spiritual fraternity and repudiated their religious identification, many former adherents have taken a stance of apostasy. While there is no consensus on what exactly constitutes apostasy, a variety of definitions is available in the literature. For example, Beit-Hallahmi (2007) defines apostasy as "disaffection, deflection, alienation, disengagement, and disaffiliation from a religious group" (p. 302). Hood, Hill, and Spilka (2009) characterize it as "the degree to which it is a permanent abandonment of faith" on the part of the former devotees. As such, many who have become apostates are labelled with such terms as "unchurched" or "religious nones," and their experience is often examined in connection with the context of childhood transition and changes in commitment. Hunsberger (1983) specifies apostates as those who are not merely "irreligious or the unchurched, nor with denominational switchers" but rather are "individuals who reported being raised in a religious denomination but who later change their religious orientation to 'none'" (p. 21). Similarly, Baker and Smith (2015) refer to this cohort as those "who considered themselves to have been religiously affiliated as children but who are religiously unaffiliated as adults" (p. 18). This cohort of the apostate is significant, according to Zuckerman (2012), as most of the irreligious people at least in America are postulated to be "actually raised with some religion, and

then at a certain point, they opted out" (p. 4).

Furthermore, the study of religious disengagement is also well-established in probing why faith disaffiliation takes place. To begin with, numerous studies have been devoted to determining the causes that trigger emerging young adults to abandon religious identification. For instance, Bowen (2010) identifies the following potential causes for why former Christians left the church:

Exclusiveness of Christianity; problems with church (e.g., closed-mindedness, judgmentalism, hypocrisy, and racism); lack of conviction about Christianity; and unanswered questions on the meaning of suffering (pp. 100-105). Bowen (2010) further attributes the following reasons for why the SBNR (i.e., Spiritual But Not Religious) – absent believers – no longer attend Church:

Lifestyle issues (e.g., ethical beliefs, sexual teachings, social issues); encountering "non-Christians" of Christian (or virtuous) character outside "the bubble"; and moving to a new town; lack of belonging and support (pp. 136-144). For Francis & Richter (2007), fifteen antecedents are singled out for church-leaving:

Matter of belief and unbelief; growing up and changing; life transitions and life changes; alternative lives and alternative meanings; incompatible lifestyles; not belonging and not fitting in; costs and benefits; disillusionment with the church; being let down by the church; problems with relevance; problems with change; problems with worship; problems with leadership; problems with conservatism; and problems with liberalism. Kinnaman (2011), on the other hand, highlights six reasons as to why young Christians are disconnected and defected from their faith community:

Churches being overprotective; teens' and twentysomethings' experience of Christianity being shallow; churches being antagonistic to science; young Christians' church experiences related to sexuality often being simplistic and judgmental; having challenges accepting the exclusive nature of Christianity; and the church being unfriendly to those who doubt (pp. 91-185). Furthermore, Thiessen (2015) identifies eight causes for the religious nones turning away from religious identification and/or involvement:

Exclusivity; life transitions; teenage choice; too busy; scandals and hypocrisy; intellectual disagreement; interpersonal tension; and social ties (pp. 129-146). Finally, Zuckerman (2012) cites nine likely influences on religious disaffiliation:

Parents; education; misfortune; exposure to other cultures and religions; friends, colleagues, and lovers; politics; sex; Satan and hell; and malfeasance of religious associates (pp. 153-163). While these influences cannot be mistaken for causes for the apostates' abandonment of faith, he asserts that they might "increase the likelihood of a person's eventual rejection of religion" (p. 165).

However, when it comes to problematizing who the apostates are in terms of their identity (e.g., atheists or agnostics), different shades of delineation exist with no consistency in sight, as Pasquale (2012) laments that coming to terms with accurate dictions or terms "to validly and reliably describe secularity and its distinguishable forms" is "one of the most pressing challenges" (p. 5). Pasquale (2007) observes that the unchurched bear different monikers to differentiate themselves: naturalistic, agnostic, scientific, humanistic, secularist, atheist, anti-religious, and skeptical. Silver (2013), on the other hand, categorizes atheists as academic atheists, activist atheist/agnostics, seeker agnostics, antitheists, nontheists, and the ritual

atheists (pp. 114-120). Baker and Smith (2015) stretch their classification across the spectrum of affiliation, belief, and practice in the context of secularity and devise the following types: religious non-affiliated, atheists, agnostics, non-affiliated believers, and culturally religious (pp. 14-17).

In attempting to understand who atheists are and why they undertook the path of apostasy, Brewester (2014) opines that "there remains no clear consensus on who atheists are and what they believe" (pp. 4-5). Yet she observes that recent literature delineates the differences between strong atheists, those who have taken a "principled and informed" position to reject God's existence, and weak atheists, those who exhibit uncertainty about God's existence (e.g., an agnostic) (p. 5). In turn, Brewester offers her own portrait: New Atheists are those who take on active initiative to push "scientism" onto the agenda by creating an "'unrealistic fixation' on empirical facts and data to dictate morals and serve as an antidote to supernatural beliefs" (p. 6); Humanists are a type of atheist who choose to "downplay differences between believers and nonbelievers" and "reject religious claims about the source of morality and value" (p. 7). Finally, Baker and Smith (2015) suggest that not only are atheists more likely to be strongly opposed to institutionalized religion, but they also tend to "exhibit low levels of interest in private spiritual concerns" (p. 204). Many atheists place high importance on "institutional science, and often on the mythologized 'war between science and religion' to frame their understanding of the world and their experience" (p. 204).

In connection with the role of science, one of the key predictors of non-belief that surfaces from researches is related to the apostates' orientation to intellectualism. Caplovitz and Sherrow (1977) single out commitment to intellectualism as one of the four specific traits for predicting faith disassociation (the others being poor parental relations, symptoms of maladjustment or neurosis, and a radical or leftist political orientation) (pp. 51-76). Hunsberger and Brown (1984) also highlight intellectual orientation as a significant role in predicting apostasy in their research. In addition, Hunsberger, Alisat, Pancer, and Pratt (1996) point out that nonreligious young adults incline to exhibit a higher integrative complexity (i.e., the ability to think about issues in a way that entertains multiple perspectives and how they relate to one another) and greater religious doubt. Galen (2014) links this cognitive orientation to the transition from childhood religion to the process of "divergent cognition" wherein these youth engaged in exploring information from belief-inconsistent sources (p. 258). They tend to adopt an open-ended belief-search that is linked to complex cognition and greater doubt. As to how doubt persists, Hunsberger, Pratt, and Pancer (2002) conclude that "doubting is consistently related to decreased personal religiousness" (p. 264) as well as to a tendency of consultation with "anti-religious sources of information", which, in turn, predicts future levels of lower religiosity (p. 255). In this context, Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1997) point out that college students with good academic standing who engage in the process of intellectual struggle tend to give up their childhood belief (pp. 120-121). Hunsberger and Altemeyer (2006) reason that such faith disengagement occurs in part due to an open-mindedness to consult with wider resources, including non-religious ones, to address their doubt, compared to the stronger religious who look to religious sources to confirm their beliefs (p. 45). Finally, Hill (2011) reports that decline in aspects of specific belief (e.g., existence of supernatural entities) is evinced more in college students attending elitist universities, possibly abetted by their exposure to "secular ideas, faculty, and possibly to identity work associated with the elite social status of associating with these institutions" (p. 548).

Conclusion

As mentioned before, religious affiliation for the teenagers and emerging young adults is shaped and impacted by many interconnected and complicated influences, as they need to navigate a very personalized passage throughout their growing-up process. This chapter reviews pertinent literature on four major determinants that are generally present in their journeys, affecting their adhesion to, or disengagement from, faith and their community:

Intergenerational influences, vibrant community, mentoring experience, and religious disengagement and apostasy. In the next chapter, attention will be turned to a discussion of the various religious types the study has identified, the analysis of the data, and the findings of the research.

Religious Types, Analysis, and Findings

3

Religious Types, Analysis, and Findings

As stated in Chapter 1, *LTTV* focuses on exploring the faith journeys of the Stay-On and Drop-Out cohorts of CBCC, and what have shaped them to be who they are by examining the factors that motivate them either to disengage from CCIC and/or faith altogether, or to maintain a strong conviction in Christian belief and devotion to the community. In this chapter, the findings emerging from the investigation via interviews and eSurvey of these two cohorts are discussed. As indicated previously, this study anchors on the qualitative-driven mixed method as the core interrogative research framework (Morse & Niehaus, 2009). To that end, the data analysis is first navigated through the examination of the interview participants' lived experience. As the religious orientation of this contingent is scrutinized, two subcategories of "religious types" within each cohort of Stay-On and Drop-Out of the interview participants have emerged. Not intended to offer precision of boundary, religious typology is generally created to clarify the identity of the researched cohort in relation to the saliency of faith affiliation (Baker & Smith,2015, p. 7; Brewster, 2014, p. 4; Zuckerman, 2012, p. 5). As is the case with most typologies, categories may overlap when applied to individuals, given that they are simplifications of the complexities of the human experience. With the application of religious typology, the study can highlight the proclivity that motivates those who decide to stay engaged with CCIC (i.e., Stay-On), and effectively contrasts with the salient factors that may have caused those who are disaffiliated with these religious communities (i.e., Drop-Out). In so doing, these religious types help explain the linkages of what caused the participants' affiliation with CCIC and their faith engagement in that context.

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

For the Drop-Out category, two distinct groups of participants have also emerged: the Spiritual "Nones" and "Dones" (SND) and the Agnostics and Atheists (A&A). SND self-report to have not jettisoned their faith in God, but choose not to associate with faith communities due to several factors. As a result, most have developed an antipathy to church affiliation and attendance, claiming no attachment to the institutionalized church as religious nones, or being fed up with the church institution and therefore cutting ties with CCIC as spiritual dones. On the other hand, A&A appear to have completely abandoned their faith and no longer identify themselves as Christian, as most have denied the existence of God; and of the interviewees, only one identified himself as an agnostic.

With these four religious types (i.e., HE, LA, SND, and A&A) emerging through the analysis of the interview participants' lived experience, a corresponding set of these types can also be identified from the eSurvey respondents by ascertaining a composite profile of religiosity based on the responses to a roster of questions that are best characterized as linkages to: (1) worship service attendance; (2) strength of conviction in basic beliefs; and (3) spiritual practices and church affiliation (See Appendix A). The resulting analysis of the eSurvey based on these corresponding religious types provides not only a top view of the respondents' sentiment toward the questions posed, but it also offers a detailed breakdown based on each religious type wherein the correlation between religious types and the questions can be probed and established. For example, the analysis of the eSurvey question, "Did your faith come alive on a mission trip?" (Q51), yields the following result: 27% of HE registering "YES," with LA, 23%; SND, 4%; and A&A, 8%, indicating that a mission trip is a more salient influence on those who are in the Stay-On cohort, and less on Drop-Out. This can lead to the understanding of whether a correlation between participation in mission trips and a deeper faith conviction exists or not.

In this study, 739 respondents participated in the eSurvey, and 554 identified themselves as Canadian-born Chinese, with the breakdown corresponding to their religious types as follow: HE, 209; LA, 208; SND, 75; and A&A, 62. In addition, 37 participants were interviewed with the following makeup based on the religious types: HE, 10; LA, 9; SND, 9; and A&A, 9. The analysis of the eSurvey result and the responses of interview participants identify eight determinants that shape the religious types into who they are, with each type being impacted by a group of two salient drivers. The eight determinants and their corresponding correlating religious types are: Mentoring Experience (HE); Vibrant and Authentic Community (HE); Dysfunctional Leadership (LA); Unhealthy Culture (LA); Life Transition (SND); the Conundrum of Romance (SND); Rising Intellectual Complexity (A&A); and Sexuality and Sexual Orientation (A&A). Furthermore, two additional variables, Experiencing God at Special Events and Parental Influences, are incorporated for analysis. These two are identified less for the purpose of differentiation of their correlation with a particular religious type, since, as will be explained later, they do not stand out as clear and unique determinants for specific religious types; but rather for their unique relationship with the CBCC in the context of CCIC. To provide a high-level overview of the effects of these variables, a table (Table 3.1) summarizing the determinants' effects across the religious types is included. The remaining sections in this chapter detail the analysis of these determinants with the interviewees' real identity substituted with pseudonyms to protect their privacy.

Table 3.1: Summary of Determinants Across Religious Types

Major Themes	HE	LA	SND	AA
Mentoring Experience	Very active, positive & healthy (A determinant)	Present but less noticeable	Positive but indeterminate	Negative & hostile
Vibrant & Authentic Community	Highly salient with high belonging (A determinant)	Unhealthy & disenfranchised	Absence of connectedness; lack of support	Virtually absent
Dysfunctional Leadership	Positive but less noticeable	Very hierarchical & dysfunctional; no vibrant vision with irrelevant teaching (A determinant)	Unprepared, disengaged and political	Incompetent

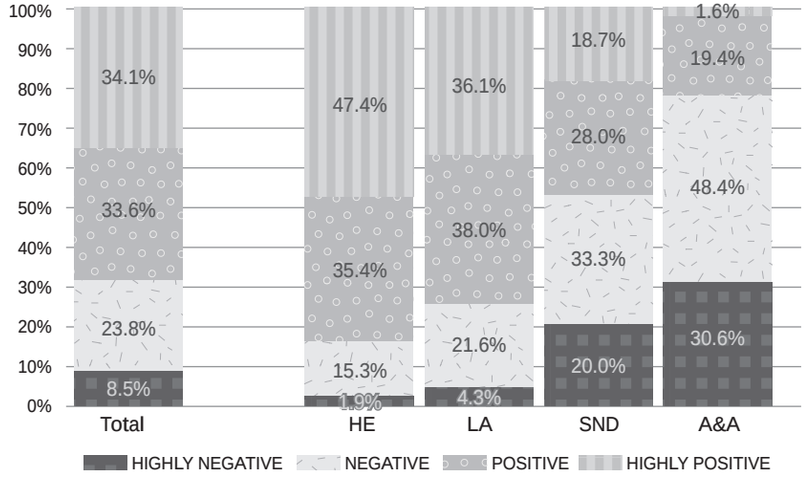
Unhealthy Culture	Supportive but not salient	Very unhealthy, rife with conflict, politics, & hypocrisy and exclusivity (A determinant)	Unsupportive & judgmental	Backward & distanced
Life Transitions	Healthy support from CCIC	CCIC unengaged	Lost in transitions through life stages; relocation, disconnected community (A determinant)	Less noticeable but lost in transition to university over science arguments
The Conundrum **of** Romance	Not noticeable	Fractured relationship experienced but received support from CCIC	Broken & disengagement with faith communities (A determinant)	Absent as a factor
Rising Intellectual Complexity	Absent	Unnoticeable	Absent	Faith & science a "zero-sum" game (A determinant)
Sexuality & Sexual Orientation	Teaching is muted or irrelevant	Teaching is muted or irrelevant	Teaching is muted or irrelevant	Teaching is antagonistic and a game changer to dislodge faith (A determinant)
Experiencing God at Special Events	Palpable in Conferences and STM	Present and somewhat active in STM	Unevenly felt in Conferences and STM	Almost absent
Parental **Influences**	Weak to somewhat Strong but not a determinant	Weak to Negative	Weak to Negative	Weak to Negative

Mentoring Experience

As mentioned in the previous chapter, multiple studies have identified the presence of a role model, mentor, an authority figure, or someone who has taken steps to show interest and care for the younger sojourners in faith as an immensely positive influence on how their faith affiliation is shaped and sustained (Abo-Zena & Ahmed, 2014; Bowen, 2010; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Dean, 2010; Erickson, 1992; Lanker, 2009, 2012; Magyab-Russell et al., 2014; Martinson, 2004; Parks, 2011; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith et al., 2014). According to the eSurvey instrument, the following questions best represent the mentoring experience the respondents reflect in their church affiliation.

Q22: Being mentored by an adult churchgoing Christian is important to me.
Q50: Did your youth leaders do a great job of modeling Christianity for you?
Q63: Mentor and Model for my generation.
Q87: I feel free to ask questions of church leaders.

Table 3.2: Mentoring Experience



The analysis of the eSurvey (Table 3.2) points to a strong correlation between past mentoring experience religious affiliation: 67% of the respondents register a strong to very strong positive experience with mentoring. Further parsing based on religious types, however, paints a more nuanced picture: 82% of HE report a strong to very strong positive experience; 74% of LA indicate a similar experience. In contrast, 53% of SND and 79% of A&A respond with a strong to very strong negative experience respectively.

Detailed examination of interview participants corroborates the eSurvey analysis. Mentoring experience as an active and positive agency for faith adhesiveness is detected mostly in the HE cohort, and in the SND and LA groups in a declining scale. So positive was the influence and so palpable was the experience that, for instance, Bartholomew (LA) goes so far as to attest that "I don't remember Bible lessons or scripture passages … [but] I remember [that the mentors] spent a lot of time with me, even when I was not interested in class. They didn't give up on me." For the purpose of this study, mentoring can be construed as both formal and informal processes engaged in by mature adults who may have either the designated role in the faith community (e.g., an appointed mentor for a youth group) or just simply have taken an interest and actions to care for the younger generations (e.g., a supportive Sunday School teacher). For example, Rebekah (HE) portrays the mentoring experience as just having a more mature adult who would talk, listen, and allow her to ask tough questions:

> *This idea of someone [being] with you who is older to walk you through your faith ... When you are younger, you are more [vulnerable] to other influences because of friends or peer pressure or at school. So having someone you can talk to about these things, asking tough questions is really important in the church.*

In addition, the notion of mentors can be conflated with that of leaders. For this study, mentoring can be a part of a leadership exercise, though the lived experience of the interviewees shows that while leaders tend to focus on how they accentuate their role and experience in the context of structure, power, and authority of the faith institution, mentors tend to pay attention to care, growth, and support for a person as a whole. To Leah (HE), her Sunday School teacher in Grade 12 fits the description: "My Sunday School teacher when I was in high school. She's been very influential [and] a very good mentor to me." In the following sections, salient features of mentoring experience as characterized by the interviewees are further discussed.

A. Presence of mentors

As an overall experience, participants in three of the four groups (i.e., HE, LA and SND) express positive sentiments toward a palpable mentoring involvement in the context of CCIC, a finding that is in line with the eSurvey analysis. On the contrary, many interviewees in the A&A cohort take a negative and even hostile stance against mentors or authority figures (e.g., Isaac and Moses), an attitude consistent with the eSurvey analysis that points to 79% of the A&A group registering a strong or very strong negative sentiment. On the other hand, while mentoring experience could not be counted on as a game-changing variable for SND in sticking with CCIC, a few recounted positively about the experience of being under the tutelage of mentors when growing up, consistent with eSurvey analysis of only 47% SND showing a strong to very strong sentiment toward mentors at CCIC. One can argue that mentoring for this cohort can be considered at best as a factor for personal growth when younger. For these participants, vivid mentoring experience in teenage years has lingered on in their mind even though it does not help create

enough stickiness of church affiliation later on. For example, Eve (SND) remarks about being involved in the mentoring process:

> *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 high school kids. It was like a pass[ing] it [i.e., the baton] on kind of thing.*

Deborah (SND), a peer in the same cohort, recalls a comparable experience of being mentored by her youth worker, which led her to expand her faith horizons:

> *It opened my eyes to faith not just being something that you know, "I went to church with my parents" which is just something that you do. It opened my eyes to the idea that this is something [extra in faith.] that is part of your life.*

A few LA register the mentor's presence in their church when growing up, as Phoebe (LA) remarks: "I had some mentors when I was a teen and they are good examples and we would meet up some times." For Matthew (LA), a major reason he continues to stick around his church is a direct result of the love and care of his Sunday School teachers in the teenage years. He pays no small tribute to these mentors as they judiciously and purposely created a welcoming, accepting environment that in the end fostered a high degree of connectedness between themselves, Matthew, and his peers. Unsurprising, these beloved mentors are held in high esteem with the utmost respect. Of special note is the fact that this is not necessarily a group of first-generational mentors but rather local-born university students who doubled-up as Sunday School teachers for the high-schoolers. These mentors took the initiative in making connections with the students outside the class, showing their support, care, and concerns by inviting them out for lunch and athletic activities, and in summer, sacrificing time, energy, and resources in accompanying the students to camps. Matthew speaks of this experience with joy and excitement:

> *We had our own Sunday School teachers [who would] bring us along to hang out with them and go camping with them. And then for that, we felt connected with them. I feel it was important because I see them as my role models. Yeah. One of the main reasons I stayed around in the church and ... I see my faith [being] important because of them [and] the love they've shown me. These Sunday school teachers, they were young adults ... in college and I was in high school. Yeah they'll take the time out, and after the Sunday School class every week, they'll ask us to go to lunch. And then they'll ask us to play sports with them. And that's a huge change in what we experienced.*

If mentoring is a positive experience as narrated by the interview participants in the overall Stay-On group, the HE roster in particular raves about this experience, with eight out of ten participants (Andrew, James, John, Miriam, Leah, Peter, Rachel, and Sarah) identifying mentoring as one of the major factors for their strong attachment to CCIC. The nurturing experience corroborates with e-Survey HE respondents, with 82% of the group reporting a strong to very strong positive experience with mentors when growing up at CCIC.

For example, Miriam (HE) refers to her mentors as "sponsors," those who have her and her peers' interests in mind and take them under their wings and build up their faith. Described also as

"facilitators," the mentors are the gatekeepers for their faith development, leading them through spiritual exercises such as "Bible study and worship" or team-building activities such as "Planet Laser night or [just] play games" so that they all could "get to know each other." All in all, Miriam's mentors are "caring and encouraging" in strengthening her commitment, as well as shaping her faith identity.

Furthermore, Sarah (HE) speaks about how trust and connectedness is created by mentors opening themselves up in being vulnerable and authentic, which helps forge a relationship that has lasted from teenage years to university: "When they're [e.g., Sunday School teachers or counselors] open up about their life, that's when I felt that I had a closer connection with them. I really saw them as mentors … and I still do even in university fellowship [group]." Yet Sarah's experience is extraordinary in that hers is extended outside of the confines of CCIC. In high school, Sarah purported to be going through a period of spiritual dryness. With doubts, academic stress, and emotional turbulence pressing down on here in Grades 11 and 12, Sarah experienced a feeling of helplessness and isolation, alongside a sense of void when it came to God's presence. At that time, her friend suggested she sought help from a school counselor, who turned out to be a Christian. Under his care, Sarah's journey was turned around:

> *My guidance counselor happened to be a Christian even though we were in a public school. And he [was] very God-sent. He affected me a lot. I would always [be] crying in the office and he would comfort me with words and pray for me. He was just always there, giving me Scriptures and answering questions with a lot of understanding and love. I'm just very thankful for him. He's truly a blessing through that Grade 12 year.*

The mentoring experience is extended in the university as Sarah identifies another mentor who took time to invest in her spiritual life personally and individually to nurture and disciple her: "But in university, she [the mentor] came out for one-on-ones with me and really discipled me."

B. Disruption of mentoring engagement

While mentoring engagement can be a growing experience, disruption of a mentoring engagement after a period of healthy interactions can be a centrifugal force for CBCC to spin out of faith adherence. After having been immersed in wonderful and nurturing support by mentors for a long period of time, Matthew (LA) recalls the disruption and lack of intimate relationship he suffered when his mentors left because of their own mission engagement elsewhere:

> *At certain points close to the end of high school and my beginning of university, there were some disconnects between the church and my peer groups because a lot of our Sunday School teachers, they went on missions trips ... like long term missions.*

In addition, a dent could be put in the CBCC's growth in a time of pastoral transition if the departing pastoral leaders are regarded as role models. Matthew continues to recount: "Pastors are good role models [and] there's been a lot of transitions between pastors … [the transition] created a vacuum in leadership where I didn't have as many – as my role models." Along the same vein, Thaddaeus (SND) postulates a similar thought that an improved and sustained relationship with a pastoral mentor in the English congregation could have reversed the direction of his faith journey. His former pastor, whose departure created a spiritual void at the church, used to take time to travel to campus to nurture him:

We would [meet] once a week. He would come up to [the] University and we would spend time talking, studying Scriptures. So I think [that if I] had more of that type of relationship with a pastoral type of figure earlier on that would have made a difference [in my faith development].

C. Characteristics of mentoring experience

But what constitutes a mentoring experience? To the interview participants, the enduring mentoring involvement bears at least four characteristics; together they had left an indelible impression on many participants' faith journeys, no matter how old they were when they received the mentoring, and remaining even at the time when they were interviewed.

1. Mentors are approachable, available, and take the initiative to engage

Almost to a person, participants speak about how approachable and available mentors have been in their lives. This dimension is most laudable, yet astonishing when looked at from the perspective of the substantial power differentials in CCIC in which first-generation authority figures or persons with seniority are to be respected and deferred to. Local-born, however young or mature they are, tend not to speak with candor in the presence of their elders because of the experience of being treated as second stringers. The dimension of approachability and availability speaks to the encounter when mentors make extra effort just to reach out and show care for the mentees. For instance, James (HE) recalls with fondness how his pastor showed concern about his absence from church to his parents, and took the initiative to seek him out during high school: "The pastor invited me out for coffee a couple of times [and] we were able to talk about things that you don't normally talk to the public about [such as questions on sin and failure]."

Initiatives such as what James' pastor undertook help create a level of trust and acceptance, and, in turn, generate goodwill for further engagement in building a deeper relationship. Rebekah (HE) recounts that it is her pastor's approachability and openness that gradually swayed her to stick with the immigrant church she attended when thoughts of fleeing surfaced: "It was a gradual process. It was the process of like Pastor Donald was really welcoming and a pastor that I could talk to, be open whenever he is available." Mark (SND) remembers how his mentor took it upon himself to challenge his faith journey, and in so doing, deepened his faith when he was younger: "There's a guy [i.e., mentor] who would be the [one who] would always ask me a lot of questions and get me thinking, and that's obviously helped me understand my faith a little bit better." Sarah (HE) echoes in agreement, reminiscing how her Sunday School teachers showed care and concern outside of Sunday School class by being open, and making themselves available in order to forge a tighter relationship with her:

Sunday School teachers are [by default] always not as close [and] I never really got to know them really well except for a couple of them when they're really open about their life. And that's when I felt I had a closer connection with them. And so, I would talk to them a little more outside of Sunday School.

Similar experience with Sunday School teachers resonates with Bartholomew (LA): "They treated me with respect, and I didn't feel uncomfortable with them even though I'm socially awkward and shy. That made an impact on me." Conversely, Moses (A&A) speaks bitterly of how distant and cold his relationship was with his Sunday School teacher:

I don't talk to them very much ... Oh, not much [of a relationship] to be honest, it's just you only know them as your teacher and you only talk to them in the class and you try to stay away from them after.

2. Mentors listen with patience, offering not condemnation but sage advice

For many HE, being listened to does not imply that the listener merely practices a stoic posture of hearing the grievances or agony the local-born may have suffered. Instead, listening is an active acknowledgement of their struggles, providing a space and time where their hurt and conundrums are recognized and heard. Sage advice is offered in return, in a way that is not judgmental, but rather edifying such that the CBCC's faith is strengthened and their self-confidence restored. In some situations, participants learn simply from the calmness that oozes from the mentors' posture, projecting to the mentees that everything is under God's care. In the example of James (HE), he singles out an episode in high school when he was processing doubt and discontent with his faith community. It was the time he spent with his mentor, talking through these issues without fear of harsh reprimand or rejection that restored his faith and confidence in his church. And their relationship has been an enduring one. One can understand why he sings his praises: "He's a great listener and that is one of his great qualities, and so throughout this time, I think and it's still a great blessing to have a mentor."

Though preoccupied with his start-up small business and claiming God was not at the centre of his life at the time of the interview, Mark (SND) speaks highly of his mentor in teenage and adolescent years. They shared a close connectedness, and mutual interest in sports. In particular, he attributes his mentor's patience, calm presence, and intentional listening as attributes which allowed him to model his faith better: "it was the way that [the mentor] listened and how he carried himself that helped me understand my faith more."

The practice of empathetic listening can be a cathartic experience, as it was in the case of Andrew (HE) and his mentor Pastor David. With a congenital disability that is not necessarily always visible, Andrew experienced avoidance at best and discrimination and ostracism at worst at a few CCIC. When he started worshiping at his church at the time of the interview, it was no exception. Alienation abounded. Yet the lead pastor, whom Andrew describes as his mentor, spent the time to listen to him and his life-story about this disability in an empathetic manner that made him feel that his dignity was respected. Andrew is convinced that he was "listened to and the hurt was acknowledged." Then the pastor acted as an advocate in dispelling the myth around the disability, stemming the tide of unacceptance, and turning it into a welcoming experience. Andrew further characterizes his mentor's action this way:

He spoke in a way that he understood it. And he made [sure that] I knew that I was being heard and I was being listened to. Even though things were not changing right away, I knew what mattered to me the most was knowing that my voice was being heard.

Peter (HE) shares a similar experience of mentorship in motion. He recalls fondly how his faith grew because of the care and support he received from his youth leaders during the teenage years: "They took time to answer my questions, care about me, minister to how I can better serve, and also they took time to develop me and my spiritual growth." He cites an example to illustrate his thought. After worship practice, a mentor would chauffeur him home: "He used to drive

me home and we used to have lengthy conversations, we used to talk a lot about things." This lengthy conversation reflects an exercise of active listening on the part of mentor and learning on the part of Peter. His experience speaks to a practice of "alongsideship," willingness to journey with the local-born side by side, offering care and support along the way, thus engendering a high degree of connectedness with CBCC.

3. Mentors are open and transparent, showing vulnerability and willingness for reverse-mentoring

The next characteristic of mentoring experience that inspires the local-born is the mentors' openness and transparency, especially in expressing their vulnerability, which inevitably leads to a deeper sense of identification and connection with the mentees. For instance, Peter (HE) recalls an important conversation with his mentor about their family background. He was pleasantly surprised that the mentor talked openly about his brokenness and vulnerability, emanating from the dysfunctional and broken family he was raised in. As a child reared by a single parent, the youth minister discussed his down-trodden experience and how it helped shape his ministerial philosophy and approach toward youth from both broken and established families. This exchange strikes a chord with Peter, who was raised in a family with an absentee father, cared for only by his mother. With a mentor he could identify with, Peter developed a keen connection and strong solidarity with the youth minister. He recounts: "I do remember one conversation … about how both of us came from broken families. So, he and I connected rather well because we kind of understood each other."

However, it is Andrew (HE) who looks at this dimension through a cultural lens. Citing examples of many traditional Chinese pastors as being distant and maintaining a posture of seniority and often displaying an attitude toward him as "I don't care about you," Andrew is astounded by the level of care and support his senior pastor has provided. Yet the game-breaking moment occurred when the pastor came to him with genuine humility, valuing his opinion, and asked: "Andrew, I need your help." Andrew recalls the exchange with admiration:

> *First of all, I never heard that coming out of a Chinese person's mouth quite often ... "I need your help in understanding the second generation because I have a heart to take care of the second generation." And he was a man who also understood people with disabilities.*

The act of reverse mentoring won Andrew's heart with mutual respect. But more importantly, it eradicated the cultural biases that he held due to his years of experiences with traditional Chinese pastors and CCIC. So overwhelmed by this uplifting and restorative experience is Andrew that he "asked [the pastor] to be my mentor, and he has been a significant mentor. And he has played a key role in me coming back to love and accept my Chinese identity during the times when I was frustrated."

4. Mentors are incarnational, making sacrifices and investment in time, effort, and providing monetary support if necessary

Many participants express deep appreciation for how their mentors show interest and take steps to model faith and nurture spiritual growth for the local-born in a manner that is sacrificial. Making a sacrifice means always keeping the mentees' interests in mind and at times requires a mentor to abandon a more efficient approach of ministering to a larger group in favor of a one-on-one discipling process over time, as in the case of Sarah's (HE) experience of Bible study with her mentor on the university campus. Similarly, James'

(HE) mentor was willing to invest in him by having a personal "biweekly study" of the Bible over a long period of time. Or it could be a gesture of generosity as in the case of a youth pastor who invested in gifting Peter (HE) a Bible when he lost his own. It might seem to be a small gesture, but the impact has gone far beyond the initial investment. Peter explains:

> *I remember a youth leader who invested in me ... Well, [when] I lost my Bible, he decided to give me a [new] Bible. And he encouraged me to read it every day and to pursue God by getting into His Word that way. And so, he did something that I found very helpful because to this day I still have that Bible.*

Deborah (SND) speaks about how her youth pastor would take her and the youth group to camping and other outdoor activities to generate deeper bonding. In the same way, Matthew (LA) praises the sacrifices of the mentors for how they invested time, energy, and even money in him and his peers. As mentioned earlier, for a long period of time, these mentors took him under their wings by being hospitable: treating him for lunch and playing sports activities with his peers after Sunday service. But the clincher came when they took him camping and paid for all the expenses associated with it.

Finally, John (HE) speaks eloquently about the practice of hospitality and even financial support that his church counselors are so willing to invest in CBCC. He explains the act of compassion of one particular counselor who opens his downtown apartment to allow students to spend the night:

> *There is one counselor [who] lives in the downtown and he owns an apartment and whenever a student is staying at school late they can just go over to his apartment and just spend the night there. So he basically offers his house to the students if they need it. So that is how he helps students physically.*

In addition, John speaks of the act of generosity of another counselor when students are in dire financial need:

> *There is another counselor that ...[at] one time when there were a couple of students [who] were lacking financially so I guess he helped them a little bit by giving them money to help them pay for their tuition for that semester. They always offer some help.*

Summary

In this study, a high correlation between mentoring experience and the CBCC' s stickiness in faith and affiliation with CCIC across both eSurvey respondents and interview participants is observed. The more positive the experience, the higher the level of the engagement of CBCC. This is most evident in the HE cohort than in the others. Absence, withdrawal, and negative mentoring experiences appear to lead to a lesser affiliation as in the case of A&A. Yet selfless support, loving care, active listening, and willingness to show transparency and express vulnerability surface as key traits of solid mentoring for CBCC. This finding is consistent with many researchers' conclusions that mentoring experience is a significant variable in affecting the religiosity of adolescents and emerging adults (Abo-Zena & Ahmed 2014; Bowen, 2010; Dean, 2010; Lanker, 2009, 2012; Martinson, 2004; Pearce and Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Smith & Denton, 2005; Smith et al., 2014), validating and aiding their

transition into adulthood, instilling faith values, and shaping their religious identity in the mentees (Magyab-Rusell et al., 2014). This experience is particularly salient when the mentoring relationship is constructed in a natural and informal fashion (Erwin, 2016; Zimmerman et al., 2005) and engaged in a process that is more dialogical and inspirational (Parks, 2011).

Vibrant and Authentic Community

Another salient influence, according to research, that positively affects the faith journeys of young religious adherents is an affirmative identification and active engagement with faith communities that promote growth and deepen spiritual values (Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Penner et al. 2012b). Such an engagement, in turn, fosters the faithful to develop a strong sense of belonging with the faith institution. For many CBCC, not only does this experience of belonging reflect CCIC as a place where ethnic socialization takes place, more importantly it speaks to a venue where they experience joy and spiritual nourishment; form and forge identity; build and cement healthy and meaningful relationships; shoulder pain and grief; and spur each other on with their peers along the faith journeys (Abo-Zena & Ahmed, 2014; Ammerman, 1997; Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Bowen, 2010; Cha & Jao, 2000; Cooksey & Dooms, 2010; Flory & Miller 2010; Magyab-Russell et al., 2014; Mammana-Lupo et al., 2014; Thoennes, 2008; Whitney & King, 2014; Wong, 2015).

According to the eSurvey instrument, the following questions best represent the community experience the respondents reflect in their church affiliation and belonging:

Q27: In my experience, being involved with religious groups isn't worth the effort.

Q35: In my experience, church members practise what they preached.

Q37: When I was growing up, most of my friends were committed Christians.

Q38: I have experienced emotional healing through help received from a church.

Q39: My faith came alive for me through the witness of a friend.

Q49: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the church group?

Q52: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the young adults' group?

Q61: Nurtures my spiritual growth.

Q65: Listening and encouraging.

Q66: Affirms and values my contribution.

Q69: Treats me as a second-class citizen.

Q72: Stifling my growth.

Q76: Allows me to grow and exercise leadership.

Q78: A safe haven to weather emotional and spiritual challenges.

Q79: My friends are there.

Q81: Open to ideas and creativity.

Q87: I feel free to ask questions of church leaders.

Q89: I have personally been hurt by church leaders.

Q90: My parents have been hurt by church leaders.

Q91: In my experience, the opinions of youth matter to church leaders.

Q93: In my experience, church leaders are welcoming of all ethnic groups.

Q94: Those in church leadership are able to help me explore my toughest questions.

Q98: In my experience, church is a place where people are equipped to help others.

Q102: The church members I know are accepting of those outside the church.

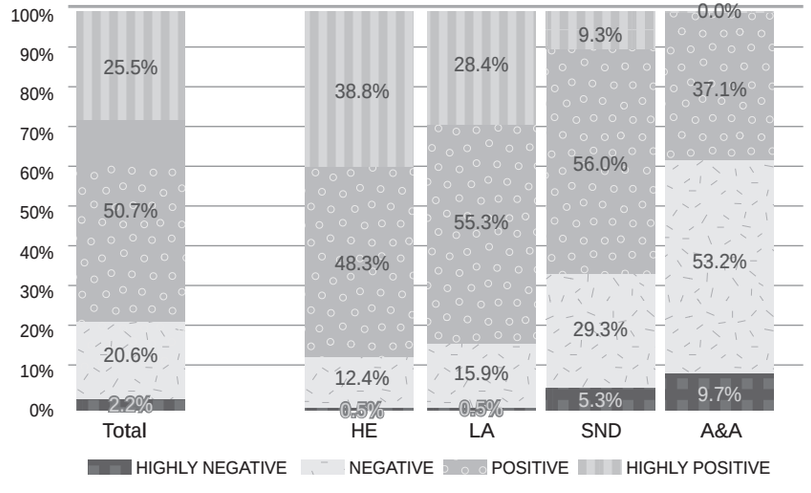
Q103: In my experience, church leaders value church programs more than people.

Q104: The church makes a difference in my community.

Q105: In my experience, church is a place where my talents go unappreciated.

Q106: I have been given the opportunity to lead in church.

Table 3.3: Community Experience



Past community engagement correlates positively with church affiliation for the eSurvey respondents (Table 3.3) as 76% register a strong to very strong positive experience. Further decomposition based on religious types conveys a more detailed compelling story of an affirmative experience in three of the four groups: HE, 87%; LA, 84%; and SND, 65%. In contrast, 63% of the A&A cohort indicate a strong and very strong negative experience.

To the interviewees, however, community experience can be a double-edged sword. While the affirmative impact of community experience guides CBCC and creates stickiness in the commitment to faith and CCIC for HE, which is consistent with the eSurvey analysis, contrasting negative experience contributes to why the LA, SND, and A&A participants become disenfranchised, feel unsafe, and lose the bearing of their identity and faith conviction. As will be examined in a later section, specifically for the LA group, the unhealthy culture some participants have spoken out against stems more from discontentment with the leadership of CCIC as well as inter-congregational conflicts, and less from the friendship and positive support CBCC received from the English speaking community within the faith institutions. As such, the interviewees' experience is not consistent with the eSurvey analysis on community experience for the LA and SND survey respondents who indicate positive sentiment, but very much aligned with the A&A group as almost two-thirds (i.e., 63%) indicate negative experience.

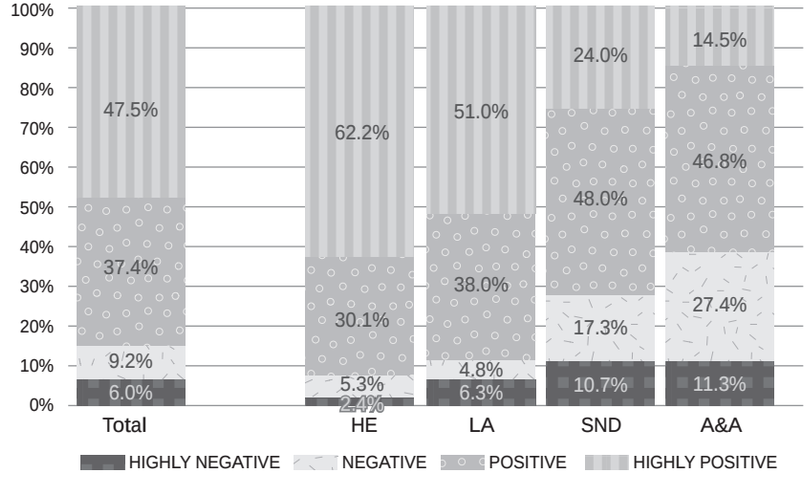
To no one's surprise, certainly not to the interviewees, a local Chinese immigrant church is probably the first community CBCC came to associate with, as Abigail (LA) attests: "The church was the main community at that point [when I was a child], that's the main community for my parents [and my family]." While most interviewees identify their experience with the CCIC they associate or once associated with as a key component in shaping their faith negatively or positively, the HE cohort (Andrew, James, John, Miriam, Naomi, Rachel, and Peter) registers a much stronger attachment to CCIC as a vibrant faith community that has left a positive imprint in their journeys. The following discussion highlights the key characteristics of a vibrant community that many of these HE and others have come to portray.

A. Essence of an authentic community: acceptance, mutual support, and transparency

One of the key characteristics which a vibrant community research points to is the presence of authenticity and acceptance (Thoennes, 2008). According to the eSurvey analysis, a number of clusters of questions best reflect the sentiment of the respondents toward the faith community's stance on acceptance, transparency, and being open. For acceptance, the questions and the analysis are as follows:

Q49: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the church group?
Q52: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the young adults' group?
Q102: The church members I know are accepting of those outside the church.

Table 3.4: Acceptance and Openness

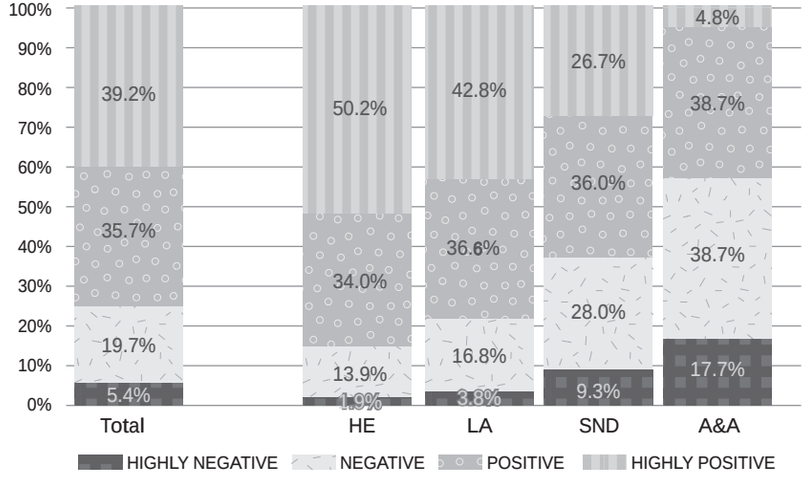


According to the eSurvey, most respondents identify with a strong to very strong positive response in the experience of community acceptance (Table 3.4): almost 85%. Further breakdown based on religious types, however, provides a more detailed picture of such a strong and positive experience in all four groups, though in a declining scale: HE, 92%; LA, 89%; and SND, 72%. Yet for the A&A group, the affiliation with community acceptance dwindles to 61%.

For mutual support, the questions and the analysis are as follows:

Q38: I have experienced emotional healing through help received from a church.
Q49: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the church group?
Q52: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the young adults' group?
Q61: Nurtures my spiritual growth.
Q65: Listening and encouraging.
Q66: Affirms and values my contribution.
Q69: Treats me as a second-class citizen.
Q72: Stifling my growth.
Q76: Allows me to grow and exercise leadership.
Q78: A safe haven to weather emotional and spiritual challenges.

Table 3.5: Mutual Support



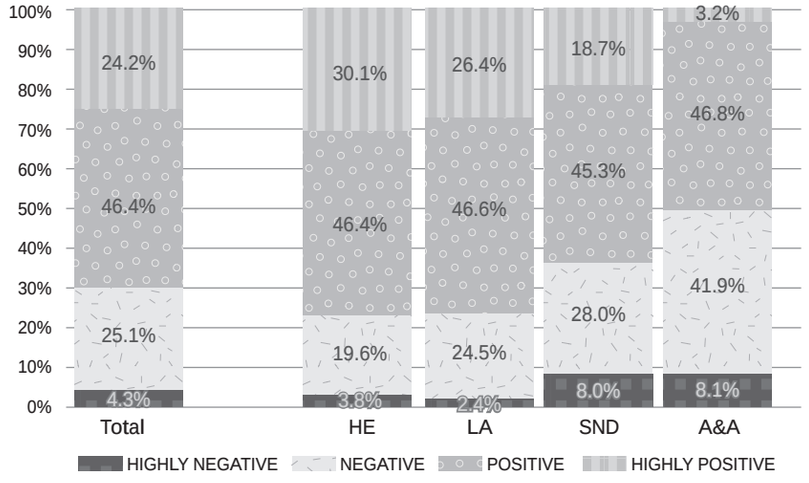
Most eSurvey respondents also report a strong to very strong

positive sentiment in the experience of community acceptance and support (Table 3.5): nearly 75%. Yet further breakdown across the religious types shows that a strong to very strong positive experience is only evident in three of the four groups: HE, 84%; LA, 79%; and SND, 63%. On the contrary, 57% for the A&A group register a strong and very strong negative experience in mutual support in the CCIC.

With respect to whether the community is authentic and transparent, the questions and the analysis are as follows:

Q35: In my experience, church members practise what they preach.
Q81: Open to ideas and creativity.
Q87: I feel free to ask questions of church leaders.
Q89: I have personally been hurt by church leaders.
Q90: My parents have been hurt by church leaders.
Q91: In my experience, the opinions of youth matter to church leaders.
Q93: In my experience, church leaders are welcoming of all ethnic groups.
Q94: Those in church leadershipare able to help me explore my toughest questions.
Q104: The church makes a difference in my community.

Table 3.6: Authenticity and Transparency



Along the same line of acceptance and mutual support, more than 70% of the eSurvey respondents carry a strong to very strong positive response regarding the experience of the community's authenticity and transparency (Table 3.6). Further inquiry based on religious types indicates that a strong and positive experience is reported in three of the four groups: HE, 76%; LA, 73%; and SND, 64%. Yet in contrast, 50% for the A&A group register strong and very strong negative experience in mutual support in CCIC.

Turning the spotlight to the interview participants, a few appear to suggest that the adage "God is the reason church was built; community is the reason why people go" does resonate in their experience. To these interviewees, a church community in its less inspiring form is seen not as a place to develop and grow in faith but merely as a social hub where human relationships, not spiritual ones, are struck (e.g., Jacob [AA] and Thaddaeus, [SND]). Yet many other participants, in particular for most in the HE cohort, speak of a highly favorable experience of CCIC and articulate

the key characteristics of what they consider to be a vibrant and genuine faith community that helps form their faith convictions. These characteristics bear a resemblance to the parameters researchers (Ammerman, 1997; Thoennes, 2008) have come to define as traits of an authentic Christian community:

Be known, trusting, transparent, supportive, experiencing and transmitting Christ-like graciousness, love, mercy, and forgiveness. Matthew (LA) expresses it this way: "Community would be a group of people that love each other no matter what. So, they'll see through all your shortcomings and even if you do stuff to make them angry or piss them off, they'll still love you." It is a place and space that is considered safe enough that someone would open himself up without fear of condemnation, and he would feel accepted, supported, and encouraged. These spiritual practices of complete acceptance and unconditional love reflect what an authentic spiritual community must look like. Matthew summarizes: "These are what God would desire in heaven, how He designed us to be like we're all in community together, all worshipping Him, all focus[ing] on Him."

