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**“How Am I Going to Grow Up?”**  
**An Exploration of Congregational Transition Among Second-Generation**  
**Chinese Canadian Evangelicals and Servant-Leadership**

A dissertation  
submitted to the faculty of the  
Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies  
School of Professional Studies  
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for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

By  
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“How Am I Going to Grow Up?” An Exploration of Congregational Transition Among  
Second-Generation Chinese Canadian Evangelicals and Servant-Leadership

Enoch Kin On Wong

Growing up in Canada, second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE) face multiple forces that shape their growth and identity, not least of which are ethnicity and religion. This cohort undergoes a double process of socialization: first, with their parents' culture and ethnic identity through participation with the religious institutions and communities; second, with the school system and social agencies. Generational and cultural conflicts arise when this cohort attempts to deal with the religious-social-psychological doubleness. This dissertation investigated how SGCCE transitioned in the growth process as shaped by their ethnicity and religious experience through a multi-case study. Servant-leadership espouses the idea of service as manifested in both the leader being the servant first and the followers' interests being prioritized in the leadership experience. This dissertation selected Greenleaf's concept of foresight as the leadership lens to examine how leaders in the Chinese Canadian churches and other congregations addressed SGCCE's transitional experience.

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### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the loving memory of my parents

Kwing Wong and Yuk Oi Law

whose selfless sacrifice and incredible support shaped the lives of their three children and made it possible for me to study and lead a new life in Canada.

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## **Abstract**

Growing up in Canada, second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE) face multiple forces that shape their growth and identity, not least of which are ethnicity and religion. This cohort undergoes a double process of socialization: first, with their parents' culture and ethnic identity through participation with the religious institutions and communities; second, with the school system and social agencies. Generational and cultural conflicts arise when this cohort attempts to deal with the religious-social-psychological doubleness. This dissertation investigated how SGCCE transitioned in the growth process as shaped by their ethnicity and religious experience through a multi-case study. Servant-leadership espouses the idea of service as manifested in both the leader being the servant first and the followers' interests being prioritized in the leadership experience. This dissertation selected Greenleaf's concept of foresight as the leadership lens to examine how leaders in the Chinese Canadian churches and other congregations addressed SGCCE's transitional experience.

*Keywords:* Asian, Chinese Canadian, Christianity, congregation, ethnicity, evangelical, foresight, leadership, religion, second-generation

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

A few years ago my older daughter, Sarah, was in the process of selecting a university to enroll in after her graduation from high school. With an interest in attending a business school, she consulted with me regarding various strengths and merits of different institutions of higher education. The discussion quickly turned into a debate. She and I had very different notions of how to appraise a school. After summarizing my assessment of several universities, I suggested the University of British Columbia for her consideration. Pausing for a moment, she replied in a subdued voice: “How am I going to come home, Dad? It’s so far away!” Puzzled by her remark, I asked, “Why do you want to do that?” Sarah replied, “Well, I still want to see you and Mom once in a while and not have to wait till Christmas or the end of school in May. Besides, I want to do laundry at home!” Sensing that she was falling right into my ruse of luring her to study at my alma mater, I immediately suggested: “Well, why don’t you stay at home and attend the University of Toronto?” She hollered without any hesitation, and her voice still rings in my ears to this day: “Dad, how am I going to grow up if I stay in Toronto?”

As a Canadian-born second-generation Chinese Canadian, Sarah’s dialogue demonstrates how “tertiary education is highly valued in contemporary Canadian culture” because “education attainment has . . . acquired the status of a vital benchmark of integration and inclusion for immigrants” (Beyer, 2005, pp. 178, 197). More importantly to Sarah and many immigrant children, university selection and post-secondary education are critical parts of negotiating the life passage involved in growing up into adulthood

from adolescence, as well as a key part of the assimilation process (Portes & MacLeod, 1999, p. 374). In a broader context, the process of growing up has always been a challenge for immigrant children since they “are torn by conflicting social and cultural demands while they face the challenge of entry into an unfamiliar and hostile world” (Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 75). Portes and Zhou argued that the growing-up process can oscillate “between smooth acceptance and traumatic confrontation depending on the characteristics that immigrants and their children bring along and the social context that receives them” (p.75). Although school is a critical arena in which assimilation takes place for immigrant children (Beyer, 2005; Li, J., 2001; Portes & Hao, 2004; Portes & MacLeod, 1999), for second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE) like Sarah, religious institutions, where the immigrants and their children co-mingle and attend services, are other major venues in which the ethnic and religious identity of the second-generation is being constructed and negotiated as part of their assimilation into the mainstream society (Alumkul, 2003; Bramadat & Seljak, 2008, 2009; Busto, 1999; Carnes & Yang, 2004; Cha, 2001; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Jeung, Chen, & Park, 2012; Kim, R., 2004; Kim, S., 2010; Muse, 2005; Tseng, 2002, 2005; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999b). R. S. Warner (1998a) identified generational transition in the local congregations as one of the four emerging themes of research in the area of religion, immigrants, and their children (the other three are: role of religion in how immigrants renegotiate their identity; nature of relationship between immigrants and host society; immigrants’ religious experience at local congregations) (pp. 14-27). My study explored how church leadership of both the first-generation immigrant church and

the congregations SGCCE are currently attending mediated the transition of SGCCE from their parents' religious institution to their current place of worship in the context of ethnicity and religion.

### **Background**

Canadian Immigration Policy underwent a major sea change in 1967 that effectively shifted the admittance of immigrants that was formerly based upon preference for the applicant's country of origin to being based on a universal point system. The new approach assessed applicants on the basis of, among many other things, "education and training . . . adaptability, motivation, initiative . . . occupational demand and skill, age, arranged employment, knowledge of French and English, relatives in Canada, and employment opportunities in the area of destination" (Marr, 1975, p. 197). The amendment of the Immigration Act led to a sharp rise in Chinese emigrants in the ensuing decades, bringing in a "new class" of upwardly mobile, urban-dwelling, confident, and independent immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, mainland China, and Southeast Asia, newcomers who were either skillful professionals or self-employed entrepreneurs with fluency in English and sophisticated expertise, financial capital, business acumen, and corporate experience (Li, P. S., 1992, p. 274). The Chinese population in Canada was at 58,197 in 1961. With the change of Immigration Policy in 1967, the Chinese population shot up to 118,815 in 1971 and expanded to 289,245 in 1981 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 89). According to the Canadian National Household Survey of 2011, just over 1,324,700 identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry (Statistics Canada, 2011).

Many of the new immigrants were drawn to Christian churches as they discovered that faith communities did provide a place for preservation of the immigrants' cultural heritage and tradition values in the midst of the metamorphosis of their social network and ethnic identity in the new home (Connor, 2011; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, 2000b; Ley, 2008; Warner, R. S., 1998a). The religious institutions also function as "a concrete space in which the younger generation and the older generation are brought together in face-to-face interactions" (Cao, 2005, p. 190). In fact, 27.7 percent of the 1996–2001 cohort of Hong Kong immigrants who came to Canada were reported to be affiliated with the Christian faith, according to the 2001 Census (Skirbekk, Malenfant, Basten, & Stonawski, 2012, p. 178). More than 350 Chinese churches were reported to be active in Canada with more than 140 in the Greater Toronto Area, according to a survey conducted by the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism (Canada) in 2005 (p. 1). The National Household Survey 2011 identified more than 150,000 of the Chinese Canadian population as Evangelicals (Statistics Canada, 2014).

Over time, the "new" second-generation, children of immigrants whose parents arrived after 1967, began to grow up at the heels of their parents in the religious setting (Reitz & Somerville, 2004). Canadian-born Chinese often find themselves struggling with their own identity: Are they Chinese, or are they Canadian (Costigan, Su, & Hua, 2009; Lee & Hebert, 2006; Ooka, 2002; Tung, 2000)? What about their faith identity as Christians (Cha & Jao, 2000; Chen, J., 2006; Jeung et al., 2012)? The struggle is further compounded at the religious institutions, where conflict flares up around the different needs of the first-generation and the second-generation. Apart from cultural differences

in terms of values and traditions between the two generations, the conflict manifests itself on multiple fronts (Kim, R., 2004, 2006). The most obvious one is the style and language of worship (Kim, J., 2003; Song, 1997, 1999). The first-generation find it easier to conduct their service in their mother tongue of Cantonese or Mandarin, and they feel more comfortable with a conservative style of hymns, usually championed by the pastor who himself or herself was an immigrant (Mullins, 1987). The younger generation, however, desire to express themselves in a freer style of worship, one that is more in line with the popular culture of the North American evangelical churches that favors, among other things, music that is modeled after the pop songs with a mix of instruments such as guitar and drums (Lee, H., 1996). At a deeper level, the conflict lies with the spiritual message and the understanding of faith with the second-generation. The younger group very often finds the message of their parent's generation spiritually uninspiring and culturally restricting. The immigrant pastors tend to talk about faith and obedience at the personal level as a way of finding assurance in the new home and to reinforce the cultural values (Kim, S., 2010; Ling, 1999; Yang, 1999a, 1999b). The second-generation desire to have a spirituality that is more germane to the day-to-day life of school, office, and family as well as a faith that has a dimension that links their interests to the community, social concerns, and justice (Jeung, 2005; Tseng & Wu, 2012). Finally, as the children are growing up, they are affected by the ideals of democracy and equality and want to be heard in terms of their voice and aspiration (Kim, S., 2010). Though eagerly wanting to participate in church life and ministry, the second-generation constantly find themselves in conflict with their parent's generational leadership style of hierarchy and authority, and

with a governing body with power concentrating in an oligarchy of elders (Alumkal, 1999; Cha & Jao, 2000; Chen, C., 2006; Tseng, 2005). In an attempt to assert their freedom and autonomy, and finding the immigrant church offers no creative platform to achieve their aspiration, many second-generation Asian North American Christians have decided to exit their parents' church. In so doing, they either abandon their faith altogether, or form congregations in line with their own identity, one that is shaped by their ethnicity, culture, and faith (Alumkal, 2003; Cha & Jao, 2000, Chen, C., 2006; Chen, J., 2006; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Jeung, 2005; Kim, S., 2010; Tran, 2010; Tseng, 2005). H. Lee (1996) characterized this phenomenon as "Silent Exodus": it is silent, because they left quietly; it is an exodus, because the size of their departure is massive (p. 50). On the other hand, C. Chen (2006) contended that other second-generation Asian American Christians attempt to stretch their wings by leaving their parents' churches because their parents' religious institutions may have played a role in democratizing the relationship between parents and children, thus consecrating the individuality and autonomy of children (pp. 592-593). Since the mid 1990s, research studies have been devoted to analyzing both the causes and the outcomes of this phenomenon, and multiple scenarios seemed to have surfaced. Although some of the second-generation Asian American Christians do abandon their faith, many have creatively crafted different pathways for their transition: creating parallel congregations with the immigrant churches yet maintaining autonomy; establishing separate and independent ethnic churches with English services; forging an alliance with other Asian ethnics to form pan-ethnic congregations; joining congregations with multiethnics; or

simply worshipping at the mainstream Caucasian churches (Alumkul, 2003; Carlson, 2008; Chen, C., 2008; Garces-Foley, 2007; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Jeung, 2005, Kim, S., 2010; Muse, 2005). Most studies examine the phenomenon from the perspective of assimilation and the role ethnicity and religion play in abetting the choices the second-generation make during this process.

Apart from the active role second-generation play in the “Silent Exodus” transition, pastoral leadership from the first-generation immigrant churches as well as that of the current congregations attended by the second-generation are also key actors in facilitating the process. For example, the root cause of “Silent Exodus” is attributed to the failure of first-generation Chinese Canadian church leaders in recognizing the aspiration of the second-generation for growth and autonomy (Evans, 2008, pp. 74-75). In addition, cultural clashes as manifested in the intergenerational leadership conflict are singled out as one of the major pressure points for the exit of the second-generation (Kim, S., 2010, pp. 30-41). Conversely, the second-generation are aided by the leadership of the churches they currently attend in legitimatizing their move. For instance, Jeung (2005) suggested that pan-Asian ethnic church leaders purposefully alter their leadership and rhetoric in order to create meaning and identity on the part of the newcomers and thereby sanction the Asian American Christian in their transition into the new congregations. As Jeung attested: “What ministers say, and do not say, about ethnicity and pan-ethnicity in front of the congregation represents their articulation of ethnic and racial meaning” (p. 5).

In Canada, this phenomenon has received very little academic attention. Song (1999) addressed this trend by looking at how different religious participation theories may be applied in mitigating and preventing the “Silent Exodus” from happening in Korean Canadian congregations. Evans (2008), on the other hand, asserted that the “Silent Exodus” of the Canadian-born Chinese from their parents’ church is inevitable, and that only through a development of “a more inclusive theology of identity and community for the second generation” can its members be prevented from being “completely lost to the Church at large” (p. 1).

### **Significance of the Study**

Although many of the studies into how second-generation relate to their religion were conducted for Asian American Christians (Alumkul, 2003; Chen, C., 2008; Garcés-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Jeung, 2005; Kim, S., 2010; Muse, 2005; Yang, 1999b), only a few address Chinese Canadian Christians (e.g., Evans, 2008; Li, Q., 2000; Liao, 2007). Studies do exist that explore religious and ethnic identities in Canadian Coptic and Calvinist churches (Botros, 2005; Van Dijk & Botros, 2009); Mennonites (Driedger, 2010); Muslims as a collectivity (Ramji, 2008); Sikh youth (Nayar, 2014); Sri Lankan Tamil Youth (Amarasingam, 2010); and a non-Christian visible minority (Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Bramadat & Seljak, 2009). Although inquiries can be found regarding the assimilation of the second-generation Chinese Canadian (Costigan, Su, & Hua, 2009; Hiller & Chow, 2005; Ooka, 2002), very few are focused on how ethnicity and religion intersect with each other among the Canadian-born Chinese evangelicals in their congregational transition and how leadership mediates the process. According to

Statistics Canada's (2013b) 2011 National Household Survey, among those whose mother tongues are neither French or English, Canada's two official languages, Chinese languages are the most common ones spoken at home (p. 5). SGCCE amount to about 35,000 (Statistics Canada, 2014), thus representing a cohort that has come of age for research. My study explores how church leadership of both the first-generation immigrant churches and the congregations SGCCE are currently attending mediated the transition of SGCCE from their parents' religious institution to their current place of worship in the context of ethnicity and religion through a multi-case study.

### **Personal Reasons for This Study**

Two factors motivate me to pursue this study to focus on the Canadian-born Chinese Evangelicals in their congregational transition. To begin with, most of the children of the immigrant parents of the 1970s and 1980s have now come of age and reached adulthood. Collectively referred to as the "new" second generation, these young adults are capable of asserting their autonomy and negotiating their identity (Reitz & Somerville, 2004). More than 90% of second-generation Chinese Canadians were born after the 1967 open-door immigration policy in favor of those immigrants with skills, experience, and education that matched the demand of the rising labour market of Canada (Li, P. S., 1998, pp. 91-95; Statistics Canada, 2011). Totalling around 35,000 according to the same survey, SGCCE follow in lock-step with their overall counterparts, with more than 93% born after 1967 (Table 1).

Many SGCCE have begun to experience "growing pains" similar to those of their American counterparts, who began this process in the life cycle of their ethnic churches

in the mid 1980s (Goette, 1993, 2001; Mullins, 1987). Evans (2008) predicted that many Canadian-born Chinese Christians would eventually depart from the church because of the fractured relationship with their parents and the schism with their parents' church. Whether the outcome would lead them to abandon their faith or drive them to forge different pathways informed by their faith and ethnicity is largely unexamined academically. I engaged with samples from a meaningful sized cohort of SGCCE to understand the outcome.

At a personal level, I had been an elder at a Chinese church associated with the denomination of Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada. Part of my church experience has been at the leadership level. I have been curious about what role leadership may play in assisting both the first-generation and the second-generation in understanding their intergenerational differences and in creating space and freedom for the second-generation to grow in autonomy.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this dissertation is therefore to explore through a multi-case inquiry how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the SGCCE transition from their first-generation churches to the current congregations of their own choice.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The key concepts used in this study are organized into two groups: (1) ethnicity, religion, the incorporation process, congregational pathways; and (2) leadership and foresight. Servant-leadership will be the framework adopted to determine how religion

and ethnicity affect the outcome of second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals in their search for transition from their parents' religious institution to congregations of their own choice.

**Ethnicity, religion, incorporation, and congregational transition pathways for the “new” second-generation.**

*Ethnicity.* Ethnicity is commonly referred to as the marker of a group of people who are related to each other through shared ancestry, common culture, history, and place of origin (Bramadat & Seljak, 2009, p. 8; Gin, 2009, p. 184; Kim, S., 2010, p. 6). Feagin and O'Brien (2010) suggested that contemporary scholars have used the term *ethnicity* or *ethnic group* as an umbrella concept to “cover all racial ethnic and religious groups” (p. 53). Defining ethnicity can be problematic, but the concept can be examined from two pairs of contrasting perspectives: primordial versus situational (Kivisto, 2007, p. 492) and objective versus subjective (Breton, 2012, pp. 47-48). Seen through the lens of the first pair, the primordial conception is rejected in favor of situational or constructional stance due to the fluid and malleable nature of ethnicity (Breton, 1990; Conzen, Gerber, Morawska, Pozzetta, & Vecoli, 1992; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Min, 2002a). In addition, objective characterization of ethnicity in terms of physical appearance and cultural heritage is not chosen for this study because, for the second-generation, it is best to construe their ethnicity as being defined subjectively by themselves as they attach significance to the membership of the group they belong to as well as to the group boundary (Barth, 1969; Isajiw, 1975, 1990, 1999; Kallen, 1995; Zhou & Lee, 2004). Extending the subjective constructionist approach to problematizing ethnicity, Isajiw

(1999) suggested that the second generation goes through a double process of socialization: one that takes place through ethnic settings in families and ethnic communities; and the other that takes place in public institutions in their interaction with broader society (p. 193). Isajiw further identified five social-psychological options for the second-generation to respond to conflicts arising from this double process (pp. 193-194). These options include: (a) keep the two worlds apart; (b) favor the ethnic world and reject broader society; (c) reject the ethnic world in favor of broader society; (d) push both worlds aside and seek alternatives; and (e) bring the two worlds together in creative ways (pp. 193-199). In addition, Isajiw (1975) introduced three patterns of ethnicity retention or loss for the second-generation. *Transplantation* means adhering to parents' traditions, practices and values (p. 132). *Distancing* and *rebellion* represent rejection of the parents' traditions, practices, and values (p. 133). *Rediscovery* means symbolic attachments to traditional and cultural values (p. 134). Isajiw's framework will be used to postulate the role of ethnicity in SGCCE's choices in the context of their transition to congregations of their own.

***Religion.*** As is the case with ethnicity, defining religion is problematic (Bramadat, 2009, p. 11; Mol, 1976, p.4). Researchers attempt to conceptualize religion along the continuum represented by substantive definitions and functional definitions at each end (Dawson & Thiessen, 2014, p. 25). The substantive approach is rooted in the beliefs or ideas that religious adherents commit to and find important (Pals, 2006, p. 13). Conversely, the functional definition focuses not on the idea of religion but rather on how it operates in people's life in terms of offering support and comfort for those who follow

a set of beliefs (Pals, 2006, p. 13). Influential scholars such as Durkheim (1995), Geertz (1973), W. Herberg (1962), Robertson (1970), Stark and Finke (2000), Tylor (1871), and Weber (1991) offered definitions of religion of their own along the continuum. Finally, C. Smith (2003) stated that religions constitute “*sets of beliefs, symbols, and practices about the reality of superempirical orders that make claims to organize and guide human life.*” Smith continued, “Put more simply, if less precisely, what we mean by religion is an ordinarily unseen reality that tells us what truly is and how we therefore ought to live” (p. 98, emphasis in original).

C. Smith’s (2003) definition is adopted for its straight-forward characteristics and suitability for examining religious expression at the congregational level as well as his articulation of evangelical identity that is applicable to SGCCE. According to Breton (2012), religion in the congregational form plays a significant role in assisting immigrants and their children in their incorporation into Canada (p. 17). However, it is R. S. Warner (1998a, 1998b), who is regarded by Kivisto (2007, p. 497) as one of the most prominent sociologists of religion, who advanced the study of new immigrants and religion. R. S. Warner (1998a) focused on “what the immigrant communities do religiously for themselves and not what others do or not do on their behalf” (p. 9). And it is in religion in the congregational setting that immigrants and their children find their religious expression comes alive and is manifested (Warner, R. S., 1998a, p. 21). Thus, for the purpose of this dissertation, religion in the congregational form as it is applied to the arena in which SGCCE’s religious experience and ethnicity are manifested is adopted as part of the conceptual framework.

***Incorporation.*** One of the key discussions in the research on second-generation Asian American Christians concentrates on the relationship between ethnicity and religion and how they intersect with one another in these Christians's congregational experience (Alumkul, 2003; Bramadat & Seljak 2008, 2009; Busto, 1999; Carnes & Yang, 2004; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Jeung et al., 2012; Kim, R., 2004, 2006; Kim, S., 2010; Muse, 2005; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999a). Most studies have situated the intersection within the framework of immigrant incorporation. Ethnic incorporation is construed as a process "in which ethnic groups move their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new centre, whose institutions assume sovereignty over and responsibility for the ethnic groups" (Li, Q., 2000, p. 23). In general, the process is conceptualized along the continuum between assimilation and pluralism at each end (Kallon, 2010, p. 162; Li, Q., p. 23; Ng, W. C., 2002, p. 195). For instance, R. E. Park (1950) and Park and Burgess (1969) advocated assimilation as the process for incorporation by advancing a "race relation cycle" that goes through the form of "contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation" (Park, R. E., 1950, p. 150). Known as the "melting pot" process, assimilation understood from this perspective is irresistible, irreversible, and natural (Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 828; Ooka, 2002, p. 8; Park, R. E., 1950, p. 150). Extending R. E. Park's theory, Gordon (1964) conceptualized a modified assimilation process of seven stages: (a) cultural or behavioral assimilation; (b) structural assimilation; (c) martial assimilation; (d) identification assimilation; (e) attitude receptional assimilation; (f) behavioral receptional assimilation; and (g) civic assimilation (p. 71, table 5). For Gordon, the outcome of assimilation is not

inexorable, and he sees three possible outcomes: (a) Anglo-conformity; (b) melting-pot; and (c) cultural pluralism (pp. 85-86).

Glazer and Moynihan (1963) moved the discussion of incorporation toward pluralism and argued that incorporation is not a straight-path, zero-sum process but rather a process of combination of change and retention (pp. 292-294). With the emergence of the new immigrants and their children, classic incorporation theories that are based upon early 20th century European North American immigrant experience are rejected in favor of more nuanced flavors (Alba & Nee, 1997; Alumkal, 1999; Zhou, 1997a). New research focuses more on the adaptive, adhesive, and additive manner with which ethnicity is construed by and for the second-generation (Bacon, 1999; Kim & Hurh, 1993; Ooka, 2002; Yang, 1999a). Emerging from this research is the new idea of conceptualizing assimilation in a segmented manner (Portes & Zhou, 1993). Segmented assimilation theory suggests three options for incorporation. The first one is the traditional path of assimilation into the dominant White society with upward mobility. The second one points to the opposite direction, yielding persistent poverty and downward mobility. The third option is for the second-generation to achieve economic advancement through social capital made available through co-ethnic communities to allow the second-generations to preserve social solidarity and ethnic identity (Portes & Zhou, p. 82).

In the Canadian context, incorporation is distinctive because of its multicultural milieu. With the influx of immigrants after the change of the Immigration Act in 1967, Canada had evolved from the imperial British and French charter with people assuming

their own monolingual/monocultural states to an increased ethnic and demographic diversity that forms a multicultural mosaic (Bibby, 1990; Driedger, 2011). Two aspects of multiculturalism in Canada need to be differentiated. First, multiculturalism refers to the official *policy* of the Government of Canada first introduced in 1971 and later enacted by the legislature in 1988 (Bramadat & Seljak, 2009, p. 9). The policy was “construed as a doctrine that provides a *political framework* for the official promotion of *social equality and cultural differences* as an integral component of the social order” in Canada (Wilson, 1993, p. 654). Second, the term *multiculturalism* also refers to a broad Canadian public tradition of pluralism with respect to culture, ethnicity, race, and religion (Bramadat & Seljak., 2009, p. 9). In this regard, Driedger (1989) conceptualized an incorporation model for integrating different dynamics of assimilation and pluralism in the Canadian context. Called the conformity-pluralist conceptual model, Driedger’s framework takes into consideration different forces (i.e. voluntary versus nonvoluntary as well as conformity versus pluralism, or multiculturalism) that shape the ethnicity of visible minority in Canada. I argue, along with Driedger (2008), that in the context of SGCCE, the concept of race has been subsumed under the notion of ethnicity and multiculturalism.

***Congregational transition pathways.*** Building on the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus,” this dissertation focuses on how SGCCE depart from their parents’ congregations. Originally conceptualized as a problem of how second-generation abandon their faith due to generational conflict regarding spirituality, church mission, style of worship, leadership and hierarchy, and control and assertion of autonomy (Kim, J., 2003; Kim, S., 2010; Lee, H., 1996; Song, 1997), I postulate the “Silent Exodus” as

the reflection of a broader process of transition through which the second-generation Asian North American Christian cohort has matured to demand their spiritual growth and autonomy and are yet met with inadequate supply for their spiritual need by the first-generation. Recognized as such, transition for SGCCE is presented as having a number of possible pathway models as identified in the literature review. These options can be conceptualized into two broad categories: (a) continuous evolution and (b) discontinuous pathways. Continuous evolution looks at deploying English language ministry as well as resolution of generational conflicts as the variables through which first-generation church leaders attempt to mitigate the crisis in order to ameliorate the departure issue (Skelton, 2003). Thus, English language programs judiciously delegating authority and autonomy to the second-generation are deployed as tactics by the first-generation church leaders (Carlson, 2008; Goette, 2001). In this category, a number of gradually progressive modes of operations exist. They range from the paternal approach that continues to concentrate power among the first-generation, to parallel congregations with joint decision-making responsibility between generations, to partnership alternatives with a high degree of autonomy ceded to the second-generation, to a town-house arrangement with complete second-generation independency but sharing facility with first-generation (Carlson, 2008; Chang & Chuang, 2013; Kim, S., 2010).

The *discontinuous pathways* category, however, suggests that other variables exist to account for the transition phenomenon. Assimilation and ethnicity are the two key variables highlighted by a number of researchers to account for why the second-generation are choosing different options (Alumkal, 2003; Chen, C., 2006; Jeung, 2005;

Kim, S., 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012). Several pathways exist under this category: (a) straight-path integration into mainstream congregations (Ley, 2008; Mullins, 1987); (b) pan-ethnic congregations to allow for a homophilic and common solidarity with faithful of Asian heritage (Jeung, 2005; Park, J., 2008); (c) a hybrid model whereby co-ethnics create their own congregations but forge a faith of their own that is different from the tradition of their parents (Kim, S., 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012; Mak, 1995); and (d) multiethnic or multiracial congregations to encourage the faithful to break down ethnic and racial barriers to embrace cultural diversity, racial reconciliation, and church unity; and to realize the biblical ideal of gathering all tribes and nations under one faith (De Young, Emerson, Yancey, & Kim 2003; Emerson & Smith, 2000; Garces-Foley, 2008; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013; Marti, 2008). To sum up, these models in the continuous evolution and discontinuous pathways categories present themselves as viable options for SGCCE to select as place of worship of their own through the process of congregational transition.

**Leadership.** The second aspect of the conceptual framework for this study is based upon the phenomenon of leadership and specific principles of servant-leadership as identified and advocated by Greenleaf (2002). Specifically, foresight as a servant-leadership characteristic is highlighted as a less-researched yet relevant variable in studying the leadership of both the first-generation immigrant church and the current congregations SGCCE are attending. Furthermore, foresight of these leaders in terms of its presence or absence is examined through the lens of Ladkin's (2010) framework of

two suites of phenomenological concepts of “whole” and “moment” as well as “ready-to-hand” and “present-to-hand”(pp. 25, 43-44).

