

# **A MISSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON A SOUTH AFRICAN CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH IN THE LIGHT OF ALAN HIRSCH'S SIX ELEMENTS OF "APOSTOLIC GENIUS"**

By

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

Masters of Art (MA)

Science of Religion and Missiology Department

Faculty of Theology

University of Pretoria

August 2013

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## **A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

First of all I would like to thank Dr. CJP Niemandt without whom this work would never have seen light. His encouragement and direction were always there when I needed them. Second I would like to thank my wife for her love and support on this long road that lead to this dissertation. Finally I would like to thank the Chinese pastors for their example of dedication and passion to Christ. May the Lord bless you all.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	6
1.1. Synopsis Of Research .....	6
1.2 Purpose Of The Research .....	8
1.3 The Goal Of The Research .....	9
1.4 Research Problem .....	9
1.5 Research Hypothesis .....	10
1.6 Outline Of Research.....	10
1.6.1. CHAPTER 2: JESUS PEOPLE MOVEMENTS.....	10
1.6.2. CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CHINA .....	11
1.6.3. CHAPTER 4: THE CHINESE IN AFRICA .....	11
1.6.4. CHAPTER 5: APOSTOLIC GENIUS IN THE CHINESE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	11
1.6.4. A. THE WRITER AS A PARTICIPANT OBSERVER.....	12
1.6.5 CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION .....	12
1.7 METHODOLOGY.....	13
Chapter 2: Apostolic Genius .....	14
2.1. Hirsch's Apostolic Genius .....	14
2.1.1. ABOUT THE AUTHOR .....	14
2.2. Chapter 2: Relevancy Of This Dissertation.....	15
2.3 Apostolic Genius .....	15
2.3.1. THE 6 ELEMENTS MDNA .....	17
2.3.1.A. Element 1: Jesus Is Lord .....	18
2.3.1.B. Element 2: Discipleship And Disciple Making.....	21
Phase 1: White Hot Faith .....	23
Phase 2: Commitment To Cause .....	23
Phase 3: Contagious Relationships .....	23
Phase 4: Rapid Mobilisation.....	23
Phase 5: Dynamic Movements.....	23
2.3.1.C. Element 3: Missional-Incarnational Impulse .....	26
2.3.1.D. Element 4: Apostolic Environment.....	30
2.3.1.E. Element 5: Organic Systems .....	32
2.3.1.E. Element 6: Communitas Not Community.....	35
2.4 Summary And Conclusion .....	37
Chapter 3: Context Of The Christian Church In China An Inheritance .....	39
3.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER .....	39
3.1.A. Relevance To Dissertation.....	41
3.2 THE CHURCH IN CHINA.....	42
3.2.1. CHRISTIAN WITNESS .....	42
3.2.2. J. HUDSON TAYLOR.....	42
3.2.3. The Influence Of Hudson Taylor .....	44
3.2.4. The Principles Of The China Inland Mission.....	45
3.2.5. Observations On J. Hudson Taylor.....	46
3.3 The Leaders Of The Christian Church .....	48
3.3.1. OBSERVATIONS.....	48
3.4. Wang Ming Dao .....	49
3.4.1. THE BELIEFS OF WANG MING DAO .....	50
3.4.2. THE LATER YEARS WANG MING-DAO.....	51
3.5. Watchman Nee .....	53
3.5.1. THE EARLY YEARS WATCHMAN NEE .....	53
IT WAS OUT OF THIS EXPERIENCE AND OTHERS THAT HE BEGAN TO WRITE HIS BOOK "THE NORMAL CHRISTIAN WALK." .....	55

3.5.2. FOREIGN TRIPS.....	55
3.5.3. REVIVAL BREAKS OUT .....	56
3.5.4. THE TEACHING OF WATCHMAN NEE.....	56
3.5.5. TIMES OF TROUBLE.....	57
3.5.6. APOSTOLIC OUTREACH.....	58
3.6. Yang Shao-Tang (David Yang) .....	59
3.6.1. THE YOUNG YEARS .....	59
3.7. A New Vision For Ministry The Spiritual Action Team (Apostolic Bands).....	61
3.8. The Church Under Communism .....	63
3.9. Summary Of Three Leaders .....	65
3.10. Three Younger Leaders: Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze And Enoch Wang .....	65
3.11. The Chinese Church From 1950 Onward .....	69
3.12. The Cultural Revolution .....	70
3.13. The Gang Of Four .....	72
3.14. The Communist Party In China.....	72
3.15. A Cursory History Of The Church In China.....	73
3.16. A RADICAL CHANGE IN CHINA .....	74
3.17. Summary.....	75
3.18. Conclusion .....	75
Chapter 4: The Chinese In South Africa .....	77
4.1 PURPOSE OF THE CHAPTER .....	77
4.2 THE CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	77
4.2.1. TAIWANESE.....	78
4.2.2. FUJIAN.....	79
4.2.3. IDENTITY .....	80
4.2.4. LANGUAGE: MANDARIN.....	80
4.2.5. SECURITY .....	80
4.3. The Chinese Church In South Africa .....	81
4.3.1. DENOMINATIONS .....	81
4.3.2. AN EMERGING ECCLESIOLOGY.....	82
4.3.3. THE LOCAL CHINESE HOUSE CHURCH.....	83
4.3.4. THE HERITAGE OF THE CHURCH FROM MAINLAND CHINA .....	83
4.3.5. OBSTACLES .....	84
4.3.6. NEW DEVELOPMENTS.....	84
4.4. The Local Chinese Pastor.....	85
4.5. Training Of Lay Leaders .....	85
4.6. Becoming A Part Of The Church .....	86
4.7 A Case Study .....	86
4.8. Growth.....	87
4.9. Beginnings .....	88
4.9.3. Attraction To Christianity .....	88
4.10. Description .....	88
4.11. Factors .....	89
4.12. Ambience Of The Brethren Church.....	91
4.13. Youth .....	91
4.14. Receptivity.....	92
4.15. Summary .....	92
4.16. Conclusion .....	92
Chapter 5: Apostolic Genius In The Chinese Church In Sa.....	94
5.1 Purpose Of The Chapter .....	94
5.2 The Six Factors Of Apostolic Genius Are .....	94
5.2.1. JESUS IS LORD.....	94
5.2.2. DISCIPLESHIP MAKING.....	96
5.2.3. MISSIONAL – INCARNATIONAL IMPULSE.....	97
5.2.4. THE APOSTOLIC ENVIRONMENT .....	98
5.2.5. ORGANIC SYSTEMS .....	98

5.2.6. COMMUNITAS .....	99
5.2.6.A. The Enemy Outside .....	99
5.2.6.B. The Enemy Within. ....	100
5.3 Summary .....	100
5.4 Conclusion .....	101
Chapter 6: Concluding Remarks .....	102
6.1 Purpose Of The Chapter .....	102
6.1.1. OPENING REMARKS.....	102
6.1.2. THE CHURCH IN CHINA.....	103
6.1.3. RESEARCH PROBLEM .....	104
6.1.4. THE CHINESE CHURCH IN SOUTH AFRICA.....	105
6.1.5. WHAT IS NEEDED? .....	108
6.1.6. VISION.....	108
6.1.7. CHURCHES .....	108
6.1.8. LEADERS .....	109
6.1.8. JOINT OWNERSHIP .....	110
6.1.9. CONCLUSION .....	110
Bibliography .....	112
Addendum A .....	118
Addendum B .....	120
Addendum C .....	123
Addendum D .....	125
Addendum E .....	127
Addendum F.....	128
Addendum G .....	129
Abstract.....	129
Key Terms.....	131

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Synopsis of Research

The subject of this research is the occurrence of *Jesus People* movements among the Chinese in South Africa. In order to determine if such movements have taken place it is necessary to identify an instrument to measure them. Alan Hirsch's Apostolic Genius is just such a device. In *The Forgotten Ways* (2006) he details the six elements of Apostolic Genius (2006:78-79). These elements are (1) Jesus is Lord, (2) Disciple making, (3) Missional/Incarnational impulse, (4) Apostolic environment, (5) Organic systems and (6) *Communitas*. When these elements are combined they create what is known as *Apostolic Genius*. These elements are to be found in a Jesus People movement. The central hypothesis of this study is that a Chinese House Church expresses these six elements of Apostolic Genius in the life of the church.

According to the research of Aikman (2003), Lambert (1999) and Hattaway (2003) there has been a significant Jesus People movement in the People's Republic of China. This movement contributes to the changing the face of China. Aikman (2003:285) claims that the percentage of Christians in China may grow to between 20-30%. Currently, Christians number 100 million believers in China (Hattaway 2003:13). Deng Xiaoping came to power in 1978 (Aikman 2003:130) and his new Open Door policy has opened China to the world. Not only has the world come to China, but entrepreneurs and businessmen have moved to foreign cities. This gave rise to a Chinese Diaspora. Concurrent with this has been the growth of the Back to Jerusalem movement. Hattaway (2003:20) states that thirty years ago the vision that God had sent the Gospel

to China from Jerusalem began to grow. A part of this vision was the conviction that the church has the responsibility to send the gospel back to Jerusalem, and preach it along the way. Today there are Chinese missionaries preaching the gospel across the Middle East.

With the Diaspora, many mainland Chinese have come to South Africa. It is estimated that there are between 300 000 and 350 000 Chinese in South Africa (F. Tuan, April 7, 2004). According to the SACON Research Working Group (2013) there are fourteen Evangelical Chinese churches that are working among the South African Chinese population. This large population is mainly made up of Fujian people from mainland China, consisting mainly of shop owners and entrepreneurs. Large shopping malls such as the “China Mall” have sprung up all over Johannesburg and the surrounding areas. These shops are Chinese run and operated. A new “China Town” has been established in Cyrildene to supply the Chinese with Chinese goods and services.

Interviews for the purpose of this study suggest that the leadership of the Chinese churches is largely Taiwanese. In contrast with the leadership, the membership is mostly from mainland China. Furthermore, research shows most of the members came to faith in Jesus Christ in South Africa through family or friends. The majority of South African Chinese house churches consists of between 20 and 30 members and are growing at a moderate rate

The Chinese Brethren Church based in the West Rand has between 20 and 30 members. It is strongly influenced by the teachings of church leader and Christian teacher Watchman Nee. Cohesion in the congregation is apparent and participation in the service is open to all and freely accepted. There are four elders who meet together every three months to discuss the way forward for the church. The sharing of communion is a central mark of the church; baptisms happen on a regular basis and meals are shared after every service. In my view, this church shows a greater number of Apostolic Genius than other churches.



The Chinese Brethren Church of the West Rand shows a very strong Christology both in the teaching and in the life of the church. The notion that Jesus is Lord is clearly a reality for the members. The leadership is dedicated to discipleship making and their approach is very simple but effective. They are missional and incarnational in their approach to evangelism. This is seen as a natural outflow of their life rather than a program. Every family has a stack of bibles that they are encouraged to give out to interested friends. There is a steady flow of people being baptized. Leadership is open and inviting to input from the members. Elders are highly approachable and encouraging. Participating is a regular feature of the life of the congregation. Elders are seeking expansion of the church but not in a mechanical way, rather the growth must be organic and natural. Systems are simple, organic and functional. The South African Chinese are not persecuted because they are Christian, but because they are Chinese. This persecution takes the form of crime, bribery, violence and discrimination. Communitas takes place on the basis of their Chinese ethnic origin.

## **1.2 Purpose of the Research**

The rapid expansion of Christianity is of interest to any student of the Christianity of Church History. Against all odds, the Christian Church has prevailed against the Roman Empire, until finally the empire became Christian. This expansion is also true of the Eastern Church. The fact that this expansion is spontaneous contributes to the fascination of Church growth. In this study rapidly expanding church communities will be referred to as Jesus People movements - people of all walks of life, privileged and underprivileged, who chose to follow Jesus. There have been Jesus movements throughout the history of the Christian Church.

One of the first occurrences of this movement was Phillip and the Samaritans (Acts 8:4-17). Philip preached and multitudes believed. Later on the Romans would carry this gospel throughout the empire. Boniface carried the gospel to the Germanic tribes of Northern Europe where many were converted (Beaver 1970:241). Thomas carried the gospel to India (Tennent 2010:234-236) and the church in India still there to this day.

Revivals followed in many places and in many forms. Revivals took place in Moravia, France, Wales, the New Hebrides, South Africa, East Africa, Boston, New York, the frontiers of Ohio and Indiana, Azusa Street, Anaheim, Costa Mesa, Indonesia, Korea, Zululand and China. This is by no means an exhaustive list. Such activity catches the imagination. It is directly linked to the great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). The kingdom of God is displayed for all to see. God moves in power and authority. It is worth further study.

The object of this study is to understand the potential for a Jesus People movement among the Chinese in South Africa. The presence of these churches is well known, but little is known about the churches themselves.

### **1.3 The Goal of the Research**

The goal of the research is to study the potential for a Jesus People revival among Chinese people in South Africa. This will be done through the use of Alan Hirsch's book, *The Forgotten Ways* (2006). More specifically, Alan Hirsch's description of the six elements of Apostolic Genius will be considered in the context of a South African Chinese house church.

### **1.4 Research Problem**

Can the story of a Chinese House Church in South Africa serve as an expression of a Jesus revival among Chinese in South Africa? Especially if investigated in the light of the six elements of "Apostolic Genius" of Alan Hirsch? The question that is relevant to this study is "Does the Jesus People phenomenon of the Chinese House Church movement in China reproduce in the Chinese churches of South Africa?" Alan Hirsch's "The Forgotten Ways", in my opinion, gives us an instrument to evaluate this process in South Africa. Hirsch describes six signs of Apostolic Genius in action. The stronger the expression of the individual signs, the more you can be sure that a Jesus People

movement is apparent. In order to understand the Jesus People movement, it is necessary to consider “Apostolic Genius” with its six elements.

## 1.5 Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis is that a Chinese House Church expresses the six elements of Apostolic Genius within the expression of the life of the church.

## 1.6 Outline of Research

### *1.6.1. Chapter 2: Jesus People Movements*

How do you know when a Jesus People movement is taking place? Alan Hirsch describes the process of Apostolic Genius in his book, “The Forgotten Ways”. This is closely linked to what he describes as missional DNA (mDNA) or core missional characteristics, which is expressed in six elements: Jesus is Lord, Disciple making, Missional/Incarnational Impulse, Apostolic environment, Organic systems and Communitas. A proper understanding of these elements will help us to discern the workings of the mainland China Jesus People movement and its potential in South Africa. mDNA is a term that Hirsch uses to describe that in the same way that a natural organism has DNA, there is something genetic about the inner dynamics of the church. Within the inner coding of the church we find a “drivenness” to grow, multiply and survive. Only moving away from its core values will stop this growth. This is what is described by Hirsch as missional DNA (mDNA). Apostolic Genius is “the total phenomenon resulting from a complex of multiform and real experiences of God, types of expression, organizational structures, leadership ethos, spiritual power, mode of belief, etc.” (Hirsch 2006:78). It is quite simple according to Hirsch: in the same way DNA has nucleotides that make up DNA, mDNA has six elements. Each element is an mDNA. When these six elements come together, they release the powerful response that is Apostolic Genius (according to Hirsch, 16 November 2012).

### *1.6.2. Chapter 3: Context of the Christian Church in China*

To understand the potential for a Jesus People Movement in Africa among the Chinese, we must understand the context of the movement as it arose in China. The Church in China consists of about 100 million people (Hattaway 2003:13) which is close to 1% of the population. The growth of the church is amazing. In this chapter I explore the long history of the church. The elements that set up such a rapid expansion can be easily deduced. Men like J. Hudson Taylor, Wang Ming-Dao, Watchman Nee, David Wang and many more gave up their lives to see the missio-Dei take place in China. Credit must be given to God for the spontaneous expansion of the Church and the fruit of this harvest. The Cultural Revolution will be discussed and its role in opposing the church. In 1978, China opened to the outside world. By 1990 many Chinese immigrants were travelling all over the world. They became a Diaspora People representing China. What happened in China was quite amazing and there is great potential for it to happen among the Diaspora Chinese living in South Africa.

### *1.6.3. Chapter 4: The Chinese in Africa*

In this chapter I share the results of my interviews with Chinese pastors and laymen living in South Africa. The researcher explores the identity as well as the complicated identity of Chinese South Africans. There are certain common reactions and responses to their life in South Africa. It was a privilege to be able to meet the members of local house churches and the hardworking pastors who serve these communities. Finally, we will consider ministry in one local Brethren church.

### *1.6.4. Chapter 5: Apostolic genius in the Chinese church in South Africa*

If Apostolic Genius is operating with all six elements, then the rapid growth of a Jesus People Movement will be obvious. The six elements can be partially expressed leading to a slow growth such as is seen in western churches. These six factors are Jesus is

Lord, Disciple making, Missional/Incarnational Impulse, Apostolic Environment, Organic systems and Communitas. At the current moment there are fourteen churches working amongst the 300-350,000 Chinese in South Africa. Moderate growth is apparent in these churches and the greatest expressed need is for more Christian workers.

#### 1.6.4. a. The writer as a participant observer

Seven years ago with the help of a Chinese businesswoman, we planted a Chinese House Church in the West Rand of Gauteng. I was the pastor of the church but kept a very low profile. This was because of my lack of fluency in Mandarin and the desire to see what Chinese leadership would arise. In addition to giving bible studies that were translated into Mandarin, I had extensive interaction with the participants of the church. During this time I spoke to many Chinese and met with many church leaders. Our church was mostly composed of Chinese businessmen from the Shanghai area. It was my pleasure to enter the Chinese community and be accepted as a member. During this time I was introduced to a Brethren Church in the West Rand. It is this church that displays the closest marks of the Chinese House Church model in South Africa. I was able to do research into the number of Chinese living in Gauteng. I explored their quality of life. It was my great pleasure to become acquainted with the leaders of the Brethren church in the West Rand. It was here among them that I could hear the echoes of the Church in mainland China. They were strongly influenced by the tradition of Watchman Nee.

#### *1.6.5 Chapter 6: Conclusion*

China is a dominant figure in our world today. China also figures in the world Evangelical church. The church in China is important and cannot be ignored. The Chinese House church is very large and very vibrant. There is a large Chinese Diaspora in the world. There is a Chinese Diaspora in South Africa. The Chinese church in South Africa is different from the church in China. The church needs vision for the task, churches for the people, leaders for the new churches and joint ownership of

the task. The Chinese church in South Africa must do something about the Chinese Diaspora in South Africa. The planting of new churches is a desired goal.

Research has shown that the Chinese church in South Africa is not growing at the rate that would be expected of a Jesus People movement. Elements of Apostolic Genius are present but not fully expressed. Growth of the churches is at a moderate rate rather than an explosive rate. The introduction of new personnel for church planting is desperately needed.

## **1.7 Methodology**

The researcher did an extensive search of the literature. The literature took me to the global house church movements and particularly China. Of great importance were the works on Apostolic Genius by Alan Hirsch. The six elements of Apostolic Genius are of particular importance. A history of the church movement in China was reviewed from many sources. The growth of the Chinese church from a struggling movement to a vibrant Jesus People movement was examined. The Back to Jerusalem movement was studied. Research was conducted on the Chinese population in South Africa through literature and interviews. The Chinese church in South Africa was identified and researched. Interviews were conducted with pastors, missionaries and Christian laymen in South Africa. It was decided that a case study of the Chinese Brethren Church of the West Rand would be in order. Multiple interviews were conducted with the elders and members of this church.

In the next chapter we will discuss Apostolic Genius. Apostolic Genius helps us to evaluate Jesus People movement potential. We will use this to evaluate the Chinese House Church movement in South Africa.

## CHAPTER 2: APOSTOLIC GENIUS

### 2.1. Hirsch's Apostolic Genius

Introduction: In this chapter, I will introduce Alan Hirsch and his concept of Apostolic Genius. After a discussion of Apostolic Genius (The Forgotten Ways Hirsch 2006:78), I will clarify the six elements of Apostolic Genius: Jesus is Lord, Disciple making, The Missional/Incarnational impulse, Apostolic environment, Organic systems and Communitas. These elements exemplify a Jesus People movement. The insights gained in this discussion of Hirsch's work will serve as guide to evaluate a Chinese House Church and to determine the missional nature of Chinese House Churches in South Africa.

#### *2.1.1. About the author*

One might ask why is the work of Alan Hirsch important to this task. Hirsch has wrestled with the whole question of House church (2006:46-48) and studied Jesus People movements. Indeed Hirsch is one of the leading thinkers in terms of Jesus People movements today. He has practical experience. That experience continues to grow as he travels, writes and lectures. He has authored eight books. Hirsch makes reference to the House Church movement in China in his works. It is particularly Hirsch's insight into the inner dynamics of a movement that make his views so important to understanding the Chinese House churches.

Alan Hirsch was born in South Africa to a Jewish family. During his twenties, they moved to Australia. It was in Australia that Hirsch found Jesus as his Lord and Saviour. In 1989 he became the leader of the South Melbourne Church of Christ. This community was in rapid decline. The radical concepts of "The Forgotten Ways" were rediscovered during his 15 years as the pastor of this church. From this aging church

was born the South Melbourne Restoration Community (SMRC). Hirsch has written eight books including *The Shaping of Things to Come*, *Right Here Right Now*, *On the Verge*, and *The Faith of Leap*, *Creating a Missional Culture*, *Untamed*, *ReJesus* and *The Permanent Revolution*. He is the director of Forge Mission Training Network, co-founder of Sharpvine and he is on the leadership team of Christian Associates International. He is married to Deborah Hirsch. They live in Los Angeles.

## **2.2. Chapter 2: Relevancy of This Dissertation**

The question that is relevant to this study is, “Does the Jesus People phenomenon of the Chinese House Church movement in China reproduce in the Chinese churches of South Africa?” This is the key question. We have a people group of like identity. They are found in similar situations. The language and the culture are similar. Should not the same phenomenon transmit itself to this other group? They share the same ideology, the same educational experience. The movement in China started among the rural farmers but has spread uniformly throughout the society. There are university departments now dedicated to studying Christianity. There are Christians in the Communist party (Aikman 2003:10). China has a full blown Jesus People movement. “*The Forgotten Ways*” by Hirsch (2006), in my opinion, gives us an instrument to evaluate this process in South Africa. There are six signs of Apostolic Genius in action. The stronger the expression of the individual signs, the more you can be sure that a Jesus People Movement is apparent. First we must understand “Apostolic Genius” with its six elements.

## **2.3 Apostolic Genius**

Apostolic Genius defines a phenomena found in the history of the Church. When a rapid spontaneous expansion of the Church takes place, there are certain observable elements. Hirsch notes six elements. There is a unique energy that propels the Church forward (Hirsch 2006:15). There are latent primal forces in every Jesus community that have energised Church History’s most outstanding Jesus Movements (Hirsch 2006:15).