Yet Matthew's sentiment is not consistently shared by participants in the LA, SND, and A&A groups, whereas it resonates more stronger in the HE cohort. For instance, Andrew (HE) recounts a positive experience of openness and acceptance in portraying his church as a "safe" place to discuss both day-to-day issues such as "money" and spiritual topics such as "visioning," with "both sides [i.e., Chinese and English congregations] being able to speak honestly about how things are going" with "neither side … feel[ing] judged on it." To Miriam (HE), the faith community and her affiliation with it is a critical contributing factor that defines her faith journey. When asked what she values most about the church she grew up in and continued to attend at the time of the interview, Miriam answers without any hesitation: "Community is probably the biggest thing for me." The community is where mutual support, reliance, and encouragement are set in motion for the congregants. Thus, being a part of the community is as much about taking as giving. She further comments:

> *Being involved in a group of people that will support each other in their faith and in their lives whether [they are] separate or together. And just having a group of people that you can count on for whatever [the circumstances]. Yeah, that's probably the biggest one [i.e., reason I stuck around].*

In short, for Miriam, the spiritual community is "where everybody is really invested in each other's faith journey."

Similarly, when asked to identify the key benefit of affiliation with the CCIC, Naomi (HE) responds swiftly, with an enthrallment about her faith community, especially the experience of spiritual growth and an openness to discuss mental illness such as depression without it being mislabeled and dismissed as merely a spiritual defect that could be cured by an exercise of faith and prayer:

> *I think [it is] the sense of community. Definitely growth like having to learn with [each] other; and be challenged with other people as to what the Bible says; and just the sense of being able to discuss certain things with other believers, for example, what their thoughts on mental illness within the church [are].*

Along the same line, Peter (HE) places a premium on his community experience and how it has fostered his faith and forged his Christian identity. He singles out the commitment to ministry,

open communication, and a sense of collectivity or togetherness as the key distinctiveness of his faith community:

> *I value the community that we have. I value that a lot of us are very disciplined in our service. We take serving seriously, so my church has a fifty percent ministry culture, [that is] about fifty percent of our congregation does something. I value that it's really not difficult for us to converse with each other. We don't set up walls of segregation and isolation when it comes to the church. So, we love each other, we get to do [things] together, we talk a lot, we have fellowships, and given our church's population [being] rather small, we get to know each other rather well.*

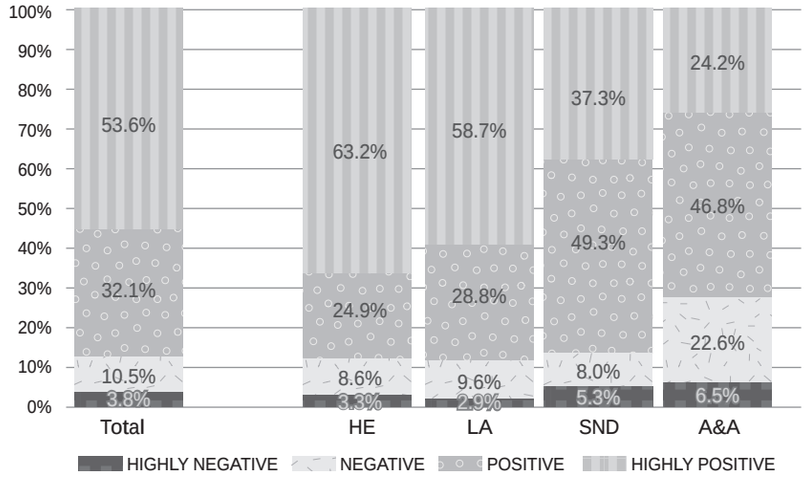
B. Belonging and welcoming

Another distinctive feature of a vibrant community is related to how welcoming it is not only to its members but also to outsiders. The more welcome the younger adherents experience in their faith communities, the higher the sense of belonging they register with them. On the other hand, exclusionary practices such as in-group formation based upon similar economic and social background are likely to thwart the spiritual growth of young adults in faith communities (Penner et al., 2012b, pp. 52-64). From the perspective of the eSurvey, the following questions best gauge the sense of welcoming CBCC have experienced at their CCIC:

Q93: In my experience, church leaders are welcoming of all ethnic groups.

Q94: Those in church leadership are able to help me explore my toughest questions.

Table 3.7: Welcoming



The analysis indicates in general that CCIC appear to be a welcoming community across the religious types (Table 3.7), with 88% of HE; 87% of LA; 86% of SND; and 71% of A&A indicating a positive to very positive response.

Looking at the interview participants, a crucial aspect of community life is the sense of belonging that being part of the community generates. Belonging means welcoming, acceptance, ownership, and full accountability. A strong registration of belonging on the part of CBCC can be attributed to the affirmation of ethnic identity of the local-born via the affiliation of CCIC as asserted by Greeley (1972), who argues that ethnic identity can be conceptualized as belonging to the ethnicity's group. Collins and Solomos (2010) further observe that "at a basic level, identity is about belonging, about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others" (p. 5). Yet more importantly for CBCC, when it comes to belonging, it has always been understood in two contexts: meaning of faith and healthy relationships, both within the church as well as with

friends. This is consistent with Wong's (2015) findings that "relationship is the linchpin of belonging" (p. 283).

Belonging in terms of active attachment to a church community is epitomized in Miriam's (HE) characterization: "It feels good. It feels like home." Home is a place that is safe, where acceptance is received; hospitality is practiced with no requirement to conform to a set of unreasonable group norms or parrot superficial spiritual jargon. At home, there is no need to hold in your true thoughts and feelings. In a nutshell, for Miriam, the church as a spiritual home is "a place [I] can … relax … be myself … accepted and loved, and sometimes have a good fight." In many respects, these salient features of openness and non-judgmental acceptance define the belonging that prompts Matthew (LA) to exclaim: "I think for me one of the biggest anchors of my faith is the community. And I think being part of this church, we have a very strong community and that's always anchored me to church."

These two pillars – meaning of faith and healthy relationships – are intricately intertwined, reinforcing each other at times, functioning as cause-and-effect at others when it comes to postulating belonging for CBCC. For Martha (SND), though raised Roman Catholic as a child, her faith did not take root and become authentic until she participated in a closely-knit Asian/Chinese Christian fellowship group on the university campus, typically an extension of CCIC and Chinese ethnic parachurch organizations' presence. Rather than following a traditional view of conversion process of "believe, become, and belong" (i.e., where one must first make a commitment, sometimes at a special event, to faith in Christ in order to become a Christian and then come to belong to a local church, usually initiated as a member through baptism), Martha followed a process of "belong, believe, and become" (i.e., a strong identification or affiliation of faith community, at times a gradual process, which leads one to firm up one's belief and then acquire a faith identity). She explains her experience this way:

> *In the third year, I got more involved in fellowship and I had a really wonderful [experience] as I was surrounded by a lot of wonderful people. And that's when I decided that I wanted to be situated with Christians and that's when I realized I wanted to be Christian.*

It is the affirmation and realization of being accepted that engenders a strong sense of stickiness with what she expresses as an experience of a vibrant community, though she had not started attending local church worship: "Fellowship at the time was very important to me because it built community for me and it got me to think about Christian life in a group setting."

The sense of belonging usually starts with a stance of hospitality and welcoming, especially to those who have identified themselves as being excluded, feeling ignored, or mistaken. For Naomi (HE), the flashpoint is her mental illness and depression. Yet for Andrew (HE), having a congenital disability and having been marginalized in a few CCIC, his exposure to belonging with the church he was attending at the time of his interview starts with being welcome, appreciated, and acknowledged - first by his pastor, then by the entire faith community: "The fact that he [the pastor] was able to lead a whole community of people to love the person with this disability, I'm like 'he is the man who understands me.' And he's a first-generation pastor." Along the same vein of welcoming and hospitality, Priscilla (LA) echoes Andrew's experience. Reflecting on how hospitality enables her to open herself up to know and be known amongst her fellow congregants, she speaks about the close-knit church

experience that has made her espouse a strong sense of bonding with the church:

> *They just have soup at someone's house after service and I felt I started to get to know people and I actually felt the church was my church and I felt welcome. So I feel very personable with the church community.*

Ruth (LA) singles out an identical experience of welcoming as the game-changing factor in a season of transition for her family to settle into a church they finally attended and stayed in for a long time:

> *We moved from a situation of poor relationship management to a community where people genuinely start to care about each other. As that transition happened and we were able to see that impression, I think that's one of the major reasons why we stayed at Mount Zion and not another church because the community there really welcomed us even though it was a difficult time for my family.*

C. Friendship and connectedness

Another salient dimension of a vibrant community that has a major impact on young believers is how strong friendship and connectedness are struck in faith communities (Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Cornwall, 1987, 1989). In the eSurvey questionnaire, the following cluster of questions best represents the respondents' sentiment about their experience of friendships they struck up while growing up in CCIC:

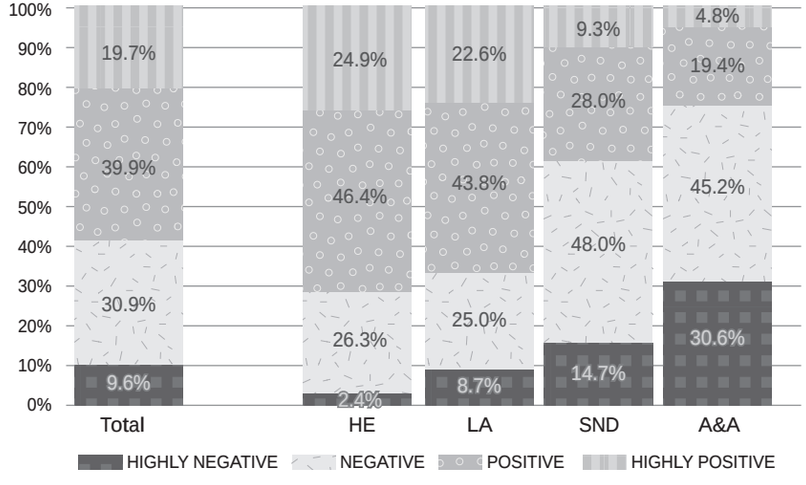
Q37: When I was growing up, most of my friends were committed Christians.

Q79: My friends are there.

Q39: My faith came alive for me through the witness of a friend.

Q49: Did you feel accepted by your peers in the church group?

Table 3.8: Friendship Experience



The responses are clearly tilted favorably toward the Stay-On cohort, with 71% of HE and 66% of LA registering a high to very high positive experience of friendship (Table 3.8). However, 63% of SND and 76% of A&A answer with a high to very high negative experience of friendship at CCIC, indicating the positive effect of healthy friendships on the Stay-On group and the absence of such relationships experienced by the Drop-Out cohort.

Friendship and peer influences are unquestionably one of the key variables in CBCC's faith journeys (Wong, 2015). A peer group relationship in the local church context wherein everyone speaks the same language and shares similar generational and ethnic cultural practices would likely create a steady social and religious bonding capital (Ley, 2008; Putnam, 2000). Strong friendships and tight

connections in such a context can undoubtedly spur their growth; conversely, fractured peer relationships can, in fact, discourage and at worst thwart their attempt to continue to associate with the faith community where the broken relationship occurs. Yet to a few SND such as Thaddaeus, friendship being extended across his high school years with the same group of peers who happened to enroll in the same school and church is rewarding: "This is where I am spending time with my friends and this is where it was very fulfilling for me." Esther, another SND, recalls her friendship fondly:

> *In general, I did enjoy going to the weekly fellowship [meetings]. I think the group of friends that I had in my teenage years when we were at this church, it was pretty strong. And I enjoyed all the relationships that I made there and the things that we did. So I had good friends and I enjoyed everything that we did.*

For Matthew (LA), friendship in the teenage years with his peers at church is what has kept him connected to the church, however tenuous it might have seemed:

> *For me, I don't think I would have really stayed in church past late high school. I would probably have stayed in church [only] up to that point because of my parents. But then if I didn't have any friends or no community support by then, I ... [might] have left.*

A key challenge is that while fellowship may have been strong and a sense of adhesive community was experienced, the grounding of their spiritual life might have been proven rootless for SND and LA, partly due to the emphasis on fun and entertainment in the ministry, as opposed to a discipling culture. When the fun is over, church matters little. Martha (SND) attests to this experience: "I just found church at that time to be just a really fun place, so that's what I saw it as. It's like for me the same as going to a movie theater." Moses (A&A) echoes the fun and games motif and characterizes his church attendance in his younger years this way: "Not that it was very meaningful because all you did was go and play … Like you go to Sunday School and then you play and like just like any other group of children."

As for what creates stickiness of the youth to stay in church in the Canadian context, John Bowen (2010) reports that 80.9% of the targeted group of youth he studied indicate friendship is either "important" or "very important" in their continuing in the faith, closely following "Mentors" (82.3%) and "My Relationship with God" (89%). While peer friendship appears to be evident in the above-mentioned interviewees, its positive impact appears more palpable in the HE group. Consistent with Bowen's findings, half of the ten HE participants point directly to peer friendship as a significant factor in the development of their faith. For instance, when asked about what experience in church during growing up was significant and being valued, Leah (HE) replied without hesitation: "I would say that being part of the high school fellowship organizing team [at church] … was important. That's where I developed a lot of good [relationships] ... with the friends I still am friends with now."

Indeed, not only do the close friends of many participants share the same faith, they also grew up together in the local church setting as James (HE) acknowledges: "I would say that 99% of my friends are Christian." He further portrays friendship at CCIC this way: "I think it's one of the most important aspects when I personally create friends. To have Christian friends, it's much easier to support them

and the other way around where they can support myself." The phenomenon is also an evidence of homophily based on ethnicity and faith (Sepulavdo et al., 2015). Sarah (HE) sings the same tune, when it comes to differentiating casual friendship from a deeper and more intimate relationship:

> *Personally for me ... having close friends that are Christians are more [important] – they help me a lot more and I can help them a lot more. And I think we have a special more unique connection than a non-Christian friend.*

Very often, friendship of this nature was initiated when they were young. The church community can be at the same time the incubator and crucible for the formation and development of solid relationships among youth. Programs or ministries such as youth group, Sunday School, and Awana (i.e., a popular pre-packaged children's program in North America) are breeding ground for creating connectivity and socialization networks within similar age groups that share comparable backgrounds. Indeed, Reimer and Wilkinson (2015) explain the focus of these ministries in Canadian evangelical churches this way: "Evangelicals 'expect' the spiritual formation of their children and youth to be a priority and programs to be offered for them. Youth programs legitimize the congregation" (p. 110). Likewise, many CCIC actively implement a family ministry known as a cell group network in which a small group of families, usually with similar backgrounds and close proximity to one another, gather regularly, typically in the cozy environment of the group members' houses, on a rotational basis. Aided and abetted by such gatherings, children have their own time to develop social bonds while the adults engage in their own activities, such as Bible study. Sarah (HE) relates vividly how long-lasting friendship was initiated and continuously shaped at family cell group meetings when growing up at her church:

> *When parents met [at cell group meetings] it's always really, really fun because all the parents would gather together and bring the children. And then the children will do their own thing. And that's where the bond [was shaped] and how I got to know my best friends. And the relationship that we had during those times had built from then.*

Similarly, John (HE) regales how enduring friendship has strengthened him and kept him safe and strong in his faith:

> *I treasure their friendship because I guess when you are little you always want friends. The more friends you have the better person you are. And having friends when I was younger that are still friends with you right now means a lot.*

Friendship established when he was young has created a strong connectedness with his faith that allowed him to take ownership of its development eventually: "I am really close to the friends that I had when I was a kid and we helped each other grow." At its core, friendship forms a part of the bedrock of an authentic community, for friends understand and accommodate each other and encourage growth with full acceptance, as John attests: "That they can put up with me, they accept me, they support me, and they help me grow spiritually and as a person."

Genuine friendship is not all about having merely an effective feeling toward each other, but recognizing human vulnerability and therefore demanding mutual accountability in a bi-directional

relationship. James (HE) talks about this aspect candidly. He values friends who would keep his path straight while recognizing the malleable and imperfect nature of the relationship. Speaking of facing the potential temptation of social engagements such as "clubbing" in college, James ruminates:

> *I think it's a big part of temptation even if you go ["clubbing"] with your Christian friends, some people may offer an excuse of, "Oh, you know, my Christian friends will keep me accountable. They will stop me from doing anything [stupid]." But, you know, at the end of the day, you're walking alongside sinners; you don't know how strong their faith is.*

While James points to accountability-holding with friends in the church in a cautious preventive manner, Rachel (HE) gives meaning to such mutual responsibility among friends in Christian community through a positive lens of support and encouragement for growth in faith. She recalls how her Christian acquaintances on campus turns the tide for her when it came to strengthening her church affiliation:

> *So in the first year and even the second year, I didn't go to church at all. I would rather party on Saturday and then sleep as much as I can on Sunday. But I remember one of my Asian-Christian friends that I met at the Asian-Christian Fellowship. So we were friends and she liked going to church, so we would try to force each other to wake up and then go to church together. So, that's when I started going a bit more frequently.*

Summary

As examined in this section, engagement in a vibrant faith community is a multi-faceted experience that espouses strong religious values and forges faith identity in a setting that is welcoming and authentic. Such an experience leads to a deepened sense of belonging to the community, fostering and maintaining enduring friendships that create sticky faith.

Our analysis of the interviewees indicates that while the experience of a vibrant faith community is virtually absent in the A&A group and noticeable in a few LA and SND, it is most palpable with the HE cohort. This finding is consistent with many of the eSurvey analysis discussed in this section (e.g., friendship, belonging and welcoming, and community experience). In addition, this finding is in line with researches that demonstrate a high correlation between a vibrant faith community and stronger faith adherence (Abo-Zena & Ahmed 2014; Ammerman, 1997; Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Bowen, 2010; Cha & Jao, 2000; Cooksey & Dooms, 2010; Cornalwall, 1987, 1989; Flory & Miller, 2010; Magyab-Russell et al, 2014; Mammana-Lupo et al., 2014; Thoennes, 2008; Whitney & King, 2014; Wong, 2015).

Dysfunctional Leadership

An organization's success depends in large part on its leadership:

How effectively does it provide clarity on the direction in which it is heading (i.e., vision)?

How clearly does it demonstrate the purpose of its existence (i.e., mandate or mission)?

Does it reflect with integrity who the organization really is (i.e., identity) and what it represents (i.e., values)?

What are the strategic goals it intends to achieve (i.e., a strategic plan)?

On the other hand, when such an entity is failing and its survival is at stake, leadership is typically the crucial issue (Gill, 2011, p. 26). Yet unlike secular organizations, Christian churches do not define their vision and mandate based upon leaders' self-interest, the organizations' market values, or human wisdom, but rather seek spiritual direction that is rooted in their faith values and practices as well as their spiritual conviction. To that end, the vitality of faith communities depends greatly on how leadership builds a vision that is grounded in their core spiritual values and calling, and inspires the followers in a way that is true to these values with transcendental guidance and personal examples, to achieve ministry goals (Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley, & McKinney, 1998; Wong, 2015).

For CCIC, the leadership landscape is complicated by the ethnic cultural ethos exhibited by the first-generational leaders, lay and pastoral, and the resulting conflicts engendered between these leaders and CBCC. In this study, some in the HE cohort affirm the value of the immigrant church leadership, the wisdom, and the blessings it has brought upon local-born. Yet such a sentiment is eclipsed by the repugnant experience shared by many participants in the other cohorts, be they (LA) still staying on in the immigrant church or having left it for a variety of reasons (SND and A&A), when these CBCC speak poignantly about the stagnation, confusion, hypocrisy, and power struggles at the religious institutions they grew up in. Leaders, according to them, tend to put on a façade, with their commitment to the younger generation being artificial, and the practices hypocritical and inauthentic. In addition, the Chinese cultural exercise of leadership that tends to be top-down in approach with power centralized in the hands of a few is perceived to be in conflict with the emerging Western leadership style that gravitates toward an orientation that is open, bottom-up, participatory, and peer-driven, one that has gained notoriety with the local-born in schools and in their careers (Heimans & Timms, 2018; Wong, 2015). Thus, to many CBCC in the LA, SND, and A&A cohorts, the Chinese leadership at CCIC is perceived to be dysfunctional.

Of the four religious types, LA are the most difficult to designate and differentiate for the reason that the participants are neither necessarily disinterested nor non-committed to their faith. Rather, many in the cohort report having been embroiled in rancorous arguments with first-generation CCIC leaders and exhibit a strong inimical sentiment about their emotionally distant relationship with the faith community, as five of nine (Bartholomew, Julia, Phoebe, Priscilla, and Ruth) either were actively considering taking, or had already taken, action to exit their own CCIC at the time of the interview. Most identify two detrimental factors about CCIC as the tipping point for fleeing the community: dysfunctional leadership and an unhealthy church culture. This section paints a collective picture of what constitutes dysfunctional leadership at CCIC as narrated by the interview participants.

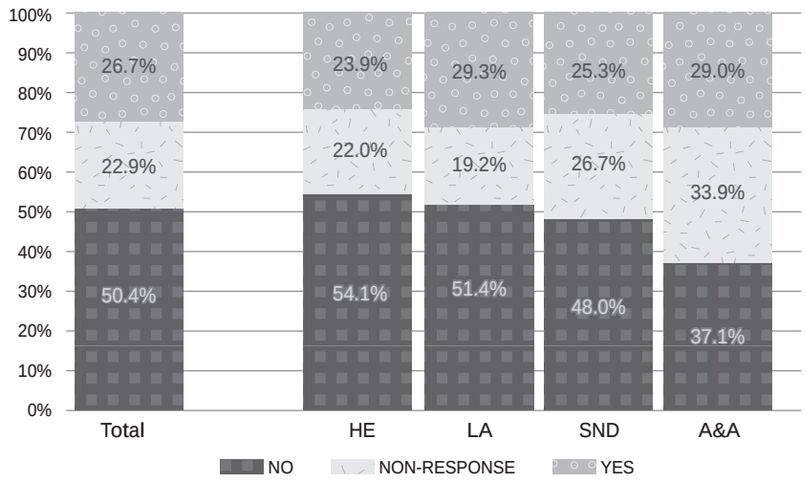
A. Hierarchy, power concentration, and underlings

One of the key complaints about the CCIC leadership by the interview participants is centred upon the issues of leadership hierarchy, power concentration, and CBCC being treated as underlings in faith communities. However, according to the eSurvey analysis, respondents do not appear to indicate that church hierarchy per se is a predominately critical issue in deterring the growth and

aspiration of CBCC. When asked:

Q62: [If CCIC are being] Hierarchical & dysfunctional.

Table 3.9: Hierarchical & Dysfunctional



the Stay-On group answers favorably with 54% of HE and 51% of LA registering a "NO" response, while the response declines across the Drop-Out group (Table 3.9): SND, 48%; A&A, 37%. However, LA rank the highest in agreeing with the premise that CCIC are hierarchical and dysfunctional when 29.33% of the respondents select "YES" (HE: 23.92%; SND: 25.33%; and A&A: 29.03%).

As mentioned previously, for many interview participants, leadership at CCIC, in general, is not cast in a positive light, especially by LA. Many show their disdain by speaking about its dark side: inauthentic, oligarchic, opaque modus operandi, steering much by the norms imbedded in Chinese culture, and high power differentials. Mary (LA) and Moses (A&A) characterize the CCIC leadership the most negatively: it is "fake." Martha (SND) describes her pastor's behaviour as: "Paternalistic." Abigail (LA) portrays the leadership style of her minister as: "Dictatorial." Mark (SND) labels the leaders at his former church as those "who keep the water running and keep the money coming." Leah (HE) agrees: "Members from the Chinese ministry who will be deacons make the decisions for us, to balance the books at the end of every month, to oversee the building and the maintenance." Mary (LA) describes the disconnect between the senior pastor and her generation, and his inability to communicate with them as: "He is from another planet." And when asked further if she has a good relationship with him, or would consider sharing faith issues with him, Mary replies decisively and emphatically in a crescendo of "No's." In an environment characterized as such, CBCC are very concerned that their voice is not heard, and if so, it never gets considered seriously for a variety of reasons. First, a few talk about how they are treated as underlings by the first-generation. Mary (LA) summarizes the issue succinctly: "The Chinese congregation is like older moms." Deborah (SND) further describes how her generation is "seriously being looked down on because they were younger." In the same vein, Bartholomew (LA), a 30-plus middle manager in a local IT company, well respected by his employees and peers, and serving on the church board for a few years, speaks in despair: "They perceived me as [one of their] children." As such, his voice in church ministry is legitimate only as long as Bartholomew "didn't say something that made them [i.e., the Chinese elders] feel uncomfortable." If he does so, "they [resorted to calling him] somebody who is young and inexperienced talking." This treatment is astonishing to say the least. As a well-accomplished professional who is more educated than many of his Chinese counterparts in his faith community, Bartholomew takes umbrage at being "dismissed" by the first-generational leaders from time to time, a behaviour he attributes to the social norms of the Chinese culture that "values age and seniority [more than meritocracy]." Humiliated and marginalized, he, as many in the LA

cohort like him, was actively taking steps to leave their CCIC at the time of the interview. Similarly, Julia (LA) shares an identical experience and frustration at not being treated as an equal by the first-generation:

> *We're [CBCC] 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 that we are not viewed as leaders of the church, the English side. [But] at some point you need to let go and allow the child to grow up.*

The claim to authority by the CCIC leaders by virtue of age and seniority is not lost on other participants. For example, Abraham (A&A) describes that "the Chinese culture is very top down, you know, man is overall kind of thing and it's like: 'don't disobey me and don't question'; I find it too controlling." Phoebe (LA) points out how power has been concentrated in a few longtime members of the Chinese congregation who sit on the church board: "Yeah. People who have been in the church for a long time have the most power." For that very reason, the power scale is tipped in favour of the Chinese congregation when it comes to running the bi-lingual church of hers:

> *It is tough because the church started off with the Chinese side and so the Chinese side is bigger and they have more people, power, more decision-making [authority]. And [they] focused on a certain way of doing things, more traditional because it is more of the adults [who called the shots]. So it is a little bit hard when it comes to decision making for the church.*

The sentiment reverberates in the mind of Abigail (LA) when she labels these leaders as "the old boys at the table." With these "old boys" at the helm, an environment of toxicity is inadvertently established such that full transparent display of one's intention, brokenness, or authenticity in one's faith is never possible, or encouraged. For that reason, Abigail is adamant in concluding that her voice would never be heard as a legitimate and equal one at CCIC, as she explains: "You have to play a certain [prominent] role if you're going to talk to the big boys, right?" Yet that role Abigail refers to could only be acknowledged when someone is a first-generation leader, which she is not. A mature senior executive at a private organization, Abigail laments that she would never be given that role because, similar to the experience of the other LA participants mentioned previously, she is viewed as a second-stringer in the community. Not mincing words in expressing her frustration, she laments:

> *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 as a teen. So, they've taught me Sunday School, right? [But] they don't know about me, they know of me. So, this is 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].*

Thus the insistence upon maintaining a power hierarchy that ignores the legitimate credentials, the maturity, as well as the aspirations of CBCC to participate in the leadership is a palpably disengaging influence on many interviewees, especially LA.

B. Lack or clash of vision

Another marker for dysfunctional leadership is the absence of an overall vital vision that guides the direction and operation of the church. Ammerman et al. (1998) assert that congregational leadership is construed to embody three key roles:

(1) Helping the church to gain a realistic current-state assessment in terms of its particular situation and circumstances;

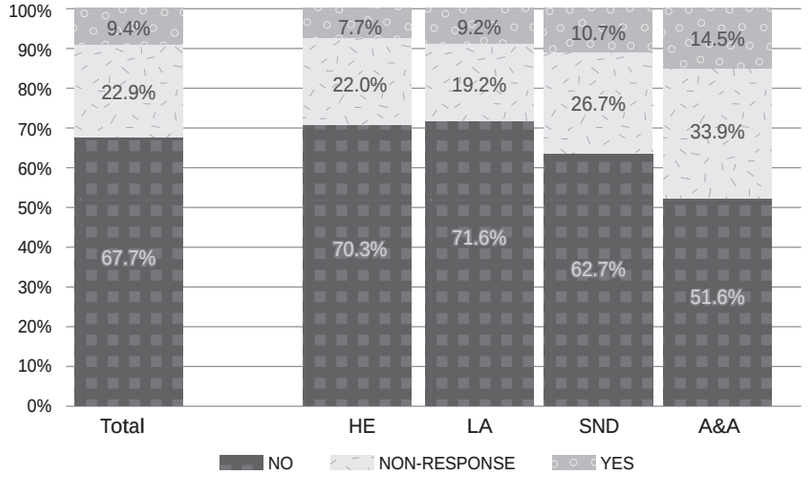
(2) Assisting members to develop a future-state vision of their corporate life that is faithful to their best understanding of God and God's purposes for the congregation in this time and place; and

(3) Helping congregants execute that vision in the congregation's corporate life. (p. 17)

To the interviewees, the concept of vision is by and large narrated around ethnicity and multicultural outreach that is purported to reflect CBCC's hybrid national and ethnic identity of being Chinese-Canadian. For this reason, most CBCC find themselves negotiating an identity that typically leads them to favour a definition of a faith institution that transcends ethnic boundaries. Framed in this manner, the understanding of vision and mission can also be seen by the eSurvey respondents' replies to the following two questions. For example, when asked:

Q82: [Are CCIC being] Missional?

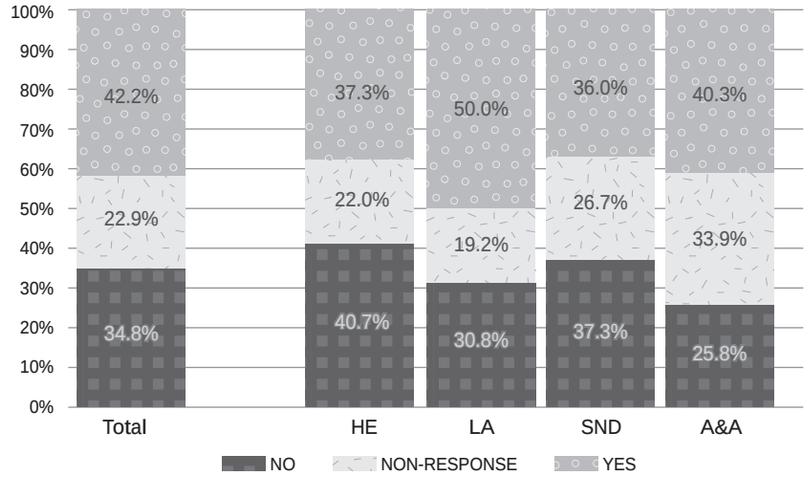
Table 3.10: Missional



The overall response is a resounding "NO" with 67% (Table 3.10). When deciphered through the different religious types, the following breakdown emerges: HE, 70%; LA, 71%, SND, 62%, and A&A, 51%, Though the negativity is palpable across the four groups, the nuance of the response cannot be overlooked. It is the Stay-On group that responds more negatively than the Drop-Out group. This phenomenon can be attributed in part to the fact that, for the Stay-On group, mission and vision matter more as a marker to the faith institution when compared to Drop-Out, who collectively register a higher non-response to the question, a sentiment that can be understood either as nonchalant or that the issue matters less to the cohort. Furthermore, when asked:

Q85: [Are CCIC] Too Chinese?

Table 3.11: Too Chinese



The respondents' answers are inconsistent across the religious types. While 40% of HE respond with "NO," 50% of LA say "YES." And 36% and 40% of SND and A&A respectively answer "YES" (Table 3.11. The overall response points to the LA respondents as the cohort most sensitive to the ethnic orientation of CCIC, which, as it is explained in the next section, is consistent with the interview analysis.

According to the interview participants, a not too uncommon cause for an absence of vision at CCIC is the vacancy of the senior pastor position . In such a vacuum of an overall leader, lack of vision and direction is evident and major disagreement over how to minister a church runs rampant. For example, Ruth (LA recalls an instance when uncertainty over the policy of hiring a senior pastor caused strife within the church leadership: "[Without a senior pastor] the deacon board [which was limited to a small number of men] didn't agree on certain policies and one of the biggest things is the hiring process for the pastor." Phoebe (LA observes the same phenomenon at her church:

> *We have been looking for a senior pastor for a long time but we haven't been able to find one. But I think if there is a senior pastor, it would be of more help [to] guide the direction better [and] can help the two sides [the Chinese and the English] be more united.*

But Phoebe's remark points to a deeper issue: the complex and intricate relationship between the Chinese and the English congregations within CCIC, as manifested by the silo structure and competing vision between the two. Many CBCC observe that a disjunction exists between the first-generation leaders who typically dominate the church board and are in control of the decision-making process at CCIC, and the local-born. With the English congregation's vision usually being couched in an expression of aspirations and values that are very different from that of the Chinese congregation, it may not have captured the mindshare of the board. Philip (LA) explains how the English congregation identifies a vision to pursue authenticity, discipleship, and community and yet "this vision is specific [only] to the English ministry. The other … ministries [i.e., the Chinese] are more focused on [what] I would say sort of [pursuing] traditional evangelism." Yet when the English congregation makes attempts to assert their autonomy in framing their own direction and negotiating pathways to realize it, conflicts usually flare up. As such, Mary (LA) singles out the clashes or the rejection of the English congregation together with its vision as one of the major barriers hindering the spiritual growth of her generation:

> *Sometimes I feel it hinders when we try to get things approved of what we want to do, of our vision. But because the board is mainly from [the] Chinese congregation and*

they have comments, have thoughts, have opinions, and in a sense don't trust our [English] pastor [and leaders]. That hinders our congregation.

The apparent dearth of vision has not been lost on Bartholomew (LA), who observes that at his immigrant church there is "a lack of direction on vision either from the board or the pastors, who seemed to just keep the machine going and running the program." When he and other CBCC leaders attempt to construct a model of ministry tailored for the local-born congregants that would permit them to assert a higher degree of autonomy, the board rejects it outright. The process involves a lot of "head-butting," with no agreement ever established. With this experience, Bartholomew comes to attribute the CCIC leadership's resistance to embracing change to a risk-averse philosophical stance deeply imbedded in the Chinese culture: the board was "very happy with maintaining the status quo. They feel very comfortable with where things are. [Their attitude was]: 'Don't rock the boat. Why change the structure? Why try anything new?'"

Julia (LA), who was about to leave her church at the time of the interview, shares similar frustrations. As a CBCC leader who has been involved in the congregational ministry with multiple roles, she laments the tortoise pace of embracing fresh vision by the leaders of the church she attended:

It's been a decade that I've been trying to encourage our overall church to think a bigger picture ... and to think about the English ministry side as well as the Chinese side [in terms of] what our overall vision is. And there's been a lot of talk about it. There has never been any movement. And I've been voicing this for a decade. And nothing ever gets done.

Julia attributes this phenomenon to a couple of factors. Similar to Bartholomew's observations, the first one is related to the board's desire to maintain the status quo:

Our church is very much embracing the status quo. And if it doesn't affect the Chinese side, then they don't want any change [even though] we can address this Silent Exodus and the lack of growth in the EM [i.e., English Ministry] in a certain way, but it was shut down. The board didn't even want to talk about it. Our church has just closed its eyes and just reacts instead of thinking big picture. There's no big picture thinking.

Secondly, the issue of control is identified. In a culture that is patriarchal and therefore privileges the senior Chinese leadership, these older statesmen are firmly in control of the church and exert a tight grip on the ministry: "Because they've always had control. Just like a Chinese parent [who] does tend to want control over their children." With this in mind, CBCC like Julia feel strongly that their aspirations for growth and assertion for autonomy are being stifled and obstructed.

Summary

Effective and collaborative leadership that is built upon the character and humility of the pastoral and lay leaders strengthens healthy and growing congregations. Conversely, lack of clarity on vision and mandate at CCIC serves as a disengaging factor for CBCC to exit the immigrant church, in favour of congregating at other venues such as a local-born Chinese church, Asian church, multi-ethnic church or mainline Caucasian church (Wong, 2015), or in withdrawing from church worship altogether and/or dislodging their faith. The eSurvey respondents' reply to the issues of hierarchy

and lack of vision tend to be consistent with the interviewees' account, though the disengagement factor is more salient in the LA cohort than in others. This finding is consistent with previous studies on dysfunctional leadership as a disengagement factor for CBCC (and Asian American Christians) in leaving the immigrant church (Alumkal, 1999; Cha & Jao, 2000; Chen, 2006; Tseng, 2005; Wong, 2015).

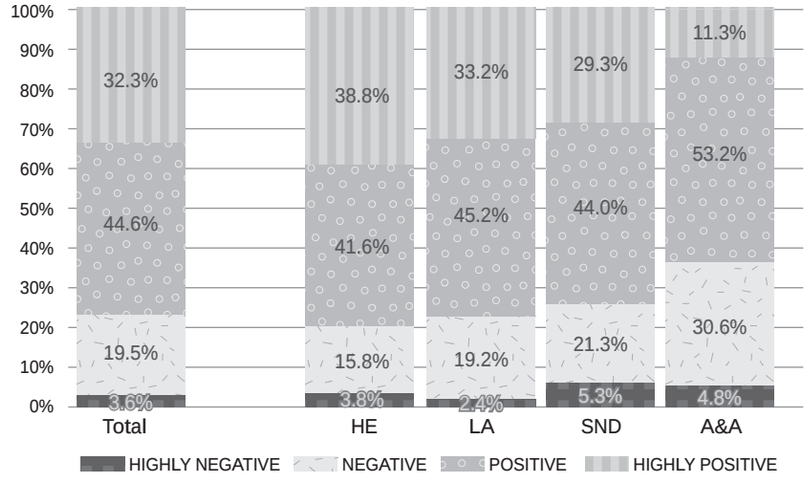
Unhealthy Culture

Research informs us that human social behaviours in an organizational or a community context are influenced significantly by the social mores or norms that are prevalently shared by the members, which, in turn, are shaped by the collective assumptions and values that are underlined by the culture of the organization or the community the members are associated with (Hatch & Culiffe 2006, pp. 181-191; Schein, 1993, pp. 3-15). Culture can, therefore, be construed as the embodiment of the values, norms, beliefs, and traditions of a collective group (Gill, 2011, pp. 184-185; Northouse, 2013, p. 384; Yukl, 2013, p. 286). Though not necessarily visible on its own, culture can be gleaned from the opinions, behaviours, and actions of the people associated with the organization or society (Wright, 2009, p. 151). A vibrant and life-giving culture gives rise to the vitality of the community. Yet a toxic or unhealthy culture is reflected in the staleness or even disintegration of an organization as well as the member behaviours that deviates from the clearly stated values. Faith communities are no exception. Churches whose ecclesiastical culture is built upon sustainable spiritual values, rooted in Biblical teachings, and Jesus' sacrificial example, tend to create cohesive, passionate, loving, and growing communities. In contrast, ecclesiastical institutions that are rife with a toxic culture characterized by internecine conflict or abuse of power tend to gravitate toward a higher degree of disassociation in the membership (Mammana-Lupo et al., 2014, p. 113).

Filtering through the eSurvey analysis, the overall congregational experience of the respondents appears to tilt slightly in favour of CCIC's culture as being healthy. However, as the following analysis of the responses to the usual markers of unhealthy community – disenfranchised community, irrelevant teachings, internal conflict, and hypocrisy – shows, the likelihood of such markers to correspond directly to the religious types' enhancement or decline in their engagement in faith or with CCIC appears not to be strong. Two rosters of questions illustrate this point. First, the following questions portray the notion of a disenfranchised community:

- Q35: In my experience, church members practise what they preach.
- Q36: In my experience, church leaders practise what they preach.
- Q62: Hierarchical & dysfunctional.
- Q64: In-fighting or conflict.
- Q83: Harmful.
- Q86: In my experience, church members are often rude to one another.
- Q89: I have personally been hurt by church leaders.
- Q92: I have experienced a church split.
- Q101: I have felt judged by church members for my lifestyle decisions.

Table 3.12: Disenfranchised Community

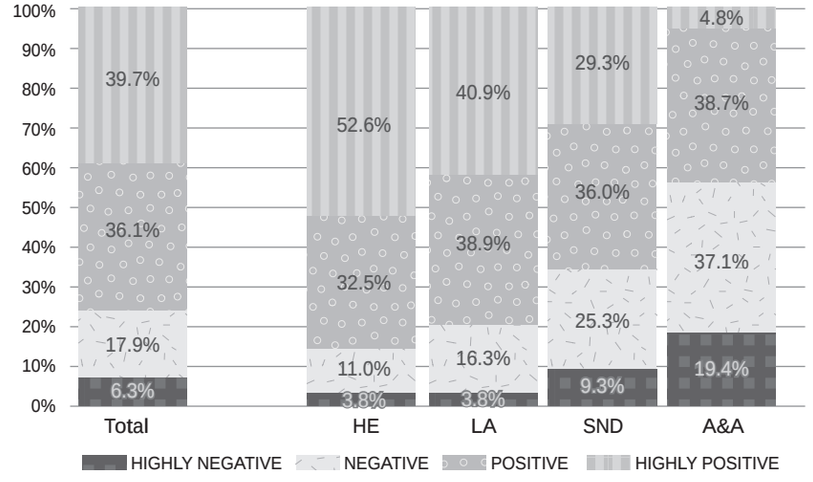


The analysis indicates that over 76% of the respondents register a positive to very positive sentiment about the healthiness of CCIC, though a declining trend is reflected throughout the religious types (Table 3:12): HE, 80%; LA, 78%; SND, 73%; and A&A, 64%.

The second roster of questions addresses the nurturing of CBCC at CCIC:

Q96: In my experience, church leaders do not care about me.
Q101: I have felt judged by church members for my lifestyle decisions.
Q72: Stifling my growth.

Table 3.13: Nurturing



Similar to the response to the first roster of questions, the analysis indicates that almost 76% of the respondents register a positive to very positive nurturing experience with the CCIC communities, with the Stay-On group showing high correspondence (Table 3.13) (HE: 85%; LA: 80%), with 65% of SND maintaining the same sentiment. On the other hand, 57% of A&A register a negative to very negative response.

In the context of this study, though each immigrant church bears its own marks of ecclesiastical culture, the collective culture of CCIC can be examined based on the observation of the behaviours and opinions of the actors in that arena. From this perspective, narratives of the CBCC interviewees about the words and deeds of their leaders, parents, and peers that collectively define the immigrant church community allow this study to peer into the very cultural fabric of CCIC. When examined further, the interviewees speak of a reality that is not consistent with what the eSurvey analysis suggests. To many of the participants, mostly LA, the culture of CCIC they

are associated with can best be characterized as unhealthy. Put simply, a spiritually unhealthy church is a faith community that does not reflect the sacred values and the divine vision it is entrusted to carry out. Abigail (LA) summarizes the overall perspective this way:

> *The church is not healthy. Even though every week I'm going to this community as a child for like twenty, thirty, forty years of my life, I'm being fed that this is church, this is Christ, this is [a spiritual] community when in reality it's not what God's intention is for His kingdom to be like on earth. So, I'm actually going to a church that's not really His intention and it makes me sad that that's the reality of the state of the church.*

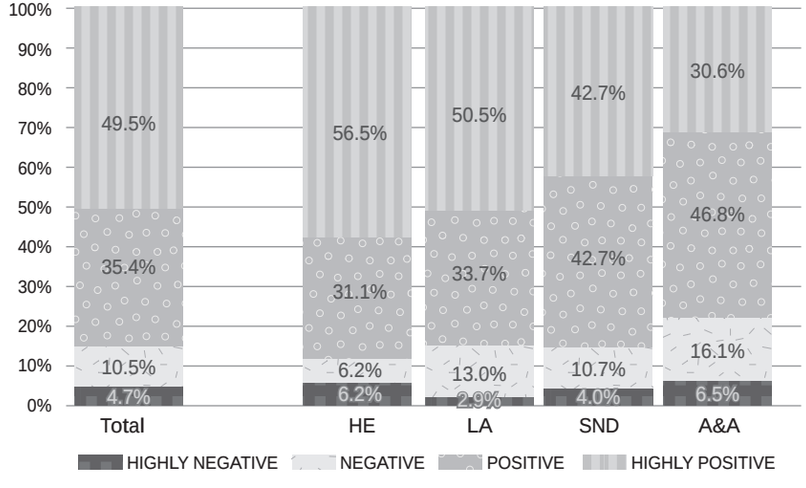
The following section addresses four characteristics of the community cultural behaviours that, when knitted together, come to portray the unhealthy culture of the CCIC.

A. Church politics

Power distance between leaders and followers in the intercultural context has often been looked at as a marker for problematizing leadership and organizational culture. According to Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov (2010), power distance is construed to be "the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country [or culture] expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 61). When a high power distance is in place, followers tend to feel excluded or marginalized, perceiving themselves more as outsiders, or practicing minimal compliance to the norms and behaviours, rather than being passionate participants in the life of the organization or community. The decision-making process in such a context tends to be opaque, and power is concentrated in the top rung of the leadership hierarchy. Without transparent leadership and open communication, followers tend to lower their trust and develop a distasteful view of the leadership culture of the organization. As a crucible for the ethnic Chinese culture, most CCIC have become a microcosm for high power distance experiences between the first-generation leadership and CBCC. Many interviewees – most in the LA cohort – have framed such an experience of leadership culture as "politics" being at play as it relates to the ethnic cultural practices of hierarchy and male gender dominance. The following roster of questions represents the sentiment of eSurvey respondents in this matter:

Q67: Puts my parents' ethnic tradition above my faith.
Q71: Too ethnic.
Q73: Great leadership.
Q69: Treats me as a second-class citizen.

Table 3.14: Playing Politics

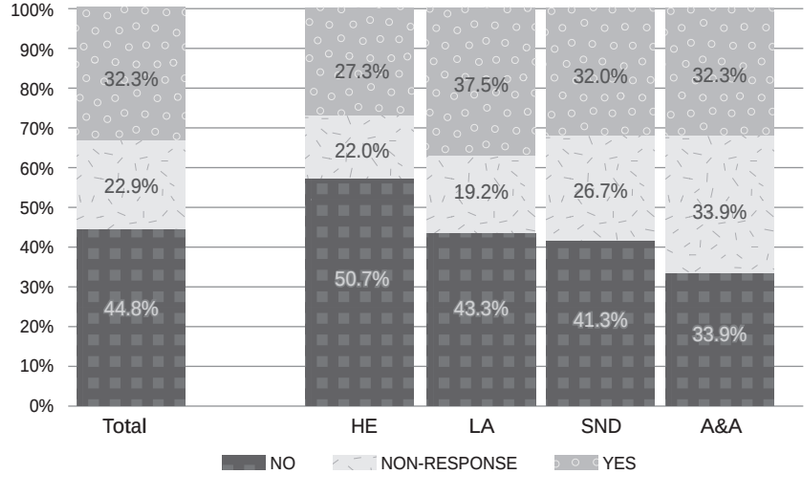


The analysis of the eSurvey indicates that almost 85% of the

respondents reflect a positive to very positive experience of how their communities behave with an absence of politics at play in the ethnic context of CCIC (Table 3.14), with HE registering 87%; LA, 84%; SND, 85%; and A&A, 77%. However, when asked of the question on ethnicity alone (i.e., Q 71), which helps address the context of ethnic power distance, the more disaffiliated the religious type, the lower they tended to register "NO" (Table 3.15). Looking at the other side of the response, LA register the strongest sentiment that CCIC are too ethnic (37% of LA compared to 27% of HE; 32% SND and 32% A&A):

Q71: [CCIC are] Too ethnic.