Although the definition of *leadership* varies (Bass, 1990; Ciulla, 2003; Kellerman, 2012; Northhouse, 2007; Rost, 1993), researchers point to the industrial revolution as the starting point and to Carlye’s Great Man theory (1840) as the origin of the modern study of leadership. This classic conception of leadership speculates that certain men (*sic*) are born with natural leadership gifts that differentiate them from the followers (Daft, 2015). The Great Man theory soon evolved into trait theory in the early 20th century. Trait theory differs from the Great Man theory in that the former does not make explicit assumption about the origins of the traits, whether they are innate or acquired, but rather implies that such characteristics are inherent in only a few select people (Rowe, 2007). In the 1950s, researchers shifted their attention away from traits as the salient factor and focused on leaders’ behavioral styles as the key variable for analyzing leadership (Antonakis, Cianciolo, & Sternberg, 2004). Thus, good leaders are those who make adjustments in adapting appropriate behavior (Daft, 2015). The shift is significant, for this approach implies that leadership behaviors can be learned and therefore leadership is no longer construed as being limited to a select few but is accessible to all (Daft, 2015). By the 1960s, the behavior model of leadership had given way to the contingency model that moved the focus away from the dominant role of leaders to the social and structural factors that form and shape the contexts or situations to which leaders are called to respond (Bryman, 1996; Grint, 2011). In this construct, leadership of the contingency approach looks at a suite of components that constitute the

totality of leadership: leadership style, follower characteristics, and situational or contextual factors (Daft, 2015). These factors led Fiedler (1967) to conceptualize two major styles of leadership under the contingency approach: task-oriented style and relationship style. By the 1980s, Bryman (1996) observed that a collective of “New Leadership” emerged that essentially advocated examining leadership from the context of leaders as managers of meaning rather than in terms of an influence process. Charismatic leadership (Bryman, 1992; Conger, 1989; House, 1977), visionary leadership (Sashkin, 1988; Westley & Mintzberg, 1989), and transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Tichy & Devanna, 1986) are regarded as representatives of this collectivity (Bryman 1996). Transformation leadership appears to differentiate itself from others based on a number of impressive findings and its strong theoretical framework (Jackson & Parry, 2011). However, it is criticized, among others reasons, for its lack of a sound moral and ethical foundation (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Fernando, 2011). Thus, among various emergent issues, the importance of the moral and ethical dimensions of leadership is increasingly appreciated (Ladkin, 2010, p. 10). It is within the context of contemporary study of leadership that scholars identified servant-leadership as a viable candidate of ethical leadership for research (Ciulla & Forsyth, 2011; Daft, 2015; Northouse, 2007; Sendjaya, 2010; Yukl, 2013).

Contrary to traditional leadership theories that tend to emphasize either the leader’s personality, traits, skills, or styles to achieve results with approaches that tend to be either “top-down” or command and control in nature, or via power and influence (Bass, 2008; Burns, 2010; Covey, 1989; Northouse, 2007; Rost, 1993), servant-

leadership distinguishes itself by placing the priority of serving the needs and the development of individual constituents above the achievement of organizational objectives (Andersen, 2008; Greenleaf, 2002; Russel & Stone, 2002). Patterson (2003) defined servant-leaders as those “who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral” (p. 5). Yukl (2013) echoed the emphasis on the need to work with the followers: “Servant leaders must listen to followers, learn about their needs and aspirations, and be willing to share in their pain and frustration” (p. 349). Sendjaya (2005) pinpointed servant-leadership’s primary tenet succinctly: “Servant leaders set the following priorities in their leadership roles: followers first, organisations second, their own the last” (p. 1).

To accomplish this set of objectives, a servant-leader is required not simply to rely on management skills or human resources tactics but to “draw out, inspire and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out,” rather than being the traditional manager who “drives results and motivation from the outside in” (Covey, 2002a, p. 3). Sendjaya (2005) summed up the interior approach of servant-leader’s engagement this way:

Servant leadership is not so much a theory as an attitude of the heart which shapes the decisions and actions of corporate leaders at all levels. It is not another leadership style one can choose to use whenever she likes . . . Servant leadership is a commitment of the heart to engage with others in a relationship characterized by service orientation, holistic outlook, and moral-spiritual emphasis. (p. 1)

Because of its focus on the interiority of the leader, servant-leadership has been characterized not merely as a leadership theory but as a way of life “in which devotion to the good of others takes priority and evokes greater integrity in individuals and in society as a whole” (Ferch, 2012, p. xxiii). In commenting on Greenleaf’s notion of servant-leadership, Jaworski (1998) expressed the opinion that it is “much more about *being* than *doing*” (p. 264). Spears (2004) concurred that “at its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work — in essence, a way of being that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society” (p. 12).

The concept of servant-leadership gained prominence when Greenleaf introduced it in his seminal writing *The Servant as Leader* in 1970 (Spears, 1998, p. 2). Unlike the hierarchical system of leadership, which placed premium of command and control style of leadership, Greenleaf (2002) stressed the importance of the leader’s serving the needs of followers and attending to the the growth of those being served. The essence of servant-leadership, Greenleaf (2004) contended, is that a leader must not aspire to lead first, but to serve first. He asserted: “The servant-leader is servant first. . . . Becoming a servant-leader begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead” (p. 6, emphasis in original). Greenleaf differentiated servant-leaders from those who want to be leaders first. The leader-first individuals are perhaps motivated by the “need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possession” (p. 6). Conversely, servant-leadership:

manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being*

*served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 2004, p. 6, emphasis in original)

Greenleaf (2003) drew inspiration for servant-leadership from Hermann Hesse's *Journey to the East*. The central figure of the story, Leo, was first portrayed as a servant accompanying a group of men on a mythical journey, with his real identity actually being the head of the Order that sponsored the journey (p. 32). For Greenleaf, Leo played two roles that are diametrically opposed to one other: the servant, "who, by acting with integrity and spirit, builds trust and lifts people and helps them grow"; and the leader, "who is trusted and who shaped other's destinies by going out ahead to show the way" (p. 32). The moral of the story is that these two roles can in fact co-exist and be brought together to create what Spears (2004) called "the paradoxical idea of servant-leadership" (p. 10). A leader must first be a servant, and the true essence of leadership can be authenticated only through service to others. Such leadership action demands not so much the skills as the character and the morality of the servant-leader, as Covey (2002a) echoed:

The essential quality that set servant-leaders apart from others is that they live by their conscience — the inward moral sense of what is right and what is wrong . . . (which differentiates) leadership that *works* and leadership — like servant leadership — that *endures*. (p. 4, emphasis in original)

Three reasons form the selection of servant-leadership as the leadership framework to mediate analysis of the process through which SGCCE exercise their choice of congregations. First, the concept of service and putting followers first has

resonated well among faith-based organizations and religious institutions (Lemler, 2000, p. 77). Wong and Davey (2007) contended that servant-leadership has been “the most influential leadership model” within the Christian community (p. 3). The writers cited the alignment of servant-leadership principles with the Christian tradition of Jesus Christ’s practices of servanthood as the primary reason that many Christian leadership publications have focused on servant-leadership. Baldomir (2008) took a step further and argued that servant-leadership is the right model to unify the first- and second-generation Chinese American Churches because of its advocacy of placing others’ needs above one’s own (p. 4). Second-generation Chinese church leaders can use the model of servant-leadership to establish an attitude of service and to better understand the needs of their congregations. Second, the concept of autonomy of the followers as espoused by Greenleaf has a greater chance of success in mediating the growth and the identity shaping of SGCCE. Last, Greenleaf’s (1975) articulation of servants as healers of society presents a greater appeal to SGCCE, as many may have experienced frustration and hurt under the control of the first-generation leadership (p. 25). Servant-leaders are healers and bring healing to the communities they serve (Ferch, 2012, pp. 14-15). The healing characteristic sets servant-leadership apart from the power-based and control-centric leadership approaches and will stand congregants in good stead in building caring and empowering communities, an end-goal scenario I argue both generations of Chinese Canadian church leaders desire to construct.

With these three reasons supporting the choice of servant-leadership as the framework, I selected Greenleaf’s concept of foresight as the key dimension of servant-

leadership characteristic to be used as the leadership framework in this study. For Greenleaf (2002), a mark of leaders “is that they are better than most at pointing the direction” because they have the ability “to foresee the unforeseeable” (pp. 29, 35). Foresight, according to Greenleaf, is the ability to make sense of the unforeseeable. For this reason, foresight is what Greenleaf wrote of as “the ‘lead’ that the leader has” (p. 40). I therefore argue that foresight is the key leadership lens through which leaders of both generations can see the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” not merely in the light of defection of second-generation from their parents’ churches but as a process of growth on the part of their children in their negotiation of their own faith and ethnicity.

However, foresight as a characteristic of servant-leadership appears to be seldom researched (Spears, 2010). Part of the reluctance to explore this characteristic stems from difficulty in gauging the parameters within which the measurement of foresight is to be operationalized. I argue that the challenge is also rooted in large part in the evasiveness of foresight’s effect, in which avoidance of certain occurrence and risk mitigation are not easily or visibly linked to the exercise of foresight. As Ladkin (2010) observed, when leadership foresight is “serving its purpose,” it is difficult to detect (p. 46). I found Ladkin’s framework (to be explored in detail in chapter II) of two suites of phenomenological concepts of “whole” and “moment” and of “ready-to-hand” and “presence-to-hand” effective in probing the presence or absence of foresight on the part of leaders from both first-generation immigrant church and the current congregations SGCCE are attending (pp. 25, 43-44).

## **Research Questions**

In support of the purpose of study, I proposed the following research questions for my investigation:

1. What is the extent to which ethnicity and religion play a role in the way SGCCE think of themselves and in the choices they make concerning the congregation they worship in while making the transition from their parents' church?
2. To what extent is ethnicity overshadowed by religious identity and vice versa in SGCCE's decision as they transition away from their parents' congregation?
3. What role does church leadership of the first-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical play in guiding and shaping SGCCE's search for growth and autonomy as expressed in the congregational transition through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?
4. What role does church leadership of the current congregations in churches SGCCE are attending play in legitimizing the ethnicity of the congregants and shaping the ethnic boundary of the congregations through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?

## **Overview of Research Method**

This study utilized multi-case study methodology to gain a deeper understanding of how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the congregational transition process for the SGCCE. I

probed four cases of second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE) attending different congregations that represent the various pathways these second-generation worshipers took as a consequence the transition process. Furthermore, I conducted post-analysis interviews with the representatives of the first-generation Chinese Canadian church leaders and the leadership with the current congregations the SGCCE were attending to gain a perspective on the presence or absence of servant-leadership foresight on their part.

### **Definition of Terms**

The study used the following terminology to describe different groups of people in Canada and the United States:

*First-Generation:* People who were born outside Canada. For the purpose of this study, the term can refer to people who were born outside the United States of America (Statistics Canada, 2013a, p. 3).

*Second-Generation:* Individuals who were born in Canada and had at least one parent born outside Canada (Statistics Canada, 2013a, p. 3).

*Third-generation and more:* People who are Canadian-born and whose parents and grandparents were Canadian-born (Statistics Canada, 2008, p. 36).

*Visible minorities:* Unlike the United States of America, which categorizes its population based on the racial categories of White, Black, American Indian, Hispanic, and Asian American (Jeung et al., 2012, p. 7; Zhou & Lee, 2004, p.11), Canada tracks its population with three broad categories: people “Caucasian in race or white in colour,” aboriginal people, and visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2013b, p. 14). The

Employment Act of Canada further differentiates visible minorities as not belonging to the first two types and categorizes them under the following groups: South Asian, Chinese, Black, Filipino, Latin American, Arab, Southeast Asian, West Asian, Korean, and Japanese (p. 14).

*Evangelicals*: David Bebbington's (1989) quadrilateral emphasis that gives evangelical faith its character is followed. These include: (a) *Conversionism*: The conviction that each person must turn from their sin, believe in the saving work of Christ, and commit themselves to a life of discipleship and service; (b) *Activism*: Cooperating in the mission of God through evangelism and charitable works; (c) *Biblicism*: Reverence and devotion to the Bible as God's word; and (d) *Crucicentrism*: The centrality of the cross of Christ in evangelical teaching and preaching (pp. 2-17).

*Evangelical denominations in Canada*: When these groups are used in this dissertation in numeric forms for reporting census or statistical findings, the term *evangelicals* refers to the denominations in Canada. Beyer's (2008) inclusion of denominations as reported in Census Canada 2001 is followed in this dissertation:

Apostolic Christian, Apostolic (not otherwise specified), Associated Gospel, Baptist, Brethren in Christ, Born Again Christian (not otherwise specified), Charismatic Renewal, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Christian Assembly, Christian or Plymouth Brethren, Christian Reformed Church, Church of Christ Disciples, Church of God (not otherwise specified), Church of the Nazarene, Congregational, Evangelical Free Church, Evangelical Missionary Church, Evangelical (not otherwise specified), Free Methodist, Methodist (not included elsewhere), Moravian, New Apostolic, Pentecostal, Salvation Army, Seventh-Day Adventist, Standard Church, Vineyard Christian Fellowship, Wesleyan, and Worldwide Church of God. (p. 437, note 2)

### **Overview of the Dissertation**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter I outlines the background and the context of the study and the theoretical framework through which the study was conducted, together with the purpose statement and the research questions. The next chapter, Chapter II, reviews the literatures pertinent in addressing the theoretical issues related to the following areas: the Chinese evangelical church in Canada in terms of its ethnicity, religion, and incorporation; congregation transition pathways and the “Silent Exodus” of SGCCE; and servant-leadership. Chapter III conceptualizes and discusses the choice of a multi-case study as the research approach. The following chapter, Chapter IV, presents data gathered from interviews with SGCCE, the first-generation Chinese Canadian church leaders, and leaders of the congregations that SGCCE are currently attending. The final chapter, Chapter V, discusses the findings, presents the themes emerging from the study, and concludes with implication and suggestions for further study.

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

As indicated in Chapter I, most of the Canadian-born children of the immigrant parents of the 1970s and 1980s have now come of age and reached adulthood. The Canadian National Household Survey of 2011 reported that just over 1,324,700 identified themselves with Chinese ancestry, and 27 percent, or 358,500, are local-born (i.e. non-immigrants), comprising second and the subsequent generations (Statistics Canada, 2011). More than 90 percent of this cohort was born after the 1967 open-door immigration policy in favor of those with skills, experience, and education that matched the demand of the rising labor market of Canada (Li, P. S., 1998, pp. 91-95; Statistics Canada, 2014). Collectively referred to as the “new” second generation, these young adults are capable of asserting their autonomy and negotiating their identity (Reitz & Somerville, 2004). Many of these immigrant children have been growing up in a religious setting of their parents’ religious institutions. Partly because of the conflicts they face with the first-generation’s traditional style of worship, immigrant brand of spirituality, and hierarchical leadership approach, and partly because of their desire to exert freedom and autonomy, some of these SGCCE have decided to leave the religious institutions, following the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” (Lee, H., 1996). Although some may have chosen to abandon their faith (Penner, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy, & Hiemstra, 2012), many creative options are available to them: creating parallel congregations with the immigrant churches yet maintaining autonomy; establishing separate and independent co-ethnic churches with English service; forging an alliance

with other Asian ethnics to form pan-ethnic congregations; moving into worship with multiethnic congregations; or simply joining the mainstream Caucasian churches. Researchers (e.g., Alumkul, 2003; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Kim, R., 2004; Kim, S., 2010; Muse, 2005) argued that this phenomenon is greatly affected by the process of assimilation, and both religious affiliation and ethnicity do play a part in shaping this process. Their decision regarding which pathway they may choose is also a function of how the leadership of both first and second-generation is being exercised in shaping their identity and affiliation (Jeung, 2005). Toward that end, the purpose of this study was to explore how church leadership of both the first-generation immigrant church and the congregations SGCCE are currently attending mediated the transition of SGCCE from their parents' religious institution to their current place of worship in the context of ethnicity and religion.

This chapter of literature review consists of four major sections. The first provides a brief overview and history of the Chinese evangelical church in Canada and a description of SGCCE to establish the arena and the context of the study. The next section reviews the literature on ethnicity, religion, the incorporation process, and how both religion and ethnicity intersect in the incorporation process of the "new" second generation in context of local congregations. A brief portray of the Canadian multiculturalism is provided in the Canadian context to facilitate understanding of the distinctiveness of Canadian incorporation. The third section discusses the transitory pathways available for the second-generation in making congregations of their choice. The final section focuses on servant-leadership, drawing principally from its

characteristic of foresight as the framework to inquire into the lived experience of both first- and second-generation church leaders in their mediation of the transition process of the SGCCE in their choice of congregations.

### **Chinese Evangelical Churches in Canada**

In identifying the factors by which ethnic Chinese religious institutions were being shaped in the Diaspora, Nagata (2005) observed that “the political and social climate and religious policies of particular states influence how churches are organized” (p.125). Chinese evangelical churches in Canada are not immune to such influences. A church can be construed from multiple perspectives. It can be looked at as a theological entity, hallmarked by its faith or doctrinal characteristics. Alternatively, it can be examined as an organization featuring its hierarchy, programs, and resources. R. S. Warner (1998a) argued that immigrant churches are best examined from the perspective of being congregations, a group of “local, face-to-face religious assemblies — rather than on teachings, private devotions, scriptures, buildings or national umbrella organizations” (p. 8). R. S. Warner asserted that the congregational approach offers the best perspective from which to understand how ethnic and immigrants group “were *doing religiously* . . . and what manner of religious institutions they were developing *of, by, and for themselves*” (p. 9, emphasis in original). Ammerman (1997) characterized congregations as:

A part of a community’s institutional infrastructure, a part of the structures and connections that make social life possible. Those structures and connections are not neural shells into which any given group can be placed. They are, rather,

living networks of meaning and activity, constructed by the individual and collective agents who inhabit and sustain them. (p. 356)

The objective of the first main section is to provide an overview of the Chinese Canadian evangelical churches as congregations situated as part of the Chinese community in Canada, which essentially has been shaped by, and located within, the development of the history of Chinese immigrants in Canada. The history of Chinese immigrants in Canada can largely be divided by a monumental event that occurred in 1967, when the Immigration Act underwent a major sea change. In that year, the former immigrant admittance system designed to privilege the applicants' country of origin was replaced with a universal point system that assessed, among many other things, the applicant's "education and training . . . adaptability . . . occupational demand and skill, age . . . knowledge of French and English, and employment opportunities in the area of destination" (Marr, 1975, p. 197). Before the change, a Chinese population of 58,197 was reported in 1961 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 89). The shift in policy cracked the immigration entrance wide open for Chinese both in the Diaspora and from China to access and emigrate to Canada. The Chinese population skyrocketed to 118,815 by 1971. It more than doubled again to 289,245 by 1981 and climbed up significantly to 633,933 by 1991 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 89). By 2001, it moved to around 1,029,400 (Statistics Canada, 2008), and was reported to reach 1,216,565 by 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006). According to the 2011 Census, a few more than 1,324,700 identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry (Statistics Canada, 2011)

The implication of this major adjustment in immigrant policy, as will be made clear later in this study, is that not only does the growth of the Chinese community

provide the critical mass and fuel the rapid growth of the Chinese evangelical churches in Canada but it also gives credence to Nagata's observation that political policies, and in this case the new Canadian Immigration policy, do affect how churches are being organized. In the following discussion, I provide a brief history of the Chinese Canadian church and of the relationship between Protestants and Chinese immigrants before 1967.

**A brief history of Protestant faith and the Chinese Canadian immigrants (1858-1967).** This discussion is further divided into three subsections according to the demarcation of the Chinese immigrant history in this period commonly recognized by researchers (Con, Con, Johnson, Wickberg, & Willmott, 1982; Hardwick & Johnson, 1975; Li, P. S., 1992, 1998; Mar, 2010; Ng, W. C., 1999; Tan & Roy, 1985).

***Early contact (from 1858 to 1923).*** The first Chinese settlers began to arrive in Canada in 1858 when three Chinese came from San Francisco in search of opportunity to mine gold in the Uptown Valley of British Columbia (Yu, 2007, p. 5). They were quickly followed by 300 more prospectors from California in the same year (Con et al., 1982, p. 13). Soon after the arrival of the Chinese, a local Methodist missionary pioneered an evangelization ministry among them in New Westminster as early as 1859 and soon was joined by other colleagues from the denomination (Wang, 2006, p. 33). However, despite the evangelists' zeal, their attempts to convert the Chinese into Christianity were "sporadic" at that time and did not receive much support from the denominational headquarter before the construction of the Canadian Pacific railway (Roy, 1989, p. 27). With more than 17,000 Chinese entering Canada from 1881 to 1884 and joining the railway project (Con et al., 1982, p. 22), many more local missionaries

from other denominations soon followed their Methodist counterparts. Anglican missionaries started their ministry as early as the 1860s (Wang, 2003, pp. 708-709), while the Presbyterians became active in the 1880s (Con et al., 1982, p. 96). Individual Baptist missionaries were said to have reached out to the Chinese as early as 1878 (Wang, 2006, p. 45).

P. S. Li (1982) estimated that “prior to 1900, close to 90% of the Chinese were concentrated in British Columbia” (p. 530). However, thousands of Chinese began to migrate eastward after the completion of railway construction in 1885 (Chan, A. B., 1983, p. 67). With this movement and new immigrants arriving in the East, mission work began to emerge in Toronto and Montreal (Ye, 2006). For instance, Rev. David McLaren started a Chinese class at the Toronto Young Men’s Christian Association as early as 1882 (p. 19).

The first ever Christian Sunday service offered to the Chinese immigrants exclusively in the Chinese language was held in Victoria in 1885 by John E. Gardiner, a Methodist missionary (Con et al., 1982, p. 122; Wang, 2003, p. 694). However, the First Presbyterian Chinese Church, established in Victoria in 1899 with a membership of 14 at the time, was the first native Chinese Presbyterian congregation set up on Canadian soil (Wang, 2003, p. 705). The Montreal Chinese Presbyterian Church, established in the 1880s, was allegedly the second one (Con et al., 1982, p. 237), irrespective of the discrepancy in the time of establishment between the two churches. The third Chinese church was the Chinese Presbyterian Church, established in 1905 in Toronto (Con et al., 1982, p. 97; Goh, 1991, p. 137; Nagata, 2005, p. 115).

Three motivations prompted early missionaries in their efforts to reach out to the Chinese. The first was related to a sense of Christian humanitarianism, which moved the missionaries to address the immigrants' sordid social conditions by providing safety and shelter for the new arrivals and the disadvantaged among them (Con et al., 1982, p. 64). Examples of this category include providing dormitory space for the young adults to discourage them from engaging in gambling and opium smoking (Con et al., 1982, p. 96; Roy, 1989, p. 16). The missionaries established rescue homes to assist Chinese young women who wanted to escape "the servitude of prostitution or unwilling marriage contracts" (Con et al., 1982, p. 122).

The missionaries were further motivated by their religious zeal to reach the unsaved migrants and were quick to learn that English proficiency on the part of the Chinese was an effective channel to facilitate the immigrants' understanding of the salvation message (Wang, 2006, p. 111). Mission schools were soon set up and an English class was offered (Wang, 2001, pp. 17-18). So popular was the evening class that Ward (1974) asserted that it was by far the most welcome educational program the missionaries organized, and in the early years it attracted thousands of Chinese students (p. 44). Typical with the missionary approach was to add a Bible class or a religious service at the end of the English class to preach the Christian message (Wang, 2003, p. 694; Ye, 2006, p. 20).

The last incentive that influenced the missionaries in carrying out their religious activities among the Chinese had to do with their conviction that the best way to assimilate the newcomers was to Christianize them (Con et al., 1982, p. 125). Viewed

predominately by mainstream White Canada as a race that was inferior and inassimilable (Ward, 1974, p. 42), the Chinese were discriminated against very early on in their history in Canada (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 5). They were deprived of official legal status and regarded virtually as “non-persons from 1872 until 1888 when they were exempt from registering their births, deaths, and marriages” (Roy, 1989, p. 42). And in 1875, the Chinese settlers were disenfranchised and banned from voting and participating in the electoral process by British Columbia (Chow, 2000, p. xvi; Roy, 1989, p. 46). The ban was quickly followed by other provinces such as Saskatchewan in 1908 (Tan & Roy, 1985, p 10). With the anti-Chinese sentiment dominating in Caucasian Canada toward the end of the 19th century, the Canadian government began to levy an unprecedented punitive and oppressive head tax, starting at \$50, rising \$100, and finally increasing to \$500, as an economic disincentive against Chinese immigrants from 1886 to 1903 in an attempt to thwart the influx of the unwelcome newcomers (Li, P. S., 1992, p. 267; Roy, 1989, p. 232; Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 8).

Labeled the “Yellow Peril,” the Chinese were so harshly treated that even the mainstream clergy at the time chose to side with the prevalent anti-Chinese sentiment in rejection of admission of any Chinese into Canada, arguing that “God was on the side of the white man’s country and that self-preservation was the first law of nations” (Roy, 1989, p. 231). Yet contrary to the public fervor, the local missionaries saw assimilation as not only possible but in fact necessary for the Chinese, for assimilation would “remove the threat of Oriental vice and paganism,” giving the Chinese the blessings of higher civilization and transforming them into Canadian citizens (Ward, 1974, p. 42). For these

missionaries, the pathway to assimilation clearly was to Christianize the Chinese, and the church was the agent for that process. Christianization and Canadianization, therefore, were inseparable processes and constituted the same objective for these missionaries (Con et al., 1982, p. 125). Thus, as Wang (2006) pointed out, “evangelizing the Chinese . . . was, in fact, a means to defeat the ‘Yellow Peril’” (p. 7).

Yet confined by individual efforts and without much support by their denominations, local missionaries were met with resistance and yielded less than enthusiastic results, primarily because of four factors: (a) the Chinese indifference toward the Christian message (Ye, 2006, p. 23); (b) virtually nonexistent support or sympathy from the general public due to the anti-Chinese sentiment (Ward, 1974, p. 44); (c) policy hurdles at the denomination headquarter resulting in the lack of finance and human resource support (Roy, 1989, pp. 27-29); and (d) cultural and linguistic barriers as major obstacles in making the Christian message intelligible to the immigrants (Wang, 2006, p. 30). Consequently, evangelization efforts in the first few decades after the Chinese arrival led to less than favorable results. The first Chinese to be baptized by the Anglicans, for example, was reported in 1893 in British Columbia, almost 20 years after they started to minister the Chinese immigrants (Wang, 2006, p. 44). For the Presbyterians, no more than 10 Chinese were converted to Christianity in the first three decades of the mission (p. 46).

***The Exclusion Era (1923 to 1947).*** The anti-Oriental hostility reached a feverish pitch in 1923 when the Chinese Immigration Act was passed by the Canadian Government, essentially excluding any Chinese immigrants from landing in Canada in

the ensuing two-and-a-half decades until the Act was repealed in 1947 (Hardwick & Johnson, 1975, pp. 81-82). With the full force of the Act's implementation, only eight emigrants were permitted to enter Canada between 1924 and 1946 (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 13).

Canadian Protestants during this period underwent a structural modification by forging a new entity that merged some of the Methodists and Presbyterians to form the United Church of Canada, while a few churches, such as the Chinese Presbyterian churches in Victoria, Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal, decided to opt out of the alliance and stay with the Presbyterian Church of Canada (Wang, 2006, p. 76). At the same time, Wang observed, the missionary tactics underwent a sea change, moving away from evangelization focus to a so-called Social Gospel model by centering on establishing community-based services such as Chinese medical missions. The shift in the ministry model seems to have been effective in ameliorating the relationship with the Chinese community and the Protestants. Consequently, for example, the attendance at the Vancouver mission more than doubled in 1931 after hospitals were set up by the denominations (pp. 75-77).

Wang (2006) identified another major shift in ministry direction of the Protestants at the time: the abandonment of the English night class in favor of directing the educational efforts toward the younger generation due to the virtual absence of new Chinese immigrants as well as the emerging second-generation of the Chinese community. Educational work started with kindergarten and moved to day school for the youth, matching the life cycle needs of the Canadian-born Chinese at the time (pp. 77-

78). Though the Chinese community was predominantly male during the Exclusion Era as a result of the “married bachelors” not being able to bring their families to join them in Canada (Roy, 1989, p. xi), local families began to attract the church’s attention during the 1920s and 1930s. While the single Chinese males were usually not churchgoing, women and children in most families were reported to be Christians (Con et al., 1982, p. 172). By that time, churches began to gain prominence in the Chinese communities for a few reasons. Chief among them had to do with the availability of Chinese Canadian ministers who communicated in the Chinese native tongues. Although the first independent Chinese congregation, the Christ Church of China, was established in 1911 (p. 97), and the first Chinese clergyperson, Chan Sing Kai, was ordained in the Methodist denomination in 1891 (Wang, 2003, p. 695), Chinese ministers were a rare breed until the 1920s to 1930s. Many churches in the ‘30s were now led by Chinese ministers “who were linguistically and culturally well-equipped to help both the China-born and Canadian-born members of their congregations” (Con et al., 1982, p. 172). Some Chinese ministers and congregants functioned both as leaders at the religious institution and in the Chinese community, while the church venues became a gathering place for the communities to resolve their issues and a hub for social services and networking (p. 172). Over time, the Chinese exhibited much less resistance and warmly embraced the Christian faith. These Chinese Canadian Christians “believed in a Western God and were convinced that the Messiah and the church were integral parts of their spiritual well-being” (Chan, A. B., 1983, p. 113). The commitment to their newfound faith and its growth in the Chinese community were evident in the faithful’s “hard work, cash

donations, and service as officers in the church hierarchy” (p. 113). Indeed, the census of 1941 reported that nearly 30 percent of the Chinese population, or 9,841, indicated themselves to be Christians, as opposed to 17 percent, or 8,341, in 1931, compared with the total Chinese population of 46,519 and 34,627 respectively (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 14; Wang, 2006, pp. 79-80). The rising number of Chinese affiliated with Christianity in this period did not necessarily portray a complete picture of the Protestant ministry, which went through ups-and-downs during these decades that included lowering attendance and lack of financial support. Additionally, the church faced the fluidity of the Chinese immigrants, many of whom either returned to China or left their congregations in search of work elsewhere in Canada or in the United States. The net progress was indeed a tribute to the missions’ perseverance during the Exclusion Era (Wang, 2006, pp. 81-82).