It is like a spiritual explosion of the atom. This has been observed by many men of God throughout history. Roland Allen referred to it as the “Spontaneous Expansion of the Church” (Allen 1962:7). Apostolic Genius searches for a more authentic expression of “ecclesia” and embraces the dramatic change of worldview that has taken place over the last 50 years (Hirsch 2006:16). We are lost in a global jungle where our culture and theology don’t make sense. Is God confused? That is not possible. He has a certain way forward. We must come into alignment with Him. Hirsch says we are lost in “an ecclesial future shock” (Hirsch 2006:16). We face a world where our concepts, our language and our thinking no longer work. Out of this confusion is coming a new way, such as in the Early Church. We face terrorism, paradigms of technological innovation, “an unsustainable environment, rampant consumerism, discontinuous change, and perilous ideologies...” (2006:16). The Church must adapt or perish. The result is decades of declining membership of the Church in the West. Is the answer more programmes, more seminars, more of doing the same thing? This is obviously not the answer. We cannot simply revise past approaches and techniques (Hirsch 2006:17). Rather we must rediscover God’s “Forgotten Ways”. Much of our thinking about “emerging church” leaves intact our assumptions about church and mission and focuses on theology and spirituality in a postmodern setting. We must begin at the beginning and see how Jesus and the disciples formatted the Church. We shall rediscover “Apostolic Genius”.

Apostolic Genius leads to a “radical expression of Christianity” (Hirsch 2006:20). People are willing to die for their faith. Jesus is more important to them than life and all it represents. This was true in the church of the first 300 years of existence and was true of the Chinese church of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Persecution was not just tolerated, but embraced. In one sense it purified and focused the life of the believer. Jesus is the source of all meaning. The believer lived closer and truer to the gospel message (Hirsch 2006:20). This vibrancy is authentic Christianity. Jesus and his teaching were radical. Can we be less than our master? Interaction with the Gospels shows us a new godly way of life. Christian life in the West has been seduced to the point where one cannot tell the difference between the lifestyle of the believer and the non-believer

(Barna 2005:31-35). The teachings of Jesus are radically different to the ways of the world in any epoch.

### *2.3.1. The 6 Elements mDNA*

mDNA is a term that Hirsch used to describe that just as a natural organism has DNA; there is something genetic about the inner dynamics of the church. Within its inner coding is the “drivenness” to grow, multiply and survive. Only moving away from its core values will stop this growth. This then is missional DNA. Apostolic Genius is “the total phenomenon resulting from a complex of multiform and real experiences of God, types of expression, organizational structures, leadership ethos, spiritual power, mode of belief, etc.” (Hirsch 2006:78). It is quite simple according to Hirsch. In the same way DNA has nucleotides that make up DNA, mDNA has six elements. Each one is an mDNA. When these six elements come together, they release the powerful response that is Apostolic Genius (according to A. Hirsch, November 16, 2012). Apostolic Genius is the underlying factor by which a Jesus People Movement is driven. It is by nature spiritual. Within Apostolic Genius, just as within mDNA is resident all the information that is necessary to reproduce an Incarnational, attractional or missional church. Furthermore, God can use anyone of his believers to bring about that emergent entity (On the Verge Hirsch and Ferguson 2011:41).

mDNA is something internal for the true believer (Hirsch 2006:77,85). mDNA is something that directs the believer and Jesus Movements with unbelievable accuracy. mDNA is a “simple, intrinsic, reproducible, central guiding mechanism... necessary for reproduction and sustainability of genuine missional movements.”(2006:76). It is this mDNA coding that is missing in institutional Christianity. In each believer and each missional movement, the full mDNA coding is represented (2006:77). “Organic missional movements organize through healthy mDNA coding...” (Hirsch 2006:77). Significant “adaptive challenges” cause a movement to access their mDNA coding (2006:77). mDNA runs throughout Apostolic Genius.

### 2.3.1. a. Element 1: Jesus Is Lord

Israel in the Old Testament is marked by its monotheistic passion for Yahweh. Yahweh is all and everything. Deuteronomy 6:4 declares that “The Lord Yahweh (our God) is one.” (Christiansen 2001:141). This starts by focusing attention on “Hear oh Israel”. In this short statement is found the identity of our God. We are directed to focus all our attention on this monotheistic being that is the source of all things past, present and future. Our life is wrapped up in God. Jesus represents “the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9). He is the full representation. He is the one on whom we focus. When together and we focus our devotion on him, powerful things take place.

This passion for Jesus leads to an expression that there is one true God, Jesus. “The teaching that God is Lord over his creation, what theologians have called ethical monotheism, or what Jesus himself calls the kingdom of God, is the subterranean message under girding all of Scripture” (Hirsch and Ferguson 2011:126). Jesus himself embodied the Kingdom of God (Newbiggin 1995:40).

The “true believer” comes to recognise that Saviour and Lordship are inextricably linked in Jesus Christ. This is the essence of biblical faith (Hirsch 2006:89). To truly understand these truths is to become unconditionally committed to the master. No price is too great to pay.

In the “Jesus People movement” of the 60’s and 70’s which took place in Southern California, you would often see motorists gesturing to other motorists. This was not because they were angry, but because they had recognised the “fish” symbol on the back of the other car. They were gesturing to a fellow Christian with the index finger in the air. The meaning of this was “Jesus is Lord”; “there is only one way”. I saw many accidents nearly happen because of their enthusiasm. Jesus is Lord, as it was in other Jesus movements, was central to the Jesus People Movement. This touched most of the American youth of the ‘70’s in one way or another. The “Counter-Culture Hippy Movement” which sought to change American society was itself changed. Jesus is Lord, is ‘ground zero’ for the church (Hirsch 2006:84). Addison in “Movement

Dynamics” identifies this as “red hot faith” (Hirsch 2006:84). It is this radical devotion to Jesus that suffuses the Jesus movements throughout history. This enthusiasm is not just a sign of emotionalism, but of the real presence of God through his Spirit in the life of ordinary believers. God infuses these movements with his presence and his power.

This was true in the Chinese Jesus movement. In 1949 Mao deported all foreign missionaries. In 1953, he eliminated the senior Christian leaders. He sent the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> tier Christian leaders to “re-education” camps. He seized church buildings and turned them into store houses, museums and government buildings. In one coup, he had eliminated the institution structures for Christians and all the other religions. It seems that he did the Church a favour. When all of the props had been removed, Christians had to return to the basics of their faith. This persecution, together with the authenticity of their faith, unleashed the power of the Holy Spirit in their midst (Hirsch 2006:85). The message of the gospel came with a simple power. Even the frailties of their humanity only served to underline the power of the message. This is one of the greatest “Jesus People movements” the world has ever seen. Millions have come to Christ. Some state there are 80 million believers (Aiken 2003:7). Others say there are as many as 100 million believers (Hattaway 2003:13). Thirty one percent of the Chinese say they are religious (National Geographic 2008 May:70) Only the Lord really knows how many are Christian. To survive under persecution, they have thrown out top heavy ideas of institutional “ecclesia”. Rather their networks have become relational. Their churches became cells. Their message was distilled and purified to the essential truth that is the message of Jesus. Faith returns to the simplicity found in the teachings of Jesus. This simple message is dynamite. This message is rapidly transferred by relationship with non-believers. The message must be simple enough to be understood by any person, even the illiterate. The lordship of Jesus in daily life becomes supreme. “The desperate prayer-soaked human, clinging to Jesus, the reliance on his Spirit, and the distillation of the gospel message into the simple uncluttered message of Jesus as Lord and Saviour is what catalysed the missional potencies inherent in the people of God.”(Hirsch 2006:86). “What is required is a spirituality of engagement, as modelled

for us in Christ. Such incarnation cannot occur without a sustaining and energizing spirituality.” (Frost & Hirsch 2003:111)

“Christology must by necessity define missiology. Jesus is our model of mission and the Gospels are our primary texts.” (Frost & Hirsch 2003:112). Too long have we interpreted the Gospels through the eyes of Paul? It is much more realistic, to interpret the epistles through the eyes of Jesus. We have misplaced the concept that Jesus is the Lord and Saviour. He defines all things for us. “In him we live and move and have our being” (Acts 17:28). Christ is the “historical person who represents the principal model for missions, ministry and discipleship and the focal point for an authentic New Testament faith, ” (Frost & Hirsch 2003:112). Paul himself emphasised that we focus on Jesus rather than himself. (I Corinthians 1:11-17). We must never forget that it is the Son who brings us to the Father. It is by his work on the cross that we are adopted into the royal family. We are forever connected to Jesus as his disciples and therefore for his purposes on earth. Jesus remains first in our thinking, our adoration and our action. (Frost & Hirsch 2003:113). It is Christ who defines Christianity and all that is found in it, especially mission. Further, it is missiology that defines our “ecclesiology” (according to: A. Hirsch, TFW seminar, Weltevreden, South Africa, March 2008). The primary task of the leader is to reconnect ecclesiology with missiology (Gibbs 2005:38). Rather than maintaining the status quo, a missional theology focuses on having dialogue with unbelievers and those of other religions (Gibbs 2005:39)

We need to rediscover the Apostolic Genius of the early church. It was intrinsically tied to Jesus. Two thousand years of “Christendom” has muddied the waters of the simplicity and purity of the life Jesus led. This simplicity is what Hirsch refers to as “messianic spirituality” (Frost & Hirsch 2003:116) which is rooted in the life and teaching of Jesus himself. Christendom can be defined as the formalisation of the Church. With the conversion of Constantine, in 311 CE, Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire. In addition to this, certain Early Church Fathers had been moving toward a more formal expression of the church (Zdero 2007:176). Churches were built for the first time. Constantine was involved in the form used to build the structures. Edicts

were issued. Councils were held and creeds were devised. The Church was morphing from a movement into an institution. This formalism continues to this day in many ways. Nevertheless spontaneous movements continued to arise throughout the history of the church.

Christology must define our actions. We must revisit Jesus and his teaching to conform ourselves and our organisations to the simplicity of Jesus. The Gospels become our instruction books for an authentic life. The example of Jesus instructs us on relations with everyone outside of our faith. (Hirsch 2006:94)

Jesus is central to all of life. Therefore there can be no division of secular and sacred. It all belongs to him. His kingdom rule applies everywhere, in every situation. There can be no opportunity for secularity in his kingdom. Jesus has the authority to invade all areas of life and culture. This is the Lordship of Christ! (Hirsch 2006:95). All of life becomes sacred, rather than just our “religious” venues and events.

#### 2.3.1.b. Element 2: Discipleship And Disciple Making

In terms of the mDNA of the Church, this is one of the most important aspects of Apostolic Genius. “The essential task of discipleship is to embody the message of Jesus, the Founder.” (Hirsch 2006:102) This is the most crucial factor that determines the quality of the whole church. If we fail at this, we will fail at all other points (Hirsch 2006:102). In my opinion, it is the discipline that we have failed in the most. We have confused knowledge with lifestyle. It is clear that our teaching methods in the West have produced Christians who may have a great deal of knowledge but do not live the message (Barna 2005:31-35). This is the activity that Jesus spent most of his ministry on earth doing. It was his primary task. If we look at the people he worked with, they were not the best society had to offer. These were the people he would leave in charge of the church. Should we be so exclusive about whom we put in leadership? Should we not look for teachability in discipleship rather than natural ability (Gibbs 2005:33)? With teachability comes humility.

The entire Christian movement throughout time was started by Jesus investing his life and planting his teaching in the lives of his followers. He helped his followers to develop into “authentic disciples”. This must be a major focus of the church today (Frost & Hirsch 2003:113). “Discipleship, becoming like Jesus our Lord and founder, lies at the epicentre of the churches task” (Hirsch 2006:94). Becoming a disciple isn’t just a phase in our early belief. We are a disciple “on-the-way” (Hirsch 2006:104) throughout our life. But our calling is to a radical Christ-like lifestyle. We talk about discipleship, yet our churches do not practice it the way Jesus did. We have replaced discipleship with the knowledge of ideas. This is not a true disciple. If you are not living it, you do not have it. Consumerism is a large enemy of true discipleship. The seeking of things is the societal norm rather than becoming like Christ. One’s identity is wrapped up in material things rather than the life that comes from within through Christ. Part of the interesting facets about discipleship in spontaneous movements is that it was difficult to become a disciple. In the early church, your life was on the line. If you were found to be a Christian, you were put to death. On the other hand, you had to prove yourself dedicated to be a disciple. These were the “catechisms”. This was a process of examining yourself to find the good and the bad. It was out of this confession that you were admitted to the church or not. Later movements had similar facets. In China 1963, a Christian believer could be imprisoned or put to death for being a Christian. Many of the pastors were. Consequently, you had to prove yourself to be a Christian. There were many spies sent out by the government to find out what was going on in the underground churches. “Many people were turned away (from the early church) because they were found unworthy.” (Hirsch 2006:104)

The modern trend seems to be “to make church complex and discipleship too easy”. (Hirsch 2006:104). It should be the opposite. This is readily evident in the seeker sensitive programme. We remove all the obstacles from someone seeking Christ so they do not have to make the effort. They don’t have to be serious. This is the marketing strategy of Church Growth. Our churches on the other hand are turned into complex structures of innovation and beauty. Great detail is paid to the staffing and facilities. In essence they are competing with the shopping malls. Jesus must be the

focus. We must get serious about Jesus. Following him and becoming like Jesus must be the goal, rather than who has the best programmes. In Africa, we say “That which you pay for means the most to you.”

Steve Addison (Hirsch 2006:105), says there are five phases in the transmission of ideas in mission movements. I think the same can be said of true disciples.

#### Phase 1: White hot faith

There is a personal encounter with God that produces a “give it all” attitude. There is Jesus and no one else. This infectious faith flows to other people and a movement is begun.

#### Phase 2: Commitment to cause

Commitment is high. Therefore there is joint energy to achieve. This comes through mutual cooperation.

#### Phase 3: Contagious relationships

The gospel passes from one person to another. There must be web relationships where many people are in contact with others. This spreading of the faith becomes contagious.

#### Phase 4: Rapid mobilisation

There must be leadership that pushes out into new areas and an organisation that supports it. This maximises the efforts of the believers.

#### Phase 5: Dynamic movements

New innovative methods and ideas tell the message. As Hirsch (Hirsch 2006:106) and many others have noted, the greatest threat to discipleship is materialism. When you



take an objective look at western cultures, you quickly notice the religious nature of materialism. It has its prophets, its evangelists and its teachers. Advertising is one of the great recruiters for a consumer lifestyle. For instance one particular ad says “awake the goddess in you”. Another offers success, money and sexual fulfilment. Donald Trump’s theme song in the show the “Apprentice” is unashamedly “Money, money, money, money, money”. Advertising offers “a sense of identity, meaning, purpose and community.” (Hirsch 2006:107). Language and symbols have been stolen from the religious community to spiritualise their products. The religious overtones are quite deep. “This is a “significant religious phenomenon”. (Hirsch 2006:107) This follows the de-Christianisation of the West and something must fill this hole. Materialism is the heir apparent.

In a similar fashion, with the demise of Mao, there was a philosophical void in China (Aikman 2003:15; Lambert 1999:18). Christianity is now being widely embraced. The greatest threat to a vibrant mission movement in China is materialism. China has filled the world-wide need for cheap electronics as well as many other items. In this way it has become the supplier for the rampant materialism of the West. Any visit to modern China would impress one with the availability of cheap products and technology.

The Church has followed suit. Advertising is one of the great tools of the mega-church. C. Peter Wagner in his Church Growth classes that I attended at Fuller School of World Mission (1984) would regularly refer to the McDonalds phenomenon. On one street corner in America, you can find four different fast-food restaurants. The consumer can take his choice. The church is taught to appeal to the community for its business. Large churches with beautiful landscaped grounds, parks and fountains have become a regular feature of the American landscape. “Consumerism has become the driving ideology of the church’s ministry.” (Hirsch 2006:110). The early church of the first 300 years had none of this. Yet their movement captured the attention of the Roman Empire. There obviously are far deeper stronger elements at work. Chinese believers are convinced that this is the way to a successful church. Many do not understand the vibrant form of Christianity that is theirs.

There is a radical difference between the western church and the early church. In the American church, 80 to 90 percent of the people attending are passive. They attend and they consume a message and a musical production and they go home entertained. On the other hand, discipleship is a radical encounter with the living Christ. The modern setting does not lend itself to active encounters with the living God. It does happen, but it is the exception rather than the rule. Knowledge cannot be equated with lifestyle. There must be an intrinsic change in a person's actions. The person must be transformed. This comes through regular exposure to the Word of God and the Spirit of God. It is not a matter of attending a service but becoming a follower. The western church works on an *attractional* model. This is what we call the "come and see" method. A better approach is "go and tell" or "go and be". A Christian must go and express the life of Christ in his world. Sunday is not enough. The consumerism model is a "get all you need" in one visit approach. This conforms to the "easy, no problem, product on demand" lifestyle of the American public. This does not produce disciples.

Christianity is not a set of doctrines to be believed, but a lifestyle to be lived (Frost & Hirsch 2003:113). Our search for truth in the West has not produced the mighty Christians that we expected. It is not a matter of the mind but of the heart and life action. Belief cannot be divorced from works. "Christianity is not a doctrine but a person to whom I entrust myself without reserve." (Frost & Hirsch 2003:113). The Gospels must be taken seriously for what they are. They describe how we should live. All other things, including the Epistles, must be seen through this light. We relate to God through Jesus Christ. As Bonhoeffer says "Christianity without the living Christ is inevitably Christianity without discipleship..." (Bonhoeffer 1937:59) Since the Messiah is our focus, we are therefore intrinsic to his purposes in this world. Jesus comes first in our thoughts our love and our works.

Central to the message of Jesus is the fact that he alone is the way to salvation. The post-modern world does not like this message and is doing everything it can to extinguish this truth. In reading John 14:6, we must again surrender to the fact that our

identities and lives are tied to the person of Jesus. You cannot avoid Jesus, only surrender to his kingdom plan. Our very existence relies upon him.

The spirituality of Jesus did not drive secular people away. Quite the opposite, both religious and non-believers were drawn to him in droves. This deserves great thought considering that our current reputation puts off the general populace. Who has not heard “Jesus I like, but the church and its members you can keep!” Even many of those within the church have left to go looking for an authentic relationship with Jesus. Jesus exuded an attractive spirituality. He was notorious for hanging out in the wrong places with the “wrong” kind of person. Like Daniel, when Jesus walked into the lion’s den, it became his den. He came for the sick. The Church spends most of her energy on those who are not in need... “We need his model of holy laughter, of his sheer love of life, of his infectious holiness, of his common people’s religion, for this day” (Frost & Hirsch, 2003:114). Being Christian should be fun. As Costa Mitchell, of the Vineyard Christian Fellowship, South Africa, says “If it’s not fun, let’s not do it.” Our messianic mission in life is to be conformed to the image of Jesus. Our relationships with people must imitate the relationships Jesus had with the common man. We need to see Jesus through new eyes, first century eyes.

#### 2.3.1.c. Element 3: Missional-Incarnational Impulse

We cannot incarnate Jesus in a culture unless we deal with the person of Jesus, his life and teaching.

It should not bother us that the Christian faith was perceived and experienced in new and different ways. The Christian faith is intrinsically incarnational; therefore unless the church chooses to remain a foreign entity, it will always enter into the context in which it happens to find itself (Bosch 1991:1)

The Missional-incarnational impulse is combining two practices that form one and the same action (Hirsch, 2006:128). As Guder would say, we are called and sent to represent the reign of God (Guder 1998:77-80). We are missional, but at the same time

we are sent to identify with a people and show them God. We are a people sent by God to represent him. We must incarnate the gospel for them. The “genius of the apostolic church” will be impeded. That genius is to foment the rapid multiplication of the church by “seeding and embedding” the gospel in groups and societies. In this impulse, we find the theology of mission and Incarnation. The mission of God (*missio Dei*) results in the missional-incarnational impulse. This comes from God’s plan from the beginning. God fully revealed himself in the incarnation. By redeeming man he completes this circle. He brings mankind back into relationship with himself. The natural impulse of someone receiving the full force of God’s grace should be burning, white hot desire to see his gospel implemented. This is the authentic impulse that permeates apostolic movements. Hirsh and Frost describe it as “A missional church is one whose primary commitment is to the missionary calling of the people of God. As such, it aligns itself with God’s missionary purposes in the world. A missional leader is one that takes mission seriously and sees it as the driving energy behind all the church does” (Frost & Hirsch 2003:229).

There is a delicate nuance here that must not be missed. For decades we have practiced the “evangelistic-attractational mode of reproduction”. It has been sincere. It has often been successful. We cannot misconstrue the positive motives that have driven this phenomenon. Yet according to Hirsch, it gets in the way of how the early church lived. The mission-incarnational impulse is more holistic. It is more than “come to church and receive Jesus”. It is full orbbed in penetrating the things of this world with the things of God. It is transformational. It is not a “triumphalism” but it is the kingdom of God penetrating the darkness. It is go and show the wonders of Jesus.

In the last 40 years we have realised that our view of mission has been a church-centred one. We have shifted to a God-centred view. This is readily seen in the works of George Eldon Ladd (*Blessed Hope* 1956; *The Gospel of the Kingdom* 1959). The kingdom of God does not focus on the realm of God but the reign of God. The kingdom of God focuses on the King. His reign is his authority put into action. Therefore he is the centre of all things rather than his church. As Guder says: “Mission means sending

and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of God's action in human history" (Hirsch 2006:129; Guder 1998:4).

The church is to be sending rather than attracting. We have to go out and live the gospel among the people of the world. The missional impulse is exemplified by "sending" of Christians into the world. It is not based in how you can attract people to you, but going to them and expressing the faith in their cultural norm. We are the sent people of God. Where does this term "missional" come from if not from the very nature of God himself? We are sent into this world to be his witnesses. A true understanding of the missional-incarnational impulse is that it is "sending". We are sent.

There is the Incarnation of Jesus. He came as God's son and infiltrated this world. He put flesh on God for us. At the same time he showed us how to live a life given entirely to God. It resulted with his dying on the cross and the forgiveness of our sins. We received eternal life. Now a new incarnation begins. In Galatians 2:20, Paul says "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live and yet not I but Christ lives in me. And the life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God who loves me and gave himself for me." This is indeed a mysterious and mystical scripture. Jesus penetrates our life, with our consent. With this a new incarnation takes place. Jesus invades the world. We become his ambassadors, sent out to accomplish his task. It is exemplifying the life of Christ. It is not becoming Christ. That would be heretical. But there is this unexplainable extension of his kingdom, where he penetrates life as we know it. We can see from his sending out of the twelve and the seventy that his mission is global. When Jesus taught on Isaiah 61, he didn't just say "preach the Gospel". It was much deeper and fuller than that. The full preaching of the gospel encompasses man in all his conditions and situations. Christ wants to address these conditions through us. But we must do it incarnationally. It must be a true reflection of the way Christ himself would do it. We are not about an institution, but a dynamic relationship with a living Lord who changes us and everything around us. We cannot reduce life to simplistic approaches. We face the immensity of life with the resource of God himself. Only then are we truly the church. Hirsch refers to this as "daily connections between heaven and

earth”. This is an “incarnational lifestyle” (Hirsch 2006:133). Hirsch expands the understanding of the Incarnation in four topics. They are Presence, Proximity, Powerlessness, and Proclamation (2006:133-4):

**PRESENCE:** God was indeed here in the flesh. It wasn’t his proxy or his agent but Jesus the Son himself. (John 1:1, Col 2:9)

**PROXIMITY:** Jesus entered into our lives. He fully experienced the human condition. He made himself accessible to us. He preached a radical message of repentance and made friends of the down and out members of society. He “lived life in proximity with the broken and the lost” (Hirsch 2006:132.).