Table 3.15: Too Ethnic



The interview participants narrate a very different story from the eSurvey analysis on the overall ethnic power presence at CCIC, stitching a picture inconsistent with the respondents' replies, with the only exception being the response to the question on whether the ethnic presence is too strong. To the interviewees, the contrast in terms of identification with the Chinese Church cannot be more elaborate than in how they characterize the operation of the inner sanctum of the CCIC leadership. While a few in the HE group (James, John, and Sarah) speak favorably of their leadership, many in the LA (Mary and Phoebe), SND (Deborah, Eve, Thaddaeus, and Thomas) and A&A (Joshua) groups portray the key leadership or operational aspect of the CCIC as "politics" or "political," mostly referring to the modus operandi of the oligarchy of Chinese elders or deacons that constitutes a concentrated power base for running the Church.

For instance, Thomas (SND) is succinct in accounting for why he left the church: "I left my home church because there is a lot of Chinese politics." Johanna (SND) shares the same sentiment that it is "politics," as in "the inner workings of the church," that "turned her off" and makes her question: "Why we were all here?" sowing the seeds for her departure from the church. The "inner workings of the church" refers to the operation "behind closed doors" of CCIC, a framework that is often perceived as obfuscated, with leaders usually not having accountability to a higher authority, with decisions made by them not likely to get communicated well in terms of the rationale or the options assessed.

In the case of Naomi (HE), she is unclear about how the decision was made for the English Ministry of her church to become independent: "I saw the church politics behind it, and it was really messy like … people were very bitter about the church becoming autonomous." Also to Mary (LA), the negativity of politics is what makes her more disengaged from the affairs or ministry of the church. When confronted with issues in ministry, for instance, she would rather turn a blind eye than initiate an effective and open dialogue with other stakeholders to seek constructive solutions: "If issues arise, I listen ... But I try not to get involved in church politics

… I try really hard to stay away from church politics." One of the root causes for her to shy away from interacting with the leadership has to do with the "pride" of the first-generational leaders, who, according to Mary, are "unwilling to understand each other first without judging. And that comes with the culture."

B. Irrelevant teachings

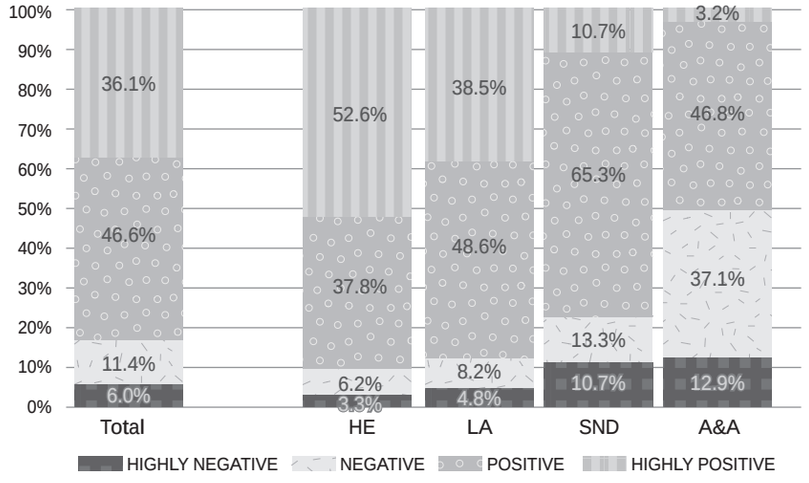
Another key marker for whether a faith community is healthy lies with how its teaching ministry reflects a firm commitment to the faith doctrines, and how the teachings are delivered in a manner that is timely and relevant in edifying and nurturing its congregants. The following roster of statements best exemplifies the presence or absence of such characteristics in the CCIC:

Q68: Irrelevant teaching.

Q88: In my experience, church sermons don't help me live a meaningful life.

Q97: In my experience, the church addresses tough topics in its sermons.

Table 3.16: Irrelevant Teachings



Overall response to this roster of questions indicates that 82% hold a positive to very positive opinion on the teachings at CCIC with the following breakdown on the religious types (Table 3.16): HE, 90%; LA, 87%; SND, 76%; and A&A, 50%. While declining sentiment about timely and relevant teachings across the religious types may not be a surprise, it is worth noting that half of the A&A refute this notion. As will be discussed later in considering the issue of sexuality, this is consistent with most of the interviewees' sentiments across the religious types, with the A&A participants expressing the strongest negative opinions. However, as the following discussion will elaborate, the LA interviewees also register strong disengagement specifically on the teachings they receive at CCIC.

With hybridity of identity based on their Canadian nationality and Chinese ethnicity, CBCC often lament about the tough challenges they face in navigating their faith journeys in the intersection between CCIC and mainstream society. In the day-to-day multicultural milieu, CBCC are challenged by how Christian faith

can be relevant in a time and place where secularism and pluralism seem to dominate the social, political, and moral agenda of the broader society, and religious influences appear to have waned (Wong, 2015). Philip (LA) expresses the observation poignantly: "Less people are seeing, you know, Christian faith as relevant to their lives," and for that reason, "sharing my faith with [non-Christian friends] is a hard sell." Yet his immigrant church at times limited itself to "[viewing of] DVDs like Hillsongs … and watch[ing] these people worship … at ministry gathering" as a way to make "Christianity relevant," and for him, this approach has fallen short of affirming the relevance of faith.

What CBCC are yearning for is substantive teaching that is based on Jesus' words and deeds, that is culturally engaging and contextually relevant so as to provide them with a solid Christian stance and direction on how to address the issues of the day. To the extent they might appreciate teachings at CCIC, CBCC at times would only sing the praises of such endeavours undertaken by the English Ministry, not by the first-generational Chinese congregation. For example, on what she values at her church, Abigail (LA) enthuses about: "Moments of authenticity, [and] the current [English] pastor's teaching on discipleship." Yet Abigail's experience is an exception to the norm. Priscilla (LA) extends the line of thought on good teaching when ruminating on the preaching at a mainstream Canadian church in a town where she attended university, and how the lead pastor would challenge her in aspects of faith that she thought she had always grasped, only to discover she did not: "[Issues such as those] I thought I understood in high school and then I was like, 'No, not really I didn't get it' after I heard him." Comparing and contrasting teachings at CCIC after she returned to her hometown, she finds her appetite for relevant teaching growing. Priscilla elaborates:

> *So in the church I grew up in they didn't really talk about basics or at least not in a way that I really understood whereas when you go to a Caucasian church ... they will talk a lot about really basic things, but that is also applicable to a deeper faith as well ... what was [not] really helpful for me was that my church at home didn't really talk about the basics in a way that someone who doesn't really understand would like to be able to grab hold and learn from it.*

With such an appraisal, it is not surprising she yearns for digging deeper into sound scriptural teaching and applying the lessons to her day-to-day challenges:

> *I think the only thing my [home] church has literally never addressed but they should is that they should address mainstream issues [such as] homosexuality [because] people need to be able to answer with a sound scriptural basis instead of just saying: "The Church says homosexuality is wrong and I kind of don't agree and I kind of do." So I go and hang out with my non-Christian friends and when they ask me I will say it is okay even though the church I go to says it is not okay. A lot of people just leave it closed and never really have a good answer, and that is not good in terms of representing Christ to our non-Christian friends.*

Finally, Bartholomew (LA) offers a curt summation of the irrelevance of sermons at CCIC, with a reference to the response from the non-Christian friends whom he and his wife invited to attend services. Many of these friends are not bilingual, and their common complaint is that the sermons are "not culturally relevant to us; [they

may speak my language] but [the messages are] not appealing to our generation."

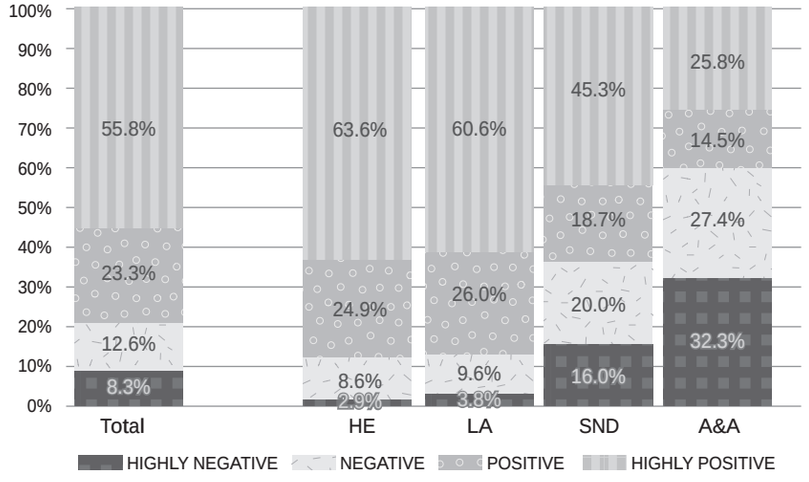
C. Hypocrisy

As examined in the discussion of mentoring experience, CBCC are inspired by the adults at CCIC who have walked side by side with them in their faith journeys, making sacrifices, practicing active listening without judgment, and offering a genuine faith model for them to emulate. For these local-born, mentoring practices illustrate the authenticity and conviction of faith that they want to latch on to. By contrast, studies also indicate that hypocrisy in leaders, parents, mature adults, and among peers represents one of the most harmful toxins that espouses unhealthy faith communities (Bowen, 2010; Penner et al., 2012a; Thiessen, 2015). The issue of hypocrisy is best represented by the following two questions in the eSurvey:

Q35: In my experience, church members practise what they preach.

Q36: In my experience, church leaders practise what they preach.

Table 3.17: Hypocrisy



The analysis shows that 79% of the respondents register a positive to very positive response toward the authenticity of the church community as a whole (i.e., they practise what they preach), with the breakdown across the first three religious types as follow: HE, 88%; LA, 86%; and SND, 64% (Table 3.17). However, over 59% of A&A reveal a negative to very negative sentiment toward the authenticity of the church community. Again, the A&A responses will be explored at greater length in the later section dealing with sexuality. Similar to the issue of irrelevant teachings discussed earlier, however, and as the following section will elaborate, the LA interviewees register strong negative sentiment on what they characterize as hypocrisy at CCIC.

When CBCC perceive or witness behaviours at the immigrant churches that are either contradictory or inconsistent with what are being taught, a sense of cognitive and spiritual dissonance emerges. This disconnect can give rise at best to confusion about authenticity or sincerity of the leaders or the community as a whole, and at worst

to condemnation, which usually leads them to take steps to distance themselves from either the CCIC's teachings or the community as a whole. Such dissonance about the inconsistency is often referred to as hypocrisy by all participants across the cohorts, and it is mostly targeted at the leadership of CCIC. However, to LA, the issue of hypocrisy points to the recognition of a broader phenomenon that is not merely restricted to the leadership, but also evident in the faith community at large – including parents, peers, and at times reflecting the participants' behaviours. For example, Bartholomew (LA) bemoans the hurt that hypocrisy has generated when divorcees at his church are barred from taking any leadership position while love and acceptance are preached. To put fuel on the fire, there is no formal policy or official position clearly articulating this practice. Likewise, Julia (LA) is blunt in assessing the CCIC leaders: "The thing is that I think what is preached isn't always practiced. They try to teach good values, but I don't see them always being followed." Ruth (LA) observes that same display of "hypocrisy" on how the church addresses the issue of homosexuality, as she remarks: "[How a] church could preach love but show so much hate at the same time [is incomprehensible]." Thaddaeus (SND) is disturbed by the "hypocrisy amongst some of my peers" which is manifested in their contradictory lifestyles: "living life as a churchgoer" and "living a second life [that makes] concessions." He offers an example to illustrate the point as some of his peers date "a lot of non-Christians and some things like that cause me to question their faith," since CCIC teachings tend to restrict dating to only the faithful. Along the same vein, Phoebe (LA) takes on the issue of hypocrisy by pointing out the inconsistency between the CBCC's lifestyle and the Christian calling to live out simplicity, purity, and helping the poor, marginalized, and the homeless in the community. Being raised in the middle class of the socio-economic spectrum, most CBCC, according to Phoebe, are materialistic in their orientation: "It is like you buy what you want, you do whatever you want, enjoy your middle-class life, and you can help the poor, but that doesn't mean anything." In so doing, CBCC are not differentiated from non-Christians in their values and behaviours: "Because it is hard to see people who say that they are Christian but are doing the same as everything as the rest of the world." In this regard, Phoebe offers a self-indictment: "I think we are all hypocritical. I mean I think even I am."

Finally, Abigail (LA) articulates at length instances of hypocrisy she has experienced. The first one is with her Christian father, from whom she suffered much spiritual and mental abuse. When her father opposed her dating a fellow congregant because he had a personal vendetta against her boyfriend's father, Abigail was very confounded by her father's resistance, since carte blanche in dating choices was originally given: "Basically he said I can date anybody." Yet when the father objected to her dating this boyfriend, Abigail traced the odyssey back to her father forcing her to attend church, where she met her boyfriend; yet it was her father now rejecting her choice, a decision she could not rationally reconcile. So befuddled was Abigail at the time and so deep was her frustration about this episode that she decided to disengage from church attendance for a while:

> *That's right. That's right. That's right. And it was my dad that wanted me to go to church in the first place as a teen. And it was because he forced me to go, I met this guy, right? It's just irrational, right? Anyways, that's why I left.*

The second issue is related to the hypocrisy of church leadership in dealing with the nontransparent and unwritten dress code of pastoral staff. When her former youth pastor was chastised for the way he dressed, Abigail attributed this to the inexplicable set of social norms

that is embedded in the Chinese culture. At the time, she and many others in the English congregation felt that the pastor was mistreated and the board was "looked at as hypocritical." Yet at the interview, she escalated her accusation and called the instance adult spiritual abuse: "I actually would call it now as adult spiritual abuse using spiritual authority and spiritual power in a way that is hurtful to those who were more vulnerable."

However, Abigail attributed the worst cognitive dissonance of hypocrisy to herself, recalling how she ran away in the middle of a church service when she recognized that her own faith was in complete misalignment with the church's teachings. Abigail characterizes the experience as the church's attempt to "brainwash" her. So devastated was she by the horrific interaction that in her short answer she mentions the word "brainwashed" several times and labels the whole experience hypocritical. She remarks:

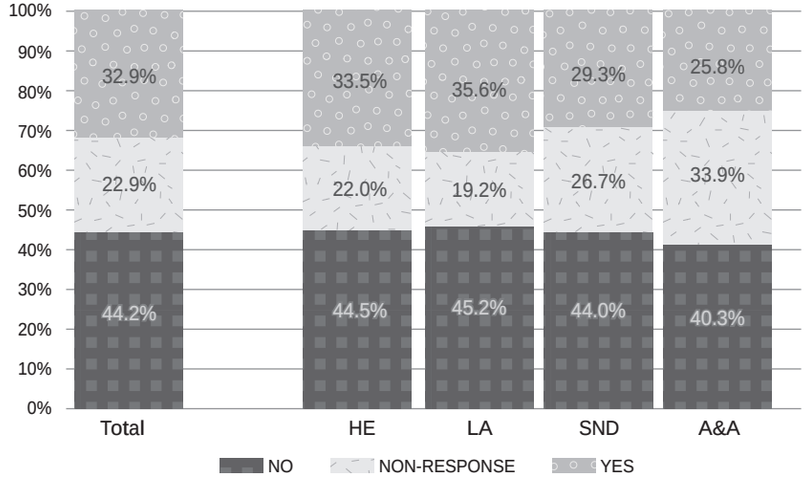
> *Actually I ran off [during] a church service, I don't remember [clearly], I actually took off saying like this is – this is – this is BS. This is BS, I've been brainwashed. I had this weird revelation that I've been brainwashed by the church. This was maybe when I was sixteen or seventeen. I took off and ran a couple of blocks away. I was crying [and] I was [saying], this is ridiculous, so hypocritical, blah, blah, blah, it's like I've just been brainwashed, I hate this place, this is not right. And I felt I've been brainwashed ever since I've been a child, I've been brainwashed into this faith.*

D. Congregational conflict

As discussed earlier in this chapter, politics in terms of high power distance and hierarchical leadership structure at CCIC often renders CBCC marginalized in their participation in church ministries. To add insult to injury, conflict and scandals at faith communities are also dissuading agencies that cause congregants to cut ties with their faith community and turn elsewhere for comfort and peace (Mammana-Lupo et al., 2014; Thiessen, 2015; Wong, 2015). To the eSurvey respondents of this study, the issue of church conflict is best explored by the following question:

Q64: [Was the church filled with] In-fighting or conflict.

Table 3.18: Inflight or Conflict



The analysis of the eSurvey suggests that church conflict is not necessarily a strong factor contributing to the disengagement of CBCC from their faith and community, as the overall response indicates 44% answering "NO" (Table 3.18). This sentiment is also spread across all religious types, as over 40% for each cohort

responded "NO." However, what is noteworthy is that of all the types, LA alone stand as the cohort that registers the most negative sentiment with almost 36% answering "YES," compared to 33% of HE; 29% of SND, and 25% of A&A. This sentiment is consistent with the LA interviewees' experience as explored in this section.

While politics may have more to do with the exercise of power and authority by those in leadership, internecine conflict can happen on all levels at CCIC, moving from one end of the spectrum – say, a mild disagreement over certain issues – to the other extreme, where congregants find themselves being confronted with a combative discord on ministerial practices, values, and culture. Across the participants, internecine church conflict is a consistent theme. It ranges from personal vendetta (e.g., Abigail's [LA] father's longstanding fight with another elder), to facility arrangement (e.g., Miriam's [HE] complaint about the sound department), and to congregational polemics (e.g. Abigail's [LA] narrative about division between the Mandarin congregation and the others). To many interviewees, conflict is at times portrayed as "drama." Sarah (HE) recounts how "drama" hinders her growth when inter-congregational issues flare up and how her church loses track of its mission. Thaddaeus (SND) speaks about the occurrence of "drama" in addressing the issue of homosexuality that splits the Chinese and the English congregations and how it does not help retain him at the church. Finally, Phoebe (LA) traces the source of such drama to a selected few "longtime members" at her church who were on the deacons board and held onto power and control: "People who have been there for a long time are in power." In her particular instance, the "drama" plays out between the board and the congregation over the key issue of facility renovation, and Phoebe witnesses personally how conflict escalates rapidly from at first merely focusing on the proposition, then on the process of decision making, and finally targeting a person, the senior pastor. Some began to question "whether he was fit to be the senior pastor and so a lot of people left the church." Sadly, her parents were among those who departed permanently for another church.

In addition, such occurrences of "drama" or flashpoints are not limited to inter-congregational operational squabbles, such as Miriam's (HE) example of how to manage the sound equipment. For the cohort of LA specifically, drama happens far too often and manifests itself in different ways. Conflicts can be portrayed so as to paint a picture of teenagers fracturing their church relationship as in Abigail's (LA) narrative, or recounted as a story about the splitting of a congregation as Philip (LA) has witnessed. Yet conflicts can be very harmful when occurring among ministry leaders. Most of the time an effective conflict resolution framework does not exist at CCIC, as Abigail attests: "There was no mechanism to address disagreement or even conflict." These circumstances inevitably lead to the fallout that eventually forced leaders or pastors to leave the church. Experiences such as this have caused Philip "to start questioning about what it is that keeps the church together."

Thus for many LA, growing up in CCIC is rife with the experience of conflict. Though the encounter may not always be one that directly involves CBCC, they are nonetheless harmed even as bystanders. Ruth (LA) recalls at length hearing disgruntled conversations at the dinner table about how the conflict with the church board hurt her uncle and father, such that they were "ostracized" and by extension her extended "family felt much ostracized." The hurt this experience generated has left an indelible scar on her consciousness, so much so that conflict is to be avoided

at all cost, even when it comes to church affiliation. Consequently, in attending a new church and experiencing a refreshing sense of welcome, Ruth characterizes the decision to settle in through the lens of conflict:

> *They were very, very welcoming and open and I think that had an impact on how [it shone] a new light on how my sister and I saw the church, something that wiped away our old impressions of conflict.*

And when asked if she would ever contemplate exiting the church she is attending, Ruth replies with only one possible trigger: "avoiding conflict."

However, the severest conflict participants come to describe focuses on the inter-congregational strife that exists at CCIC, as Miriam (HE) attests: "But most of the head-butting that I see is between the English and all the Chinese ones." This sentiment is also shared by other HE in the Stay-On cohort, emerging not as a factor for causing lesser affiliation, but as an acknowledgment of issues to be ironed out. For example, Naomi (HE) sympathizes with the harmony in the Chinese cultural setting of CCIC: "I value … the Chinese culture [because it] is very community minded." Sarah (HE) resonates the same feeling: "But I really, really treasure our multicultural, multi-language church." But such a sentiment is never entertained by LA. Mary (LA), for example, pins the inter-congregational clashes on the cultural bias that favours the seniority of the first-generational Chinese congregants and leaders in treating the local-born as inferior:

> *Chinese people are still like Chinese people ... You have to do things a certain way [to comply]. And the Chinese congregation will always judge what the English congregation is doing. Put limits on them. But, you know, on the outside they're like, "You know, we really support you."*

Similarly, Abigail (LA) is concise and frank in describing the deep divide that exists within the bilingual, tri-congregational setting of her church: "The Mandarin and the Cantonese congregations are in fighting mode." She further remarks:

> *They are in a state where they don't even want to fight anymore, so the Cantonese are proposing to leave just [by] themselves. This is a very interesting situation. So the Cantonese want to leave, they don't want to take a single penny with them. Their whole congregation wants to leave, they voted already as a group as a language group. They don't want to take the English with them, and they don't want to take the Mandarin with them, so we're in that state right now.*

The dispute between these two Chinese congregations inevitably spilled over to the English congregation in such a way that the board is rendered "dysfunctional" in leading the church, providing no clear resolution. Thus CBCC feel rudderless most of the time.

Bartholomew (LA) argues that the source of conflict in CCIC lies with the different ministerial philosophies of the English and the Chinese congregations. The English congregation desires to be more inclusive, integrating a vision beyond simply retaining CBCC of their generation. This vision and ministerial approach are designed to allow more autonomy to the English congregation "to entice [higher participation] and to accommodate" their needs. In addition, the non-Chinese attending CCIC would feel more welcomed if control were being relinquished by the immigrant

generation so that the more open-minded English congregation could embrace their involvement. Yet the vision and practice of the Chinese congregation, according to Bartholomew, focuses on "the majority of the members, which is not extended to the English ministry." Their ministry orientation tends to be program-centric and it "will be [run] for a long time" without changes being made. This orientation is "reactive," not truly knowing "where the church is going." The conflict has been taking a personal toll on Bartholomew because to him, such a ministry ethos is considered "harmful" to the church and hinders his growth. In seriously contemplating leaving the church, Bartholomew remarks: "I want to be involved with something meaningful and not fighting with the Chinese congregation on things that are just cultural. It is just not worth it."

Finally, Phoebe (LA) shares a similar sentiment with Bartholomew: CCIC culture and value have stifled the growth of CBCC, especially their penchant for playing it "safe," which is reflected in the ministerial philosophy of the Chinese congregations. With a "safe" or risk averse mentality, Chinese congregations tend to be resistant to innovation and not "open to new ideas," while the English congregation has a passion to be adventurous and inclusive. Phoebe (LA) surmises that the Chinese congregation "wouldn't feel comfortable if people who look really different came in and they are kind of wary of people that are different." The discomfort may not be limited to ethnicity but extends to social-economic considerations:

> *Like people who don't belong to the middle-class then I feel they wouldn't be as easily welcomed by the Chinese side. Or they don't want somebody to come off from the streets for example; if they look not as clean, they wouldn't want them.*

This modus operandi is deeply rooted in the Chinese congregational ethos and difficult to break because there are "people who have been in the church for a long time like they have the most power. They keep it how it is." Phoebe further suggests that the root of the problem, which might explain to a large extent the cultural conflict between the Chinese and the English congregations, lies with the values the Chinese congregation has long held: success-oriented, performance-centric, and results-driven. She concludes:

> *I think because a lot of Asians have worked really hard to get to where they are, they pride their hard work and then they see other people who are not doing as well as they are. They are kind of like, "Why aren't you working harder?"*

Summary

Toxic culture and unhealthy communities stifle the growth of CBCC and thwart their aspirations. Frustrated with a lack of progress in changing the CCIC culture and given no opportunities to be key actors in that exercise, many LA have seriously contemplated or taken action in leaving CCIC where they have either grown up in or been associated with for years. The eSurvey analysis does point to CCIC as healthy church communities, as the examination of individual dimensions such as nurturing, CCIC playing politics, ethnicity being too strong, irrelevant teaching, and hypocrisy has shown, with an expected correlation between faith affiliation in such dimensions (i.e., higher favorable sentiment is found in cohorts with higher engagement whereas higher unfavorable sentiment has surfaced in groups with higher disaffiliation). The interview participants' experience, however, is not consistent with the eSurvey analysis, with the exception of the responses on ethnicity being too strong and experience of conflicts at

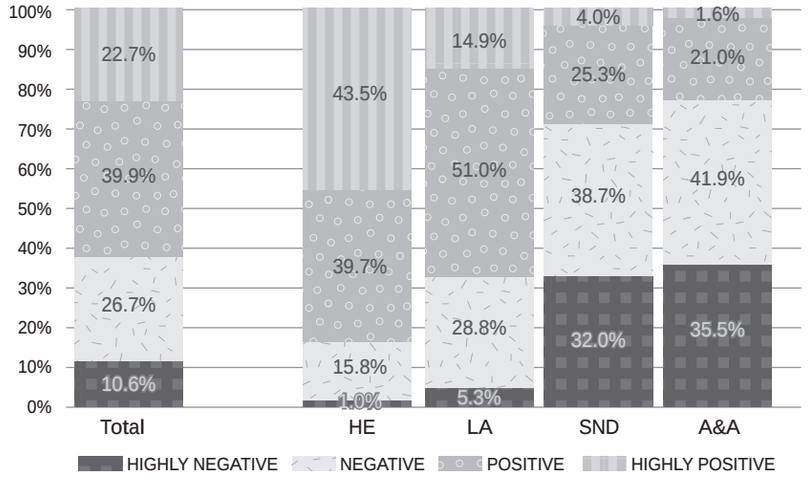
CCIC. Many participants, especially those in the LA cohort, have responded that their CCIC leaders are too "political," incapable of delivering timely and relevant teachings and the church is rife with internecine conflict with hypocrisy surfacing on many fronts. Their experience is consistent with the findings of many studies on the vibrancy, or the lack thereof, of faith communities (Penner et al., 2012a, 2012b; Smith [with Longest], 2009; Thoennes, 2008), particularly in the area of congregational conflict (Mammana-Lupo et al., 2014), hypocritical and closed-mindedness communities (Bowen, 2010; Thiessen, 2015), irrelevant teaching (Penner et al., 2012b), and problems with shallow experience, leadership, and relevance (Francis & Richter, 2007; Kinnaman, 2011).

Life Transitions

Much research highlights transitionary changes that occur through various life stages as an instigator for institutional and faith disengagement with religion for those who grew up in faith traditions (Bowen, 2010; Francis & Richter, 2007; Penner et al., 2012b; Thiessen, 2015). According to the eSurvey questionnaire, the following questions represent most appropriately the life transitional experience the respondents reflected in their faith journeys:

- Q9: My beliefs about God today are different from the ones I was raised with.
- Q34: These days, I am too busy to attend church regularly.
- Q40: At some point in time my church attendance declined because of my lifestyle.
- Q41: At some point in time my church attendance declined significantly due to a geographical move
- Q101: I have felt judged by church members for my lifestyle decisions.

Table 3.19: Life Transitions



The eSurvey analysis suggests that past transitionary experience through different life stages reflects favourably with the respondents, as 63% register a strong to very strong positive experience of transition correlating to their church affiliation (Table 3.19). Further decomposition captures a clearer picture of this experience per the religious types: 83% of HE report a strong to very strong positive experience; 66% of LA indicate similar experience. In contrast, 71% of SND and 77% of A&A report a strong to very strong negative experience respectively.

Consistent with the eSurvey analysis, transition impact as an adverse influence is clearly evinced in the Drop-Out participants. Yet it is very muted in the narrative of the Stay-On cohort. While most of the A&A interviewees discuss in particular other triggers that precipitate their abandonment of belief in God when they grew up, transitions through life different stages is a salient and detectable theme that presents itself as a major variable impacting the faith journeys of SND according to their discourses. Caught betwixt and

between high school to university and from university to a career, the SND participants have found themselves facing unprecedented uncertainty in their life and faith in the context of changing locales and life priorities; negotiating an identity that is malleable; forging new, or reconstructing old, relationships with various faith communities; and facing overwhelming academic demands and daunting expectations to adjust and to excel both in school and a career. Though many in the HE and LA cohorts share similar experience, life transitions are particularly adversarial in its impact on SND in dislodging affiliation with the church. The most clearly expressed reason for not attending church by SND is changing life priorities, as illustrated by Esther when she remarks: "I think because my life is now so different and so busy, I haven't made it a priority. And I haven't … found the time to [return to church]." From the discourse of SND, there are multiple contributing factors behind the changing priorities of this cohort. This study identifies the following triggers under the broad determinant of life transitions: the natural process of growing up, career adjustment, absence of connectedness, and church relocation as a cost-benefit factor for attendance. The following section examines the natural process of growing up and how it affects the SND cohort.

A. Natural process of growing up

As teenagers and young adults traverse from one terrain to another in the growing up process and transitionary journeys, they undoubtedly face multiple challenges. The experience of transition can be portrayed as what Ammerman (1999) characterizes to be the twin characteristics of "mobility and choices" in postmodernity: "People don't stay in one place for a lifetime, and they think of religion as something to be chosen" (p. 1). CBCC are no exception. As far as exercising self-determination for faith ownership, positively or negatively, life stage transitions present them with the opportunity to break away from their parents' influence and negotiate a path of their own. This could occur in the transition from high school to university as Thomas (SND) attests in his eagerness to test the waters:

> *I know people [in] the Christian community always talk about, "Oh, when you go to the university, you can't drink. You can't party. You can't do all this stuff." And I went out and had fun with my friends. I didn't get into trouble. I just did what, you know, the norm was at the time.*

A similar predicament can also manifest itself in the transition from college to career. Deborah (SND) recalls her experience vividly: "I see my faith changing considerably after I finished university and started working and I became a little bit more independent. Although I was still living at home I had a little bit more freedom as an adult." And once she moved out, Deborah moved away from church attendance, albeit gradually:

> *Yeah, it was gradual. And I think [what had] changed was when I moved out, I wasn't living under my parents anymore. So it became solely up to me whether I went [to church] or not and I think that was the time when I stopped going more often.*

For those who move from high school into university, college experience in general can be perceived as a milestone that marks their coming of age. It represents a point in time at which CBCC begin to assert a life of autonomy and independence as an engagement with the natural process of growing up, making decisions on their own without necessarily leaning on parental assistance. In addition, university campuses, as characterized by President Obama (2016) in his speech at Howard University Commencement Ceremony,

are places full of many conflicting and yet enticing ideas as well as people who express them in forceful manners. As such, institutions of higher education are venues that can expose CBCC to pluralistic thinking, intellectual stimulation, liberal sexual practices, and a diverse religious presence (Freitas, 2008; Hui et al., 2015; Gilliat-Ray, 2000; Small, 2011). Furthermore, their religious socialization process is likely to be changed if they attend a university that is not in their hometown, suffering from a sense of loss of intimate social and religious connections that they once cherished in faith communities at home. While social media offers a level of connectivity, the feeling of detachment is palpable. Compounded by a liberal lifestyle prevalent on college campuses and academic pressure that has increased markedly from their high-school experience, university Christians are likely to re-prioritize their religious involvement, especially when venues of such engagement become less accessible either on or off campus.

For those CBCC who have been intentionally prepared for such a transition, their churches have played a great part in mapping out the landscape in advance. John (HE) recounts the preparation:

> *When we were in Grade 12 and about to go into university, current university students will come and share their thoughts, share their struggles when they are in the university. They share what things might happen ... And they talked about both [success and failures].*

Yet many CBCC are ill-equipped when confronted with a pluralistic ethos that is celebrated in the university setting. Faced with a variety of options in terms of intellectual pursuit and lifestyles as well as the presence of faith organizations of various religions on campus, these freshmen typically experience "life as a café": you can cherry-pick what you think or feel to be your choice of faith or belief systems. Christians with curiosity to explore other traditions or being exposed to different ideas may choose to dabble with various groups or agencies. Armed with the normative perception that "everything goes" once entering university, many are threatened by secular forces and at the same time enticed by sexual liberalism as well as pleasure-loving social practices such as "clubbing" and "pubbing" (i.e., going from one club to another, or one pub to another). Under such circumstances, charting a course that remains faithful to Christian values and convictions is unquestionably daunting and extraordinarily challenging. To maintain their sense of spiritual bearing, some participants stay actively engaged with the social network of their own faith and ethnicity on campus (e.g., Chinese or Asian Christian Fellowship), expressing a high degree of homophily of spiritual and cultural matching (Sepulavdo et al., 2015, p. 835). However, as a general phenomenon, academic pressure and life orientation changes among many CBCC moving for university to towns or cities far from their home town shift commitments and priorities in such a way that church-going is no longer critical for them, as Joshua (A&A) confesses:

> *One of the reasons [for not attending church services] was not adequate time commitment and different priorities. I just had different priorities. [And] I think my priorities really changed. I rather go to theater and then maybe I would rather study a little bit [than attending church activities].*

For those being enticed by the desire to try out the café experience as a way of expressing their coming of age and breaking away from the "bubble," a term many participants used to characterize the growing up experience under parental and church tutelage that is

protective and untested when it comes to entertaining the veracity of different ideas, CBCC perceive this attempt to be an acceptable social norm that many have chosen to practise when entering university. For example Judah (A&A) remarks: "Well, I mean typically when you're going to university you stop going [to church] and that's what happened to me. I lost when I went to university also a lot of my friends [because we] went out of town." He goes on to explain the genesis of this notion: "There's just this general expectation [by the church and parents] that people will fall away [when attending university;] and I fell away [as well]." On the other hand, Jacob (A&A) is fascinated by different viewpoints expressed by "people I respected like professors and the classmates I think who are really smart." Consequently, doubt about faith has seeped in and he begins "to ask questions but I didn't feel like I ever got satisfactory answers [from Christians or the church]." Furthermore, there are CBCC like Moses (A&A) who, once enrolled in university, actively sought ways to disclaim the veracity of the Christian faith and was drawn to non-Christian materials to satisfy his intellectual curiosity by following debates on the Internet between atheists and theologians. He speaks somewhat enthusiastically: "One of the biggest debates is between Ken Ham and Bill Nye. That was one of the strongest [debates, containing evidence] that really solidified my decision to leave the church." Yet others such as Luke (A&A), who were under similar pluralistic influences, have taken a slow and winding path to come to question their faith. Luke reminisces:

> *So after around 2nd or 3rd year university, that's when I started questioning the truth of the Bible, I also started this journey of finding the truth. I started researching, you know, both philosophical arguments and moral arguments and scientific – so the whole gamut of trying to figure out does God really exist?*

As CBCC enlarge their social network on campus, many have come to befriend those who have different or contrasting faith values, reflecting a cultural or religious distancing from their own (Sepulvado et al, 2015, p. 835). Under such socialization processes, their faith is being tested and their values altered. For example, Eve (SND) recalls:

> *It was in university that I really noticed I would start to get tempted by things that weren't taught at church. So, my friends have expanded to people that weren't Christians and it was then that my eyes were really opened to what the world was.*

Part of the socialization process is to adjust to a way of life that goes against the teachings at CCIC that cast aspersions on the liberal lifestyle marked by partying, drinking, and clubbing. Some, like Thomas (SND), want to engage in larger networks in order to tap into their contacts for career development, and the "most effective way to do that was to go out and party with people." Others pursue it to get a taste of a new lifestyle, as Eve acknowledges: "When I was in university, we'd do a lot [of drinking and 'clubbing'] in the summer." Esther (SND) recounts her experience of "pubbing" and how it impacted her church life in university:

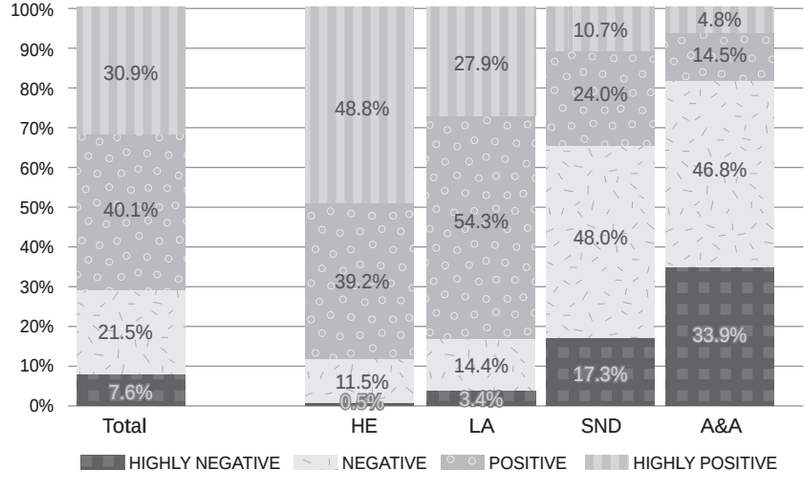
> *And then in the fourth year, I made a lot of new friends, some non-Christian friends ... [And we went out drinking on Saturday night]. And I would have other things to do on the Sundays [i.e. sleeping in]; I would be too hung over to go to church.*

With such enticement toward novel lifestyles, provocative

pluralistic ideas, and expansive social networks, the university setting is unquestionably a fertile ground for the above-mentioned participants to assert life-independence and lead a life of their own choosing as a part of their natural process of growing up. Yet for many interviewees in the SND and A&A cohort, such an experience appears to have led them down a path of disengagement from faith and the spiritual community. This phenomenon is somewhat corroborated by the response to the following eSurvey statement:

Q25: I think the lifestyle demands that churches make are totally unrealistic choices for me.

Table 3.20: Unrealistic Lifestyle Demands



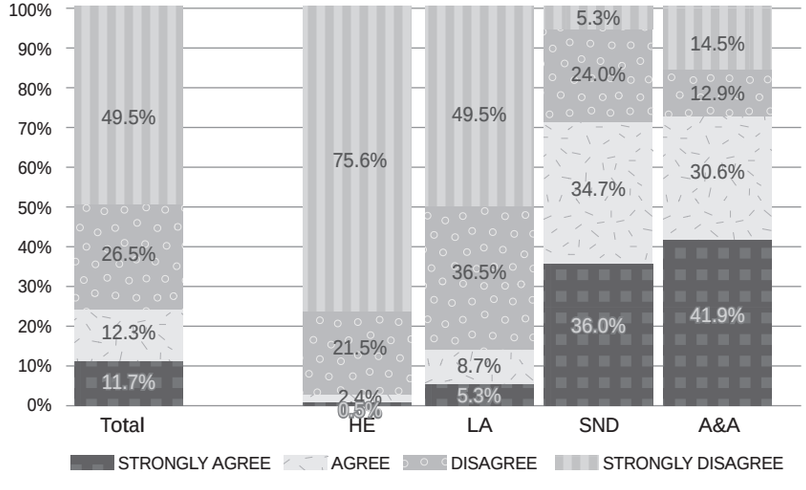
the Stay-On group registers an overwhelmingly strong to very strong level of disagreement (HE: 88%; LA: 82%), whereas the Drop-Out cohort expresses strong to very strong agreement (SND: 65%; A&A: 80%) (Table 3.20). And for SND & A&A who have been subjected to disruptive changes in lifestyle and priorities as part of the growing up and transition process, adherence to conservative lifestyle demands could in fact be deemed unrealistic.

B. Career adjustment

Unlike faith defection in university settings where pluralism, secular lifestyles, and diversity of ideas may overwhelm the unprepared, some SND participants begin their faith disengagement during the transition from university to work life. While many in the Stay-On cohort share the same struggle to maintain a balance between demands of work and faith community engagement (e.g., Mary and Rebekah), the impact on SND seems to be much more severe. Some appear to have been affected by irregular work schedule demands that have kept them away from regular church attendance, while others point to career change and its demands as a reason for disengagement. The experience of the SND participants is consistent with the eSurvey result in this cohort. When asked:

Q34: These days, I am too busy to attend church regularly.

Table 3.21: Too Busy to Attend Church

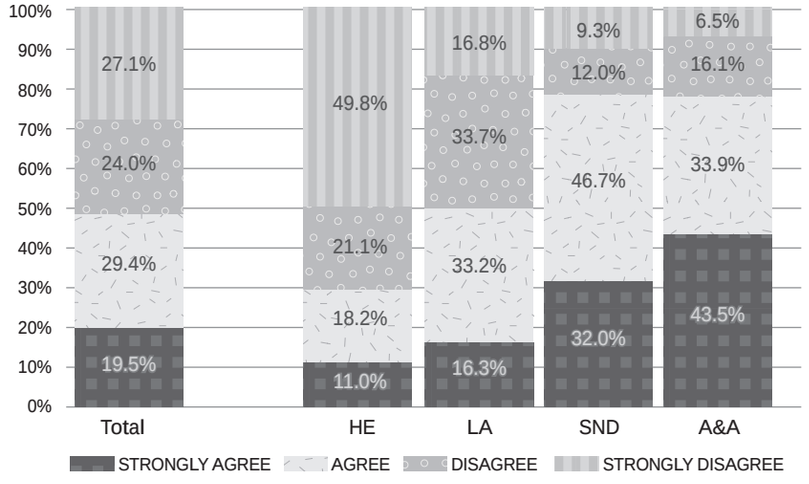


over 70% of SND are in strong to very strong agreement, slightly lower than A&A (72%), whereas 86% of LA and 97% of HE are in strong to very strong disagreement (Table 3.21). Apart from being

busy as a reason for not attending church, responses to the following question imply that change in lifestyle is a key determinant for church disaffiliation.

Q40: At some point in time my church attendance declined because of my lifestyle.

Table 3.22: Decline in Church Attendance due to Lifestyle Changes



Over 78% of the SND respond with strong to very strong agreement, by far the highest of all four (A&A: 77%; LA: 49%; and HE: 29%), suggesting that lifestyle change is a strong contributing factor for the Drop-Out to disengage themselves from church attendance (Table 3.22).

Yet examined at a deeper level, issues related to shame, guilt, and a spirituality that focuses more on performance than Christian values of forgiveness, grace, and gratitude begin to emerge. Eve (SND), for example, works in the medical field, and shift work is part of her regular schedule. Consequently, consistent attendance at Sunday service is impossible and guilt begins to develop. She explains:

> *I have to work on certain Sundays, [and even when that is not the case] Sundays are my only day off ... and I just don't want to wake up for [the service]. It's either I feel terrible or laziness for me.*

With such a habit of absenteeism developed over time, Eve simply stops being engaged with church altogether: "I just don't care to go to church anymore."

For Mark (SND), after a two-year stint with overseas missions, he was daunted by the reality upon returning to Canada that he was behind on the path of upward mobility in comparison with his peers. When an opportunity to start a small business with a few high school non-Christian friends presented itself, he dived in and has been totally "consumed by my business [because] I … want to succeed." Part of the drive for success requires him to devote his time and energy to the business on Sunday, which eventually prohibits him from regular worship attendance. He rationalizes his decision this way:

> *I have no thought about God [during the] entire week. I was just so wrapped up in doing my business and getting that set up, in getting that ready, [and] I thought I did nothing [spiritual] actually this whole week. So I'm not gonna say business killed my faith, [but] it was just for me that was my focus.*

This experience has found him in a quandary between choosing faith and business success:

> *For me right now the reason that I am stopping myself from going to church is because I am stuck. I feel like God is not my first [priority] so therefore he can't be anything*

at all ... I know what I'm saying right now about God and about religion is completely wrong.

This sense of shame stems from the belief that if "Jesus is not the Lord of all, he is not the Lord at all," a prevalent teaching he was raised with at his church. For Mark, this belief demands a performance-centric ifestyle such that if he cannot meet the high bar of treating Jesus as the Lord of everything in his life, then Jesus has no place in his life at all.

In the same vein of devotion to establishing a career, Thaddaeus (SND) echoes a similar experience as a budding IT professional, working at his father's company. Wanting to prove himself a trustworthy employee and to avoid being viewed as the beneficiary of nepotism, Thaddaeus responds to arduous work demands in supporting customer services by "working for sure between 60 and 70 hours a week and Sunday was part of it". Another motivation for strong work engagement is that he wants to:

Make my own mark rather than to live in my father's shadow. So working on Sunday was part of it and if it wasn't working on Sunday. I would be working on Saturday night until 2 or 3 in the morning or later.

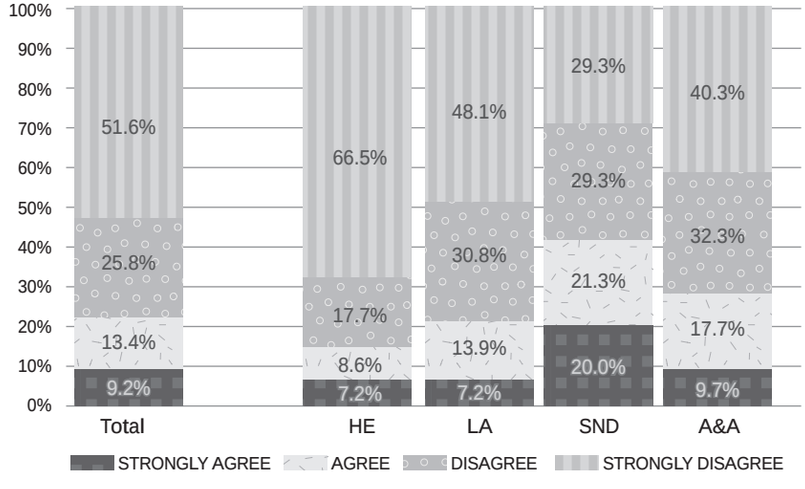
Church attendance, as a result, has been relegated to a much lesser priority.

C. (Re)Location of home church as a cost-benefit factor

As discussed previously, Ammerman (1999) observes that for postmodernists, two characteristics stand out in describing their engagement with faith: mobility and choice (p. 1). For some CBCC, mobility is ironically not a choice. As a result of enrolling in universities that are outside of their hometown and re-settlement back to their hometown or living elsewhere due to career demands, they need to relocate. Yet for some SND, moving highlights how geographical displacement even within their own town creates a disruption on their engagement with the faith community that they grew up with, one that eventually factors into their decision to discontinue church attendance, as Rainer and Rainer III attest (2008, p. 73). This experience of the SND participants is consistent with the eSurvey result in this cohort. When asked:

Q41: At some point in time my church attendance declined significantly due to a geographical move.

T able 3.23: Decline in Church Attendance due to Geographical move



over 41% of SND respond with strong to very strong agreement, the highest of all four (A&A: 27%; LA: 21%; and HE: 15%) (Table 3.23), indicating that geographical disruption of either the church or home is likely a more significant correlating factor for the SND cohort disaffiliation than for the others.