By the 1940s, the concept and the sentiment that the Chinese were inassimilable were still palpable, but gradually faded away (Roy, 2007, p. 8). The White Canadians began to see Chinese presence as less of a threat to their identity, culture, and economy than they had a few decades earlier (Wang, 2006, p. 82). Their sympathy was abetted by the occurrence of several events in the 1940s. First with the Sino-Japanese War and then the Second World War, China was embraced as an ally of Canada. As a result, Roy (2007) observed, for the Chinese in Canada, “the Second World War marked a real turning point in their relationships with the larger Canadian community” (p. 148). In addition, Chinese volunteers gained Canadian favor by serving in the Canadian army, with about 500 Chinese Canadians being enlisted to serve (Con et al., 1982, p. 200; Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 14). The valor and courage of these Chinese, mostly Canadian-born,

demonstrated their willingness to sacrifice themselves for Canada. All of these events ended in the eventual restoration of the franchise and full-fledged citizenship rights for Chinese Canadians at the end of Second World War (Tan & Roy, 1985, pp. 14-15; Wong, L., 2007, p. 221).

The Protestants were not idle in the effort of supporting the Chinese during this period. The Committee for the Repeal of the Chinese Immigrant Act, a group closely associated with the United Church of Canada, campaigned vigorously for this cause (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 15). By 1947, the discriminatory Chinese Immigration Act of 1923 was finally repealed by the federal government, meaning that “every dependant applying for admission into Canada shall . . . be permitted to enter Canada” and “shall be deemed to have landed” legally in Canada (Hardwick & Johnson, 1975, pp. 87, 89).

Wang (2006) observed that the effect of the White Canadian goodwill during this period also translated into rising financial support by the mainstream citizens for the missions to the Chinese, leading to more social programs being implemented, with the twin effects of (a) loosening the racial tension between the Whites and the Chinese and (b) at the same time enabling the Protestants to recruit more Chinese to their churches. The Protestants’ activities led to a rise in the number of the Chinese in their affiliation, with the number of Chinese Protestant Christians growing from 8,864 in 1941 to 16,231 in 1951, at the same time that the Chinese population dropped from 34,627 to 32,528 (Li, P. S., 1998, pp. 82, 85, table 4.4).

*The Chinese Church between 1947 and 1967.* The door of family reunification was now made possible by the repeal of the 1923 Immigration Act in 1947, and more

than 24,000 Chinese moved to Canada between 1947 and 1962 (Con et al., 1982, p. 217). Attendance at church activities rose considerably in the 1950s, and the Chinese missions began to become self-sufficient. Thirty Chinese congregations were reported to be in operation in the 1950s (Guenther, 2008, p. 380). However, not all denominations were faring well consistently during this period. The United Church of Canada, for example, was said to have established “eleven Chinese congregations across the country, with nine ordained ministers and five Woman’s Missionary Society workers serving about 8,500 Chinese immigrants” by the end of the 1950s (Wang, 2006, p. 84). As a result, the affiliation with the United Church among the Chinese was reported to have grown from 10,604 in 1951 to 22,522 in 1961, according to Statistics Canada (Wang, 2006, p. 85). The Presbyterians and the Anglicans, on the other hand, appeared to be heading into the opposite direction, with the former maintaining five Chinese congregations across the country by 1961 and the latter reducing its Chinese missions to only one in Vancouver throughout the 1950s and 1960s, while integrating missions in other cities with the local Anglican churches (p. 84). Consequently, these two denominations only experienced modest growth at best: 1,626 to 2,612 from 1951 to 1961 for the Anglican; 3,578 to 5,121 during the same period for the Presbyterian according to Statistics Canada (p. 85).

Prompted by the arrival of the new Chinese immigrants, Chinese churches and missions in major cities such as Vancouver, Montreal, and Toronto revived the English class for the newcomers. In addition to the usual religious programs, other social services such as Boy Scout troops and Chinese classes for native-born Chinese Canadians were started to meet the need of the Chinese communities (Con et al., 1982, p. 237).

Another factor affecting the direction of the Chinese missions among the mainline Protestants was the growth of the native-born Chinese. Since the turn of the century, the number of local-born Chinese was on a steady climb, increasing from 3 percent of the total Chinese population in 1911, to 7 percent in 1921, to 12 percent in 1931, and rising to 20 percent in 1941 after nine decades of immigration history in Canada. The growth had been fueled by the reopening of the immigrant door to allow family reunification in 1947. The local-born percentage increased to 31 in 1951, to 40 in 1961, and to 38 in 1971 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 67). At the same time, the Chinese Christian population rose to 31,950 in 1961 from 16,231 in 1951 (Wang, 2006, p. 85, table 4.4). Though it was a segregated ethnic enclave in the past, Chinatown was no longer the abode of choice for the second-generation (Ng, 1999). Many of the younger generation, together with the new immigrants who could speak English, chose to settle themselves in areas that were shared with the mainstream Canadians, and they joined the local Canadian mainstream churches near their home rather than joining the Chinese churches in Chinatowns where the Protestant missionaries first established their evangelistic activities (Wang, 2006).

In the 1960s, most of the mainline Protestant denominations began to wind up their endeavor after more than a century of mission work in the Chinese community by directing the work among the Chinese to the local parishes and congregations. The Presbyterians, for instance, no longer filled the position of the Superintendent of the Chinese mission after the last superintendent retired in 1962, signaling an end of the era of organized Chinese mission by the denomination (Wang, 2006, pp. 84-85). The eventuality came as a result of at least two factors. First, the new wave of Chinese

immigrants, especially those who came after 1967, were more educated and fluent in English. Highly upwardly mobile themselves, these new immigrants were able to assimilate themselves into mainstream society with much greater ease than had their earlier-arriving counterparts. In addition, Canadian society was no longer holding onto the Protestant vision of Canada as “His Dominion” as a result of secularization (Bramadat & Seljak, 2008, pp. 11-15; Wang, 2006, p. 85). As the immigration door opened wide to embrace educated immigrants with skills and experience to meet the labor demands of the growing Canadian economy, the Canadian mainstream became more tolerant of immigrants of different ethnicity in their society. Consequently, specific missionary works at the mission station for the Chinese immigrants proved to be ineffective as a strategy. The Protestant churches “abandoned the mission” (Wang, 2006, p. 85).

**The era of Chinese Evangelical Church (1967 to present).** While the chapter was drawing to an end for the mainline Protestant missionary ministry in the Chinese communities across Canada in the 1960s, Con et al. (1982) observed, a fundamentalist or evangelical version of the Christian church began to lurk behind the scene as early as the 1950s among the Chinese and became much more noticeable in the 1960s (p. 237).

***Chinese Evangelical Church: Genesis and growth.*** Echoing the observation of Con et al. (1982) almost 40 years later, Guenther (2008) suggested that the emergence of Chinese evangelicals in Canada does reflect a broader trend of Canadian evangelical development (p. 365). Guenther traced the development of evangelicalism in Canada back to the religious revivals in the 19th century known as the Second Great Awakening,

started during the early 19th century in the United States and extending to Canada, that shaped a common “moral, theological, and social consensus” among different denominations (p. 368). Prior to 1961, most of the evangelical Protestants had their ancestral roots in Europe (p. 366). Significant changes in immigration policy in 1967 fundamentally shifted the landscape of the demographic and social complexion of Canada such that ethnic immigrant churches began to emerge (Marr, 1975, pp. 196-197; Roy, 2007, pp. 8-9).

With this change in immigration policy, the Chinese population skyrocketed to 118,815 by 1971 compared with 58,197 in 1961 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 89). Apart from family members who sought to be reunited with the Chinese in Canada (Madokoro, 2012, p. 54), many of the newcomers were students and brought fresh enthusiasm and ideas, revitalizing the Chinese church in Canada (Matthews, 1997, p. 18; Wong, W., 2000, p. 8). Campus Bible study groups were established and were tailored toward these overseas Chinese students by creating a space for ethnic affinity as well as functioning as a social hub in providing mutual support and establishing social networks (Wang & Yang, 2006, p. 190). The genesis of the campus ministry could be attributed to the evangelical student ministry workers from Hong Kong who started the movement of establishing “Chinese Christian Fellowships” on campus after their emigration to Canada, with the first one having been formed in Winnipeg in 1961 (Matthews, 1997, p. 18). As a result, many of the overseas students were befriended and converted to Christianity by Chinese Christians who were supported by campus ministry organizations such as Ambassadors for Christ (p. 18).

In conjunction with the student ministry on campus, Chinese churches began to grow at a fast pace starting in the 1970s as part of the overall ethnic church movement in Canada (Clements, 1997, p. 28). The remarkable increase of the ethnic congregations did not necessarily come with forethought or strategic planning on the part of the local Canadian evangelicals. Rather, many of these churches were established by the newcomers themselves, and the religious communities became the fruit of their labor. This phenomenon emerged mainly as a result of the arrival of a group of evangelical church faithful who were leaders in their home countries or ministers themselves. Once they landed in Canada and saw the need of the local communities for ministry, they started churches of their own (p. 28).

Hence, although there were about 30 Chinese congregations in the 1950s (Guenther, 2008, p. 380), most of the Chinese evangelical churches emerged largely out of the immigration trend after 1967, picking up the baton after the mainline denominations decided to terminate their Chinese mission in the 1960s (Wang, 2006, pp. 84-85). The growth of the ethnic evangelical churches could be fueled only by a continuous influx of immigrants and the availability of trained native pastors. The arrival of these religious leaders from the homeland also preserves the ethnic characteristics of evangelicalism of the Chinese church in Canada (Kivisto, 2007, p. 500).

As immigrants arrived in the new land, they struggled to find safety and sense of meaning and belonging while experiencing the metamorphosis of their social network and traditional values. Yet they discovered that religious institutions such as the evangelical immigrant churches are sites and spaces where they find constancy and

continuity of their language, tradition, cultural values, and social support (Botros, 2005; Breton, 2012; Hirschman, 2004; Ley, 2008). The role of religion in the process of adaptation of the non-European immigrants in North America has been well analyzed (Chen, C., 2006; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000b; Kim & Hurh, 1993; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, 1999b). Religious institutions have offered an important dynamic in the lives of new immigrants both as a venue of ethnic reproduction and as a force for assimilation and change (Botros, 2005; Breton, 2012; Cao, 2005; Li, Q., 2000; Rah, 2009).

Researchers suggest that, apart from evangelization efforts, these organizations carry out at least four functions in the adaptation of the new immigrants. First, religious institutions function as a hub where a social bond is forged, a network is established, and material and psychological support are offered (Abel, 2006, pp.174-177; Breton, 2012, p. 19; Chen, C., 2006, pp. 51-53; Ley, 2008, pp. 2058-2060; Ng, K. H., 2002, p. 197).

Second, immigrant churches can be a focus for preserving ethnic culture, values, and traditions (Bankston & Zhou, 1996, p. 19) and comingling with co-ethnics to create social capital (Breton, 2012, p. 33; Hirschman, 2004, p. 1229; Ley, 2008, p. 2058; Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 86). Third, religious organizations provide a site and a space where tradition, cultural rituals, languages, and ethnic identity are being passed on to second and subsequent generations, who in turn negotiate and constitute identity of their own in that context (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, p. 432; Warner, R. S., 1998, p. 25). And last, for some ethnic groups such as Koreans, immigrant congregations are institutions many male immigrants use to restore their social status with a leadership role they used to occupy in their countries of origin, mitigating the downward mobility they experienced when

settling in with the mainstream of the host country (Kim, S., 2010, pp. 24-25; Min, 1992, p. 1391; Rah, 2009, p. 167; Warner, R. S., 1998, p. 25).

*Evangelicalism and Chinese evangelical churches in Canada.* Chinese Canadian evangelicals are distributed across a suite of denominations. The denominations include, but are not limited to, Baptists, Christian & Missionary Alliance, Evangelical Free, Pentecostal, Mennonite Brethren, and other independent denominations such as Association of Chinese Evangelical Ministries (Guenther, 2008, p. 380; Matthews, 1997, p. 22; Nagata, 2005, p. 118). Many of them started independently while some received sponsorship from their denominations either in Canada or their home countries. For example, the first Chinese Baptist congregation was established in 1969 (Chan, J. C., 2004, p. 23), even though Baptist missionaries first made contact with the Chinese settlers as early as 1878 (Wang, 2006, p. 45), whereas the first Chinese congregation of Christian and Missionary Alliance was started in Regina in 1961 (Leung, K. L., 1998, p. 146). In addition, the first Mennonite Brethren Chinese congregation was formed in the early 1970s (Guenther, 2008, p. 380).

Unlike its counterparts in the mainline Protestant denominations that tend to adopt a more liberalized stance and place much emphasis on social justice and trumpet social services (Yang, 1998, p. 252), evangelical Christianity differentiates itself with four key characteristics, according to Noll (1994): an unyielding view on the inerrancy of the Bible; the life-transforming experience of being “born-again”; the supremacy of the redemptive work of Christ; and a priority of spreading the faith through active evangelism (pp. 7-10). In the same vein, Guenther (2008) conceptualized evangelicals

using a slightly different framework. According to Guenther, evangelicals are, first, *conversionists*, suggesting that people become Christians through a distinctive experience of conversion by confessing their wrongdoings and accepting Jesus Christ as their personal savior. In addition, evangelicals are *crucicentric*, meaning that their theological scheme is centered around the redemptive work of Christ on the cross for the atonement of their personal wrongdoings. Furthermore, evangelicals are *biblicist*, implying that they place a very high regard on the Bible as a revelation from God and the authority for their faith and morality. Finally, Guenther characterized evangelicals as *activists* in that they believe true religious conversion lies with activism in doing good and spreading the cause of faith (pp. 374-375). Although the term *evangelical* in Canada tends to exclude mainline denominations such as United Church, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Lutheran (Bibby, 2011, p. 30), Stackhouse (1999) conceptualized Canadian evangelicalism as representing a group of faithful who share the same set of evangelical convictions but organize themselves in a largely informal network and are united in their central concerns (p. 16). I argue that, based on my experience in Chinese Canadian churches, the Chinese congregations of these mainline denominations in Canada tend to identify with evangelical faith due to their pastors' background and training (Tseng, 2002, p. 253). The Chinese Canadian evangelicals share these characteristics because the early founders of their churches were rooted in the fundamentalist version of Christianity influenced by the missionaries to the Far East (Chen, C., 2008, p. 2; Yang, F., 1999b, pp. 6-7).

*Subethnic composition of the Chinese evangelical church in Canada.* Observed on the surface, the Chinese in Diaspora can be seen merely as a homogeneous ethnic

entity based on their similarity of physical appearance and their apparent congruence in customs, values, and culture (Salaff, 2005, p. 3). However, Salaff (2005) contended that many distinctive subcultures indeed exist among the overseas Chinese that can be traced to their place of origins, dialects, and ancestral cultures, reflecting the divergent variations of regional and clannish differences among them (p. 3). Nagata (2005) further observed that, similar to their counterparts in South Asia, the Chinese Christian congregations across Canada organized themselves mostly along the line of the members' subethnicity (p. 100). I argue further that these subethnic groups can be traced to their time of arrival in Canada and thus form different cohorts within the larger Chinese Canadian evangelical community. Lam (2000) identified at least four distinctive subethnic categories that formed the core of different subcultures and subethnicity within the Chinese congregations based on languages, places of origin, and time of arrival of these immigrants.

Immigrants who arrived in Canada before the 1960s constitute the *first* category. According to Census 2011, this group of evangelical faithful today amounts to only 4,900 (Statistics Canada, 2014). This cohort of congregants predominantly originated from the Pearl Delta area around Guangzhou, the capital of the Southern province of Guangdong. Most of them speak the dialect of Toyshan, reflecting the Siyup (Four County) regions of Southern China from whence they came. However, they are also capable of conversing in Cantonese, the dominant dialect spoken in Southern China and Hong Kong (Lam, 2000, p. 23). Mostly lower in educational level and working in labor-intensive

occupations, this group of immigrants represents a “social class of the past” (Con et al., 1982, p. 247) and is quickly disappearing due to natural attrition.

The Hong Kong immigrants who came to Canada after the 1967 adjustment of the Immigration Act constitute the second category occupying the pews (Lam, 2000, p. 24). Principally Cantonese speaking, this group of immigrants constituted the primary actors and agents of the early Chinese ethnic church in Canada and accounted for the impetus for its rapid development since the 1970s (Clements, 1997; Mak, 1997), pushing the number of churches from 30 in the 1950s to 230 to 1990s, and to more than 350 in the 2000s (Guenther, 2008, p. 380). Unlike their pre-1960s counterparts who were farmers and laborers, many of the post 1970s immigrants were urban dwellers who were skillful professionals or self-employed entrepreneurs, fluent in English and possessing sophisticated expertise, financial capital, business acumen, and corporate experience (Li, P. S., 1992). They also included students seeking better higher education opportunities and eventually settling in Canada as permanent residents (Mak, 1997). Dubbed as a “new class of immigrants” by P. S. Li (1992), this cohort was more confident and independent; they brought determination and self-starting spirit. They came especially for two reasons: (a) to seek a politically stabilized and democratic country in which to secure their families as well as better educational and future prospects for their children; and (b) to flee from or avoid potential political chaos facing Hong Kong’s reversion to China in 1997 (Clements, 1977). Not only did these immigrants come with their skills, but they brought their wealth as well. P. S. Li argued that “there is substantial evidence to suggest that the financial position of Chinese-Canadians has been buttressed by the arrival of

nouveaux riches from Hong Kong and Taiwan” (p. 139). Together with the other middle-class professionals among this cohort, their abodes are no longer seen in the Chinatown of the old but rather are the monster homes in the affluent enclaves of the populous cities and the suburbs (Madokoro, 2011). In fact, more than 66 percent of the Chinese population in Canada resided in the Greater Toronto and Vancouver areas in 1991 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 104). The figure rises to 71 percent according to Census 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2014). The concentration of the Chinese immigrants in Toronto, for instance, has fueled the growth of the Chinese congregations in the metropolitan area. The number of Chinese churches more than doubled in Toronto during the decade between 1987 and 1996, from more than 50 to 114 respectively (Matthews, 1977, p. 21; Ye, 2006, p. 5).

However, the intake of Hong Kong immigrants into Canada began to decline after 1995, partly due to the slow-down of the Colony’s economy at the time. The Asian financial crisis of 1997 further devastated Hong Kong markets with dire consequences of negative growth, deflation, rising unemployment, and falling real estate prices, thus affecting the wealth and assets of the middle class (Li & Li, 2008, “Immigration from China to Canada,” para. 4). These factors working together resulted in a dwindling number of Hong Kong emigrants arriving in Canada annually. No more than 2,000 immigrants came from the former Colony annually from 2001 to 2008, and by 2009, the number of immigrants dipped to less than 1,000 (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012a, p. 27). As the intake of Cantonese immigrants seems to have petered out, the effect of the rapid decline of this particular group of immigrants is being felt palpably

among the Chinese church as the growth of the membership seems to have been significantly thwarted (Statistics Canada, 2014).

The third category of congregants surfaced by Lam (2000) is the Mandarin-speaking Chinese, most of whom originated from Mainland China and came to Canada since the 1980s (p. 24). Since the emigration door was opened in the 1980s in China by the Communist regime, Mainland Chinese gradually began arriving in North America. Apart from those who came for family reunification, many scholars who were sent by the Government of China to pursue research or post-doctoral studies chose not to return to China but elected instead to settle in the United States and Canada. These scholars were soon followed by another group of university graduates who were incentivized to move to Canada for employment opportunities (Li & Li, 2008, "China's reform of the system of higher education," para. 5). The opportunity for emigration was created by the Canadian government's shift of immigration policy in the 1990s to place higher emphasis on human capital as the key criterion for its immigration intake by awarding more than two-thirds of the assessment points to formal education, knowledge of official languages, skilled experience, and experience in investment and entrepreneurship (Li & Li, 2008, "Changes in Canada's immigration policy," para. 4). Many of these academics and graduates were attracted to Christianity and soon converted to the faith once they landed in Canada. Apart from the genuine social support and the warmth of belonging these scholars received and felt through interaction with the church members (Abel, 2006; Zhang, 2006), additional factors have emerged in accounting for their conversion (Wang & Yang, 2006; Yang, F., 1998). Raised in a communist regime that is atheistic and based

on Marxist materialism, this group of immigrants expressed dissatisfaction with the “money-seeking milieu prevailing in China” at the time (Wang & Yang, 2006, p. 185). They expressed the opinion that China was deeply embroiled in corruption and was facing a moral crisis at the time. By turning to Christianity, they claimed that they found the moral authority for their lives. They further discovered that Christian churches create a space in which they are allowed to re-construct their national identity by judiciously cherry-picking the cultural values that would amalgamate well with their new-found faith (Wang & Yang, 2006, pp. 185-186; Yang, F., 1998, p. 253).

By the 2000s, immigrants from China began to surge into Canada, starting with 40,365 being accepted into Canada in 2001. From 2003 to 2012, more than 325,000 Mainland Chinese immigrants arrived in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2012b, p. 27). Conversely, 67,903 came from the People’s Republic of China during the period 1985–1994, compared with only 22,986 from 1977 to 1984 (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 99). The trend line of immigration of the Mainland Chinese projecting into the 2030s continues to be on par or larger than the intake of the last decade (Statistics Canada, 2010). Embracing the arrival of the new cohort of Mandarin-speaking immigrants, Chinese churches in Canada began in the 1990s to establish separate services in Mandarin to meet their needs. Perceiving them to be the engine of growth for the Chinese Canadian churches in the future, many church leaders have shifted their focus and resources in supporting this segment of the population (Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism [Canada], 2005).

Within the Mandarin-speaking communities, Guenther (2008) further identified a subgroup of Chinese immigrants originating from Taiwan (p. 381). Two cohorts of this subgroup can be further identified. The first cohort of Taiwanese came mainly in the 1970s with the growing concern that the icy-cold relationship between Nationalist Taiwan and the People's Republic of China might take a turn for the worse with the possibility of a potential encroachment on the Taiwan Island by the Communist regime. Canada became a safe political and social haven of choice for the Taiwanese as they flocked to emigrate, looking for a stable environment and a better future for their families (Con et al., 1982, p. 246). Similar to their Hong Kong counterparts in the 1980s, the second cohort of Taiwanese comprised business immigrants who came to Canada from the mid 1980s to the early 1990s as a result of the expanded Business Immigration Program of Canada in 1985, which sought to "attract entrepreneurs, self-employed persons and investors to immigrate to Canada mainly on the basis of their capacity to invest in business and to create jobs" (Li, P. S., 1998, p. 95). Each investor was required to have a net worth of at least \$500,000 and was mandated to invest at least half of that amount in order to qualify for a visa. Eager to take advantage of this policy and were willing to comply with the financial commitment, business-class immigrants responded quickly: The proportion of the business class immigrants from Hong Kong, for example, rose from 5 percent in 1982 to a whopping 40 percent by 1986. The story is similar for Taiwan immigrants. Only 5,455 of Taiwanese moved to Canada from 1977 to 1984 under this category, but the intake skyrocketed almost eightfold, rising, to 41,176 from 1985 to 1994 mostly due to the Business Immigration Program (Li, P. S., 1998, pp. 95,

99). Many of these Taiwanese immigrants established their own Mandarin-speaking churches, for two reasons: (a) the incompatibility of language with their Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong counterparts and (b) the desire for differentiation from the Mainland Chinese due to their ideological, political, and social distinctions (Nagata, 2005, p. 117). Nagata (2005) identified at least eight exclusive Taiwanese congregations of different denominations in Toronto in the 1980s and 1990s. Some of these congregations even conduct their services in Taiwanese dialect, according to Nagata, to preserve their distinctiveness and identity as being Taiwanese (p. 117).

In conjunction with Guenther's (2008) identification of the Taiwanese as a subgroup within the Mandarin-speaking congregations, Nagata (2005) highlighted another group of Mandarin speakers, one that originated from South Asian countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia (p. 104). The Canadian open-door immigration policy of the 1960s also motivated many overseas Chinese families from "South America, the Caribbean, southern Africa . . . to adopt Canada as their home" in the 1970s (Tan & Roy, 1985, p. 16). In particular, overseas Chinese professionals from Southeast Asian countries such as Singapore, Philippines, and Malaysia were eager to explore their prospects in Canada. Similar to the sentiment in Canada of the 19th century, the anti-Chinese hostility rose in the 1960s and 1970s in many of these Southeastern Asian countries, where racial discord and social unrest were common. These factors all converged to motivate the overseas Chinese from the Southeast Asia region to seek sanctuary in a safer place where their professional skills and occupational pursuits were welcome and valued. In addition, many sent their children to Canada to pursue higher

education as they believed that Canada would offer a better future for their next generation in terms of education and social development (Chow, 2000, pp. xx-xxi). Consequently, for these emigrants, “Canada became increasingly attractive throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s” (Con et al., 1982, p. 246).

**Second-generation Chinese Canadian Evangelicals (SGCCE).** The fourth and last category of congregants identified by Lam (2000) is the Canadian-born Chinese (p. 24). Canadian National Household Survey of 2011 reported that slightly more than 1,324,700 identified themselves as having Chinese ancestry, and 27 percent, or 358,500 (see Table 1), are local-born (i.e. non-immigrants), comprising second and the subsequent generations (Statistics Canada, 2011). More than 90 percent of this cohort (see Table 2) was born after the 1967 open-door immigration policy (Statistics Canada, 2011). Collectively referred to as the “new second generation,” these young adults are capable of asserting their autonomy and negotiating their identity (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Reitz & Somerville, 2004).

Second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals, totalling around 35,000 according to the same survey, follow in lock-step with their overall counterparts, with more than 93 percent born after 1967 (see Table 2). Just like their immigrant parents, most SGCCE are located in the major urban metropolitans of Toronto (14,765) and Vancouver (12,555), which are followed by Calgary (3,315), Edmonton (2,155), Ottawa (1,065), and Montreal (800) (see Table 1). Roughly 55 percent, or slightly more than 19,000, of them are between 15 and 44 (see Table 1); one can therefore argue that this

cohort has now come of age and represents a sizable presence and meaningful category to problematize how faith and ethnicity intersect in their growing-up process.

Table 1

*Chinese Canadian and Chinese Canadian Evangelicals (Immigrants and Non-Immigrants) and Their Locations of Residence (Statistics Canada, 2014)*

|                    | <i>Total Chinese</i> | <i>Total Evangelical</i> | <i>Non-Immigrant</i> | <i>Non-Immigrant Evangelical</i> | <i>Immigrant</i> | <i>Immigrant Evangelical</i> |
|--------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Canada</b>      | <b>1,324,745</b>     | <b>150,045</b>           | <b>358,565</b>       | <b>39,385</b>                    | <b>920,795</b>   | <b>107,550</b>               |
| Halifax            | 4,620                | 390                      | 1,355                | 140                              | 2,170            | 230                          |
| Quebec City        | 2,445                | 45                       | 400                  | 0                                | 2,015            | 40                           |
| Montreal           | 74,375               | 3,935                    | 19,240               | 800                              | 52,115           | 3,025                        |
| Ottawa-Gatineau    | 37,135               | 3,375                    | 12,050               | 1,065                            | 23,790           | 2,270                        |
| Kingston           | 2,005                | 215                      | 610                  | 65                               | 1,300            | 155                          |
| Toronto            | 531,635              | 61,820                   | 134,455              | 14,765                           | 383,260          | 46,045                       |
| Hamilton           | 11,545               | 1,120                    | 3,505                | 205                              | 7,280            | 825                          |
| Kitchener-Waterloo | 11,800               | 1,275                    | 3,225                | 375                              | 7,570            | 895                          |
| London             | 7,405                | 415                      | 2,100                | 115                              | 4,655            | 295                          |
| Windsor            | 6,945                | 755                      | 1,790                | 245                              | 4,690            | 505                          |
| Winnipeg           | 15,165               | 1,260                    | 4,425                | 510                              | 8,985            | 705                          |
| Regina             | 3,710                | 625                      | 1,025                | 300                              | 2,065            | 310                          |
| Saskatoon          | 5,375                | 725                      | 1,875                | 310                              | 2,700            | 400                          |
| Calgary            | 75,465               | 9,620                    | 25,260               | 3,315                            | 48,740           | 6,170                        |
| Edmonton           | 51,675               | 6,635                    | 17,195               | 2,155                            | 31,850           | 4,290                        |
| Vancouver          | 411,475              | 51,040                   | 102,965              | 12,555                           | 297,120          | 37,330                       |
| Victoria           | 12,770               | 1,055                    | 5,185                | 450                              | 6,845            | 585                          |

Table 2

*Second- and Third-Generations of Chinese Canadian and Chinese Canadian Evangelicals (Statistics Canada, 2014)*

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

As children of the post-1967s so-called “new immigrants” (Breton, 2012, p. 3), SGCCE share a number of key characteristics with the broader cohort of the second-generation visible minority in Canada. Researchers suggested that second-generation immigrant children in general are less likely to find concrete, meaningful connection with the “back-home” tradition of their parents. Rather, they are prone to evaluate or be evaluated by standards of the “new home” (Gans, 1992; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou, 1997a, 2004). To focus on this cohort, *Canadian Diversity 2008* devoted the entire Spring Edition issue to the emerging research on the second generation of the visible minorities in Canada. Kobayashi (2008) reported that many researchers assert that members of the second generation are keenly aware of their ethnocultural identities, and of both the potential and the limitations for those identities to change (p. 5). Acting as the cultural bridge between their parents’ way of living and that of the wider society, these second-generation members continue to interpret and reshape the dynamics of these identities and the sense of belonging to Canada (Jedwab, 2008; Kobayashi, 2008).