**POWERLESSNESS:** Jesus portrayed an amazing role. He came in the form of a servant. He had every right to invade every throne and place of power on earth. He turns our concepts of power and leadership entirely upside down. The coercive power, which is so evident in today’s world, is not God’s way. Rather love and humility are consistent with the very nature of God in this world and his plan to transform it. We would perceive this as “powerlessness”. In truth it reveals a greater power than the world has ever known. The ways of God have not changed. We have simply lost touch with them. It is the power of the cross.

**PROCLAMATION:** What was it that Jesus proclaimed? It was “repent and believe for the kingdom of God has come near.” This is central to the gospel message. The reign of God has come. We enter in by repentance and faith. Today that message is still offered to all men and women.

Mission should be something that is natural. It should part of the daily life of the Christian. It should soak our life, friendships and community (Hirsch 2006: 135). This is the nature of contextualisation. The gospel comes out through our personal expression of it. This is “living inside the gospels”. This is true incarnation.

I am reminded of a recent Vineyard Christian Fellowship church in Cape Town. The church was started and conducted in a pub. It made national news. The images showed people standing at the bar with a beer in their hand listening to the gospel message. Christianity was no longer a list of “dos and don’ts” but had penetrated their world, their reality. It was expressed in their way in their environment. To do this you have to drop our Christian buzz words and our “Christian” attitude. You have to speak their language and experience their world. Is not this what Jesus did?

#### 2.3.1.d. Element 4: Apostolic Environment

Leadership is the key to any endeavour. The question is what kind of leadership? How do I define it? Jesus was very clear that leadership in the kingdom of God is very different. He said if you want to be a leader you must become a servant of all. This is contrary to the world’s understanding of leadership. Jesus said, do not be like the gentiles “lording it over” your people. Most worldly systems work like this. The approach is “I am the boss; do what I say.” The old joke is “There are three laws of business. First, the boss is always right. Second, the boss is always right. Third, should an employee ever be right, see laws one and two above.” Although meant to be humorous, this anecdote catches the human tendency. If I am in charge, do what I say or else. Eddie Gibbs in his excellent book “Leadership Next” tackles the idea of servant leadership (Gibbs 2005). “The church should not simply follow the leadership insights and models of the business world” (Gibbs 2005:21). It is not a congregational polity where everything is voted on. It does not mean that the leader must do everything anybody wants. It is rather that you seek the will of God together. Hirsch calls him the “servant-inspirer” (Hirsch 2006:159). This was evident in the council of Jerusalem and the choosing of Paul and Barnabas for their first missionary journey. Further, the role of the leader is classically to build up the Christian for his/her destiny (Ephesians 4:11-12). There is no “one model fits all.” Each of us is created differently by God. The gifts are different. The abilities are different. We have a role to fulfil as God’s “workmanship” (Ephesians 2:10). The leader must be helping people become who they are meant to be. In this way the will of God is accomplished. His works and ministry are done by his

people. Rather than one small group of professional people practicing ministry, all the people are involved.

Within this is the idea of Apostolic Environment. God commissioned Apostles, Prophets Evangelists and Pastor-Teachers (APEPT). These offices are misunderstood, rather than offices they are functions (Frost & Hirsch 2003:166-169). “Apostolic ministry is a function not an office” (Hirsch 2006: 153). The titles themselves are dangerous. They often produce pride and diminish capacity to do the work. They are identified by the process of doing the work, not by a title. The New Testament church was an “emerging people movement with little or no centralized structures, no ‘ordained’ or professional ministry class, no official ‘church’ buildings” (Hirsch 2006:153). An apostle regularly starts new work. A prophet announces God’s truth in black and white. An evangelist brings new people to Christ. A pastor takes care of the flock. The teacher teaches truth for daily living from God’s word. All of them teach others to do likewise. This teaches the “Go and tell” method of church rather than “Come and see”. It is missional. It is not dependant on professionals and big buildings.

The calling of the apostolic leader is to push the boundaries. S/he is the one to go out and blaze new trails. S/he enters new cultures new societies and sees God’s kingdom expanded. It is the blazing pioneer, the new thinker. If the church is to advance and not decline, then it needs missional leadership. A leadership of pastors and teachers will not do. Rather we need APEPT. We must understand this new world and develop new ways of penetrating it in a meaningful way. The apostle is the person who implants the mDNA in the movement. S/he is the custodian of the ethos. S/he spreads it wide but also helps the movement to remain true to the message.

There is another aspect to apostolic ministry and that is what Hirsch calls the “working theologian” (2006:156). It is imperative that the movement maintains doctrinal integrity. This should not be confused with cultural expressions of the gospel, but the biblical teaching itself. This is particularly important today with the postmodern eclectic tendency to add a little of anything. This most often results in the still-birth of a church.



My personal motto is “Let God, be God”. He has declared himself in his living Word. Only then can we be on the right track.

Essentially, apostolic ministry is the start of all the other ministries. In a new context, it has to start somewhere. You start at the beginning, and then all other ministries will flow from this. It is prudent to mention here that this does not create a hierarchy in ministry. All of the ministries are equal, just different in their expression and timing.

#### 2.3.1.e. Element 5: Organic Systems

Organic system is best understood as in living organisms (Hirsch 2006:180). That is to say, growth is exponential and organic. Great emphasis is put on simplicity and functionality. Systems that hinder growth are to be avoided at all cost, even if they work. We face unbelievable complexities and challenges in the twenty-first century. Only new effective systems will suffice. The paradigm of the twentieth century just will not do. If we look at creation, we see systems that work intelligently. It is amazing the amount of information that is processed by organisms, yet the systems are simple and efficient. Indeed, there is a movement in natural science which views creation from “intelligent design” (Behe 1996). It goes against the dogma of the day and is highly persecuted.

It is clear that God is present in the earth’s organic systems. Indeed, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were involved in creation. All created things are directly connected to God (Hirsch 2006:181). Furthermore, Hirsch writes that “we must find a pattern of church closer to life” (2006:181). The mechanistic, marketing approach that we have used in the 20<sup>th</sup> century can never produce the all invasive result that God seeks. That approach is centred in his very self. If we focus on numerical growth, we are fooling ourselves. Numerical growth has not shown itself to produce qualitative growth. Only systems that resemble organic systems can produce true vitality. Our growth must be holistic.

As Hirsh points out (2006:183), if people are truly God's people, they have everything within them "to be able to thrive and adapt in any setting". There are abilities and capacities that nobody has even thought of yet. This is the hand of the creative God that we serve. If we lead *missionally*, we release the untapped abilities in people for God's eternal purpose.

The key to simple organic leadership is to bring the elements into relationship. This is a relational network, not an institutional structure. How does nature work? Unrelated elements work in harmony for the betterment of the whole system. Take a flower for instance, a bee takes nectar from a flower and turns it into honey. In turn, pollen is attached to the bee which rubs off on the next flower he visits. Cross-pollination takes place which improves the whole system. Likewise, talents of different scopes when put together in missional leadership have a salutary effect on the whole. The sharing of information of different gifts and callings brings about a cross-pollination that enhances the outcome. The diversity of knowledge and gifts clash with each other resulting in new forms of knowledge and possibilities (Hirsch 2006: 184-186).

It is here that the system must get out of control. There is a salutary effect from chaos. An old Jewish proverb says, "where there are no oxen, the stables are clean" (Proverbs 14:4). It is the mess that shows that life is taking place. It is in the adapting that creative novel progress is made. Many a spiritual revival, powered by the Holy Spirit was stopped by exerting control and order to the situation. There will be many disruptive situations and people, but in dealing with problems, missional leadership will create an environment where everybody grows from the experience. From personal observation, the Jesus People of the 1970's in Southern California brought together two unlikely partners. They were the conservative church institution and "hippies". I remember meeting in a circus tent where people were sitting side by side in different dress. I remember one man in his three piece suit sitting next to a hippie in his kaftan. I remember grandmothers hugging barefoot hippies with sand between their toes. The overall effect was a real demonstration of God's love and acceptance. It resulted in Christian workers being spread all over the world, myself included.

There will be a lot of scattered information. The task of missional leadership is to bring meaning to this chaos. Hirsh calls this “management of meaning” (2006:184). Leadership must choose those truths that cause the system to thrive. Change is inevitable. This must motivate the group in its progress. All of the disciplines come into play, particularly theology, psychology and sociology.

This meaningful chaos produced an effortless flow. In this way, Christianity conquered the Roman Empire. The key is the flow of natural life. Discipling, friendship, worship as a lifestyle and mission are daily activities. They flow from life and belief.

The modern leadership structure is very hierarchical in the West. It is a “from the top down” structure. Often decision making is in the senior pastor’s hands. What is preferable in fluid movements is a flat leadership structure where people are allowed to make decisions. Leadership simply guides the process. As a young forestry student, I learned you could not stop a forest fire. To get in front of it was to die. Rather you worked from the sides to control its direction until it lost momentum. Leadership should not be centralised but decisions should be made by those with hands on knowledge on the spot. The decentralising of decision making authority is necessary. This builds trust and initiative. It does no good for an institution to live on if it does not have “wildfire spreading” ability. Such a thing is found in movements not institutions. The church must be a “learning and theologising community”. (Hirsch 2006:187)

It is appropriate here to mention the “Signs of the Spirit” as written by Howard Snyder. According to Hirsch (2006:193) the following are characteristics of movements:

1. A thirst for renewal
2. A new stress on the work of the Holy Spirit
3. An institutional-/charismatic tension.
4. A concern for being a countercultural community.

5. Non-traditional or non-ordained leadership.
6. Ministry to the poor.
7. Energy and dynamism

#### 2.3.1.e. Element 6: Communitas Not Community

What is it that drives us to the challenge of the gospel? What causes us to risk our comfort zone and invite rejection for our faith? It is a basic adage that animals avoid pain. In the human animal we particularly avoid emotional pain. If we examine the western church, we quickly see that it is a middle class phenomenon. Hirsch points out (2006:219) that the middle class seems to carry with it the search for safety and security. Our western consumerism has purposely schooled us in the search for comfort and convenience. This has reached the level of addiction. Everything is judged acceptable or not by these four criteria. They have brought about some of the greatest evils of our time. They do have some merit but the gospel asks us to go beyond that. The gospel asks us to do whatever the Father asks us to do. This includes our family and our life. The two are at war with one another. If we call Jesus Lord then in the true sense of the word, he is in charge of everything in our life. Our faith is a 24/7 belief.

We can explain community in one sense as living near one another. Yet another definition would put us in the same activities and interests, such as cricket or attending Sunday school. Yet when there is risk, challenge or danger involved, we enter a new model. When we come together because of a shared ordeal or danger, we enter a new relationship. When we share personal experience of abuse and persecution, safety and security fall aside. We are now living in “communitas”. For the sake of something far larger than ourselves, we risk everything. We are bound together in a deeper form of community. I am reminded of the man watching a tightrope walker push a wheel barrow on a cable suspended over Niagara Falls. He was approached by a spectator who said to him “You are the greatest tight rope walker of all time!” The artist responded saying “Do you really believe this? If you really believe, then get into the wheel barrow.”

Suddenly we are in a brand new category. This illustrates the all or nothing quality of “communitas”.

I am reminded of the story of Floyd McClung (according to Floyd McClung, April, 1978) from Youth With A Mission. At one time, Floyd lived in the red light district of Amsterdam. They had a choice. They could send their children to a safe and secure private school or they could send them to public school. They chose the latter. I remember him recounting (according to Floyd McClung, Venice, April 1978) that daily they had to debrief their children because they would come home asking “What is a condom? Why does Billy have two mothers? What are drugs?” This is being in the community heart and soul. This is the seeking of “communitas”. No middle class American would have blamed them for making other arrangements but the gospel lead them to do otherwise. We admire people who make such choices, but what happens when it is our choice? This is entering into “communitas”.

When you find yourself in no man’s land of being outside of your culture, you have entered what Victor Turner calls “liminality” (Hirsch 2006:220). You are excluded from membership in that community because you have not passed the entrance experience. Such a case was true for the American soldiers in Viet Nam. When a new infantryman arrived in the back country of Viet Nam, he was a “Newbie”. He had not experienced the terror of live fire and acquired the survival skills to keep him alive. He was excluded from the group until he had encountered certain experiences. This is liminality. In experiencing this sort of disorientation and exclusion, the new comer is forced to depend on other more experienced individuals. He develops a sense of “comradeship and communality” (Hirsch 2006: 221) from their shared ordeals. He enters into what Turner calls “communitas”.

I remember Vietnam vets talking about how this was their finest hour, the high point of their life. I remember being part of a street evangelism team in Venice in 1978. When we arrived at our meeting spot everybody huddled together in a group for safety. It was only as we left the group and entered the crowd of spectators that we attempted “communitas”. We left the comfort of the known and safe to venture into the unknown

for the sake of Jesus Christ and his gospel. We began to hear and feel the people's stories of pain and neglect. We entered into their world. Likewise, the church must leave its comfort zone and enter into the dangerous place of a world that does not operate by their rules and values. Light must penetrate darkness. It is in this way that a better world is created. It is this way that the rule of Christ is extended. This is a better understanding of the Kingdom of God. Both the early church and the Chinese church experienced this through the act of being outlawed and persecuted. Rather than being destroyed by this, they were driven to new depths of faith. The Jesus Movement became irresistible. *Communitas* is the general operating procedure of Apostolic Genius. When this is lost, the driving life force of the movement diminishes. It has long been my statement, that having experienced "*communitas*", you long for it ever after. You have indeed been changed. It is also true that the most powerful theological ideas came out of the experience of being at danger, or at risk. All you have to do is look at the major characters of the Old Testament to see them rise to new levels of faith. Moses, who killed an Egyptian to start things going fled into the desert. After a face to face experience with God, he returned to defy Pharaoh before his throne. The examples are endless.

## **2.4 Summary and Conclusion**

We have discussed Apostolic Genius and the role of mDNA. We have seen that Apostolic Genius is composed of six elements; Jesus is Lord, Making Disciples, Missional-Incarnational impulse, Apostolic Environment, Organic Systems and *Communitas*.

We have described Apostolic Genius and the six points that are included. These points come from observation and the study of actual Jesus People movements. It is my premise that by careful use of these elements we will be able to see if the Chinese church in South Africa is or will become a Jesus People Movement. Jesus People movements are a regular occurrence in the history of the church. In addition to this, we can see the potential of a community breaking out into a large movement toward Christ.

We have here an excellent tool, in my estimation, to understand a move of the Spirit in God's kingdom.

In the next chapter we will discuss the rich history and contribution of the Christian church in China. It is from this soil that one of the greatest movements for Christ springs forth. It must be understood.

# CHAPTER 3: CONTEXT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN CHINA AN INHERITANCE

## 3.1 Purpose of the Chapter

Nothing comes from nothing, as the saying goes. Divine creation obviously is the exception. Sociologically speaking, events and movements have their causes in history and culture. People affect people. Things take place. For this reason, we will study the people and events that brought about the House Church Movement in China. We cannot understand if a Jesus People Movement is taking place in Africa among the Chinese unless we identify its origin and character in China. The history and the people involved set the stage for one of the largest movements towards Christ that the world has ever seen. It is only by understanding this that we can evaluate whether it has come to South Africa. Our goal here is to understand what happened in the church in China so that we can evaluate if it is taking place in the Chinese church in South Africa. To this end, we are applying the six principles of Apostolic Genius by Hirsch to measure the traits of the church. We call this missional DNA (Hirsch 2006:76). It is appropriate that we start with J. Hudson Taylor. J. Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission stand out as an incarnational example of the gospel. The qualities that Taylor exemplified in a Victorian culture truly demonstrate his godliness. We will see these traits in the church in China. I have chosen to study three prominent Chinese Christian leaders that express the spiritual and theological climate of the Chinese Church in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are Wang Ming-Dao, Watchman Nee and David Yang. Others such as Peter Xu and Brother Yun will be considered briefly. The current change in the political climate in China has allowed the House Church movement to spread beyond Chinas borders.



What is the House Church movement? The church is people. The movement is composed of real people. Even with good leaders, the church has problems. Allow me a whimsical illustration:

Decades ago I was a young leader in Youth With A Mission (YWAM). I was one of the teachers in the first Discipleship Training School (DTS) in France. We were taking 20 students to Spain for a cross-cultural outreach. We had to stop in Languedoc for the night before we crossed into Spain. I discovered that I, the leader, had left the car papers in north eastern France. We were not allowed to move the car, let alone cross a border until the papers came by post. I had to confess to the team, with growing humility, what I had done.

We had several beautiful days in a chateau. It was idyllic. I remember watching a herd of sheep at the feeding trough. One ewe was left out. She repeatedly backed up and rammed the line of feeders until she was given access. The church is like that where ever I have gone. One person will push and shove until they get their way. I was the leader. We had several leaders, but I had to lead the group. I was young and inexperienced. One of our leaders would try to take over the meeting, every time I spoke.

One night I took her aside to the kitchen to talk this out. I explained to her that she was undermining me. She was speaking over me. I had come to get this right. Her response was “I don’t do that!” At that moment our Swiss student, Claude, entered. He said he wanted to get a glass of milk. I explained that we were having an important meeting. He would have to come back later. She immediately took over. “What do you want? The milk is over there.” I looked at her until the proverbial penny dropped. She began to laugh. God in his mercy showed her what she was doing. I never had another problem, with her. But problems are always lurking in the hallway.

It is leaders who forget the way. It is leaders who hold true to the direction that God has decreed. And mostly, it is leaders who put an imprint on the church. You can see the

DNA of a church movement by the passion and teaching of the leaders. They put a stamp on the church that is God given. They have learned to hear the voice of God and obey. This is what my research of Chinese leaders has also shown. They were not perfect. But they sought God and obeyed. Can we expect less from our leaders? Leaders lead what? Obviously that is people. Let us look at a People movement then. When leaders build an institution or organisation rather than a movement, something vital is lost. It can no longer be a movement (Hirsch 2006: 58-61, 253; Frost & Hirsch 2003:183-185).

A movement engages people in a dynamic way. A movement is transformational. People's lives are changed. A movement takes centre stage. A movement is people of like persuasion and experience. A movement needs a vessel. For the Chinese, that vessel was the House Church movement. In 1949, Mao seized the churches, imprisoned the pastors and burned the books. But he could not take away the idea of church from the people. The people knew and loved their church. It led to unpaid lay leaders, meeting in local homes in small groups. It led to the scriptures becoming precious. It led to a dedication to the cause of Christ. The Chinese House Church was born.

### *3.1.a. Relevance to dissertation*

How can one understand if the Chinese house church movement has come to Africa unless one understands what that is? The men of the history of the church in China are important. Will the things they taught and passed down be found in the Chinese house church movement in Africa? If so, we will know that the movement has truly come to the southern part of the African continent. We will know that they are Jesus People movements because they will carry the missional DNA (Hirsch 2006:76) that identifies such a movement. In the same way, we will know it is from China because of the unique imprint of the church in China.

## 3.2 The Church in China

### *3.2.1. Christian witness*

Christianity is not new to China. The church spread out from Jerusalem in every direction. Some fled persecution. Others travelled for business. Some came as missionaries. On a stele in the city of Changan, China is a representation of a delegation arriving in that city. They are Nestorian Christians dressed in white robes. The year is 635 CE. Their leader was named Aluoben. They had travelled the Silk Road to bring Christianity to China. This was the start of a Christian presence in China (Aikman 2003:21-22; Hattaway 2003:4; Chan 2010:1). It was to last 210 years. Even so, Marco Polo reported the presence of Nestorian Christians in China during his visit hundreds of years later (Aikman 2003:25).

On several occasions, the popes sent monk delegates to the Mongols who ruled China (Aikman 2003:28; Jenkins 2008:14-15). Even Marco Polo (1266CE) had two Catholic monks with him on his trip to China. These Dominicans dropped out of the trip (Aikman 2003:28). Polo actually brought back a message for the Pope from Kublai Kahn that if he would send 100 missionaries to China, men able to teach and persuade, then he and his potentates would become Catholic. The Pope sent only one missionary (Aikman 2003:28). In the 1500's the Jesuits came to the Far East with Francis Xavier and because of him, Mateo Ricci, landed in Macau in 1582. He would become an important part of the scholars in Peking. He would have a profound effect on the Chinese court. The Jesuits would be expelled in 1722 (Lyll 2001:50). The Protestant missions started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with western colonial expansion (Chan 2010:1).

### *3.2.2. J. Hudson Taylor*

It is appropriate to start with J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905 CE). One could say that Taylor was born for the task. When J. Hudson Taylor's mother was pregnant with him,

the parents prayed, “Dear God if you should give us a son, grant that he may work for you in China.” (Aikman 2003:1) Wisely they did not tell the boy of the prayer till much later in life. If ever there was a man born for China, it was Hudson Taylor. As a missionary, Hudson Taylor embodied the Incarnational-missional approach to witness and mission. He, more than anyone else, would affect the nature of the Chinese church to come. He was the embodiment of a Jesus People movement leader. His example would set the standard for the Chinese Christian leaders to come. This is especially true for the Back to Jerusalem movement (Hattaway 2003: 6). One of his favourite sayings was “adopt *all* things *not sinful* that were *Chinese* in order to save some” (Taylor 1865:34). He was centuries ahead of his time. The only Chinese missionary close to his example was the Jesuit, Matteo Ricci, 1582 CE (Aikman 2003:31).

*No other missionary in the nineteen centuries since the Apostle Paul, has had a wider vision and has carried out a more systematized plan of evangelizing a broad geographical area than Hudson Taylor. (Tucker 1983:73)*

After a long preparation in England, Taylor arrived in Shanghai in 1853. He was sent out by the Chinese Evangelization Society of London (CES). He was considered strange by his fellow Europeans. He forsook the gathering of Europeans. He dressed and ate like the Chinese. He lived in a Chinese neighbourhood. He dyed his red hair black and wore a false pig-tail until he could grow his own (Pollack 1962:53-56). He studied Chinese assiduously. Most of his colleagues considered him odd and left him alone. He had quite correctly separated culture from the gospel. He planted the truth of Christianity more deeply into Chinese society than any other missionary (Aikman 2003:39; Taylor 2003:59). Because of the existing treaties, missionaries were not allowed to travel outside of the “treaty ports”. This was unthinkable to Taylor. He fervently believed the gospel must be carried to every town and village in China. Every radical thinker will be opposed by the status quo. It was these radical ideas drawn from the life of Christ and the first century church community that would lead to the China Inland Mission (OMF). To show the impact Taylor had on the modern church in China, we find this quote from Peter Xu, one of the principle leaders:

“The vision of the house churches in China today is not only to saturate our own country with the life and presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also to impact all the remaining Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu nations with the gospel. This is why we are so thankful for the impact Hudson Taylor made on our country. His example was one of single-minded passion to see God’s kingdom come. Like a mighty soldier he marched into pioneer areas where the name of Jesus Christ had never been uttered before.

Today the house churches in China have caught the same vision. It is as Hudson Taylor handed a flaming torch to the Chinese church and asked us to continue the race towards the finish line.” (Hattaway 2003:6)

J. Hudson Taylor grew up in the Methodist Church in Yorkshire (Pollack 1962:15-16). One of his favourite stories as a child was when John Wesley, then 82, stayed at their home. It is common that one radical move of God often affects a later move of God. Methodism was radical in its day. They attempted to stay within the Church of England but were driven out. The source of their piety was “the method”.