For instance, to Thaddaeus (SND), his family's relocation further out to the suburbs makes an already long commute into town to attend church even longer:

> *It was tough at that time that the church was always relatively far away from me when my family moved out to Thompson which is east of the town and it takes about 45 minutes for driving to church on a Sunday.*

To Lois (SND), however, it is quite the opposite yet with the same outcome. Her church moved from downtown to the suburbs in her university years. For Lois, who lived and studied downtown at the time, commuting to a suburb to connect with the faith community required time and efforts that were not enticing. Compounded with other changes in life priorities as she entered the workforce, her engagement has further declined:

> *I remember around university or shortly after finishing university ... there was a lot of change in the sense where the church was moving, university became busy for me, and when university ended, I started working. So those five, six years, it's very hazy. I just know that when I started university, the church was still downtown, by the time I finished university and started working the church had moved to Townsville and it was much farther away and not easy to get to.*

Yet for others, the situation is reversed. Many have to move further away from their home church either because of work engagement or for other reasons. For example, Eve (SND) moved downtown in order to commit to a shift-work schedule as a first responder. Her relocation led to a disruption of regular church attendance as she states matter-of-factly: "when I came downtown three years ago, [yes] I stopped going to church regularly." Esther (SND) shares a similar experience. Once she graduated from university and moved back to her hometown, she no longer stayed with her family in the suburbs, and relocated downtown to be closer to her office. And with the move, she stopped church attendance: "So when I moved downtown, that's when I stopped going [to church] altogether."

Collectively, these participants suggest that the costs and benefits do not add up for them to continue an ongoing engagement with the same faith communities once geographical displacement has come into the consideration. However, this begs the question as to why they would not engage with other faith institutions that are closer to their locale or in their neighbourhood. The answer lies in part with a deeper issue of life transitions that deals with disruption of the spiritual and social connectedness that this cohort had previously built, either with their home church, or with the spiritual circle while in university. This issue is examined in more detail in the next section.

D. Absence of spiritual connectedness

Religious social networks and intimate relationships are not formed overnight; they take time to shape and evolve. Once they are fractured, for whatever reason, they cannot be easily replaced and reconstructed either elsewhere or within the same community. Consequently, a sense of disconnectedness looms large for those who are affected, which triggers community and faith disengagement, as Martha (SND) attests after a broken relationship with one of her best friends at CCIC occurred and reconciliation did not materialize: "I left my church because I didn't feel like people were embracing me [anymore]." As for many participants who cease to attend their home church due to geographical displacement of either their church

(e.g., Lois [SND]) or their own residence (e.g., Thaddaeus [SND]), genuine attempts have been made to fabricate a new linkage with faith communities nearby. A steady attendance, however, is not established. Esther (SND) attests to this experience:

> *I have tried going to a few [other churches] about two, three years ago. One of my friends from Yale who was in that fellowship [group] moved downtown and he would go to this one church. So sometimes I would go with him. But that was maybe just once every two or three months.*

Eve (SND) echoes: "I've been to other churches, right? It's not like I haven't been, it's just [that I] don't care to go to church anymore."

For these participants, a major contributing factor for the failure to engage with these new faith communities lies with the participants' inability to create the necessary stickiness and reconstruct similar satisfactory connectedness they once enjoyed at their home faith communities. This is certainly the desire of Eve (SND) but to no avail. And for Thaddaeus (SND), he finds this experience to be a chicken-and-egg conundrum: he needs to be part of a community to feel he belongs and yet he has to first participate to engender that same sense of belonging. He characterizes this paradox after worship hopping at different churches around his new locale:

> *In every case it became very clear to me after about 3 or 4 or 5 weeks that it was very easy to be disconnected from everything that is happening in the church without really going all in. I am going to join a couple of small groups or attend Sunday School on top of Sunday services, and it was like chicken-and-egg where I am not really comfortable at the church because I don't really feel part of the community. And you are not really part of the community because you are not participating in [it].*

Eunice (SND) experiences the same outcome but arrives at it from a different perspective: an inability to recreate spiritual intimacy due to life transitions. Eunice recounts her growth in faith during her university years and attributes it in no small part to her housemates, reflecting how peers as a determinant shape young adults' faith (Barry & Christofferson, 2014). Cocooned in a small circle at her residence, Eunice and her soul-mates created a sanctuary where accountability and prayer were mutually supported and upheld. She recalls the intimacy with fondness:

> *The four of us lived together and we would have weekly accountability and prayer meetings. And there was one year when all of us served on committee together. So we're very close and we're able to share each other's burdens and problems. So I think that continued fellowship and closeness just increased my faith a lot.*

Yet the spiritual intimacy Eunice experienced on campus did not prepare her well for transitioning to a life after school. Upon re-entering into the former faith community in her hometown, Eunice discovered that it was impossible to recreate the same level of intensity of spiritual high. She feels disengaged for two reasons. On the one hand, relationships with former friends at church need to be restructured after a few years being away. Many former acquaintances have either moved to other cities due to career commitments, or became distant as a result of being physically separated for a few years. According to Eunice, "it was hard reconnecting with the friends I had back at church." On the other hand, her former university soul-mates are dispersed and no long physically around to continue to exercise mutual accountability.

Daunted by the prospect of having to re-establish or intentionally cultivate deep relationships that would require years to construct, Eunice feels lost and has began to drift away from the church where she once was so involved: “So that’s another reason I stopped going because I didn’t want to go. I knew my heart wasn’t really in it.”

While life transitionary disruption has created a significant impact on how the participants drift away from faith, many point to two other concerns apart from a mere cost-and-effect consideration in efforts and inconvenience in church attendance. The first is linked to what these participants portray as a sense of inadequacy rooted in a performance-driven religious observance, rather than an identity-based spirituality: one that upholds subscription to a standard of religious behaviours or practices that defines a "good Christian". Eunice (SND) is a clear example of this kind of spirituality:

> *Right now, I still believe in God. I still believe in Jesus but I would say I’m not living my life in any way that acknowledges God. So I wouldn’t call myself a Christian just because I don’t acknowledge God in my life [and] I don’t live as if God is my God.*

Eve (SND) shares the same conviction and no longer characterizes herself as a good Christian:

> *I don’t necessarily do a lot of the things that a good Christian would do. Go to church, do Bible study, have prayer meetings, and all of that stuff that I thought was what it meant to be a Christian when I was younger. I felt [that] you did these things and that’s what made you a Christian.*

This twisted logic – you have to do certain things to qualify as a good Christian, and since you are not a good Christian, then you are no longer a legitimate member of a church – justifies her stance and allows Eve to escape the possible sense of guilt and shame that she is no longer a member in good standing of the faith community she used to belong to. Similarly, in pursuing a lifestyle that focuses on success in operating a small business, Mark (SND) shares the same mindset that he is not able to prioritize his faith above anything else, including his career. Consequently, he feels he has fallen short of living up to the expectation of treating God as his utmost “first”:

> *I’m still stuck in a workspace mentality ... because God is not my first and for me to say that if God is not my first [and] you can’t do anything, that [means] I’m totally, totally forgetting the entire history of how God is gracious or how God forgives and all that.*

In the absence of having a meaningful dialogue with their faith community about grace and forgiveness, these participants resort to rhetoric of failure and shame about how they do not meet the standard or expectations of what they were taught when younger, as Deborah (SND) further attests:

> *I was feeling guilty at times and even now once in a while I [still] feel guilty but I think after a while that feeling goes away and it becomes less and less as you become more used to not going [to church].*

The second area of concern most of these participants have expressed vehemently is a discernible absence of support from their former faith communities when they went astray. For instance,

when asked if the pastors or church leaders contacted her and made inquiry of her withdrawal, Lois (SND) replies stoically with a tone of disappointment: "No." Disgruntled and holding grudges, some participants feel abandoned and betrayed. Deborah (SND) registers resentment for receiving no contact after she ceased attending, despite many years of investment in relationships with congregants. She is flabbergasted: "When I fell away from the church that it really wasn't that big? Not very many people seemed to care about it." For that reason, she summarizes her feeling this way: "I never stop believing in God [or] feeling that I am a Christian. I just have a distaste for the church." Similarly Eunice (SND) is appalled with an identical experience of noncontact from her former church, especially from pastors and other leaders. As a result, a feeling of hurt and betrayal surges in her mind. This experience has started a vicious spiral cycle that further reinforces her backsliding: "I did not go to church and no one contacted me; and because no one contacted me [I no longer went to church]." She recounts her disappointment with sadness:

> *After I hadn't gone for 2 months or more I realized that no one from my church had called up and asked me where I was, or checked up on me and had that accountability or care or concern to inquire if I was okay. And I felt pretty hurt by that. And I think that was a big part of it to me not coming back. I almost wonder if someone had called to check up on me and to encourage me to come back to church ... I would have come back. Because I remember being very hurt and very puzzled as to why my own pastor hadn't [even] checked up on me or at least just given some sort of sign that he cared about my spiritual health.*

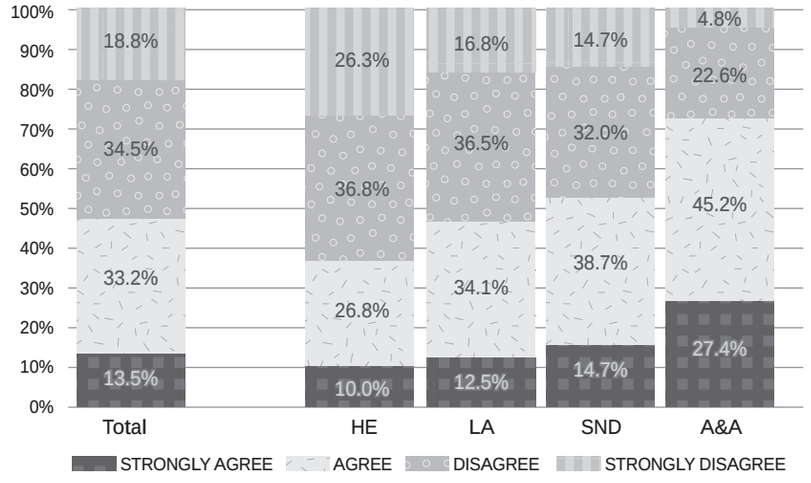
To the extent that leaders have made contact and offered support, sensitivity is not always displayed and no understanding of the participants' career challenges is evident. Eve (SND) speaks profusely of the judgmental attitude of her former church:

> *Another thing that left a sour taste in my mouth is [that] I was one of the first people in the English congregation [who] just started shift work on Sundays and weekends. And in the beginning they made me feel bad for not going to church on Sundays. Or if I had a day off, "why didn't you come to church on Sunday" or if I got off Sunday morning, "why didn't you come to church Sunday morning, you're not working" Well, I was just up for the last fourteen hours, I can't.*

The judgmental attitude on the part of the church community and leaders is not lost on the mind of the Drop-Out eSurvey respondents. The responses to the following question provide some insights into this attitude:

Q101: I have felt judged by church members for my lifestyle decisions.

Table 3.24: Felt Judged for Lifestyle Decision



Both the SND and A&A cohorts register strong to very strong agreement (SND: 53%; A&A: 72% respectively, compared to LA: 46% and HE: 37%) (Table 3.24). As will be explained in the later analysis on sexuality and sexual orientation, A&A identify a different reason for feeling judged in the CCIC community. But the presence of such an attitude is equally palpable in both cohorts.

Summary

Life transitions for many are a complex and intricate experience. Most people need to navigate a landscape that is either new or complex at different stages of their life cycle. Undoubtedly when transitions occur – such as entering a new school, creating new relationships or renewing acquaintances, engaging in untested terrain of new ideas, diverse cultures, and liberal lifestyles for youth and adolescents who were reared in a faith context – these changes can either bring about new hopes, opportunities, and growth for faith affiliation, or their values and faith are deconstructed and reshaped by secular and pluralistic influences. CBCC as a cohort have been further challenged because of their ethnicity and affiliation with CCIC (Wong, 2015), as many in SND have spoken so candidly about their struggle with faith and community engagement in the context of following areas:

Tackling life transitions in the natural process of growing up; adjusting to career demand; facing changes of locale either of their home church or their own residence; and searching for or recreating the spiritual connectedness that was once so familiar and intimate among peers and congregants.

For participants in the SND and A&A cohorts, life transitions serve as one of the factors that leads them to sever affiliation with their ethnic CCIC community, with many expressing a sense of shame and guilt in so doing, and complaining about the lack of pastoral care and support during that process. Such a correlation is exhibited more strongly among SND, and to a lesser degree among A&A, participants, consistent with the eSurvey respondents' sentiment not only on the overall life transitions questions, but also on individual questions on the impact of faith and community affiliation by relocation, lifestyle changes, being too busy to attend church, and unrealistic lifestyle demands. The higher the faith engagement, the more immune they are from these life transitional changes; the lesser the engagement, the lower their religiosity and faith development. In addition, the SND experience is consistent with the findings in recent research (Francis & Richter, 2007; Penner et al., 2015, Rainer & Rainer III, 2008) that life transitions, changing life priorities, and being too busy are highly correlated to the decline of church attendance and faith community engagement. Finally, with the exhibition of shame and guilt, the CBCC's display of such emotion is consistent with the traits of honour and shame imbedded in Asian culture (Tokunaga, 2003; Wu, 2012).

The Conundrum of Romance

Romantic relationships are significant source of identity and spiritual development for emerging young adults as enduring intimacy between romantic partners tends to strengthen their shared values, life aspirations, and faith (Barry & Christofferson, 2014; Barry, Madsen, Nelson, Carroll, & Badger, 2009). As a spiritual venue and an ethnic social hub, CCIC are a natural incubator for such relationships to bud and mature. Furthermore, the university campus is also an open and fertile ground for a strong socialization engagement that can lead to romantic relationships (Freitas, 2008). A healthy romantic engagement often leads to an abiding commitment that lasts a lifetime, whereas a romantic breakup may lead to a disruption of identity, rage, and emotional upheaval (Barber, 2016; Fisher, 2016). Such a tumultuous experience can, in fact, lead to the jostling of one's religious conviction and commitment, complaining to or blaming God for not letting the romantic relationship come to maturity.

For this study, there is no specific question(s) from the eSurvey instrument that can be identified to gauge the correlation between the strength of romantic relationship and strength of faith. However, from the perspective of the interviewees, another contributing factor leading some CBCC to sever church affiliation is the somewhat subtle experience of romantic relationship and its fracture that have significantly impacted their ongoing affiliation with CCIC. Across the religious types, three participants from the LA cohort (Abigail, Bartholomew, and Mary) indicate that disruption in a romantic relationship did create scars and traumatic experience along their spiritual journeys. However, support and healing were eventually available, and reconnected them with their faith communities. Yet for many in the SND cohort, broken a romantic relationship or subsequently engaging in a love commitment with either non-church attending or Roman Catholic partners through marriage or cohabitation has become a significant disaffiliation experience. Collectively, romantic relationship demands such a signifcant emotional undertaking, that either its fracture or engagement with non-Christian partners has resulted in shifting the values and the spiritual stance of those involved. For the former, ongoing connection with the faith community where the broken relationship occurred is not necessarily easy for two reasons: the presence of the former romantic partner makes it difficult or awkward to continue community participation, and a sense of failure or shame that generally accompanies the break-up tends to push them away from that venue. For the latter, connection with church may not be advisable, as these participants might be stigmatized with their chosen partner being a non-Christian, a practice that is regarded as a taboo in CCIC. Regardless of the two, the conundrum of such romantic relationships as a determinant to disengage from faith communities looms so large for SND that half of the cohort (Deborah, Esther, Eunice, Lois, and Thaddaeus) attribute negativity toward this particular experience and how it has severed the relationship with their faith institution and altered their faith journeys.

A. Fractured romantic relationships

Thaddaeus (SND) recounts how steady he had been in engaging a female peer in a meaningful relationship at his home church over the years. Their relationship had eventually matured to the stage that marriage was discussed. Yet she broke up with him due to a different vocational calling as a missionary. The broken relationship dealt Thaddaeus a severe blow, causing him to question his church affiliation: "I had been dating somebody at church for a number of years and when things soured between us and we ended things, I

stopped going more because I guess it was just uncomfortable." Not knowing how to address the broken relationship in a way that is mature, and not receiving adequate emotional and spiritual support at the time led him to a slippery slope of shame and avoidance: "[I] was really avoiding this one person because it was awkward and it was uncomfortable and [not to go to church] was an easy solution to just avoid that one person." This experience, compounded by the coincidental move of his family further away from the church, has sealed the deal for his withdrawal from church attendance.

A similar picture is painted by Eunice (SND). Amidst the turmoil of transitions from college to her hometown and struggling to recreate a relationship anchor that might mirror her intimate circle of university years, Eunice sought comfort in a romance with an unbeliever. The relationship led her into a vicious cycle: it reinforced her desire not to attend church even further. Eunice recounts:

> *My faith was already not strong [as] I didn't have desire to go to church. I didn't have desire to rekindle my relationship with God. So, that's why I let myself date someone who wasn't a Christian. And staying in that relationship ... didn't make me go to church even further.*

Yet the relationship, which lasted for two and a half years, was shrouded in secrecy as Eunice did not share this development with her parents, fearing their disapproval: "I also didn't tell my parents about that relationship. So, they didn't know that I was dating anybody." In a void of a meaningful spiritual relationship such as the ones with her former soul-mates, and seeing no viable option to replace the emotional capital that she had now invested in a romantic relationship with a non-Christian boyfriend, Eunice found herself mired in an emotional upheaval: "it was dating that guy and knowing that it was kind of a dead end relationship but not being ready or willing to break up with him."

B. Romantic engagement with non-Christian partners alters life priorities

Pew Research Center (2016) observes that "adults who are currently in religiously mixed marriages are far less religious compared with affiliated adults married to a spouse of the same faith" (p. 11). The conclusion is equally applicable to the SND participants in this study whose romantic relationship with a spouse or a cohabiting partner of a different or no faith has caused them to discard affiliation with their faith communities. For example, while a broken romantic relationship presents itself as a cogent factor in affecting Thaddaeus and Eunice in how they disengage from church attendance, it pushes Esther even further to seek comfort in a cohabitating relationship with a non-Christian partner. Similar to Thaddaeus, Esther was dating a Christian from another church when she was in Grade 11. Because of a different church affiliation, she began to socialize with her boyfriend's circle and to attend his church. Yet when he broke up with her in the third year of university, Esther "just stopped going [to that church] because he was there, right? I think after that, I just simply didn't want to see him." As a safety net, Esther circled back to the church of her youth, only to be confronted with a depressing reality: her prior social network no longer existed as former friends were in schools elsewhere or had moved away. As a result, she "stopped going to my home church." At this juncture, Esther's spiritual journey took a sharp turn. Abandoning a previous engagement in the leadership of the Christian Fellowship on campus in favor of a secular lifestyle, she began to engage with non-Christian school friends in an attempt to find solace in a new social network. Through drinking with a non-Christian classmate Esther began to develop a crush with

him, which eventually led to a cohabitating relationship. This has completely altered her lifestyle and priorities, which requires her to take into consideration her boyfriend's nonspiritual values and secular lifestyle. As a result, church attendance is out of the question. Framing it as a changing life priority, Esther explains her disengagement this way:

> *Because my life is now so different and so busy, I haven't made it a priority. And I haven't found the time to. And we just get busy with lots of other things. We're usually away on the weekends or it has been a backburner thing going back to a church community.*

Regarding finding romance with non-Christian or non-churchgoing partners, Esther is not alone in this cohort. Deborah, for instance, married a non-practicing Roman Catholic. While she does not completely attribute her disenfranchisement with the church to her marriage since she had stopped attending church already when they were dating, their marriage does create an additive effect in moving her further away from church. She postulates whether that relationship has prevented her from engaging in church attendance this way: "Yeah, I think it may have. I wasn't going regularly before I met him because I moved out of my parents' house a couple of years before I met my husband. But it may have been another instigating factor."

Deborah reveals a deeper reason why, at that time, she did not want to attend church, and it is similar to Esther's: a previous broken romantic relationship at her church. When asked if it is a contributing factor for leaving the church, she replies:

> *I think it was. I had dated somebody in the church and I think that contributed to [me] not wanting to go. It [happened] after I came back from Toronto, I still went to Livingwater and I still served and at that time I started dating someone who was new to the church.*

The relationship lasted for six months and when it ended, Deborah felt "betrayed and angry" because, unbeknownst to her, the former boyfriend continued to have an old flame and never came clean about that the ongoing love affair. Yet this whole experience forced Deborah to assess not only the broken relationship but question the legitimacy of the church's teaching on dating only Christian friends since it did not materialize: "I think what happened was obviously [that the relationship] didn't work out and I think I felt betrayed by the person but I also felt betrayed by [church teachings on dating] … I don't know what I was taught." The sense of betrayal led her to be open her dating to outsiders of other faiths, and eventually marrying a non-practicing Catholic husband, whose presence in her life undoubtedly altered her view of church affiliation.

Finally, for Lois, her disengagement with CCIC is not as strongly related to the influence of her husband as the disconnectedness she experienced with her childhood friends. However, her marriage does complicate any thought of potential reengagement. Lois's husband is of Germanic decent and was reared as a Roman Catholic but is non-practicing. She paints the picture of faith in her family this way:

> *He doesn't go to Catholic Church but we both believe in God and we both try to behave like what's considered to be as good Christians, but we don't go to church on Sunday. We haven't found a church that we like. Mind you, we haven't actually taken the time to go look for a church that we like.*

In other words, life priorities as well as complications in choosing the kind of church to attend (i.e., multicultural or CCIC) has become a barrier too great to overcome for Lois to reengage her connection to a faith community.

Summary

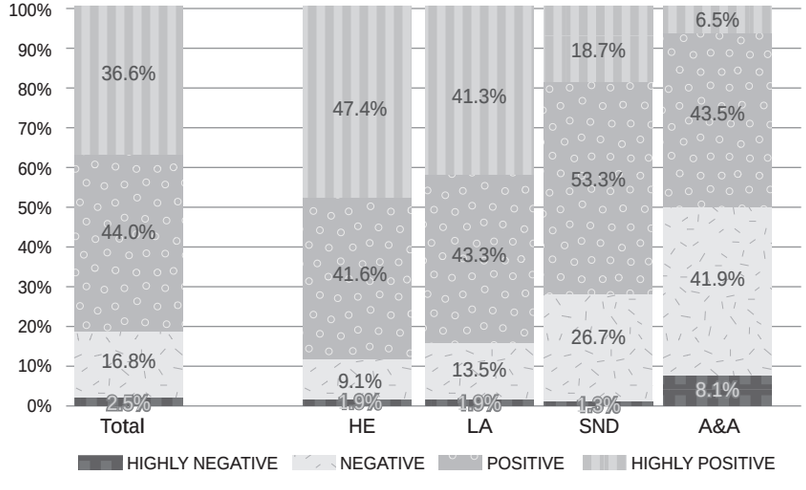
In short, the conundrum of romance in terms of broken relationships and engagements with non-Christians and/or non-church going spouses or partners plays a significant role in shaping the decision of many SND participants in their disengagement or potential re-engagement with faith communities. Our finding in this study is consistent with Barber (2016) and Fisher (2016) about broken relationships and with Freitas (2008) about yearning for "hooking up."

Rising Intellectual Complexity

Studies suggest that former faith adherents forsake belief in God's existence for a variety of reasons. Key among them is the perceived inconsistency between theistic belief and logical thinking that is based on scientific and empirical reasoning (Baker & Smith, 2015; Francis & Richter, 2007; Kinnaman, 2011; Thiessen, 2015). The abandonment of faith conviction on the ground that it is illogical is developed through a gradual process, as apostates tend to develop doubt and a level of cerebral complexity to challenge their faith over time (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1997; Caplovitz & Sherrow, 1977; Galen, 2014; Hunsberger et al., 1996; Hunsberger & Brown, 1984; Hunsberger et al., 2002). While there is no specific one-to-one relationship between the questions in the eSurvey that correspond to the rising intellectual complexity that confronts local-born interview participants, the answer to the following questions provides the best clue to understand how the respondents portray the CCIC's teaching on intellectual and social issues such as science and social justice, and how CBCC perceive "tough topics" as a measure of how CCIC tackle the increasing intellectualism many, especially A&A, have faced in their faith journeys:

- Q68: Irrelevant teaching.
- Q75: Does not support social justice.
- Q77: Solid teaching.
- Q88: In my experience, church sermons don't help me live a meaningful life.
- Q97: In my experience, the church addresses tough topics in its sermons.
- Q99: In my experience, church is a place where people grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.

Table 3.25: CCIC Teachings on Social and Intellectual Issues



The eSurvey inquiry suggests that most respondents register positive past experience with the CCIC's teachings on social and

intellectual issues (Table 3.25): almost 81% of them register strong to very strong positive response. Further breakdown based on the religious types provides an even sharper picture of this experience, with 89% of HE, 84% of LA, and 72% of SND reporting strong to very strong positive experience respectively. In contrast, 50% of the A&A group register strong to very strong negative experience. For the eSurvey respondents, therefore, CCIC's teachings are likely not a centrifugal factor for HE, LA, and SND to disengage from their faith and church. However, it is an influential factor leading A&A to abandon theistic belief. As will be explained in this section, the A&A interviewees identify rising intellectual complexity as a key factor for faith defection, and complain that CCIC teachings have not been hitting the mark. When teachings are delivered, they are considered inadequate, untimely, and irrelevant, a theme consistent with the eSurvey analysis for A&A.

Many of the A&A participants grew up as typical local-born Christians, being corralled to church as a religious routine celebrated and practiced by their parents. Some in the A&A group did take ownership of faith in their teenage years and exhibited strong adherence to Christian belief and spiritual disciplines such as devotional exercise and involvement in congregational ministry. For example, Luke (A&A) recalls his experience this way: "Yeah, I was fairly regular with my morning devotions, started reading the Bible and praying; it was several times a week." Furthermore, many A&A exerted themselves in ministry by taking up leadership roles in youth fellowship groups (e.g., a counsellor in middle school), worship team, and in Chinese or Asian Christian Fellowship on campus during college years (e.g., Jacob and Luke). They attended short-term mission trips and Teens Conference, an annual gathering for high-schoolers that takes place during the spring reading week in Toronto (e.g., Moses). And in the case of Luke, he even responded to an altar call to devote his life to God and was filled with tears as an emotional expression to the call. At the same time, this cohort is also subjected to non-religious influences. Secularism, which has dominated the Western culture in the last many decades, promotes a pluralistic agenda in the cultural milieu that has permeated, among other things, academic curricula and social media. Evolution, religious diversity, moral relativism, anti-traditional sexual orientation, anti-establishment, and anti-authority hermeneutics are but a few examples of teachings and influences that the participants and respondents of this study have been imbued with in the growing up process (Wong, 2016). In spite of the seemingly positive religious influence in their upbringing by CCIC, for reasons to be explored later in this section, CBCC in the A&A cohort have chosen to reject their belief in God, as Isaac (A&A) expresses: "I think what ultimately caused me to stop going [to church] and not be a Christian anymore was just the fact that I couldn't believe it personally. [Because] … intellectually, it [faith] doesn't make sense." Six of the eight participants in the A&A cohort offer telling accounts, citing unbelief as the reason for leaving faith and church community (Elizabeth, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Luke, and Moses).

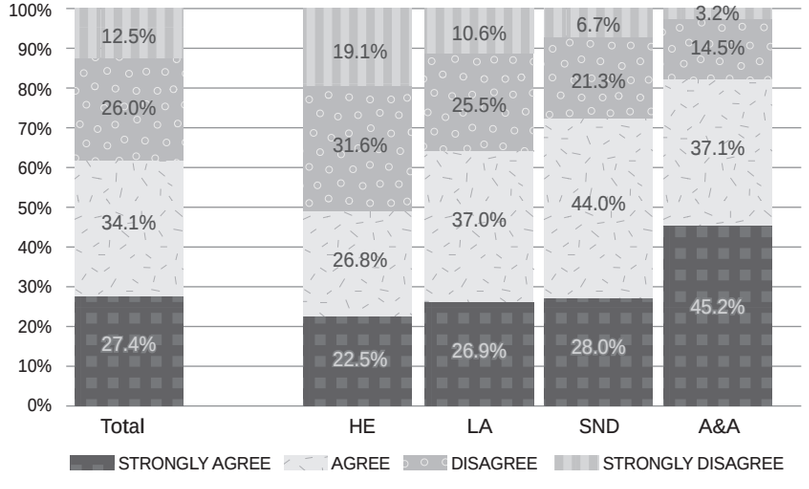
A. Science and faith: a zero-sum game

According to recent studies, there is a prevalent perception among young Christians in North America that Christianity is in opposition to modern science, and that church as a faith institution is collectively anti-science and therefore intellectually backward (Kenneson, 2015, p. 9; Kinnamen, 2011, p. 131). Meanwhile, many atheists place high significance on "institutional science and are engaged in the mythologized 'war between science and religion' to frame their understanding of the world and their experience"

(Baker & Smith, 2015, p. 204). For CBCC who have been educated in a secular curriculum with an emphasis on science and evolution, their beliefs about God may well be influenced by the empirical and logical analytics. To the eSurvey respondents, the answer to the following question represents a composite picture of how they have traversed this journey:

Q9: My beliefs about God today are different from the ones I was raised with.

Table 3.26: Beliefs being different from those when young

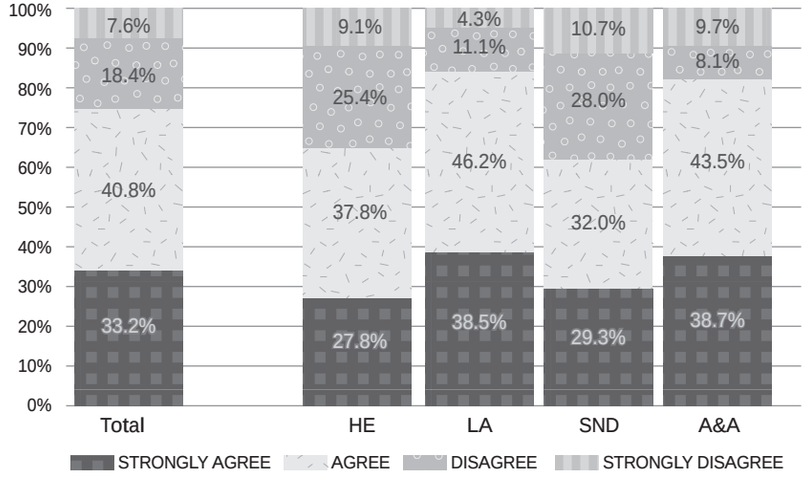


The analysis of the eSurvey results indicates that 61% of the respondents reply that their beliefs about God are different from the ones that they were raised with (Table 3.26). Further deciphering, based on the religious types, takes a deeper dive into the response: About 51% of HE report strong to very strong disagreement. However, the trend reverses in the opposite direction for the other cohorts: 64% of LA and 72% of SND report strong to very strong agreement. Finally, over 82% of A&A register strong to very strong agreement that their beliefs about God have changed from those with which they were raised. Though the answer to this question does not provide clarity on the direction in which the shift has occurred, positive or negative, an inference could be drawn that by the nature of the HE cohort, the disagreement they register points to steady growth of their faith without much change in their beliefs about God, whereas for the other three cohorts, the shift points to an increasing attitude of faith disengagement, with the A&A respondents registering the highest degree of separation.

As discussed earlier, one of the key influences that may dislodge the CBCC belief system is exposure to secular ideas as well as scientific thinking that counter the theistic convictions they were raised with. The eSurvey response to the following question sheds light on how exposure to new ideas at school has impacted the respondents:

Q43: School exposed me to new ideas that challenged my faith.

Table 3.27: School Exposed Me to New Ideas that Challenged My Faith



On the surface, the overall response indicates that about 74% agree

with the notion that the respondents' faith has been challenged by new ideas they were exposed to in school (Table 3.27). Yet the effect of such exposure in school is found to be more salient in the LA and A&A cohorts (84% and 82% respectively), compared to HE and SND (65% and 61% respectively). Yet unlike the LA interview participants, who do not indicate that these issues have caused them to be less engaged with their CCIC, the A&A participants are vocal about how such challenges may well be a contributing factor in dislodging the faith that they were brought up with at CCIC. The following analysis of the A&A interviewees points to a theme of faith abandonment that is consistent with eSurvey analysis of their respondents counterpart, as participants in the other cohorts are mute on the subject.

A few forces have conflated to lead this cohort of A&A down a path of deconversion, and much has to do with viewing science and faith as a zero-sum game: the higher the credibility ascribed to science, the lesser to faith, and vice versa. These interviewees exhibit the characteristics of being subscribers to "scientism", a view that advocates science replacing faith in a manner that is "forcefully defended with the same dogma and zeal as religion" (Brewster, 2014, p. 6). In so doing, their disposition tends to adopt the tenets of modernism, embracing empirically-based reason as opposed to the post-modernist stance of their Millennial counterparts. Instead of pursuing feeling-based postmodern understandings of reality, those ascribing to scientism favour analytically based self-interpretation of reality (Smith, J., 2006). Joseph, for example, typifies the anti-faith mindset: "I no longer believe the Bible stories to be true because scientifically I could not imagine them to be believable … [for this reason] my faith began to fade. And I don't believe in miracles …they are just merely coincidence." Jacob echoes: "I don't believe in miracles during the modern days."

Many in this cohort tend to have established a strong sense of curiosity in exploring questions of deeper meaning when they were younger: Does God really exist? How do I come to know of God's existence? How does the idea of God align with logical thinking? For example, Jacob sums up the sentiment: "Like I should be able to ideally … I would be able to objectively determine whether or not God is real." Piqued in the teenage years and cemented in university, these former CBCC's interests are rooted in the development of an intellectual complexity that requires analytic or scientific reasoning to satisfy their curiosity. Elizabeth speaks about how she was drawn to critical thinking and scientific reasoning in junior high school: "As I got older [in high school], I started to really think more critically about my beliefs and what makes sense to me. I'm also in the sciences. And so, I'm very logical and I have [developed] evidence-based thinking." Luke, on the other hand, having taken a minor in philosophy in university, started his journey of serious inquiries at:

> *Around the 3rd or 4th year in university, that's when I started questioning the truth of the Bible, it started off scientifically ... this journey of finding the truth ... so the whole gamut of trying to figure out, you know, does God really exist?*

In raising questions on matters related to empirical truth and faith, this cohort believes that they are simply on the path of seeking authenticity with questions that anyone, non-believers included, might ask, as Joshua asserts that these are "controversial and yet legitimate questions that non-Christians would ask." In so doing, not only do these participants express a strong intention to dig deeper but their interest reflects a sense of strong doubt, as their thinking

is being shaped and influenced by secularism and pluralism.

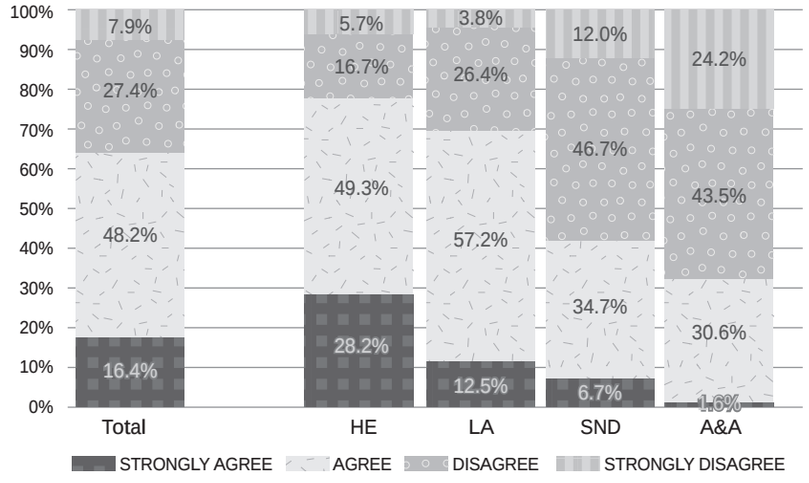
These A&A participants are further aided and abetted by the perceived ineptness of CCIC's teachings on such subjects as the relationship between God, science, apologetics, and how faith intersects with science. Many A&A participants who embarked on their journey of curiosity by raising questions about faith and science are confronted with two realities. First, they have found the answers provided by CCIC wanting. To a person, they claim that the responses range from being "not strong, inadequate" (Luke), to "[dis]satisfactory" (Jacob and Moses), to downright "condescending" (Isaac). In addition, these responses tend not to carry an adequate assessment of the stance or assumptions of "the secular science" but rather resort to just "literal interpretation of the religious text" (Isaac). Thus, in the words of Luke, the answer is unacceptable not only to Christians, but to non-Christians as well: "what the Bible says has no grounds for an atheist or non-religious person to accept it. So, yeah, there really was no strong answer." Finally, Moses' frustration sums up what constitutes to be the overall reaction toward the church's effort in the inquiry exchange, which, in turn, has resulted in hardening his resolve of deconversion. He mocks the church with sarcasm and defiance: "My biggest problem is that I cannot find satisfactory answers from church … to good logical questions … it's because the world is getting more intelligent, more knowledgeable and you guys can't provide the apologetics to back yourself." The sentiment of these A&A reveals a deeper level of distrust and a perceived ineptness of CCIC in response to their intellectual inquiries, as the next section will expand on further.

B. Inadequate and inconsistent responses on doubt, science, and faith

Experiencing spiritual doubt is part of every believer's journey and may be more pervasive and common than generally acknowledged. Barna (2017) for instance, reports that up to two-thirds of American adults who self-identify as Christian are either experiencing doubts or have in the past experienced or questioned their faith (p. 1). Deconstructing previously held spiritual assumptions and reconstructing them to become faith values of their own is a key component of the maturation process to achieve a robust religious identity for many teenagers and adolescents (Magyar-Russell et al., 2014, p. 50). Tackling doubt in a healthy manner is part and parcel of such a process. CBCC are no exception in this regard. Yet many participants, A&A in particular, express the conundrum in connection with how and why doubt has sowed the seeds for their rejection of their faith. They further complain that at best the teachings or responses from CCIC are not relevant and at worst faith communities are incapable of addressing the issue raised by CBCC adequately. This sentiment is consistent with the eSurvey response to the following question, especially by A&A:

Q94: Those in church leadership are able to help me explore my toughest questions.

Table 3.28: Help Me Explore Toughest Questions



A response of strong to very strong disagreement correlates to the affiliation or disaffiliation of the religious types of the eSurvey respondents (Table 3.28). Within the Stay-On cohort, 22% of HE express such a response while 30% of LA share the same answer. The response becomes significantly pronounced for the Drop-Out cohort: 58% of SND and 67% of A&A respond with a strong to very strong disagreement respectively. Suffice to say that to the A&A respondents, the ability of the church leadership to help them tackle tough issues is either highly dissatisfactory or ineffective.

It is no surprise therefore that many among the A&A interviewees have also cited the inability to quell their doubt and the countering spiritual instructions to lean on faith alone as the way to address their curiosity as one of the reasons why they repudiated belief in God altogether. Moses further elaborates:

> *I'm not going [to church] because you guys can't provide answers on top of church just being generally very annoying already. Why should I give one tenth of my money? Why should I wake up on Sundays on top of all these annoying stuff [since] you can't provide like satisfactory answers?*

Rather than establishing a meaningful dialogue on doubt or unbelief in faith communities, the participants encounter a conservative, closed mindset that dominates the teachings at CCIC which in essence discredits doubt and promotes the need for "unwavering" faith that discourages, if not prohibits, questioning the existence of God and the deity of Jesus among other things. Moses vehemently opposes the urge by the church for him to abandon his reasoning in favour of placing trust in God: "I don't know if I don't have the answer, but trust in God, trust in faith, that's bull – I'm sorry, that's kind of bull****." In the same vein, Jacob characterizes the church he attended as "conservative" and recalls how preachers tended to design their sermons to be "anti-science" to tackle inquiries about faith and science. Similar experience is reflected on by Isaac on his Sunday School class: "the instructor was either incredibly incompetent and not fit to teach on scientific topics, which his credentials would say otherwise; or was being intellectually dishonest to a cult-like superstitious level." He sums up the experience this way: "from an editorial perspective, I would say that I do not think that the general, conservative interpretation of the religious text is incorrect; I find it incredibly antiquated and indicative of a more intolerant [attitude]."

With the faith communities' responses deemed to be inadequate and incompetent, A&A have turned to non-religious resources to satisfy their insatiable intellectual appetite and to further buttress their scientific or logical reasoning. Participants such as Isaac, Jacob, Luke, and Moses recall experiences of attending conferences and watching live or YouTube debate on atheistic themes. With their

mind already being bent on rejecting the idea of God, the more these AA turn their attention to such resources, the more hardened their unbelieving stance becomes with the reasoning that the Christian God is not something or someone to believe in since his existence is highly questionable. Luke, for example, speaks about the fruit of his labour in studying atheism in coming to this stance: "I've done enough research, [and] from what I found, there's a 70-30 probability that God doesn't exist." Jacob also reminisces:

> *I started to question it [i.e., existence of God] more and more and then started to listen to debate on it on the Internet. I realized that it was always an atheist or non-Christian side that started sounding more reasonable to me.*

In addition, Moses remarks on watching the "debate between Ken Ham and Bill Nye" on creation and how it "was one of the strongest [arguments] that really solidified my decision to leave the church." Finally, responding to what CCIC could do to reverse this stance, Isaac sums up his position this way:

> *I just don't personally see how faith has any fundamental value ... to the average person. It seems more like it's a question of construction. But on its fundamental level, I can't bring myself to think that there might be [something in] there. It's just the [idea] I can't believe. So, while ... my old church might make grand changes to how efficient they are and how they change their doctrine or how they reach out to people, that [it] still doesn't swing [my position].*

Summary

The eSurvey's probe into how beliefs about God might have changed over time for the respondents and how school exposed them to new ideas points to a correlation in general between the stickiness of faith and church attachment based on the religious types. Furthermore, the A&A cohort is the one group that has registered a strong and very strong agreement on the changes and the impacts of the secular curriculum they may have been exposed to in school. In addition, A&A also respond with strong to very strong disagreement on the church's ability to help them navigate the wrestling between faith and science.

The A&A interviewees are the only vocal group on the issue of science and faith as the other cohorts are silent on the topics. The analysis indicates that there is a strong correlation between faith and science as a zero-sum game for this cohort and their abandonment of faith identity. Their stance on intellectualism, science, and faith is consistent with the studies of Altemeyer and Hunsberger (1997); Baker and Smith (2015); Caplovitz and Sherrow (1977); Galen (2014); Hunsberger et al. (1996); Hunsberger and Brown (1984); Hunsberger et al., (2002); Kenneson (2015); Kinnerman (2011); and Thiessen (2015).

Sexuality and Sexual Orientation

As reflected in the earlier section on the issue of the conundrum of romance, sexuality is a necessary and unavoidable terrain teenagers and adolescents must navigate in their process of growing up (Booth, Crouter, & Snyder, 2016). However, studies show that young Christians' church experiences related to the topic of sexuality are often found to be simplistic and the institution is out of step with the times (Kinnaman, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b). In addition, parents may not have placed a high enough priority on preparing their teens for the transition into university in the areas of sex, love, and romance (Freitas, 2008). The faith community as a collective

ensemble encompassing congregants, pastors, leaders, and parents appears to have a large gap to fill in addressing the issue of sexuality and sexual orientation. CCIC are no exception in this regard. The issue of sexuality and sexual orientation has plagued the interview participants across the religious types as they agonize over how it is being addressed at CCIC, an emblematic stigma that reflects the inadequacy and inability of CCIC in dealing with broader contemporary issues in a relevant and timely manner. Deeply rooted, and intersected, in the teachings of conservative evangelicalism and Chinese culture, most, if not all, CCIC hold a traditional Biblical view of marriage and sexuality. To them, marriage is a sacred institution that governs the relationship between a husband and wife, and sexual practices can only be sanctioned within the marital covenantal agreement. Any sexual activity outside of the Biblical spousal framework are unequivocally condemned and labelled sinful, as Zuckerman (2012) sums up this way: "Sex as experienced between a married heterosexual couple is good, while all other forms of human sexual expression are bad." (p. 83). However, with the dawn of digital technology and social media which provides access to information in the form of images, video, and sound at the fingertip of mass audiences, engagement with sexual activities has been drastically altered. With pornography, for example, the paradigm of availability has shifted radically from just spotting "eye-candy" on the cover of pornographic publications on the newsstand to the ubiquitous digital access to salacious materials that can be browsed anywhere and at any time. The universal availability of multi-media information is particularly pronounced in the younger generation. As a survey by Piper Jaffray (2017) of teens' spending habits in the U.S. has illustrated, 76% are iPhone owners, up from 67% in 2015, with this cohort typically spending almost six hours per day on the Internet with the phone texting

and engaging with social media (Twenge, 2017, p. 51). Imbued in a secular culture that favours and promotes sexual freedom and spurred by celebrities or pop singers they follow (e.g., Miley Cyrus Ariana Grande, Katy Perry, Shawn Mendes, etc.), CBCC find themselves staging an uphill battle in navigating a path of faithfulness and purity in dealing with their own sexual desire, at the same time receiving very little helpful assistance from CCIC. Furthermore, CBCC who consume pornographic material may not find CCIC a community where they can open up with their struggle for reasons of either carrying shame or guilt as in the case of Jacob (A&A), or for fear of being ostracized or losing "status" or honour in the community as reflected by Judah (A&A), who complains:

> *If someone went up [to the stage] and said: "I'm struggling with pornography" and he was on the worship team, that would just lower his status in the church ... So [if] people would come out and their status dropped, it's the thing that you don't want people to know you're imperfect, right? So, you keep silent about it and you don't be vulnerable.*

When coming to understand the issue of sexuality for the eSurvey respondents, the reply to the following roster of questions best represents their attitudes and values in the context of their faith:

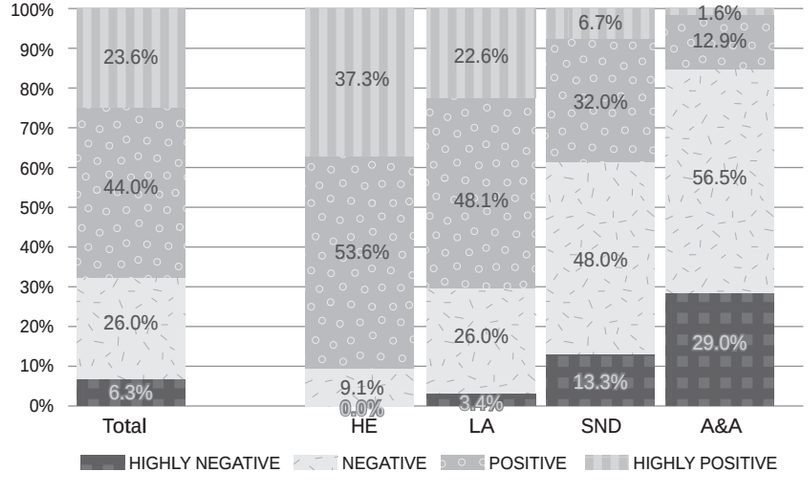
- Q28: I think the church's teaching that sex should be saved for marriage is completely unrealistic.
- Q29: Churches should allow women to hold the same leadership positions as men.
- Q30: Churches should allow gay and lesbian people who remain celibate to participate fully in their ministries.
- Q31: Churches should allow people who are practicing a gay or lesbian lifestyle to participate fully in their ministries.

Q32: Churches should solemnize gay and lesbian marriages just as they solemnize heterosexual marriages.

Q80: Gender inclusive.

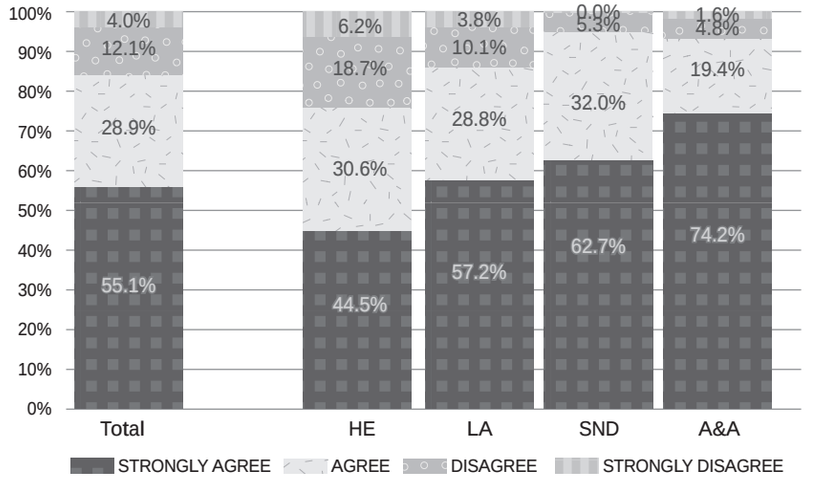
Q100: Women didn't have the rights they should have in the church I grew up in.