Furthermore, Ramji (2008) observed that some second-generation are refashioning notions in innovative ways by reinterpreting their faith in a multicultural context in Canada (p. 104). Collectively, a thumbnail composite profile of the second-generation emerges with the following selected characteristics: (a) family relationships are of paramount importance to the second-generation and they tend to live at home prior to marriage (Boyd & Park, 2008); (b) traditional avenues of partner selection are favored (Byers & Tastsoglow, 2008; Lalonde & Giguere, 2008) and the conservative norm of sexuality is adopted (Lalonde & Giguere, 2008); and (c) while second-generation youth overachieve compared with non-visible minority and third-plus generation (Boyd & Park, 2008), a growing proportion of immigrant families still struggle with poverty, which affects the second-generation relationships within the families (Tyyska, 2008).

In addition, this cohort of immigrant children is facing a path of incorporation different from that of their counterparts of the pre-1967 era, having to deal with different forms of racism (Kobayashi, 2008, p. 3). For the current second-generation Chinese Canadian, the racial discrimination issue may well be a variation on the same theme as that faced by their counterparts in the past era, when Chinese in Canada faced stiff racial exclusion measures, such as segregation to Chinese-only schools in the early 20th century in British Columbia (Stanley, 2007, p. 110). Regarding the contemporary cohort, Cui (2011/2012), for example, observed that the racism Chinese-Canadian youth experienced at school and the racist discourse against Chinese-Canadian students found in Canadian media indicate that Chinese Canadians as ethnic minorities have not been fully recognized and treated as equal partners in social interactions with the White dominant

group (“Conclusion,” paras. 1-3). In the same vein, many researchers reported that, for the broader second-generation of the visible minorities in Canada, experiencing racial discrimination is a reality (Auther, Chaves, Este, Frideres, & Hrycak, 2008, p. 73) and dealing with it is a “fact of life” (Brooks, 2008, p. 77). Echoing Reitz and Somerville (2004), Kobayashi (2008) further asserted that:

The second generation may experience more racism than their parents because their linguistic fluency, educational attainment, and high expectations of the rights that come with citizenship place them in positions where they are more likely to be viewed as a challenge to the dominant group, as well as more likely to identify their experiences as racialized. (p. 5)

Apart from the above-mentioned common characteristics, the immigrant children of visible minorities are reported to have fared in general equally well or better in terms of educational attainment (Beyer, 2005, p. 197; Beyer & Martin, 2013, p. 42; Connor & Koenig, 2014, p. 301), especially when their parents are at a lower education level (Corak, 2008, p. 14). Immigrant parents who arrived with skills and education tend to support their second-generation children in attaining an extended education (Perlmann & Waldinger, 1997, p. 910). For many Chinese immigrants, the desire for high educational expectation for their children is deeply rooted in the Confucian values of learning and pursuit of educational excellence (Li, J., 2001, p. 489). Closely related to the education performance is an indication of stronger mental health on the part of immigrant children who either were born in Canada or entered into the country at a young age as compared with their native-born counterparts in the wider society (Beiser, Hou, Hyman, & Tousignant, 1998, p. 32). Beyer (2010) asserted that the higher educational achievement

of the second-generation tends to translate into a better economic achievement when compared with their parents as well as with the Canadian population as a whole, though variation exists among different ethnic subgroups (p. 10). Other researchers (e.g., Boyd, 2002; Boyd & Grieco 1998; Corak, 2008) echoed the observation that higher educational attainment has enabled the second-generation of visible minorities in Canada to acquire better jobs and upward social mobility, although their performance varies depending upon whether one or both parents is foreign-born (Boyd, 2008; Halli & Vedanand, 2007).

When it comes to religiosity of the second-generation visible minority in Canada, Beyer (2013), in his research on a cohort of immigrant children with Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist backgrounds, highlighted the following findings. First, to the extent that religion is practiced by this cohort according to their faith tradition, not only is religion embraced as a good thing, but religious pluralism is also celebrated (pp. 55, 77). However, as such, religion is treated as a “privatized” matter, not in the sense of being restricted to some “private sphere” but rather in the sense that its role was to give the lives of practitioners meaning, structure, and purpose, not to impose itself on everyone as some kind of authoritative system of belief and behavior (p. 77; Beyer, 2014, p. 90). Last, religious practice for this cohort is highly personalized in the sense that they take responsibility for working out religious life for themselves, reflecting an individual choice they make in attributing significance and meaning to their own practices rather than just following their parents’ faith tradition (p. 78).

While sharing similar characteristics with the general cohort of second-generation of visible minority in Canada, the local-born Chinese Canadians face a few unique forces

that have emerged over the last few decades that affect the shaping of their values and their ethnic identity. First, the perception of the ascending prominence of China as a strong nation in the international arena has aroused interest among the second- and third-generations to be “resinified,” (i.e., to become identified as Chinese), aligning themselves with their parents’ ethnicity (Wickberg, 2012, p. 140). Their desire has found expressions in closer ties with ethnic practices or traditional values, as in the example of the rise of Chinese martial arts clubs in Vancouver that attracts both young immigrants from Hong Kong and second- or third-generation Chinese Canadians (p. 140). Some local-born Chinese Canadians are reported to express their ethnic affinity by following their parents’ practices of setting up of traditional Chinese cultic altars at home (Lai, Paper, & Paper, 2009, p. 107). Many others follow the global trend toward the use of Mandarin by immersing themselves in the Chinese language and following the Chinese media (Nagata, 2005, p.125).

Second, the rising trend of globalization has bridged both the cultural and the traveling gaps between the immigrants’ host country and their home country. Wiarda (2007) defined globalization as “the increasing scale, extent, variety, speed, and magnitude of international cross-border, social, economic, military, political, and cultural interrelations” (p. 3). Robertson (1992), on the other hand, perceived globalization “as a concept (that) refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole” (p. 8). Steger (2013) extended this definition, referring to “the expansion and intensification of social relations and consciousness across world-time and world-space” (p. 15). Campbell (2007), also drawing from Robertson,

theorized the concept as “increasing extensity of world interdependence and increasing world consciousness” (p. 282). Global compression and interconnections are supported and hastened by aerospace advances that result in affordable and more frequent travel. The ease of movement and the desire to transmit cultural and ethnic values to their offspring have resulted in some first-generation Chinese immigrants and Chinese religious organizations and churches in North America sending their children to spend either a summer or up to a year in China, Hong Kong, or Taiwan, both for short-term mission trips and to gain affinity with the culture of the home country (Yang, F., 1999a, p. 98). Conversely, some Chinese parents, especially the fathers, have not completely severed their economical ties “back home” such that they settle their family in Canada but have decided to remain in Asia, traveling frequently back and forth to maintain familial contact. These parents “live aspects of their social, economic, and political lives in at least two settings” (Levitt, 2003, p. 850). As a result, these so-called “astronaut” immigrants have created a transnational space for their local-born children to explore their identity.

Transnationalism can be thought of as the transcendence of national boundaries and the involvement of several nations or nationalities (Gilkinson & Sauve, 2010, p. 4). Basch, Schiller, and Blanc (1994) defined it as “the process by which immigrants forge and sustain multistranded relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (p. 7). This process yields what Gardiner Barber (2003) described as transnational identities on the part of immigrants, with multiple connections and attachments (p. 45). Furthermore, transnational migration and religion has been

recognized as one of the key emerging area of study in analyzing the adaptation of new immigrants in a host society (Kivisto, 2007). In the Canadian context, transnationalism is also regarded as a key research domain regarding the religious affiliation and practices of the Canadian second-generation who belong to the so-called six major visible minority traditions (i.e., Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism, Islam, and Chinese religion) due to the intertwining relationship between their ethnicity and their native religion as well as the global nature of their religion (Beyer, 2007, pp. 60-62; Wong & Simon, 2010, p. 4). However, I suggest that transnationalism affects SGCCE more in their ethnic affiliation than in their religious practices because the linkage between Christianity and their parents' culture is not as strong as the religious-ethnic link of their South Asian counterparts who have strong cultural ties between the Diaspora and the religious heartland of their parents' origins (Beyer, 2007, p. 62). The tendency for SGCCE to be drawn closer to the ethnic affiliation may result from the marginalization of their immigrant parents' creating a centrifugal force connecting them back to the identity of their homeland through religious participation (Han, 2011, p. 64). However, to the extent that such transnational connections exist for SGCCE and their parents' congregations, they tend to pertain to providing financial and human resource support for religious maintenance and reinforcement wrapped in the Chinese ethnicity (Yang, F., 2002, p. 133, table 7.1). F. Yang (2002) highlighted four such transnational ties: individual to individual, individuals to organizations, the church to individuals, and the church to organizations (p. 133). As an example of the church to organizations transnational tie, a transnational linkage emerges in the Diaspora Chinese church that reflects connection

based on ethnicity rather than on country of origin. Unlike the Coptic church scenario in which “the Church in Egypt considers immigrant local churches an extension of its service, and therefore acts transnationally” (Botros, 2005, p. 14), or the local Muslim or Buddhist communities that would foster a transnational link with the worldwide Muslim and Buddhist communities through their central/core doctrines (Beyer, 2007, pp. 60-61; 2013, pp. 9-10), the Chinese Canadian churches latch onto the worldwide Chinese Church via a religious–ethnic connection and attempt to focus on two areas: (a) mainland Chinese evangelization and (b) Diaspora Chinese evangelization. Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism is a perfect example of the second area (Nagata, 2005, p. 99).

Facilitated by the Internet and aided by the proliferation of digital mobile technology, social media, and social networks, the second-generation has created a capability for contact with far greater and wider access to the culture of their ancestral homeland. This experience has profoundly changed the way they experience their daily life such that cultural practices have become transcendent over fixed location and geographical confines (Steger, 2013, p. 75). Writing of the Asian American youth, Zhou and Lee (2004) commented that globalization and transnationalism have widened the cultural space in which the Asian local-born are “able to maneuver at relative ease to create new opportunities for cultural production and expression” (p. 20). G. Yang (2003) took a step further by asserting that “Chinese cultural spaces are flourishing on the Internet” (p. 484). Although these spaces may be based both inside and outside China, they are linked to global networks (p. 484).

Thirdly, as Ooka (2002) observed, one of the key determinants in shaping Chinese Canadian youth ethnic identity is the extent of the ethnic socialization in which the youth have come to engage. Ooka's research shows empirically that the stronger the ethnic socialization the youth receive from parents or friends, and the deeper they are embedded in Chinese-dominated friendship networks, the higher the tendency that these youth will experience the so-called non-zero sum process of acculturation and remain bicultural. As the cohort of the present study, SSCCE engaged their socialization process in the space and place of the immigrant church where they grew up. Ooka further observed:

When the second-generation (Chinese Canadian) youth are growing up with parents and friends who encourage ethnic retention, the shift toward complete acculturation is not as *rapid* or *extensive* as in conventional assimilation theory. Acculturation proceeds, but the ethnic socialization experiences and the network structural environment determine what *form* acculturation proceeds. (pp. 218-219, emphasis in original)

Therefore, biculturalism can be a prolonged phenomenon in locations such as Toronto where second-generation youths can easily find social networks that promote Chinese cultural contacts and ethnic traditions (p. 219).

Ooka's (2002) findings resonate with Breton's (1964) concept of the institutional completeness of ethnic communities that refers to the extent to which an ethnic group in a particular place and time forms organizations by and for its member (p. 194). Established solely for the purpose of catering to the needs of the ethnic group members, these institutions become the arena for the shaping and retention of the ethnic identity in a way that is directly proportional to the institutional completeness: The higher the completeness, the higher the likelihood that the members will retain their ethnic identity

(Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013, p. 11). Institutional completeness also facilitates the intergenerational ethnic identity transfer through ethnic socialization. Drawing from Reitz (1980), Satzewich and Liodakis (2013) pointed out that “the participation of first-generation parents in ethnic organizations serves as a model of socialization for their offspring” (p. 11). For SGCCE, the Chinese Canadian immigrant churches that number more than 350 serve as crucial ethnic communities through which socialization that shapes and reinforces their ethnicity takes place.

To summarize the challenges for the second-generation growing up in the Canadian context, Rajiva (2005) noted that the second-generation:

face the difficult task of growing up different: trying to belong to a national identity that continues to see them as not Canadian; dealing with experiences of systemic and overt racism that are based solely on perceived racial difference rather than on cultural strangeness; and finally, struggling to balance the often competing demands of peer culture with the cultural expectations of immigrant families and communities. (p. 28)

These challenges led Potvin (2008) to conclude that members of the second-generation are feeling rootless and disenfranchised in their place of birth and subjected to forces of transition and change (pp. 100-103). Beyer (2013) further postulated that this cohort is caught between a dual reality of living in a “back home” culture and tradition and “new home” values and practices (p. 5). Other scholars took this notion one step further and located the second-generation Asian North American Christians in the state of liminality, a space of transition between realities in terms of being Asian and being Christian (Guest, 2004, p. 55; Hiller & Chow, 2005, p. 79; Matsuoka, 1995, p. 61; Rah, 2009, p. 187; Tokunaga, 2003, p. 50; Tran, 2010, p. 40). I argue that it is in this state of

liminality, a sense of in-betweenness, that we find SGCCE transitioning from their parents' church to the congregations of their choice.

**Summary.** This section first provided a brief history of the relationship between the Protestant faith and Chinese immigrants in Canada from 1858 to 1967. That history was followed by an overview of the Chinese evangelical church in Canada in terms of its genesis, growth, faith characteristics, and subethnic composition in the context of the history of immigration of Chinese in Canada after 1967. Last, a profile was provided for the second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals, the cohort of the present study. In the next major section, I review the literature pertinent to the areas of ethnicity and religion and how they intersect in the process of incorporation for the second-generation.

### **Ethnicity, Religion, and Incorporation**

As it was pointed out at the end of last section, growing up in Canada is for the children of immigrants not a straightforward experience but rather a complex and bumpy process. Canadian sociologist Isajiw (1999) characterized the growing-up experience for this cohort as a double process of socialization (p. 193). On the one hand, second-generation receive socialization through their parents and ethnic institutions regarding the basic traditional culture and identity of the first-generation. On the other hand, they are socialized through the public school system and other social agencies regarding the culture and identity of the broader society (p. 193). This section focuses on the first process and examines how ethnicity and religion, in particular the evangelical faith tradition, of the second-generation come to be associated with each other through exposure to the first-generation parents' congregations, and how they intersect in the

socialization process to affect the transition of SCGGE to the congregations of their choice.

**Ethnicity.** Ethnicity as a research subject in sociology appears to have arisen to prominence only in the 20th century (Kivisto, 2007, p. 491). Feagin and O'Brien (2010) suggested that the emergence of ethnic analysis is linked to the focus of sociologists on migration and assimilation over the last few decades rather than on racial analysis alone (p. 52). Feagin and O'Brien (pp. 52-53) cited W. L. Warner (1945) as the first to make significant use of the term *ethnicity* referring to ethnic groups that are defined principally by cultural differences as opposed to racial groups that are defined principally by physical attributes. Many contemporary scholars use the term *ethnicity* or *ethnic group* as an umbrella concept to "cover all racial ethnic and religious groups" (Feagin & O'Brien, p. 53). Linking the concept to "people hood," Gordon (1964), for example, defined an ethnic group as one distinguished by race, religion, or national origin (pp. 23-24, 27-28). Denton and Deane (2010), on the other hand, observed that although many researchers (e.g., Alba & Nee, 2005; Perlmann & Waters, 2002) consider race to be a subset of ethnicity, some (e.g., Omi & Winant, 1986; Winant, 2000) still argue that race is a critical variable for research (p. 69).

The root of ethnicity study can be traced back to as early as the Greek philosophers of Homer and Herodotus's era (Isajiw, 1999, p. 17; Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013, p. 4). Defining ethnicity can be arbitrary and problematic (Isajiw, 1979, p. 4). In the following sections, I examine two different approaches in how to problematize

ethnicity: (a) primordial versus situational dimensions of ethnicity (Kivisto, 2007, p. 492) and (b) objective versus subjective elements of ethnicity (Breton, 2012, p. 47).

*Primordial versus situational dimensions of ethnicity.* One way to problematize ethnicity is to examine it from the perspective of two polar types: “primordial” and “situational” positions (Breton, 2012, p. 10; Kivisto, 2007, p. 492; McKay, 1982, p. 396). Several theoretical frameworks can be identified to hypothesize the nature of ethnicity and how it emerges along the spectrum of primordial and situational dimensions. First, McKay reasoned that in the primordial type, “men are divided due to ‘deep’ historical and experiential factors” (p. 396). Primordial ethnic theorists emphasize that ethnicity is directly tied to a solidarity exhibited through similar physical appearance; common cultural heritage, language, religion; and shared kinship and territorial connection that one is given or acquired at birth (Geertz, 1963; Issac, 1989; Stake, J., 1986; Swidler, 1986). Known also as the essentialist approach, the primordial theory argues that people have an essential need for affinity with those who share the same heritage and nationality (Isajiw, 1999, p. 30). According to Geertz, such primordial attachments are part and parcel of social existence and have “an ineffable, and at time overpowering coerciveness in and of themselves” (pp. 109-110). Thus primordial ethnicity is considered to be more or less fixed and long lasting (Isajiw, 1999, p. 30). S. Kim (2010) asserted that such primordial ethnic bonds continue to exert powerful influence on “the children of immigrants into the third and fourth generations” (p. 6). To that end, Min (2002a) cited primordial ties that are based on “a common language, religion, physical characteristics,

and history associated with their home country” as the “major sources of their ethnicity for Asian immigrants” (p. 7).

Conversely, drawing from Glazer and Moynihan (1975), McKay (1982) argued that in the situational case, ethnicity is contextual and ethnic attachment emerges from specific and immediate contextual circumstances (p. 396). Situational theorists, also known as “circumstantialists” (Breton, 2012, p. 10; Kivisto, 2007, p. 492), opined that ethnicity becomes relevant in some situations but not in others and that individuals can choose to highlight, conceal, or even modulate certain aspects of ethnicity to their advantage (Isajiw, 1999, p. 31; Lee & Bean, 2010, pp. 146-147). No longer defined by cultural heritage as its antecedent, ethnicity seen from this perspective is not fixed and can change for individual economic, social, and political purposes depending upon what situations warrant the change (Okamura, 1981, p. 463; Yancey, Ericksen, & Juliani, 1976, p. 399). As Bell (1975) reasoned, “Ethnicity . . . is best understood not as a primordial phenomenon . . . but as a strategic choice by individuals who in other circumstances would choose other group memberships as a means of gaining some power and privilege” (p. 171). By extension, situationalists view ethnicity as an organizational strategy whereby members seek to satisfy their instrumental needs for economic, social, and political empowerment (Kallen, 2010, p. 139). For example, Lee and Bean (2010) highlighted the way a multiracial group of Asian Whites adopts minority identity for social benefits even though they regard themselves as Whites in most other circumstances (p. 147). Similarly, Collins and Solomos (2010) noted that ethnic identity can be viewed from the perspective of agency and resistance depending upon whether a person is

situated within structures of dominance or facing such dominance. In other words, ethnicity can be construed as a constituting factor of power in social relations (p. 5).

While some researchers (e.g., Bramadat & Seljak, 2008; Brubaker, 2004; McKay, 1982) advocated that these two positions need not be polarized and can be viewed as complementary, a constructionist perspective emerged as an extension of the situational theory in connection with “post-modernist movement in contemporary thought” (Isajiw, 1999, p. 33). Constructionist theory considers ethnicity not as fixed, but rather as fluid and malleable, and suggests that ethnicity is being socially negotiated and constructed in the context of people’s everyday living (Breton, 1990; Conzen et al., 1992; Lee & Zhou, 2004; Min, 2002a; Nagel; 1994; Yancey et al., 1976). Nagel (1994) stated that the constructionist model “emphasizes the socially ‘constructed’ aspects of ethnicity, i.e., the ways in which ethnic boundaries, identities, and cultures, are negotiated, defined, and produced through social interaction inside and outside ethnic communities” (p. 152). Conzen et al. (1992) concurred and defined ethnicity not as “a ‘collective fiction,’ but rather a process of construction or invention which incorporates, adapts, and amplifies preexisting communal solidarities, cultural attributes, and historical memories. That is, it is grounded in real life context and social experience” (“Introduction,” para. 6). Invention theory suggests that ethnic people can have multiple identities and that they selectively use the identity that they consider to be appropriate at a given time in a given situation (Kibria, 2002, pp. 102-103; Min, 2002a, pp. 11-12). S. Kim (2010, pp. 7-8) contended that the greatest level of ethnic invention can be found during the generational

transition between immigrant parents and their children, as R. Kim (2006) and Moore (2006) also attested.

In extending the paradigm of process of invention, Kim and Hurh (1993) suggested that American Korean immigrants engaged in that process as part of their adaptation to the American culture by judiciously selecting different social elements of the American culture to add to their existing ethnic identity while not losing their ethnicity (pp. 709-712). Kim and Hurh judged the two traditional adaptation theories, assimilation and pluralism, as inadequate in their assumptions in that they operate in a mutually exclusive manner, resulting in a zero-sum model. Assimilation holds that immigrants' children will be completely Americanized over time, whereas pluralism suggests that despite a lengthy adaptation, immigrants and their children will continue to preserve their ethnic identity while playing an integral part in the social and political fabric of the United States. These two forces in fact do co-exist in working not to cancel each other out but to shape the ethnicity of Korean Americans in a process called the "adhesive pattern of adaptation," in which "certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are added on to the immigrants' traditional culture and social networks, without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old" (Hurh & Kim, 1984, p. 188).

Echoing Kim and Hurh (1993) and aligning his approach with the ethnicity invention process, F. Yang (1999a) arrived at a similar conclusion in his study on how the second-generation American-born Chinese (ABC) developed their identities. F. Yang observed that this cohort of immigrant children has to juggle three identities at the same

time, characterized by a suite of three labels F. Yang termed *XYZ*. The younger generation acquires their Christian (*X*) identity as the immigrant churches act fiercely to cultivate a universal religious identity among them that transcends the boundaries of Chinese and American identities. Meanwhile, the second-generation were born Chinese, or *Zhongguoren* (*Z*), in the primordial ethnic sense. Finally, they are known as part of the racial minority that is Asian, the Yellow race (*Y*) (p. 90). Using this model, F. Yang (1999a) argued that the second-generation Chinese engage in an “adaptive integration” process, one that adds “multiple identities together without necessarily losing any particular one” (p. 185).

Similarly, in a study on how second-generation American Indians address their identity construction when growing into their teenage year and emergent adulthood, Bacon (1999) concluded that this cohort judiciously appropriates the first-generation’s rhetoric toward public life and merges them with American ideas to forge a generational identity of their own that “allows them to interact in the public realm both with their parents’ organizations and with the organizations of other segments of the new second generation” (p. 158).

***Objective versus subjective elements of ethnicity.*** A second approach to problematize ethnicity is to juxtapose its objective and subjective elements. Objective elements of ethnicity generally refer to a real or presumed common origin or descent, shared cultural and/or religious heritage, and identical historical experiences (Breton, 2012, p. 47; Isajiw, 1999, p. 17; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001, p. 496). These objective elements find their distinct expression usually in customs, language,

values, and a set of symbols (Breton, 2012, p. 47). Subjective dimension, on the other hand, focuses on the process by which individuals attach significance to the objective elements in differentiating themselves from others and shape their behaviors in the context of in-group/out-group relationship accordingly (p. 48). This process of “psychological identification” of being different therefore lies with the actors’ own sense of what constitutes significance so as to carve out a social boundary (p. 48; Isajiw, 1979, pp. 11-12). As an early example of objective definition, Herodotus (2008) articulated a general conception of ethnicity as a people of common descent who shared a common language, gods, sacred places, sacrificial festivals, customs, mores or ways of life, as well as “the common character they bear” (Book VIII). Conversely, from the perspective of conceptualizing ethnicity with its subjective dimensions, Weber (1978) linked ethnicity to a collectivity and defined it, or ethnic groups, as:

Those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and immigration . . . (irrespective of) whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. (p. 389)

Implicit in Weber’s (1978) concept of ethnic groups is the assumption that groups are socially constructed and that their identities are determined by the group members. However, apart from self-identification, group identity can also be ascribed by others external to the group. In this regard, Weber was mute about the role dominant outsiders play in imposing identities on the marginalized sectors of society (Kivisto, 2007, pp. 491-492). Recognizing Weber’s shortcoming, Christiano, Swatos, and Kivisto (2002)

advanced the following definition, combining both the objective and the subjective components as well as including the ascribed identification dimension:

Ethnic groups are composed of people who are presumed, by members of the group itself and by outsiders, to have a shared collective origin and history and a common set of cultural attributes that serve to establish boundaries between the group and the larger society. (p. 155)

In addition, other researchers recognized that while ethnic group members may share common origin and cultural attributes, the membership is not by choice (Breton & Pinard, 1960; Francis, 1947; Isajiw, 1975, 1999). Connected to the peoplehood or the *Gemeinschaft* type, the involuntary characteristic of ethnic groups highlights the emotional relationship of the group members on the psychological level, articulating with feelings of sympathy and loyalty toward one another (Breton & Pinard, 1960, p. 474; Francis, 1947, p. 395; Isajiw, 1979, p. 20; Kivisto, 2007, p. 492). Incorporating this involuntary nature, Isajiw (1979) defined the ethnic group as “an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or . . . (who are) descendants of such people who identify themselves and/or are identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group” (pp. 21-22). Conceived in this manner, ethnicity or ethnic group provides a basis for the formation of one’s identity and plays a key role in shaping it by determining who people are in their own eyes and in those of others (Breton, 1990, p. 5).

Given the broad definitions of ethnicity or ethnic group, ethnic identity can then be conceptualized as belongingness to the ethnicity’s group (Greeley, 1972). Collins and Solomos (2010) observed that “at a basic level, identity is about belonging, about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others” (p. 5). For

that reason, Phinney et al. (2001) defined ethnic identity simply as “an individual sense of self in terms of membership in a particular ethnic group” (p. 496). Tajifel (1981) accentuated “the values and emotional significance attached to that membership” (p. 255). Isajiw (1975) expanded the concept of ethnic identity to mean a “commitment to a social grouping of common ancestry, existing within a large society of different ancestral origins, and characterized by sharing of some common values, behavioral patterns or symbols different from those of the larger society” (p. 129). Kallen (1995) further distinguished the concept of individual ethnic identity from its collective counterpart. Whereas the former refers to the individuals’ relationship to their own ethnic collectivity in terms of the strength and scope of the group attributes with which they associate, collective ethnic identity underscores the agreed-upon distinctive characteristics in terms of what constitutes the group and how they differentiate the group from the other groups (pp. 83-84). In later research on ethnic identity retention, Isajiw (1990) recognized the need to add a dimension in terms of internality and externality of ethnic identity to characterize and reflect the individual–community interaction. Commenting on the interaction, Isajiw noted:

Locating oneself in relation to a community and society is not only a psychological phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon in the sense that the internal psychological states express themselves objectively in external behavior patterns that come to be shared by others. Thus, individuals locate themselves in one or another community internally by states of mind and feelings . . . and externally by behavior appropriate according to these minds and feelings. (pp. 35-36)

Isajiw (1990) further distinguished three dimensions of internal aspect of identity: cognitive, moral, and affective. Cognitive dimension points to an ethnic individual's self-image and images of one's group; knowledge of the ethnic group's heritage and history; and knowledge of the group's values (p. 36). Conversely, considered as the central dimension of subjective identity, moral dimension refers to an ethnic individual's feelings of group obligation that represent "the commitment the person has to his (or her) group and for the group solidarity that ensues" (p. 36). Finally, the affective aspect of identity is related to the feelings of attachment to the ethnic group. Two types of attachment feeling can be further distinguished: (a) sympathy and associative preference for fellow members of the ethnic group over members of the other groups and (b) comfort with the cultural patterns of one's own ethnic group as opposed to that of other groups or societies (p. 37).