### *3.2.3. The Influence of Hudson Taylor*

It was this same radical approach that would infuse the missionaries and believers of the China Inland Mission. Another of the strong influences on his mission was the Plymouth Brethren. The church polity of the Chinese House Church movement was strongly affected by the Brethren movement.

Hudson Taylor’s impact on China was large. He lived in a time when the arrogance of western countries was great. They forced countries to open their borders and in some cases invaded and conquered them. The Spanish owned Latin America. The English had taken over India. The Dutch had Indonesia. The Americans forced Japan to open to the world. The imperialist actions of England in South Africa are well known. Hudson Taylor refused to follow the “political thought” of the day. He was openly pro-Chinese (Hattaway 2003:7).

### *3.2.4. The Principles of the China Inland Mission*

J. Hudson Taylor started the China Inland Mission. It is very instructive to look at their guiding principles.

**Object:** The China Inland Mission was formed under a deep sense of China's pressing need, and with an earnest desire, constrained by the love of CHRIST and the hope of his coming, to obey his command to preach the Gospel to every creature. Its aim is, by the help of GOD, to bring the Chinese to a saving knowledge of the love of GOD in CHRIST, by means of itinerant and localised work throughout the whole of the interior of China.

**Character:** The Mission is Evangelical, and embraces members of all the leading denominations of Christians.

**Method:** Methods somewhat unusual and peculiar were adopted for working the newly-proposed organisation. It was determined:

1. That duly qualified candidates for missionary labour should be accepted without restriction as to denomination, provided there was soundness of the faith in all fundamental truths.
2. That all who went out as Missionaries should go in dependence upon God for temporal supplies, with the clear understanding that the Mission did not guarantee any income whatsoever; and knowing that, as the Mission would not go into debt, it could only minister to those connected with it as the funds sent in from time to time might allow.

**Support.** The Mission is supported entirely by the free-will offerings of the Lord's people. The needs of the work are laid before God in prayer, no personal solicitations or collections being authorised. No more is expended than is thus received, going into

debt is considered inconsistent with the principle of total dependence upon God (Broomhall 1901: appendix).

### *3.2.5. Observations on J. Hudson Taylor*

1. His father asked God to send him to China as a missionary, before his birth (Aikman 2003:1, 39). One is immediately drawn to the comparison with Samuel the prophet (I Samuel 1:11). Hannah the mother of Samuel dedicated him to the Lord's service before he was conceived. The ministry and prophecies of Samuel would establish David as king and hasten the arrival of Jesus as Messiah. Here was another man set aside for a task. The time of Hudson Taylor was no different. One thinks of John Wesley, the "brand snatched from the fire" and his Aldersgate conversion, John Whitfield an evangelist called by God to change the Western world, and George Mueller whose belief in prayer and the providence of the Lord would revolutionise the perception of the walk of Faith. This was a time of giants in the faith.
2. Taylor was totally dedicated to his task. Taylor had a normal childhood, but when God called him, he dedicated himself to the task. He studied all the reports coming out of China. He eagerly prepared himself for life as a missionary (Aikman 2003:39). He went to China in spite of the financial and physical hardships of the trip.
3. Taylor was not affected by the political and cultural norms of his day. Rather than sitting in a comfortable western setting, in the treaty ports, he chose to live among the Chinese (Taylor 2003:70). The politics of the day would nullify and destroy the works of most of the missionaries of the day. They were identified with the countries they came from with their decadent lifestyles. Taylor chose to be Chinese. He wedded his destiny to their destiny. He wore the clothes of the Chinese (Taylor 2003:73). He ate their food (Aikman 2003:39). He even grew the Manchu pig-tail to identify with the people (Pollock 1962:40).

4. Taylor was a visionary. Everywhere he went he was looking for how the gospel could be spread. He would not be confined to the treaty ports but at the threat of his life, he travelled all over China (Aikman 2003:40). He sent missionaries to the farthest regions of China. He spent his life prospecting for new opportunities to preach the gospel. From this, and those he inspired, he would affect the lives of Christians in China.
5. One of the great mistakes of western mission, including the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was the leadership of the church remained in foreign hands. The property of the mission was in the name of the mission society. Although this was true at the start of CIM, Taylor saw the wisdom of turning the leadership over to the Chinese (Lyall 2001:23). In this, he was 100 years ahead of his time.
6. In the “Boxer” war of 1900, 230 missionaries were killed and mission properties destroyed (Aikman 2003:42). As part of the terms of pacification, China would have to pay for the mission property that had been destroyed. This was a disgrace to the Chinese, a losing of face once again to the foreign devils. We still pay for this outrage to this day in the anti-foreigner attitude of the Chinese. Taylor categorically refused to receive payment for the mission property that was lost (Aikman 2003:42). His identification with the Chinese was complete. His example did not go unnoticed.

The principles of J. Hudson Taylor continue on in the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF). They “depend on God’s faithfulness, identify with the people to whom you are sent – those whom no one else is reaching with the gospel; teach the believers and train the leaders.”(Aikman 2003:368). In 1900 the membership of the Christian church was 100,000. In 1950 it had grown to 700, 000. Marvellous Christian leaders appeared. Men like Wang Ming Dao, David Yang, Dr. John Sung, Watchman Nee, and Andrew Gih. During the days that the “Bamboo Curtain” was closed (1950-1986), no one knew the state of the church. The church has grown to over 100 million believers (Hattaway 2003:13). Those of us, who have watched in faith, believe that this is just the beginning of a mighty move of God in China. Only God knows the full extent of his



kingdom growth. With my own eyes, I can see this coming to South Africa and the other Diaspora communities.

### **3.3 The Leaders of the Christian Church**

In order to understand the modern Chinese church, we must look into the lives of the Chinese leaders who shaped it. I have chosen three men: Wang Ming-Dao, Watchman Nee and David Yang. Discussion of other contemporary leaders will be limited or under pseudonyms. Much serious damage has been done to the Chinese church by publicly naming their leadership. They must continue and thrive.

#### *3.3.1. Observations*

There are several elements in my study of these three men of God that are relevant to this dissertation.

1. First of all, they were totally committed to God. They sought his will in the face of all adversity. They were extremely prophetic in the Old Testament sense of the word. They called the Church to come back to the teachings of Jesus. They called for righteousness, holiness and sanctification. They denounced the worldly practices of the church.
2. Second they taught the autonomy of the local church and the complications of denominationalism. They correctly taught the principles of self-government, self-finance and self-propagation. They called for an entering into the deep mature teaching of God.
3. Third, they brought about the use of missionary teams that were multiple in gifting, mobile in application and embracing of the whole body of Christ.
4. Fourth, they were great expositors of God's Word as well as excellent preachers. Humble obedience to the Word of God was the start of their training in righteousness. They were unknown and unheard of as young men.

5. Fifth, they encouraged and participated in the planting of new house churches. They were financed by God rather than a foreign organisation. They were zealous to a fault.

### **3.4. Wang Ming Dao**

1900 was a very eventful year. The Boxer Rebellion was in full swing (Aikman 2003: 42). Tzu-gsi, the Dowager Empress, gave the word that released the unruly crowds and excited them to violence. Foreigners and Chinese Christians were their target. Much damage would be done to western concerns, but especially to Christian missionaries. This would seriously distress J. Hudson Taylor of the China Inland Mission. His people were often in the most remote areas. For the first time there were martyrs among the CIM. I believe this added to his breakdown and eventual death in 1905. He was literally burned out for Christ.

A new age of the church was dawning in China. It was the rise of Chinese leaders.

On July 25, 1900, Wang Ming-Dao was born. He was born in Beijing to a man who was a doctor at the Methodist hospital. Because of the pressure of the Boxer Rebellion, this doctor, Wang De-hao committed suicide before the birth of his fifth son (Lyll 2001:104; Aikman 2003:49). After the end of the Boxer rebellion, his mother lived in rather poor surroundings. Her family often suffered malnutrition. It was in this rough environment that Wang Ming-Dao was raised. One of his sources of input was the family bible (Lyll 2001:105). This was to bear fruit later in his life. At 14, he came to Christ through an older school mate (Aikman 2003:49; Lyll 2001:107). His belief was nominal, but instrumental to later personal revival. His ministry had humble beginnings. He led a bible study in a hut on his mother's property in Beijing (Aikman 2003:50, 106; Lyll 2001:111). Visitors were impressed by his simple gospel teaching. Soon he would be sought as a conference speaker all over the province.

Wang Ming-Dao was truly the most influential leader of the Chinese church (Aikman 2003:47). He was even more influential than Watchman Nee. Watchman Nee was better known in the West because of the conferences that he gave in England and the

United States and because of his books. Wang Ming-Dao is clearly a statesman of the church of China. He is described as one of the outstanding Christians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Aikmen refers to him as the “Nelson Mandela of Chinese Christianity.” (2003: 47) After his studies at Bible College he was offered a position at the Presbyterian primary school in Bao ding ( 2001:109). It was during this time through speakers and his study that he came to believe in “believer baptism.” He chose to be re-baptised as an adult. The Presbyterian hierarchy threatened to expel him from their primary school. Wang Ming-dao means “witness to the truth” (Lyll 2001:110). He chose the truth rather than the comfort that was offered him. He and several of his friends in the middle of winter went over to the river nearby and broke the ice (2001:111; 2003:50). They were then baptised by immersion. He lost the comfortable paid position he had obtained.

In his studies he became a disciple of H.L. Zia of the YMCA. He was particularly impressed by his book “Help to Personal Development.” It was during this time he became influenced by the Pentecostal movement. One of the older Christians in his group convinced him to pray for the Holy Spirit (Lyll 2001:111). February 1923 was a pivotal period for Wang Ming-dao. A missionary by the name of Eric Pilquist led him to a full understanding of the truth that “salvation is through faith alone.” This was to mark Wang Ming-dao’s preaching and teaching throughout his life (2001:111).

### *3.4.1. The beliefs of Wang Ming Dao*

There are certain cardinal beliefs that comprise Wang Ming-Dao’s belief structure.

1. The first one was to live by personal virtue. A Christian must be a Christian who acts like one. This is clearly an incarnational approach.
2. Second, he accepted that the Bible as the only authority for Christian doctrine. He believed very strongly in the Three Self Principle that a church should be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating. Wang Ming-Dao was never financed or manipulated by foreign organisations. These three principles, first elucidated by

Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson, would be Ming-Dao's saving grace. They were, when properly applied, a great blessing to the nascent church. They would be twisted to keep the church under the control of the State.

3. Third, he was offended by Christians who did not live a Christian life. His understanding was that to believe the Christian life one must *live* the Christian life in all of its calling.

4. Fourth, he would regularly call upon the people in the churches to repent and forsake their sins. This is found in his book, "A Stone Made Smooth" (1920: 90). As mentioned before he was independent of foreign support or influence (Aikman 2003:51). This was to serve him greatly in the years ahead when he would be accused of being an "imperialist lackey."

The main contributions of Wang Ming-Dao to the church were first and foremost that he was a man of great integrity (Lyll 2001:121). It was a long time before the Communists dared to accuse him because of his reputation among the people (2001:134). This is truly an important message for the Chinese businessmen in South Africa. It is much easier to give a bribe or change an invoice rather than live with Christian integrity (Aikman 2003:50).

### *3.4.2. The later years Wang Ming-Dao*

He also had human fallibility. He would face his own "Garden of Gethsemane" (2001:141-2) when through torture he denied the independent church. But he would come out of this experience victorious. Finally this was a man that was totally sold out for the Chinese. His goal was to bring the Christian gospel to the Chinese. Because of this he kept his ministry in China rather than travelling abroad.

In 1921 Wang Ming-Dao earned a reputation for being fearless and outspoken against existing Churches that did not conform to the biblical model. This was also to be one of his life characteristics (Lambert 1999:112). He was a man that regularly sought God

for understanding. In his “Arabian experience,” in the quiet atmosphere of the western hills of Beijing, he sought the face of God for 62 days. He called it his “training school.” The grace of God came upon him with great strength. (Lambert 1999:112; Lyall 2001:112) In his first public sermon his text was “repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand”. Over and over throughout his life he would return to this message. He knew that he was chosen and gifted. He was only 22 years of age.

The next years were the silent years. He had no employment. He lived at home. He did menial tasks on this Mother’s property to bring humility into his life (2001:111). Humility would characterise his life. This continued for 18 months. He poured over his Bible. Out of this came exciting possibilities for ministry. In August 1923, he was invited by the China Inland Mission to an 8 day conference (Lyall 2001:113). The leaders of this conference were shallow in their experience. They lacked the depth of Christian experience in their Christian walk. Wang Ming-dao spoke out against the missionaries who took the brightest students but did not look for Christian maturity. He called out for a return to the teaching of Christ and a life devoted to following the examples of the Master. From this experience he moved into an independent and individual ministry that God would use so powerfully in China.

J. Hudson Taylor III would say about Wang Ming-dao “no Christian Chinese leader in the 20th century has more clearly articulated the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or more poignantly experienced what the Apostle Paul described as the ‘fellowship of suffering’ in his sufferings” (Aikman 2003: 56).

As with all the well-known Christian pastors, Wang Ming-dao, the founder of the Beijing Christian Tabernacle had his moment of political “accusation” (Lyall 2001:133; Aikman 2003:50). This happened in July of 1954. Elders and colleagues from his church were encouraged to accuse him of various anti-government activities. He was arrested and incarcerated on August 7<sup>th</sup> 1955 (Lyall 2001:140). He was coerced, he was threatened and he was tortured. Finally after enduring much pain and with great anguish and exhaustion he wrote a confession admitting to the things that he was accused of (Lyall 2001:142; Aikman 2003:55). With this he joined The Three Self Patriotic Movement

(TSPM). He was released from prison in September of 1956. Being a man of great integrity, he was deeply disturbed by what he had done. He was often seen wandering around Beijing. He was heard to be mumbling to himself, “I am Peter” (2001:142). This was in reference to the way Peter denied Christ three times in the scriptures (Aikman 2003:55). In response to this he came to the firm conclusion that he must publicly renounce his confession and embrace once again the true path that God had for him. The government officials had a hard time believing that he would actually do this (Aikman 2003:56). He was rearrested on April 29<sup>th</sup> 1958 (Aikman 2003:55). He was then put in prison again from 1966 to 1971. He was arrested again and released leaving jail in January 1980 (Lyll 2001:143; Aikman 2003:56). He had been in jail more than 20 years. By this time he was an old man but he was strong in the Lord.

This experience could be viewed as the disgrace of his life. Rather, I prefer to see it as an expression of his humanity. In the same way that Peter’s experience showed him the humility of his humanity. Wang Ming-dao came to understand his own weakness and the strength of the grace of God. Chinese Christians owe much to the example of this man of God. Chinese everywhere need the firm conviction of faith that caused Wang to publicly embrace Christ, knowing he would be incarcerated.

Wang Ming dao had set an example for the Christian pastors who would come after him. In his frail humanity he still returned standing strong for Christ. Hundreds of pastors would follow his example as they were taken to prison.

### **3.5. Watchman Nee**

#### *3.5.1. The early years Watchman Nee*

Watchman Nee is one of the most famous Christian leaders to come out of China. His books are still read and studied today (Lambert 1999:62). On November 4 1903, Nee Duo-sheng was born in Swatow. His name means “sound of a bell” hence Watchman in

English (Lyll 2001:52-53). His family moved back to Foochow in the Fukien province. Most Chinese in South Africa come from this area.

Nee was a man of great integrity. Nee came to Christ through the ministry of Miss Dora Yu (Lyll, 2001:55). It was during one of her crusades that he developed a deep conviction of sin. He had cheated at a scripture exam. He knew that if he admitted to this act the result would be expulsion from school (2001:55). He knew it could ruin his future ministry. Nevertheless, he confessed. This was a turning point in his life and would greatly affect his future ministry (Lyll 2001:56).

Nee and Lealand Wang started their first public meetings together (Lyll 2001:57). This was the original “Little Flock”. In 1923 over a theological dispute Watchman Nee and Lealand Wang Zai, his missionary colleague, broke fellowship. He then began to work with another missionary by the name of Margaret Barber (Kinnear 1973:46). She had originally come to China with the China Inland Mission, but she felt that her ministry needed to be given to emerging young Christian leadership (Lyll 2001:58; Kinnear 1973:47). Watchman Nee was one of these young leaders. He was deeply affected by her papers on the deeper aspects of the Christian life, the work of the Holy Spirit and the walk of faith. Barber also introduced him to the writings of Jessie Penn-Lewis, Andrew Murray and J. N. Darby. It was in the Brethren movement that he found a church model that could work within the Chinese context (Lyll 2001:59; Kinnear 1973:100). His ecclesiology would spread to Taiwan, South Africa and beyond. At the age of 20 he began writing his first publication called “Revival.” This would become a life-long passion with him. Watchmen Nee was a very sincere believer. He believed in being honest and would not preach something unless he had a very deep conviction about it. Nee was studying Romans chapter 6 when he came upon the 11<sup>th</sup> verse “reckon yourself therefore dead unto sin.” He knew in his own life that sin was not dead. He also thought that most other Christians experienced that same thing. This created a crisis in his life (Lyll 2001:61; Kinnear 1973:96).

He struggled with this passage for many months; he was literally in anguish. He could not preach this if he did not know it. He was in the book of Ephesians when he saw

“oneness with Christ.” He was in Christ. When Christ died, he died. That meant that he was dead to sin. This concept revolutionised the problem that he was having. He got so excited about this that he ran down the stairs into the kitchen to share with everyone he ran into. His death was in the past not the future. Therefore it was done. It was completed (Kinnear 1973:96). He was filled with great joy over this discovery and the words of Galatians 2:20 had a new meaning for him.

“I am crucified with Christ never the less I live, and yet not I but Christ liveth in me and the life I now live I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.”

*It was out of this experience and others that he began to write his book “The Normal Christian Walk.”*

### *3.5.2. Foreign trips*

In 1924 he began the first of many trips to foreign lands. His mother, Huo-ping, had been invited to travel to Malaysia and teach Christians living there. They went to a small town by the name of Sitiawan. She asked Watchman Nee to accompany her. Upon their arrival the local pastor was not very thrilled. He had just had a campaign by an American missionary. The meetings were poorly attended. The first night the Nees showed up at church they found that the doors were locked. They went to find the pastor only to find him attending to his business. He gave them the keys to the church. The first night, there were very few people who showed up. The next night it doubled. Quickly there were crowds of 300 plus. Eventually they only had room for people in another room. Both mother and son taught. At the end of their campaign, the pastor closed the meetings and they travelled back through Singapore where they also held evangelism campaigns. This was to be a regular feature of Watchman Nee’s life.

In 1928 Watchman Nee felt compelled by God to move to Shanghai. Shanghai was the centre of many movements both secular and Christian. It was also where the



Communist movement started in 1921. Rather than joining existing churches, he established his own congregation, “The Little Flock”. In his preaching he criticised the practice of existing churches and missionaries. He said that these churches hindered the purpose of God. He said “what we witness is almost entirely the works of man” (Lyll 2001: 63). His emphasis was on the local church, in particular the autonomy of the local church. This was to mark the belief and practice of the Little Flock congregations. He even went so far as to say that since there was only one church in a locality, his was the only authentic church. This was not received well by the other churches in the area. Very clearly, Watchman Nee was one to take a prophetic stance. Nonetheless he had a great sense of humour and was self-deprecating. He was not full of himself.

### *3.5.3. Revival breaks out*

What is perhaps most critical to the church in China was the revival that broke out among the Little Flock. In 1930 Nee was in England when this revival broke out in Che Foo in the Shan-tung province. Andrew Gih of the Bethel World Wide Evangelistic Band was holding a campaign. This revival had great local influence. 70 families immigrated to the Northeast of China to carry the gospel to this needy place. Nee rushed back to China to experience this revival himself. By 1944, forty new churches had been established (Lyll 2001:73).

On October 16<sup>th</sup> 1934 Watchman Nee married his childhood sweetheart, Charity. She was to have an excellent teaching ministry in the Little Flock Movement. Charity was his close companion until he was arrested and sent to jail. She also spent her own time in “re-education” camps.

### *3.5.4. The teaching of Watchman Nee*

The teaching of Watchman Nee, even today, affects the church in China and the church in the West. His teachings took on many aspects. Particularly those who were seeking

a deeper walk with the risen Christ were drawn to his teachings. Watchman Nee taught what he called the “deep mysteries of God.” (Lyll 2001:80) He said that the soul of the outward man must be “smitten a fateful blow.” It was this act of the cross in the life of a believer that would put to an end his fleshly responses or what he called his “soulish” or mental activity and bring forth the spiritual. This was to come by a supernatural revelation. One must remember that these teachings came in the light of the “holiness” and mystical movements of the day. Watchman Nee was very impressed by the writings of Andrew Murray and Jessie Pen Lewis. He stated that, “once the outer man is broken, man’s spirit naturally abides in the presence of God without ceasing.”

These teachings were found in Nee’s writings “Release of the Spirit.” (1965) Many of the great teachers of the day found these teachings to be too mystical. “They tend to encourage a form of spirituality which is introspective and divorced from the harsh realities of life in the world of today.” (Lyll 2001:81). As was common in the holiness movement, they suggested a sanctification of “sinless perfection.” What happens in this sort of approach to Christian life is it leads believers to label Christian activity as being “soulish” and therefore unspiritual. This leads to a sense of spiritual superiority for those who agree strongly with Nee’s views. This leads to elitism among believers. This denies the scriptural teaching of using your mind to search the scriptures for the truth that is found there.

### *3.5.5. Times of trouble*

The events of 1942 brought one of the greatest criticisms of Watchman Nee’s ministry (Lyll 2001:85-86). In 1940, Nee’s younger brother started the Sheng Hua drug manufacturing factory in Shanghai. He was not a business man but a scientist. Therefore he had trouble making this business work. In 1942 Watchman Nee became chairman of the board of directors. This was in line with Nee’s teaching that sometimes a preacher would be supported by the church and sometimes he had to “tent-make”. But the elders of his church at Hard Dune Road Assembly Church looked on this quite negatively (2001: 86). They asked him to stop his pulpit ministry.

This continued for five years. The weight of these business ventures began to take their toll upon Watchman Nee's health. In 1947 Watchman Nee publicly confessed his mistake. He then handed this factory over to the local church. Interestingly enough, this started a trend among the members to hand their businesses over to the local church. This became a very dominant theme in Watchman Nee's preaching at the time. All of this teaching was in contradiction to Nee's writing in "The Normal Christian Church Life" (Lyll 2001:87). 1948 was the height of Watchman Nee's ministry. He had returned to fellowship with The Little Flock and was preaching quite widely.

It was during this period that he began to leave some of the early principles of The Little Flock that he had established. Nee had taught that churches were autonomous in their local leadership. Now, he created a hierarchy of national leaders with himself at the top as Bishop. Control of the movement became centralised. This is rather surprising since it was one of the things that he had denounced other denominations for doing. This created confusion and eventually schisms among The Little Flock movement.