Table 3.29: Gender, Sexuality and Homosexuality



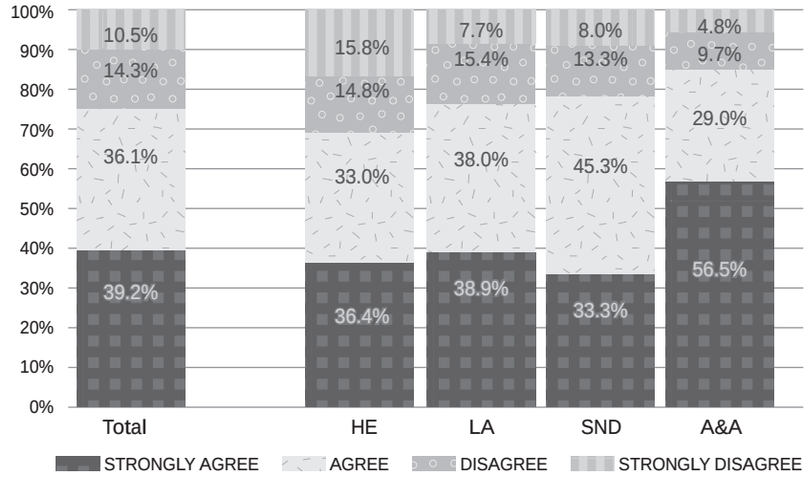
At the composite level, over 67% of the respondents hold a strong to very strong traditional view of sexuality that is consistent with the predominant conservative and evangelical persuasion, particularly on homosexuality in terms of acceptance, leadership position, and solemnization (Table 3.29). However, similar to answers to other themes, a deeper dive into the religious types reveals much clarity on which groups are more amenable to, or against, such a conservative stance: almost 91% of the HE cohort holds a very conservative view, with LA registering 70%. As for the Drop-Out group, 61% of SND reply with a strong to very strong liberal view (i.e., sexual equality and acceptance of homosexual practice and solemnization), while the A&A cohort stands at the opposite end of the HE group: 85% with a strong to very strong acceptance of the liberal view.

Table 3.30: Women Should Hold Same Leadership Positions as Men



Replies to individual questions, however, show a more open stance toward gender equality irrespective of the religious types than the traditional Asian culture of CCIC. For instance, responses to Q29 ("Churches should allow women to hold the same leadership positions as men") reveal consistently favourable acceptance across all cohorts (Table 3.30): HE, 75%; LA, 86 % ; SND, 94%; and A&A, 94% show strong to very strong agreement, whereas 84% of the respondents as a whole share the same stance.

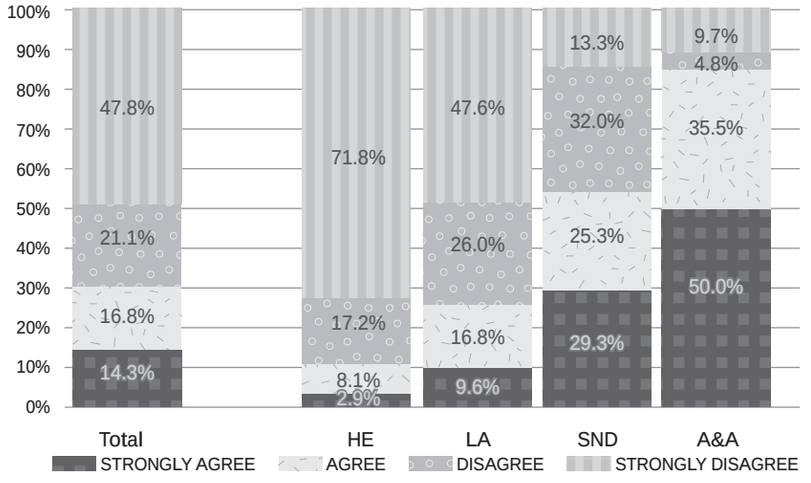
Table 3.31: Celibate Homosexuals Allowed to Participate Fully in Ministry



The openness continues in the repsonse to the question of accepting gays and lesbians who remain celibate to participate fully in ministry (i.e., Q30) (Table 3.31). 75% of all respondents are in strong to very strong agreement with the proposition. Analysis of the religious types shows a similar consistency: HE, 69%; LA, 77%; SND, 79%; and A&A, 85% are in strong or very strong agreement, indicating a correlating trend such that the further the religious type is disassociated from either CCIC or their faith, the higher the acceptance.

However, further scrutiny of answers to a specific question related to practicing homosexuality reveals consistency with the overall trend toward positive or negative attitudes toward sexuality based upon religious types (i.e., higher disagreement with higher engagement; higher agreement with higher disengagement). Question 32 ("Churches should solemnize gay and lesbian marriages just as they solemnize heterosexual marriages") is a key representative of such attitudes.

Table 3.32: Churches Should Solemnize Gay and Lesbian Marriages



Overall response indicates that about 69% are in favour of the conservative view of anti-solemnization of gay marriage (Table 3.32). Yet when decomposed further, the reply shows that almost 89% and 74% of HE and LA respectively, are either against or strongly against solemnization respectively. However, almost 55% of SND are in agreement or strong agreement in endorsing it, while more than 85% of A&A are in an agreement or strong agreement in accepting such a practice, standing at the opposite spectrum of the HE cohort.

In summary, the CBCC eSurvey respondents have perhaps taken a more open stance than their immigrant parents in accepting gender equality and accepting celibate gays' and lesbians' participation in ministry. But the attitude begins to diverge when it comes to accepting practicing homosexuals and their solemnization. HE, and to a large extent LA, remain conservative in rejecting such a stance, whereas SND, and in particular, A&A, show a much more open and liberal posture. Indeed, analysis of the A&A interview participants sheds a sharper light with a fuller description of such a liberal

viewpoint as discussed in the following section.

As for the A&A interview participants, many are gay friendly and two of them declare their gay identity. The gay friendly attitude is motivated by a number of factors. Raised in a secular culture in Canada whose social milieu and values promote inclusiveness and openness toward the LGBTQ community, and with gay marriage officially legislated in Canada, many A&A participants have soaked up such values. This is exacerbated by the church's failure to teach a holistic understanding of sexuality and homosexuality, or in some cases, even acknowledge the issue. Many speak about the muted voice of CCIC on the subject and how discussion of sex is limited to one single tenet: pre-marital sex is sinful and prohibited. Furthermore, many A&A are flabbergasted, and even angered, by the tone of CCIC's teachings on homosexuality, something they characterize as "unloving" and "hatred". Their feeling is further compounded by the hostile attitudes CCIC have at times exhibited toward gays such as the following practice: "Escort them out of the church if we discover them in the midst of the church," as Luke recounts. Such an inconsistency between CCIC teachings and practices and what CBCC perceive to be Jesus's love for sinners, irrespective of the sins they committed, adds fuel to the fire of their frustration.

Sexual orientation is such a contentious, tide-turning issue for the church, and it's risky to put the church's reaction to homosexuality on a pedestal too high. Reflecting the traditional Chinese culture and a conservative stance against homosexuality; believing they are faithful to the Biblical teaching and in alignment with the Puritan holiness tradition; and with a mandate to guide and guard their flock, CCIC leaders have spoken out against this sexual orientation fiercely. Yet the emotion they convey has been equated to hostility with a total absence of love and mercy. So raw is the emotion that many CBCC have equated it to be anti-gospel. And for many A&A participants, such a stance has become a catalyst for the abandonment of the faith.

Yet the issue goes deeper than what the cohort is facing. The teachings about sexuality and homosexuality in CCIC have historical and traditional roots. Until recently, the Chinese immigrant Protestant churches in Canada were founded primarily by immigrants in the 1970s to 1990s from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and South Asia (Wong, 2015). Though the scenario has changed somewhat with the higher influx of mainland Chinese immigrants in the last decade (Wong, 2016), the ecclesiastic culture of CCIC reflects a hybrid of the 19th and early 20th century fundamentalist Protestant missionary tradition as well as conservative Chinese ethnic culture. Part of that blended church ethos requires treading ever so lightly on the issue of sexuality, and by extension, homosexuality. For instance, though abandoned by most CCIC today, there was a time when seating in congregational worship was arranged on the basis of gender: males were segregated from females. In addition, traditional Chinese parents tend to shy away from talking about sex openly with their children due to the conservative nature of the ethnic culture. It is, therefore, no accident that from the perspective of the participants of this study, the issue of sexuality and homosexuality is very much a taboo, not to be discussed; or the teachings on this topic are not openly discussed in CCIC. To the degree it is discussed and taught, it is never dealt with in a holistic manner with questions such as: why is sex important and in what context? And how should its beauty and practice be observed? When the issue of sex is addressed, it is mostly done only in the context of dating, calling for abstinence or celibacy before marriage. To no one's surprise, therefore, many CBCC indicate that the main

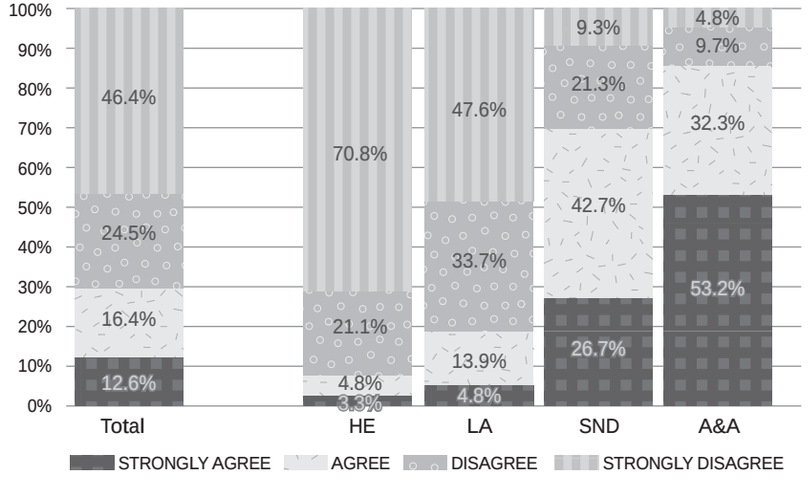
source of learning about sexuality and homosexuality is their school curriculum. Under the influence of secularism and a societal openness to gay rights and gay marriages, many Drop-Out interviewees have shown a level of openness to gay marriage as a right for those who practise homosexuality, an attitude that is consistent with the eSurvey analysis as mentioned before.

A. Sexuality: a taboo and muted in CCIC

On the CCIC's teaching on sex and sexual practices, the answer to the following question best represents the eSurvey respondents' attitude:

Q28: I think the church's teaching that sex should be saved for marriage is completely unrealistic.

Table 3.33: Church Teaching on Sexuality is Completely Unrealistic



As the analysis shows, a clear dichotomy exists along the line of faith affiliation. Overwhelmingly, HE are in a strong or very strong disagreement with the statement (Table 3.33), with almost 92% expressing this sentiment. It is closely followed by LA with 81%. As for the Drop-Out cohort, a diametrically opposite view is expressed: 69% of SND are in strong or very strong agreement with the statement, while over 85% of A&A register the same view. The demarcation is consistent with the earlier eSurvey analysis on the view of sexual equality and homosexuals' participation in ministry. While the Stay-On cohort may be sympathetic to gender equality when it comes to leadership positions in CCIC, they do not budge on the conservative stance and teachings of sex and homosexuality. On the other hand, the Drop-Out's reply is consistent with a favourable view on homosexual practices as well as their participation in ministry, and thus registering strong to very strong agreement on the statement.

For the interviewees, a few from the overall roster recount a positive impact they have received from their CCIC on sexuality. Yet when it happens, the teaching is usually done so with an intention to focus on how to assist CBCC to refrain from adopting a secular perspective on sexual practices, rather than developing a holistic understanding of sexuality as mentioned earlier. For example, Isaac (HE) recalls how his church strung a series "of a four-to-five-week talk on sexuality" when he was in high school and the speaker led them through a prayer for abstinence and purity. In addition, Eve (SND) speaks about how she gained respect for her sexuality through the CCIC teachings: "it made me respect myself more and learn [what to respond] when [facing] peer's pressure when it comes to sexuality." Echoing Eve, Deborah (SND) mentions how, as a teenager, she "took a lot of direction about life in those areas [i.e., teaching on sexuality] from the church."

Yet by and large, the experience of these few participants is a rare exception rather than the norm. More than half of the interviewees depict how they received next to no teaching on both sexuality and homosexuality (i.e., Abigail, Andrew, Bartholomew, Elizabeth,

Esther, Isaac, Jacob, John, Leah, Lois, Luke, Mary, Matthew, Miriam, Moses, Philip, Phoebe, Rachel, Ruth, and Thaddaeus). To the extent they did, the impact was negative. In response to the interview question: "Was there anything about the church's teaching on sexuality or homosexuality in your childhood or when you were a teen that affected you positively or negatively?" the prevailing answer is that the church is found wanting. The following is a list of representative responses that serves as a clear indication of how muted CCIC teachings on sexuality and homosexuality were:

"No, the church doesn't talk about sex." (Abigail, LA)
"Homosexuality? Nope, that wasn't even on the radar." (Andrew, HE)
"The topic of sex was not talked about, it's a taboo!" (Bartholomew, LA)
"I can't remember any of those teachings." (Elizabeth, A&A)
"Very seldom talked about [sex and homosexuality]." (Esther, SND)
"We never really talked about homosexuality when I went to church." (Eve, SND)
"I don't think the church explicitly talked about it [sexuality] per se." (Isaac, A&A)
"I don't think that our church really talked about [sexuality] or at least at Sunday School we didn't talk about that. And homosexuality was never [discussed] even when we were at university." (John, HE)
"Oh, it's [i.e., sexuality and homosexuality] very taboo, like they didn't talk about it unless they were condemning it ... it's a subject you just didn't touch." (Judah, A&A)
"I don't remember there was any discussion on [sexuality and homosexuality]." (Lois, SND)
"Nothing [about sexuality] that I recall." (Matthew, LA)
"Homosexuality? There weren't really any formal teachings." (Miriam, HE)
"I don't think that was touched on very much at all." (Philip, LA)
"We didn't talk about it [sex and homosexuality] very much. It was kind of a quiet topic at church." (Phoebe, LA)
"I don't think my church talked about that at all." (Rachel, HE)
"Sexuality [and homosexuality] is always the topic that is the elephant in the room." (Ruth, LA)

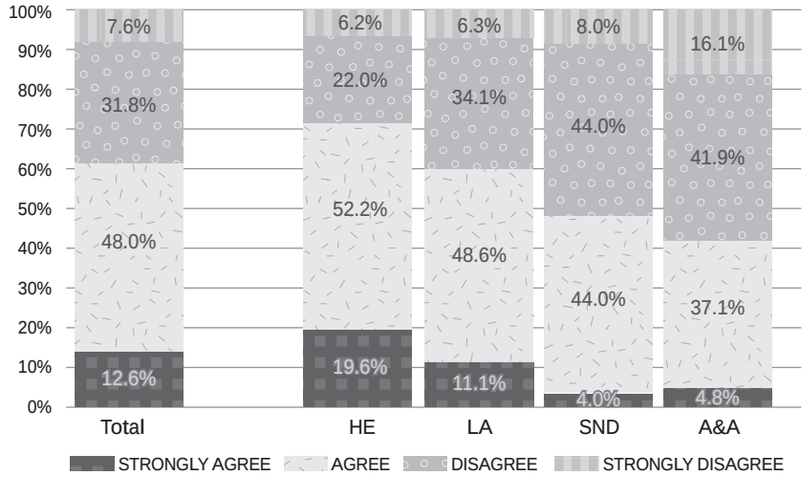
Thaddaeus summarizes it succinctly: "the topic of sexuality was never brought up and whenever it was, it was always [done] in very muted tones" and Naomi echoes that sexuality and homosexuality are "taboo subjects." The next section discusses the principal reason why CBCC perceived sexuality is a muted taboo at CCIC.

B. Conservative Chinese culture on sexuality with teachings ceded to school

In many respects, the noticeable absence or silence of teaching is no surprise to the interview participants. Many attribute this to the conservatism that is inherent in the Chinese culture, in which the subject of sexuality has seldom been broached in public and/or open forums in faith communities. This observation is nested in a broader concern about a lack of teaching delivered at CCIC in tackling contemporary and tough issues. Those who responded to the eSurvey echo the same concern when probed with the following statement as a proxy for how CCIC addressed difficult subjects:

Q97: In my experience, the church addresses tough topics in its sermons.

Table 3.34: Church Addresses Tough Topics in Its Sermons



Over 58% of A&A respond with strong to very strong disagreement, compared to 52% of SND; 40% of LA; and 28% of HE (Table 3.34). For the A&A eSurvey respondents, an absence of teaching in tackling tough issues may appear to be more of a centrifugal force in the engagement with CCIC and their faith.

Many interviewees talk about the conservative nature of the Chinese culture in shying away from dealing with sensitive and tough issues such as sexuality. With the exclusionary and protective bastion of the ethnic ethos in mind, Lois (SND) is blunt in her assessment: "In the Chinese church, I don't think there was the bravery to approach that topic [i.e., sexuality and homosexuality]." The thought of the conservative Chinese culture evokes a sense of resignation and sarcasm in the mind of participants. For example, Rachel (HE) exclaims: "We are Chinese, we are conservative!" Abigail (LA) extends this thought: "[the reason why the issues are not discussed is that] it is Chinese culture!" And by extension, as Eunice (SND) adds: "the church is quite conservative." And for that reason, Julia (LA) asserts that "[the practice of homosexuality] was [deemed] wrong [in the Chinese church]." In addition, any practices that violate the traditional teaching of sexuality in the context of CCIC, such as pornography, would be condemned, as attested by Jacob (A&A): "when I watched one, I would feel very guilty."

As mentioned earlier, to the extent sexuality is discussed, the conversation does not deal with the full extent of the issue but is restricted to the context of dating, calling for celibacy until marriage. Deborah (SND) recalls how the subject of chastity is talked about in connection with "dating and pre-marital sex." Philip (LA) echoes: "if you're talking about just relationships and the context of sexuality in marriage or dating … I guess the underlying principles [of chastity and abstinence] one should take on dating were talked about." Mary (LA) is direct in her reminiscence: "Don't have sex before marriage, that's about it." When probed further, many agree that whatever they do learn about sexuality, their generation has learnt from school. And if it is the public school system rather than Christian independent schools they attended, the curriculum is inclusive and gay-friendly, pointing to a missed teaching opportunity that CCIC have ceded to the educational system. Ann (SND) recalls: "any stuff like that [i.e., sexuality and homosexuality] was [taught] in school. To that Rachel (HE) resonates: "Whatever I learnt, we learnt it from the school."

C. Antagonistic responses on homosexuality contribute to apostasy

The issue of sexual orientation and homosexuality has surfaced over the last few decades as a major flashpoint in the North American evangelical communities of which CCIC are a part, as a rising number of Christians take on liberalizing views on pre-marital sex and homosexual practice (British Social Attitudes, 2017; Brown,

2015). Traditional and conservative faith communities tend to regard homosexuality as "unwelcome, unacceptable, and downright unholy" (Zuckerman, 2012, p. 161) and teaching on the subject "too restrictive" (Penner et al., 2012b, p. 71). However, as reflected earlier, teaching on both sexuality and homosexuality has to a large degree been muted at CCIC. To the extent that there is an exception, participants reflect on how specifically their awareness and understanding of homosexuality is raised in their own faith communities. Abraham (A&A) relates that "At [my previous] church, the teaching about homosexuality was that it wasn't allowed." In general, the reason is simple: homosexuality and gay marriage have been taught to be sinful because, as Peter (HE) put it, "God makes marriage for one male and one woman and … and God calls that marriage." Phoebe (LA) adds to the thought: "I am pretty sure they taught gay marriage was wrong." So does Priscilla (LA): "my church always taught that homosexuality is wrong." Judah (A&A) recalls that his senior pastor talks about "how the world is corrupt and what everyone is doing these days, you know, men are marrying men, women are marrying women." For that reason, homosexuality is denounced and as Isaac (A&A) explains: "There was a significant push against it." A similar stance is adopted by Sarah's (HE) church, as she reflects on this issue: "the church's view was against it." Jacob (A&A) remarks how preachers talk about "how gay marriage is ruining society." Luke (A&A) concurs: "there were more serious tones of disapproval on homosexuality [on the part of the church]."

Yet the tone of disapproval does not necessarily cover the entire gamut. A few participants remark on the nuances required to differentiate the subtly different attitudes separating the act from the person. Julia (LA) explains that it is the action that is sinful, yet gay people deserve to be loved: "In the Chinese church homosexuality is wrong … And, we learned that people may have tendencies. It's the action that is the sin, but we need to love the person." Leah (HE) reverberates with the same sentiment: "[While] there were [no] specific sermons or topical discussions on homosexuality, we were encouraged to love everybody." Such a distinction is not always acknowledged, as a few others suggest that CCIC's teachings on homosexuality is conducted in an antagonistic and unloving tone that is repugnant and inconsistent with Christian teachings and practices of unconditional love as exemplified by Christ. Luke (A&A), for example, recalls how leaders in his church talked about the swift action necessary to treat homosexuals: "I do remember some deacons saying that if there was a homosexual [in their midst], you escort him out of the church." Naomi (HE) was told by church leaders to take aggressive action to deal with the issue if confronted by it: "homosexuality is a sickness. You have to cure it." Yet she further remarks that the same leaders "spoke of it in a very unloving manner." The major disconnection between Christ's teachings on love and forgiveness and the CCIC's own admonition on the issue has become so distasteful that CBCC react with disdain and resentment. And Thaddaeus (SND) cites this disconnect as the reason why he left the church:

> *To me that was what it [i.e., the reason for leaving] was. That drove me away from Bayhill. [And] these are the people that are teaching us about Christ's love. Whether you are a sinner, the people that were the lowest [or] the dirtiest people in the Bible, Christ had so much love for them. Yet these same people turned around and can be so hateful toward people. I mean whether you agree with homosexuality or not, whether you believe it is a sin or not they are God's children. God loves them. So I just didn't understand the justification of people [even] saying, "God is wrong. These people don't deserve love." ... It seemed very hypocritical to me.*

As reflected in Thaddaeus' narrative of withdrawal from church and faith participation, the polarizing hostility reflected in these teachings is translated into anti-gay behaviours manifested in the church leadership, which in turn sows the seeds for the abandonment of faith directly or indirectly for most of the A&A participants, as six (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Luke, and Moses) out of the nine in this cohort have attested. Moses makes a similar point in characterizing his church and parents as being homophobic and harboring hatred toward gays: "Basically, I'm straight [and] I don't believe in homosexuality as being correct but I don't hate them as much as some people at church do." He further elaborates his view, which he believes to be contrary to the animosity that singularly focuses against homosexuality as exhibited in the church: "I don't treat it [homosexuality] as the most disgusting enemy [or] thing. [And] it's not any different to me than a guy who wants to sleep with five different women."

Judah (A&A), a self-declared homosexual but not sexually active at the time of the interview, speaks about the agony and struggle he has experienced during his odyssey since discovering his sexual orientation in Grade 9, when he could no longer consciously deny his identity and attraction to males. Characterizing himself as a spectator of faith in his teenage years, Judah remarks that his church's teachings and parents' faith as exhibited in their life and edification had very little positive influence on him in creating an enduring faith adherence. To the degree he considered himself a Christian, it was in name only and did not reflect any substance of faith. Though he went to a Christian church, was raised by Christian parents, attended a Christian school, and participated in Christian activities, he would not call himself "one [i.e., a Christian]" at the time of the interview, explaining that "I don't feel [God's] presence and that's why I don't really consider myself a Christian." Being gay and claiming a strong detachment from Christian faith, Judah points out that the biggest game-changer is the church's teaching that "homosexuality is a sin." And he is "so deep into [his] sin" that he no longer feels being qualified to be a believer, pinning the blame on the faith community: "I've been repressed." Under a shroud of shame and trepidation of stigmatization, Judah has not taken any step to disclose his sexual proclivity and gay identity to his church, pastors, or to his parents. Only a handful of close friends are aware of his sexual orientation. Yet he concludes that he would not be welcome at his church because of the hypocrisy of the leadership's attitude and practice toward the LGBTQ community. Judah further elaborates:

> *Our pastor will say: "we need to love these people; we need to welcome and accept them." But the thing is [that] it's hypocritical because at the same time there'll [be a] very negative aspect to homosexuality, so they'll make jokes about being gay or stuff like that. And, yeah, so it's hypocritical. So I assume that my church [has] a negative perspective on it.*

Losing connectedness or feeling disengaged due to a growing consciousness of his sexual orientation and gay identity and how his faith community treated gays, Judah feels he no longer belongs to that community. He sums up his severance from his faith and community this way:

> *I think it has to do with [the time] when I was [starting] to feel alienated at church because of my sexual orientation. So, that's when I started to notice that hey, I don't belong to this community.*

Finally, of all participants in the A&A cohort, Abraham is the most

outspoken as a hardcore gay ex-Christian. Brought up under strict conservative Christian values, he recalls: "learning about dancing was wrong and drinking was wrong and drugs are wrong, [and] tattoos are wrong." Yet when he was asked if he continued to believe in Jesus, his answer changed in terms of complexity: "It's kind of – I think, yes, I believe that, but only in so far as I was raised to believe that [but in reality I don't]." In other words, Abraham's faith, to the extent one can characterize, was never his own and has been abandoned over issues of his gay lifestyle. Reminiscing on the issue of homosexuality, he is quick to point to the main squabble he had with the church:

> *The first thing that got the ball rolling was I'm gay and trying to figure out why it was a bad thing and no one can really give me an answer for it and I couldn't even find or think of an answer for it ... So, I cannot think of a real reason why being gay is wrong and why having a boyfriend is wrong.*

At that time, the church made no attempt to differentiate between homosexual tendencies and homosexual activities and extended no welcoming posture, even to those who might have the propensity but remained celibate:

> *[Homosexuality] was still one of those under the radar and underground issues in terms of people actually coming out and saying something about whether they were gay or not, or whether they struggle with any sort of deviant sexual kind of behaviour or inclinations. And, back then, I don't think there was a distinction between the orientation and actions. They're all just slammed in together.*

Claiming that he was treated unsympathetically over this issue at his home church and finding no one to relate to his journey, Abraham left the institution several years ago before the interview. Soon after the departure Abraham was church-hopping for a while, looking for congregations, immigrant or mainstream Canadian, that might be more accepting of, or at least tolerant of, his gay identity. Yet he found none. The principal reason, for Abraham, is the strict adherence to the centrality of the Bible in the teachings and practices of churches on the issue:

> *But then I visited other churches, Western churches and different churches in terms of ethnicity and denomination. I found them all to be the same in terms of how confined they were to the Bible. Every issue that we bumped up against, it was: "what does the Bible say about this?" There was never anything they did think about of themselves. I didn't like how restrictive it was ... They're not willing to shift their beliefs on things that they label as foundational [such as] gay marriage.*

At the heart of the polemic is Abraham's unwillingness to accept the Bible and its teachings as the one and only overall adjudicator of human morality and behaviours upheld by those Christian communities. Rather than being defined by faith, Abraham asserts that his morality is based upon the principle of "no-harm to others": "If I hurt someone or if it hurts you, then it is wrong." With strong resistance to accept the Bible as the authority over the issue of homosexuality, Abraham is looking for what he calls a "fair fight," an open and democratic debate that would allow gays a platform to present their side of the argument. Yet none of the churches he has visited are willing to engage in the debate:

Well, if a church is given the option to [examine whether to] accept gays or not accept gays, they have to be willing to go to the other side if that's where their discernment leads them or the evidence or logic leads them, right? But the fact is that most churches limit themselves to only one [position] – to the Biblical stance ... because they see going to the other side as heresy.

Lastly, Abraham ruminates on the conditions under which he might consider rejoining the church: leadership must have the courage to be open-minded, and they must find gay marriage acceptable, and be prepared to abandon any local church or denominational doctrinal viewpoint on gays.

While the issue of homosexuality remains a gut-wrenching one for many of the participants in the A&A cohort, others postulate that it is a tide-turning controversy for CCIC in how faith communities and local-born must deal with their values and beliefs as part of their faith odyssey. If not treated properly and adequately, the issue of homosexuality could trigger a broader fracture between CBCC and CCIC as a whole. Isaac (A&A) sums it up in this way:

I think what would be interesting in a broad spectrum of research would be the views on homosexuality. It's interesting because I feel it's very much reminiscent of past social struggles. And this is kind of a turning point. So, which[ever] way it goes [it would have a grave consequence for the community as a whole].

Summary

Responses to the eSurvey instrument on the composite questions of gender, sex, and homosexuality show a correlation between the conservativism and the Stay-On cohort as well as between a liberal view and the Drop-Out respondents, with HE (91% being conservative) and A&A (85% being liberal) at opposite ends of the spectrum (Table 3.33). However, as for the question of gender equality, there appears to have no correlation between the strong faith adherents and the acceptance of equality as all four religious types appear to be open in embracing the stance. When the spotlight is shifted to the question of accepting gays and lesbians who remain celibate and want to participate fully in their ministries, the openness continues across all types. As to the question of solemnizing gay and lesbian marriages, a drastically different picture emerges from the eSurvey responses: a strong correlation between the Stay-On cohort and an anti-solemnization stance; and a strong correlation between the Drop-Out group and the acceptance of solemnization, with HE and A&A being diametrically opposite to one another (89% overall disagreement for HE; 85% overall agreement for A&A). This picture suggests that although the Stay-On respondents may be more open than their first-generation elders in accepting gender equality, they share with their parents' generation a conservative view of rejecting homosexual marriage.

When the eSurvey respondents are further probed for their sentiments as to whether Church teachings on sex practices are unrealistic, a strong correlation is also evident between Stay-On and overall disagreement, and between Drop-Out and overall agreement, again with HE (92% disagreement) and A&A (85% overall agreement) at each end of the spectrum. As for the question whether the church is prepared to tackle tough issues in a sermon, a similar correlation exists between overall disagreement and Drop-Out and between overall agreement and Stay-On.

The issue of sexuality and homosexuality has proven to be an

agonizing and divisive one for all of the interview participants as they have painted a picture of CCIC as conservative in their stance, unprepared and even unwilling to be proactive in taking the leadership to conduct a healthy dialogue on sexuality and sexual orientation, which is an issue emblematic of other contemporary challenges CBCC are facing. Participants speak about learning the subject from school rather than church, as most CCIC are muted in this issue. On the issue of homosexuality, a collective suite of factors such as negative attitudes toward the orientation; the perceived inconsistency with Jesus' teaching on acceptance, love, and forgiveness; and a lack of sympathy and the feeling of being ostracized by CCIC if and when they come "out of the closet," have caused many in the A&A cohort to become apostate and abandon the faith they grew up in. The findings of this issue are consistent with the studies of Brown (2015), Kinnaman (2011), Penner et al. (2012), and Zuckerman (2012).

Experiencing God at Special Events

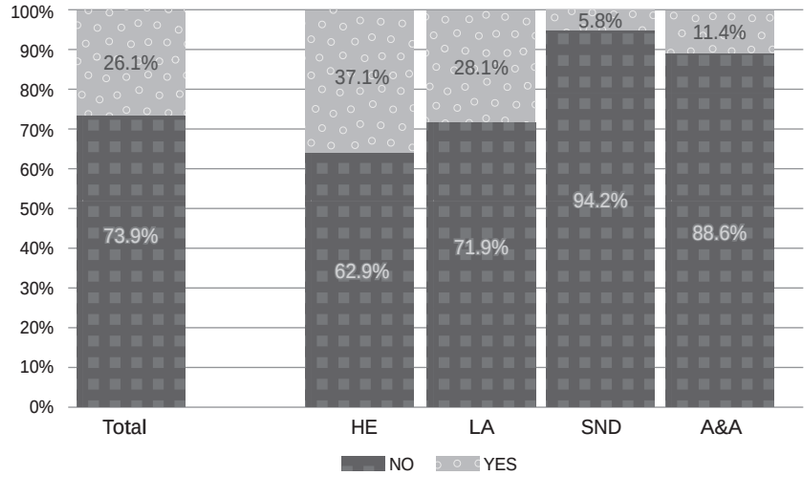
Many studies in faith engagement have established in varying degrees how God's presence can be palpably felt at such special events as conferences, retreats, and short-term mission engagements (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012b; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015). Positive experience of God does correspond to a higher spiritual affiliation and a greater level of engagement with religious communities for the faithful, as Penner et al. (2012b) pointed out: "Where spiritual awakening do[es] happen on mission trips, those young adults are more likely to become Engagers" (p. 98). In this section we examine how participation in conferences and retreats, a special event called Teens Conference, and short-term mission engagements relate to the faith journeys of CBCC.

A. Conferences and retreats

Conferences, whether they are interdenominational regional events such as the Canada Chinese Christian Winter Conference in Eastern Canada and the equivalent one in Western Canada, mission conferences such as Urbana, or individual church sponsored retreats or camps, are generally multi-day events where space and time is carved out to facilitate a focused attempt to create a transcendental intimacy usually through a theme-based topic, expounded by one or a few keynote speaker(s), and augmented by workshops and special worship. For this study, the analysis of eSurvey responses to the participation in the Canada Chinese Christian Western Winter Conference, which generally attracts attendees from provinces of Canada west of Ontario, yields an inconsistent result with 26% of those who resided in Western Canada registering attendance (see Q126) (Table 3.35). From the perspective of the religious types, there is a declining percentage of attendance corresponding to faith affiliation: HE, 37%; LA, 28%; SND, 6% and A&A, 11%, suggesting that there is a correlation between attendance at this conference and faith affiliation.

Q126: If you currently reside or previously resided in Western Canada, did you attend the Canada Chinese Christian Winter Conference?

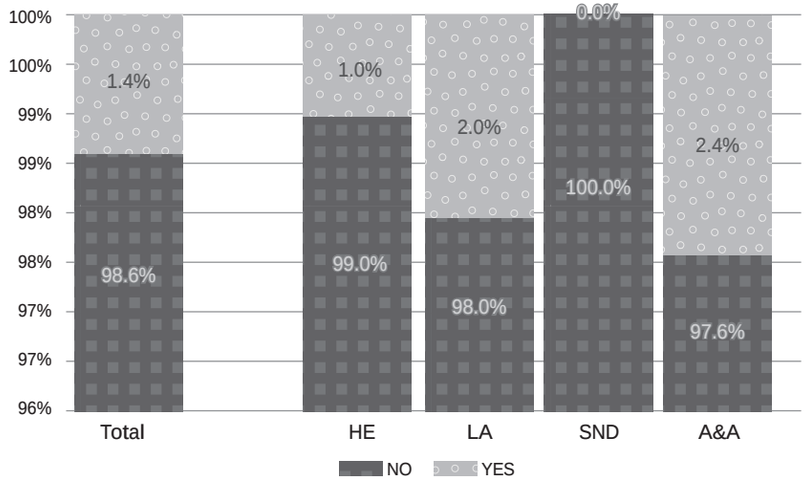
Table 3.35: Western Christian Winter Conference Attendance



However, for the Eastern Canadian Chinese Christian Winter Conference, which generally attracts attendees from Ontario and other Eastern provinces, over 98% of the overall respondents indicate that they never attended the Conference with only 1% of those who resided in Eastern Canada reporting attendance (see Q128) (Table 3.36), indicating that it is statistically insignificant to draw any correspondence between faith affiliation of the respondents and conference attendance.

Q128: If you currently reside or previously resided in Eastern Canada, did you attend the Eastern Canadian Chinese Christian Winter Conference?

Table 3.36: Eastern Christian Winter Conference Attendance



As for the interview participants, they register more consistently that they have had a palpable experience of God's presence that has left an indelible impression in their spiritual journey. Such an encounter usually spurs spiritual growth, affirms their faith conviction, and provides clarity for deepening their resolve in following divine guidance for their lives. For example, a few HE participants identify the transcendental experience through such occasions as personal devotion or group Bible study, as Sarah (HE) attests: "I've really felt the presence of God," or through service to one another at church, as Philip (LA) recalls during a period of difficulty: " A … small reminder of God's presence in the form of [service] when there's an opportunity that people do take to serve each other when I've had a very challenging period in my life."

With respect to conferences and retreats as a venue to experience God's presence, five of ten HE participants recollect spiritual intimacy that has created a lasting impact on their faith. For instance, Sarah speaks fondly of a divine encounter at retreats: "A lot

of it happened during retreats where I really feel the presence of the Holy Spirit." Miriam elaborates on such an impact: "The experiences that we had there [at conferences] … that was the big reason why that was significant for me because it showed me the joy that I have being Christian." Peter raves about how attending a summer camp transformed his faith and created an undeniable conviction of God's existence:

> *I went to summer camp ... and I experienced the presence and the love of God inexplicably. I felt that God truly did love me, God truly did care for me and that transformed my whole world so to speak. And since then ... I could never go back and say that God doesn't exist ... because of that one tough experience.*

Similarly Rebekah recalls how a church retreat helped her re-anchor her faith after stepping away from it:

> *It was during the annual retreat [when] I was away from school and away from family and [could] focus on God [the way] I experienced [God] like [it was] in Grade 12 because I had kind of forgotten. It was a revisiting of that as soon as I got to the retreat away from all this busyness.*

Finally, Andrew summarizes how conferences helped him claim his faith: "When I started to go in to Christian conferences [three years consecutively], it was where I started experiencing [God}. And it started my faith; the faith aspect started becoming a little bit more of my own." In addition, conferences are where his Chinese Canadian identity began to cement: "And I got to meet Chinese Christians from all over Western Canada which at that time there weren't very many Chinese Christians in my hometown."

Inasmuch as conference participation does lead to a positive experience for these HE interviewees, it is also mentioned by half of the SND (i.e., five of ten) cohort as an uneven influence, ranging from no impact to positive yet creating no enduring stickiness to their faith. Eunice, for example, brings up the regular attendance at the summer retreats at her church as a part of her growing up journey but recounts no specific influence. Then Lois recalls only a single experience of attending a youth conference in New Jersey and yet it did not exert any "significant impact" on her faith. However, Eve describes how a one-time attendance at Urbana, a tri-annual mission conference organized by InterVarsity Christian Fellowship in the U.S., connected her to a mission trip to China. Yet, Deborah raves about a transformative camp experience: "As a teenager I remember rededicating my life to God at a youth … camp." Finally Thaddaeus also recounts a positive experience: "I really felt that presence [of God] at a missions conference." So heightened was that experience that Thaddaeus became more zealous about his faith and emboldened in his desire to openly identify himself as a Christian: "I am going to go and pray. I am going to tell somebody about what it means to become a Christian."

Positive experience is also reported by two (of nine) LA participants. For instance Abigail talks about attending the Winter Conference in Western Canada first as a child with her family and later as a teen with a youth group, and how she dedicated her life as a Christian teacher at the venue in response to an altar call. Matthew shares a comparable affirmative feeling in attending a retreat:

> *We had a retreat where our entire high school fellowship went. I would say that's when I first realized that I need to take this faith seriously for myself, and that faith has to be mine. And that's when I first really felt God's presence.*

Recollection of a Christian conference surfaces only in one A&A interviewee and it was not an experience leading to positive faith development. Moses recounts his response to an altar call at Urbana and attributes it not to an act of obedience to God's invitation but rather to "the way the mood, the crowd hype, the emotion, and the crowd" that compelled him to go forward to answer the call. Yet such an emotional response yields no enduring effect of commitment, as Moses argues: "It's … a spiritual high or whatever you call it, just a big bunch of emotion and … Just few months after … you start like you don't feel it, you don't want to do anything [about it]."

In short, the eSurvey analysis on the attendance of conferences does not offer any significant insights into how it relates to the religious type as the attendance is either low (i.e., Western Canada Winter Conference) or insignificant (Eastern Canada Winter Conference). For the interviewees, the experience of God through participation in conferences or retreats appears to be equally salient for some HE participants as well as for two in the LA cohort, and some in SND. Yet for SND, such an experience is eventually too weak to counter the forces of other dissuading influences to create enough adhesiveness for church affiliation. Thus, to the interviewees, although conference attendance does create an affirmative impact in some, it does not stand out as a differentiated dominant factor that may underpin a correspondence for religious affiliation.

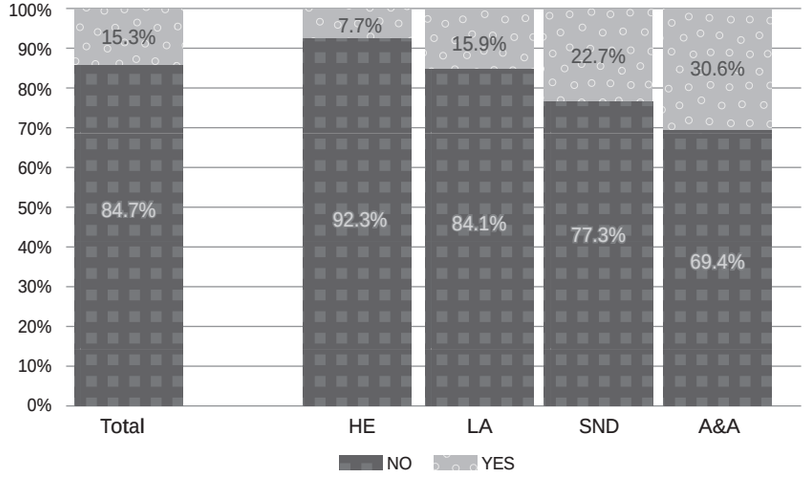
B. Teens Conference

With all the conferences the eSurvey respondents and interview participants identified, an event, Teens Conference, mainly attended by CBCC in Ontario surfaces as a point of interest for understanding how event participation may have had an effect on their feeling of God's presence and in turn created a stronger faith affiliation. An annual two-day event organized by the Ambassadors

For Christ Canada held in Toronto during the Spring break (typically in March) for high schoolers, Teens Conference attracts hundreds of attendees from the Greater Toronto Area and other cities in Ontario on an annual basis (Ambassadors For Christ in Canada, 2018). When asked the following question:

> Q39: When you went to high school in the GTA [i.e., Greater Toronto Area], did you attend the GTA Teens Conference?

Table 3.37: Teens Conference Attendance



only 15% of the overall eSurvey respondents indicate attendance, in part due to the fact that only 40% of the respondents identify themselves as resident in the GTA (Table 3.37). However, the breakdown of such attendance based on the religious types shows a reverse correlation of attendance and religious types: HE, 8%; LA, 16%; SND, 23%; A&A, 31%, implying that high participation has an inverse correlation on faith affiliation.

The interviewees, however, paint a more nuanced picture of their involvement with the event. Of the eighteen interviewees who

identified themselves as Ontario residents at the time of the interview (one from Waterloo, four from Ottawa, and thirteen from the GTA), five make no mention of attendance of such a conference (Joseph, Martha, Lois, Rebekah, and Sarah). Of the remaining thirteen interviewees who acknowledge participation, four are HE, one LA, four SND, and four A&A. Of the four from the HE group, two have an unfavourable view of the event, while the third one is at best neutral, and the last one, somewhat positive. Their experience shows inconsistency across the HE cohort in specifying a correspondence of their participation of Teens Conference to strong attachment to their CCIC. However, two themes have emerged as these CBCC recount their experience.

The first one is related to the raw emotion the participants experienced in the Conference and how it does not necessarily translate into a lasting impetus for spiritual growth. In fact many of them label the conference experience "hype," an emotional high that quickly dissipates. For example, James (HE) at first speaks about how he enjoyed the event and views it as a vibrant and significant spiritual gathering that his peers needed to participate in, something akin to going through a spiritual rite of passage. But his alarm bell goes off when he characterizes the post-Teens Conference experience as a debacle from a spiritually high moment:

> *You wanna go to serve Jesus, but after a month, after the high, you just crash [and] some people don't return to the faith anymore. [They just had] a very high moment and came crashing down. I think that caused people to burn out.*

John (HE) stitches a similar picture, as he recalls that his church in Ottawa stopped sponsoring the event after he attended two years in 2007 and 2008 for the reason that the event might have helped attendees to "get spiritually high [while at the conference] but it didn't really help our group really grow." Such a highly charged emotional experience, rather than the core teachings of the conference, is what Mark (SND) has singled out for recollection: "I don't remember a lot of teachings. I remember the teachings were good. [But] a lot of it was just the raw emotions." The emotional characteristic can be construed from the perspective that the event is just being fun-and-entertainment centric, with a lot of "hypes" as Judah (A&A) remarks:

> *So, a lot of people get saved at Teens Conference, but you just see that people are there for the show, people are there for the music, they are there for the screaming and the cheering and things like that ... They actually focus on fun things which is not necessarily a bad thing, but the faith that is encouraged on this side, it's really like emotionally based. You know what I mean? Like that's hype, very hype.*

Secondly, to the extent that there is an impact on the participants' religiosity, the effect is not evenly registered across the religious types. Some mention that it is the ministerial involvement in Conference, not just mere attendance, that has led to spiritual growth. For instance, Thomas (SND) recalls that at first he "didn't like" the conference "the first time he attended." However, when invited to take a deeper engagement in the ministry of the conference, he returned three more years. In other words, involvement, not mere participation, created a positive impact on Thomas: "And that was when I experienced probably the most spiritual growth." Naomi (HE) shares a similar experience with a curt and somewhat positive comment about her participation: "I attended two years and became a captain." Lastly, Eunice (SND) recounts fondly that she became a committed Christian at the

Conference and staked a claim of the faith as her own. She explains further:

> *When I accepted Christ, it was my own personal decision for the first time. It was after hearing a sermon and other people's testimonies as well as just realizing that I wanted to make a personal choice to follow Jesus. And so, that was the first time I took responsibility and ownership of my faith and my walk instead of just doing whatever my parents told me to do or whatever they believed in.*

However, other participants do not relate such positive influences or any comparable impact of the conference on their faith. Rachel (HE) mentions merely that she attended twice, without citing any impact on her spiritual journey. This neutral stance is not lost on Mary, the only LA among the Ontario participants, who remarks: "I went for two years. It was okay. I made friends. But I didn't like talking to strangers and I didn't like making friends. I wasn't just the most extroverted person." Similarly Eve (SND) looks at her participation only as one of the rituals of growing up in her immigrant church. On the other hand, Luke and Moses from the A&A cohort share a nonchalant attitude without mentioning any spiritual benefits they might have gained from attending the conference. Finally, for Jacob (A&A), his attendance does evoke "some sort of religious experience when I went to Teens Conference for the first time." But his account quickly turns to the fun aspects of the event, as opposed to the spiritual impact it may have had on him:

> *It was fun [but] at the same time I am pretty sure my favourite points were when we went on some random trip to sleep in. So it was fun being with my friends and playing basketball in the gym or something.*

In summary, experience of Teens Conference by the Ontario cohort does not assert itself as a strong distinctive influential factor for the lone LA and the HE conference participants to stay highly connected to CCIC or create stickiness for their faith. For some, it is a positive and growing experience. For others, Teens Conference is a hub for socialization, offering fun and entertainment, and rousing a "hype" emotion. At the same time, attendance does not indicate that it may have sowed the seeds for SND and A&A to leave the church or faith altogether as three participants of the latter group report at best a neutral stance toward the Conference. Thus, similar to the overall impact of conferences and retreats as discussed earlier, Teens Conference attendance may have created a level of positive impact on some participants' growth, yet it does not differentiate itself as a strong corresponding factor for faith affiliation.