External identity, on the other hand, refers to observable cultural and social behaviors. These behaviors may include speaking of ethnic language and practice ethnic traditions, participating in ethnic social network and ethnic activities, and being involved in ethnic institutions such as religious institutions and in voluntary associations such as benevolent associations (Isajiw, 1990, p. 36).

In a study on Chinese American immigrants, Kwan and Sodowsky (1997) demonstrated how the internal/external dimension of Isajiw's definition of ethnic identity provided a framework to relate to the salience of ethnicity regarding the Chinese cultural attribute of shame (i.e. loss of face) and social standing (p. 51). Gin (2009) echoed Kwan and Sodowsky's findings and suggested that for Asians, "an understanding of ethnic

identity that adds an external focus is more appropriate” (p. 184). Zhou and Lee (2004) opined that for Asian American youths, the expression of their identities reflects a choice they make through a dialectical process that involves both an internal process in terms of socialization of Asian values and shared experienced of growing up Asian, and an external process of outsiders’ ascription of who they are (p. 21). These two processes of self-identification and identification by others are what Barth (1969) referred to as the critical feature of ethnicity: *ethnic boundary*. In his seminal work, Barth reasoned that what differentiates an ethnic group is not its culture but rather the group boundary that is determined both by the members and the outsiders. The key determinants are the socially relevant factors that are deemed significant by the members, not the “objective” differences such as physical appearance of the members (pp. 14-15). For Isajiw (1999), identity definition is seen as a “process of self-inclusion or exclusion and inclusion and exclusion by others” (p. 176). It follows that ethnicity is an exercise of what Isajiw called a double boundary definition: a boundary from within, established by the ethnic socialization process, and a boundary from without, established by external barrier and intergroup relationship (p. 20).

***Generations and ethnicity retention.*** Along the intersection of ethnicity and ethnic generations, Hansen (1952) was the first to formulate the so-called “principle of third-generation interest” (p. 495). Characterizing it as an “almost universal phenomenon,” Hansen suggested that “what the son wishes to forget” about the ethnic culture and practices, “the grandson wishes to remember” (p. 495). Some agreed that ethnic identity construction or the lack of becomes a salient issue during generational

transition (Kim, S., 2010, pp. 7-8; Matsuoka, 1995, p. 50). Differing from Hansen, however, Isajiw (1999) suggested that each generation, be it first, second, or third, constructs its own identity in a different way and therefore its identity is different from that of the other generations (p. 33). He further added that the “persistence of ethnicity over generation depends not so much on the maintenance of the form of ethnicity constructed by the first generation, as on the emergence of new forms constructed by each succeeding generation” (p. 33). In examining the ethnic maintenance process in the Canadian context, Isajiw (1975) delineated three patterns that form an explanatory framework for retention or loss of ethnicity over generations. First, the pattern of transplantation is related to the attempts by the first-generation immigrants to re-establish and follow the institutional practices of their ethnic culture when they arrive in the new country (Breton, 2012, pp. 17-18). Transplantation allows the immigrants to build emotional connection and social network with co-ethnics in their settlement (Isajiw, p. 132). In this regard, ethnicity retention is a function of the degree of institutional completeness in terms of the availability of ethnic organizations and participation in such institutions (Breton, 1964, p. 194; Kallen, 1995, pp. 86-87). The second pattern, rebellion, characterizes the awareness of the cultural and social background of the second generation (Isajiw, 1975, p. 133). This pattern may be typical of the second generation but can be applied to any generational relationship and not limited to the ethnic communities. Rebellion emerges from the emotional confrontation of the children with their parents’ culture and their interaction with the larger society (p. 133). Isajiw further remarked that a possible outcome of such confrontation could be either embarrassment, dissatisfaction with, or shame of one’s own parental patterns and expectations.

The reaction may be a conscious rejection of one's past, or it may be an overidentification with the dominant society, or still another form of reaction may be a commitment to ideologies or utopias involving some ideal patterns of universal justice or love. (p. 133)

Finally, the returning or rediscovery pattern applies to the generation that has experienced no cultural confrontation with their parents. In other words, it may apply to the second or third ethnic generation who have experienced no rebellion pattern but have been socialized in the culture of the dominant society. In addition to participating in the basic socialization process, the cohort who experiences the rediscovery pattern tends to be socially mobile and connects with their ancestral past in a symbolic manner with new meaning "rediscovered" (Isajiw, 1975, p. 134). Isajiw's (1975) hypothesis aligns consistently with the studies that claim that ethnic identities of immigrant children may become less salient and more symbolic in nature over time (Gans, 1979; Waters, 1990).

Isajiw (1975) then introduced a dimension of commitment with opposing poles over these three patterns: traditional commitment versus symbolic commitment. Here Isajiw leveraged Breton's (1964) concept of *institutional completeness* as a dimension of ethnic solidarity or cohesion (p. 194). Institutional completeness is viewed as the extent to which an ethnic group in a particular locale possesses organizations developed by or for members of that group (E. Herberg, 1989, p. 208). For Isajiw, higher institutional completeness with traditional commitment may bode well for the transplantation pattern but at the same time may evoke a pattern of rebellion. On the other hand, a degree of institutional completeness with symbolic commitment favors the rediscovered pattern but

at the same time alienates those who commit to the ethnic culture in a traditional manner (pp. 134-135).

Applying this explanatory framework specifically to second-generation immigrant children in Canada, Isajiw (1999) observed that this cohort experiences a double process of socialization: The first one takes place with their parents and with ethnic organizations that shape their ethnic identity; the second one takes place at public schools and social agencies in which interactions between the second-generations and the broader society lead them to a process of incorporation into the culture and identification with the broader society. Embedded early in the second-generation's consciousness, this world of "doubleness" becomes a daily reality for them growing up in their own home country (p. 193).

Exploring the choices the second-generation may make in dealing with conflicts that arise from addressing the double process, Isajiw (1999) further identified five social-psychological options or strategies (pp. 193-194). The first one, postulated by Isajiw as perhaps the most common strategy, suggests that the second-generation keep the "two worlds" apart when managing the inconsistencies that the two worlds present, leading to the conflicting issues being compartmentalized and unresolved (p. 194). The next option sees the second-generation giving primacy to ethnicity by engaging primarily through interaction with first-generation members as well as their ethnic friends at the ethnic community to resolve the double process conflicts (p. 194). This option draws the second-generation closer to the transplantation pattern discussed earlier without insisting that they reject the broader society.

At the opposite end lies Isajiw's (1999) third strategy, which represents the second-generation "pushing aside" their ethnicity in favor of embracing the mainstream society with which they strongly identify. This "pushing aside" manifests itself in two forms: distancing and rebellion. Distancing implies that the second-generation is devoted to the pursuit of the values of the mainstream society and participate in the activities of the ethnic communities on only a limited basis. They take their rebellion a step further by not only rejecting the ethnic values and identity but also casting them in a negative light when comparing them with those of the mainstream society. Negative though its effect may be, ethnicity continues to remain in the background in both cases (pp. 194-195). Adding to the third option, the fourth one sees the "pushing aside" occurring with the mainstream society when the second-generation perceive the mainstream society as unjust, repressive, and discriminatory (p. 195). In other words, the second generation adopt this option voluntarily as much as they do because of being forced to by the broader society. Different variations of this option can manifest themselves, ranging from the second-generation rebelling against the mainstream but not the ethnic communities, to the second-generation distancing themselves from both their ethnic affiliation and the mainstream society. Isajiw suggested further that to the extent that this cohort rebels against its ethnicity, it is reacting against its transplantation pattern and its traditional commitment. In this scenario the "rebels" may even offer a symbolic-ideological commitment as a means to reconcile with their own ethnic background (pp. 195-196).

Isajiw's (1999) last strategy represents a creative approach that the second-generation adopt to bring the two worlds together in an "innovative and meaningful manner" such that conflicts can be resolved in a way that others can identify (p. 196). Such an approach, Isajiw contended, usually manifests itself in writing, art, and culturally creative work by those who are engaged in the double process (p. 197). Isajiw stretched this option further to characterize not only the second generation but also the subsequent generations who have generally gone through not the double process of socialization but incorporation primarily by the mainstream society. For them, their ethnic identity can be characterized as "ethnic rediscovery," which represents "a process of identity construction based on selected elements of a tradition such as cultural symbols in terms of art, music, or ethnic rituals; and selective knowledge of the ethnic group history that validates their identity" (p. 197). As Isajiw (1975) pointed out in his earlier research, ethnic rediscovery can take place in both the second and the third generations not through the traditional ethnic commitment but rather through symbolic commitment (pp. 133-136).

For the purpose of this dissertation, I treated ethnicity as a fluid quality that allows for it being treated as a marker for ethnic tradition as well as a symbolic invention. In addition, I employed Isajiw's discourses on generation retention/creation of ethnicity as the lens to explore how ethnicity affects SGCCE in their growing up in context of ethnic religious institutions.

**Religion.** As with ethnicity, defining religion is problematic. For example, Bramadat (2009) lamented that a common definition is difficult to establish (p. 11), and

Mol (1976) regarded many existing attempts as “strategically dysfunctional” (p. 4). However, broadly speaking, many researchers have taken various approaches to define religion along a continuum anchored by substantive definitions and functional definitions at each opposing end (Dawson & Thiessen, 2014, p. 25). Pals (2006) summarized substantive definitions as those that center on the beliefs or ideas that religious people commit to and find important (p. 13). E. B. Tylor’s (1871) minimal definition of religion as “belief in spiritual beings” is a traditional representative of this category (Vol. 1, p. 424). Tylor’s definition is not without problems. Dawson and Thiessen categorized the problems with Tylor’s definition of religion as falling into three camps: (a) it suggests that religions are no more than a set of beliefs; (b) it also tends to exclude certain forms of religion, such as Buddhism; and (c) it employs dictions that are in and of themselves in need of further definition, such as the word “spiritual” (pp. 25-27). Pals further described functional definitions as those that reject the idea of religion in favor of understandings of how it operates in people’s life in terms of what sense of comfort it brings or what support it provides for a group of individuals who claim to follow a certain set of beliefs (p. 13). Pals cited Freud as an example of someone who was interested primarily not in religious beliefs but in how they operate in religious people such that these people would hold these beliefs and develop deep convictions about them (p. 64). Drawing from his work on psychoanalysis, Freud asserted that religious teachings are considered as neurotic relics and religion arises from emotions and conflicts that originate early in childhood (Pals, 2006, pp. 71, 77). The difficulty with Freud’s approach is that “religion

cannot be explained merely on the level of the psychology of individuals” (Collins, 2007, p. 23).

Many sociologists have attempted to situate their own definitions between the two poles of substantivism and functionalism. As the ones responsible for “turning the focus of professional sociology in its earliest years specifically toward the sociology of religion” (Pals, 2006, p. 181), Durkheim (1995) and Weber (1991) offered two distinctive views of religion. Combining elements from both ends of the spectrum, Durkheim characterized religion as a “unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things . . . which unite into one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them” (p. 44). He further elaborated as sacred things that “are set apart and forbidden” (p. 44). Sacred things are those that involve large concerns: the interests and welfare of a collectivity. Conversely, profane things are little matters such as the day-to-day private business of each individual (Pals, 2006, p. 96). The distinguishing feature of religion resides in the very division of world into these two opposite existence (Dawson & Thiessen, 2014, p. 28; Robertson, 1970, p. 37). The limitation of Durkheim’s thesis lies in the vagueness of what constitutes things as “sacred” since “nothing intrinsically distinguishes sacred things” (Dawson & Thiessen, 2014, p. 28).

Weber (1991), on the other hand, refrained altogether from offering a concrete definition of religion while hypothesizing an approach to its study:

To define “religion” . . . is not possible at the start of a presentation . . . Definition can be attempted, if at all, only at the conclusion of the study. The essence of religion is not even our concern, as we make it our task to study the conditions and effects of a particular type of social behavior. The external courses of

religious behavior are so diverse that an understanding of this behavior can only be achieved from the viewpoint of the subjective experiences, ideas, and purposes of the individuals concerned — in short, from the viewpoint of the religious behavior's "meaning." (p. 1)

In other words, for Weber, religion can be understood only from the perspective of the subjective feeling of the religious. The criticisms leveled against Weber's approach tend to be twofold: (a) evaluation of a subject area usually requires a criterion for its identification and (b) it is the definition of religion, rather than essence of religion, that enables researchers to analyze the subject matter in a rigorous and consistent manner (Robertson, 1970, p. 34).

Influenced and guided by Durkheim's (1995) and Weber's (1991) paradigmatic work, subsequent scholars sought to expand the study of religion along the broad spectrum of substantive and function definition. Geertz (1973), for example, described religion as:

(1) a system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic. (p. 90)

Stark and Finke (2000), on the other hand, argued that religion "consists of very general explanations of existence, including the terms of exchange with a god or gods" (p. 91). They further defined such "explanations" as "conceptual simplifications or models of reality that often provide plans designed to guide action" (p. 87).

W. Herberg (1962) described religion in three dimensions. First, "conventional religion" is regarded as a "system of attitudes, beliefs, feelings, standards, and practices

that, in the particular society, generally receive the name of religion” (p. 145). Second, “operative religion” is taken to “signify that system of attitudes, beliefs, feelings, standards, and practices that actually does in fact provide the society with an ultimate context of meaning and value in terms of which social life is integrated and social activities are validated” (p. 146). Finally, religion is “understood existentially as the structure of one’s being oriented to one’s ultimate concern” that drives a “man’s life insofar as it is defined by his supreme loyalty and devotion” (p. 146).

Alternatively, Robertson (1970) chose to draw on the substantive and cultural content of religion and defined it from two perspectives: culture and action. He further asserted:

Religious culture is that set of beliefs and symbols (and values deriving directly therefrom) pertaining to a distinction between an empirical and a super-empirical, transcendent reality; the affairs of the empirical being subordinated in significance to the non-empirical . . . religious action (is) simply . . . action shaped by an acknowledgment of the empirical/super-empirical distinction. (p. 47)

C. Smith (2003) interpreted Robertson’s definition and distilled it into the following statement:

*Religions are sets of beliefs, symbols, and practices about the reality of superempirical orders that make claims to organize and guide human life. Put more simply, if less precisely, what we mean by religion is an ordinarily unseen reality that tells us what truly is and how we therefore ought to live. (p. 98, emphasis in original)*

For the purpose of the present dissertation, I adopted C. Smith’s (2003) characterization of religion to determine how religion in the form of evangelical beliefs,

symbols, and practices collectively intersects with SGCCE's ethnicity and how the two shape and guide their choice of a congregation of their own. Although Foner and Alba (2008) noted that in earlier studies, religion has "generally taken a backseat to other topics in the immigration field" (p. 360), researchers since have garnered support and generated momentum both in the United States and Canada in focusing on how both new immigrants and their children related to their assimilation experience through the lens of religion in the congregational context (Alumkal, 2003; Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Botros, 2005; Bramadat & Seljak 2008, 2009; Busto, 1999; Carnes & Yang, 2004; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Jeung et al., 2012; Kim, R., 2004; Kim, S., 2010; Li, Q., 2000; Muse, 2005; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, F., 1999b). According to Breton (2012), religion in the form of congregation plays three roles in assisting immigrants in the process of adaptation to the new world. First, a religious affiliation provides a beachhead for immigrants to deal with the cultural disorientation and helps redefine their social identity. Second, churches assist immigrants in coping with the loss of former social networks and in establishing new ones. Finally, religious institutions help immigrants to deal with social marginality (p. 17).

The concept of studying religion in the congregational form was brought to the fore by R. S. Warner (1998a, 1998b), "one of the most prominent sociologists of religion to have advanced the study of the" new immigrants and religion (Kivisto, 2007, p. 497). Demerath and Farnsely (2007) conceptualized congregations from two perspectives: top-down and bottom-up. Viewed from the top-down, congregations are a formal organizational structure with connection to a larger religious identity, such as a

denomination or a synagogue, that touches and enfolds individual congregants. Seen from the bottom-up, congregations are the voluntary religious communities that provide the congregants with the “most intimate and potentially influential contact with religious organization” (p. 193). Ammerman (1997) noted that congregations are local, voluntary in nature, and necessarily diverse in their characteristics (p. 1). They are a part of a community’s institutional infrastructure and a part of the structures and connections that make social life possible. As such, congregations are “living networks of meaning and activity, constructed by the individual and collective agents who inhabit and sustain them” (p. 346). Extending this characterization, R. S. Warner (1998a) built his framework on three propositions. First, he argued that the process through which religion manifests its expression specific to one community, be it enculturation or contextualization, is not a static one. For immigrants and their children, the process can be “dramatic and visible” (p. 9). Consequently, no single experience with this process can be considered as the gold standard. Second, focusing on congregations implies for R. S. Warner examining what the communities do “religiously” for themselves, not what others do or do not do on their behalf (p. 9). This perception implies that the meaning emerging from the process of religious manifestation is constructed locally in the community of the congregation. This is not to discount the common beliefs these communities may share with others via umbrella organizations, such as Christian denominations. But the actors and the arenas for social construction of religion are inherently local (pp. 9-10). Consequently, the last presupposition R. S. Warner made in framing his approach is this: religion exists in the form not of texts but of living

communities (p. 9). R. S. Warner refuted the claim that “true religion is found only in the Bible and stands outside the world” (p. 9). For the purpose of this study, I argue, as pointed out in the analysis of transition of the second-generation Asian North American evangelicals (Alumkal, 2003, 2004; Busto, 1996), that religious teachings and sacred texts do play a role in shaping and giving primacy to their religious identity over their ethnic identity. At the same time, however, I recognize that religious expression becomes vivid only at the local congregational level, partly through the leadership of the pastors/leaders in how they interpret the text, postulate the meaning, and negotiate identity, both religious and ethnic, with the congregants (Jeung, 2002, p. 212, 2005, p. 159). To summarize, R. S. Warner argued that religion in its congregational form, local and voluntary, is the environment that new immigrants and their children contact in which religious expression has come alive through their inherent actors and arenas (p. 21).

In the context of the present study that examined how religion may intersect with ethnicity and how the two play a role in the incorporation process through the transitory experience through different churches, I followed the framework of R. S. Warner (1998a, 1998b) in terms of his articulation of the congregation as the arena in which religious experience is manifested and therefore in which both religious and ethnic identities are negotiated.

**Ethnicity, religion, and the incorporation process.** Although religion has received little attention in earlier studies as a variable for analysis of assimilation of the second-generation in Canada (van Dirk & Botros, 2009), recent research has begun

reversing this trend (Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Bramadat & Seljak, 2008, 2009; Ramji, 2008; Wong & Simon, 2010). Many researchers (e.g., Jeung et al., 2012; Mullins, 1987; Yang, F., 1999b) pointed to Niebuhr (1957) as well as W. Herberg (1983) as the earlier voices in problematizing religion as a variable in shaping the ethnicity of immigrants and their children and in the context of assimilation. Niebuhr contended that two forces are evident in shaping the immigrants and their relationship with religion. The first force moves the immigrants “toward conformity with the prevalent religious attitudes and practices which have been established by the churches previously acclimated in America” (Niebuhr, p. 203). The second, however, compels the immigrants “toward the differentiation of the immigrant church from the prevailing type, toward the preservation or development of its distinct character” (p. 203). These two forces collide to give “rise of new denominations as well as the merging of immigrant churches” (p. 203).

Despite the push and pull of different forces of assimilation such as the public school system and intermarriage influencing immigrants and their offspring (Horn, 2005, p. 37), W. Herberg (1983) argued in the context of the United States of America that the Eurocentric immigrants and their children would decline over time in terms of their affiliation with their home country and ethnic heritage, and that religion would become the only marker that differentiates the social identity of later generations. He asserted:

The newcomer is expected to change many things about him as he becomes American — nationality, language, culture. One thing, however, he is not expected to change — and that is his religion. And so it is religion that with the third generation has become the differentiating element and the context of self-identification and social location. (p. 23)

W. Herberg (1983) posited that ethnicity revolved around answering the questions “Who am I?” and “To which group do I belong?” (pp. 12-13). Extending Hansen’s (1952) principle of the third-generation, religion becomes “an acceptable, even desirable, way” for the third-generation to locate and incorporate themselves into American life, given that they want to “remember what their parents wanted to forget” (O’Brien, 2005, p. 44). W. Herberg (1963) argued that ethnic groups who resisted cultural assimilation and persisted in self-perpetuation, such as Blacks and Orientals, were considered part of an “alien race.” The only kind of diversity Americans recognized was the “separateness of religious community” (pp. 37-38). This narrow-minded approach led W. Herberg to conclude that the religious community would displace the ethnic group “as a primary form of self-identification and belonging in contemporary America” (p. 29). So convinced of this process was W. Herberg (1983) that he proclaimed that “America is indeed . . . the land of the ‘triple melting pot,’ for it is within these three religious communities [i.e., Protestant, Catholic and Jewish] that the process of ethnic and cultural integration so characteristic of American life takes place” (p. 37).

Though W. Herberg’s (1983) articulation of American immigrant ethnicity transformation through the three religions was hailed as “seminal” (Kim, S., 2010, p. 100) and “monumental” (Nordstrom, 2005, p. 66), its conclusion was based upon an examination of European immigrants and their offspring, and it has been criticized for ignoring a number of key factors. For example, Stein (2005) identified a few “oversights”: (a) an exclusion of immigrants whose race was non-white (e.g., Blacks and Latin American immigrants); (b) the existence of a variety of marginal Protestant groups

(e.g., the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints); (c) the emergence of the evangelical revival in the postwar period; and (d) the account of religious diversity that includes, for example, Hinduism or Buddhism, which are usually associated with Asian immigrants (pp. 16-21). In addition, W. Herberg did not anticipate the influx of non-European immigrants, post 1965 in the United States and post 1967 in Canada, who encountered a more different, and perhaps more difficult, assimilation process than their Caucasian counterparts (Jeung et al., 2012, p. 2).

As a result of the shifting demographics, scholars such as Jeung (2005) and Schwarz (2004) concluded that W. Herberg's "triple melting pot" theory is no longer applicable in understanding how immigrants' children are assimilated into the host country. In particular, the assimilation journey has been seen to be diverse for Asian Americans in terms of its intersection with religion. Some researchers (e.g., Chai, 1998; Kim, R., 2006; Min & Kim, 2005) concluded that, for example, second-generation Korean Americans embrace and practice religion not after the tradition of their parents' faith but rather following the model of mainstream evangelicalism. Others (e.g., Alumkal, 2003; Beyer & Ramji, 2013; Botros, 2005; Bramadat & Seljak, 2008, 2009; Busto, 1999; Carnes & Yang, 2004; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Jeung et al., 2012; Kim, R., 2004; Kim, S., 2010; Li, Q., 2000; Muse, 2005; Warner & Wittner, 1998; Yang, F., 1999a) found that religion, or its institution such as congregations, plays a vital role for the first- and second-generation of Asian Americans to mediate their ethnic culture, preserve the home country's traditions, and reinforce the ethnic identity. The reliance on the religious institution for ethnic preservation is more pronounced for

the Koreans (Chong, 1998) than for the Chinese (Yang, F., 1999a) in the United States since the church is the dominant site for ethnic gatherings for the Koreans, whereas for the Chinese Americans, churches may well be competing against other ethnic associations (such as hometown associations or benevolent societies) and schools that exist in the community (Abel, 2008; Yang, F., 1999a) for institutional completeness (Breton, 1964, p. 194; Satzewich & Liidakis, 2013, p. 11). In fact, Jeung et al. (2012) suggested that when it comes to understanding the new immigrants and especially their children in terms of their identities and religious association, there can be multiple pathways for conceptualizing how the intersection of religion and ethnicity manifests itself (p. 3).

Since W. Herberg's (1983) seminal thesis appeared, others have contributed in conceptualizing the interrelationship between religion and ethnicity in the immigrants' setting, and how the intersection of the two may interrelate to the assimilation process. Church historian T. Smith (1978) characterized immigration as a "theologizing experience" whereby immigrants become more religious as they acculturate in the new country of settlement (van Dijk & Botros, 2009, p. 192). According to T. Smith's hypothesis, religion is the variable that shapes the migration experience, which in turn generates three key changes in the relationship of faith and ethnic identity: (a) a redefinition of the boundaries of ethnicity in religious terms; (b) an intensification of theological reflection and ethnoreligious commitment as a result of resettlement; and (c) a revitalization of the conviction that the goal of history is the creation of a common brotherhood of faith (p. 1161). Smith further suggested that ethnic association is largely

determined by the immigrant's identification with a particular religion more than by other factors such as language, national feeling, and a common descent (p. 1169). To sum up, traditional loyalty to the customs and beliefs of the immigrant's faith has been "the decisive determinants of ethnic affiliation in America" (p. 1174).

Greeley (1971), on the other hand, advanced a view that characterizes the relationship between religion and ethnicity as intimate and inseparable: "A more fruitful way of viewing the (relationship) . . . is to acknowledge that religion and ethnicity are intertwined, that religion plays an ethnic function in American society and ethnicity has powerful religious overtones" (p. 82). He further viewed this relationship as a variable for self-definition for various people in the United States. Some regard religion as their principal marker; others look to ethnicity, and "still others choose some sort of subtle combination of both" (p. 86). The variation of how religion and ethnicity intertwined can also be found not only between but also within religious collectivities.

Loewen (2008), on the other hand, identified six discourses to interrogate ethnoreligious relationship among Canadian Mennonites. The first discourse sees ethnicity being given precedence in terms of which religious tradition is degraded or rejected. The next one regards Mennonite ethnicity as worthy of being celebrated but expresses little interest in traditional Mennonite religiousness. The third approach is adopted by those Mennonites who call themselves "neo-Anabaptists" but they "are guarded on . . . (their) ethnicity" (p. 351). Then there is the fourth view that links both ethnicity and Mennonite faith directly and intentionally to one another. The fifth discourse, Mennonite ethnicity is regarded as "symbolic" without religious significance

but exists alongside Mennonite religious faith (p. 354). With the final discourse, identification as Mennonite carries no religious or ethnic value but is retained only for socialization and integration purposes (pp. 346-356).

Recognizing that connection to the immigrant forefathers' religion "remains one of the ways by which ethnic group identity is expressed and maintained in America" (p. 55), Hammond and Warner (1993) suggested three patterns to help religion and ethnic intersection to emerge, all three of them shaped by forces of assimilation and secularization (pp. 56-57). The first one, referred to as "ethnic fusion," regards religion as the major foundation of ethnicity, as in the examples of the Amish, Hutterites, Jews, and Mormons. Ethnicity under this scenario can be conceptualized as equivalent to religion, and if the religious identity is denied, so is the ethnic identity. In the second pattern, called "ethnic religion", religion is only one of several foundations of ethnicity, while others such as language and territorial origin also serve as markers for ethnic identification. Ethnicity in this pattern extends beyond religion in the sense that a person can claim ethnic identification without claiming the religious identification, but the reverse is rare, as in the examples of the Greek or Russian Orthodox and the Dutch Reformed. The last pattern, dubbed "religious ethnicity," is the opposite of the second one in that a religion can be associated with multiple ethnic groups. Religion in this pattern therefore extends beyond ethnicity, and religious identification can be claimed without claiming the ethnic identification. Examples of this pattern include Irish, Italian, and Polish Catholics and Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish Lutherans (pp. 58-59).

One of the gaps in Hammond and Warner's patterns of intersection is that it ignores the non-European immigrants and their descendents. Specifically, the authors did not take into account of those ethnic groups that adopt a nontraditional religion such as Chinese Evangelicals in North America (Yang & Ebaugh, 2001, p. 369). Regarding the second-generation faithful, Jeung et al. (2012) argued that they do not merely look to religion to define their identity. Rather, they negotiate their identity in the intersection of race, ethnicity, and religion (p. 3). Four pathways emerged from the authors' research that reflects the identity negotiation process. The first one is called "religious primacy," adherents of religions place a premium on their religious identity over all other identities, as in the example of Asian American evangelicals attending multiethnic congregations and Muslims (p. 3). The second pathway is the practice of racialized religion in that "religion does not transcend race and ethnicity but rather affirms racial boundaries that are a product of racialized experiences in the United States" (p. 3). Examples are the Asians and Latinos who have been racialized and forced to affiliate with a religion of their own race in the United States. Likewise, Black Christianity appears to be ethnicized in the United Kingdom under similar circumstances (Kalilombe, 1997, pp. 307, 310-312). The third pathway, ethnoreligious hybridization, reflects processes by which second-generations employ multicultural discourse to redefine religious experience and to merge their religious and ethnic identities. Examples of this pathway are the Korean American Evangelicals and Filipino American Catholics. The last pathway includes those noncongregational religious and spiritual traditions that are "domestic and kin centered"

and identified with an “ethnic” family (Jeung et al., p. 3). Examples include American Indians and American Hindus and Chinese who practice the tradition popular religion.