### *3.5.6. Apostolic outreach*

In 1937, Nee taught what he called the "Antioch Principle" (2001:92). This meant that when a church in a locality experienced persecution, whole families would voluntarily relocate to a non-evangelised area. This practice was called the "going forth of the apostles." Local autonomy was abandoned and became the responsibility of "workers" (Lyll 2001:92).

1949 was a great time of transition and confusion in China. The Communist movement gained power in mainland China (Aikman 2003:44). Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist movement fled to the island of Taiwan. Freedom of religious expression, in practice, was ending in mainland China. The Communist government required all foreign missionaries to leave the country (2003:44).

By 1953 the China Inland Mission had removed all of their foreign missionaries from China (Thompson 1978:183). Christians and particularly Christian leaders who had

close association with foreign missionaries were seen as “agents of foreign imperialism”. April 1951 saw the beginning of the “accusation campaigns”. This meant that members of a church congregation were encouraged to accuse their pastors at public meetings of various crimes against the State. This was the beginning of the Three Self Patriotic Movement which would become the government controlled church in China. (Kinnear 1973:199). In 1953 Watchman Nee was arrested for “bribery, smuggling, stealing national resources, skipping on work and stealing national economic reports” (Lyll 2001: 95). Nee was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. He died in jail on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1972. He never denied the Lord and he was faithful until the very end (Kinnear, 1973:237).

### **3.6. Yang Shao-tang (David Yang)**

This brings us to our third Christian leader of this time whose name was Yang Shao-t’ang, known in English as David Yang. I believe that David Yang has a particular significance. There are certain characteristics that are extremely biblical but very important for the survival of the Chinese Jesus People movement. Yang was not impressed by position or title. He worked in mobile teams of foreigners and natives. He chose a direction because it was Gods way not because it was easy or lucrative. He stayed in close contact with other leaders. He truly was Gods man.

#### *3.6.1. The young years*

All three of these leaders, Wang Ming-dao, Watchman Nee and David Yang have great similarities but at the same time they have different paths. They made different decisions. Each one paid a heavy price for his decision. In 1903 David Yang was born to a Christian farming family in Quwo. At 12 years old, after graduating from the local Christian primary school, David moved to the Christian middle school in Hongdong (Lyll 2001: 18). It was here at this school that many of David Yang’s Christian beliefs would be formed. He was a very promising student. David’s goal was to enter the Christian ministry. The best theological college in Northern China was the Presbyterian

Seminary in Tengxian in the province of Shang tung. In 1923 David Yang began his study in Tengxian (Lyll 2001:19). To put this within its historical context, we need to remember that the Chinese communist party started in 1921. From that time, it began to build its influence. In 1949, after World War II it would take over the power of the country (Aikman 2003:44).

In 1921 the churches in Shang tung were experiencing revival. There was a Chinese group called the “Bethel Band” who carried their revival message all over China (Lyll 2001:20). A very influential person at this revival was miss Marie Monson of Norway. Her influence was so great that many years later Chinese Christians would travel to Norway to show their respect for this simple woman at her graveside. She was practically unknown in Norway. As is very common among revival movements, there was a lot of confusion with many spurious offshoots. Here we see the character of David Yang. He was determined to find the truth of what was going on. So he sought the truth from the revival and embraced it.

In 1924, David Yang attended a conference in Kuling on “Deepening the Spiritual Life.” He states that at this conference grace and understanding came into his life (Lyll 2001:21). He says, “The Lord saved me.” This was on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1924. The burden of his sin fell away and a true relationship with Jesus Christ was established. It would be this theme of grace that would characterise the true church in China. Contrary to this, there was a slavish, legalistic approach towards the scriptures. The truth of grace brought freedom and light. In 1925 David Yang graduated from the seminary. He was offered a well paid position in Shansi Province (Lyll 2001:21). He was very tempted to take this paid position. He was very afraid of going out of God’s will. David Yang moved back to Quwo where he pastured 13 churches in the Province (Lyll 2001: 22).

The Church in Quwo was his base of operations. This area was very rural. Travel was very hard. In 1926 the communist movement started an anti-foreign, anti-Christian movement. This resulted in riots. It was very difficult for Christians all over China. This was a portent of things to come. In 1928 the China Inland Mission started the Three

Self Church movement (Not to be confused with the Communist movement program). The movement properly named represents, self-leadership, self-financing and self-propagation.

In the past Mission Agencies had funded and sustained the local church. This created a dependency on foreign funds and foreign leadership. The Three Self Concept produced a strong healthy indigenous church who owned the mandate of the scriptures themselves. China Inland Missions was one of the forerunners in this movement. China Inland Mission (CIM) stopped the paternalism and allowed the churches to pay and to administer themselves (Lyll 2001:23). With this also came the passion to propagate new believers and new churches.

In 1931 David Yang was asked to become the principal of Hongdong High School. Later in 1934 he was invited to teach at Tengxian Seminary, he declined this honour due to his responsibility to carry the gospel and tend to the Christians in his own province (Lyll 2001:23).

Many missionaries were impressed by David Yang. His faith was deep and enriching. Many young foreign missionaries learned from him and his example. His faith was very evident in his lifestyle. This would be a key to the Jesus People movement in China. He was a great expositor of the Word and used local earthy examples that the people understood. He was a great teacher of the bible (Lyll 2001:25).

### ***3.7. A new vision for ministry    The Spiritual Action Team (Apostolic Bands)***

In 1931 a new revival broke out in Shansi Province. At the centre of this revival were Andrew Gih and Dr. John Sung of the Bethel Evangelistic Band. They held campaigns all over the province (Lyll 2001:25). Out of this came a grass roots evangelism movement. This would characterise the church going into the early Communist era. David Yang wrestled with how this movement and devotion to Christ could be spread.

As a dedicated man of God he turned to prayer. He earnestly wrestled with these ideas. He was on a trip for ministry when the rain turned everything to mud. He had to stop at an inn and it was here at this inn that he got a new vision (Lyll 2001:26).

This vision was a team of Christians living communally by faith. They would go out in teams to minister. It would be composed of both young foreign missionaries and Chinese believers. They would be complete equals. This is one of the innovative ideas that marked David Yang's ministry. As an example. He created the Ling Gong Tuan which is a spiritual action team (Lyll 2001: 26) David Yang had a growing conviction that if anything was to be accomplished he would need the power of the Spirit. In his quest he received a new sense of power from the Holy Spirit. In the summer of 1934, land was donated to the Spiritual Action Team. Twenty men and women came to work as part of the team. At this same time, Watchman Nee in his writings "The Spiritual Man" warned of deceiving spirits, counterfeits, "soulish" expressions (Nee 1968:175-178). In considering this David Yang came to the conclusion that if one was not filled with the Holy Spirit then this is sin and disobedience. He was struck by Ephesians 5:18. The Christian must not fear, but must seek God's fullness. Yang found that because of his experience with the Holy Spirit, "it was no longer a labour and sacrifice to minister, but an everlasting rest" (Lyll 2001:28).

This was not to be a short lived revival. Living waters from this revival continued to pour forth when the teams returned home. The meetings continued. Miss Fischbacher held meetings in Quwo and Hongdong for Bible Study. The outbreak of revival continued. David Yang said "just now I can think of large numbers of brothers and sisters who three or four months ago were weak and powerless, yet today have become strong leaders on the firing line" (Lyll 2001:29).

The Spiritual Action Team, including young foreign missionaries, became a centre of rich spiritual life and activity. Deeply affected by the Spiritual Action Team was David Adney, a CIM missionary (Lyll 2001:30). David Yang led the study of the scriptures and encouraged the search for the work of the Holy Spirit. He was a man of "humility and Christ-likeness" (Lyll 2001:30).

1937 was a momentous year. It saw the invasion of China by Japan. In spite of the times David Yang was held in high esteem by Wang Ming-dao and frequently preached from his pulpit in Beijing. Yang was also in close touch with Dr. John Sung (2001:33). Yang worked with everyone who adhered to the New Testament pattern of ministry. He was held in high esteem by the missionaries (Thompson 1978:43).

1948 was an important year for the church in China. The communist armies were beginning to occupy the cities of China. It became evident to the China Inland Mission and other international ministries that they would have to withdraw their missionaries from the field. CIM waited until the very last moment to withdraw their missionaries (Thompson 1978:54). By 1941 Peking, Nanking, and Shanghai were occupied by the communist army. From 1949-1953 the China Inland Mission withdrew their missionaries from China. It was an impossible task with no funds to remove such a large body of workers. Hospitals, churches and administration buildings had to be turned over to local churches. This was a daunting task. In the face of this impossible situation, the Lord caused it to succeed (Thompson 1978:54).

### **3.8. The Church under Communism**

The China Inland Mission had conducted evangelistic and worship services in Shanghai on Woosung Road. It was obvious that they could not continue. David Yang took over the work and began to build a church with these people. David Yang's experience from 1925 to 1937 with the Spiritual Action Team and his lecturing at Bible College prepared him for his book which is entitled "The Course of the Church" (Yang 1951). It was first published in 1951 but reprinted in 1962 in Hong Kong. It defines the ministry he would follow.

The church in China had reached an unbelievable crisis. The missionaries who had laid the foundation of the church were gone. Many Christians had little knowledge or church teaching and were not aware of the importance therein. (Lyll 2001:37). David Yang's book was fundamental to the structuring of a new church in China.



In the 1950's the Communist government created the "accusation movement" (Lyll 2001:39). With the creation of the Religious Affairs Bureau and the Christian section which became known as the "Three Self Patriotic Front", control of the churches had begun. Zho En-lai had promised Christian Leaders that there would be freedom of religion yet progressively more and more control was imposed by the official state church. All the churches were required to form a committee to review the actions of their pastors. Particular emphasis was put on his involvement with foreign nationals. Members were encouraged to accuse their pastors of foreign imperialism.

Yang faced his first accusation trial in Nanking. He was thrown out of the Nanking church where he was the pastor for "being reactionary, under the influence of imperialism and being anti-government" (Lyll 2001: 39). He was pressurised to join and work with the Three Self Patriotic Movement. They made him a leader to draw in other evangelical leaders (Lyll 2001:40). David Yang wrestled with this decision and he finally entered the movement in order to minister to the true Christians in these churches. But as was often the norm in 1958 he was sent to jail for being a "two faced progressive." His health was seriously affected. He faced long sessions of indoctrination that exhausted him. He was again accused, so he retired to Shanghai in 1971. It is said that he died in a "labour program" in 1979 in his home town of Quwo. We can truly say about David Yang that he was faithful to Christ, to the very end.

We have here three leaders of the Christian church in China and three different approaches. There are similarities and yet there are differences. After a long time of being outside of the Three Self Patriotic Front, Wang Ming-dao was pressured to sign a confession and to join the movement. He gave in only to later recant his confession and to once again be incarcerated. Watchman Nee remained steadfast in his refusal to be a part of the Three Self Patriotic church and paid the price. David Yang joined the Three Self Patriotic Front to minister to those Christians that were found within it. He also suffered horribly and finally died for his choices.

### **3.9. Summary of three leaders**

Let me make some observations about the commonalities of these three leaders. They found Christ at a very young age. It was at about the age of 18 that they found their identity and passion in Christ. Even as young unknown leaders they were faithful. They took their rebellion to stand for the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is very clear that Jesus was their central focus throughout their lives. They would suffer anything for the sake of Christ. They were passionate about the Chinese people and focused in their goal to see them won for Christ. They often ministered in teams and sometimes with international teams. They were flexible in their approach, constantly changing according to the situation and the need. They all endured suffering and hardship. They did not take the easy way that was accessible to them such as money and reputation; rather they chose to find the will of God for their lives and to follow that even if it meant obscurity. They were very proud to be Chinese and to minister to the Chinese people. They attempted to avoid the excesses of the church. Often their leadership style was what we call a “flat curve”.

At the beginning there was a very unpretentious leadership style. We can see it in the term they used of each other as “brother” or “brethren.” They faithfully preached the Word of God; they gave to God’s people sacrificially, enduring hardship. Spreading the kingdom of God was everything to them. They all failed at one point, but in failure they all found forgiveness and new strength. They stood up to all ridicule. One of the common themes is the use of informal meetings in personal homes. Most important was the dedication to sacrifice self for the sake of the gospel. No price was too great to pay.

### **3.10. Three Younger Leaders: Brother Yun, Peter Xu Yongze and Enoch Wang**

These leaders are contemporary leaders. They represent the form that the Chinese House Church Movement has taken. They have a passion that drives the movement.

Brother Yun has become quite famous because of the book co-authored by Paul Hattaway, “The Heavenly Man” (Yun Hattaway 2002). Occasionally a book arises that catches the imagination of the Christian public. The Heavenly Man is such a book. The book is the story of a young pastor in rural China. Rather than being a unique example of a Chinese pastor, Yun is a good representative of the Chinese pastors. One of the interesting things is the role Yun was thrust into. He became an unwavering prophet for the church. Many times during his interrogation he would be asked to affirm a lie about his ministry. He doggedly remained true to the truth. Many times in a meeting with the Three Self Patriotic church, he would stand up and shout the truth. He called truth, true and untrue, false no matter the consequences. There are men and women with deep devotion to Christ serving the Lord in China. The author is familiar with a number of these brothers. . Brother Yun is marked by Christian humility and meekness (Yun Hattaway 2002:10). He was imprisoned for his faith for many years. He is called the Heavenly Man because of an incident in 1984 (Yun Hattaway 2002:13). He was arrested and refused to give his real name. When pressed, he responded, “I am a heavenly man. My home is in heaven.” Ever since, he has been known as the “Heavenly Man”.

Yun was born in 1958. In 1974 he became a Christian (2002:23). The Cultural Revolution was in full expression. The Red Guard reigned supreme. Yun’s mother had left the church because of the persecution. Yun’s father became deathly ill. One night his mother was lying in bed when she heard a voice say “Jesus loves you” (Yun Hattaway 2002:25). She immediately knelt and repented her turning from Christ. Her husband was dying of cancer. She called the whole family together and told them that Jesus was their fathers only hope. Over and over they prayed “Jesus heal father”. The next morning he felt better and within a week the cancer was entirely gone (Yun Hattaway 2002:25). This sort of faith would mark Yun’s ministry.

One night as Yun lay down to sleep, he felt a tap on his shoulder. He heard a voice saying “Yun, I am going to send you to the South and to the West to be my witness.” (Hathaway 2003:53). This became part of the Back to Jerusalem Movement that

started in 1942. In 1995, Yun met Simon Zhao of the original Back to Jerusalem Movement. Zhao had been imprisoned in the 1950s. All of his fellow leaders were martyred. For Yun this was a key moment in his life. “..After meeting Simon Zhao it (the Back to Jerusalem Movement) became the primary focus of my life.” (2003:57). The Back to Jerusalem Movement became a massive clandestine mission movement and Yun’s life was filled with signs and wonders.

Bibles were scarce and Yun desperately wanted one to read for himself. Every night he would pray for a bible. He fasted and cried for a bible. One night he had a dream in which three men were selling bread. An old man came to him and asked if he was hungry. He took a red bread bag from his cart and gave it to Yun. Yun opened it and there was a bible. He woke up and began searching the house for a bible. He woke the rest of the family. They thought he was losing his mind. His father prayed for him, asking God to give him a bible. Shortly before dawn someone knocked on the door and called Yun’s name. He opened the door and stood there were the two helpers from the dream. They handed him a red bag and departed into the darkness. Inside was a bible. He fell to his knees and prayed, promising that he would devour the bible (Yun Hattaway 2002:26-30).

Yun’s dream of preaching to the south and the west returned. He went on a journey to the west. He met an old man on the way. He said, we have been praying for you to come for three days (Yun Hattaway 2002:36). The old man took him to his village where they all gathered in one house. Yun did not know what to do, so he recited the entire gospel of Matthew from chapter one to twenty eight from memory. Then he sang them some songs. When he opened his eyes the people knelt down and repented of their sins in tears. He had experienced the power of God’s word. In Yun’s dream a man from the South had come to ask him to preach the gospel in their village. While he was in the West the young man from the South visited his home. He said they had been praying and fasting for three days that Yun would come. This man looked exactly like the man Yun had seen in a dream. Yun had been given his name in the dream. They embraced and immediately left for the brother’s village in the South (2002:40).

The brother took him to a house for him to share the gospel. Yun once again repeated from memory all the scripture he had memorised. The effect was the same as before. The gospel began to spread in the South and in the West. This is a common theme among Jesus People Revivals. The word of God when met with simple faith produces unbelievable results. Phillip preached the gospel in Samaria and bedlam broke out (Acts 8:4-8). Lonnie Frisbee and Chuck Smith saw an amazing response to the preaching of the word in Orange County, Southern California (Pratney 1983:232-3). The researcher personally saw Calvary Chapel grow from a modest chapel to a huge circus tent filled every night except Monday by young people hungry for the Word of God. This took place in one year. Massive baptismal services took place on the Newport Beach beaches. Thousands were saved. Today in China you have to arrive early if you want a seat at a Christian service.

It wasn't long before the activities of the churches began to draw the attention of the authorities. Yun's mother was arrested and forced to march through town with a dunce cap on her head. She was forced to attend "re-education classes" (Yun Hattaway 2002:48). Persecution had arrived. Yet the persecution only seemed to heighten the revival. By 1980 phenomenal growth was taking place. Many people were sent out to the surrounding Provinces. Yun was travelling a lot, preaching the gospel. It wasn't long before he became a wanted man. The Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) sought to stop this movement for Christ, but to no avail. The Three Self church (TSPM) strictly controls what a pastor or member may do. Evangelism is discouraged, outreach to children is forbidden and certain bible passages may not be preached. The Book of Revelation is banned. In response to this many pastors, Yun included, started "fleeing evangelism" (Yun Hattaway 2002:55). They would preach the gospel and then flee to another village. They were considered outlaws, revolutionaries.

Belief in Christ was not just a passing fancy; you had to truly want to believe and be prepared to pay the cost. Because of this, pastors would be separated from their spouses. Children would grow up not knowing their father. Often a pastor would spend 20 years in jail. Many people could not return home or they would be arrested (Yun

Hattaway 2002:57). 1983 was a particularly great year of growth. This is significant for the Jesus People Movements. It is what we are looking for in the Chinese church in South Africa. Dedication to Christ no matter what the outcome.

On several occasions Yun avoided arrest or escaped jail. On a visit to Shaanxi Province, he was being held in a room with his arms bound. The ropes broke and he opened the door and walked through the courtyard to the toilets. There he climbed an insurmountable wall and escaped (Yun Hattaway 2002:64-65). He returned to the meeting place and encouraged the leaders. When he returned to Henan he discovered that his wife had had a vision of exactly what was happening and the church had prayed earnestly for him. In 1983, before a prayer meeting, Yun was apprehended and taken to jail. This was the first of four incarcerations he would endure. He was tortured although the Lord continued to intervene with signs and wonders. At one instance, a guard told Yun that he was Yun's Lord and God. He turned his electric baton on Yun and during the torture, the baton malfunctioned. The guard was terrified and ran away (Yun Hattaway 2002:86-87). The prisoners were encouraged to be brutal towards Christians. By the example of the Christians, many of these prisoners came to Christ. He was released from jail in 1988 and arrested again in 1991 (Yun Hattaway 2002:196).

### **3.11. The Chinese Church from 1950 onward**

In order for us to understand the modern Chinese church we must first understand the Christian church under the rule of Mao tse-Tung. Karl Marx's in "Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of the Right" (1843: introduction) states that "religion is the opiate of the masses." Mao wanted to suppress all religion. The ironic thing is that his harsh measures in the 1950's and 1960's actually helped create an atmosphere where there was a religious vacuum. This vacuum was in politics, religion and philosophy. This religious vacuum would begin to be filled by Christianity (Aikman 2003:15).

In 1953, the China Inland Mission completed its withdrawal of personnel from China (Thompson 1978:183). The "bamboo curtain" closed. All information about the church

in China was fragmentary at best. In the West it was commonly believed that the Church in China had been extinguished. It was in the 50's and 60's that Mao arrested all of the pastors and many of the leading elders of the churches. He confiscated the local churches and turned them into granaries, museums and shops. The leaders were all sent to "re-education camps." Many of them would die in these prisons. The very same thing was done to the Buddhists and the Buddhists Monasteries. The Taoists were also included in this persecution. Mao tse-Tung fomented the worship of himself and of his sayings. This was the origin of the "Little Red Book" that would be so popular in the counter culture hippie movement of the 1970's in the United States.

### 3.12. The Cultural Revolution

If one reads the book "*Mao's Last Dancer*" by Li Cunxin (2003:70) one gets a very good idea of what was happening during the Cultural Revolution. The Cultural Revolution began in 1966. Students were encouraged to stop their studies and to become a part of the Red Guard. Their function was to ferret out anyone who was against Chairman Mao or the Chinese government. They destroyed anything that would stand in opposition to what Mao was saying. This meant that they would burn books that did not mention Mao. They smashed the Buddha's of the Buddhists. They would barge into a professor's home and accuse him of being an anti-revolutionary. They would burn his books. He would be interrogated for hours. He would be paraded through the streets with a dunce cap on his head. The church and pastors were particularly targeted. Especially children were not allowed to be taught about the Christian faith. Instruction for the children focused on the words of Chairman Mao. One wonders if Mao was not deified. Following a quote from the book *Mao's Last Dancer* helps portray the tone of the Cultural Revolution.

"Yes our beloved Chairman Mao, before we start our class each day we will bow to Chairman Mao and wish him a long life, because we wouldn't be here if it wasn't for him. He is our saviour, our sun, our moon. Without him we would still be in a dark world of suffering. We will also wish his successor, our second most

important leader, our vice chairman Lin Biao good health, forever good health. Now let us get up and bow to Chairman Mao with all our hearts full of love and appreciation!" (Li Cunxin, 2003:73.)

This incident helps to underline one of the dominant traits of Chinese culture. The willingness to sacrifice everything in order to see something accomplished. This would later characterise the spirit in the Chinese Christian church. An example of this attitude towards culture is to be found in the Dick Hillis' story "Steel in His Soul." (1985). Hillis was a China Inland Missionary in Henan. He was evacuated in 1949. The Communist insurgents took his village and used his compound as their headquarters. Hillis records the following interview with the commanding officer.

The message came for the communist forces to attack the fortified walled city that was closest to this village. They would most certainly die. Hillis asked:

"Sir, has communism done anything for you? What have you gained that you would be willing to lay down your life to carry it one mile further?" 'I fight not for personal gain. It is for the world. It is what the world will gain that counts. I and my men are willing to die, if need be, but communism must win. The rule of my life is 'communism for all and my all for communism.' "And all includes death." (Winbrenner 1985:95)

It is this self-sacrificing spirit that characterised the pastors of the Chinese church and their leaders who would follow. The source is not Communism per se, but the Chinese Culture itself.

The Cultural Revolution ran from 1966 to 1976. Its focus was to create a fanatic devotion to Chinese Communism and to exterminate all opposition. Education in its more inclusive sense ended. Everything revolved around studying the sayings of Mao. The sayings, his face, and banners were found everywhere. Thousands of leaders and academics were sent to re-education camps in the countryside. Books were burned by the thousands.