C. Short-term mission engagement

Canadian evangelical congregations place a high priority in shaping the faith identity of youth and children, and to that end, ministry initiatives are designed to create an enhancement of their faith commitment through meaningful encounters with God's presence (Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015, p. 180). Short-term mission engagement is one of the endeavors arranged to achieve that objective (Penner et al., 2012b). Smith (and Longest) (2009) indicates that going on more religious mission trips during teenage years is associated with a stronger faith commitment in the emerging adulthood (p. 218). CCIC are no exception, as many congregations organize trips overseas or to First Nations communities with an attempt to develop a deeper awareness of God's presence through ministry and service to the local people. These trips are usually organized in the summer to capitalize the school schedule. However,

to the eSurvey respondents of this study, the overall participation in short-term missions indicates that it was not a highly engaged ministry for them, as 68% answer with "No" involvement (see Q46) (Table 3.38). But further breakdown based on the religious types does point to a somewhat consistent correspondence between such participation and faith affiliation (i.e., greater participation is evident in those who tend to be higher in faith affiliation). HE register 40% participation and LA 31%, whereas SND a mere 9% with A&A bucking the trend with 16%. When asked further if their faith may have come alive with engagement on a short-term mission (see Q51) (Table 3.39), only 20% of the overall respondents say "YES," perhaps due to low participation rate in the first place. However, a correspondence between vibrant faith and faith affiliation across the religious types has surfaced: HE, 27%; LA, 23%; SND, 4%; and A&A, 8%.

Q46: I went on a mission trip during my upbringing.
Q51: Did your faith come alive on a mission trip?

Table 3.38: Mission Trip Participation

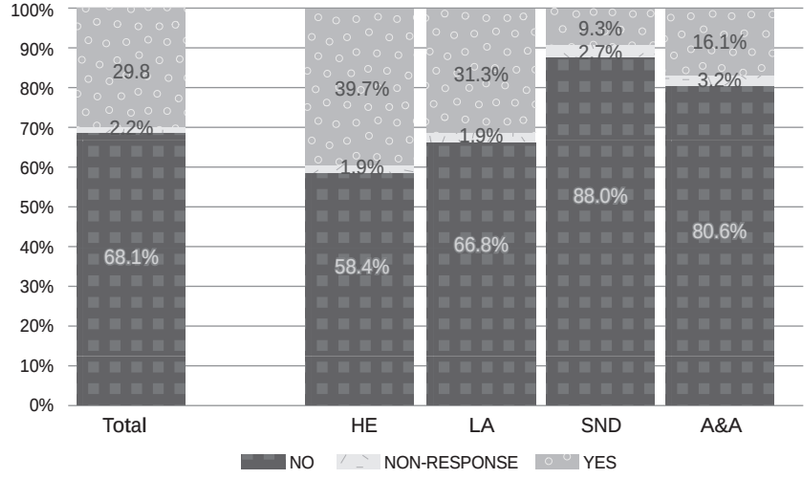
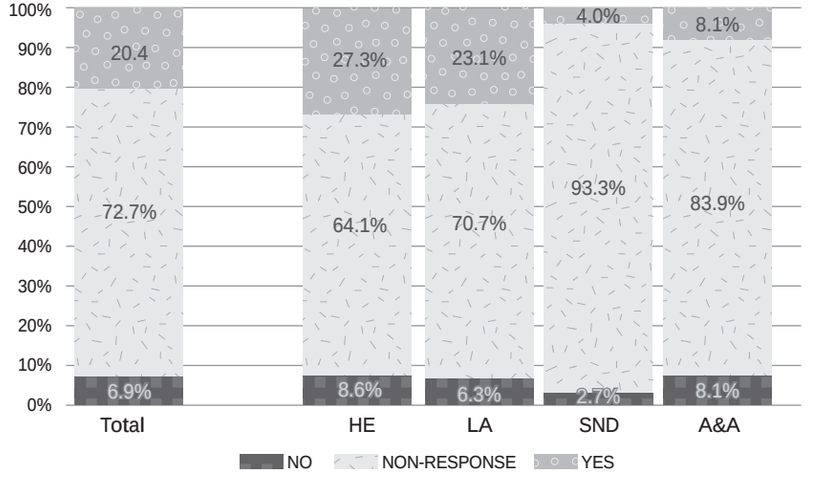


Table 3.39: Faith Came Alive on a Mission Trip



For the interviewees, experiencing God's presence in short-term mission trips as a variable to strengthen faith affiliation tells a slightly different story. Their description offers no specific correlation between such participation and an enduring commitment to the faith or CCIC. To the extent that mission engagements have any positive long-term impact, it can be seen in seven participants in three different religious types (HE, LA, and SND), with nine interviewees reporting either a neutral or negative experience while twenty participants register no participation. For those who report a positive impact, a shared theme has surfaced: participation in short-term missions does lead to a greater recognition of God's work and His purpose, which, in turn, fortifies their faith and fuels their spiritual growth.

For the HE group, four of ten (James, Peter, Rachel, and Rebekah) have never been involved with any short or long term mission while five others in this group mention participation (John, Leah, Miriam, Naomi, and Sarah). For example, Naomi merely

acknowledges involvement with a mission trip to another city and Leah has engaged in two short-term mission trips during her university years, without acknowledging for any impact. Speaking for those who engaged in multiple mission trips, Sarah recalls how such engagements motivated her to move from being a mere participant to becoming a trip leader on different visits. Similarly, Miriam relates strongly to how an ongoing annual engagement with a short-term mission to a native reserve in B.C. has resulted in a significant recognition of the spiritual reality of connecting the needs of the world with God's love:

> *Just getting to know the people there and seeing the brokenness that you don't necessarily see here. And it's not immediately evident when you go, when you first see it. But once you get to know the people and you really talk to them and start to hear about their lives and ... it really opens my eyes to how much this world needs God.*

The experience of a positive impact on one's spiritual growth is also evident in John's journey as he elaborates about the purpose of short-term mission engagement:

> *It is to further God's kingdom; to let people know about God's love and the Gospel. I think that is the main reason. That is what I think short-term missions are just to spread the word everywhere. It also helps me to learn more, to get more experience, and to get more comfortable to share my testimony, share my faith to random people.*

In the same way, five participants from the LA cohort also speak about involvement in short-term missions (Abigail, Julia, Mary, Phoebe, and Priscilla). While Julia, Phoebe, and Mary merely mention their participation and are silent about the impact, the other two recall their involvement with fondness. Priscilla recounts an eye-opening experience in how she was inspired by a mission engagement to Mexico, which made clear to her what the core purpose of such an endeavour is and what it means to put faith into practice in a genuine manner:

> *We went on a missions trip to Mexico [in Grade 9] ... and that was my first missions trip ... It was the first time when I had seen people pray genuinely and I guess it was just very open. I had never felt I had been close to my classmates because we had been together since Grade 1. I hadn't ever seen them genuine in this way I guess. It was like they were spiritually open.*

Abigail registers a similar experience during a short-term mission trip which she characterizes as "life-changing … and very powerful" because she "just felt the boldness and the courage to just declare my faith … [to] random strangers on the street."

When it comes to the SND cohort, four (Esther, Eunice, Eve, and Mark) interviewees report participation in missions trips. Esther and Eve indicate their involvement but offer no details on the engagement's impact. Eunice, however, remembers how God's presence came alive through the faithful examples of the trip leaders as well as how the mission forced her out of the comfort zone to engage with something that was not a routine expression of Christian experience such as attending worship. This experience in turn strengthened her faith and deepened her conviction at the time:

> *I would say for the short-term missions, I remember just listening to the leaders and hearing their testimonies and*

how God had changed or shaped their lives and how they had come to where they are now. And just hearing stories and also expanding my faith in terms of stepping out of my comfort zone and talking to strangers and engaging in conversation with people about God which is something I'd never done before. And realizing that this is what being a Christian really means. It's not something I practise in Thunder Bay like going up to people I didn't know and talking to them. So, [it] opened my eyes to another deeper aspect of Christianity and what my faith meant. Like this is what God is calling us to do, not just [to] live day to day, but to tell people about Him.

Mark, another SND, can be characterized as an activist in mission participation. He went to Africa "a couple of times" in university, each trip lasting for 6 weeks and he regales the impact on his faith at the time as very positive: "It was crazy!" Such engagements later led him to devote two years after university to returning to Africa for a longer-term ministry.

Finally, only two A&A participants mention involvement with short-term missions but do not share the similar delightful experience of the other cohorts. Luke briefly recalls his trips to Grenada but Judah comments on a negative experience, not so much about the trip, but the hypocrisy of the leader:

On the missions trip that I went on before I went to university, my senior pastor and also the Chinese pastor went along, I think that for most of the time the senior pastor wasn't really doing anything, he just, you know, told the younger pastor to do everything.

This discussion set the stage for Judah to launch into a deeper conversation about leadership power and hierarchy which elicited a very disturbing reaction when he recalled "the politics of hierarchy that just got really annoying" as it was related not only to mission trips but ministry at his church in general.

In summary, short-term missions are not ministerial engagement that most of the eSurvey respondents and interviewees have been involved with. But to the respondents who were, the eSurvey does point to a degree of correlation between such participation and religious affiliation. However, analysis of the interviewees shows no consistency with the eSurvey result, as the positive effect of short-term mission engagements surfaces in seven of sixteen interviewees across three cohorts (three in HE, two in LA, and two SND), offering no direct correlation of such engagement to a higher degree of faith stickiness. However, a case can be made that the impact is more salient in the Stay-On cohort as a whole than in the Drop-Out, implying a more likely correlation to the higher level of stickiness to their faith for both HE and LA participants than for the others.

For those who report influences contributing to spiritual growth, short-term missions offer a longer engagement period in ministerial endeavors (usually one to two weeks) than mere conference or camp attendance. The engagement appears to have heightened the awareness of transcendental presence in locales and languages that the participants are typically not familiar with. Such an experience lays bare the participants' religiosity in a way that removes their regular façade and draws them closer to the spiritual reality of how God carries out His work through missions.

Summary

For this study, attendance at conferences (including Teens Conference), retreats, and short-term missions may have had positive results for some of eSurvey respondents and interviewees. Yet an uneven level of influence is detected. For some, enduring transformative changes are evident, for others, participation in these events may act as a spiritual booster for them but the long lasting effect is questionable. Yet for the rest, engagement in these events leads to either a neutral or negative experience. In other words, no clear indication that a distinctive correlation between experiences of such special events and faith affiliation across the religious types is evident, a finding that is inconsistent with recent studies (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012b; Reimer & Wilkinson [with Penner], 2015; Smith [with Longest], 2009).

Parental Influences

The impact of parents' religiosity on their children has been widely regarded as one of the most significant influential parameters for understanding the faith engagement of the younger generation (Myers, 1996). Parental piety has been identified as a key determinant for the young adolescent's retention of their faith (Dean, 2010; Penner et al., 2012b; Smith [with Longest], 2009). Conversely, hypocrisy on the part of parents is singled out as the chief reason for apostasy of the children (Zuckerman, 2012). For the eSurvey respondents, the answers to the following roster of questions best represent how they see their parents' religiosity through the lens of such religious practices as service attendance, prayer, and Bible reading:

Q1: My mother attended religious services regularly during my upbringing.

Q2: My father attended religious services regularly during my upbringing.

Q3: I believe my mother prayed regularly outside of table grace.

Q4: I believe my father prayed regularly outside of table grace.

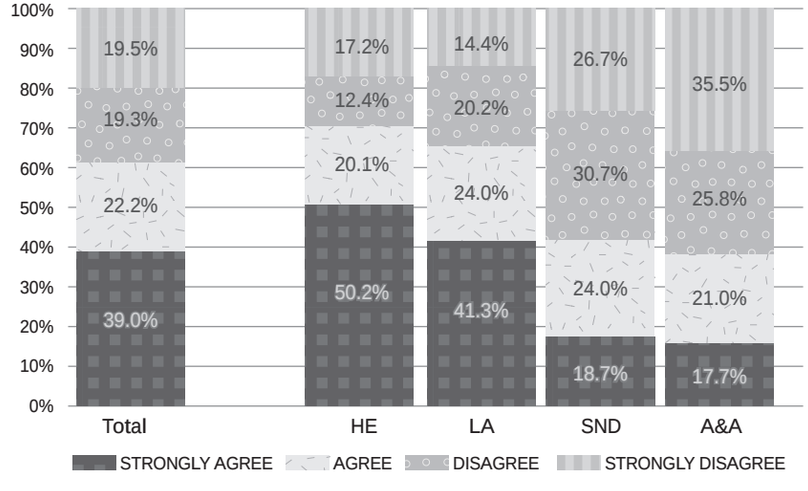
Q5: My mother read the Bible regularly during my upbringing.

Q6: My father read the Bible regularly during my upbringing.

Q7: My parent(s)' church attendance declined significantly or ceased altogether while I was living at home.

Q8: My parents encouraged me to explore religions other than Christianity.

Table 3.40: Parental Religiosity



The analysis indicates that 61% of respondents report a high to very high level of parental commitment to religious practices (Table 3.40). Further breakdown of the response based on the religious types shows a clear correspondence between parental religiosity and

the level of engagement of each type as higher parental religiosity is evident in the Stay-On cohort but a lower degree is identified with the Drop-Out group. In general, 70% of HE and 65% of LA report positively regarding such religiosity, whereas, 57% of SND and 61% A&A indicate unfavourable responses.

However, the analysis of interviewees' parental influence as an active agent for affecting concrete faith affiliation on CBCC through the following lens points to a less certain direction: (1) family devotional practice; (2) parental faith identity as a Christian; and (3) presence of explicit acknowledgment of parental influence points to a less certain direction. The result is not consistent or uniform to suggest that parental influence is a salient correlating variable across the religious types (Appendix E). In general, some parents of the interview participants exerted a degree of influence through modeling of ministry engagement in CCIC. Yet such engagement in and of itself does not necessarily translate into any impact on their children's growth in faith. In particular, a few in the Drop-Out group indicate that their parents are ministers (Abraham, Eunice, and Moses), deacons, or lay leaders (Jacob, Luke, and Thomas) at their home. Though parental ministerial roles or positions would normally justify an assumption of stronger faith commitment in the children, these Drop-Out participants would indicate otherwise by virtue of their religious types.

For this study, the religiosity of the parents behaves at best as a neutral agent for the participants, neither influencing the Stay-On cohort to stay affiliated with the church, nor discouraging the Drop-Out group to abandon their faith. Twenty-seven (of thirty-seven) participants recall "weak" to "neutral" parental influences on their faith journeys, with five others registering "negative" influences, and remaining five a "weak-to-positive" to "positive" impact (Appendix E). In addition, to the extent that the Drop-Out participants discuss family devotions when they were young, only a few indicate that such a practice was held. And when the exercise did take place, it was conducted irregularly, and usually stopped when these CBCC grew into the teenage years (Esther, Jacob, and Luke). Others do not recall having family devotions (Deborah, Eunice, Mark, and Thomas), with one participant (Lois) suggesting that it would not have been possible since she did not understand the language (i.e., Chinese) her mother spoke. Finally, two A&A interviewees carry a sarcastic and scornful view of their experience of family devotions, demonizing it as a "joke" (Judah) or "thing to avoid" (Moses). In the following section, a more detailed examination of parental influence as a driver for the CBCC's faith commitment is provided based on each religious type of the interview participants.

A. Highly Engaged (HE)

As the discussion of this section and the next one will show, there is not uniform evidence that parents exercise a strong impact on the faith of the Stay-On cohort. For HE, parental influence does not emerge as a consistent factor across the participants and for that reason, a conclusion on the correlation of parental influence having a "positive" effect on their stickiness with CCIC and their faith cannot be drawn. Six of the ten in this cohort exhibit an overall "neutral" or "weak" effect by their parents on their faith journeys (see Table E.1, Appendix E). Four (Andrew, James, Leah, and Miriam) do not mention the practice of family devotions, while the other three (Naomi, Rachel, and Rebekah) refer to devotions as a peripheral family spiritual exercise when they were young. In addition, three (Andrew, Miriam, and Naomi) in this group do not report any explicit parental influence on their growth in faith, partly due to the presence of non-Christian parents in the household (Miriam).

However, the three interviewees (John, Rebekah, and Sarah) in the "weak-to-strong" and "strong" categories do mention their parents as a good role model to follow, raising these CBCC with strong faith conviction and holding them accountable for its development. Unlike the LA cohort, most HE in the "neutral" and "weak" categories were brought to church by parents who continued to be actively engaged at their churches. One (Peter) of the ten interviewees who registers a "negative" influence reflects at length about feeling "fatherless" when growing up as his father was virtually absent. To the extent he was present, Peter suffered physical (i.e., spanking) and emotional abuse from him. His father considered himself a Christian when Peter started attending church at a very young age, abandoned faith later, and insisted that Peter needed "to open my eyes to other things and open my eyes to other religions." When Peter was involved with church ministry extensively, his father "wanted me to stop going to church." This father issue, as Peter frames it, has left him with much hurt and affected his mental and spiritual health in his teenage and adolescent years.

Finally two (John and Sarah) of the HE group positively discuss their parents' "strong" presence in their spiritual journey when growing up. Both explicitly highlight how they want to emulate their parents as a good role model in their faith journeys. John, for example, expresses appreciation of how his parents, though busy themselves in ministry, took leadership in initiating spiritual conversation with him, probing his understanding of Scripture, and leveraging the exchange to mediate faith. They also made themselves available and were open minded in discussing doubts on faith matters. In times of turbulence when John did not want to participate in church activities, it was his parents who gently guided him to continue the journey. In reflecting on how his parents created an unforgettable imprint on his life, John acknowledges and exclaims: "I am grateful." The description is equally vibrant on the part of Sarah. She was brought to church at a very young age. Though Sarah was raised by both parents, her mother was the stalwart of faith in the family: "My mom was actually a lot stronger in the sense of leadership of the family Christian life". Consistent, though not frequent, spiritual practices of family devotions were a mainstay of household activities and it was her mother who pulled them together. When Sarah had "challenging questions on the spiritual life", or even curiosity on the topic of sexuality, she did not hesitate to turn to her mother for guidance long before she would consult, for example, her Sunday School teachers. Yet in the end, it is her parents' devotion to the church ministry throughout all seasons of their life that stands out the most for Sarah, a commitment that has left an indelible impression and a very positive influence on her growth in faith. She recalls fondly:

> *My reflection now from when I was a child I've realized now that my parents despite having four children and having jobs of their own, they were very, very, very active in church in serving. And there's no incidents that stop them [like] sometimes some [other] adults complain, "Oh, I have a baby now. I need to stop serving." And for [my parents], it was: "have a baby and continuing to serve." And that happened. There are all four of us. So, that really spoke to me about the importance of serving God and serving just his children and the church.*

With the parents' footsteps of ministry beckoning her to follow, Sarah concludes with joy: "they are very, very good examples and role models for me."

B. Less Affiliated (LA)

For the Less Affiliated, a pattern of "weak" to "negative" influence prevails as eight out of the nine participants report “weak” (one), “neutral” (five), or “negative” (two) influence from their parents with only one participant making an explicit identification of “strong” parental impact on his faith journey (see Table E.2, Appendix E). Of the eight participants, two were brought to church when they were young by either friends or non-believing parents. Philip identified his parents as nonbelievers at the time of his interview, though Matthew mentions his parents’ conversion years after he attended church worship. Another two participants (Mary and Priscilla) were introduced to church by their mothers as their fathers were not Christians and had made no Christian commitment up to the time of the interview. In such a family environment where spiritual conversation or practice was not observed because not both parents were believers, family devotions were next to nonexistent.

Three of the nine participants identify what can be considered as either “weak” or “negative” parental influence on their faith journeys, as explicit references are made to parents as barriers that hindered or obstructed their spiritual growth. For example, Abigail speaks of her father as a domineering figure with abusive behaviour even though he was a deacon. Family devotions were present for this group but lasted only a few years into early to mid-elementary school years for two participants (Mary and Ruth). Ruth indicates that neither her church nor her family considered Bible reading as a crucial Christian spiritual practice because: “I think [only a] few people [at church] actually led by example and [a] few people actually showed how important it was.” For Abigail, family devotions were conducted in a way that was “too awkward and too forceful.”

In terms of explicit parental influences, Mary speaks about its absence in forming her faith growing up: “It [i.e., faith] wasn’t my mother’s, it wasn’t my own. It was textbook.” Describing her parents as being “distant,” she goes on to highlight how the Asian values of “shame” and “honour” motivated further disconnection from them, as such values prevented her from confiding in them about critical issues she faced such as her boyfriend’s abuse (physical and emotional), fearful of disapproval or being condemned. On the other hand, Ruth remembers all the negativity that was carried on at dinner table conversations about church conflicts and personal vendettas among leaders and families. Such conversations jarred her faith and created a distrust of church leadership. As to the spiritual practice of devotions, her parents seemed to be interested in conducting merely a formal exercise rather than focusing on personal growth in faith. Ruth explains further:

> *They never really actively tried to find out where my sister’s and my faith were, how we stood in terms of our faith, they never actively did, so for them it was like, “oh, did you read your Bible? Did you pray? Okay, [you did?] Good.”*

Of all the participants in the LA cohort, Abigail reports the most negative impact, recalling vividly the long-term spiritual and emotional abuse she suffered from her father. For instance, he disapproved of her career choice as a missionary and disavowed her for a few years because of a continued relationship with her boyfriend. Abigail attributes her father’s intransigence to a personal feud between him and his boyfriend's father who happened to be his rival, an enmity first incited by squabbles between the two when they sat on the church board. The scar her father caused in her heart and soul took years to heal, and she required an engagement with spiritual counseling services for therapy.

Finally, Bartholomew stands out as the exception in the LA cohort in registering a "strong" parental influence on his faith journey (i.e., an explicit reference to the parents as role models in spurring growth). Of all the discussions about their influence, the one that stands out the most is the ongoing bi-weekly family devotional practice (with the extended family as Bartholomew was married at the time of the interview) where the whole family, including the children and their spouses, would read the Bible and his father would deliver "a mini-sermon." More importantly, his parents backed the "talk" with their "walk," as he testifies to their modeling behaviour in how to treat others with respect: "I saw behaviours, I saw the way my parents treated others with respect". From his parents, Bartholomew witnesses the virtues of generosity and the practice of simplicity and frugality. Lastly, his parents were never forceful in facilitating spiritual growth but offered gentle guidance to allow him to develop a faith of his own.

C. Spiritual "Nones" & "Dones" (SND)

Overall parental influence as a variable in the spiritual journey of the SND cohort appears to be "weak" and "neutral", as eight of the nine participants reflect such sentiments in reference to its impact (see Table E.3, Appendix E). Similar to many in the other cohorts (e.g., LA), a few participants (three of the nine) in this group identify their parents as non-Christian and as such they have no impact on the participants' spiritual growth. As for spiritual practices for the family, six of the nine in this cohort do not recall having family devotions(Deborah, Eve, Lois, Mark, Martha, and Thaddaeus), while the remaining three mention infrequent engagement in such an exercise(Esther, Eunice, and Thomas). The reasons for its absence or infrequent practice vary across the cohort. Lois, for example, singles out the language barrier as she could not comprehend what her mother spoke (i.e., Chinese) when it came to spiritual conversation.

On the other hand, Eve, Martha, and Thaddaeus could not have had such a spiritual practice with their parents since they were not believers. Finally, Eunice is somewhat dismayed by the fact that her pastor father was always preoccupied with ministry, relegating family devotions to a lower priority, which was an irregular event at her household: "I remember my dad being not at home very much. So, I don't think we really had those times."

As for intergenerational religious conversations as a way to transmit faith values to the local-born by the parents, again Eve, Martha, and Thaddaeus do not report such an experience with their non-Christian parents. Mark, on the other hand, was brought to church by his mother while his dad was still not a Christian at the time of the interview. Yet no spiritual discussion with his mother is identified. Lois paints the same picture—the language barrier inhibited communication. For Thomas, religious conversation occurred only in "times of struggle … we wouldn't really talk about it in depth until [my mother] struggled [with her faith]." Esther shares a similar experience of occasional discussions. When asked to describe such exchanges, she recalls: "Not a lot. I think I didn't really know how to have those conversations with [my mother]. I didn't really like to open up about it. So, I don't think we talk very deeply." Deborah echoes in her reminiscence of having "not very much" religious conversation at home but offers a different explanation by attributing it to her father's personality and a theology that is performance-driven and biased toward actions in favour of words:

> *My father would be less likely to talk about his emotions and for him it was, "We go to church and we do this, we do that." But we don't really talk about it in depth in terms of our faith. I don't see him as being that type of person either even with his friends.*

As for Eunice, the limited presence of her father created a domino negative effect on religious conversation at home. She remarks:

> *I don't remember having a lot of spiritual conversations with my parents when I was younger especially. When I was older, I think I could ask my parents different things. But when I was younger, I just felt more comfortable asking my friends.*

In such an environment, Eunice was not comfortable about sharing with her parents any personal hardship such as a broken relationship with a non-Christian boyfriend. Furthermore, the issue of her father not striking a balance between ministry and family support took a bigger toll on Eunice. Feeling somewhat abandoned when his support was needed in times of turbulence or adversity, Eunice expresses:

> *Some anger and hurt toward my dad for not being around ... [For the fact that] he placed church over me. And I just didn't feel very valued or important. Like in my head I know my dad loves me. I know he cares about me. But just him physically not being around when I was a child made me feel hurt and angry and not [being]important to him.*

The strong feeling of desertion led her into a bout of depression "triggered by stress" while attending university, a mental health issue that she had to tackle through professional counselling for a period of time.

D. Agnostics and Atheists (A&A)

The parental influences on the A&A cohort appear to tilt toward "negative" (see Table E.4, Appendix E) with six participants reflecting "neutral" (four) and "negative" (two) sentiments, while the remaining three highlight what can be considered as "weak" influence. Take family devotions as an example. Many A&A participants do not identify with such an experience. But for those who do, devotions were either conducted only when they were young (Isaac and Jacob) or irregularly. Jacob describes the exercise this way: "[We had devotions] when I was younger, yeah. I think that sort of stopped or it became rare when I had gone to high school." Luke echoes with a similar sentiment, recollecting that it was his mother who led "periodic" devotional exercises for the family when he was young. As for his father, Luke characterizes him as "heavily [tending to] church involvement but not necessarily devoted to private religious discipline." He further elaborates: "My father was … a bit more [into] … just service, not really … doing devotions. He basically did not read the Bible or pray on his own. But he was all about serving at church." Finally two A&A interviewees (Judah and Moses) carry a very "negative" view of the experience of family devotions, characterizing them as from being "a joke"; "top-down"; "not organic"; not "something that would help our faith" (Judah); to "things to avoid"; "it was very annoying" (Moses).

Though most of the A&A are children of church-goers and some are children of pastors (Abraham and Moses) and deacons at CCIC (Luke), almost all of the participants have little to say concerning any explicit parental influence on their faith journeys. For instance, when asked if parents may have played a role in his spiritual growth, Judah declares its absence resoundingly: "I don't think so!" Furthermore, in a domestic setting where interaction ought to be personal, regular, and intimate, positive transmission of faith values and proper guidance of CBCC can take place through open conversation. Yet

more often than not, most interviewees in this cohort do not recall such an exchange. To the extent such discussions did take place, parental expression of turmoil in faith (e.g., complaints about God) or negative reactions to ministry (e.g., complaints about church) could turn CBCC off. For example, similar to the experience of Ruth (LA), who learnt of all the conflicts and infighting of a local church at the dinner table, thus leaving her with an indelible negative impression of CCIC, Moses (A&A) was disgusted by how his pastor parents were maligned at CCIC by congregants through listening in on their conversation: "My parents like to talk to each other at home about all the bull**** they have to deal with."

Summary

For the eSurvey respondents of this study, there is a strong correlation between parental religiosity and the religious types. The highest degree of parental participation in religious practices such as prayer, Bible reading, and worship attendance is found in HE, and the lowest in A&A.

However, such a correlation does not correspond with the interviewees' experience. As Table E.5, Appendix E illustrates, parental influence is at best a "neutral" or "weak" factor on their children's faith in the overall cohort (e.g., sixteen out of thirty-seven participants registering "neutral" in overall parental influences and eleven "weak"). This can be attributed in part to the reality that some participants' fathers or parents are not Christians, and in part to the sporadic and inconsistent spiritual practices of family devotions and spiritual discussion, and lastly to an absence of parental modeling or a lack of interest in shaping their children's spiritual character and faith. Yet the handful of interviewees who have registered positive influences attribute their strong faith adherence to the modeling presence of the parents, who led and guided their children by exhibiting spiritual virtues of trust, respect, and generosity. The overall finding of the participants' experience of parental influence is not in line with the conclusion of many studies that most faith practicing parents exert a positive influence (Bader & Desmond, 2006; Cornwall, 1987, 1989; Erickson, 1992; King et al., 2002; Myers, 1996; Nelson, 2014; Pearce & Denton, 2011; Penner et al., 2012b; Powell & Clark, 2011; Smith [with Snell], 2009; Voas & Storm, 2012; Winston, 2006).

Conclusion

As stated earlier, the purpose of this study is to explore the influences shaping the faith commitment and the disengagement from religion of the Stay-On and the Drop-Out cohorts of CBCC in the context of CCIC. This research has shown that many factors are at play in forging the faith identity of CBCC, aiding and abetting their journey's direction. In their growing up process, CBCC share many similar experiences with their mainstream counterparts such as schooling. Yet there are also a few distinctive features unique to this cohort. Through the analysis of the interviewees' faith experience and the respondents' answers to the eSurvey questionnaire, this investigation has identified four religious types within the Stay-On and Drop-Out cohorts that represent the CBCC's identity with respect to the affiliation with the immigrant churches, and to the strength or the absence of their faith ownership: Highly Engaged; Less Affiliated; Spiritual "Nones" and "Nones"; and Agnostics and Atheists. Furthermore, the study surfaces eight determinants that are highly salient in these religious types and shape them to become who they are. Two additional factors are

discussed as they are germane to the journeys of CBCC at CCIC, though they are not distinctive factors in shaping their religious identity.

For the HE cohort, a *mentoring experience* that is incarnational, sacrificial, and non-judgmental, has modelled and built up a strong faith conviction in them. Through such a support, the cohort attests to the effectiveness of the informal mentoring approach in which the mentoring engagement is typically initiated by the care and support of the mentors who are willing to enter into a close and formational relationship with CBCC by lowering their power stance and practicing active listening with a non-judgmental stance. In so doing, these mentors earn credibility and trust to offer sage advice and provide modelling examples to guide CBCC in tackling tough life issues. In addition, a strong sense of attachment to a *vibrant and authentic spiritual community* that is built upon solid belonging with complete acceptance, mutual support, and transparency has strengthened the CBCC religious identity and inspired them to continue a healthy and authentic faith journeys at CCIC. Such a community experience also cements an enduring connection and friendship in a safe environment where their vulnerability and brokenness can be expressed without fear of repercussion. On the contrary, a decline or disappearance of such an intimate relationship can disrupt affiliation with CCIC as evident in the experience of many SND.

Conversely, *dysfunctional leadership* marked by high power distance and the absence of an inspiring vision as well as an *unhealthy culture* as manifested in the hypocrisy, conflicts, and irrelevant teachings in CCIC as encountered by LA have motivated them to consider seriously and/or to have taken actions to disassociate themselves from CCIC, if not abandoning their faith altogether. In such an ecclesiastical ethos, CBCC in the LA cohort are frustrated by the treatment by the leaders as perennial underlings, and being looked upon as a generation that is unready for any significant leadership engagement. To them the first-generation leaders tend to play the cards of seniority and ministerial experience that appear to protect the immigrant generation's interests, rather than broadening the vision of CCIC to be inclusive in embracing an engagement with mainstream demographics. Filled with hypocrisy, politics, and internecine conflicts that usually favour the Chinese congregations, CCIC are experienced by these CBCC as unhealthy venues that deter their growth and maturation. The consequence of the experience for most LA is clear: take actions to own and express their faith identity in houses of worship other than CCIC.

As for SND, multiple challenges faced through various stages of *life transitions* have compelled them to forsake active participation in faith expression and communities, while still claiming belief in God. In an attempt to assert freedom and identity in the transition from high school to college, many SND are confronted with challenges they are not well prepared for. Forces such as pluralistic teachings, secular values, liberal life styles, and a curiosity to "taste life as a café" by exercising choices to try out different lifestyles have conflated together to shake the foundation of their faith. As a result, many SND opt to stop religious practices such as church attendance. For SND who transition from university into a career, some are faced with unusual career demands that make regular participation in faith communities extremely difficult. Other SND are challenged by costs and benefits concerns in making efforts to (re)connect with their religious communities that arise with the relocation of either their own residence or the church. Other SND have been jarred by the *conundrum of romance* marked by a fractured love relationship and shifting marital relationships or

cohabitation with partners (i.e., non-Christian and non-practicing Roman Catholics) who do not share the same faith values and priorities. Collectively, these life transitional issues and problems arising from the conundrum of romance have taken a significant toll in the faith journeys of SND that have led them to forsake affiliation with CCIC, if not their faith entirely.

For A&A, there is a strong presence of *rising intellectual complexity* in their experience that starts with religious doubts emerging from their conviction with cerebral reasoning and science. This cohort looks at faith as being disconnected with rationality and incompatible with science whose mutual relationship can best be described as a zero-sum game. Compounding the issue is the perceived inadequate and inappropriate response on the part of CCIC to being unable to address their doubt in a way that is objective and satisfactory. Many started this process in the teenage years and deepened their atheistic conviction in university by engaging in anti-religious resources to buttress their unbelief. In addition, A&A loath CCIC's treatment of the issue of homosexuality and many, including two self-identified gays, have pointed to the churches' hostile and unforgiving attitudes as the reason to repudiate faith affiliation. The issue of *homosexuality* and *sexual orientation* reveals a deeper conundrum most of the participants have identified: CCIC are muted in their teachings on sexuality and to the extent any teaching is offered, it is limited to addressing dating practices rather than a holistic understanding of sexuality in the context of human relationships. Together, these two determinants, i.e., rising intellectual complexity and issues concerning sexuality, are clear factors in turning A&A into apostates to abandon any belief in God.

Finally, two themes are examined as they are germane to the CBCC's faith journeys in the context of CCIC. Participants' *experience of God at special events* such as conferences, retreats, and short-term mission engagements was studied. While engagement in these special events tended to heighten some participants' spiritual intimacy with God across the HE, LA, and SND cohorts, this experience was uneven and inconsistent, hence not a distinguished determinant for faith attachment or disengagement for the CBCC this research has studied. In addition, *parental influence* in the journeys of the CBCC interviewed ranges from "weak" to "negative." This is due in part to the reality that some participants' parents are non-Christian, and others simply do not model well, nor do they conduct regular spiritual devotions with their children or take the initiatives in engendering meaningful spiritual conversations with them. Collectively these markers (i.e., parental faith attachment; family devotions; and explicit acknowledgment of positive parent influence) point to parents as at best a neutral factor in affecting faith transmission to CBCC.

In reviewing the findings of this research on the faith affiliation of CBCC, the following observations can be made. Firstly, while several determinants have been identified in relation to how their religious types are being shaped and influenced by these forces, no single factor functions alone. Many are in fact operatives in the individuals across all religious types. For instance, as is evident in the discussion of the natural growing up process, the upbringing of CBCC and their religious commitment is a multi-faceted experience that can take on different dimensions. Forces of one single determinant can in fact be countered by others. For example, positive mentoring engagement can be countered by a negative experience in church hierarchy or an unhealthy culture. Although each individual factor has its own merits in molding CBCC's character, positively or negatively, pursuing individual factors alone to address the CBCC faith journey's challenges may not be entirely

adequate and requires further contextualization at each faith community. Secondly, contrary to most of the literature reviewed in the topics, the themes of experiencing God at special events and parental influences have been found to be either not consistently salient in a particular religious type or somewhat "neutral" across all of them. For this reason, their effects have to be considered in the context of this study. Thus, in drawing out the implications for CCIC, care must be taken as to whether the same weight should be given to these two as to the other determinants. For example, a key reason why parental impact is "weak" to "neutral" across the participants is attributed to the presence of one or both non-Christian parents (i.e., for thirteen of thirty-seven participants identified, either one or both parents was non-Christian at the time of the interview). The lack of any spiritual impact in the home due to non-believing parents makes it difficult to identify causes and effects as some may deem the finding to be contrary to the proven reality in CCIC that most CBCC are children of first generation immigrant believers. Be that as it may, the finding can still be a significant area to explore as mere physical presence of parents does not necessarily entail in strengthening of the children's faith, as many of the participants attested. Active and explicit engagement of faith dialogue and modeling on the part of parents does. In addition, participation in events such as short-term mission trips and conferences have encouraged positive religious commitment in Stay-On and SND cohorts that, though they are not related to a particular religious type as determinants, they are variables of change to be considered in CCIC. Thirdly, the findings point to broader issues or deeper problems CBCC encounter from their teenage to young adult years. For instance, for the determinants of A&A, the rising intellectual complexity and the issue of sexuality are emblematic of a more profound predicament of how CBCC are challenged by secularism. In the same way, the findings of an absence of connectedness and the impact of fractured romantic relationships on SND show that their tentacles are in fact extended to the influence of deep-seated Chinese ethnic culture in their lives (e.g., honor and shame) as well as inadequate and inappropriate pastoral care from CCIC. Again, merely tackling the issues alone without re-orienting how CCIC need to frame their teaching and ministry in guiding CBCC in how to deal with secular forces and life transitions may prove to be insufficient. Finally, regarding the experience of LA with the dysfunctional leadership and unhealthy church culture, these determinants are not faith-dislodging agent for their religious commitment. However, the resulting distaste of CCIC is so strong that these forces have convinced many LA to express their faith elsewhere rather than continuing their worship at the immigrant churches. In this regard, though still a loss to CCIC and a major concern the faith communities must address, the destiny of these CBCC is aligned more with the Move-On group than with the Drop-Out cohort.

The analysis of the findings points to one important direction in response to the determinants of the CBCC's faith journeys for CCIC: any action(s) to be taken will require a combined exploration and understanding of these factors as well as how they may manifest themselves at individual CCIC. In addition, the findings present not only challenges but also opportunities in addressing the needs of CBCC and preventing a further exodus of the younger generation. In the next chapter, a suite of eight directional action recommendations are suggested for CCIC to address holistically the findings this research has surfaced.

A Paradigm Shift- 4 Directional Action Recommendations

A Paradigm Shift - Directional Action Recommendations

The findings of this study paint a picture of the rugged terrain CBCC must navigate through their faith journeys while growing up in the context of CCIC. Some participants share their hope, dreams, joy, and triumphs in their faith journeys, affirming the values of the immigrant church leadership and the wisdom and the blessing it has bestowed upon the local-born generation. Yet many others, be they still staying on with CCIC, or having left them for a variety of reasons, agonize poignantly about stagnation, confusion, rejection, hypocrisy, and power-struggles at the religious institutions in which they grew up. The findings behoove CCIC to take a sober thought in identifying solutions and taking meaningful actions to buttress what they have already been doing well in helping CBCC stay engaged in their faith, and to address the porous gaps that have kept CCIC distancing themselves from the local-born's faith conviction.

As the analysis of this study indicates, no single potion or elixir is available to completely address the root causes of the CBCC's staying or leaving CCIC and/or their faith. Any attempt to alleviate the phenomenon are likely to require a multipronged approach. Thus to respond to the unvarnished aspirations and frustrations of CBCC as well as to address the determinants for their faith commitment this study has identified, and to buck the trend of CBCC deflecting from their faith affiliation, a seismic shift of ministry paradigms and practices at CCIC is required. To that end, eight directional action recommendations are identified in this chapter to ameliorate the CBCC's concerns and to build on what may have been done at CCIC to deepen the younger generation's faith conviction. At the same time, it must be recognized that each congregational ministry is highly contextualized and uniquely positioned, and therefore distinctively differentiated from others. Intended to be broad-strokes, the recommendations are not designed to be a "one-size-fits-all" solution, a set of "plug-and-play" quick-fixes, or a suite of detail implementation initiatives. Rather, they collectively serve as a framework for CCIC to examine thoroughly the current state of their multi-congregational ministry, and what areas of transformation ought to take place.

Transformation is never easy, nor is the process to achieve it a clean path. Translation of these action recommendations into what ministerial steps each one of CCIC needs to undertake requires the spiritual community to adopt a humble stance and act in a prayerful spirit with a willingness to engage in honest and open dialogue, navigating nuanced conversation with intentional listening on the part of all stakeholders. Only then can a refreshed cohesive vision and a clear mission for both generations emerge, overcoming barriers and influences that held them back so they can move forward for God's kingdom and His glory. Finally, the recommendations are a clarion call for the CCIC and CBCC leaders and congregants to engage with one another with dignity and mutual accountability in addressing the spiritual growth and well-being of the local-born, as well as the exodus of this cohort from CCIC. In so doing, the Chinese church communities may need to recognize that they are called on to chart a new course that is characterized by mutual humility and respect, one that is marked by intergenerational collaboration reflecting not merely the priority of the local immigrant churches, but also the broader interest of God's kingdom that transcends national and ethnic boundaries.

1. From “Jiaozi” (dumpling) to Jesus

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

Chinese immigrant churches that are of evangelical persuasion across North America tend to organize their ministry around the core mandates of evangelism, church growth, and discipleship. To implement these mandates across a spectrum of cultures and sub-cultures (e.g., Mainland Chinese versus Hong Kong Chinese), the churches often are structured in a way that favours their language of convenience (i.e., English, Mandarin, and Cantonese) with the intention of facilitating communication of faith in the congregants’ mother tongue so as to simplify internalization and enhance spiritual interaction among the faithful. With the first comer privilege, the Chinese congregants (i.e., Cantonese or Mandarin speaking) tend to have occupied the leadership roles in regulating the agenda of church ministry, including teaching and preaching. Growing up with this ecclesiastical structure, many CBCC recall confusion concerning the distinction between ethnic and faith practices as cultural differences loom large among the congregations (Wong, 2015). To many local-born, concerns that the teachings of CCIC are driven by cultural preferences rather than the gospel-centric messages are clearly expressed in this study. Clashes in values that underline the conversations and practices between immigrant parents and churches and their offspring appear to center mostly around the vision and direction of the church, ministry orientation, and personal vocational calling. The Chinese immigrant generation is more inclined to shape a ministry orientation designed for reaching out to the ethnic community due to prevalent interests of evangelizing to the Chinese as well as creating "bonding social capital" (Ley, 2008; Pearce, 2008; Putnam, 2000), linkages that are “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (Putnam, p. 22), and allow “immigrants to develop a strong sense of identity and to enforce norms and sanctions within tight-knit communities” (Pearce, p. 4). Yet the local-born appear to be much more keen in creating ties with the broader society, carrying out an “all-nations” multiethnic mandate of mission, as well as shoring up "bridging social capital" with the outside world, ties that are “better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion” (Putnam, p. 22). These are connections with the external groups, allowing immigrants and their children to engage in the “mainstream society and [to have] access to various information and services unavailable in ethnic communities” (Pearce, p. 4). The dichotomy between these two social capitals is but one of the areas that typifies the major cultural differences between the generations. As some have argued, many CBCC part ways with the immigrant church more because of the intolerance of the cultural bifurcation than due to theological disagreements (Chang, 2017; Wong, 2015).

Drawing from Brueggemann’s (1985) interpretation of 2 Kings 18-19 as a basis for the argument that the cultural conditions of postmodernity require the church to behave as a “bilingual community,” conversant in both the traditions of the church and the narratives of the dominant culture, Dean (2010) argues that faith communities must establish the ability to communicate with the broader culture yet at the same time resist giving in to its demands and be faithful to the Word (pp. 113-114). To that end, parents and church leaders are called to be the cultural and faith translator for the next generation with the objective of interpreting the meaning of the Word afresh in their context (p. 130).

One of the key steps for faith communities in becoming such a translator is to be more innovative in its ministerial pursuit. CCIC

need to create an environment conducive to building trust and support, such that they would move the immigrant churches from being a bastion of cultural preservation to a living and intergenerational community that bears an unique expression and witness for the living Christ. Such an emerging community is a place of healing, forgiveness, reconciliation, and authentic fellowship, a venue where the younger generation can come as they are with all their imperfections without being fearful of tarnishing the family honour and being chastised and shut out. To do so, CCIC need to encourage the removal of the cultural barriers that hinder the CBCC's search for self-discovery of the authentic message of faith and to engender a fresh experience of the new life as described by the gospel, one that "promises the freedom to be not only as we are but to become what we are called to be through Christian discipleship" (Joseph, 2014, p. 36).

To many CBCC, the teachings at CCIC, while Biblical, are at times mixed with cultural nuances and even biases. Passages such as "obeying your parents" (e.g., Eph 6:1) are taught with a paternalistic tone and practiced in a patriarchal manner that is very ethnically Chinese. Though not delivered with an intention to subjugate the local-born, the message is often perceived to convey rigidity with no room for discussion or interpretation. Abigail's desire to be a missionary is but one of the many examples. Her zeal was squelched by her father, as she characterizes her parents' rejection as: "they are Chinese." Her agony points to the deeper issue of a clash between cultural biases versus gospel-centric values. Many participants in this study lament about how choices are limited by their parents when it comes to academic programs to study or careers to pursue. Most speak about how an inordinate amount of influence was exerted by their parents in limiting them only professional programs to enroll in: accounting, engineering, medicine, pharmacy, etc. Seldom is a constructive dialogue or inspirational discussion about the local-born's calling evident. Similar to immigrants from other nations, the first-generation Chinese immigrants are known for their work ethic that is shrouded with a success-oriented ethos: result-driven and performance-centric. This mindset exists for the reason that many immigrants came to Canada for safety and better education for their offspring (Wong, 2015). The pathway for the achievement of these desires is one of upward mobility, if not of complete incorporation into the broader society. Yet very often the local-born perceive this practice to be driven by cultural values. For instance, when they are convinced of God's guidance in following Christ as they respond to the calling to the a career such as pastoral ministry through their own faith pursuit, they are confronted with "cultural" rejection. Andrew recounts a story of a self-seeking father who rebuked his son when the son expressed a desire to answer God's calling as a missionary to China: "We came to Canada so that you don't have to return to China." Andrew offers his own counter-argument: "The Bible teaches us to obey our parents. But when it comes to following Christ, He must be our priority." It is reactions similar to this father's and Abigail's, as well as teachings of pursuing material success as the first priority that prompt J. Kim (2003) to relay the desire of the Korean second-generation to the first: "Teach me about Jesus Christ, not about Korean culture", or "Don't give me kimchi, just give me Jesus" (p 63). Or understood in the context of CBCC: "Don't give us jiaozi, just teach us Jesus."

To that end, CCIC need to firmly root their teachings in God's Word and yet be sensitive to how the Spirit guides them in interpreting it in the context of CBCC. One of the key areas that churches are encouraged to be cognizant of is how they deal with the influence of ethnic culture and values in the context of being an

immigrant community in Canada (e.g., how to address Asian teachings of success, face, shame, and honor in the context of Biblical values of calling, acceptance, fulfillment, and following). As Stetzer (2014) behooves the faithful to engage culture with the unchanging gospel, such engagement requires an understanding in how to address the multicultural milieu that CCIC and CBCC are situated in and how they need to shape their identity in addressing that milieu (e.g., how to affirm a faith identity that transcends ethnic boundaries in the cultural context). As much as it is important to address this challenge, equally critical is the awareness CCIC must have of the cultural nuances and practices they bring into the community (e.g., how to support mission engagements of both Chinese nationals and global participation).