**Incorporation process.** Ethnic incorporation can be seen as a social process by which the immigrants are integrated into the main society. As such, it can be problematized from the perspective of the relationship between the dominant majority of the society and the ethnic minority. Kallen (2010) postulated that two options exist in the incorporation exercise: (a) cultural integration or acculturation and (b) structural integration or assimilation (p. 161). Cultural integration implies that objects, ideas, customs, behavior patterns, and values from the majority are selectively acquired and absorbed by the minority groups (p. 162). Assimilation, according to Kallen, refers to the social process whereby the ethnic minorities socialize with, and fully participate in, the mainstream cultural institutions rather in ethnic communities of their own (p. 162). Q. Li (2000), on the other hand, suggested that ethnic incorporation is generally divided into three types: assimilation, accommodation, and pluralism. Assimilation refers to the situation in which the members of minority groups have absorbed the features of the dominant majority to the exclusion of their own and become indistinguishable from the members of the mainstream society. Accommodation, however, sees minority groups accepting selected features from the majority group, such as language or the style of clothing, while still maintaining many elements of their traditional cultures and different degrees of ethnic identity. Finally, pluralism implies that minority groups retain their distinct features, presumably with the full approval of the majority group (Li, Q., 2000, p. 23).

Researchers traced the contemporary discussion of assimilation to the Chicago school of Sociology at the turn of the 20th century. In 1921, Park and Burgess (1969) conceptualized assimilation as “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (p. 735). R. E. Park (1950) contended that at the heart of incorporation there exists a “race relations cycle” (p. 150). This cycle of events characterizes the process through which an alien culture is being “taken over and incorporated” into the host society (p. 204). The assimilation process takes into the form of “contacts, competition, accommodation and eventual assimilation” and is “progressive and irreversible” (p. 150). The only variation exists not in the eventual outcome of assimilation, but rather in how competition may lead to a further step of conflict, which would eventually yield fusion of the cultures (Park & Burgess, 1969, pp. 746-750). In that scenario, the process takes the form of “competition, conflict, accommodation and assimilation” (Hughes, 1950, p. xi). Regarded by R. E. Park as a “melting pot” process, the race relation cycle and its fusion of both alien and host cultures allows “new cultures” to emerge (Park, R. E., 1950, p. 192; Park & Burgess, 1969, p. 734). Conceptualized in this context, assimilation is irresistible, irreversible, and natural (Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 828; Ooka, 2002, p. 8; Park, R. E., 1950, p. 150). In spite of this assertion, R. E. Park (1950) acknowledged that Orientals and Blacks of his era were unable to achieve the last step of the cycle, a phenomenon he attributed to the persistence of race consciousness of the Whites and not to the theoretical validity of the assimilation cycle (pp. 100-107; Yu,

2001, p. 41). Although R. E. Park's theory of assimilation looks straight forward, critics argue that it is perhaps too deterministic (Driedger, 1989, p. 38) and restricted only to describing early European immigrants' experience in the United States, with such an inevitable outcome of assimilation not necessarily being applied in multiethnic societies (Alba & Nee, p. 828; Satzewich & Liidakis, 2013, p. 39).

Expanding on R. E. Park's work, Gordon (1964) conceptualized a modified assimilation process into seven stages: (a) cultural or behavioral assimilation (acculturation into the cultural patterns of the host society); (b) structural assimilation (large-scale entrance into primary group institutions of the host society); (c) marital assimilation (large-scale intermarriage); (d) identification assimilation (development of a sense of people-hood based exclusively on the host society); (e) attitude receptional assimilation (absence of prejudice); (f) behavioral receptional assimilation (absence of discrimination); and (g) civic assimilation (absence of value and power conflict) (p. 71, table 5). A multidimensional/multivariable model, Gordon's theory of assimilation differs from R. E. Park's in that the complete outcome of incorporation as in civic assimilation is neither inevitable nor linear (p. 76, table 6). Some groups might undergo the early stage and stay there indefinitely (e.g., cultural assimilation without full assimilation) (pp. 77-78). But the critical catalyst in the assimilation process is structural assimilation. Gordon asserted that "*once structural assimilation has occurred . . . all of the other types of assimilation will naturally follow*" (p. 81, emphasis in original). While Gordon was primarily concerned with assimilation, he also did acknowledge that three outcomes have been evident in the American incorporation process: (a) Anglo-

conformity; (b) melting-pot; (c) cultural pluralism (pp. 85-86). Though lauded for its multidimensional complexity (Driedger, 1989, p. 43), Gordon's model is found to be too simplistic for understanding stage two of the process (structural assimilation) (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013, p. 39). Many may become assimilated into the "secondary level" of society without much interaction with the primary group life of the dominant society (Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013, p. 39). Another criticism of Gordon's theory lies in its lack of clarity regarding whether it is to be applied to individuals or groups. For example, individuals may be structurally assimilated but broad prejudice may persist at the group level (Alba & Nee, 1997, p. 830).

Both R. E. Park (1950) and Gordon (1964) fundamentally conceptualized assimilation as a zero-sum process in which immigrants would be absorbed into the host country with its new culture and at once renounce their ethnic identity and traditions along the way. Whereas R. E. Park regarded the process as an irresistible engagement with the dominant culture, Gordon never considered the process inexorable. He made a distinction between acculturation and assimilation and allowed for consideration of cultural assimilation rather than complete assimilation (Alba & Nee, 1997; Gans, 1997). Glazer and Moynihan (1963), on the other hand, took a different path from R. E. Park and Gordon in problematizing immigrant incorporation not from the zero-sum assimilation perspective but rather as a process of a combination of change and retention. The outcome of this process can be characterized as modified pluralism (Driedger, 1989, p. 44). Pluralism means that minority groups retain their distinct features, in some cases with the full approval of the majority group and in others as a reactional outcome due to

the discriminatory stance of the majority group (Li, Q., 2000, p. 23). Drawing from four worldwide examples in recent history, Glazer and Moynihan focused more on the dynamics of change that affect the development of group identities rather than on the prediction of the specific end result of the melting pot (Drieger, 1989, p. 45). These examples of “exception” to the straight-path process are: (a) the shaping of the Jewish community under the blunt of Nazi persecution and the formation of the state of Israel (pp. 292-294); (b) the shaping of a Catholic community by the re-emergence of the Catholic school controversy (pp. 294-299); (c) the migration of Blacks to New York in different waves (pp. 299-301); and (d) the influx of Puerto Ricans into the United States following World War II (pp. 299-301). These illustrations have one thing in common: Not every group completed the assimilation process and reached the ideological target of Anglo-conformity, yet all remained distinct ethnic entities. Referring to these experiences as either voluntary or involuntary pluralism, Glazer and Moynihan observed that although all groups change, they are able to retain their distinctive identities in the midst of shifting their cultural traditions to attachment to the new society (pp. 310-315).

With the emergence of the North American-born second-generation of the post 1970s, “the new immigrants,” the linear, straight-path, zero-sum assimilation models have been under criticism for their inability to account for the persistent refusal of visible minorities to be fully incorporated into the dominant culture of the host society (Alba & Nee, 1997; Zhou, 1997a). Glazer (1993), for example, attributed the failure of assimilation to work its effects on Blacks and others to the strength of the discrimination and prejudices that still exist in the mainstream society (p. 122). Alba and Nee (1997),

on the other hand, explained that immigrants do not necessarily begin their incorporation from an *ethnic ground-zero* and proceed in a linear fashion toward assimilation due to the different cultures of the immigrant group (p. 832). Alba and Nee concluded that classic assimilationists formulated their theories based on the experience of the late 19th and early 20th century European North American immigrants and their offspring and failed to take into account the experience of non-European immigrants (Alumkal, 1999, p. 127). Scholars such as Bacon (1999), Kim and Hurh (1993), Ooka (2002) and F. Yang (1999a) asserted that not only is the process of assimilation nonlinear and non zero-sum based but the ethnic second-generation could take their identities in an adaptive, adhesive, and additive manner with a selective and complementary orientation. On the other hand, some contested that ethnicity persists over generations before complete assimilation takes place (Gans, 1997; Glazer & Moynihan, 1963; Hurh & Kim, 1984; Kibra, 2002; Tuan, 1998, 1999).

In an attempt to understand and explain why the new second-generation do not assimilate in the same way as their European counterparts of the first half of the 20th century, and how retention of ethnicity in the new second-generation affects their process of adaption, Portes and Zhou (1993) hypothesized that assimilation takes place in a selective and segmented manner. Three possible outcomes are predicted for the immigrant children through the segmented process. The first outcome sees them following the traditional path of assimilation into the white middle class with upward mobility based on economic success. Conversely, the second outcome points in the opposite direction of the first, leading the local born into persistent poverty and

downward mobility in the lower social classes. The third possibility is for the second-generation to achieve their economic advancement by deliberate preservation of the immigrant community, social solidarity, and ethnic identity (Portes, 1995, p. 251; Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 82).

Furthermore, Portes and Zhou (1993) identified a suite of determinants that adjudicates the process that leads to the possible outcomes of segmented assimilation. The first one is related to the modes of incorporation as defined by the policies of the host government that reflect receptivity, indifference, or hostility toward the new generation (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990, pp. 85-86; Portes & Zhou, 1993, pp. 83-84). The second variant has to do with the values and prejudices of the host society. This is reflected in the vulnerability the youth face in potential downward mobility experiences such as racial discrimination; location of their settlement; and absence of mobility ladders (Portes, 1995, pp. 252-256; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990, pp. 86-87; Portes & Zhou, 1993, pp. 83-85). The last one is concerned with the availability of the social capital of the co-ethnic community in terms of moral and material resources being made accessible through their network to aid the younger generation throughout the incorporation process (Portes, 1995, pp. 256-262; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990, pp. 87-89; Portes & Zhou, 1993, p. 86).

Portes and Zhou (1993) did not see the new second-generation following the first path because of their colour and declining opportunities in an “hour-glass” economy in which a bottleneck hinders their upward mobility (pp. 83-85). Conversely, because the new immigrants tend to settle in the central-city area, their children are prone to be absorbed into the urban underclass identity and stay downwardly mobile at the bottom of

the hour-glass where, in response to racism, they choose to reject the mainstream values and norms (p. 85). An option for avoiding the path of downward mobility becomes viable for the second-generation when they stay involved with the immigrant community of their parents, which provides the younger generation with resources necessary to attain economic achievement of their own (pp. 86-87).

Subsequent to Portes and Zhou's (1993) advancement of the segmented assimilation model, many researchers followed their lead to pursue analysis of incorporation of the new second-generation and found consistent and supporting results (Haller, Portes & Lynch, 2011; Hiller & Chow, 2005; Ooka, 2002; Portes, 2007; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly & Haller, 2005; Portes & Rivas, 2011; Rumbault, 1994; Zhou, 1997b; Zhou & Xiong, 2005), with some research focusing on religious institutions as the site of study (Alumkal, 1999, 2003; Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Cao, 2005).

**Canadian multiculturalism and incorporation.** Ethnic incorporation does not take place in a political, economic, or social vacuum (Satzewich & Lioudakis, 2013, pp. 28-29). In the Canadian context, ethnic and immigrant communities operate in the framework of multiculturalism, which was originally construed as a "doctrine that provides a political framework for the official promotion of social equality and cultural differences as an integral component of the social order" by the federal government (Wilson, 1993, p. 654, emphasis in original). The policy was first established in 1971 and later on enshrined as the national Multiculturalism Act in 1988 (Kallen, 2010, pp. 180-183). Canada remains the only country, according to Kymlicka (2012), that has multiculturalism enshrined in its constitution (p. 10). The policy framework is designed

to “shape, redefine and manage Canada’s racial and ethnic diversity — a purposeful attempt to address the historical and contemporary exclusion of ethnocultural and racial minorities (Wilson, p. 654). As such, the policy was established with the following objectives to forge a Canadian solution to the dilemma between assimilation and pluralism when incorporating its immigrants: (a) the promotion of intergroup contact and sharing; (b) the promotion of the maintenance and development of cultural heritage; (c) the promotion of other-group acceptance and tolerance; (d) the promotion of acquisition of at least one official language (English or French) on the part of the immigrants in order to allow them to become full participants in Canadian society (Beyer, 2014, p. 70; Isajiw, 1999, p. 245; Kallen, 2010, p. 180; Wilson, p. 655). Located within a bilingual framework of the English- and French-speaking elements of Canada in the 1960s and early 1970s, the policy was established when only 3 percent of the Canadian population was non-European (Leung, 2011/2012, “The Historical Context and the Meaning of Multiculturalism,” para. 2). Over the years, the policy has evolved to meet the changing needs of the Canadian social and political landscape in light of the rising recruitment of immigrants from nontraditional regions, with the visible minority population currently at above 19 percent, according to Census 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013b, p. 4). As a result, Leung (2011/2012) cautioned that “multiculturalism (today) is neither a static concept nor a simplistic idea. It is not only a moving target, but it is also a multidimensional entity” (“The Historical Context and the Meaning of Multiculturalism,” para. 1).

To that end, Satzewich and Liodakis (2013) identified four “interrelated meanings” that multiculturalism in Canada has come to represent (p. 160). First,

Canadian multiculturalism reflects a demographically diverse population comprising members of more than 200 groups of ethnic origin, according to National Household Survey 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2013b, p. 4). Second, Canadian multiculturalism represents an ideology that carries normative narratives about how Canadian society ought to relate to ethnic groups in the spirit of pluralism with characteristics of tolerance and cultural diversity that are congruent with the goals, unity, and social economic progress of Canada (p. 161). Next, multiculturalism also implies a process of competition among and between ethnocultural organizations for economic, social, and political resources, generally made available by the government and the broader society (pp. 161-162). Finally, multiculturalism in the context of government programs refers to initiatives that aim to implement multiculturalism as ideology and transform it into a “concrete form of social intervention and organization” (p. 162).

Bramadat (2009) observed that there is a widespread assumption that Canadian multicultural traditions are “preferable to what is perceived as the less generous American assimilationist model” because the Canadian practice of multiculturalism tends to undermine “the notion that any ethnic or national group . . . can claim supremacy in this country,” thus affirming social equality and cultural differences among Canadians as intended by the policy (p. 10). One implication that flows from this understanding is the affirmation of the choice some Canadians make in embracing both their ethnic and their national identities as well as celebrating their heritage (Jedweb, 2003, pp. 38-40; Leung, 2011/2012, “Conclusion,” para. 2). For example, in a 2007 report on a survey conducted by Canadian pollster Ipsos Reid, 38 percent of second-generation Canadians are reported

to identify themselves with a “hyphenated” Canadian identity (i.e, Chinese-Canadian), and only 17 percent view themselves as Canadian only, affirming the legitimacy of holding both the Canadian national identity and the ethnic identity simultaneously (“‘Canadian’ reported as identity (or part of) higher among second generation Canadians,” figure 2). Leung (2011/2012) concluded that “multiculturalism that celebrates, protects, and nurtures diversity can be a Canadian ideology that leads to a unified, but not uniform, nation” (“Multiculturalism: Down to earth from ideology,” para. 2).

Canadian multiculturalism has garnered international recognition and appears to be successful in attracting immigrants to settle in Canada (Cui, 2011/2012, “Introduction,” para. 2; Kymlicka, 2012, p. 10). Leung (2011/2012) went further by asserting that “multiculturalism has given Canada a reputation and an international image that we are in the vanguard of acknowledging and managing a national and global reality where cultural diversity is flourishing” (“Conclusion,” para. 2).

However, negativity has been surfaced against the policy and its practice over the years. Wilson (1993), for example, highlighted a few earlier criticisms: Multiculturalism may breed double consciousness; it would turn ethnic enclaves into ghettos; it would exacerbate jealousies and envy among minorities and make no demands on Canadians to adapt to the Canadian mainstream (pp. 656, 659). However, recent findings as indicated by Kymlicka (2010, 2012) suggest that immigrants in Canada are more likely to become citizens (2012, p. 10) and to indicate a high level of pride in Canada (2010, p. 8). The immigrants and their children tend to be able to integrate into all social, economic, and

political aspects of Canadian society compared with other countries and to have better upward social mobility (2010, pp. 7-9; 2012, p. 11). In addition, Biles (2002) countered that ample evidence suggests that ethnic people living in close proximity may not necessarily be harmful to inter-ethnic group relationships, and their residential choice may well be a reflection of other factors such as cost of housing, quality of schools, nearness of places of worship, access to public transit, and quality of life, factors that are commonly shared by other Canadians (p. 36). Kymlicka (2010) further asserted that “there is an almost complete absence of immigrant or visible or religious minority ghettos in Canada” (p. 8).

Biles (2002), on the other hands, suggested four flaws in Canadian multiculturalism: (a) it is divisive, pitting one group against another; (b) it is established for political expedience, allowing the governing political party to attract ethnic votes; (c) it represents a threat to the status quo; and (d) it leads to cultural relativism, leading to an absence of normative boundary (pp. 35-38). Regarding the divisive nature argument, Bramadat (2009), citing Kymlicka’s research (1998), indicated that compared with findings in United States, promotion of Canadian multiculturalism does not impede ethnic integration (p. 10). As for the ethnic vote-buying argument, Bramadat countered that there is very little evidence that indicates the government has shaped the policy toward that end (p. 11). The challenge to the status quo can be perceived as a symbolic threat to the majority cultural hegemony in Canada (Kallen, 2010, p. 184). Bramadat, on the other hand, argued that “multiculturalism is part of a critical discourse that seeks to shed light on and to dismantle the often hidden structures of inequality in our society” (p.

11). Last, when it comes to cultural relativism, Biles (2002) argued that the government does continue to make changes in laws that reflect progressive views and values of democracy and modernity, and openness to negotiate legal and political boundaries is central to a democracy (p. 38).

Recognizing the need to incorporate different dynamics of assimilation and pluralism in the Canadian context, Driedger (1989) proposed an integrated model (Figure 1) that is built along the intersection between two continua, each with opposite polarities: (a) a conformity-pluralism continuum and (b) a voluntary-involuntary continuum (p. 50). Under this model, theories of assimilation and amalgamation are situated at one end of the polarity of the conformity-pluralism continuum, where immigrant groups lose their ethnic identity and become part of the melting pot by conforming to the host society.

The pluralist theory, on the other hand, is found at the other end continuum, where ethnic groups either voluntarily retain their unique identity or are forced to remain segregated (p. 50). Modified assimilation and modified pluralism theories are found in the middle. The addition of the second voluntary-involuntary continuum highlights different pattern variables when contrasted with the conformity-pluralism continuum (p. 50). Six components exist for this model: assimilation, Anglo-conformity, modified assimilation, voluntary pluralism, involuntary conflict, and conflict. Driedger postulated that the main conflict arises between Cell E and Cell A when ideal pluralists attempt to preserve their ethnic identity and institution and yet out of necessity participate in the marketplace due to economic factors (p. 56).

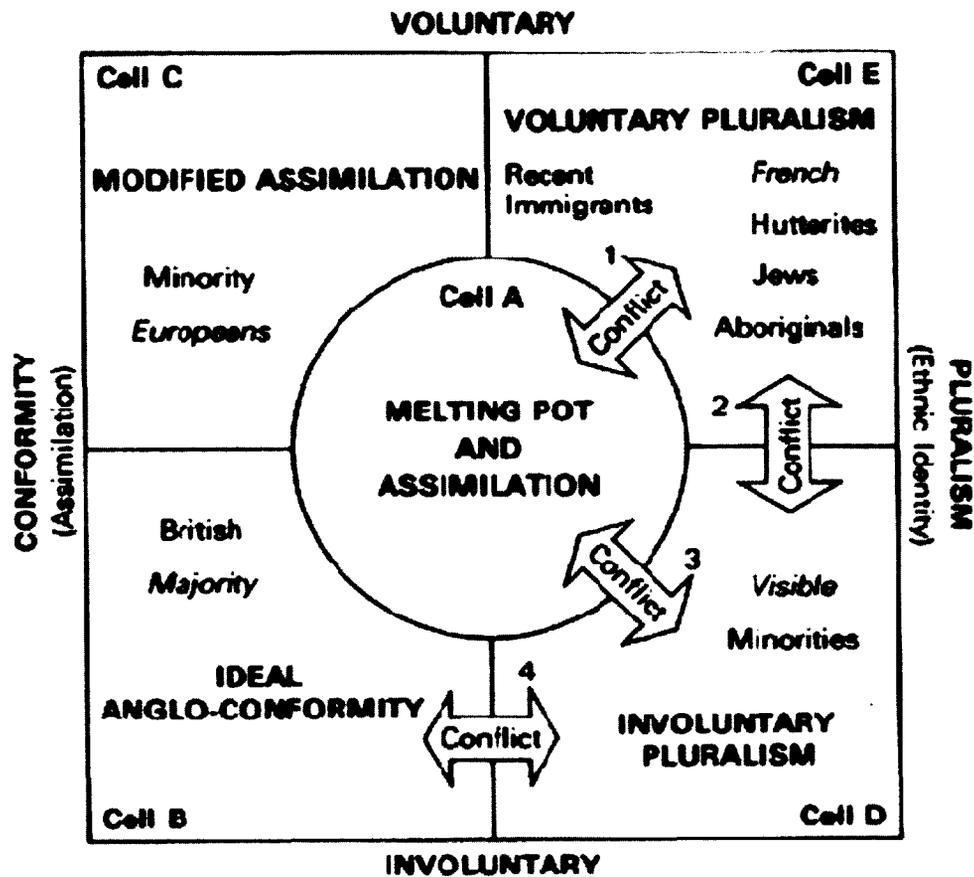


Figure 1. A conformity-pluralist conceptual model (Driedger, 1989, p. 51, figure 2.2.).

Signifying the locale of melting pot and assimilation, the center of the model, or Cell A, exemplifies the marketplace where labor forces and ethnic groups meet and where the process of assimilation takes place (Driedger, 1989, p. 52). Cell B represents the largest or most powerful group that attempts to shape society by leaving Cell A, such that its own “language, culture, morality, and institutions are dominant and often may force such conformity upon other minorities” (Driedger, p. 52). This dominant group, the British majority in Canada, employs a process of Anglo-conformity through which minorities completely relinquish their ethnic identity and amalgamate with the dominant

group (Driedger, p. 39). Cell C represents groups that give up some ethnic and structural characteristics through voluntary conformity to the assimilation process. Some minority Europeans fit into this characterization. Groups in Cell E represent those who wish to remain distinct and separate on a voluntary basis, such as new immigrants or groups with strong religious and/or ethnic identities, such as Jews and French Canadians, who either enjoy high levels of institutional completeness of ethnic retention of identity and tradition or choose to promote residential segregation to maintain identity (Balakrishnan & Kralt, 1987, pp. 139-140; Breton, 1964, p. 204; van Dijk & Botros, 2009, p. 195). Cell D, however, portrays a process closer to the pluralism pole. In this cell, ethnic groups and individuals remain pluralist on an involuntary basis because they are forced to remain segregated (Driedger, 1989, p. 54). Examples in this cell are members of visible minorities such as Asians and Blacks who are not totally accepted in the workplace and are forced to remain separate due to different value systems or racial discrimination that lead to the three conflict points. The conflict with the marketplace in Cell A arises out of discrimination and competition; the one with the dominant group in Cell B occurs when the blunt force of assimilation is felt and resistance to incorporation is exercised; and finally, conflict emerges when the other Caucasian groups in Cell E refuse to socialize further with the marketplace in Cell A (Balakrishnan & Kralt, 1987, p. 140; Driedger, 1989, pp. 57-58; van Dijk & Botros, 2009, p. 195).

**Summary.** This section examined key concepts of ethnicity and of religion. It then followed with a discussion on how ethnicity and religion intersect in the process of incorporation. A review of the literature on the incorporation process followed. In

closing, this section addressed the Canadian distinctiveness of incorporation in the policy and practice of multiculturalism. In the next major section, I review the literature on the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” and what it broadly represents, as well as different models that exist as pathways for congregational transition for SGCCE.

### **Congregational Transition of Second-Generation Asian American Evangelicals in the Ethnic Churches**

**“Silent Exodus”: the emergent phenomenon of departure and transition of the second-generation from their parents’ church.** Drawing from Greeley (1972) and McGuire (1992), Griel and Davidman (2007) asserted that “the provision of meaning and belonging are two of the most important functions of religion” (p. 549). For the immigrants and their children, religion and local congregations are compelled to provide not only meaning with a social location but also social identity for the ethnic congregants (Kotre, 1978, p. 113). By extension, local congregations in the form of the immigrant ethnic church need to be the kind of space and place for the second-generation to find their meaning and belongingness and to forge their identity based on this religious socialization (Matsuoka, 1995, p. 39). As R. S. Warner (2001) articulated well: “The second generation needs a place too if the church is to maintain their loyalty” (p. 37). Yet R. S. Warner (1998a) also observed a phenomenon emerging in the Korean American immigrant church in which second-generation began to depart from their parents’ church (p. 25). This phenomenon reflects a broader trend that has been present in North America in which an escaping from, or rejection of, the first-generational religion, culture, values, and ethnic identification has been taking place across ethnicities

(Ammerman, 2003, p. 208; Dawson & Thiessen, 2014, p. 193; Isajiw, 1999, pp. 192-197).

Although the leakage of the second-generation Asian American Christians from their immigrant parents' church may have been taking place for decades, the phenomenon was only characterized in the 1990s as a movement, dubbed "Silent Exodus," and brought to the fore by Carvajal (1994) in a front page article, "Trying to Halt 'the Silent Exodus,'" in the *Los Angeles Times*. Subsequently, H. Lee (1996) and Song (1997) followed with their articles to further problematize the phenomenon and trace what they perceived to be its root causes. H. Lee articulated the simultaneously prosperous and perilous reality of the Asian American Christian ministry: While the Asian ethnic immigrant churches were undergoing spectacular growth with the rising infusion of recent immigrants, their offspring were exiting the congregations of their parents at an alarming rate (p. 50). At the core of the phenomenon is the astonishing manner with which the departure of second generation of Asian American Christians occurred. The exit is "silent" because it has been happening almost unnoticed; an "exodus" because the size of the departure was massive and the number staggering (Kim, R., 2004, pp. 237-238).

In analyzing the causes contributing to the phenomenon, H. Lee (1996) maintained that the church-raised second-generation left their parents' congregations because they found the "immigrant churches irrelevant, culturally stifling, and ill equipped to develop them spiritually" (p. 50). S. Kim (2010) singled out the following contributing factors for the second-generation's departure: (a) immigrant churches' being

viewed as dysfunctional and hypocritical religious institutions that foster a negative expression of Christian spirituality for the younger generation; (b) ongoing clashes over cultural differences in the styles and philosophies of church leadership; and (c) the second-generation being treated as second-class citizens and their needs being unmet and regarded as inferior to those of the first generation (pp. 26-46). Song (1999) further posited five factors that may lead to the massive exit: (a) the immigrant church's overemphasis on parental ethnicity and tradition; (b) a lack of clarity about the mission and direction of the church; (c) conflict with the first-generation leadership; (d) broken relationships and church schism; (e) influences from secularism and postmodernism (p. 48). J. Kim (2003), on the other hand, attributed the "Silent Exodus" in the Korean American Christian community to generational differentiation in terms of the language barrier, generational discrimination, ministry and worship style differences, and cultural differences (p. 7). At a deeper level, factors such as race dynamics that existed in the United States, the normative discourse of society in terms of assimilation process, and identity construction in the intersection of the religion and ethnicity of the new immigrants' children collectively play vital roles in contributing to the phenomenon (pp. 213-222).

Though the "Silent Exodus" phenomenon may be more "noticeable" in the Korean American churches than in their Chinese American counterparts (Lien & Carnes, 2004, p. 43), and not necessarily due to the same contributing factors (Yang, F., 1999a, p. 110, n. 11), the brunt of the phenomenon nonetheless extends to, and is observed and experienced by, the Asian Canadian churches (Chang & Chuang, 2013; Evans, 2008;

Song, 1999). *Ethnic Diversity Studies in Canada* (2003) supported this observation in that 8 percent of first-generation immigrants claimed to be affiliated with religious institutions, but only 7 percent of the second-generation did so (Statistics Canada, p. 14, Figure 5). It can be argued that the phenomenon is situated in a broader context in which the trend of Canadian youth defecting from their church and abandoning their religious affiliation with the Christian faith was found to be severe (Penner, Harder, Anderson, Desorcy, & Hiemstra, 2012). Commenting on the second-generation Chinese Canadian Christians, Evans suggested that the leakage issue in Canada resembled that in the United States and extended itself to other immigrant churches of other ethnic origins, such as German and Scandinavian Lutherans, in Canada (p. 6). Yet regarding the Chinese Canadian Christian exodus, Evans attributed the root cause to the resistance of immigrant churches to be assimilated and the identity crisis that second-generation experience through the process of ethnic identity construction in their growing up as Canadians (pp. 8-10).