### **3.13. The Gang of Four**

Finally the Cultural Revolution was taken over by the “Gang of Four” who was arrested in October 1976. This marked the end of the Cultural Revolution. Mao Tse-tung died in 1976. One of the political leaders who had been sent to the camps for re-education was Deng Xiaopeng. He was restored to power and by 1978 he became the main spokesman for China (Aikman 2003:13). It was during this time that Richard Nixon, the president of the United States visited China. This was a first for an American President. All of this was part of a much larger movement, the opening of China to the West. The period between 1978 and 1990 saw amazing gradual changes in the government and culture of China. Rather than living in co-operatives, people were allowed to create their own businesses. Through the influence of Deng Xiaopeng, the economy moved toward a more open market system. The economy improved and people began to prosper. All of this did not happen at once. There were periods of loosening of controls and tightening of controls. This was cyclic and regional in nature. The same can be said for today's cultural climate.

In 1988 Dr. Billy Graham was allowed to visit Peking. He was allowed to meet with the aging pastor Wang Ming-dao (Aikman 2003:167). Billy Graham was quite impressed with the sincerity and faith of this man of God. During this period the Churches were allowed to open, Buddhists were allowed to worship, baptisms, funerals and celebrations could be held without interference. The people were allowed “normal” religious activity. For the religious culture, all of this started with what was known as “Document 19” (Aikman 2003:168). .

### **3.14. The Communist Party in China**

Let us recap then the political history of the Communist Party in China. The Communist party was created in 1921 in Shanghai. It was small and had little influence. It was in opposition to the Nationalist Kuomintang Government. The Kuomintang was founded by Sun Yet-sen. By 1926 Chiang Kai-shek became the leader. In 1931 the Japanese

invaded Manchuria. The Japanese wanted the riches of China. In 1937 the Japanese invaded China. Both the Communists and the Nationalists fought the Japanese. Communism was a small weak rural movement. They began to gain support and power among the common people. This rise to power is recorded in what is known as the “Long March” (Zhihou, Xia (2008) Long March, available from: [www.britannica.com/topic/347303/history](http://www.britannica.com/topic/347303/history) (accessed 16-05-13)). In 1934 the nationalist troops had surrounded the Communist troops. The Communist army escaped from Jiang xi Province in October of 1934. They marched 12 500 kilometres in 370 days to Shaanxi Province. They crossed some of the toughest and most dangerous country in all of China. This feat is legendary in China. Mao tse-Tung arose to power during this march... From this start he gradually gained influence in the Red Army and finally took over the Communist Party. As World War II raged, China suffered deeply. The Japanese surrendered to the Allies in 1945. 1945 saw the Communist and the Nationalist resume their civil war. Nationalist de-commissioned their army without providing for their soldiers. Many of these trained soldiers would join the Communist Party because they had no other source of income. In 1949 the Communists took over China. Chiang Kai-shek and his government fled to Taiwan with many Chinese. In 1949 the Communist government threw all the missionaries out of the country. 1966 to 1976 was the Cultural Revolution. In 1978 Deng Xiaopeng came to power (Aikman, 2003:83). By 1990 not only was private enterprise in full swing but a flood of Chinese entrepreneurs left China for other countries of the world. This is known as the Chinese Diaspora. Chinese workers and industry are now found in every country of Africa.

### **3.15. A Cursory History of the Church in China**

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century there was great activity as foreign missionaries moved first into the international trade cities. Through the influence of Hudson Taylor and others, mission activity spread to every corner of China. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, missions extended their work in China. An indigenous church began to emerge. China Inland Mission initiated the Three Self Movement (not to be confused with the TSPM). 1948 was the publishing of the church manifesto that required all foreigners to leave the

church in China. 1949 through to 1953 was when all foreign missions extracted their workers from China. They handed over churches, hospitals, schools and seminaries to the local church (Thompson 2000:54.). Persecution of the local church began in the 1950's. There was the formation of the Three Self Patriotic Movement church. In 1966 during the Cultural Revolution all churches were closed and all signs of Christianity were obliterated. The church went underground. 1976 saw the end of the Cultural Revolution and a lessening of the persecution of the Church in China. In 1978, China was opened to the West through the leadership of Ding Xiaoping. The 1980's saw many visitors, both business men and church leaders. China became aware of the West and the West became aware of China. The 1980-90's were a period of unbelievable growth in the Christian church. A new phenomenon began. Chinese pastors in the Three Self Patriotic Movement were allowed to study abroad. Many of these pastors studied at Fuller Theological Seminary and elsewhere in the United States. They brought back with them a refreshed view of the gospel to the state sanctioned church.

Lambert stated that in 1999 the church was 60 million members strong (Lambert 1999: 19). In 2003, Aikman stated that the church in China had grown to over 80 million believers (Aikman 2003:7). Today China officially recognises 100 million Christians. Hattaway recognises the church as having over 100 million members (2003:13). In his book "Jesus in Beijing" Aikman shows how Christianity has spread through the universities, the businessmen and even through the Communist Party. The void that Maoism created in China is being filled by Christianity (Aikman 2003:15).

### **3.16. A Radical Change In China**

The incident at Tiananmen Square in 1989 radically redirected the culture of China. This movement was not Christian. But many of the leaders of the movement who fled to the United States and elsewhere were to become Christians and return as witnesses to China (Aikman 2003:10-11).

Starting in the 1980's and increasing in the 1990s, because of the new found freedom and financial reform Chinese entrepreneurs began to pour into the non-Chinese world. Many of the people I work with arrived in South Africa about 1990. According to Jonathon Chao of the Chinese Research Centre in Pasadena, there are 60 million Chinese immigrants in the world outside of China (according to Jonathon Chao, Pasadena, May 10, 2000). This figure changes every day as people come and go from mainland China.

### **3.17. Summary**

In this chapter the following was observed regarding the influence of the church in China, what is a house church movement, the importance of leaders, history of the church, J. Hudson Taylor, the China Inland church principles, my observations on Taylor, three Chinese leaders: Wang Ming-dao, Watchman Nee, and David Yang, my observations, of three younger leaders: Brother Yun, Peter Xu and E. Wang, the Cultural Revolution, the Gang of Four, Deng Xiao-peng, the openness of 1990 and Tiananmen Square.

### **3.18. Conclusion**

China has gone through a radical change in recent years. The leaders of the Chinese House Church movement have laid a good foundation for the church. Coming from the Protestant Mission movement to the Indigenous church, followed by the underground church, they have done well. Now the government is easing its opposition both for the church and international immigration. The time is ripe for the vibrant Chinese House Church movement to come to the Diaspora Chinese throughout the world. China is spreading throughout the world. The Back To Jerusalem Movement is taking the Chinese church to the world. It is time for representation of what the church in China experiences. We need what they have. In 1949 Mao persecuted the church. In so doing he created a streamlining of the practice of Christianity. All the props were removed and the very bare bones were left. This pure Christianity is infectious like a

virus. Leadership changed. Support structures changed. What was left was the bare minimum. What is left is a truly missional/Incarnational movement. The gospel is portrayed in all its power. The gospel was sent to the Chinese but in a truly biblical manner it could not be contained by one people group. Through the Back To Jerusalem Movement, the gospel is going to all the nations. The gospel is being planted all throughout the Middle East. It is a logical extension that the gospel should also go to the Chinese of the Diaspora. It is not without precedent. Paul was called to carry the gospel to the gentiles yet the first time we see him in foreign lands he is speaking in the Jewish synagogues (Acts 13:5). He used the synagogues as a base to reach out to the gentiles. So likewise can the Christians use the Chinese community. Christianity will become more common both in China and in the Diaspora. With this new freedom will also come more Christian workers. There can only be a great explosion of Christianity coming to the Diaspora.

We have seen the vast community of faith in China. Such a vast gathering of believers has never been known in the annals of church history. It is a power that will not be stopped. The next chapter will discuss the Chinese living in Diaspora in South Africa. It is a harvest field that is waiting to be reaped.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE CHINESE IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **4.1 Purpose of the Chapter**

In this chapter I will explore the nature of the Chinese community in South Africa. I will describe the Chinese church in South Africa from my interviews with Chinese pastors and Christian workers. I also have had interviews with Chinese Christians from which I am able to make personal observations. I will list the contributions of the mainland Chinese House Church movement to the South African Chinese church. It is also relevant to explore the process by which a South African Chinese comes into relationship with the Christian church and finally a relationship with Christ.

I have chosen a case study of a church that most clearly mirrors the qualities of the house church in mainland China.

### **4.2 The Chinese in South Africa**

To say that someone is Chinese is an oversimplification. There are five hundred ethnic groups in China (Mandryk 2010:214), although there are only eight families of the Mandarin language group. It must be noted that we are dealing with a culture that has five thousand years of documented history. Another distinction is whether the people are from a rural setting or an urban setting. The rural Chinese have a tendency to be very poor and uneducated. The urban Chinese are often highly educated and wealthy. Another factor is whether the Chinese person comes from the north or the south. Even in the food, there is a difference. The Chinese in the South use rice as their major staple. The Chinese from the north are dependent on wheat. From wheat they produce noodles, dumplings and other wheat based products. The Chinese in the south-east are noted for their reliance on sea food. It is from this vast pool of people that the Chinese in South Africa come.

China is made up of many people groups, the largest one being the Han people group. It is 91.3% of the population (Johnstone 2001:159). There are four hundred and fifty-six distinct ethnic groups numbering 8.7% (Johnstone 2001:159) of the population. In addition to this each one of the provinces appears to have their own local language. The businessmen that I worked with spoke Shanghaiese. But the most common dialect in South Africa is Fujian, from the Fujian province in Southern China. There is a great deal of mistrust between the various people from the provinces. There is also a great deal of prejudice as to whether you are a communist or not. Some of the Christians in South Africa come from the Three Self Patriotic Movement Church. Others are from the Free Church Movement or the Chinese House Church Movement. South Africa has a long history of immigrants from China. The first immigrants were Cantonese in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Accone 2006:257). They worked on the railroads and in the mines. There is still a population group of Cantonese in South Africa today. Cantonese is a distinct language from Mandarin.

#### *4.2.1. Taiwanese*

In the 1970's there was an immigration of Taiwanese to South Africa (Accone 2006:264). They are the backbone of the Chinese restaurant industry in South Africa. With the opening up of mainland China to the world, mainland Chinese immigrants began arriving in South Africa about 1990. Most of the people that I have interviewed came to South Africa about this time. In 1994, when the new government came to power, South Africa removed their recognition of Taiwan as a country and as a preferential trading partner. This served to increase the number of immigrants coming from mainland China to South African. There continues to be a discrimination of the Taiwanese for the mainland Chinese. The population of the immigrants from China in South Africa is under constant change. It is very hard to arrive at an accurate figure of the population because 80-90% of the Chinese do not have the legal papers to be here (according to F. Tuan, April 7, 2004). The estimate that is regularly reported among the Christian Chinese pastors is a population of 300,000 Chinese (according to F. Tuan,

April 7, 2004; interview). From my research, the pastors of the Chinese church in South Africa are mostly Taiwanese.

#### *4.2.2. Fujian*

It is clear that the major portion of immigrants come from the Fujian province (Accone, 2006: 266). It is not an exaggeration to say that almost every little village or township in South Africa, has one or two Chinese shops selling Chinese wares. These Chinese come from Fujian province. The Chinese have an excellent work ethic. They work hard and they produce a very good product. There are perhaps four categories of Chinese. There are the diplomats and the CEO's of large companies that are resident here. In addition to that you have fairly wealthy entrepreneurs that are running their own businesses. Next there are the small businesses represented by shops selling clothing, plastics, toys and Chinese products. In 2009 I was part of a ministry team that visited the Chinese entrepreneurs of Middleburg. The final category is the poor worker from China. A classic example of this is exemplified by an outreach that our church conducted to a cement factory in Lichtenberg in the Northwest Province. The cement company had concluded a deal with a Chinese construction company to increase the size of their factory. The Chinese construction workers recruited from rural locations in China would help to double the size of the cement factory. There were three hundred Chinese workers living and working at the factory. After several months of outreach, we baptised 8 workers. This type of business deal is common all over Africa. In 2008 the Democratic Republic of Congo closed a deal with Chinese authorities that would send three thousand Chinese workers to the Congo to build roads, schools, hospitals and infrastructure. This story is repeating itself all over Africa. In addition to this factory in Lichtenberg, there is now another cement factory near Mafikeng that has imported a thousand Chinese workers to help build the factory.



#### *4.2.3. Identity*

It must be understood that the Chinese are very proud of China. The Chinese have believed for millennia that the “middle kingdom” was the centre of the earth. They are also proud of the many international events that have taken place in China such as the Olympics in Beijing in 2008 and the International World Expo in Shanghai, 2011. Some of the Chinese are very well educated and others have a very rudimentary education. In 1953 Mao Tse Tung outlawed all religions (Aikman 2003:153). Today in addition to Christianity there are Buddhists and Taoist in China. This is also true of the Chinese in South Africa. The huge temple complex in Bronkhorstspuit is an example of the Buddhist influence in South Africa.

#### *4.2.4. Language: Mandarin*

In the same way that during the French Revolution the dialect of Tours was chosen as the correct form of the French language, the Mandarin of Beijing has become the standard Chinese language. It is taught in all the schools countrywide. Some people do speak a little English, but English is as difficult for the Chinese to learn as Chinese is for the English speaker. In my visit to Beijing in 2010, I found an entire floor of a bookstore that was dedicated to materials for the teaching of English. There is a massive program going on in China to learn English. Nevertheless, most Chinese in South Africa struggle with English and are cut off from the mainstream of South African society because of language and culture. The main language among South African Chinese is Mandarin. We English-speakers speak too fast. We use idioms that they do not understand. This is exactly the same experience that I had in Beijing with Mandarin Chinese. For the Chinese, it is not easy to learn English.

#### *4.2.5. Security*

From my research interviews, probably the greatest preoccupation of the South African Chinese is their security. There is a great fear of violence and of theft among the

Chinese. This is not without good reason. The moment that a Chinese steps out his/her front door, s/he is marked as a foreigner by his/her ethnicity. It is also rumoured among the local populace that the Chinese do not trust banks that a great deal of cash is kept in their homes or in their businesses. They are often robbed at gun point or their cars are hi-jacked. There is a great deal of fear of going out at night, when potential violence is more prevalent. In addition to this, Chinese are afraid of other Chinese. A common theme that I hear among businessmen is that they do not want other Chinese to know where they live or what possessions are in their house. They are afraid that other Chinese would hire someone to come and rob their premises. There are many examples of this happening. In addition to this, they do not share their business ideas with other Chinese. A common response I received to “How is your business doing?” is a negative, “It is OK.” Opportunities for businesses are regularly “borrowed” by other Chinese. There is great competition among entrepreneurs. The Chinese often work seven days a week. They are afraid that one of their regular customers will come to the shop and they will not be there. They are afraid that they will lose the customer and s/he will become the customer of another Chinese shop. Chinese triads are active in South Africa. Several times of the year, one hears about assassinations by the Triads of other Chinese. Triads could be understood as the equivalent of Chinese Mafia or criminal gangs. They are Chinese organised crime syndicates.

## **4.3. The Chinese Church In South Africa**

### *4.3.1. Denominations*

The Chinese Christian Church in South Africa is relatively small. It is under one percent of the Chinese population. The Chinese population in Gauteng is regularly reported as 300-350, 000 people (according to F. Tuan, April 7, 2004). Hard statistics are rare, because most Chinese are here without proper papers. They do not register with their embassy or any government agency. There are many denominations and many

expressions of faith. In my research, here in Gauteng, I came across people describing themselves as Covenant Christians, Presbyterian, Methodist, Brethren, Charismatic Christians and Independent House Church Christians. It has been my privilege to meet and interview many Pastors.

#### *4.3.2. An emerging ecclesiology*

One of the secrets of the House Church movement in China has been their flexibility. They often did not have permanent buildings or permanent staff. In speaking with Chinese Christians in South Africa I got the following reactions. They see the example of the western churches with their big buildings and large staff. This brings about certain expectations. They want to have a physical church building. They want to have Sunday services rather than to have meetings during the week. They want to have a large church with many members and a large budget. They want vast programs to see to the needs of the people. They want a professional pastor, seminary trained and paid for by the church. They want worship of a professional quality. In essence this is a mirror of the western church. What the Chinese do not understand is that the power of the mainland Chinese church has been that they have not had these things. Rather they have had to streamline their church and cut back to the very basics. Lay leadership was the norm. Men and women had to strive to live the Christian life. Often to be a Christian was to have your life and future in peril. They became fervent for Christ. In essence, this is *Communitas*. They cling together because of their shared trouble. They understand that it is all for Christ. In the West our faith is one of many options. Going to church or staying home is an option. Not so in China. If I am going to be a Christian, it is going to be a costly choice. It could cost me my job. It could cost me my freedom, possibly my life. A choice for Christ takes on a whole new dimension under such a situation. I am either all the way in or all the way out. There are no partial degrees. *Communitas* is the acceptance of the cost of my decision. It is entering into the sharing of a like held decision. My faith takes on a whole new importance. The kingdom of God takes first place. We are brothers because we share the same burden.

#### *4.3.3. The Local Chinese House Church*

It is my observation, having visited many Chinese churches in South Africa that the typical local Chinese church in South Africa runs between twenty members to seventy members. A church of 60 members is considered a successful church. What is not understood by the Chinese is that a smaller church is a more highly effective church (Schwartz 1996:44). Most of these churches have a pastor or a missionary. Often a Chinese Christian will attend an English speaking service, in an English speaking church, on a Sunday, even if s/he doesn't understand the message. In my observations, the Chinese have little knowledge of the bible, particularly the Old Testament. In their faith they lean toward a "works righteousness" orientation. I have further observed that, there is a great need for the understanding of true grace.

#### *4.3.4. The Heritage of the Church from Mainland China*

There are many things from the Chinese House Church Movement in Mainland China that have made it such a dynamic movement. The Chinese were forced to meet in small groups. This was the norm, but there are also some very large churches in Mainland China. They had to be secretive about their faith and about their worship. This brought about a high degree of dedication to their faith and to their church. Evangelism often was gradual. A person would come to a meeting and would often become a part of the church even before he had become a believer. It is the new adage that "identification precedes salvation". Often a Chinese would come to Christ because of observing answered prayer or the healing of the sick. After seeing many examples of God's direct intervention, it was natural to believe that God existed. The Chinese church exemplifies the model of self-ruling, self-supporting and self-propagating. These principles lead to a vibrant dynamic church. It is a willingness to sacrifice and to suffer for Christ. It was considered a privilege to testify to Christ in this way. Communitas is natural. They share in the suffering of Christ. This is church in its finest hour. This movement is truly a Jesus People Movement.

#### *4.3.5. Obstacles*

The expectations of South African Chinese Christians are the very things that would rob them of the vitality that lead to the tremendous explosive growth of the House Church Movement in China. The Chinese Christian in South Africa sees the large South African church. They have a building. They have paid pastors. There are extensive programmes running. They have a choir and an orchestra. You can attend the church and observe. Nobody bothers you. They take this to be a sign of success. This is not the stripped down model of church that is so vibrant and focused in China.

#### *4.3.6. New developments*

When I began this research, I expected to find many missionaries from mainland China. My expectation was ahead of its time. During the month of May, 2011, I helped host leaders from major denominations in China to see how they can muster Chinese missionaries for Africa. This is clearly a sign of the “Jesus People” House Church movement extending into the Diaspora communities of the Chinese. What the Chinese church in South Africa needs is new experienced leaders. That is exactly what the mainland China church has to offer. The harvest in South Africa is very plentiful but the labourers are very few. A new exciting development is the creation of SACON (Southern African Chinese Outreach Network). SACON is a group of churches and missions that are concerned about reaching out to the growing Chinese population (according to K. Teichert, May 16, 2013). It is composed of both Chinese and South African organisations. They partner with OMF (Overseas Missionary Fellowship) to put on training seminars for churches and individuals. They teach seminars on culture, world view and evangelism (according to K. Teichert, May 16, 2013). These seminars take place twice a year in various cities in South Africa. They have been very well received. Interest has been expressed in Zimbabwe and Kenya to have similar seminars. The goal of the seminars is to see the multiplying of existing Chinese churches and the planting of new churches (according to K. Teichert, May 16, 2013). This group came about because of the repeated request by pastors to have help with

the increasing number of Chinese they were encountering. This once again reinforces one of the premises of this paper, that the Chinese are a prevalent presence and something must be done about their need. The missionaries and the Chinese church have the experience the other churches need. Hence the creation of SACON. The personnel for SACON came from the MANI movement (Movement African for National Initiatives) which itself came from the AD2000 and the GCOWE movement (according to K. Teichert, May 16, 2013). This shows the evangelical roots of the movement.

#### **4.4. The Local Chinese Pastor**

Without exception I found that the local Chinese pastor works very hard. This is clearly a cultural paradigm. In South Africa he ends up doing the entire ministry. Their greatest need is for lay workers to help them in the task (according to D. Wu; April 20, 2010: interview). The training and releasing of lay leaders is absolutely essential for the growth of the Chinese church in South Africa. They must be recognised as essential as the pastor.

#### **4.5. Training of lay leaders**

Now the question must be asked what kind of training do they need? In my experience, an apprenticeship, working side by side, with an effective leader is a far more powerful form than a certificate that is given for attending formal lectures about Christian ministry. In my experience, the local Chinese pastor spends most of his time helping non-Christian Chinese with various problems because of living in South Africa (according to D. Wu; April 20, 2010: interview). This is the experience of almost every pastor I interviewed. The worker ends up dealing with corruption, bribery, false incarceration, documentation and the obvious problems of translation. I find the Chinese pastor very well trained and dedicated. His wife often is also a part of the ministry. It is the opinion of the researcher that a paid social worker could deal with

these social problems better. This would leave the pastor free to focus on preaching and teaching.

#### **4.6. Becoming a Part of the Church**

In the testimony of those who have become Christians it is because of contact with a Chinese Christian friend. It isn't long before the Chinese discover the difference between the behaviour and demeanour of the Christian and the normal Chinese (Incarnational belief). The newcomer has many doubts about becoming a "Christian." Conversations are held, many of his/her questions are answered, and s/he attends a lot of meetings. It is very interesting to note that often, the interested party becomes a member of the group before s/he becomes a believing Christian. Normally there are many non-Christians in a Christian group. Many creative forms of media are used at these meetings. They use video, DVD's, Power Point, literature and discussion groups. Research has revealed that often it is a process of two to four years for the Chinese to become a committed Christian. When s/he comes to Christ it is not just joining another religion. S/he is embracing a change of life, transformation, a coming to righteous and holiness in living.

#### **4.7 A Case Study**

In my investigation I found one particular local church that showed many of the signs of the House church in China. This church is very well attended. They often have 30 people that meet on a Friday night to hear a particular testimony or teaching. Normally, 20 people would meet on Sunday morning for a Christian service (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). Their leadership is four elders. They have a desire to add another four elders. This plurality of leadership has proven to be very powerful. No one person is in control but there seems to be a common seeking of the will of God together for a particular situation. The elders are Taiwanese (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). I also noted a very strong emphasis on the Lord's Supper and Baptism. If

communion is not shared, by their definition you do not have a church (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012).