CCIC must come to grip with the notion that Jesus, and by extension gospel-centric teachings, is at the core of the local-born's construction of an identity that intersects between their hybrid ethnicity (i.e., Chinese-Canadian) and faith. The gospel is the adjudicator for values and truth. As such, gospel-centric teachings can inform, reform, transform, and create culture (Carson, 2008; Crouch, 2008; Kim, M., 2017; Kraft, 2005; Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1978; Newbigin, 1986; Niebuhr, 1951; Platt, 2015). First, the gospel informs culture by critiquing wrongful man-made traditions such as the practice of "corban" (Mark 7:9-13). Next, the gospel reforms culture by judiciously highlighting the corrupted aspects of cultural practices in order to restore it to its holistic intent such as "obeying parents in the Lord," not sanctioning parents to use this instruction as a justification to lord over the children but rather to motivate them to submit to parents because of their faith identity in the Lord. Finally, the gospel transforms and creates culture in a way that beckons believers to follow Christ's example to abandon the popular secular cultural and social norms completely (e.g., the pursuit of material success) in favour of what the world may consider as innovative or radical, as in the example of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. To that end, the local-born examined in this initiative as well as those covered in other research (Wong, 2015) express an insatiable hunger for a gospel-centric message: just give them Jesus.

2. From Belonging to Radical Discipleship

Developing and implementing a set of radical yet Biblical-based discipleship principles and practices that accept risk-taking and shape a lifelong devotion.

As this study has illustrated, HE of the Stay-On cohort register a solid identification with CCIC as well as a tenacious commitment to their faith. One of the major reasons for the strong attachment is the emphasis these participants place on the friendships that they have knitted in CCIC. Such a relationship creates a spiritual fellowship as well as a strong social bonding that in turn enhances the level of homophily as well as connectedness in the community (Wong, 2015). Thus to no one's surprise, acknowledgment of strong belonging is one of the key markers for this group. Yet at the same time, broken relationships, among peers in general and in particular romantic ones, do result in a high likelihood of disassociation of CBCC from their faith communities as exhibited by the SND cohort. The problem lies in part with the reality that many CBCC put a premium on the human relationships as the end-game, at times more so than on their relationship with God. When intimate relationships, in particular romantic ones, become fractured, affiliation with faith communities for those involved is no longer viscous especially in venues that are salient with honor and shame culture that may frown upon such breakup as a failure.

A two-fold action can be considered for addressing the issue. First, the importance of a spiritual relational value rooted not in association with cliques, clans, first-comers, or social background but in God needs to be clearly articulated. This is the foundational value upon which every other relationship in the church must be built. Relationship with God cannot be strengthened by programs and activities with the objective of merely generating fun and excitement, a phenomenon similar to what Tozer (1997) admonishes against: "Christ calls men to carry a cross; we call them to have fun in His name" (p. 155). In addition, the Sunday School curriculum cannot be designed merely to mediate stories but not teach Biblical truth as a few CBCC (e.g., Moses and Bartholomew) complained about. True divine belonging can only arise out of the personal pursuit of intimate experience of following Christ and obedience to God's calling. 1 John provides a clear metaphor of such a pursuit: the enduring relationship with the Eternal Life that is built upon an engaging divine encounter by the whole being with a direct experience of seeing, hearing, and touching, and not merely by a cerebral quest. This experiential relationship is the cornerstone of what 1 John characterizes as the "fellowship with the Father and his Son, Jesus Christ" (1:3). Only with this deep, personal, and intimate vertical integration experience with the Lord can forging and shaping a healthy horizontal relationship, including intimate friendship and romance among believers, be possible and sustainable: "So that you also may have fellowship with us" (1:3). This vertical-and-horizontal relational framework forms for believers a foundation of spiritual dependence on Christ not likely to be dampened by any dent on the human relationship; and transforms the cultural value of face and shame.

The second prong is construed through a key understanding of what Biblical followership must constitute. While it is true that Christ calls His church and followers to "disciple all nations," followers must first be disciples themselves. In this context, an argument can be put forward that disciples are not made, but shaped, first by obedience to the Lord's calling and emulation of His devotion to the Kingdom, then by developing and honing spiritual practices (e.g., meditative prayer and practice of Sabbath) that lead to fostering a godly character and a deeper commitment to follow Him. Only then can disciples inspire others to join in the journey. Paul is the disciple-shaping apostle par excellence. His articulation of imitation in 1 Cor. 11:1 ("Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ") makes it plain that a leader must first be a follower, a follower of Christ. To that end, he challenges the Philippians not just to observe his life but put into practice what he has demonstrated to be a Christ follower: "Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me --- put it into practice." (Phil. 4:9). If that is the case, then discipleship is no longer a topic characterized by a curriculum one needs to enroll in or an immediate target to reach such as obtaining a certificate of completion. Discipleship is first and foremost a life-long journey of "denying oneself, [and] picking up the cross" (Mark 8:34), following Christ's direction, imitating His character, and developing values that are rooted in His teachings. Thus, the most important aspect of the lifelong spiritual pursuit lies not so much in the attention to "acting out," but rather to the commitment of "baking in". In other words, the focus of discipleship is more on the "being" rather than "doing," and more concerned about "shaping" than "making." If this understanding of discipleship is acceptable, then there is only one paragon of faith we must emulate and follow: Jesus Christ the Lord Himself. In a portrayal of Millennial "Nones," Aigner (2015) ruminates on his own journey in an essay, *Dear church: An open letter from one of those Millennials you can't figure out*, and points out that one of the observations of his generation about

the church's teaching of following Christ is that: "The Jesus preached from the pulpit did not look much like the Jesus of Nazareth." CCIC need to re-orient themselves by returning to the Jesus of the Bible by targeting the radical nature of Jesus' lifestyle and his transformative values as a foundation of discipleship: risk-taking, courageous, complete dependence on the Father, truth-telling, merciful and compassionate, dispensing justice but always with steadfast love, obeying and suffering with faith, and perseverance in, and deeply committed to, completing the redemption mandate. The question remains: Are we being complacent with the status quo? Or are we willing to engender a sense of wonder in the younger generation to be Christ-like disciples and take risks for the Lord, to be whoever and to go wherever God calls them to be and go?

3. From Textbook Instruction to Journeying

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

Taking from the saliency of faith experience in the HE group, one can infer that growth in faith for CBCC requires not so much traditional textbook instruction as dependence on someone being alongside them to journey together. This is not to say that instruction is not important. However, if there is any concern about the ethos of the CCIC's pedagogy, CBCC appear to be responding to the first-generation this way: "you have often told us what to do [and what not to do], but you have seldom helped us in how we must grow, and never inspired us where we need to go!" Similarly, Elmore (2017) suggests that today's emerging generation of teens and adolescents who are the future leaders desire adults to be "guides" not "gods." To Greenleaf (2003), this is what leadership is supposed to focus on. He defines a leader as someone "who is trusted and who shapes others' destinies by going out ahead to show the way" (p. 32). In raising up the Twelve, Jesus set them aside so that "they might be with him" (Mark 3: 14), to observe and learn from His personal example. To Him, equipping them involves a process of modeling and shaping of their calling, character, and competency, a process not likely to be accomplished in the classroom environment but rather in an experiential setting of life ministry. One of the key reasons for such a pedagogical shift can be gleaned from Ruth when she remarks: "Our generation values experience more." Yet this insight appears to run up against the CCIC's tradition of direct instruction that favours curriculum-based programs or course-driven training. The "alongsideship" appreciated by CBCC requires a willingness on the part of the mentors to lower their self-merit to a level where the mentees feel comfortable. It requires an incarnational practice of engaging with the mentees with unfeigned humility, seeking mutual accountability rather than asserting a stance of superiority. It implies the alacrity to admit vulnerability and brokenness and maintain transparent. Dean (2010) observes that mentors are difficult to find because they "lacked confidence about their own faith formation." (p. 121). Be that as it may, the practice of mentorship does not necessarily need to take on a formal program or structure, though it is always helpful to have one in place. The informal mentorship experience HE attest to reflects a desire or readiness of the mentors to enter into the mentees' world as who they are, helping the younger generation all they can, including self-sacrifice in terms of time, finance, and energy. Mentees in the HE group express appreciation for the support from the mentors in their willingness to listen, accepting them as who they are without condemnation, caring for their wellbeing, and affirming their faith. The mentoring experience that seems to have worked best for this cohort puts emphasis less on the positional status of the mentors than on the authenticity of care, as

Andrew witnesses how his pastor acknowledges his disability and sponsors his leadership involvement.

How can CCIC raise such a group of mentors? Just as it takes disciples to reproduce disciples, it takes congregants who are mentors to replicate mentors intentionally. De Pree (2014) relates the development of mentors to a "covenantal approach to life and leadership," implying a commitment that requires perseverance and longsuffering. Yet the outcome is worth the effort if CCIC are committed to raising a healthy generation of devoted local-born followers of Christ. However daunting it may seem, faith communities can consider establishing a pilot program of informal mentoring to recruit adults who are willing to open themselves up to this journey with the local-born. In addition, CCIC can also judiciously establish a formal "walking together" mentorship initiative by accentuating the mentors' intent to sacrifice for the sake of spurring the growth of CBCC. Above all, committed adults who are inspired to raise up the next generation in growth and maturity can start the mentoring process by simply taking an interest in CBCC's welfare and wellbeing by making themselves available to offer help or engage them in informal discussion over a coffee or a meal. Just like building a house brick by brick, a mentor and mentee relationship can be constructed step by step. Though the enduring effect may not be evident overnight, the selfless kindness and nurturing care of the mentors will be remembered and leaned on as the HE cohort attests.

4. From Protecting to Preparing

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

As CBCC experience life stage changes from childhood to puberty, from teenage years to emerging adulthood, and from the university campus to the career pursuit, they undergo a nature process of transition that not only disrupts their lifestyle but also challenges faith, values, and norms, as they will inevitably interact with people with background and values other than their own through different networks of social connection along their journeys. According to this study, transitions of this nature are likely to induce a process of deconstruction and reconstruction in faith and identity that is part and parcel of CBCC's growing up into maturity, as Magyer-Russell et al. (2014) observe in the context of physical transition as well as spiritual transition: "The goal of leaving [home for university] is not to become an ideological vagabond [though some do], but rather home-leaving is a prerequisite for the homecoming to a more mature and cohesive identity and worldview" (p. 50). However, a recent U.S. survey suggests that 70% of adults "say children growing up today will not be ready for adult life [i.e., life after grade school]" (PR Web, 2017). Other research suggests that teens entering college are less shaped by purpose and few have clear direction in life (Clydesdale, 2007). With that in mind, how can parents and faith communities develop and support the younger generation in a manner that is nurturing but not overpowering, equipping them in ways that can help them anticipate and address the challenges they may face in their transitory experience?

Thomas (2006), a noted Christian author who has written extensively on family ministry, suggests that parental concerns in child-rearing can be netted down to two, and they can be framed as prayers. First, parents pray to the Lord: "Protect them [i.e., the children]," and to paraphrase the plea of the traditional Davidic Psalms: "Lord, do not be far from them" (Ps. 22:11, 19; 35:22; 38:21). Second, parents ask God to "change them." (pp. 75-76). Thomas, however, argues that there ought to be a third prayer, one

that expresses our gratitude to the Lord for our children:

> *God, thank you for the way you're working in their lives. Thank you for how I see you sanctifying them. Thank you for the joy of living with my children. Thank you for the privilege of getting to spend my life with them. (p. 76)*

Though Thomas' assertion is laudable, there is an even more foundational prayer CCIC and immigrant parents need to lay before the Lord: "Before you change them [i.e., the children], first change us." Parents are required to commit themselves first to the transformative path of becoming authentic followers of Christ in order to generate the moral and spiritual authority to invite the children to emulate them in all facets of their spiritual pursuit (Deut. 6:4-9).

Many CBCC in this study characterize the protective upbringing environment in both their church and their families as "bubbles," "sheltered," "comfortable" (e.g., Eunice, Eve, John, Mary, Matthew, and Naomi) with no real test of faith and no opportunity to build up their conviction through meaningful contacts with the world. Phoebe portrays the ho-hum protected environment she was raised in:

> *I think it was just the way that I was brought up. It was really normal. I didn't know anything different you know. Like my parents are Christians, and then my school is Christian, and my other friends at the church are Christians, so it was just like [pretty protected].*

To alter the pathway from protection to preparation and equipping, CCIC and immigrant families can judiciously shape the worldview and the spirituality of CBCC by finding ways to guide them to see the world from Jesus' perspective. The process needs to start long before the teenagers are to be transitioned into college. In an interview by Mueller (2008), Clydesdale, a researcher in the transition of high schoolers into college, argues that those who:

> *Walked away from their faith during college made the decision to do so long before their college years ... In many cases, these teens reported having important questions regarding faith during early adolescence [12-14 years old] that were ignored by their parents or pastors rather than taken seriously and engaged thoughtfully.*

He continues to suggest that "it is in early adolescence that faith trajectories [along with other life trajectories] are set, thus early adolescence is the point when preparation must occur." The preparatory process ought to be rooted in a seismic shift of cultural values into faith values that needs to take place first in parents. As a change of mindset, parents must modify the child-rearing paradigm from one that can be described as "preparing the path for the child" to one of "preparing the child for the path." "Preparing the path for the child" in the Chinese immigrant family context can mean being motivated by worldly success, marked by fame and accomplishment through the pathway of professional careers and material attainment, characteristics underscored by a success theology. To that end, this paradigm implies the pursuit of cerebral competency. For instance, local-born children are sent to afterschool programs to develop their analytical skills so that they can excel in areas such as mathematics and sciences, prerequisites to getting into medical school or an accounting major. In contrast, a "preparing the child for the path" approach seeks a fundamentally shifted mindset. Rather than competency-driven, this pursuit is designed to help the child discover his purpose and calling in life and build his character. Thus, a child needs to be raised with confidence and a sense of wonder as to what

he or she may become under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. One good way to allow God to pique the child's interest is to expand his/her horizon of the world and see what it really is from the spiritual perspective: broken, sinful, and fallen, and what God is doing to redeem it, with love, hope, and mercy. This can shift CBCC from seeing "the church is their world (i.e., the 'bubble')" to realizing "the world is where the church/God's kingdom is." In so doing, this would move the younger generation from being merely consumers of earthly goods to contributors to God's kingdom. Mission engagement with the children, a salient factor for the Stay-On cohort and some SND, can be an effective way to open CBCC to the experience of the wider world, shaping them to be followers of Christ with obedience to His calling and dependence on His guidance. Through services and ministry with such engagements, a child will find himself/herself in a much better spiritual framework to seek clarity for his/her vocational calling and to respond to the needs of the world. Once that calling begins to bud, parents are wise to affirm and support it, even if that calling requires the children to commit themselves to less materially rewarding careers such as full-time ministry. As a wise saying goes: "Do what you think is going to make the Lord happy rather than what is going to make you rich." The participants examined in this research complain about how pursuing full-time ministry is not only frowned upon but completely rejected by their parents. For example, one participant shares her dream to become a missionary and how her parents took the news: "My parents were very against it. Why? Because [to be a missionary is] not very Chinese … Because it's not very profitable [and] not very wise … my family is Chinese and they don't like it."

"Preparing the child for the path" requires intentional equipping on many fronts: building up the younger generation's spiritual values and faith identity; opening up conversations about permissive sexual behaviours and why they are not consistent with spiritual values; strengthening their faith through a deep-rooted and enduring experience of God as well as a foundational and holistic understanding of key Christian teachings. "Preparing the child for the path" can also mean painting the picture in advance for the child as to what campus life may involve, inviting those who have current or past experience to speak to their life and walk with them. In addition, investigative questions on faith and social life on campus can be postulated with potential answers sought out in advance to facilitate a fruitful conversation with the local-born, in turn encouraging them to draw their own conclusions (Freitas, 2008).

5. From "a Museum of the Saints" to "a Hospital for the Wounded"

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

If faith progression is perceived as a pilgrimage through life stages, then such a journey can, in fact, be full of joy, agony, and tears, mirroring the triumphant celebration in God's court, and the distressful experience of the Valley of Baca (Ps. 84). The perturbing struggle in the valley can be very lonely. Sojourners in such a quandary long for a companion who can share the tears and agony, or a place that is safe to restore their confidence and hope. Yet the interviewees' accounts suggest that CCIC do not always offer a "safe house" or a "city of refuge," a place and space where CBCC can feel comfortable to express their doubts, speak of their wounds and hurt, and look for spiritually therapeutic regeneration of their faith commitment. Abigail sums it up well: "I feel that's really sad … that the church cannot be a place of healing." Very often, CBCC (e.g.,

Abraham, Eunice, Martha, and Moses) are fearful of the repercussions of being condemned and concerned that their desire to experience God's mercy and healing might be thwarted. Thus, in the eyes of some of the participants, CCIC are thin on encouragement, impatient of human failure, and quick to criticize. Clothed in the conservative ethos and teachings, CCIC are looked upon by CBCC as institutions that frown upon any spiritual misgiving, in part due to the desire to preserve the perceived "holiness" of the church. Beneath this, however, the culture of exclusion appears to be rooted in a failure to practise forgiveness and reconciliation, a stance that is grounded more in a culture of honour and shame than in the Biblical values of acceptance and mercy. This is not to suggest that CCIC should treat sinful behaviours lightly. But the holistic support for those who struggle in the valley must not start and end with a direct and straightforward judgement, leaving the afflicted with little opportunity to rebound in God's grace and forgiveness. The end objective ought to be restoration through a spiritual environment that is rooted in love, respect, restoration, acceptance, and compassionate nurturing exemplified by Christ.

Given the culture and practices discussed, CCIC collectively are seen as what Van Buren (1964) characterizes as: "a museum for saints," a place that welcomes only those who are perfect, when what CBCC need the most in times of struggle is a place and space that is safe, transparent, willing to offer mercy and support before condemnation is rendered. In this regard, CBCC aspire their faith communities to be what Van Buren further describes: "The church is a hospital for the sinners," embracing those who are in need of love and restoration, echoing what Jesus accentuates: "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Mark 2:17). CCIC can consider, as some have already put in motion, establishing practices that reflect the values of how the church must be perceived: an accepting, forgiving, and restoring community. In other words, the communion of saints and the forgiveness of sins as affirmed in the Apostles' Creed need to go hand in hand. Such a practice requires servant-leadership to shape the faith community with a Christ-like mind.

In discussing acceptance and empathy in the context of servant-leadership, Greenleaf (2002) declares: "Great leaders … may have gruff, demanding, uncompromising exteriors. But deep down inside the great ones have empathy and an unqualified acceptance of the persons of those who go with their leadership" (p. 34). In this regard, he drew inspiration from Robert Frost's poem *The Death of the Hired Man* (1915) in which a farmer was discussing what a home is with his wife: "Home is a place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in" (pp. 20). Not only is home a safe haven, it is also a place where undeserved acceptance is found and received. And this is what a servant-leader must do in creating an environment in which leaders and followers can experience complete and unconditional mutual acceptance and forgiveness. This will allow the "offender" and the "offended" to be fully restored to their dignity and worth as a "son or daughter" in Christ. Home is also where one is no longer a stranger, treated with hostility and unwelcome gesture, but rather fully embraced as a full member of a family. He or she would at once feel at home, not because a home is a place where acceptance is guaranteed out of duty, but instead, a home is a place where one does not deserve acceptance but is accepted unconditionally. "Home is like unearned grace; it is simply available, [with] no strings attached," declared Greenleaf (1996, p. 310). CCIC can be such a home by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ.

To put this into practice in a way that reflects the values of

acceptance, forgiveness without conditions, and the pursuit of restoration, concrete steps can be taken in turning the church from "a museum of the saints" to "a hospital for the wounded." CCIC can carve out a place such as a "Safe Corner," "Youth Hub," or "Upper Room" where teens can enter with a feeling of safety, comfort, and assurance that they are listened to when expressing doubts and pursuing restoration. Such a practice is important, as some suggest that the more open and safer the high schoolers experience in being allowed to express doubts and problems, the healthier their transition will be into college (Melleby, 2011; Power & Clark, 2011). Furthermore, CCIC can be reminded that the gospel-centric ministry focuses not merely on salvation but on the pursuit of holiness, which is an important aspect of the holistic gospel. The significance of this step lies not so much with the action as in the message and gesture sent to the entire spiritual community that as followers of Christ, we are but forgiven sinners and therefore it behooves us to "forgive each other just as in Christ God forgave" (Eph. 4:32).

6. From Rigidity to Fluidity

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

To many CBCC, the "old-home" practices of the first-generation of conducting ministry are at times confusing and irrelevant. One of the flashpoints that ignites cognitive dissonance in the CBCC's mind (e.g., James, Mary, Miriam, Phoebe, Rachel, and Thaddaeus) is the practice of joint services at CCIC, a worship service for all congregants from different languages held on important occasions in the Christian calendar such as Christmas and Easter. Though not all are in opposition to such a practice, many interviewees have developed a distaste for it. A few acknowledge that joint services are established to celebrate the unity and communal aspect of the immigrant church, but most CBCC find the CCIC's congregational structure to be very siloed in its orientation. To the extent that the local-born register positivity on their "church" experience, "church" appears to be restricted to the English congregation, not the entire institution of a Chinese immigrant church. The phenomenon is rooted partly in the language barrier, which prevents any meaningful spiritual interaction between CBCC and the other congregations. More importantly, CCIC are perceived to be organized with a structure that reflects a power base favouring the first-comer or the founder cohort, which is typically the Cantonese. To many CBCC, joint services reflects how ministry design and resource allocation are deployed with such favoritism. Under this arrangement, congregations of different languages are motivated to take sides in conforming to the power structure irrespective of the disagreement among them. CBCC tend to acquiesce in the arrangement, recognizing that the power structure does not work in their favour. The practice, in turn, gives rise to the congregational grievance in matters dealing with ministerial programs or events that are to be implemented across the congregations as seen in the joint service worship.

The disputes point to a more profound discord around the affiliation of CBCC with CCIC. To the extent that the immigrant church was discussed in the overall multi-congregational setting, CBCC were quick to single out the exclusionary mindset of the first-generation, which usually stands against the inclusive desire of the local-born. They argue that the ministry orientation and ambiance are more reflective of the "back home" cultural practices than of a move toward a Biblical centricity of affirming Christian

identity in the "new home" ethos. For CBCC, joint services have become a moment of truth that bring to the surface not only cultural differences, but theological differences in style, approach, and the meaning of such practices at CCIC. For example, some single out the interpretation of the language used in worship to accommodate the needs of different congregants as messy. As not all congregants are fluent in all three languages spoken at CCIC, interpretation into two of Cantonese, Mandarin, and English is generally required. However, an efficient interpretation is not always available or consistent, at times even absent or lost in the process (e.g., Miriam, Rachel, and Thaddaeus). Furthermore, for the local-born and other congregants, important occasions such as Christmas offer the best opportunity to invite non-believing friends to participate in worship service and get to know the Christian faith. However, the language barrier and the "old home" cultural practices appear to demotivate the local-born (e.g., Rachel) to invite newcomers, as the experience is not conducive for them to enjoy the worship. Mary, for instance, complains about all the Chinese "extra stuff that we don't see the value in." Yet beneath the complaint of the language and cultural practices about joint services lies concern about the perceived "power play" by the Chinese congregations as they tend to take over the design and organization of the service (e.g., Miriam), which explains why the language of the service tends to favour Chinese, with English being interpreted, according to many CBCC. The phenomenon reminds us of what the Corinthian Christian community was practicing in the early Church by taking sides with Apollos, Paul, Peter, or Jesus in its ministerial practices. Inspired by divine wisdom, Paul reframes the community focus by uniting them with Christ: "Our righteousness, holiness, and redemption" (1 Cor. 1: 30). The implication of Paul's admonition for CCIC cannot be ignored: alignment with cultural or language-centric power is not the foundation of unity for all congregants, be they English, Cantonese, or Mandarin. Christ is.

Not only are these issues emblematic of the inability of CCIC to be culturally adaptive in their worship style, but they also point to a broader range of ministerial practices (e.g., mission budget at CCIC favouring Chinese ethnic-sponsored ministries). The cultural ambiance of CCIC can, in fact, be a detrimental factor for CBCC to continue to engage in their faith communities, as reflected in another study (Wong, 2015). Though Chinese congregants – Cantonese and Mandarin speaking – remain as the majority in most CCIC, it would be helpful for them to adopt a posture of humility, releasing control of joint ministry initiatives to CBCC to shape them to become first stringers. The younger generation can then learn how to execute key ministry practices so that they grow to be mature members of the communities. In order to accomplish this, CCIC need to reimage (i.e., as in reimaging the operating system of a computer) and reshape their ministry orientation, to become more intergenerationally-friendly and ethnically-neutral. For example, for the technologically savvy local-born, it is not uncommon to see the Bible on their mobile phone app. To ban the use of mobile phones in worship services, assuming that such usage reflects irreverent behaviours or equates to texting, is not always true. Many use the phone to read the Scriptures and take notes on the sermon. In this instance, cultural adaptation and embrace of digital technology are required to bring the generations closer to one another.

On the other hand, the local-born need to come to understand the theology and practices of the first-generation. When it comes to worship, for instance, the first-generation have been raised in a tradition that solemnity must be observed as congregants enter the sanctuary (Hak. 2:20), which does not imply that worship service cannot be animated. On the other hand, the contemporary worship

style of a band-like atmosphere in a pop music ambiance appears to tilt more toward cultural absorption. Tozer (2011) sounds off the danger this way: "Worship is no longer worship when it reflects the culture around us but not the Christ within us" (p. i). Conflict over worship style is but a microcosm of a broader intergenerational discord. CCIC need to reimage how to replace culturally outmoded forms of ministry and substitute them with new creative thinking in ways that allow the faith communities to reshape practices that are at once culturally-adaptive and Biblically-rooted, accommodating both generations.

7. From Hierarchy to Lower Power Distance

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

CCIC leaders who were brought up in an Asian cultural environment and trained in traditional ministry philosophies tend to embrace a focused view of leadership practice primarily defined by power and authority, based on the "Strongman Theory" (i.e., success and failure is determined by a single individual who occupies the top rung in the hierarchical ladder). Such a leadership practice ensconces decision-making responsibilities safely in the hands of a chosen few. This study, however, shows that the manner with which the CCIC leadership wields power and control is not always entirely Biblical but at times advances the merit of seniority or the status the leaders hold in the church. By contrast, in a broader sense and context that is much more familiar to the local-born, leadership can be perceived not merely as "power," but also as "position" (i.e., the role), as "process" (i.e., the influencing mechanism), and as "person" (i.e., the virtues and character of the leader) (Jackson & Parry, 2011). Within this frame of reference, spiritual leaders exercise authority not so much for the purpose of holding onto positional power, but rather deriving the spiritual one based on a calling from the Lord. In addition, leadership influence can be distributed through delegation and the inspiration of the leaders' character. In such a scenario, leaders do not instruct followers: "You do it," but rather invite them: "Let's do it." This practice of leadership enables followers to be a part of the bigger movement for the Kingdom's sake. But most importantly, no leaders know all solutions. By leveraging CBCC who are more specialized in areas which are not the expertise of CCIC leaders, greater influence can be exercised and better goals accomplished through the process of inclusion. Even if these followers are not experts, a deeper level of engagement impresses upon them that they are valued, and in so doing, the development of younger leaders can emerge.

However, one of the key characteristics of Asian culture that CCIC reflect in their ministry operation is the presence of high power distance between the leaders and the followers, as shown in this study. While this power distance dimension of leadership can be addressed by the Christian teaching of egalitarian status among believers (i.e., the priesthood of all believers) and servanthood in ministry (Plueddemann, 2009, pp. 97-98), large power differentials are still very evident in the experience of CBCC. It is unsurprising to most of them that the first-generational pastors and church founders continue to dominate the power structure in CCIC. They are the authority figures that at times demand cowering underlings. Perceived to be seniority-sensitive, oligarchic, and elitist, first-generational leaders have occupied in many ways the inner sanctum of the church ministry, shunning the participation of the local-born. This can be seen from Abigail's characterization of her first-

generational immigrant church leaders as "the old boys at the table." So great is the power differential that Mary exclaims ten times: "no, no, no, no, no, not [with] Rev. Ju, no, no, no, no, no!" in a rising crescendo, when asked if she dared to share her faith issues with the first-generation leaders such as the senior pastor at her church. To CBCC who have been influenced by the ideals of fairness and equality through participation in mainstream society, in schools, or in the marketplace, they want their voices and aspirations to be heard and heeded. Though eager to participate in church ministry on the leadership level, CBCC find themselves confronted with an unacceptable bias toward the Chinese ministerial practices of the CCIC leadership, as Sarah sums up well: "When you're in leadership, it's not that one culture [i.e., Chinese] is better than the other [i.e., Western. Therefore, leaders should not privilege the Chinese culture over the other]." Many CBCC continue to experience a degree of hypocrisy when encountering the older generation's leadership. Mary's sentiment exemplifies this feeling, as she remarks: "the Chinese congregation [and leadership] will always judge what the English congregation is doing. Put limits on them. But on the outside, they're like, 'You know, we really support you.' I think it's very political. It's very fake."

One of the expressions that power distance manifests itself in the CBCC's experience lies with how they have been treated as "children" by the CCIC leadership. For example, Deborah recollects that "there is always a feeling of not being as important or taken as seriously, or being looked down on because [we] were younger." With little hope for change in sight, some CBCC have been conditioned by the modus operandi and conceded to the notion of maintaining an inferior status, as Leah sighs: "We are a generation that likes to live in our parents' basement." Not satisfied with being situated in such an isolated enclave instead of being an integral part of the main home, others want to assert their autonomy and stretch their wings. However, their experience continues to be that of second-stringers, labelled as the perennial "never-ready" generation, rather than being developed to become the "get-ready" emerging leaders.

In suggesting how congregations must integrate new immigrants into church leadership, Ebaugh (2003) states that the acceptance of:

> *New immigrants into leadership positions indicates that the newcomers are not just guests who benefit from being in the congregation but are part of the decision-makers who are creating the future of the congregation, a fact that is often difficult to accept on the part of old-timers who may have built and sustained the congregation for generations. (p. 234)*

One can draw a parallel from Ebaugh's observation and argue for the same openness to be extended to the local-born generation who have not been completely welcomed, nor unconditionally accepted, as decision makers by the first-generation, who are the builders and very often the major source of funding for the CCIC ministry. Ebaugh's point is echoed by Ruth when she was asked what she wished her church would do more to help her grow in her faith. Without hesitation, Ruth replies: "I really like the idea of mentorship [i.e., in the sense of leadership development]. I really like the idea and building up people with the intention that you want them to lead, everyone with the intention that they're leaders."

In countering the power differential that is inherent in CCIC, the first-generation leadership may want to engage in examining if, while they have authority and power in their position, in effect they have lost influence on the local-born. Furthermore, they are

encouraged to embrace a leadership stance that is inclusive, engaging, respectful, trusting, and empowering. These leaders may also want to heed Moses' exhortation for any future monarch of Israel: "not [to] consider himself better than his brothers" (Deut. 17:20) by not always exercising power that is associated with their leadership position, but instead lowering the power differential so that the two generations can be drawn closer to one another. Jesus, as the Servant-King, is a perfect paragon to emulate: humble, service-centric, and valuing the little ones who come to Him. With Christ, the Chief Shepherd, as the mimetic foundation, immigrant church leaders could consider embracing such a servant-leadership stance.

To accomplish this, a paradigm shift in four dimensions of leadership practice is encouraged if CCIC are to ensure the ongoing participation of the local-born in a nurturing and partnering relationship.

The first dimension is related to leadership language and stance. CBCC can sense the emergence of power plays when the elder spokesmen begin to cite experience and seniority as their merit to lead or use heavy-handed, top-down language in a discussion, as opposed to adhering to a practice of intentional listening in which the longing and desires of CBCC can be heard. Gestures such as inviting CBCC to say grace at a meal, to lead a discussion session, or take initiatives with clearly delegated authority are important to the younger generation, demonstrating recognition that their contributions are considered worthy and appreciated.

The second leadership dimension promotes an exercise of boundary management in instead of micromanagement, such that clear guidance on scope and parameters of ministry execution can be provided within which delegated authority can be exercised by the CBCC. Empowerment would become evident when mandate and boundary are clearly established: with space, trust, support, and care provided to the younger generation to excel, and with limited and reasonable failures being judiciously accepted in order to allow learning from such experiences to take place.

The third dimension speaks to clear and open lines of communication. Very often first-generation leaders make decisions, knowing full well that it is within their power and authority to do so. However, irrespective of the logic of the decision, a stance of "never apologize, never explain" is evident in their leadership behaviour. Yet sound communication practices require seeking information, feedback, opinions, and input from CBCC before key decisions are being made; or at the very least, disseminating the decision together with the rationale and options assessed to the local-born, seeking their support for the decision's implementation. This practice will create deeper ownership of ministry execution if CBCC know that they have a voice in the process.

The last leadership dimension addresses the development of CBCC leaders. According to most participants, leadership development practices are either absent or to the extent they exist, are generally carried out with inadequate orientation, as Andrew suggests: "They tend to talk about leadership as a role and function, not as a process of growth and development." Yet when given an opportunity to take on leadership roles as part of a developmental process to learn the ropes of church ministry, many CBCC in the HE group (Andrew, James, John, and Miriam) rave about the engagement. For them, the leadership development experience goes beyond the mere practice of empowerment. It is a sponsorship engagement in which CBCC can be invited to participate in leadership as a full partner. Instead of being looked upon as the young and inexperienced "never-ready" leaders, these CBCC are given the front row seat, learning,

observing, growing, and becoming the "get-ready" leaders as the development process intends.

In taking a calculated risk in shifting the leadership orientation and practices toward giving CBCC the front row seat, seeking their input about ministry practices, and intentionally implementing ministry readiness training at CCIC that does not merely focus on failure (e.g., asking: "why did you fail?") but rather creates a learning and feedback culture (e.g., asking: "what have you learned?"), immigrant church leadership can open doors for CBCC to be recognized as as an emerging critical partner in ministry – not only for the CBCC generation and the immigrant church, but also for the kingdom of God.

8. From Being "Stuck in the Middle" to "Reigniting the Vision"

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

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

This research's findings indicate that one of the concerns raised by the participants – particularly the LA cohort – is related to the refusal of CCIC to engage with CBCC in enlarging the church's vision to address their yearning for a higher degree of independence in the ministry direction that is likely to include an appetite for an inclusive multicultural orientation. Furthermore, CBCC desire to make a difference to the world and contribute to causes they care about; they want the institutions they associate with to support them. They tend to be inspired by a focus that engages their faith in the public arena, helping the less fortunate and the marginalized, and addressing social injustice in addition to evangelism and global mission participation. Many in the LA group explicitly identify the lack of an inclusive vision as the centrifugal force for their contemplation and actions to exit CCIC, as they conclude that association with an institution that does not have the same visionary mindshare is vacuous.

The purpose of a church's vision is to project the future state of the community's corporate life; it is to be articulated in a faithful manner with its best understanding of God's intention for the congregation as a whole in their time and place going forward (Ammerman et al., 1998). For CBCC to fulfil the purpose of what they believe God has called them to be and to do, their aspiration

needs to be heeded and heard. Despite their coming of age and professional achievements as executives or middle management, many CBCC continue to be considered inexperienced and at times chafed at as callow when it comes to church ministry. The refusal to entertain input from CBCC about future direction signals to them that CCIC continue to embrace the status quo in running existing programs and activities without pursuing innovation and transformation that is necessarily inclusive of the CBCC's desire for maturity, autonomy, and growth. Under the circumstances, the church as a whole as experienced by the local-born can be perceived as lethargic, lacking a sense of urgency or readiness to face the societal, cultural, and congregational changes that are impacting both first-generation members and their children; or to capitalize on outreach opportunities to communities beyond CCIC. With that in mind, though some CBCC are resigned to the reality that their churches are "stuck in the middle;" others contemplate exiting CCIC, or end up doing so (Wong, 2015).

Problematizing the issue from the perspective of first-generation leadership, one can surmise at least three possible explanations as to why the church operates in that mode. First, some of the first-generation CCIC pastoral leaders could be approaching retirement years and may lack the stamina and energy necessary to take on major change initiatives, especially those that are required to engage in a culture that is not their own, and an area not their forte. In such a circumstance, leaders might choose to defer these major initiatives to leadership successors. In addition, there is the human element of fear, uncertainty, and doubt dealing with the CBCC's vision. The fear of the unknown may be related to concerns about engagement with the mainstream culture, suspicious that such an engagement and cooperation may soften the boundary of subculture between church and society, which may lead the church to lose its evangelical distinctiveness (Reimer & Wilkinson, 2015, p. 133). Finally, there is the incompatibility or clash of vision between the Chinese congregation and the English ministry along the line of the aforementioned of bonding versus bridging social capital as discussed. Though many participants do identify valiant attempts on the part of CCIC to open the door to its neighbouring or broader community, most acknowledge that the efforts are not effective, with the root cause lying with CCIC's inability to totally embrace an inclusive vision that addresses not only ethnic and cultural diversity, but also the diversity of the the social-economic spectrum. This sentiment is evidently reflected in Phoebe's lament about those "people who don't belong to the middle class then, they wouldn't be as easily welcomed by the Chinese side" Andrew also echoes: "It's like you're saying you have a welcome sign saying come in but the door is locked."

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

Conclusion

The landscape of the twenty-first century is dotted with post-modern and secularized dynamics such as religious pluralism, the conflicts between democracy and ideology, the rise of consumerism and liberalism, and advances in social media. These impetuses collectively give rise to the influential forces that are shaping the societal values and norms in Canada and elsewhere in the world, which, in turn, have been directly or indirectly affecting CCIC and their ministry over the last few decades. Christ's church has been facing the forces of change throughout the ages, and CCIC are not immune in dealing with challenges and disruptions in their context. Though the guise of change may differ from one to another, each influence compels the church to delve deeper into its convictions, reaffirm its faith and core values, sharpen its focus in solidifying its holy and servant identity, and redouble its efforts in remaining faithful to Christ's commandment to love our neighbour, and discipling across the street and around the globe. Amidst many challenges CCIC have to tackle, one can argue that nourishing CBCC for healthy growth and maturity is one of the critical mandates the immigrant churches need to examine and embrace. To that end, this study has provided insights into the aspirations, frustration, and agony of CBCC along their faith journeys by bringing to the surface key determinants that have come to shape their religious identity and commitment, as well as their affiliation to CCIC. Taken together, the findings of this research and the directional action recommendations can collectively establish a fresh framework in facilitating CCIC and CBCC to chart a new path for collaborative partnership in ministry for the sake of God’s kingdom and His glory.

Appendix 5 & References

Appendix A: Research Method

Methodology

This study followed closely the research framework of *Hemorrhaging Faith (HF)* (2012), utilizing a mixed methodology of quantitative survey and qualitative interview. To strengthen the ability to query CBCC in the CCIC context, both survey questionnaire and interview questions were modified to target how ethnic and Chinese Protestant traditions might have played a role in the CBCC's faith journeys (see Appendix B & C for the complete questionnaire and questions). Mixed-methodology is favoured over a single methodology, for its comprehensiveness in probing complex research across multiple disciplines (Morse & Niehaus, 2009, p. 15). In interrogating the data and results of the mixed methodology research, three key criteria can be applied: validation (or triangulation), complementarity, and discrepancy (Lee & Smith 2012). In addition, mixed-methodology research requires a core component – qualitative or quantitative, to be used primarily as the lead method in answering the research questions specified in the study (Morse & Niehaus, 2009, pp. 14-15). For the current initiative, the qualitative-driven mixed method was selected as the core because growing up as immigrant children in the context of CCIC is a multi-layered and multi-faceted lived experience, involving socialization at home, school, church, and other societal institutions, of which the journey of faith is a critical and integral part. To tease out the lived experience of this journey, the research team opted for placing a primary emphasis on a qualitative study of the participants to decipher the data, as this research methodology is aptly designed for digging deeper into that lived experience (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8; Creswell, 2013, pp. 47-48; Klenke, 2008, p. 121; Mercadente, 2014, p. 15). In addition, as the scope of the study focused on the Stay-On and the Drop-Out cohorts with the purpose of uncovering what shaped them to be who they are in terms of their religious types, as well as the casual mechanisms that underlie the CBCCs' decision to stay or leave CCIC, the qualitative case study approach is best suited for inquiries of this nature. Case study research allows the investigation to look at in-case and cross-case analysis of commonalities and differences across each religious type so as to compare and contrast the different nuances of these types, which in turn provides the threads for weaving the stories of the CBCC's engagement and disaffiliation with CCIC and their faith (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2012, 2014).).

The eSurvey results – the quantitative data – were examined to supplement the interview data; not merely complementing the analysis but expanding the richness of the analysis. In so doing, it was recognized that at times convergent, divergent, and even contradictory views might emerge, as mixed-method analysis often points to validation or triangulation, complementarity, and discrepancy of the data as mentioned earlier (Lee & Smith, 2012). However, care was exercised in the analysis not to privilege merely the qualitative results or undervalue the quantitative ones (Greene, Kreider, & Mayer, 2005, p. 279). Adopting an iterative and recursive approach involving the simultaneous analysis of both the qualitative and quantitative components allow for an effective synthesis of the research findings

Research Instrument and Process

As indicated earlier, while instruments of *HF* were permitted for this study, the research team subsequently modified the

questionnaire and supplemented questions of our own to reflect the need to problematize issues that are CCIC-specific. In addition, although the study followed the broad mix-methodology approach of HF, engaging Vision Critical – the same service provider which administered the HF's survey – the method of quantitative sampling is different in this study. Instead of engaging with a random sampling approach – which HF employed since Vision Critical had an existing broad-based Canadian sampling panel with which it engaged for research – such a panel was not readily available with the service provider for Chinese Canadians. The research team adopted what is called "invited sampling", essentially soliciting respondents of the eSurvey through faith gatekeepers in six cities and beyond, as well as through another independent third-party service provider through Vision Critical's assistance.

As the study requires two interrelated components, namely eSurvey and interviews, the research started with a pilot, implementing the eSurvey in Halton and Peel Regions in Ontario in the summer of 2014, targeting more than 10 CCIC. The objectives of the pilot were to allow the research team to iron out any potential wrinkles in the data collection process, gauge the initial response, and take corrective or improvement actions if necessary. Unlike HF, which started with the interviews in order to establish a broader framework for survey questions, *LTTV* has no such limitations, since the study deployed a modified HF survey instrument that was supplemented by additional questions to probe issues related to the ethnicity of the cohort. In addition, the team opined that collecting data through the survey allowed momentum to be created from the outset and throughout the process of promoting the study.

To kick off the pilot, the research team organized an introductory meeting to present the background of the study and the process of soliciting the survey participation. Engagement with the gatekeepers – the pastors and leaders of those congregations – was made at the meeting, securing their commitment to promoting the survey in their congregations. Information and promotional materials such as bookmarks and videos were provided and distributed. Suggested announcement templates were also provided to facilitate the gatekeepers' engagement with their local-born congregants with specifications such as age and place of birth. Recommendations were also made on how to assist their congregants to recruit the non-churchgoers to participate in the survey. With the exception of one church, which expressed concerns over a particular group of questions and subsequently withdrew from the pilot, the pilot was completed successfully with approximately 50 respondents.

After the pilot, a rollout of the eSurvey was conducted in Montreal & Ottawa (September, 2014); Edmonton & Calgary (November, 2014); Greater Vancouver Area (GVA) (February, 2015); and Greater Toronto Area (GTA) (March, 2015). These six cities comprise approximately 87% of the Chinese Canadian population as well as that of Chinese immigrant churches (See Table 1.2). As the survey was being implemented in each city or metropolitan area, interim survey results were generated to gauge progress in that area, and timely reminders were sent out to the gatekeepers to continue the promotional efforts in their respective communities. The eSurvey was closed in May 2015 and a total of 627 surveys were completed. However, as the implementation was progressing across the country, it was realized that non-churchgoers' participation was lower than expected. Recognizing a need to seek an alternative for this cohort's participation, the team and Vision Critical solicited a third-party service provider that specialized in polling amongst visible minority communities for engagement with its panel of respondents. As a result, a cohort of an additional 112 who met the

criteria (being local-born, with at least one parent being ethnic Chinese and first-generation immigrant, and having once been affiliated with a Chinese immigrant church but no longer church-attending at the time of completing the survey) was recruited to complete the survey by the end of June 2015. These two cohorts brought the total respondents to 739. Once the survey data were collected, the number of valid respondents was reduced from 739 to 554, as 185 identified themselves as being born outside of Canada.

Interviewees in this study were courted through the gatekeepers of CCIC as well as via invitation through the eSurvey as they identified themselves as willing and available to be interviewed. To aid in the process of recruitment, a document with a profile of interviewees specifying the scope of the study, qualifications for targeted interviewees and a brief description of the semi-structured interview approach was prepared and sent to these gatekeepers and potential candidates. Unique in the referral process is the fact that almost to a person, these gatekeepers were known to the researchers and pastors leading English congregations within CCIC. Many did encourage their congregants, and in some cases, ex-congregants, to speak of their experience in the ethnic faith community. A final list of potential participants between the ages of 18 and 35 was established. This cohort was chosen for two reasons: in anticipation of facilitating a compare-and-contrast examination with HF's cohort, which was comprised of 72 interviewees across the country within this same age bracket (i.e., the emerging young adults or the Millennials). And secondly, 85% of the local-born Chinese Canadian evangelicals are under 35 and can be recruited more easier, given the size this demographic (Statistic Canada, 2014) (see Table 1.3).

Once the interviewees were identified, they were approached with care. A two-step approach was utilized with most candidates: A first communication session either via phone call or Skype was established to explain the purpose of the study and the interview process, and requesting consent through sign off of the Letter of Consent, and confirming the second session for the interview. Most candidates in the Greater Vancouver and Toronto Areas were interviewed face to face, while those who could not meet face to face or resided outside of these two metropolitan areas were interviewed via Skype. The interview process ran from May 2015 to October 2015. All interviews were conducted by the Principal Researcher (i.e., Enoch Wong), with consent for each interview established in advance and each session taped with two recorders to establish a backup record. Each interview recording was then transcribed by a third-party service provider with the exception of one participant session.

Data Analysis

Interview transcripts were studied and coded to register themes, and key words and themes were identified mainly through coding notes and partly through NVivo for further analysis. Transcripts were examined numerous times to ensure that nuances and variation of emerging themes and ideas were adequately captured. When the report and its findings were written, care was given to replace all interview participants' identities with pseudonyms to protect their privacy as stated in the Letter of Consent. Once the coding of the lived experiences of the interview participants was completed, data categories were established to detect themes and determinants. Matching those themes and determinants with the participants' religious profiles allowed the research to further identify the sub-category of religious types of Highly Engaged (HE) and Less Affiliated (LA) within the Stay-On cohort, while Spiritual "Nones" and "Dones" (SND) and Agnostics and Atheists (A&A) surfaced within the Drop-Out contingent.

With the emergence of these four religious types through the analysis of the interview participants' lived experience, a corresponding set of these four types was also identified from the eSurvey respondents by developing a composite profile of religiosity based on the response to the following three rosters of questions from the survey that are best described by three markers: (1) linkages to worship service attendance (abbreviated "**Attendance**" below); (2) strength of conviction regarding basic beliefs and spiritual practices (abbreviated "**Conviction**"); and (3) church affiliation (abbreviated "**Affiliation**").