**Congregational transition at the North American ethnic churches.** Although there is little dispute about the occurrence of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon in North America in the last few decades, the drop in religious participation by the second-generation cohort may not be as dramatic as originally asserted (Chai, 2001, p. 158; Kim, S., 2010, p. 54; Min, 2010, p. 138). The leakage does not necessarily always point to the second-generation cohort abandoning their faith altogether. Cha (2007) observed that some chose to form independent congregations of their own (p. 261), and Ly (2000) made the same observation. Chong (1998), on the other hand, suggested a high retention

or participation rate on the part of the second-generation Korean Americans up to the age of 17 (65 to 70 percent), with the rate declining in the college years (p. 261, n. 3). Min and Kim (2005), however, asserted that:

Korean Protestant immigrants are highly successful in transmitting their church-oriented style of Protestantism to the second generation. Approximately two-thirds of 1.5 and second-generation Korean American adults who attended a Protestant church during their childhood were found to participate in a Protestant congregation regularly, with more than two-thirds of them going to a Korean congregation. (p. 263)

Apart from spotlighting the faith abandonment of the second-generation, the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon can be problematized as a reflection of a broader process of transition through which the second-generation Asian North American Christian cohort has matured to demand their spiritual growth and autonomy and yet been met with insufficient or inappropriate supply for their spiritual needs (Kim, J., 2003, pp. 61-69). Understood as such a transition process, the phenomenon can be broadened to cover the following three groups of second-generation Asian North American Christians: (a) those who have moved away from the immigrant congregational control and now attend an autonomous congregation of their own but still are under the same umbrella of the church structure; (b) those who have left their parents’ church and now attend a separate independent congregation of their own choice; and (c) those who have left their parents’ church and now no longer practice religious faith. Tran (2010) problematized the outcomes of the transition and dubbed the phenomenon a “Rousing Success” from the perspective of the congregations Asian North American have chosen to attend, for they have succeeded in meeting the demands of the SGCCE’s spiritual growth and autonomy

(p. 26). This study examined the transition of the first two groups to determine how ethnicity and religion play a role in affecting the SGCCE in this transition process.

Many models of transition have emerged to address this process. I organize them into two broad categories: (a) continuous evolution and (b) discontinuous pathways.

*Continuous evolution.* The continuous evolution category consists of a set of models attempting to match up the demands of the second-generation in their life cycle with the creation of a separate English-speaking ministry under the same structure and administration of a local church (Skelton, 2003). Carlson (2008), for example, espoused a five-stage model that starts with a new immigrant church in a new country employing monolingual facility (using the mother tongue of the immigrants) to conduct services. It then moves to the establishment of English children's ministry to satisfy the needs of the arrival of the immigrant's children. The third stage sees the creation of the English youth ministry to nurture the younger generation as they move into the pre-teen and teenage years. Once the critical mass has come of age, a separate and independent English worship service is inaugurated. The last stage sees the emergence of a separate English congregation, apart from the existing Chinese congregation (pp. 65-70). Anchoring his ideas on a similar frame work, Goette (2001), on the other hand, offered two exceptions: (a) creation of the English Ministry department, still under the structure of the local church, before the creation of the English service to contextualize the English ministry for the second-generation; and (b) an addition of Stage 6, in which a role reversal occurs when the English ministry becomes the dominant one and the parents' congregation becomes marginalized (pp. 128-135). English ministry in these models can be operated

at least under four different arrangements: (a) the paternal approach means that the decision making of the English ministry is in the hands of the first-generational leaders; (b) the parallel option implies that decisions are jointly made; (c) the partnership alternative allows a high degree of autonomy on the part of the second-generation to conduct their ministry; and (d) the town-house model sees the operation of the English congregation in a same facility as the first-generation with complete independence and autonomy on the part of the second-generation (Carlson, pp. 71-73; Chang & Chuang, 2013; Kim, S., 2010, p. 35). I contend that SGCCE who are attending congregations that are being operated under the partnership and town-house arrangements are participants in the transition process.

The major characteristic of the models in the continuous evolution category is its regard for the immigrant church as the site of faith transmission, cultural continuity, ethnic retention, co-ethnic networking, and group solidarity (Abel, 2006, 2009; Alumkal, 2003; Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Cao, 2005; Chen, C., 2008; Chong, 1998; Jeung, 2005; Kim & Kim, 2012; Muse, 2005; Yang, F., 1999a, 1999b). The church essentially treats generational differentiation and the English language as key variables for making changes to accommodate the demands of the second-generation, mostly under the same structure and authority as the immigrant church (Cha, Kim, & Lee, 2006; Chai, 1998; Kim, J., 2003). The deployment of the English language represents a survival containment and retention strategy necessary to meet the need for faith transmission and mediation of religious and cultural values with the second-generation while attempting to keep the children of the immigrant faithful under the same structure of the church with

retention of ethnicity (Carlson, 2008; Goette, 2001; Kim & Kim, 2012). However, deployment of English ministry alone does not always appear to be sufficient to ameliorate the second-generation's concerns. Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000a) surmised that unless the immigrant church removes the "ethnic ambiance" of the home country, it would likely alienate the local-born (p. 447). The alienation may force the second-generation either to create their own congregations whose ambiance, culture, and language reflect the host country, or to defect from their parents' congregations and join the mainstream churches (pp. 447-448).

Apart from being considered as a tool of the retention measure, usage of English language in congregational services could be seen as "one of the classic paths by which America transmutes ethnicity into religion" (Warner, R. S., 1993, p. 1063) and thus as representing a measure of the assimilation process (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000a, 2000b; Millet, 1969; Ooka, 2002; Portes, 1994; Zhou, 1997a). The limitation of the continuous evolution model, however, lies with its inability to fully recognize the forces of assimilation and how ethnic retention options as espoused by Isajiw (1999) relate to different generations that shape the growth of the local-born and thus influence the pathways of their transition from their parents' churches to the congregations of their choice.

***Discontinuous pathways.*** The consideration of assimilation and ethnic retention and the identity-shaping process in the transition of second-generation Asian North American opens up the door for the conceptualization of a second category: discontinuous pathways. Situated at the opposite end of the ethnicity retention spectrum

is the assimilated or accommodation model of the ethnic church life cycle (Kim & Kim, 2012, p. 177). Mullins (1987), for instance, surmised that a straight-path assimilation process for children of new immigrants exists to incorporate the younger generation into the mainstream culture with ease. Building on the work of classic assimilationists such as Niebuhr (1957) and Gordon (1964), Mullins argued that for the ethnic churches, “the tendency toward conformity is ultimately the dominant force shaping their character” (p. 323). Mullins’s “ideal-typical model of ethnic church development” consists of three stages, with each stage corresponding to “the nature and extent of the assimilation process” (p. 323). The first stage of the ethnic church centers on servicing the first-generation immigrants in their native language by “clergy from the old country” (p. 323). Spurred by the cultural assimilation and the language adaptation of the subsequent generations, the ethnic church enters into the second stage that sees the adoption of English as the anchor for organizational changes ranging from recruitment of bilingual religious leaders to the addition of English service and making available religious and social resources in English (p. 325). The final stage of the life cycle arrives when structural assimilation takes place on a large scale, reflecting upward mobility, intermarriage, and the erosion of ethnic community and the disappearance of the original immigrant members (p. 326). At this stage, the ethnic church faces a major survival decision: to face extinction or to adapt (p. 327). For Mullins, the life cycle of the ethnic church is near its completion when it decides to “de-ethnicize” and adapts to the needs of the subsequent generations by evolving into an ethnically nondescript religious setting (p. 328). Mullins, however, identified two forces that may deter the path of the life cycle

advancement: (1) a new infusion of immigrants fueling the need for the ethnic church to survive; and (2) persistence of racial discrimination such that acculturated children of immigrants are forced to retreat to ethnic institutions such as the church (p. 328).

Ley (2008) shared a similar three-stage framework but conceptualized his model from the perspective of considering social capital as a factor in assimilation. Putnam (2000) defined social capital as “connections among individuals — social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (p. 19). He further identified two types of social capital with different benefits and consequences: bonding and bridging. *Bonding* social capital is linkages that are “good for undergirding specific reciprocity and mobilizing solidarity” (p. 22). These ties create relationships internal to groups, thereby allowing “immigrants to develop a strong sense of identity and to enforce norms and sanctions within tight-knit communities” (Pearce, 2008, p. 4). In contrast, *bridging* social capital are ties that are “better for linkage to external assets and for information diffusion” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). These are ties that exist among external groups, allowing immigrants to connect with “mainstream society and [to have] access to various information and services unavailable in ethnic communities” (Pearce, p. 4).

For Ley (2008), the first stage of the ethnic church life cycle exists primarily for the purpose of *bonding* social capital among homogeneous, monoculture, and co-ethnic social groups, of which first-generation immigrant congregations are an example (pp. 2061-2067). Internal conformity and exclusion of outsiders are key characteristics of this stage (p. 2058). With the arrival of the second-generation, the immigrant church begins a process of transition into the second stage in which “internal bonding (transitioning) to

external bridging of social capital” takes place (p. 2067). Bridging social capital in the context of the immigrant church implies an engagement of the institution with other ethnics and crosses cultural and social boundaries, “connecting diverse collectivity and extending the fields of resources and responsibilities” (p. 2058). Ley argued that the impetus of transitioning into this stage originates from the generational conflicts and acculturation experienced by the local-born generation (pp. 2068, 2071). Consequently, intergenerational bridging is a necessary containment strategy in creating an autonomous, English-speaking congregation. With forces such as changing immigrant influx, assimilation, and social capital integration affecting the ethnic church, the institution enters into the third stage and is confronted with either facing extinction or opting for a “cultural funeral” and transitioning into a “Canadian congregational identity” (p. 2068). This congregation of stage three is multicultural in outlook and multiethnic in composition; it is based less on ethnicity and more on the affinity that arises from sharing a common faith (pp. 2071-2072).

The major criticism leveled against Mullins’ (1987) model, and by extension against Ley’s (2008), is that the reality of ethnic church development does not always reflect a “straight-path” evolution (Li, Q., 2000, p. 230; Wong & Simon, 2010, pp. 7-8). The flaw in Mullins’ model lies in its reliance on the classic assimilation theories that were built upon the European immigrants’ experience and therefore completely ignore the ethnic salience of the subsequent generation of the new immigrants, those non-European ones who came to North America after the 1970s (Kim, S., 2010; Kim & Kim, 2012), as well as the possibility of other assimilation processes, such as segmented

assimilation theory, that provide a better framework for the children of these new immigrants (Hiller & Chow, 2005; Portes, Fernandez-Kelly, & Haller, 2005; Portes & Zhou, 1993; Zhou & Xiong, 2005). In addition, the current Asian North American ethnic church roster has grown to more than 7,000 and that number is unlikely to decrease (Chang & Chuang, 2013). Focusing on the Canadian context, Beyer (2013) observed that in the period between the late 20th and early 21st centuries, Canada has taken in “as many or as more transnational migrant than any country in the world” on a per capita basis (p. 4). In particular, immigrants who fall into the visible minorities category, such as Chinese and South Asians, have dominated the intake of foreign-born first generations during this period (e.g., with an average of around thirty thousand annually from China) (Citizenship and Immigration of Canada, 2012b, p 27). The population of these two categories of visible minority in Canada are forecasted to be on the rise: up to 3.2 to 4.1 million for the South Asians by 2031, compared with 1.3 million in 2006; and 2.4 to 3.0 million for the Chinese by 2031, compared with 1.3 million in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2010, p. 1). The presence of these new arrivals will continue to fuel the vibrant operation of the Canadian ethnic church, rendering the prediction of its extinction by Mullins’s and Ley’s models to be at best effectively unrealized and at worst outright inappropriate.

A second discontinuous pathways model along the retention–assimilation spectrum points to the independent Asian American *pan-ethnic congregations* as a viable option for the second-generation’s transition away from their parents’ churches (Kim & Kim, 2012, p. 179). Jeung (2005) suggested that as a relatively new concept emerging from the 1960s movements for Black power, Brown power, Red power and Yellow

power, pan-ethnicity is referred to as a collectivity “made up of people of previously distinct tribal, ethnic, or national origins” who share a symbolic narrative of their perceived common roots, despite their dissimilarity in language or religion (pp. 10, 12). Lopez and Espiritu (1990), on the other hand, conceptualized pan-ethnicity as the formation of “bridging organizations and solidarities among sub-groups of ethnic collectivities that are often seen as homogeneous by the outsiders” (p. 198). Furthermore, Min (2002b) observed that Asian American pan-ethnic identity and solidarity are more established among local-born Asians who subscribe to primordial common cultural characteristics and physical traits. Other researchers, such as Espiritu (1992) and Kibria (1996), on the other hand, suggested that pan-ethnic consciousness arose out of the political success of political efforts such as revisions of census designations and campaigns against anti-Asian violence in the United States (Jeung, 2004, p. 289). Jeung (2002, 2005), however, argued that in the pan-ethnic congregational model, acculturated second-generation of Asian descent abandon their cultural differences in favor of creating a symbolic boundary that is based upon Asian heritage and values as well as similar family upbringing (Jeung, 2002, p. 211; 2005, p. 15). Forging a hybrid configuration along the line of the third stage of Ley’s (2008) model, the Asian American pan-ethnic congregations choose to lay aside ethnic homogeneity in favor of racial homogeneity. More importantly, this cohort shares the solidarity that arises from the common experience of being treated differently by others chiefly because of their uniform racial orientation (Kim & Kim, p. 179; Matsouka, 1995, p. 10; Tuan, 1998, p. 39). Jeung (2005) argued that in coming together as pan-ethnic Asian congregations, Asian

Americans such as Chinese and Japanese forge and embrace a racialized Asian American identity that allows them to thrive in their communities without having to be fully incorporated into the mainstream denominations (p. 2). J. Park (2008) suggested that pan-ethnic Asian congregations may have stemmed from the persistent pursuit of Protestant evangelicals in recruiting Asian American both at the congregational level and on university campuses (p. 544). This pursuit has generated an identification of pan-ethnicity with Asian American evangelicalism such that a cohort identity for the second-generation is formed and shaped in a way that de-emphasizes the interethnic cultural diversity among them (p. 542). Jeung (2005), on the other hand, singled out four reasons for the genesis of congregations with pan-ethnic identity: (a) the limitations of the ethnic church to meet the needs and demands of the English-speaking members; (b) the increasing multicultural proclivity of the second-generation in their social networks and sensibility, and thus their discomfort with ethnic-specific institutions; (c) the leaders' adoption of multicultural policy and practices that value inclusivity and affirmation of diverse ethnic collectivity; and (d) the differentiated core values with emphases on hospitality, community engagement, and social justice as opposed to those that accentuate church growth (p. 148). Jeung summed up the emergence of pan-Asian congregations as a story of "generational change, . . . religious entrepreneurs, and . . . the construction and significance of race in the United States," as many of these congregations prize a journey in crossing the racial divide that has separated Whites and other races in the United States (p. 158). Although Jeung's characterization of the pan-ethnic congregations is a legitimate one, many pan-ethnic congregations have reportedly

either expressed the desire or taken action to move into a multiethnic and multiracial orientation, according to Garces-Foley (2007, p. 158), thus rendering the pan-ethnic model as much a pass-through stage in the transition of the second-generation as the destination of their journey.

A third alternative model emerges from the discontinuous pathways category that contradicts the prediction of Mullins's (1998) and Ley's (2008) models of total assimilation but varies from the pan-ethnic congregation model. This model essentially speaks to the pathway Asian Americans and Canadians have followed to establish a *hybrid church* of their own by maintaining their own unique ethnic and cultural religious space but modeling their faith after mainstream evangelicalism (Kim, S., 2010). In this model, a critical mass in social, cultural, and financial capital exists such that the second-generation congregation can thrive on its own terms. A recent study revealed that 56 second-generation Korean congregations in Los Angeles area fit into the characterization of this model (Kim, S., 2010, p. 16). While following the continuous evolution models with their earlier stages of development, Mak's (1995) model departs from them as he characterized the experience of the Canadian Chinese Evangelicals as having a crucial distinction: a complete self determination of the English ministry, moving it away from the "de facto congregation" arrangement (Warner, R. S., 1993, pp. 1066-1067) to become an independent congregation with a separate venue and complete autonomy (pp. 4-5). Kim and Kim (2012) buttressed this notion with their research on the second-generation Korean American Christians in Los Angeles (p. 179). Unlike the immigrant churches of Ley's model that tend to exclude outsiders, these churches in Mak's and the Kims's

examples express the desire to open the door to other ethnics and yet maintain the salience of their own ethnicity (p. 179). Different forces, however, appear to shape the genesis of these congregations. In Mak's case, SGCCE were found to be discontented with the constant intergenerational conflicts with the first-generation and desired to be the masters of their own destiny in shaping their identity and autonomy. The Korean Americans in the Kims's case shared the same "push" factors but experienced slightly different "pull" factors. S. Kim (2010) singled out the comfort the congregants share in worshipping with the co-ethnics as their principle motivation (p. 55). This phenomenon, according to Edwards (2008), reflects the assertion of homophily theory (Blau, 1977, 1984) that hypothesizes that people prefer to be associated with those who are like-minded. As a result, social groups tend to be homogeneous because members are recruited through homogeneous social networks. Building on this theory, church growth strategists such as Wagner (1979) and McGavran (1959) advocated founding churches with members of homogeneous background for a higher growth rate. Garces-Foley (2008, p. 20) observed that it was Wagner (1979) who popularized the "homogenous unit principle" and applied it to the evangelization focus on the new immigrants in United States for effective growth. For the Korean second-generation, the homophilic force that forges their bonding rests on a set of shared lived experiences in the collective upbringing in which they partake of the common predicaments of dealing with their parents' expectations and having their identity shaped by Korean cultural values (Alumkal, 2001, pp. 184-186; Chai, 1998, p. 311; Kim, R., 2004, p. 27; Kim, S., 2010, pp. 55-64; Min, 2010, pp. 151-152). Furthermore, some of the congregants experienced racial

marginalization by the mainstream society that compelled them to seek comfort and safety with co-ethnics (Kim, S., 2010, p. 64). Others in the congregations chose the second-generation ethnic church due to the negative experience they had in attending the White church. Although they experienced no blatant forms of discrimination, they expressed feeling as though they were “not quite fitting in” with the White church no matter how hard they tried (Kim, S. p. 68).

Another force that may shape the formation of the hybrid ethnic church comes from what Matsuoka (1995) described as *ethnic assertiveness*. Facing the pressure to assimilate toward the American ideal of cultural homogeneity, *e pluribus unum* (i.e., “from many, one”) (p. 23), Asian Americans chose to claim visibility and demonstrate ethnic assertiveness (p. 34). Three functions of such assertiveness are: (a) the defense of Asian ethnicity against the pressures of cultural naturalization (p. 34); (b) the celebration of Asian collective identity (p. 37); and (c) the building and sustaining of a reborn, empowering community (p. 39). As far as the third function is concerned, Matsuoka (1995) contended that “religion is a powerful cohering force . . . and churches are particularly well suited for this expression of ethnic assertiveness” (p. 39). The ethnic church as organized by the second-generation is the primary locus where Asian American Christians can find their own world to defend their ethnicity and to determine a creative way to relate to the broader society (pp. 50-51).

The final model of transition for the second-generation Asian North American Christians under the discontinuous pathway option, other than a straight-path enrollment with the mainstream White church, is a natural extension of the pan-ethnic/multiethnic

congregations: *multiracial congregations*. Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013) noted that the terms *multiethnic* and *multiracial* are used interchangeably by researchers (p. 195, note 4). However, I agreed with Garces-Foley and Jeung that for the purpose of studying Asian North American evangelicals, as in this study, it makes sense to adopt the term *multiracial* in discussing this model to reflect the key distinction between pan-Asian churches and the multiracial congregations that include both Asians and non-Asians (p. 195, note 4). De Young, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim (2003) defined a multiracial congregation (MRC) as a congregation in which “no one racial group accounts for 80 percent or more of the membership” (p. 3). However, Garces-Foley (2007) countered with the argument that the 80 percent demarcation is artificially stringent and does not necessarily capture the demographic diversity and racial/ethnic integration of the congregations (pp. 81-83). She opted for the concept of inclusion that manifests itself in both the community bonding that reflects and values diverse cultures as well as in the institutional structure where leadership, programs, and rituals are all directed to breaking down the barriers inherent in “culture, class and circumstance” (pp. 85-89). Garces-Foley thus defined an ideal multiethnic church as “an inclusive, ethnically diverse community” (p. 83).

DeYoung et al. (2003) traced the genesis of MRCs in the United States to the 1940s and Howard Thurman’s leadership in tackling race relations (pp. 62-68). The Civil Rights movement in the 1960s and afterward provided a key impetus in the further development of MRCs (pp. 68-70). However, American evangelicals appeared to disregard this development at the time in favor of evangelistic effort that focused on the

“homogeneous unit principle” (Garces-Foley, 2008, p. 20). A sea change took place in the 1990s and beyond when American evangelists expanded their efforts to establish MRCs when White evangelicals began engaging in anti-racism efforts that focused on the spiritual attitudes of individuals rather than on changing institutional structures (Emerson & Smith, 2000, pp. 51-68; Garces-Foley, 2008, p. 21; Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013, p. 193). Asian American evangelicals have been playing a bigger role in either founding new MRCs or transitioning congregations from pan-Asian to multiracial identity since the 2000s (Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013, p. 192). These changes may have resulted from the Asian American second-generation’s openness in embracing other cultures, races, and ethnicity as a result of their assimilation into the host society (Ley, 2008, p. 2069; Shigematsu, 1996, p.7). Rah (2009) hypothesized: “The second generation (Asian Americans), with their unique ethos and strength, along with those in our churches who have crosscultural, luminal experiences, will be the ones best equipped to face the next stage of the church” (p. 181). Others may look at MRC as part of their growth strategy (Dhingra, 2004, p. 369). However, there appears also to be an emerging trend that reflects concerns for social justice among the second-generation Asian American evangelicals who, more so than their older evangelical counterpart, see MRCs as the legitimate pathway to pursue racial reconciliation and church unity (Jeung, 2005, pp. 153-154). Chuang (2014) reported no fewer than 260 MRC Asian churches in North America, with eight listed in Canada (p. 1). Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013) postulated that Asian American evangelical ministers are better and able connectors with other racial/ethnic groups than their White counterparts for the following three reasons: (a)

Asian American evangelical leaders are more attuned to the reality of racialization due to their own experience (p. 202); (b) as a result, the leaders can better relate sympathetically with other minorities (p. 203); and (c) like Latinos, Asian Americans stand outside of the historical division between Blacks and Whites in the United States and therefore are more likely to be accepted as leaders by the latter two groups (p. 204).

Garces-Foley (2007) and Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013) advanced two ideal types of MRCs: a color-blind approach that ignores racial ethnic differences and a color-conscious approach that recognizes racial and ethnic diversity (Garces-Foley, pp. 95-102; Garces-Foley & Jeung, p. 199). Garces-Foley and Jeung's research shows that Asian American evangelical leaders opt for the color-conscious approach by not only recognizing but also affirming the racial and ethnic differences and how they matter in the lives of the church community and in broader society (p. 200). This finding diverges from the approach of the White American evangelical MRCs, which are commonly criticized for their color-blindedness and their conflation of Christian faith with the dominant White American culture (Emerson & Smith, 2000, pp. 69-9; Garces-Foley, 2008, p 21).

On a different level, color-blind and color-conscious approaches speak to the ways in which race, ethnicity, and religion socially interact with one another in the congregational arena, providing a vital context for ethnic identity to be affirmed, obscured, or reformulated (Marti, 2008; Warner, R. S., 2005). In this regard, recognizing the fluidity of ethnicity, one lens to use to problematize the MRC formation is the

contrasting framework of ethnic transcendence versus ethnic inclusion (Garces-Foley, 2007, pp. 96-102; Marti, 2008, pp. 13-15). Marti (2008) observed:

Ethnic transcendence occurs when individuals claim a new shared identity on the basis of a uniquely congregational understanding of what it means to be a properly religious person . . . that satisfies claims of legitimacy as to the credibility of that particular identity and the ability of each person to stake a claim to it. (p. 14)

Not to be confused with the color-blind approach that purposely overlooks ethnic diversity, the ethnic transcendence process is one that emphasizes formulating an alternative identity rooted in the religious community. As a result, individuals relate to diverse congregations primarily on the basis of a shared religious identity as opposed to their differences in ancestral heritage (Marti, 2008, p. 14). Busto (1996) supported this framework by noting that Asian American college students underwent a process of ethnic dis-identification in favor of an evangelical Christian identity with the hope that by so doing, they had a greater likelihood of gaining acceptance by the mainstream society (pp. 141-142). However, this interaction between the evangelical teaching about upholding the primacy of religious identity over ethnic identity and the ethnic church has generated a creative tension and cultural dilemma among the second-generation Asian American evangelicals in the process of their transition to congregations of their choice (Alumkal, 2003, p. 121, 2004, pp. 207-208). The emergence of evangelical Christian identity does not necessarily originate from a stance of refuting ethnicity; rather, it reflects the appeal of fundamentalism in providing a firmer anchor for identity due to the encapsulated nature of evangelical organizations against the “fluid, tentative, differentiated identity of

late modernity” (Griel & Davidman, 2007, p. 558). Contrary to Berger’s (1967) assertion that pluralism associated with modernity inevitably threatens religious identity, C. Smith (1998) contended that awareness of the threat of modernity coupled with having a sense of being in a battle with the forces of pluralism and secularization serves to reinforce evangelical identity (pp. 218-220). Griel and Davidman suggested that the forging of such identity is not merely a combination of a staunch insistence on preserving the traditional faith identity and a resistance to succumbing to the threats modernity poses to identity, but rather it represents the “creative adaptation of traditional identities to new circumstances” (p. 559). In the case of second-generation Asian North American evangelicals, I suggest that a part of the new circumstances they need to wrestle with is how they relate to the broader society in the context of incorporation.

Ethnic inclusivity, on the other hand, speaks to the embracement of ethnic diversity in a congregational context where the value of ethnicity and heritage is affirmed and celebrated (Garces-Foley, 2007, pp. 99-100). In this context, ethnic identity and religious identity are not juxtaposed as competing entities; rather, ethnic differences are recognized together with the religious identity (p. 100). Similar to the color-conscious approach, ethnic inclusion acknowledges and affirms that not only are the ethnic differences among the congregants real, but they matter a great deal in the congregants’ ecclesiastical and social lives (Garces-Foley & Jeung, 2013, p. 200).

The contrast of these two conceptualizations may not necessarily imply that they are opposite to one another. Marti (2008) contended that, antithetically to Graces-Foley’s assertion, ethnic transcendence may still take place within the process of ethnic inclusion

when the primary focus is on shaping a new shared religious identity (p. 14). As a result, Marti (2009) asserted, it may not be necessary to make a distinction between the two conceptions (p. xiv). For the Asian American evangelicals, Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013) argued that a form of color-conscious ethnic inclusion is more appropriate. Branded as *racialized multiculturalism*, this approach recognizes the sensitivity of racialization and appreciates the ethnic diversity of the congregations. The authors explained:

Distinct from the colorblind approach that typifies most White churches, and the political activism of many Black churches, racialized multiculturalism enables Asian American ministers to bring together the mission of evangelism to all the nations, with an affirmation of cultural diversity, and a commitment to racial justice. (p. 206)

DeYoung et al. (2003) identified three ideal types of congregations based on the overall congregational culture and the degree of racial/ethnic integration. The term *assimilated multiracial congregation* suggests one dominant racial/ethnic group and culture as reflected in the worship service, programs, and leadership. Members who are not part of the dominant groups are expected to assimilate into the existing culture (p. 165). A pluralist multiracial congregation, on the other hand, chooses to incorporate different salient features of different racial/ethnic cultures into the practice of the congregation. Integration, however, may not penetrate into the daily life of the members who, under this type of operation, maintain a status of co-existence (p. 167). The integrated multiracial congregation implies a necessary transformation of existing congregational culture(s) into something new. No longer the old culture of the dominate

group nor the mosaic with different distinct cultures, the transformed culture is a hybrid formation that creates an egalitarian status among members with the “us” and “them” divide abolished. New members are not expected to orient themselves to a particular racial “way” of ministry nor continue with their own racial/ethnic approach. Rather, they are expected to “do things in a new way, truly integrating the diverse membership” (pp. 168-169).

With the above pathways available for the second-generation, one question arises as to the criteria by which a church is recognized as either pan-ethnic or multiracial aside from the visible appearance of the congregation. Drawing from the work of Ammerman, Carroll, Dudley, and McKinney (1998) on studying congregations, Alumkal (2008) offered a theoretical framework with four lenses for analyzing the multiple variables that contribute to a congregational ethnic and racial profile. The first lens is related to the ecology of the congregation as it speaks to: (a) the demography and the characteristics of the congregants and (b) the organization of the congregation in terms of the systems of roles and relationships that structure the interactions of congregants (pp. 155-157). The culture lens, on the other hand, looks for everyday patterns of life that reflects values, practices, and the congregational identity. This perspective involves looking at the congregation’s history, stories, symbols, rituals, and worldview. It also involves assessing the congregation's sense of boundary: who they see themselves as being, who they see themselves as not being, and how they relate to the world outside their doors. It is the cultural frame that dictates whether and how to pursue racial diversity (pp. 157-160). Next is the process lens that exposes the interactions that link behavior with beliefs

and values with action. This is the frame that speaks to the decision making and exercise of power in the congregation. This frame affects the way in which new members are socialized into the culture of the congregation, what racial projects the congregation may choose to undertake, and whether in fact the actions of the congregation match the goal of the projects (pp. 160-162). Finally, there is the resource lens that speaks more to the social networks of members that shape the future ethnic composition, given that these networks are vital in converting friends and contacts into members. A congregation is likely to remain ethnically or racially homogeneous if these friends and contacts are primarily from the same ethnic and racial background (pp. 162-163). For the purposes of this dissertation, Alumkal's framework will serve as an analytical tool for investigating the ethnic or racial nature of the congregations SGCCE have transitioned into.