During the meeting there is a lot of lay participation. Many different people will pray, some will quote a scripture, some have a testimony. This immense participation adds to the energy and impact of their meetings. Prayer is particularly focused “in the name of Jesus”. Jesus is highly central to their focus and worship. On an average night many testimonies are heard of what God has done during the week. It is the opinion of the researcher that participation of the members in these meetings is that it is above the 20% level. They also provide translation for those who may not speak Mandarin. They pray for the sick and the sick get well. They always have a meal together. In Chinese culture, to eat a meal together is to cement your friendship. It is to become a part of the other person’s life. They share the Eucharist at the meeting. This is an integral part of their life together. Most of the believers are young in their faith (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). Their services have a five-fold emphasis. They come together and talk. They sing songs together about gospel themes and teaching. They pray. They read the Bible. They go home (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). It is simple but very effective. Their meeting is “the experience of the cross” (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). They share their suffering. *Communitas* is experienced.

#### **4.8. Growth**

The church is spiritual and not institutional. A church is not the object of why they meet. They meet to be together (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). Their growth is a natural dynamic not by goals. The meeting grows by word of mouth. Everyone who is in Jesus is a brother (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). In this way they express the unity of the body of Christ. Every family has five Chinese Bibles at home. They are to share these Bibles with people who are looking for Christ (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). This is a major activity of the church. It is the researcher’s opinion that more teaching and motivating on evangelism should be done to increase to rate of evangelism.



## 4.9. Beginnings

They first began meeting together as five families (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). They patterned themselves on the Recovery church from Taiwan. There was one example of this church in Kempton Park. They began public meetings in February 2002 at Norscott Centre in Bryanston (according to M. Liu; November 17, 2012). They called themselves The Chinese Brethren church of the West Rand. They share communion at every meeting which is the sign of a fully-fledged church (according to M. Liu; November 17, 2012).

### 4.9.3. *Attraction to Christianity*

People are attracted to Christianity because of the slower, simpler lifestyle (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). In China, life is frantic. They have never seen a bible. After a while they find that money just makes them feel empty (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). There is great competition in China. The lifestyle of the Christian is very attractive (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). They are drawn by the life they see expressed by the church.

## 4.10. Description

They are a Brethren church. Their theological model is the Body of Christ (Hendriks 2004:48-51). According to Hendriks, the four theological models are the Institutional model, the Proclamation model, the Body of Christ and the Transformation model (2004: 44-54). The Body of Christ model is a reaction to the other models. The human need for community and the lack of this aspect in other models brought about the Body of Christ model (Hendriks 2004; 49). Rather than a “from the top down” approach, this model is a “from the bottom up” approach in the church (2004; 53). The stress is on people participation. The emphasis is on personal abilities and spiritual gifts. It acknowledges that we all have something to contribute. This emphasises the communion of the members with one another and with God in Christ. Importance is

given to the works and gifts of the Holy Spirit. (Hendriks 2004: 50). The beneficiaries of the Body of Christ model are those who having “experienced conversion, received the Holy Spirit and the gifts he bestows thus become part of the love and fellowship of the Body” (2004: 50). In this model the purpose of the church is a personalised relationship with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This divine encounter leads to a fellowship of believers that know the presence of God and the love and fellowship of his Body (Hendriks 2004: 50). The effect of this model is quite dynamic. People are energised. They are excited to be part of the church and to contribute their part. People grow spiritually at a fast speed. Leaders are constantly arising for different situations. The church moves forward with purpose. This is the model under which the Chinese Brethren church operates.

#### **4.11. Factors**

The macro factor of this situation is that China has the second largest economy in the world (The World Bank, 2013, China Overview, available from: [www.worldbank.org/en/country/China/overview](http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/China/overview), accessed 23-02-2013). China clearly is a world power of note. To be Chinese is to be part of that presence. The influence of China is particularly noticeable in Africa. The China Monitor, issue 21 (Ed. Davies, Dr. Martyn, August 2007, News Briefs, Centre for Chinese Studies, Stellenbosch: 18) shows a flurry of economic endeavours by China. Nigeria wants to partner with China in producing uranium. China is producing 200, 000 barrels of oil per day in Somalia. Ghana has given China a tender to construct a \$1.6 billion railway. Mauritania paid \$860 million to Chinese concerns for a new railroad. The Chinese invested in the copper mining industry in Zambia. In South Africa, China imported \$3 billion worth of goods in the first half of 2007. The GoNow car factories launched 44 dealers in South Africa in 2007. All this to say that the impact of China on Africa is enormous.

As a meso factor, China is also affecting local politics. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of October 2011, the Dalai Lama was denied a visa to visit Archbishop Tutu during his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration (Gerhard Jacobs, Cape Chameleon, Dalai Lama’s refused visa,

<http://www.capechameleon.co.za/printed-version/issue-15/news-story12/>, accessed 23-02-2013). This is just one example of how the China question affects the local scene. Chinas influence is such that it can reach down to the local political level.

There are micro factors that affect every Chinese living in South Africa. I have witnessed some of these at first hand. As Chinese, the people stand out. Their face and their accent immediately put them in a category apart from the South African. Research shows it is generally thought that Chinese have lots of money. Therefore they are subject to being asked for bribes or inflated fees. One of my students had to pay R2000 to get a driver's license. In another situation, a Chinese man was put in jail because he was driving with a Chinese driver's license. It was stamped with the South African Department of Foreign Affairs Beijing. Before we could get him out, unbeknown to me, three officials had to be paid off. This is a daily experience for the Chinese in South Africa and also for the Chinese Christian. What must be done? In order for this to stop, the Chinese must stand up and say no to bribes. This can mean hours of frustration but it can be done. It takes strong people of great conviction to see this take place.

The Chinese Christian finds himself "isolated" (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012) from both the community around him and the Christian church. The Chinese is marked by his language and culture. He is always an "outsider" (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). This can be quite frustrating yet the quality of life and the freedom make it worthwhile to continue in South Africa. Occasionally you find a Chinese person in an English speaking church. It is the exception rather than the rule. Most Chinese prefer to be with their own language group and culture.

The Brethren church is 70 per cent self-employed business owners (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). Most Chinese have a business that they run. It is very hard to determine the success of these businesses. It is a highly guarded secret. But considering that most businessmen of my acquaintance make a trip to China every year, this researcher is of the opinion that they are doing quite well.

## **4.12. Ambience of the Brethren Church**

It is very clear that they enjoy their time together. There is a great deal of energy in the time of sharing and eating together. They are very welcoming towards strangers, even white preachers that cannot speak Mandarin. There are times when they will bring in special speakers for testimony of signs and wonders that have occurred. During the week there are discipleship meetings that help bring depth to the faith of the local believer. This is often led by one of the elders. The bible takes special place in their meetings.

There is a great emphasis on the Word of God and people testify as to how it has changed their lives. Their systems are totally fluid, not according to a fixed pattern but flowing around the need. There is much reliance on the Holy Spirit to lead and to guide. As you listen to the conversations, you discover that there are many people who are helping other people in the group. This kind of body life is considered normal in this church. Leaders become leaders because there is a common recognition of the hand of God upon them. The people follow their leaders. They often have a Tuesday, a Friday and a Sunday morning meeting.

## **4.13. Youth**

One of the problems that all of the Chinese churches experience is that their youth have become part Chinese and part South African in culture. They have become bicultural international. Some of the youth identify more with South African culture than with Chinese. Some of the youth speak very poor Mandarin. This then is one of the great needs of this church. A different approach is clearly necessary. A separate English speaking group would be a good idea.

#### **4.14. Receptivity**

The receptivity of the South African Chinese is much lower than the mainland Chinese. The most common reported reason for this is that the entrepreneur has come to South Africa to make money. That is his/her focus, not his/her spiritual state. (according to Sia, May 10, 2004; according to D. Hughes, May 20, 2004). The lure of Western materialism is very strong.

The opulence of the society is very appealing. A person can have a much more comfortable life in South Africa than China. There is no religious persecution. The social context is extremely different from that in China. S/he is a newcomer to this culture. S/he has not yet become disenchanted with its philosophies and dreams. Christianity is seen as western phenomena, rather than something that is available to him/her.

Research has found that the growth of the Chinese South African Church is not rapid but moderate. When asked about this, the pastors responded that the Chinese are more focused on business than on the gospel (according to D. Wu, D. Hughes, M. Liu and B. Sia).

#### **4.15. Summary**

In this chapter the following was observed regarding the source of the information, the complicated nature of the Chinese population, the identity and language of the Chinese, security, denominations, expectations, the local Chinese church, the influence of mainland China, obstacles to growth, new developments the local Chinese pastor, lay leaders, a church case study, youth and receptivity.

#### **4.16. Conclusion**

In undertaking this research the researcher expected to find a strong expression of the Chinese House Church. The researcher found few churches that were actually using

the Chinese House Church model. The church that I did the case study on was one that truly had the seeds of a House Church approach. Most often what the research revealed was a church where the pastor had had western training. He was following a western model that was not as efficient or as vital as the Chinese House Church model. This is quite contrary to what I expected to find. There is a very clear need in South Africa for missionaries to come from Mainland China and plant simple, vibrant congregations among the Chinese according to the Chinese House Church model. Naturally they would have to adapt to the South African context.

# CHAPTER 5: APOSTOLIC GENIUS IN THE CHINESE CHURCH IN SA

## 5.1 Purpose of the Chapter

As we have written about the Apostolic Genius and its application to spontaneous movement, we will now apply that to the Chinese church in South Africa. In this chapter I will apply the six points of Apostolic Genius to the Chinese church in South Africa to understand if the Chinese House Church in South Africa does indeed carry the marks of a Jesus People movement. The Chinese church is not one story but several according to ethnic origin and denominational preference. It would appear that the common denominator is the mainland Chinese population. This is the pool where evangelism will take place. This is the pool from which future leaders will come. More and more a mainland culture will become dominant. I will use Apostolic Genius to explore the Chinese presence.

## 5.2 The Six Factors of Apostolic Genius Are

Jesus is Lord, Disciple making, Missional-Incarnational Impulse, The Apostolic environment, Organic systems and Communitas.

### *5.2.1. Jesus is Lord*

All of the Chinese Christian churches in South Africa would embrace the statement that Jesus is Lord. But we are looking for something more. We are looking for a Christocentric expression in the lives of each church member. It is best observed when a crisis happens. Does the believer turn in prayer to Jesus for help? Is this earnestly done? Does the name of Jesus come up in conversation? Does the believer truly depend upon him? Is he the centre of their life?

The researcher has observed that except for the Methodist and the Brethren, Jesus is not the centre of their experience. The form of Christian expression is more often like the western church expression. It is more of the management/business approach rather than Jesus is in charge. Research has shown that for the most part the Chinese church is composed of Taiwanese leaders with mainland followers. Most of the followers have been won to Christ in South Africa. I am not saying that Jesus is not important in the life of the church. What I am saying is the “What would Jesus Do?” approach is not prevalent. When Jesus is the centre of the decision making process, a different result is experienced. His teaching is the key to decisions.

The growth of the Chinese church in Africa is apparent. This shows value both in the Taiwan influence and the Mainland presence, but it does not show the vitality of Apostolic genius. As an example of “Jesus is Lord”, the passion of the Chinese Brethren church shows up in their communal prayers and hymns. During times of prayer that they experienced together one would often hear over and over “O Jesu”. It doesn’t take an expert to translate to “Oh Jesus”. This earnest calling on Jesus is a weekly experience. Likewise, their hymnology is filled with reference to Jesus and truth about Jesus. This hymn is “Wonderful Saviour”:

*Jesus has loved me, wonderful Saviour!  
Jesus has loved me, I cannot tell why;  
Came he to rescue, sinner so worthless;  
My heart He conquered, for Him I would die.*

*Glory to Jesus, wonderful Saviour!  
Glory to Jesus, the one I adore;  
Glory to Jesus, wonderful Saviour!  
Glory to Jesus, Him I'll praise evermore.  
(Hymns Living Stream Ministry 1966:336)*

This expression screams with a high Christology. We find here a passion for Jesus as Lord. It is found in their communion celebration and baptisms. Jesus permeates their



services. They celebrate Jesus as Lord. This is no less than the expression of their common commitment.

### *5.2.2. Discipleship Making*

Discipleship making is bound to programmes with a western approach. There is quite a plethora of programmes from the West. There is a tendency to associate acquiring knowledge as discipleship within western discipleship. True discipleship is acting out in your life what you have seen of Christ in the lives of others and in the Word of God. The teaching of Jesus must be applied to your current problems in life. During one of my discipleship/mentoring meetings, the wife of the couple said to me, “Why has no one ever answered these questions for me?” (according to Carol Lam, September 19, 2012). Practical application is what discipleship is all about. In another situation, my student was faced with giving a bribe or depending on prayer to Christ. When I explained the dichotomy he immediately chose God’s way. We prayed according to scripture. In the Chinese Brethren church, they study the bible together on Tuesday nights. They meet in small groups and are led by an elder (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012).

In the Chinese Methodist church they use the Alpha Programme. It works very well among the well-educated members from Shanghai but not among the Fujian or the Cantonese (according to B. Sia June 5 2013). The Alpha course uses western concepts and examples. These work fine for the Shanghaiese but not the Fujian. The Fujian would rather have someone speaking directly to them, a testimony or a movie (according to B. Sia June 5 2013).

Pastor Sia uses the teachings of John from the Gospel of John. These stories seem to make an impact on the Fujian and the Cantonese. According to Pastor Sia it all comes down to the bible. The cell groups are centred on the Alpha course (according to D. Hughs May 27 2013). It is in the cell groups that leaders get their training for leading. A potential leader gets involved naturally. They may not know how to pray. A leader helps

them write out their prayer at first (according to B. Sia June 5 2013). This way they gain confidence and experience. In the cell group they are grounded in the faith (according to D. Hughs May 27 2013). They read the Word and pray every Wednesday night. This is the start of their training as a leader. Leaders train by doing (according to D. Hughs May 27 2013). As a leader progresses a pastor will get together one on one with him (according to B. Sia June 5 2013). In this way a leader progresses in discipleship.

### *5.2.3. Missional – Incarnational Impulse*

Missional-incarnational impulse is “go and show”. By this, we go and show what Jesus has done for us. We are sent to the people. We do not wait for them to come to us. It is God-driven by his Spirit. It is a powerful evangelism/discipleship expression. It produces thirst for Jesus. “Incarnational” expresses the transformation that happens in the new believer. You are changed by the instrument of the Word and the Spirit. You become a little Christ. This is where the world becomes incensed. You can hold your meetings. You can sing your songs but don’t meddle with anyone else’s beliefs. For the western world, this is anathema. Yet this is the crux of our life. We once were separated from God because of our sinful actions. Now those actions are being changed by the incarnation in us. Not only that, but our society becomes changed by the truth of Christ incarnating in society. Opposition is not bad. It means that something significant is taking place. Research shows one such example of this; the researcher was invited by the pastor of His People West Rand to visit a Chinese person in jail in Krugersdorp. I met with him. It was obvious he needed someone who spoke Mandarin. I got one of the pastors of the Chinese Methodist church to come with me. By doing this he was expressing the missional nature of the church. This prisoner had a sentence of 60 years in jail. My pastor friend continued visiting him for three years. He learned much about Christ and came to faith in him. His life was transformed. He was no longer the man filled with shame because of his crimes but a new creature in Christ. He began to take on the incarnation of a Christ-like life. The authorities took notice. Because of his change of life and attitude, he has been released after six years in prison to return to China. He is now waiting in a repatriation centre for his papers and

an airline ticket to China (according to D. Hughs, May 27 2013). This represents a rather dramatic representation of missional/Incarnational impulse. The church was sent and a situation was radically transformed into a kingdom of God event.

#### *5.2.4. The Apostolic Environment*

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is now. By that I see God is present among us. An Apostolic environment sees God making changes. He uses the leaders he has chosen to get the people involved. There should be a, from the roots up, effect. People filled with God want to do something for him. Apostolic leaders look for the raising up of new leaders. They are actively recruiting them. I found this readily evident in the Brethren movement. They are raising leaders and planning for new opportunities to expand. When I spoke to the leader, he gladly told me of their plans to add two more elders and look into the possibility of new venues for meetings (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012).

The average Chinese church in South Africa has a pastor. He is very busy. He works hard. He does all the work. He does the entire ministry. He gives his approval if something should take place or not. His hyper-activity often discourages anyone else from getting involved. An Apostolic leader invites other people to get involved. He doesn't have to do everything. Apostolic leaders give permission rather than holding people back. In the Brethren movement, I observed that everyone has their chance. During the time of prayer, anyone can pray for whatever concerns them. The whole congregation chimes in with their "amen". Participation is openly sought and widely appreciated. Likewise testimonies of what God has done in the lives of believers are freely shared in the meetings.

#### *5.2.5. Organic Systems*

Systems should be simple. They meet the needs and do not become institutionalised. When a system no longer works, it is changed or done away with. What we do see in

the Chinese community is either committee's ad nauseam or the pastor has made all the decisions. This is not the organic system way. In organic systems, as Wimber said, "Everybody gets to play." (Wimber 2008) The gifts and abilities of the people should not be wasted. On the other hand, they must show the initiative. Pastors are well aware of where pleas from the pulpit lead. No one is more miserable than a person coerced to help out when their heart is not really in it. Pastors help direct the flow of information to see that Apostolic Genius is realised. A pastor invites workers to create and run new systems that facilitate Apostolic Genius. In the Chinese Brethren church the elders get together when they need it. It is about once a month (according to M. Liu, November 17, 2012). They discuss the needs of the group and make decisions accordingly. The Chinese Methodists have several systems in place. The cell groups facilitate discipleship. The congregation reaches out and incorporates new people. There is practical training for the cell group leaders and "one on one" encouragement. The finances are handled by a small group that does not include the pastor. There are six leaders that regularly meet with the pastor for encouragement. The youth handles the worship (according to D. Hughs, May 27 2013). The systems are simple but workable.

### *5.2.6. Communitas*

#### 5.2.6.A. The Enemy Outside

The Chinese are under pressure the moment they enter South Africa. They are quickly reminded they don't belong by the officials who don't speak Chinese and will not do anything to accommodate them. Liminality has arrived. Nothing looks the same. It does not work the same. It is quite a confusing experience. It's with great relief that they find a fellow Chinese speaker. Once they leave the airport, the country is quite big and sophisticated. Nobody seems to understand. Nobody cares. Research has found that it is commonly believed that Chinese do not like banks and that they keep money at home. They become targets just because they are Chinese. Evenings are the worst. A Chinese person is afraid to be away from their home because of the potential of a robbery on the way to a meeting. This puts a great deal of pressure on the Christian.

Research has shown that one unrelated incidence of robbery can breakup regularly scheduled meetings. This wreaks havoc with church meetings.

#### 5.2.6.B. The Enemy Within.

A common thread in my discussions and interviews is the problem of other Chinese. There are many stories with real examples of people inviting other Chinese over to their house for a Christian meeting only to find that that person has stolen their business idea, customer or supplier. It was noted that in some extreme situations, the person had seen what was worth stealing and sent a team of Africans over to rob the house. Chinese do not trust other Chinese, especially in their home. The home is both a dwelling and a warehouse.

This creates fear. It is the enemy of church planting. People will not go to meetings at night. Still, this draws people together in the sharing of their suffering. They feel like they are on the edge of chaos. It is this edge that brings *communitas*. They feel close to destruction but are even closer to life abundant in the kingdom of God. One has to really want the gospel to persevere in a situation like this.

### **5.3 Summary**

In this chapter the following was observed regarding the six factors of Apostolic genius in the Chinese church in South Africa: Jesus is Lord, Making disciples, Missional/Incarnational impulse, Apostolic environment, Organic systems and *Communitas*. Jesus is Lord is a Christocentric passion. The Making of disciples is necessary to see the true life of the kingdom of God. The Missional/Incarnational impulse must be released to take the gospel to the people and express a transformed life according to the power of the risen Lord. An Apostolic Environment will release people and systems to exploit new situations and opportunities. Organic Systems facilitate the functioning of Apostolic Genius rather than impeding progress. *Communitas* is the fellowship of the suffering. It acts as the glue that holds people together in dynamic community and releases power.

## 5.4 Conclusion

The six elements of Apostolic genius are not readily evident in the Chinese church in South Africa in their totality. The church does not express all the elements all the time. The Chinese church in South Africa is growing. But is not growing like a Jesus People movement. The growth is there but it is not explosive. Explosive growth is one of the key indicators that a Jesus People movement is taking place. Nevertheless, the conditions are there for explosive growth. The Chinese are wide open to the gospel. They openly receive the Word when it is offered. They read what they are given. There is a great need for more workers in every church. Given the opportunity, new workers would explode the existing situation. The climate of Apostolic Genius would facilitate a rapid growth in believers and leaders. The potential is there but the mind-set and approach of existing leaders must change for releasing new workers into this great harvest field.

## CHAPTER 6: CONCLUDING REMARKS

### 6.1 Purpose of the Chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to study the potential for a Jesus People movement among the Chinese in South Africa. In Apostolic Genius we have a means to evaluate Jesus People movements. In China in the Chinese House Church movement we have a Jesus People movement of note. Research has shown that there is a Chinese Diaspora community in South Africa. The relationship between these two facts will become quite important in the near future. The Chinese church exists in South Africa as various denominations and organizations. The Chinese House Church movement in China cannot continue to exist without affecting the Chinese church in South Africa.

#### *6.1.1. Opening Remarks*

If there is one nation that is spoken of in a positive nature in the news headlines it is China. China is now the second largest economy in the world and one of the fastest growing. Research shows that China is an important economic partner with South Africa and many other African states. The researcher is of the opinion that China will play a vital role in the twenty-first century. Interestingly enough China also has a vital blossoming evangelical church (Aikman 2003:8-9). The Chinese House church is over 100 million members strong and increasing daily (Hattaway 2003:13). Bringing everything together, the researcher concludes that this church will also play a vital part in the twenty-first century. It is only a matter of time before the Chinese church comes to South Africa.

As part of this Diaspora phenomenon, research shows that 300-350,000 Chinese have come to the Gauteng province (According to F. Tuan, April 7, 2004). The church, both South African and Chinese must respond to this presence. Indeed, the research shows

that the church is responding. According to research, Pastor Sia of the Methodists and Pastor Wu of an independent church have both planted Fujian congregations. The Bryanston Bible Church has a Chinese pastor on their staff. Many churches have attended the bi-annual training conferences of the Southern African Chinese Outreach Network, SACON (According to K. Teichert, 16 May 2013). SACON continues to grow regional chapters because of demand. Research shows a definite positive response to the presence of the Chinese in South Africa.

### *6.1.2. The Church in China*

The research shows that there is a strong growing church in China. It carries all of the characteristics of Apostolic Genius as delineated in chapter two (see 2.3.1:8). It is a full blown Jesus People movement. The research has found that people are coming to Christ in China by the tens of thousands every month (Hattaway 2003:2). The researcher is of the opinion that it is currently the fastest growing church movement. Not only are they growing in China, but the Back to Jerusalem Movement in China shows that this fervor for the Great Commission will be carried with them into whatever country they enter as a mission field. Their goal to see one hundred thousand evangelical missionaries go out from China (Hattaway 2003:97) does indeed seem reachable for the Chinese House church.