Attendance

The reply to the following question best indicates how often the eSurvey respondents attend religious services. Scores are proportion to the frequency of attendance, that is, higher scores for more frequent attendance.

Q53: Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services? (**5-point scale**: More than once a week=5, Once a week or so=4, Once or twice a month=3, Once or a few times a year=2, Seldom=1, Never=0)

Conviction

In addition, composite responses to the following roster of questions allowed the researcher to establish the degree of the eSurvey respondents' religious conviction and spiritual practices. Scores are proportion to the strength of conviction, that is, higher scores for stronger conviction.

Q12: I believe God answers my prayers. (**3-point scale**: Agree strongly=3, Agree moderately=2, Disagree moderately=1, Disagree strongly=0)

Q13: I have experienced God's love personally. (**3-point scale**: Agree strongly=3, Agree moderately=2, Disagree moderately=1, Disagree strongly=0)

Q23: Life isn't worth living without Christian faith. (**3-point scale**: Agree strongly=3, Agree moderately=2, Disagree moderately=1, Disagree strongly=0)

Q107: About how often do you pray privately? (**6-point scale**: Daily=6, Several times a week=5, About weekly=4, 2-3 times a month=3, About once a month=2, Hardly ever=1, Never=0)

Q108: About how often do you read the Bible? (**6-point scale**: Daily=6, Several times a week=5, About weekly=4, 2-3 times a month=3, About once a month=2, Hardly ever=1, Never=0)

Affiliation

Finally, composite answers to the following roster of questions best described the eSurvey respondents' level of Church affiliation

Q24: I think going to church is pointless (**3-point reversed scale**: Agree strongly=0, Agree moderately=1, Disagree moderately=2, Disagree strongly=3)

Q26: The church is out of touch with what is important in our society. (**3-point reversed scale**: Agree strongly=0, Agree moderately=1, Disagree moderately=2, Disagree strongly=3)

Q40: At some point in time my church attendance declined because of my lifestyle. (**3-point scale**: Agree strongly=3, Agree moderately=2, Disagree moderately=1, Disagree strongly=0)

Q43: School exposed me to new ideas that challenged my faith. (**3-point reversed scale**: Agree strongly=0, Agree moderately=1, Disagree moderately=2, Disagree strongly=3)

Q44: Attending church would be hypocritical for me. (**3-point reversed scale**: Agree strongly=0, Agree moderately=1, Disagree moderately=2, Disagree strongly=3)

Once the composite responses to these three rosters of questions were compiled by using the SAS program, an algorithm of criteria was developed by using these three markers to determine the composite profile of the corresponding religious types. The algorithm consists of the following components:

For the classification below:

High = equal of higher than first quartile

Moderate = equal or higher than median

Low = equal or higher than third quartile

Very Low = lower than third quartile

If attendance is “more than once a week”:

The person is classified into "HE" IF EITHER affiliation is High OR conviction is High

The person is classified into "LA" IF he/she fails the above requirement

If attendance is “once a week or so”:

The person is classified into "HE" IF BOTH affiliation is High AND conviction is High

The person is classified into "LA" IF he/she fails the above requirement

If attendance is “once or twice a month”:

The person is classified into "LA"IF EITHER affiliation is Moderate (but not Low or Very Low) OR conviction is Moderate (but not Low or Very Low)

The person is classified into "SND" IF he/she fails the above requirement

If attendance is “Once or a few times a year”:

The person is classified into "LA"IF BOTH affiliation is Moderate (but not Low or Very Low) AND conviction is Moderate (but not Low or Very Low)

The person is classified into "SND" IF he/she fails the above requirement

If the attendance is “seldom” or “never”:

The person is classified into "LA"IF EITHER affiliation is Low (but not Very Low) OR conviction is Low (but not Very Low)

The person is classified into "A&A" IF he/she fails the above requirement

With the composite profile firmed up through the algorithm, it is found that the following corresponding religious types can be established within the eSurvey respondents (Table A1).

Table A.1: eSurvey Respondents Religious Types

Religious Type	# of Respondents
HE	209
LA	208
SND	75
AA	62
Total	n=554

The resulting anlaysis of the eSurvey based on these corresponding religious types provides not only a top view of the respondents' sentiment toward the questions posed but a detailed breakdown based on each religious type such that existence of correlation between religious types and the questions posed can be probed and established. For example, the analysis of the response to the question "Did your faith come alive on a mission trip" (Q51) shows that 27% of HE register "Yes" with LA, 23%; SND, 4%; and A&A, 8%, illustrating a medium correspondence between religious affiliation and engagement with mission trips.

Limitations of the study

Concerns can be expressed about a study of this nature being biased (Francis and Richter, 2007, p. 5). For instance, respondents to the eSurvey could have misdirected their responses; interviewees could have concealed their real reasons for being disassociated with their faith. In addition, treating CCIC as a homogeneous entity without giving attention to each congregation's local context and its institutional uniqueness has been raised as a shortcoming. In addition, no regional nuances have been isolated to draw further comparison and contrast in terms of respondents' and participants' religiosity. Finally, an absence of analysis along the line of age cohort within the Millennials bracket and gender is also a limitation of the study.

LTTV meets the standard of sound sampling in a quantitative study. With 554 local-born respondents in a population of 54,000, it equates to 98.2% confidence level with a 5% margin of error. However, since our panel of eSurvey respondents was created through "invite sampling," inferential statistical analysis cannot establish causation. However, one can draw correlation and observation of likelihood within the same factor analysis. In addition, while there is no assurance of knowing whether the interviewees obscured or covered up their responses from their true feelings, most of the interviewees did not portray shades of politeness, and expressed themselves in highly emotive behaviours (e.g., in tears and engaging body expressions). This is particularly evident when discussing their sexual identities; their bouts of depression; their frustration with church leadership and barriers for their growth in faith; and struggles with their parental demands. If anything, the Spiritual "Nones" among the interviewees displayed an aura of disdain and enmity toward the faith institutions and leaders they previously associated with; the Spiritual "Dones" at best spoke in favour of them, and at worst simply distanced themselves from them, but never spoke in a disparaging manner.

Appendix B : Qualitative Semi-Structured Interview: Recruitment, Interview Process, Data Analysis, and Interview Instrument

Introduction

The qualitative aspect of this study began with a modification of *Hemorrhaging Faith* interview questions, eliminating those the research team believed to be irrelevant and adding questions that potentially reflect the faith journeys of CBCC in the context of CCIC, as seen in the instrument spelled out in the Instrument Section.

Recruitment

Interviewees came from three sources. The first and second sources are gatekeepers [i.e., the church leaders at CCIC] and parental referrals. Though the number of referrals from parents was few, most of these referred interviewees belonged to the A&A cohort, while those introduced by the gatekeepers tended to be HE and LA. The third source of interview participants came from eSurvey respondents. When the eSurvey was implemented, a question was intentionally inserted in the instrument asking the respondents if they would like to discuss their faith journeys further with the research team. And if so, they were asked to leave an email address for further contact. The potential candidates for interview from this group were further filtered to ensure that they belonged to the Canadian-born Millennials cohort aged from 18 to 35. Those who met these criteria, as well as the referred candidates from the first two sources, were then contacted with an interview invitation letter, which outlined clearly: (1) the objective of the study and the interview; (2) privacy commitment and interview data confidentiality and expiry; (3) consent required; and (4) interview process (A three-step process: [a] 15 to 30 minutes to go over the invitation letter and assess the background; [b] 90 to 120 minutes for the actual interview; [c] potential follow-up interview if necessary to address further issues or clarification of the second interview). The actual interview venue was set and communicated either via a phone call or email. Most of the interview was conducted in person in a safe and secure environment with no or minimal disruption. A few were conducted via Skype. Each interview was taped by two recorders to ensure complete capture of the conversation. Each recording was transcribed by a professional transcription service provider with one exception.

Semi-Structured Interview Instrument: Interview Questions

The following questions constitute the framework for interviewing with each participant. While the framework was strictly adhered to, each interview did not necessarily cover the entire set of questions as the conversation with the interviewees did at times explore sub-topics (e.g., parental abuse; mental illness) that were germane to their faith journeys and led to a "thicker" meaning of religious affiliation as guided by the interviewees' passion and interest. However, every effort was made to guide the conversation back to the central question of the interview: why did they stay, or leave CCIC.

Faith and Church Participation in Childhood.

Q1: Tell me about your church participation, first as a child and then as a teen.

Q2: Tell me about the churches you attended growing up. Can you describe the ones that you attended for a year or more?

Q3: What can you tell me about your faith in God or Christian belief as a young child? And as a teen?

Q4: Tell me about your own private religious practices as a child and then as a teen.

Q5: Can you recall any significant religious experiences growing up, like feeling the presence of God, answered prayers, miracles or healings, etc?

Q6: Now let's talk about religious experiences and events that happened through the churches you attended. Did you grow up going to Sunday School, and/or youth group?

Q7: Did you attend religious camps, go on short-term missions, or attend or teach Sunday School or participate in any other church events like church day camps, boys and girls clubs, or church choirs or drama? If so, tell me more about these activities?

Q8: Looking back on your church experience as a child and youth would you describe yourself as more of a SPECTATOR (where it was done for you) or a PARTICIPANT (where your gifts and talents were developed and appreciated)?

Q9: Let's talk about the religious climate in your house growing up. How much was religion a topic of conversation? Did you feel comfortable asking questions about religion or moral issues at home, including questioning what your church taught? Did you pray together or do other religious practices as a whole family at home? Were your parents always around? Or they travelled or lived elsewhere most of the time?

Q10: What type of schooling did you experience (home school, public, private, catholic?) from kindergarten through Grade 12? If you attended private Christian School, tell us about its impact on your faith.

Q11: Were you known as a Christian at school, in childhood? In your teen years?

Q12: Was there anything about the church's teaching on sexuality in your childhood or youth years that affected you positively or negatively?

Q13: Looking back on it NOW, are there any things about your church participation as a child or youth that really mean a lot to you? That you are glad are a part of your past?

Present Faith Affiliation

Q21: Which of these statements best represents you present religious affiliation and church activity NOW?

If answered: I consider myself a Christian.

- Go to QA22 to QA27.

If answered: I do not consider myself a Christian.

- Go to QB22 to QB27.

A. Respondent is Christian.

QA22: Tell me about your experience of Christian faith NOW. What does being Christian mean to you?

QA23: Have you ever had a time in your post high school years when your faith increased significantly? if yes what was happening in your life? Why was it that your faith significantly increased during that time?

QA24: Have you ever had a time in your post high school years when you considered giving up your Christian faith? If yes, what was happening in your life?

QA25: Tell me about the religiosity of your closest friends. How many would be Christian? How important is having the same faith when choosing and keeping friends?

QA26: Think for a minute about Christian beliefs Christians claim that: #1. "Forgiveness of sin comes through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ?" and #2. That Christians should share this claim with others. What do you think about these claims? Do you agree with them? Do you think Christians should witness to others about this claim? Do you do this personally?

QA27: On another topic, do you think someone can be a Christian and NOT participate in a local church?

B. Respondent is No Longer (Or Never Was) Christian.

QB22: Tell me the story about how you came to not consider yourself a Christian. What was happening in your life? How old were you? Why do you think your faith dwindled at this time?

QB23: What do you get out of no longer (or not) being Christian? Anything you particularly value? Anything you don't like or are uncomfortable with?

QB24: Tell me about the religiosity of your closest friends. How many would be Christian? How important is having the same faith when choosing and keeping friends?

QB25: Think for a minute about Christian beliefs. Christians claim that: #l. "Forgiveness of sin comes through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ" and #2 Christians should share this claim with others. Has your understanding and commitment to these Christian beliefs changed since your childhood and youth years? In what way? Why do you think that might have been? Do think Christians should share what they believe with others?

QB26: Can you see a time in the future when you might return to being Christian? Why or why not?

QB27: On another topic, do you think someone can be a Christian and NOT participate in a local church?

Present Church Activity.

Q28: Which of these statements best represents your church activity NOW?

If answered: I attend church monthly or more.

- Go to QA29 to QA32.

If answered: I do not attend church monthly or more.

- Go to QB29 to QB32.

A. Respondent Attends Church Monthly or More.

QA29: Tell me about the church you attend and in what ways you participate.

QA30: What do you get out of attending church?

QA31: Think of your closest friends. How many attend the same church? How important is having the same church when choosing and keeping friends?

QA32: Now think for a minute about lifestyle issues. How does if fit into your church teaching? What about your night life?

B. Respondent No Longer Attends Church Monthly or More.

QB29: Now think back to the time when your church attendance decreased significantly. How old were you? What was happening in your life at the time?

QB30: Because you are no longer involved regularly at a church what are the implications for you? Are there some things you miss? Other things you are glad to get rid of?

QB31: When you think back to when you were involved in your church, what were the names of some of your closest friends at the church? Do you have any contact with them now? When you left your church, did anyone contact you to ask why you left?

Conclusion: All Respondents.

Q33a: If you lived in Ontario when you were a teen, did you attend Teens' Conference held in Toronto organized by Ambassador For Christ Canada? If yes, tell us about your experience.

Q33b: If you live in Western Canada and/or lived in Western Canada, did you attend Canada Chinese Christian Winter Conference? If yes, tell us about your experience.

Q33c: If you are attending or attended colleges and/or universities, were you ever involved in a Christian group on campus such as IVCF, Navigators, Power to Change, Chinese Christian Fellowship, or Asian Christian Fellowship. If yes, tell us about your experience.

Supplementary questions on Chinese Canadian Immigrant Church.

1. For "Stay-On":

A. What are the things about the Chinese immigrant church that you value?

B. What are the things about the Chinese immigrant church that you believe hinder your growth in faith?

C. Are you given freedom to grow and to lead?

D. Have you ever thought about leaving the church? Or have you ever thought about leaving the faith altogether? Why? What are the things that motivate the thought?

E. What's your take on the church leadership? Are they effective? Hierarchical? Dysfunctional? Give you freedom to lead and to decide? Give you a voice at the table? Available when you need them?

F. What are the things you think the Chinese immigrant church you are attending need to work on to help you grow in your faith?

2. For "Drop-out":

A. What happened? What were the things that made you dropped out from church/leaving the Christian faith?

B. What were the things about the Chinese immigrant church that contributed to your decision to leave the faith?

C. What's your take on the church leadership? Were they effetive? Hierarchical? Dysfunctional? Give you freedom to lead and to decide? Give you a voice at the table? Available when you need them?

D. (For those who just dropped out from church but keep the faith) How do you see yourself in relation to your faith? Do you still believe in God? Do you still hold Christian values? Why?

E. (For those who dropped out of faith) What is your concept of faith now? Do you still believe in God? What is your view on Christian values? Why?

Appendix C: eSurvey Instrument: "To Whom Shall We Go?"

Thank you for taking the time to complete the "*To Whom Shall We Go?*" survey. This survey is designed to understand your faith journey in the context of the Chinese Canadian Church. We welcome those who are Canadian-born Chinese Christians who are 13 years or older to participate.

Your perspective is important to us. The information we gather here will be shared with Chinese Canadian Christians, but your participation is completely anonymous, and individual survey result will be amalgamated into an overall study report without reference to any individual response. Because of your participation, a copy of the report will be made available to you if you finish the survey!

Family Faith:

Canadians grow up in all sorts of families. Some are religious and some are not. We'd like to better understand what your family was like when you were growing up. To the best of your knowledge, please select either yes, no or don't remember for each of the following [RANDOMIZE]:

- Yes
- No
- Don't remember

1. My mother attended religious services regularly during my upbringing.
2. My father attended religious services regularly during my upbringing.
3. I believe my mother prayed regularly outside of table grace.
4. I believe my father prayed regularly outside of table grace.
5. My mother read the Bible regularly during my upbringing.
6. My father read the Bible regularly during my upbringing.
7. My parent(s)' church attendance declined significantly or ceased altogether while I was living at home.
8. My parents encouraged me to explore religions other than Christianity.

Personal Belief:

Here are some statements people have made about their beliefs. Please indicate if you agree, disagree, moderately or strongly. There are no right or wrong answers. It is what you think that matters. [RANDOMIZE]

- Agree strongly
- Agree moderately
- Disagree moderately
- Disagree strongly

9. My beliefs about God today are different from the ones I was raised with.
10. My central goal in life is to be happy.
11. What is right and wrong is a matter of personal opinion.
12. I believe God answers my prayers.
13. I have experienced God's love personally.
14. My private beliefs about Christianity are more important than what is taught by any church.
15. I would be willing to study the Bible with a friend.
16. All world religions are equally valid.
17. There exists a place of reward in the afterlife, sometimes called heaven.

Feelings Toward Church:

Here are some statements people have made about their feelings about church. Please indicate if you agree, disagree, moderately or strongly. There are no right or wrong answers. It is what you think that matters. [RANDOMIZE]

- Agree strongly
- Agree moderately
- Disagree moderately
- Disagree strongly

18. Doing private religious readings and praying at home is the same as attending church.
19. I think it is extremely important for churches to have programs geared toward teens.
20. I think it is extremely important for churches to have programs geared toward young adults.
21. The church doesn't do enough to help those in need outside of the church.
22. Being mentored by an adult churchgoing Christian is important to me.
23. Life isn't worth living without Christian faith.
24. I think going to church is pointless.
25. I think the lifestyle demands that churches make are totally unrealistic choices for me.
26. The church is out of touch with what is important in our society.
27. In my experience, being involved with religious groups isn't worth the effort.
28. I think the church's teaching that sex should be saved for marriage is completely unrealistic.
29. Churches should allow women to hold the same leadership positions as men.
30. Churches should allow gay and lesbian people who remain celibate to participate fully in their ministries.
31. Churches should allow people who are practicing a gay or lesbian lifestyle to participate fully in their ministries.
32. Churches should solemnize gay and lesbian marriages just as they solemnize heterosexual marriages.

Feelings Toward Church and Christianity:

Here are some statements people have made about their feelings about church and Christianity. Please indicate if you agree or disagree, moderately or strongly. There are no right or wrong answers. It is what you think that matters.

- Agree strongly
- Agree moderately
- Disagree moderately
- Disagree strongly

33. As a child, I felt forced to attend religious services.
34. These days, I am too busy to attend church regularly.
35. In my experience, church members practise what they preach.
36. In my experience, church leaders practise what they preach.
37. When I was growing up, most of my friends were committed Christians.
38. I have experienced emotional healing through help received from a church.
39. My faith came alive for me through the witness of a friend.
40. At some point in time my church attendance declined because of my lifestyle.
41. At some point in time my church attendance declined significantly due to a geographical move.
42. My faith became stronger through a period of personal hardship.

43. School exposed me to new ideas that challenged my faith.
44. Attending church would be hypocritical for me.

Experiences in Church:

Here are some things that may or may not have happened to you as a child or infant. For each one please indicate yes, no or don't remember.

- Yes
- No
- Don't recall

45. I attended church youth group as a teen.
46. I went on a mission trip during my upbringing.
47. I attend(ed) a church young adults' group.
48. I was involved in a Christian club on my college/university campus.

[IF yes to Church Youth Group]

49. Did you feel accepted by your peers in the church youth group?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't recall

50. Did your youth leaders do a great job of modeling Christianity for you?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't recall

[IF yes A MISSION TRIP]

51. Did your faith come alive on a mission trip?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't recall

[IF yes Church young adults' Group]

52. Did you feel accepted by your peers in the young adults' group?
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't recall

53. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services? (+)
    - More than once a week
    - Once a week or so
    - Once or twice a month
    - Once or a few times a year
    - Seldom
    - Never

[IF not Never]

54. Have you ever gone through a period in your life where you stopped attending church? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

[IF yes Stopped Attending Church, then Q.55]

55. What was happening in your life or at the church at the time you stopped attending? (+)
56. When you were a child of public school age, how often did you usually attend religious services? (+)
    - More than once a week
    - Once a week or so
    - Once or twice a month

- Once or a few times a year
- Seldom
- Never

57. When you were a teenager in high school, how often did you usually attend religious services? (+)
    - More than once a week
    - Once a week or so
    - Once or twice a month
    - Once or a few times a year
    - Seldom
    - Never

[IF yes Attending Religious Services Now, as a Child, a Teenager]

58. Did you attend the same church as your parents when you were a child? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

59. How big is/was your parents' Church or the Chinese immigrant Church you may have attended growing up? (+)
    - Less than 100 attendees
    - 100 to 500 attendees
    - More than 500 attendees
    - I don't know/ don't remember
    - I did not attend my parent's Church or a Chinese immigrant Church growing up

[IF yes Attend the Same Church as a Child]

60. Do you currently attend the same church as your parents? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

Feeling toward the Chinese Canadian Immigrant Church: (+)

Here are some words and phrases that you may or may not use to describe the church you attended with your parents as a youth.

Please sort each phrase into one of the two piles to your right: describes your parents' church or do not describe your parents' church.

- Describes your parents' church
- Does not describe your parents' church

61. Nurtures my spiritual growth (+)
62. Hierarchical & dysfunctional (+)
63. Mentor and Model for my generation (+)
64. In-fighting or conflict (+)
65. Listening and encouraging (+)
66. Affirms and values my contribution (+)
67. Puts my parents' ethnic tradition above my faith (+)
68. Irrelevant teaching (+)
69. Treats me as a second-class citizen (+)
70. Great worship (+)
71. Too ethnic (+)
72. Stifling my growth (+)
73. Great leadership (+)
74. Traditional service (+)
75. Does not support social justice (+)
76. Allows me to grow and exercise leadership (+)
77. Solid teaching (+)
78. A safe haven to weather emotional and spiritual challenges (+)
79. My friends are there (+)
80. Gender inclusive (+)

81. Open to ideas and creativity (+)
82. Missional (+)
83. Harmful (+)
84. Places tradition and culture above faith (+)
85. Too Chinese (+)

Feeling toward church in general:

Here are some statements people have made about their feelings about church. Please indicate if you agree or disagree, moderately or strongly. Again, there are no right or wrong answers. It is what you think that matters. [RANDOMIZE]

- Agree strongly
- Agree moderately
- Disagree moderately
- Disagree strongly

86. In my experience, church members are often rude to one another.
87. I feel free to ask questions of church leaders.
88. In my experience, church sermons don't help me live a meaningful life.
89. I have personally been hurt by church leaders.
90. My parents have been hurt by church leaders.
91. In my experience, the opinions of youth matter to church leaders.
92. I have experienced a church split.
93. In my experience, church leaders are welcoming of all ethnic groups.
94. Those in church leadership are able to help me explore my toughest questions.
95. In my view, it's important for churches to make use of new technologies, like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.
96. In my experience, church leaders do not care about me.
97. In my experience, the church addresses tough topics in its sermons.
98. In my experience, church is a place where people are equipped to help others.
99. In my experience, church is a place where people grow deeper in their relationship with Jesus.
100. Women didn't have the rights they should have, in the church I grew up in.
101. I have felt judged by church members for my lifestyle decisions.
102. The church members I know are accepting of those outside the church.
103. In my experience, church leaders value church programs more than people.
104. The church makes a difference in my community.
105. In my experience, church is a place where my talents go unappreciated.
106. I have been given the opportunity to lead in church.

Personal Faith Practices:

107. About how often do you pray privately?
    - Daily
    - Several times a week
    - About weekly
    - 2-3 times a month
    - About once a month
    - Hardly ever
    - Never

108. About how often do you read the Bible?
- Daily
- Several times a week
- About weekly
- 2-3 times a month
- About once a month
- Hardly ever
- Never

Personal Information (+)

And now we have just a few more questions to help us categorize your answers. You're almost done.

109. In what year were you born? (+)
110. Were you born in Canada? (+)
- Yes
- No

[IF no Born in Canada]
111. Where were you born? (+)
- Northern China
- Southern China
- Hong Kong
- Taiwan
- South East Asia
- Elsewhere

112. Are you? (+)
- Male
- Female

113. Is/was your mother a Chinese immigrant? (+)
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

[IF yes Mother a Chinese Immigrant]
114. Where did your mother come from: (+)
- Northern China?
- Southern China?
- Hong Kong?
- Taiwan?
- South East Asia?
- Others?

115. Is/was your father a Chinese immigrant? (+)
- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to answer

[IF yes Father a Chinese Immigrant]
116. Where did your father come from: (+)
- Northern China?
- Southern China?
- Hong Kong?
- Taiwan?
- South East Asia?
- Others?

117. Growing up, did you attend Christian school? (+)
- Yes
- No

[IF yes Attend Christian school]

118. Did you attend Christian school for: (+)
    - Yes
    - No

119. Kindergarten? (+)
120. Primary school (i.e., Grade 1 to 6)? (+)
121. Junior high school (i.e., Grade 7 to 8)? (+)
122. High school (i.e., Grade 9-12)? (+)

123. Where do you currently reside? (+)
    - Toronto area
    - Vancouver area
    - Calgary area
    - Edmonton area
    - Montreal area
    - Ottawa area
    - Other

[IF Toronto Area]

124. In which region more specifically do you reside? (+)
    - Downtown Toronto
    - Scarborough
    - North of Toronto (e.g., Richmond Hill, Markham)
    - West of Toronto (e.g., Mississauga)
    - East of Toronto (e.g., Pickering)
    - Other

[IF Vancouver Area]

125. In which region more specifically do you reside?(+)
    - City of Vancouver
    - City of Richmond
    - East of Vancouver ((Burnaby, Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster, etc.)
    - North Shore (North Vancouver, West Vancouver, etc.)

126. If you currently reside or previously resided in Western Canada, did you attend the Canada Chinese Christian Winter Conference? (+)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Have not resided in Western Canada

[IF yes Western Winter Conference]

127. Have you participated in… (+)
    - Just one event?
    - More than one event?

128. If you currently reside or previously resided in Eastern Canada, did you attend the Eastern Canadian Chinese Christian Winter Conference? (+)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Have not resided in Eastern Canada

[IF yes Eastern Winter Conference]

129. Have you participated in (+)
    - Just one event?
    - More than one event?

130. Did you reside in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) when you went to high school? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

[IF yes GTA]

131. When you went to high school in the GTA, did you attend the GTA Teens Conference? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

[IF yes Teens Conference]

132. How many times did you attend the GTA Teens Conference? (+)

133. As a young person, did you participate in any Christian summer sport leagues? (+)
    - Yes
    - No
    - Don't know

[IF yes to Sport Leagues]

134. How many summers did you participate in a Christian summer sport league? (+)

135. Occasionally, we may wish to contact you further regarding your views and opinions about religion. Would you like to be contacted? (+)
    - Yes
    - No

[IF yes Contact] (+)

Name:

Email:

Phone number:

[CHECKBOX] I changed my mind. I do not wish to be contacted.

[if this is selected, above information no longer mandatory]

Once we have compiled the results of this survey, we can send you a copy of those results if you provide us with your email. Please be assured that we will only communicate with you via this email address for sending you the report should you consent to providing it. Please note that the results will be ready in 2016. (+)

Name:

Email:

[CHECKBOX] I do not want to have a copy of the study result.

[if this is selected, above information no longer mandatory]

Thank you very much for your willingness to share in this survey.

[Note: This eSurvey instrument was adopted from *HF* survey instrument with modifications to meet the need for answering the research questions of this study. Additional questions, marked with symbol "(+)", were inserted to probe appropriate data regarding CBCC and CCIC.]

Appendix D: eSurvey Respondents and Research Participants profile

As this research employed the mix-methodology of using survey (i.e., quantitative) and interviews (i.e., qualitative), the participants in the study consisted of two cohorts: eSurvey respondents and interviewees. This appendix first provides a profile of who the survey respondents are and is followed by a profile of the interview participants.

eSurvey Respondents Profile

A total of 739 completed the survey, of which 554 identified themselves as respondents who were born in Canada. In order to be consistent with our scope of study, which is to examine the journeys of the local-born, quantitative analysis was limited to this cohort of 554 for further analysis and insights. This is not to suggest that the remaining 185 respondents offered no insight for examining their experience growing up in CCIC. However, engaging the 1.5 generation cohort may be tricky and problematic as no clear and agreed upon demarcation can be drawn from the perspective of age of arrival in interrogating their conscience about the biases with their national identity versus their cultural or ethnic identity. It is indeed a different course for a different horse, as they say. From the perspective of the population size of the local-born cohort, the National Household Study (NHS) identifies over 54,000 Chinese Canadians as non-immigrants who were either second or subsequent generations of Chinese immigrants (Wong, 2015). In comparison, *HF* reported 2,039 participants in its eSurvey out of a population of 18,253,795 who self-identified as non-immigrant Christians in Canada, or 22,102,745 including immigrants (Statistics Canada, 2014). Tables D1 to D3 provide further details of the respondents' profiles in terms of gender, age, and region (n=554)

Table D.1: Gender of eSurvey Respondents

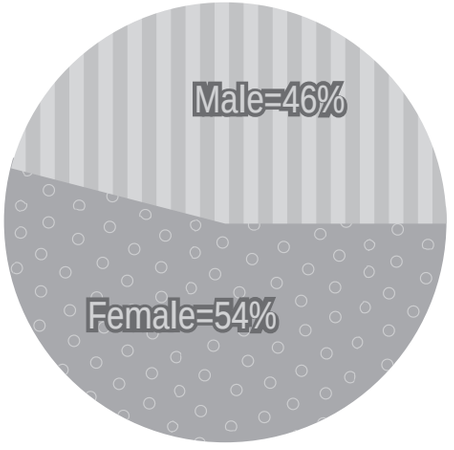


Table D.2: Age distribution of eSurvey Respondents

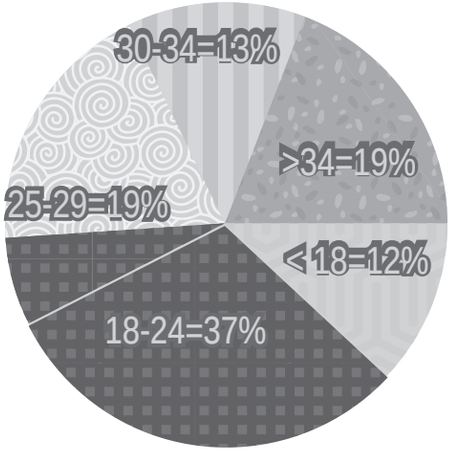
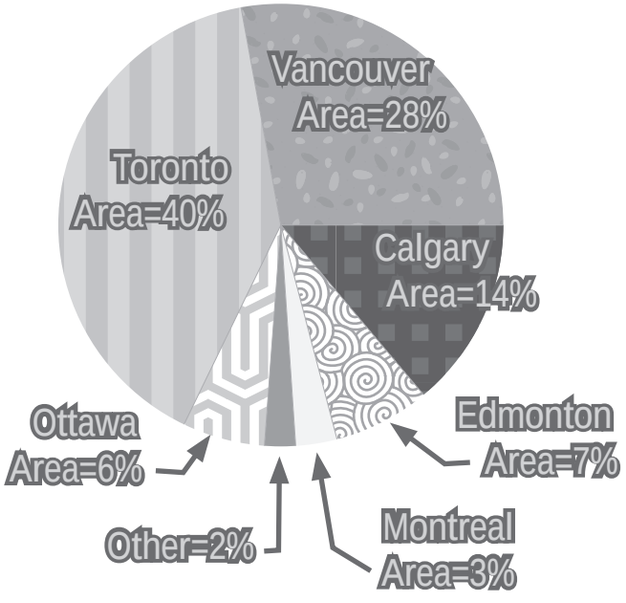


Table D.3: Region Distribution of e-Survey Respondents



Interview Participants Profile

As indicated earlier in the report, the scope of the study is targeted at the Stay-On and Drop-Out cohorts. When it comes to church leaving and staying, there are a number of variables that affect the scope of the study: gender, age, region, type of church they are staying or have left, denomination, to name a few. To support the scope of this study, the focus for the interview participants is to examine young adults from 18-35 in terms of their journeys when they were a teen or child, as well as where they were at, at in the time of the interview. Compared to *HF's* participants of 72, a total of 37 participants were interviewed in this study: 19 identified themselves to be regular church-goers at the time of interview and the other 18 were not. Of those who no longer attended church service, 9 continued to identify themselves as a Christian or adhering to Christian values, 8 claimed to be atheists and one was an agnostic. In addition, one was eliminated, as the participant became a Christian in his early 20's, disqualifying himself since he had no experience of CCIC as a child or teenager. Finally, there was one outlier aged between 36-40, whose experience the research team believed to be beneficial, warranting inclusion in the interviewee cohort.

The following tables (D4 to D7) provide further details on the gender, age, marital status, and the cities where the candidates resided at the time of interview.

Table D.4: Geographical Region of Interview Participants

City/Area	# of Interviewees
GTA	15
GVA	13
Calgary	3
Ottawa	4
Edmonton	1
Other	1
Total	37

Table D.5: Gender of Interview Participants

Gender	# of Interviewees
Female	19
Male	18
Total	37

Table D.6: Age of Interview Participants

Age	# of Interviewees
18-22	12
23-26	7
27-31	10
32-35	7
36 and above	1
Total	37

Table D.7: Marital Status of Interview Participants

Marital Status	Gender	
	Male	Female
Single	15	15
Married	2	3
Co-habiting	1	1
Divorced	0	0
Sub-total	18	19
Total	37	

In addition, further biographical details on the interview participants are provided in the following based on their religious type with their pseudonyms:

Table D.8: Personal Details of Interview Participants

Religious Type	Name	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Location
HE1	Peter	M	18-23	Single	Calgary
HE2	Sarah	F	18-23	Single	Ottawa
HE3	Rebekah	F	18-23	Single	GTA
HE4	James	M	18-23	Single	GTA
HE5	Leah	F	24-29	Single	GVA
HE6	John	M	18-23	Single	Ottawa
HE7	Rachel	F	18-23	Single	GTA
HE8	Miriam	F	30-35	Single	GVA
HE9	Naomi	F	18-23	Single	Ottawa
HE10	Andrew	M	30-35	Married	GVA
LA1	Ruth	F	18-23	Single	GVA
LA2	Philip	M	30-35	Single	GVA
LA3	Julia	F	30-35	Married	GVA
LA4	Abigail	F	36-40	Married	GVA
LA5	Bartholomew	M	30-35	Married	GVA
LA6	Mary	F	24-29	Single	GTA
LA7	Matthew	M	18-23	Single	GVA
LA8	Phobe	F	18-23	Single	GVA
LA9	Priscilla	F	18-23	Single	Calgary
SND1	Lois	F	30-35	Married	Waterloo
SND2	Thomas	M	18-23	Single	GTA
SND3	Eunice	F	30-35	Single	GTA
SND4	Esther	F	24-29	Co-habiting	GTA
SND5	Deborah	F	30-35	Single	GTA
SND6	Mark	M	24-29	Single	GTA
SND7	Martha	F	24-29	Single	GTA
SND8	Eve	F	24-29	Single	GTA
SND9	Thaddaeus	M	30-35	Single	GVA

Religious Type	Name	Gender	Age	Marital Status	Location
AA1	Luke	M	24-29	Co-habiting	GTA
AA2	Abraham	M	24-29	Single	GVA
AA3	Isaac	M	24-29	Single	Edmonton
AA4	Jacob	M	24-29	Single	Ottawa
AA5	Joseph	M	18-23	Single	GTA
AA6	Elizabeth	F	18-23	Single	GVA
AA7	Judah	M	18-23	Single	GTA
AA8	Moses	M	24-29	Single	GTA
AA9	Joshua	M	24-29	Single	Calgary

Appendix

Appendix E: Parental Influence on Faith Formation of Interview Participants

Table E.1: Parental Influences – Highly Engaged

Participants (HE)	Brought to church by	Were Parents Christians when participants **first came to** church?	Are Parents Active Christians at time of interview?	Explicit **identification of parental influence** on faith	Family Devotions	Overall parental **influence**
Naomi	Mom	Mom	Mom; Dad divorced her mom because mom became a Christian	No identification	Bible reading with mom when she was very young but stopped when she grew older	Weak
Miriam	Aunt & Uncle	No	No	No identification	No family devotions were discussed	Neutral
Andrew	Parents	Yes	Mom is; Dad no longer goes to church	No identification	No family devotions were discussed	Neutral
Rachel	Parents	Yes	Both are but go to different churches	Parental intervention was absent when she stopped going to church between 16-18 Don't want to follow parents as example in faith's journey	Praying together was mentioned; "Don't remember doing family devotions"	Weak
James	Parents	Yes	Yes	Parents held him accountable for fellowship attendance	No discussion on family devotions	Weak
Leah	Parents	Yes	Yes	Wanted to follow parents as an example in faith journey	No discussion on family devotions	Weak
Rebekah	Parents	Yes	Yes	"Parents raised me in Christian faith"; Dad shared and taught spiritual lessons on Sunday if there were questions asked	Praying together and reading the Bible together "but it wasn't too much and I didn't do this out of my own will"	Weak to Strong

Peter	Mom	Mom is; Dad no longer	Yes	Confessed to have father issue in a broken family Dad not always present when he was growing up; Experienced physical and emotional abuse; Dad discouraged him from going to church	No family devotions	Negative
John	Parents	Yes	Yes	Parents took leadership to engage in religious conversation and in probing Bible questions and leveraged the occasion to mediate faith transmission; Parents are open and available for discussion on faith issues; Grateful for parents' endurance and intervention in encouraging him to go to church when he didn't want to	Family devotions were conducted on a weekly basis at one time and lasted only for a year; Stoppage due to conflict of schedule when the household was involved in ministry individually	Strong
Sarah	Parents	Yes	Yes	Parents' good role model in the ministry in good time or bad; Mom is stronger spiritually than Dad so Sarah approached Mom with "spiritual life" questions, including the topic of sexuality: "I'm given scripture to read and they would address their own understanding of (the issues)"; Mom was the person Sarah turned to even before Sunday School teachers	Family devotions weren't weekly but at least once a month, involving Bible reading, prayer and supplication; "And then we would finish off with like a board game if we had time. Just like some – more family time."	Strong

Table E.2: Parental Influences – Less Affiliated

Participants (LA)	Brought to church by	Were Parents Christians when participants **first came to** church?	Are Parents Active Christians at time of interview?	Explicit **identification of parental influence** on faith	Family Devotions	Overall parental **influence**
Matthew	Classmate	No	Yes	No identification; Showed aversion to parents' constant attribution of reality to God	No family devotions; prayer every night before sleep up to elementary school	Neutral
Phobe	Parents	Yes	Yes but mom's faith is stronger than dad's	No identification	No family devotions; Bible and other story book reading (i.e. Winnie the Pooh) once a week	Neutral
Priscilla	Mom	Only Mom	Only Mom	No identification	No; Brother was the mentor	Neutral
Julia	Parents	Only Mom, but deferred to dad	Yes	No identification	No mention of family devotions	Neutral
Philip	Parents	No	No	No identification; Conflict with parents' values	No family devotions	Neutral
Mary	Mom	Only Mom	Only Mom	No identification Not willing to share the abuse by her boyfriend with parents, knowing that they never approved dating in high school; Being "shameful" and "prideful" of the break up and afraid of being judged	Mom read Bible every night with her until Grade 2 or 3	Weak

Abigail	Parents	Yes	Yes	Dad was domineering; Abusive (Not physical but emotional or spiritual); Dad threatened to disavow her due to his personal feud with her boyfriend's father; Parents not around much thus creating a "trust' issue for Abigail with them and others; Parents opposed to her becoming a missionary; Abigail needed to engage counselling to deal with inner would of the past	Dad read Bible to the family every night; Family devotions were conducted until pre-teen but "it was too awkward and too forceful"	Negative
Ruth	Parents	Yes	Yes	Recalled how she was heavily influenced by the negative conversation at the family table about church leadership friction and feuds. Parents focused on spiritual activities rather than their goal	Family prayed together when she was very young but stopped in mid-elementary school; Bible reading was deemed by her to be unimportant for the church and parents: "I think few people actually led by example and few people actually showed how important it was"	Negative
Bartholomew	Parents	Yes	Yes	Parents have been living out an authentic faith and experiencing God's presence as a family through His provision; Parents cited as role models (generosity, treating others with respect); Parents gave him space to grow in his faith and facilitated him to take its ownership; Trust his parents implicitly	Family devotions once every two weeks, continuing even at the time of interview	Strong

Table E.3: Parental Influences – Spiritual "Nones" & "Dones"

Participants (SN&D)	Brought to church by	Were Parents Christians when participants **first came to** church?	Are Parents Active Christians at time of interview?	Explicit **identification of parental influence** on faith	Family Devotion**s**	Overall parental **influence**
Lois	Mom	Mom	Both passed away	No identification	No Bible reading with mom due to language barrier	Neutral
Thomas	Parents	Yes	Yes	Influence through example of religious practice	"Praying together once or twice a month"	Weak to Strong
Eunice	Parents	Yes	Yes	Mixed feeling from positive to resentment	"Wasn't very regular"	Weak
Esther	Parents	Yes	Yes but parents are separated	Mom led her to Christ	Praying with mom until she did it herself	Weak
Deborah	Parents	Yes	Yes	Parents held him accountable for fellowship attendance	Bible study only with other families and participation only by adults. No recollection of family devotions	Weak
Mark	Mom	Mom	Mom	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral
Martha	Uncle and aunt	No	No	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral
Eve	Grandparents	No	No	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral
Thaddaeus	Friends	No	No	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral

Table E.4: Parental Influences – Agnostics & Atheists

Participants (A&A	Brought to church by	Were Parents Christians when participants **first came to** church?	Are Parents Active Christians at time of interview?	Explicit **identification of parental influence** on faith	Family Devotions	Overall parental **influence**
Luke	Parents	Yes	Yes	No identification	"Periodic" family devotions when young	Weak
Abraham	Parents	Yes	Yes	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral
Isaac	Parents	Yes	Yes	No identification	Family devotions when young	Weak
Jacob	Parents	Yes	Yes	No identification	Devotions with parents until early high school	Weak
Joseph	Parents	Yes	Yes	No identification	No identification	Neutral
Elizabeth	Aunt	Yes	No	No identification	No family devotions	Neutral
Judah	Parents	Yes	Yes	No influence	Family devotions when younger but it was labelled as a "joke"	Negative
Moses	Parents	Yes	Yes	No influence	Family devotions attempted when younger but it was called "very annoying"	Negative
Joshua	Mom	Mom	Did not mention	No identification	No identification	Neutral

Table E.5: Overall Parental Influences versus Religious Types

Overall **Influence**	Highly Engaged	Less **Affiliated**	Spiritual **"Nones"& "Dones"**	Agnostics & Atheists	Total
Strong	2	1	0	0	3
Weak to Strong	1	0	1	0	2
Weak	4	1	3	3	11
Neutral	2	5	5	4	16
Negative	1	2	0	2	5
Total	*10*	*9*	*9*	*9*	*37*

Appendix

Appendix F: Suggested Questions for Reflection and Discussion on the Directional Action Recommendations

1. From "Jiaozi" (dumpling) to Jesus: Strengthening gospel-centric preaching and teaching that holistically engage faith, vocation, identity, community, culture, and values.
   (a) How much of your church's teaching and preaching is centred on gospel values (e.g., compassion, being merciful, and a humility that builds Christ-like character?) Or is your church's teaching influenced by cultural/ethnic values?
   (b) Have there been intentional attempts to shape your church's teaching by contrasting gospel values with cultural values to assist the younger generation in shaping their faith identity (e.g., success, shame)?
   (c) How much of your church's teaching is consistently lined up with a broad-minded mission that addresses opportunities both across the street and across the globe, not focusing on a particular ethnic group or geographic area?
   (d) Does your church's teaching inspire congregants with a purpose to stay and commit to Christ and His mission, or just reinforce their obligation to attend church services?

2. From Belonging to Radical Discipleship: Developing and implementing radical yet Biblical-based discipleship principles and practices that accept risk-taking and encourage life-long devotion.
   (a) Has your church established or are you developing a discipleship approach that is missional/commissional and focuses on growth? Or is it a program-based approach?
   (b) Does your discipling approach focus on behavioural outcome alone? Or character-shaping after Christ? Identity-centric or obligation-driven?
   (c) What is the underlying narrative of your church's discipleship efforts? Focusing on God's purpose in life, or relieving pain-points in life?
   (d) How do you see the progress in discipling at your church? Developing followers that subscribe to a lifestyle defined by Biblical values such as sacrifice, compassion, simplicity, and passion for the gospel? Or passing on information that may or may not have contextual and impactful insights for growth?

3. From Textbook Instruction to Journeying: Creating a set of mentoring practices that are not necessarily formal but organic, championing a space for reverse mentoring and mutual support.
   (a) How many among the older generation are willing to mentor the younger ones without drawing on self-accomplishment and power differentials, but rather leaning on a desire to co-journey?
   (b) Is your church's mentoring approach established around a set of formal programs or structure, or building on a strong understanding and willingness to "incarnate" with humility and modeling by example through deeds, as well as in words?
   (c) How much of active empathic listening, seeking to understand first before seeking to be understood, is practiced in the mentoring experience?

4. From Protecting to Preparing: Putting in place a concrete transition plan for high-schoolers to move into university and for college students from university to a career.
   (a) How is your church equipping parents to guide their children in discerning God's calling in their studies and career development?
   (b) What preparatory action plan has your church put in place in assisting the high-schoolers in their transition to college?
   (c) How much contact or support has your church put in place to provide ongoing nurturing for new college students in your congregations?
   (d) Have there been intentional practices to assist college graduates in acclimatizing their return to the home church/town?

5. From "a Museum of the Saints" to "a Hospital for the Wounded": Fostering an environment that is safe and respectful, allowing doubt, questions, and failures to be expressed without condemnation.
   (a) How does your church deal with doubters? What is the tone and gesture of your teaching? Magnanimous and encouraging? Or just text-bookish?
   (b) What about dealing with failures or sinful behaviours? Forgiving, restoring and yet firm? Or Condemning without regard for the relational health of the individual and the community involved?
   (c) What about the church's ethos? Does it make congregants feel safe to express their shortcoming or doubts? Or would they feel ostracized when speaking their mind and their heart?

6. From Rigidity to Fluidity: Reimaging and redeploying rituals and symbols in a way that is both Biblically centric and culturally adaptive (e.g., worship, ambiance, ministry orientation, and practices).
   (a) How much do your church's worship and rituals reflect the "old home" traditions? And how resistant are you in adopting new ideas in your worship service and ministry?
   (b) What do your church's joint events such as joint worship services look like? Are they being conducted mainly in the Chinese language, or do English congregants help shape the service in songs and sermons?
   (c) How does your church encourage a more culturally diverse engagement with the local-born in order to be inclusive in its mission and outreach approach?

7. From Hierarchy to Lower Power Distance: Rethinking and resetting leadership practices such that: (a) power distance is narrowed; (b) a structure and culture are espoused that is local-born friendly, with open communication, distributed decision-making responsibility and trust; (c) leadership apprenticeship is encouraged.
   (a) What does the composition of the leadership look like at your church? Is there any participation from the local-born?
   (b) Is there an intentional attempt to create a platform to listen, understand, and incorporate the local-born's aspirations into church ministerial direction and practices?
   (c) How is leadership authority being exercised at your church? Is there any deliberate effort to delegate or empower CBCC?

8. From Being "Stuck in the Middle" to "Reigniting the Vision": Reigniting the CCIC's vision to: (a) incorporate the input of the local born and; (b) increase the ownership of the local-born through practices of inter-generational ministry for the sake of God's kingdom and a holistic world mission.
   (a) What about the vision of your church? Has it been articulated with input from an intergenerational perspective, ensuring ownership from both the Chinese and English congregations?
   (b) What does the execution of your church mission look like? Is it reflective of a limited mission engagement that is restricted by ethnicity and geographical boundaries, or does it make no distinction in terms of ministry across the street versus across the globe?

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

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

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

馬英傑牧師 D. Min.
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