Research has found the church in China passed through several stages of development to reach its current state (see chapter 3.8:63). In 1953, Mao confiscated all church buildings and burned all literature. Pastors and teachers were arrested and sent to re-education camps (Chapter 3: 63). Many died in prison. The Cultural Revolution that followed in 1965 furthered this goal. This purified the church. It was not easy to be a Christian. It took faith and belief.

Furthermore, research shows you had to sacrifice to be a Christian leader. Since 1976 and the end of the Cultural Revolution the church has grown at a rapid rate. In the



researcher's opinion, the ideological vacuum that Mao created by his persecution is being filled by Christianity (Aikman 2003:15).

That is not to say that Christianity is universally accepted nor approved by the government. The government cyclically cracks down or eases up on the Chinese House Church movement (Aikman 2003:178). Church leaders are occasionally arrested and imprisoned. Leaders are refused permission to attend international congresses of the church like the Lausanne Congress in Cape Town (2010). From the research it can be concluded that this is the key issue that keeps them from spreading their influence internationally. They are not allowed.

In 1978 China opened its economy to the outside world (Aikman 2003:13). It has seen rapid growth. Research shows from 1990 onward there has been a growing trend for businessmen and entrepreneurs to leave China and establish businesses in foreign countries. There are growing Diaspora communities around the world. Sydney Australia and Johannesburg are two such examples. Research has found Tokyo has 41 Chinese Christian churches. There are large resident communities of Mandarin speakers in these cities. Many more examples exist.

It is the opinion of this researcher that a church of this size and vitality cannot fail to have an impact on the developing world and finally the whole world. The nature of this impact is yet to be determined but clearly their zeal for evangelism and discipleship will be a major component. Many Chinese pastors have given their lives to see mission take place. The kingdom of God takes a major place in their theologizing.

### *6.1.3. Research problem*

Can the story of a Chinese House Church in South Africa serve as an expression of a Jesus revival among Chinese in South Africa, especially if investigated in the light of the six elements of "Apostolic Genius" of Alan Hirsch? The question that is relevant to this study is "Does the Jesus People phenomenon of the Chinese House Church movement in China reproduce in the Chinese churches of South Africa?" "The Forgotten Ways" by

Alan Hirsch (2006), in my opinion, gives us an instrument to evaluate this process in South Africa. There are six signs of Apostolic Genius in action. The stronger the expression of the individual signs, the more you can be sure that a Jesus People movement is apparent (Hirsch 2006).

#### *6.1.4. The Chinese church in South Africa*

My research shows that the Chinese church in South Africa does not show the same explosive growth that is found the church in mainland China. Research has found the Chinese church in South Africa is growing at a moderate rate (see Chapter 4:86-7). The Chinese are more focused on business than on the gospel. Also the growth of the church is dependent on the pastor doing the evangelism. It is a one man approach. Research has found that this does not lend itself to growth. The functions of APEPT (Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers) should be operating (see Chapter 2:23). Apostolic Environment is not fully functioning. Research shows the making of disciples is determined by the available time of one pastor. One man can only do so much. But according to Ephesians 4:12; II Timothy 2:2, he should be producing leaders who are able to do the ministry. Missional/Incarnational impulse focuses on sending out in the way of Christ (Chapter 2:18). Research finds that this “sending” rarely takes place. It is the exception rather than the norm. Research shows organic systems do not function for lack of available personnel. It does not express Apostolic Genius in its full expression.

The current expression of the Chinese South African church cannot reach the influx of the mainland Chinese entrepreneurs into South Africa. They are too numerous. What is needed is a Chinese House church approach to the problem. In the Chinese House church, everyone is a witness of what Christ has done in their lives. Evangelism is the business of everybody. Many hands make for a powerful effective testimony of the gospel.

Research shows the Chinese South African church is a good church doing a good job but more is needed. A Jesus People movement or a Church Planting movement (CPM) is needed in order to reach the number of Chinese now represented in South Africa. A Jesus People movement is infectious. The longer it goes the more it spreads. A large number of people can only be reached by systems like this. In a Jesus People movement everyone becomes a witness. Everyone can share what he has heard and experienced. One doesn't need a professional degree to share your faith. A person who comes to faith becomes a witness of what has happened. The list of witnesses is as big as the congregation. This multiplies the potential workers. Each person becomes the bearer of the truth he has received. Growth is inevitable. Only then will the Chinese community's true potential be reached. Apostolic Genius shows six aspects of this potential that must be developed.

A people who passionately embrace Jesus as Lord are a people that will bring non-believers to know him. This attitude is an essential part of any growing thriving Christian movement. Only when this attitude is correct will the other aspects fall into place (Chapter 2:9).

Discipleship is second nature to the committed Christian. Christianity without the making of disciples is a pale second best. Discipleship is only truly understood within Christianity. Relationship with Christ defines true discipleship (see Chapter 2:13).

In this research, the missional/incarnational impulse of Hirsch has been described as "sending" (see Chapter 2:19-20). We are sent into the world but we do things incarnationally as Christ would do them. This is not two parts but one action. Without Missional/Incarnational impulse there is no reproduction of Christianity. It is that impulse both to tell what Jesus has done and to be like him that brings power to Christianity. Christianity would have been just a good philosophy if Jesus hadn't given meaning to the cross and instructed his disciples to take the gospel everywhere. It is this divine power that has changed the world (see Chapter 2:18).

Apostolic environment foment the development of new leadership. If there is no place for leadership, none will develop. Apostolic environment leaves the opening for evolving leadership. Trained leaders will flourish. They will meet the needs as they come face to face to face with them. More leaders are desperately needed. They must be chosen. They must be trained. They must be corrected. They must be set free to lead. Only then will there be growth (see Chapter 2:22). New areas will be ascertained and exploited.

Systems in a movement must serve a function and not be served. That is why they are organic. They are simple, reproducible means by which the job gets done. When a system no longer works, it is to be discarded (see Chapter 2:24).

What holds people together? It is not proximity but shared suffering. It is not community but *communitas*. Our suffering is the glue that holds us in fellowship. Like experience and like hardship weld people together. It is this edge of chaos that allows something of great importance to be accomplished. It is not the status quo but a moving on to something new. It is liminality with all its possibilities (see Chapter 2:27). When all of these things come together, the power of Apostolic Genius is released.

Research shows the Chinese Brethren church of the west Rand is doing a good job (Chapter 4.9:80). Their dynamic is very attractive. What they are doing is organic and not programmed. Research has found their leadership is very clear and sympathetic to the people. Their leaders are competent and focused. The participation of the people is not forced but genuine. Observation shows prayer comes quite easily and naturally. Their focus clearly is on the Lordship of Jesus Christ. This researcher is impressed by the sincere fellowship that is observed during their meals together. The gifts of the Spirit are evident during their services. Healings are not uncommon. Research has shown there needs to be more teaching and encouragement in evangelism (see Chapter 4.9:82).

### *6.1.5. What is needed?*

There needs to be a vision. There are over 350,000 Chinese in Gauteng. The vast majority of these people have no relationship to a church. Churches and pastors must begin to dream together as to how these people could be met and brought into a relationship with a church. Second of all there have to be more churches. There is room for 350 Chinese churches in Gauteng, one church for every thousand non-believers. Dr. David Barrett came up with the figure that one church could effectively reach about 1000 people. Therefore one church for every 1,000 people was a reasonable goal (Montgomery 1989:47). Third there must be more workers. A church cannot function without leaders on all levels. Fourth everybody must do their part. A true living church is where everyone is involved.

### *6.1.6. Vision*

How many great things begin with a dream? Without a vision it is impossible to sustain direction. Vision tells us how things could be. It gives us practical steps that help us obtain a goal. A vision inspires us. It gives us motivation to accomplish something far beyond our ability. Proverbs 29:18 says “without a vision the people perish”. Vision gives meaning. Where would Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., or Nelson Mandela have been without the vision that sustained them? Abraham was told his descendants would be as numerous as the sands of the sea. Moses and Joshua sent spies into the Promised Land to bring back a report of what they had experienced. David was promised a kingdom. Jesus was the fulfillment of that kingdom. Vision is essential. Vision provides a path to follow.

### *6.1.7. Churches*

Where can new believers go to hear about the gospel? Where can they find faith? The answer is at churches. C. Peter Wagner calls the planting of new churches the “best evangelistic method under heaven.” (Montgomery 1989:38). Research has found

churches are the logical choice for seekers and new believers. The researcher has found if you do not have churches, you cannot reach them in a sustained way. Churches can be redefined very simply. The church in China shows it is not necessary to have a large facility, staff and budget. You need people, a place to meet and a leader. The researcher recommends that concentrated effort be expended by the existing churches to plant new churches among the resident Chinese population. Such effort should be in coordination with all the existing Chinese churches. Many successful programs have been held to reach entire regions. There have been programs in the Philippines, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Ghana (Montgomery 1989: 33, 47, 49, 138). It is the researchers experience that when the church comes together, massive things happen. Entire people groups become Christian. Nations are Christianized. It starts with a common vision and a common goal. We set aside our differences and focus on what God is focusing on, the discipling of whole nations (Montgomery 1989:11-12).

#### *6.1.8. Leaders*

Many leaders are essential. You are limited if you have just one central leader. You need pastors, assistant pastors, youth leaders, evangelists, administrators and financial people. I am reminded of a high school youth group exercise. In order to illustrate this point, the biggest boy in the group was asked to lie down. Everyone gathered around him and used just their right hand to lift him off the floor, girls included. Many hands accomplished what two strong hands would have struggled with. This is not to say that everyone is a paid leader. Many people give of their time. It has always been this way in the church.

It is the opinion of this researcher that the Chinese churches in South Africa need to hire Chinese social workers to deal with the myriad of problems that the local pastor encounters while working with the local Chinese. The local pastor interprets for the Chinese, helps them get documents and licenses and helps them pay bills. The pastor should be concerned with preaching and teaching. This other essential area can be handled by a social worker. Then the pastor will be free to see to the business of the

church. The church in Acts faced a similar problem when it came to feeding widows (Acts 6:1-7). They decided to choose seven men to act as deacons so that they could focus on studying the scriptures. The problem was resolved. Their priority was to study the Word so they could minister to the people. The others were to take care of the physical needs of the people. Both necessities were taken care of.

#### *6.1.8. Joint Ownership*

Finally, everybody must play their part. A church of one man is not a church. Many members must be active doing things to see people brought to Christ. Once a person is in Christ it takes people to help them grow in their faith. Only then can the church truly be the church. Only then can this vast group of people be brought to Christ.

#### *6.1.9. Conclusion*

There is a vibrant Jesus People movement in China. This Chinese House Church movement is not yet represented in South Africa. It should not be too long before that happens. Already leaders of denominations in China have visited South Africa to determine if there is the possibility of working together. The possibilities are quite exciting. A team of missionaries with the right training could make quite an impact on the resident mainland Chinese population.

There is much to be learned from and much to be admired in the Chinese House Church movement. Their commitment to Christ and his kingdom is exemplary. Their willingness to pay any price cannot be topped. This is the sort of commitment that is required.

Is there a Jesus People movement among the Chinese churches in South Africa? No, there is not a Jesus People movement among the Chinese churches in South Africa. This does not say that Apostolic Genius is not functioning. Apostolic Genius is functioning at one level or another in all the churches studied. Research has found a group of Chinese churches working hard for the sake of the kingdom. For a Jesus

People movement to function all elements of Apostolic Genius must be fully functioning. The functioning of elements of Apostolic Genius among the churches is a sign of health and potential.

Research reveals the problem of 350,000 unreached mainland Chinese. A new approach must be used. The form of the Chinese House Church movement is much more suited to tackling the problem of a large number of unreached Chinese. The Chinese House Church movement has an inherent flexibility to change according to the stress it is put under. It adapts. It overcomes. It shows strong consistent growth. It uses many more available people.

Overall this dissertation has been a rich source of investigation. In Apostolic Genius there is a powerful tool for understanding the dynamic of People movements and individual churches. Research into such thought is very thought provoking and rewarding. In the church in China we find one of Gods great movements. Nowhere else has there been such a vast dedicated move to Christ as in the Chinese House Church movement. It certainly deserves study. The Chinese church in South Africa is poised at the edge of a great harvest waiting to be brought in. May God bring in the Harvest.



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# ADDENDUM A

## Interview: Daniel Hughs

Assistant Pastor Chinese Methodist Church

27 May 2013

Tel: 084-310-7543

*You are responsible for the Boksburg cell group. What are they doing?*

All of our (Methodist) seven cell groups are doing the Alpha course in Chinese. All discipleship is done in the Alpha groups.

1. They are being grounded in the faith.
2. They read the Word and pray on Wednesday night.
3. Sunday they have combined celebration; Bryanston meets Sunday morning and Crown Mining and Boksburg meet on Sunday evening. Cyrildene meets Sunday.

*How are your leaders trained?*

1. Leaders lead cells. They are trained by doing. It is on the job experience.
2. There is a leadership core of 6 people who meet with pastor.

*What about the needs of youth?*

The youth are cared for in English in Bryanston. Pastor's son and daughter take care of them. Joseph plays the piano. He is very contemporary. He is very good.

*What systems are there?*

Cells take care of discipleship. Congregations are there to reach out to new people. There is practical training for cell leaders. The finances are handled by a group. The pastor doesn't handle that. Music is by the youth.

*What is relevant to all Chinese?*

Crime and violence. Everyone knows someone who has been high-jacked if not personally involved. The Presbyterian Church has a problem getting a pastor because the last one was hijacked. No one wants to come from Taiwan. They are all afraid. Bribery is a common thing. It happens all around us. Everyone has suffered. If you help someone, bribery will take place all around you.



## ADDENDUM B

### Interview: Michael (CS) Liu

19 Dec 2012

Radiokop

Chinese Brethren Church of the West Rand

Tel: 083-286-3008

*What is a Church?*

A Church is spiritual.

*How does a church grow?*

A Church grows naturally, not by establishing goals. There must be spiritual activity in the church. You are not a church because you have objectives. You meet together because you need to meet together.

*How did your church start?*

Originally there were five families. We were traveling through to Kempton Park to meet with the “Recovery Church” from Taiwan. They believe there is only one church in a town. After a while we started our church on the west rand and we separated from the Recovery Church.

Every week we share the Lord’s Table together. That is the sign of a church. If you are a church, you share communion together.

We believe in the unity of the body. All who are in Jesus are brothers. Brother Yun came to South Africa. Our sister Xiaomei tried to get some meetings for him. No one invited Brother Yun. We were the only people who came. It was a shame.

*You have a meeting on Sunday. How many people come?*

About 20.

*What other meetings do you have?*

On Fridays we have an open meeting at Norscott Centre. We have been meeting there since February 2002. We rent the facility. We have about 25 people.

*Where do your people come from?*

Most of them come from Mainland China. They are Communists. I am very disappointed in the Communist Party. Our Elders are all from Taiwan.

*What do you do to spread the Gospel?*

We have brought in Bibles. Every family has 5 Bibles. They are to give them away. In this way people come to Christ.

We believe that Jesus is the head of his body and the head of his church.

*Why did you become a Christian?*

It was the attraction of the Christian life. Life is simpler, slower. Life in China is very fast paced and competitive. You have money but you feel empty. In China, you never see a Bible.

*How do people relate to one another in the church?*

People donate to one another but they do it anonymously. Help comes from an unknown source. This way there is no politics. We are all brothers. We are all yours. We are your servants. It all starts with God.

*What does a service look like?*

They are mostly new believers.

There are several components. It is simple. We talk. We sing songs. We pray to God. We read the Bible. We share communion. We eat. We go home.

Every meeting is an “experience of the cross”. There is suffering. Our hymns are full of Gospel teaching.

*Tell me about the youth?*

The youth do not all speak Chinese. We try to have special meetings for the youth. We always have food. This draws the youth. The parents speak Chinese but the youth have gone to school in English. They share cultures. We have small groups where we speak English. We encourage them not to follow the world.

## ADDENDUM C

**Interview:** Pastor Biksing Sia,  
Chinese Methodist Church  
5 June 2013 Cyrildene  
Tel: 083-776-5485

*I understand you are using the Alpha course in Mandarin for discipleship. How is that going for you?*

We have a problem with it. The Alpha uses Western examples that are very complicated. If you have a high education it works. If you have a low education it does not work. The people in our Bryanston church are from Shanghai. Their education is very good. It works for them. The rest of our people are either from Fujian or Canton. Their education is lower. The Alpha teaching style does not work. They want someone to speak directly to them. Media productions do not work. It is better to have a movie or a testimony but not teaching. Alpha is difficult for them.

*How do you disciple them then?*

It is difficult. They want to work 363 days a year, taking off two days for Christmas. They do not have time. The way to get through to them is to truly care for them. They know when it is real. We use the Gospel of John. We use the stories of Jesus. They respond well. We simply use the bible.

*How do you develop leaders?*

First we see who is more involved. A leader humbles himself and learns. He is a leader. We move very slowly. We pray for them. Spiritual warfare is part of the process. Satan wants to tear them down. They get scared. "Why serve God if we are not protected?" These are some of the lessons they learn.

We give them experience. In a cell group they learn together. They learn to pray out loud. At first, we have them write it all out. They are not sure or confident. We teach

them. We get one on one with them and encourage them. We do things together. We teach them not to follow the man but to follow Jesus. He will never let them down.

## ADDENDUM D

**Interview:** Karl Teichert

Interim Chair for the Gauteng group of SACON

Subject: SACON (Southern African Chinese Outreach Network)

16 may 2013 1 pm

Tel: 011-794-8001

*Where did SACON originate from?*

SACON came out of MANI (Movement African for National Initiatives) which came out of the AD2000 and GCOWE movements.

Karl was on a plane flying to Nairobi. He was seated next to Noel Livesay and Caroline Kemp (OMF). They began talking about the Chinese Diaspora. Karl was going to Nairobi to attend a church planting movement seminar. Little did he realize this would lead to a network to help churches reach Chinese. In his conferences with MANI, Karl was approached by many pastors asking how they could reach Chinese.

1. SACON was developed to help local churches reach out to Chinese nationals. From the very start a good working relationship was formed with Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF). They come to serve not to impose. They have a whole division that focuses just on Diaspora Asian groups. Carolyn Kemp is the head of this division with David Sorterberg (OMF). They teach classes on culture, world view, and evangelism/discipleship.
2. The Vision is for a partnership with African churches who want to reach out to Chinese speakers. There have been so many requests for help. There must be partnership. OMF wants to train up new people to run local seminars on Chinese Evangelism and discipleship
3. We want to see the ministry here multiplied. We want to equip Chinese returning to China to be partners with the churches there. Help Chinese missionaries establish themselves here in South Africa.

4. SACON wants to see the multiplying of existing Chinese churches and the planting of new churches. Discipleship will be a key.
5. David Sorterberg ( Littleton CO) will be a key person to relate to in the future.

## ADDENDUM E

**Interview:** Pastor Frank Tuan

Chinese Covenant Church of Edenvale

April 7, 2004

tel: 011-609-3422

I had an oral interview with Pastor Frank Tuan. There is no transcript from the interview. He also gave a power point presentation. What is most important was Pastor Tuan's research establishing that there are 300,000 Chinese in Gauteng. Pastor Tuan's contribution is most important among the Chinese Christian churches of South Africa.



## ADDENDUM F

**Interview:** Pastor Douglas Wu

Chinese International Mission, Pretoria

27 June 2013

Tel: 082-653-7914

It was my pleasure to interview Pastor Douglas Wu on two different occasions. In addition to that I have had numerous conversations with him. He requested that his interview remain verbal. I am allowed to quote him but not a full written transcript of the interview. His insights into the Chinese situation are quite valuable. His consent form is on file.

## ADDENDUM G

**Interview:** Jeffrey Ching Fong

Chinese Brethren Church on the West Rand

January 10, 2010

Note: This interview was by translation from Chinese. He is one of the church members.

I became a Christian in 1999 in Kempton Park. That's where I learned that Jesus loved me. It took me two years. I am from Shanghai. In 2000 I had an understanding of my own sin. I was touched. I knelt down and prayed. I understood sin for the first time. My sin was pride. I prayed for 40 minutes. I prayed "I am a sinner". I felt compassion for my father-in-law. I said 'I will follow you forever Lord'. The burden lifted. I wanted to draw closer to God. Jesus became the most important in my life. I started meeting on Sunday with the brothers.

I was robbed but I had no fear in danger. I felt the presence of Jesus in the robbery. I was living in a different reality. The bible was illuminated for me. I surrendered my life. My attention switched from money to God. My health improved. My wife had a heart attack. I told her "Just believe, don't be afraid". God saved her. In 2002, I prayed for a sister who had a brain tumor. She was healed. I found the power of prayer. I have brought people to Christ just by talking to them on the telephone. I have learned the power of confession. When you ask for forgiveness, you feel power. I have developed strong faith.

## **Abstract**

### **A Missiological perspective on a South African Chinese House Church**

#### **Research problem**

“Does the Jesus People phenomenon of the Chinese House Church movement in China reproduce in the Chinese churches of South Africa?” “The Forgotten Ways” by Alan Hirsch (2006), in my opinion, gives us an instrument to evaluate this process in South Africa (Hirsch 2006).

#### **SUMMARY**

China is a world force. Not only is China seen in the daily news but it has produced the largest church in the world. The church is 100 million people strong (Hattaway 2003:13). Since 1978, modern China has begun to populate the world community with her immigrants. Vast Diaspora communities have been created.

The church in China shows all the signs of a Jesus People movement. In 1949 the communist came into power. They ordered all Christian missionaries to leave the country (Aikman 2003:44). By 1953 the last missionary had left (Thompson 1978:186). Mao closed the churches, confiscated property, burned books and bibles and had leaders sent to re-education camps. A time of persecution had begun. Rather than destroy the church, this made it stronger. The church grew from 750,000 to 100 million today.

Can this Jesus People movement be experienced in the Diaspora community in South Africa? To evaluate this we use Allan Hirsch’s “The Forgotten Ways” (2006). In this he speaks of Apostolic Genius and the six elements that compose it. Those elements are Jesus is Lord, Making Disciples, Missional-Incarnational Impulse, Apostolic Environment, Organic Systems and Communitas. These six elements are found expressed within a Jesus people movement. When they are all fully involved, a Jesus People movement is underway.

There are 14 Chinese Christian churches in South Africa. The Chinese Diaspora community is 300-350,000 people. The Chinese mostly come from the Fujian province in China. Seventy percent are entrepreneurs and businessmen running shops selling Chinese goods. The researcher has found that the leadership of the churches is from Taiwan. Bringing everything together, the researcher finds the churches are growing at a moderate rate. The expected explosive growth of the church in China is not found in South Africa. The elements of Apostolic Genius are present but only partially expressed.

There continues to be potential for the Chinese House church movement to field workers in South Africa. There has been some expressed interest. The Back To Jerusalem Movement is putting missionaries all over the Middle East (Hattaway 2003). It is the opinion of the researcher that putting workers in the Diaspora communities would be a natural extension of that effort.

## KEY TERMS

Apostolic Genius

“Jesus is Lord”

“Making Disciples”

“Missional/Incarnational Impulse”

“Apostolic Environment”

“Organic Systems”

“Communitas”

Back To Jerusalem Movement

Chinese Christians in South Africa

Chinese House Church Movement

Church Planting Movement

Disciple A Whole Nation

Jesus People Movement

Missional