The models identified in both the continuous evolution and the discontinuous pathways categories in this section of the literature review represent different avenues through which SGCCE can transition from their parents' church to the congregations of their choice. For this study, I am interested in exploring those models that best represent SGCCE's aspiration for growth and autonomy and in discerning the roles ethnicity and religion might play in the SGCCE's transition. The pathway models I investigated were: (a) an independent second-generation Chinese ethnic church; (b) a second-generation pan-Asian church; (c) a multiethnic church; and (d) a mainstream Canadian Caucasian church.

The transitory trajectories represent methods by which SGCCE engage themselves in the social construction of their own religious experience, caught as they are

in the web of intergenerational conflicts and the incorporation process (Beyer, 2013, p. 9). As such, the determination of the pathways is greatly influenced by the choices SGCCE make in the context of their perception of ethnicity and religious experience. However, I suggest that the transitory process is also abetted by the church leadership of the first-generation immigrant church as well as that of the current congregations SGCCE are attending. Both leaders play a key but subtle role in shaping SGCCE's beliefs and assumptions about how they see themselves and what experience and identity in terms of ethnicity and religion may prevail. In this context, the presence or absence of the foresight of the first-generation leadership in shaping the religious and ethnic identity and the aspiration of SGCCE is vital in facilitating or retarding the transitory process of SGCCE (Alumkal, 2003; Branson & Martinez, 2011; Carlson, 2008; Evans, 2008; Jeung, 2005; Kim, S., 2010). Along the same lines, the foresight of the leadership of those current congregations the SGCCE are worshipping with also plays a critical role in creating religious meaning for members' identity and forming the boundaries of the ethnic membership of the congregants, thus welcoming and making a home for the SGCCE (Jeung, 2005; Kim, S., 2010).

While presence or absence of foresight as a leadership phenomenon is difficult to detect, Ladkin (2010) exhorted researchers to be more sensitive to the seeds of actions that contribute to such presence or absence of foresight and its ensuing effects (pp. 39, 50). To that extent, for example, Botros (2005) characterized one of the major missions of church leadership in the Coptic Christian community in Toronto as competition for the second-generation against other "sources in the new society," forces that draw these

second-generation Coptic away from their religiosity and ethnicity (p. 12). Van Dijk and Botros (2009) suggested that this sense of urgency is legitimized by the vision of the Coptic Pope, who declared that competing for the youth is essential, for “a church without youth is a church without a future” (p. 199). Ammerman et al. (1998) construed congregational leadership as being embodied in three key roles: (a) helping the congregant to gain a realistic current-state assessment in terms of its particular situation and circumstances; (b) assisting members to develop a future-state vision of their corporate life that is faithful to their best understanding of God and God’s purposes for the congregation in this time and place; and (c) helping congregants execute that vision in the congregations’ corporation life (p. 17). Faced with the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon, Asian North American church leaders are compelled to exercise foresight and to stay in front of the issue, ascertain the root causes, mitigate the problems, and offer creative solutions to mediate the process. Failure to do so may lead to further aggravation of the phenomenon. For example, Evans (2008) attributed the “Silent Exodus” in Canadian Chinese Christian churches in no small measure to the failure of the first-generation church leadership to recognize the second-generation’s search for spiritual growth and autonomy (pp. 74-79). S. Kim (2010) too identified dysfunctional first-generation leadership in Korean American churches as one of the critical flashpoints for the second-generation’s exit from their parents’ church. H. Lee (1996) pointed specifically to a need for transition of power and authority between the generational church leaders as a mediating factor in this process. Quoting Tseng in her interview, H. Lee cautioned that “unless the first-generation leaders are able to give second-generation pastors the

freedom to lead, their young people will not go to these churches. First-generation pastors need to be aware of this dynamic” (p. 52).

Conversely, as creative religious entrepreneurs, pan-ethnic church leaders are described as having established and executed a vision of organizing their congregations in ways that “accommodate a rejection of the hierarchical and authoritarian structure of Asian ethnic” churches (Jeung, 2004, pp. 288, 295). In addition, these leaders make purposeful efforts to legitimize their congregants’ ethnic composition through effective rhetoric in their teachings and communications (pp. 300-301). Furthermore, these leaders create and maintain boundaries; they intentionally mobilize their congregations “around symbolic group boundaries and strategically construct who belongs to the group” (Jeung, 2005, p. 14).

**Summary.** This section discussed the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” and how it can be postulated as a broad transitional process that includes not only those second-generations Asian North American Christians who left their parents’ church and abandoned their faith, but also those who either transitioned to either autonomous congregations within their parents’ church or left to join completely independent, separate congregations of their own choosing. Several models were discussed under two broad categories: continuous evolution and discontinuous pathways. In the former category, immigrant church leaders used English language as the variable to deploy a retention/containment strategy to keep their children under the same structure, which can be employed at least under four different styles: patriarchic, parallel, partnership, or town-house. In the discontinuous pathways category, four broad models were discussed:

a straight-path ethnic church life cycle model, a pan-ethnicity model, a hybrid ethnic model, and a multiethnic or multiracial model. Then a brief discussion was provided on how to determine whether a church is pan-ethnic or multiethnic. This section closed with identifying those models for examination in this dissertation and surfacing the role leadership foresight plays, on the part of both the first-generation immigrant church and of the current congregations SGCCE are attending, in mediating the transition process of SGCCE. In the next section, I review servant-leadership's characteristics and explain why foresight was selected as the dimension of leadership for examination in the context of the congregational transition process of SGCCE.

### **Leadership**

**Evolution of modern leadership studies.** The objective of this section is not to offer an exhaustive treatment of either the definition of leadership or the historical development of leadership studies. Rather, I provide a thumb-nail sketch of different prominent schools of thoughts on leadership since the 19th century in order to provide a context in which servant-leadership is situated. In so doing, I acknowledge the risk of oversimplifying the characterization and not paying enough attention to the overlapping and complementary characteristics of each school, as well as the indeterminate time markers for their alleged dominance or extinction in the history of their development (Rost, 1993, pp. 26-29).

The definition of leadership varies and can be problematic (Ciulla, 2003, p. xii). Northhouse (2013) stated that in the last few decades, more than 65 classifications were developed (p. 4). Rost (1993), on the other hand, counted 221 definitions in leadership

writings from 1900 to 1990 (p. 44), whereas Kellerman (2012) claimed that there were at least “some fifteen hundred” definitions based on her estimation (p. xxi). Bass (1990) documented no less than nine various interpretations:

Leadership has been conceived as the focus of group processes, as a matter of personality, as a matter of inducing compliance, as the exercise of influence, as a power relation, as an instrument to achieve goals, as an effect of interaction, as a differentiated role, as initiation of structure, and as many combinations of these definitions. (p. 11)

After identifying 26,000 published articles through the search of the Expanded Academic Database using the term *leadership* in 2003, Winston and Patterson (2006) lamented that attempts to articulate an accurate description of leadership are analogous to “a lot of blind men describing a moving elephant” (p. 6). The lack of consensus points to the fundamental complexity that underpins the study of leadership. So wide open is the research on the phenomenon called leadership and so divergent is its study that Burns (1978) bemoaned: “Leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2).

Although the studies of leadership and the search for its definition do not appear to converge in a single construct or frame of reference, there seems to be an agreement that the origin of the modern study of leadership is often traced to the industrial revolution that took place in the Western world in the 19th century (Grint, 2011, p. 8). It is well recognized that the first salvo of the modern conceptualization of leadership was fired by Thomas Carlyle in 1840, when he wrote: “The history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men (*sic*) who have

worked here” (p. 3). Carlyle’s treatise was accompanied by William James’s (1880) writing on the great men of history and Galton’s (1869) study on the role of heredity to form what were recognized as the forerunners of the Great Man theory (Nahavandi, 2000, p. 28). Core to this theory is the central idea that certain men are born with traits that make them natural leaders. Thus, the Great Man approach attempts to pinpoint the traits leaders possess that set them apart from people who are not leaders (Daft, 2015, p. 36).

Consequently, early in the twentieth century, the Great Man theory evolved naturally into trait theory (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1991, p. 48). Traits are regarded as “the distinguishing personal characteristics of a leader, such as intelligence, honesty, self-confidence, and appearance” (Daft, 2015, p. 36). Hence the trait approach, according to Yukl (2013), emphasizes “leaders’ attributes such as personality, motives, values, and skills . . . (with) the assumption that some people are natural leaders, endowed with certain traits not possessed by other people” (p. 12). Trait theory does not make explicit assumptions about whether leadership traits are inherited or acquired, but implied in the theory is that leadership is inherent in a few, selected people who possess the relevant traits (Rowe, 2007, p. 2).

In the mid-20th century, trait theory was investigated by Stogdill (1948), who examined more than 100 studies based on the trait approach and unearthed several traits that appeared consistent with effective leadership: “general intelligence, initiative, interpersonal skills, self-confidence, drive for responsibility, and personal integrity” (Daft, 2015, p. 36). Yet Stogdill further argued that the importance of a particular trait

was relative to the situation in that one trait may prove to be a key contributor to a leader's success in one situation but not necessarily in another one. Stogdill concluded:

Leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group, in which the leader acquires status through active participation and demonstration of his capacity for carrying cooperative tasks through to completion. (p. 66)

Given the negative reviews in the literature of the trait theory, the trait movement gave way in the 1950s to a leadership theory that is based upon the leaders' behavioral styles (Antonakis et al., 2004, p. 7). The behavior approach suggests that "anyone who adopts the appropriate behavior can be a good leader" (Daft, 2005, p. 54). Behaviors can be learned more readily than traits, meaning leadership can be accessible to all (p. 50). Among the key variables identified, for example, by an early study at Ohio State University in 1957 that determined effective leadership behaviors are two leadership styles referred to as "consideration and initiating structure" (Antonakis et al., 2004, p. 7). Consideration structure signifies "a leadership style in which leaders are concerned about their subordinates as people . . . (whereas) initiating structure refers to a style in which the leader defines closely and clearly what subordinates are supposed to do and how" (Bryman, 1996, p. 278).

Bryman (1996) observed that the behavior style approach soon yielded to contingency models of leadership in the 1960s when other studies using the research design employed by Ohio University could not sustain the interpretations inferred from the Ohio findings (pp. 278-279). Contingency theories mark a radical departure from

focusing on the dominant role of the individual leader, shifting the attention to “the social or structural accounts [that] tended to assume that the contexts or situation should determine how leaders respond” (Grint, 2011, p. 9). Exemplified by Fiedler’s (1967) model of leadership effectiveness, the contingency approaches concentrate on how the components of leadership style, follower characteristics, and situational factors interact with and affect each another (Daft, 2015, p. 66). The thesis of the model is that leadership effectiveness is contingent upon the organizational situation and requires a good match between the leader’s style and favorable situational factors (Daft, 2015, pp. 66-67; Northouse, 2007, p. 113).

The cornerstone of Fiedler’s (1967) model is his postulation of two major styles of leadership: task-oriented style, “which satisfies the leader’s need to gain satisfaction from performing the task,” and relationship style, “which is oriented toward attaining a position of prominence and toward achieving good interpersonal relations” (p. 13). These styles are then matched with three situational factors: position of power, task structure, and the leader-member relationship (p. 22). The effectiveness of a leader is contingent upon: “(1) the leader’s typical way of interacting with members of the group (i.e., the leadership style); and (2) the degree to which the leader has control over the situation” (Fiedler & Chemers, 1984, p. 5). Although the contingency model was well received, disagreement was widespread over whether research results are really consistent with the model (Bryman, 1996, p. 280). In the end, Bryman suggested that the acceptance of contingency approaches began to wane because of the “inconsistent results

that were often generated by research conducted within their frameworks and problems with the measurement of key variables” (p. 280).

Following the above-mentioned schools of leadership (i.e., traits, behavior, and contingent approaches), Grint (2011) problematized the development of leadership studies by incorporating such new factors as emotional intelligence, leadership identity, inspiring visions, distributed leadership, followership, and culture (pp. 9-14). Bryman (1996), on the other hand, observed that there emerged a collective of “New Leadership” approaches in the 1980s as the fourth stage of modern leadership development (the others being the trait, behavior, and contingency stages) that “seemed to exhibit common or at least similar themes” (p. 280). These approaches represent a new way of conceptualizing and researching leadership. Bryman (p. 280) further cited the following works as typical descriptions of leadership among this collective group of New Leadership: charismatic leadership as represented by Bryman (1992), Conger (1989), and House (1977); visionary leadership as typified by Sashkin (1988) and Westley and Mintzberg (1989); and transformational leadership as conceptualized by Bass (1985) and Tichy and Devanna (1986). Central to the research of this collective study of leadership is a:

Conception of the leader as someone who defines organizational reality through the articulation of a vision which is a reflection of how he or she defines an organization’s mission and the values which will support it. Thus the New Leadership approach is underpinned by a depiction of leaders as managers of meaning rather than in terms of an influence process. (Bryman, p. 280)

Jackson and Parry (2011) opined that of the new leadership studies, the most popular one is transformational leadership (p. 31). At times linked with charismatic

leadership due to the same focus on the personal characteristic of the leader to inspire (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009, pp. 428-430; Bass, 2000, p. 22; Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 36), transformational leadership was first espoused by Burns (1978). Originally calling it “transforming leadership” in a study on political leadership, Burns advanced the idea that political leaders could be framed in terms of a dichotomy between transactional and transforming leadership (p. 4). As the foil for transforming leadership, transactional leadership is characterized by the exchange between a leader and his/her follower in which the former offers rewards, perhaps in the form of prestige or money, for compliance with the leader’s wishes. The effectiveness of transactional leadership is restricted by the implicit contract between the leaders and the followers (p. 19). Transforming leaders, on the other hand, elevate the aspiration of the followers such that the aspiration of both followers and leaders are forged together (p. 20). Bass (1985) took Burns’s conceptualization of transforming leadership one step further. Referring to transforming leadership as transformational, Bass advocated that transactional and transformational leadership are not two exclusively separate dimensions but can rather be viewed along the continuum of leadership effectiveness (p. 22).

According to Avolio and Bass (2002), transformational leaders spur followers to extend themselves in doing “more than they originally intended and often even more than they thought possible” (p. 1). Conceptualized from this perspective, “transformational leadership is an expansion of transactional leadership” (p. 1). Avolio and Bass further characterized transformational leadership with the following four distinctive components. The first component is *idealized leadership*, through which followers seek to identify

with the leaders and emulate them. The next one is *inspirational motivation*, through which the followers are challenged with meaning and sense making. Following inspirational motivation is *intellectual stimulation*, which provokes the followers to seek innovation and creativity. The last component is *individual consideration*, which gives personal attention to each follower for achievement and growth (pp. 2-3). Conversely, transactional leadership is conceptualized in terms of three components. The first one is *contingent reward*, through which the leaders exchange with the followers for the latter's satisfactory accomplishment of what the former wants done. The next component is *management by exception*, which can manifest in an active or a passive form. When active, the leader monitors deviations of performance of the followers from the standards of agreed-upon outcomes and takes corrective steps to rectify the performance if necessary. When passive, the leaders wait for the deviation to occur and then take corrective action. The last component is regarded as *laissez-faire leadership*, which is simply the avoidance or absence of leadership (pp. 3-4). By itself, transactional leadership is necessary but not sufficient for generating leadership effectiveness (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 33). It is transformational leadership in extending itself to transactional leadership that enables followers to achieve performance beyond expectations (p. 33).

Transformation leadership research has resulted in a set of impressive findings because of its strong theoretical framework (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 35). Bryman (1996), however, observed that, with the exception of transformational leadership, New Leadership as a collection of emergent leadership studies has been criticized for (a) concentrating the research exclusively on top leaders, (b) paying insufficient attention to

informal leadership processes, (e) providing little situational analysis, (d) suffering from technical analysis problems, and (e) placing too much emphasis on the exploits of successful leaders (pp. 282-283). These criticisms notwithstanding, New Leadership theory does point to a conceptualization of improved leadership effectiveness through vision, charisma, and transformation, which tie the relationship between the leaders and the followers (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 428; Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 44). One major caveat, however, is that although results from the New Leadership theory may have been dramatic, ethical considerations and morality may not have been the central part of the leadership framework in the pursuit of these outcomes (Jackson & Parry, 2011, p. 44). Indeed, as popular as transformational leadership has been, morality was not factored into Bass's original construct until later at a summit of leadership where Burns and Bass came to the agreement that leadership must be reserved for the forces of good; and Bass acknowledged the need to differentiate authentic leadership from pseudotransformational leadership (Burns & Sorenson, 2006, p. viii). Pseudotransformational leaders are "self-oriented, self-aggrandizing, exploitative, and narcissistic individuals" who "openly preach distorted utilitarian and crooked moral principles" (Avolio & Bass, 2002, p. 9). Fernando (2011) echoed that transformational leadership is criticized for lacking a sound ethical and moral foundation (p. 486). Thus among various emergent issues (e.g., contextual factors in which leadership is embedded) that contemporary leadership studies attempt to address, ethical consideration emerges to occupy an essential place in the leadership research (Antonakis et al., 2004, p. 10; Ciulla, 1996, p. 188). It is within this context of contemporary leadership studies that researchers such as Ciulla and Forsyth

(2011), Daft (2015), Northouse (2007), Sendjaya (2010), and Yukl (2013) deem servant-leadership a viable candidate for ethical leadership (Ciulla & Forsyth, p. 238; Daft, pp. 175-179; Northouse, p. 348; Sendjaya, p. 40; Yukl, pp. 347-350).

**Greenleaf's servant-leadership.** Servant-leadership has been portrayed with multiple hues and characterized with various emphases by leadership researchers. Prosser (2010), for instance, identified “seven different and yet complementary emphases of servant leadership” (p. 27). Sometimes linked to the discussion with leader–member exchange theory (Anand, Hu, Liden, & Vidyarathi, 2011; Ndoria, 2004) or spiritual leadership (Bekker, 2010; Fernando, 2011; Fry, Matherly, Whittington, & Winston, 2007; Sendjaya, 2010; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), servant-leadership has been compared and contrasted the most with transformational leadership approaches (Bass, 2000; Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Humphreys, 2005; Parolini, Patterson, & Winston, 2009; Smith, Montagno, & Kuzmenko, 2004; Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2003), mainly with the purpose of surfacing the “distinct characteristics of servant leadership” to differentiate servant-leadership from transformational leadership (Sendjaya & Sarros, p. 63). For instance, Bezley and Beggs (2002) claimed that servant-leadership is just “a form of transformational leadership that is consonant with other leadership concepts such as stewardship, system thinking and the learning organization” (pp. 58-59). Farling et al. (1999) agreed and proclaimed that “servant leaders are indeed transformational leaders” (p. 66). Bass (2000) extended this line of thinking and suggested that, whereas transformational leaders “strive to align their own and others’ interests with the good of the group, organization or society,” servant-leadership “goes beyond transformational

leadership in selecting the needs of others as its the highest priority” (p. 33). Stone et al. (2003) echoed the same theme by asserting that “transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational objectives while servant leaders focus more on the people who are their followers” (p. 2). Alternatively, Smith et al. (2004) asserted that servant-leadership leads to a “spiritually generative” organizational culture whereas transformational leadership results in an “empowered dynamic” organizational culture (pp. 86-88). Parolini et al. (2009) took it further by identifying five areas of distinctions that set servant-leadership apart from transformational leadership: moral, focus, motive and mission, development, and influence.

Of these distinctions, Covey (2002b) singled out in particular the moral authority a servant leader needs to exercise as opposed to positional authority as the core of servant-leadership. He further asserted:

Any one of us can take initiative ourself; it doesn't require that we be appointed a leader, but it does require that we operate from moral authority . . . the spirit of servant-leadership is the spirit of moral authority. (p. 31)

Graham (1991) extended Covey's thought and observed that although transformation and servant-leadership are both “inspirational and moral,” servant-leadership takes one step further than transformational leadership in not only “holding a mandate in developing intellectual capacity and skills of the followers” but also in “enhancing (the followers') ‘moral capacity’ . . . (such that) followers are encouraged to become autonomous moral agents . . . not bound with the context of the leader's goals” (p. 116). Echoing Graham's analysis, Sendjaya (2010) declared that morality-ethics is indeed one of the *sine qua non* of servant-leadership, with spirituality being the other (p. 40).

Irrespective of where researchers place their emphasis on characterizations, Prosser (2010) suggested that the most commonly recognized, fundamental, “crucial and non-negotiable” tenet of servant-leadership is its commitment to service and the leader’s “commitment to being a servant” (p. 37). Specially, servant-leadership is concerned with servants who lead rather than with leaders who serve (Greenleaf, 2004, p. 6; Prosser, 2010, p. 37). In particular, these are the leaders who are “genuinely concerned with serving followers” (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010, p. 8). Consequently, the primary desire of servant-leaders is “to serve the followers” (Savage-Austin & Honeycutt, 2011, p. 49). The explicit and unequivocal focus on serving and meeting the followers’ needs above all else is what “separates servant leadership from . . . (other) related forms of leadership” (Mayer, 2010, p. 148).

In expounding the cornerstone notion of service in servant-leadership, Yukl (2013) conceptualized service as the act of “nurturing, defending, and empowering followers” (p. 349). To enact service, servant-leaders need to work with the followers through listening and learning about their “needs and aspirations, and be willing to share in their pain and frustration” (p. 349). Block (1993), on the other hand, focused more on the attributes of servant-leaders rather than their actions. He conceptualized service as the leaders’ commitment to create something they care about in such a way that they can endure the sacrifice, risk, and adventure that come as part of the creative process (p. 10). Understood in the context of a community or an organization, servant-leadership requires that: (a) the leader’s power is granted from the followers; (b) the leaders’ contribution is to build up the humanity of themselves and the followers, a humanity, or “humanness,”

defined more by the leaders' vulnerability than by their strengths; and (c) truth in terms of knowledge and answer is to be pursued on the assumption that it is known to both the leaders and the followers such that the leaders do not need to spell out for the followers (pp. 42-43).

In the same vein, Patterson (2003) described servant-leaders as those "who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern and the organizational concerns are peripheral" (p. 5). Sendjaya (2005) summarized the servant-leader's core essence succinctly: "Servant leaders set the following priorities in their leadership roles: followers first, organizations second, their own last" (p. 1).

To fulfil this set of priorities, servant-leaders are required not simply to rely on management skills or human resources tactics, but rather to "draw out, inspire and develop the best and highest within people from the inside out," unlike traditional managers who drive "results and motivation from the outside in" (Covey, 2002a, p. 3). For, as Gill (2011) asserted, servant-leadership is "not a matter of leadership style but of character and motivation . . . (as well as of) strong values" (p. 69). Sendjaya (2005) highlighted the interior emphasis of servant-leader's engagement:

Servant leadership is not so much a theory as an attitude of the heart which shapes the decisions and actions of corporate leaders at all levels. It is not another leadership style one can choose to use whenever she likes . . . Servant leadership is a commitment of the heart to engage with others in a relationship characterized by service orientation, holistic outlook, and moral-spiritual emphasis. (p.1)

Because of its focus on the interiority of the leader, servant-leadership has also been touted not merely as a leadership theory but as a way of life “in which devotion to the good of others takes priority and evokes greater integrity in individuals and in society as a whole” (Ferch, 2012, p. xxiii). Jaworski (1998) echoed that sentiment, asserting that servant-leadership is “much more about *being* than *doing*” (p. 264). Senge (n.d.), as quoted by Carver (2002), shared the same observation on servant-leadership as espoused by Greenleaf (1977) in that “Greenleaf invites people to consider a domain of leadership grounded in a state of being, not doing” (p. 191). Spears (2004) concurred, suggesting that “at its core, servant-leadership is a long-term, transformational approach to life and work — in essence, a way of being — that has the potential for creating positive change throughout our society” (p. 12).

Although the ideology of service is timeless (van Dierendonck & Patterson, 2010) and can be traced in major religious traditions (Bekker 2010; Sendjaya 2010; Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), the genesis of the contemporary servant-leadership concept is widely recognized by scholars to be attributable to Robert L. Greenleaf’s (1977) seminal work *The Servant as Leader* (Avolio et al., 2009; Bass, 2000; Daft, 2015; Dubrin, 2004; Laub, 1999; Northouse, 2007; Spears, 2004; Yukl, 2013). Regarded as the “grandfather of servant leadership” (Page & Wong, 2000, p. 83; Sendjaya, 2010, p. 44), Greenleaf (2002) articulated the servant-leadership concept as one that places emphasis on the servant-leader as “servant first”: to be a servant-leader, one “begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve *first*” (p. 27, emphasis in original). Only when a servant-leader grows out of the deep desire to effect change and growth in the followers can she

develop a “conscious choice . . . to aspire to lead” (p. 27). Greenleaf further distinguished servant-leaders from those who want to be leaders first. The leader-first individuals are perhaps motivated by the “need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possession” (p. 27). Servant-leadership, on the other hand,:

Manifests itself in the care taken by the servant first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is this: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, *while being served*, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? *And*, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27, emphasis in original)

Greenleaf (2003) attributed the inspiration of his ideas about servant-leadership to the reading of Hermann Hesse’s *Journey to the East*. The central figure of the story, Leo, was a servant who performed menial chores as he accompanied a group of men on a mythical journey. But Leo’s real identity was actually the head of the Order that sponsored the journey (p. 32). For Greenleaf, Leo embodied at once two roles that are opposite to one other: the servant, “who, by acting with integrity and spirit, builds trust and lifts people and helps them grow”; and the leader, “who is trusted and who shapes other’s destinies by going out ahead to show the way” (p. 32). The irony of the story is that these two roles can in fact co-exist and be brought together to create what Spears (2004) called “the paradoxical idea of servant-leadership” (p. 10). A servant-leader must first be a servant, and the true essence of leadership can be authenticated only through service to others. Such leadership action demands not so much the skills as the interior character of the servant-leader (Greenleaf, 2003, p. 68). To further describe the nature of the servant-first leadership concept, Greenleaf identified listening and understanding,

acceptance and empathy, foresight, awareness and perception, persuasion, conceptualization, self-healing, and community as some of the key dimensions for the servant-leadership construct (pp. 45-58).

**Limitations and challenges of servant-leadership.** Since the inception of Greenleaf's conception of servant-leadership, many misunderstandings and criticisms have abounded. For example, Komives and Dugan (2010) observed that as part of the "Contemporary Leadership theories," servant-leadership was overshadowed by the emerging community service movement and as a result was misunderstood as being a theory focusing merely on service or civic outcomes rather than on the "changing imperative for the positional leader in corporate organizational and other settings" (p. 115). One of the earliest criticisms leveled against the servant-leadership concept, as identified by Sendjaya (2005), Sendjaya and Sarros (2002), Wong and Davey (2007), and Wong and Page (2003), is the characterization of the concept of servants as leaders as being oxymoronic, for it conjures up an image of slaves in bondage being subservient to autocratic masters (Sendjaya, 2005, p. 2); or of the leaders giving up power altogether (Wong & Page, 2003, p. 2). Kincaid (2011), however, countered that the deliberate choice of nomenclature by Greenleaf is rooted in his belief that no better word or combination of words than the paradoxical linkage of *servant* and *leadership* can adequately reflect Greenleaf's deep desire to fundamentally alter the inherent focus of leadership from being on the traditional authoritarian positional power to centering on serving the wellbeing of the followers (p. 103). Far from being an oxymoronic concept to be rejected, servant-leadership can be viewed as a paradoxical leadership practice to be

embraced for the two seemingly opposite ideas and yet presenting a single feasible reality (Graham, 1991; Lad & Luechauer, 1998; Spears, 2004).

Another common critique of servant-leadership, as identified by Showkeir (2002), is that the concept is “too soft and touchy-feely; it does not have enough business focus . . . it is not for companies under financial strain; or it is good when times are good, but under stress, ‘business as usual’ prevails” (p. 155). Yukl (2013) echoed this concern, noting that “it is very difficult for a servant leader to balance the competing preferences of owners and employees,” especially when times are tough or when hard choices have to be made between financial results and staff reduction (p. 350). Extending from this argument is the notion, advanced by Smith et al. (2004), that servant-leadership is viable only for organizations in a more stable and static external environment with a spiritually generative culture that favors evolutionary change processes (pp. 86-89). For this reason, Smith et al. suggested that servant-leadership works better in “not-for profit and community leadership organizations” (p. 87), a limitation also cited by Yukl (2013, p. 350) and acknowledged by McCrimmon (2010, p. 3). Andersen (2009) elevated this line of criticism to a higher level, arguing that servant-leadership would not work in private or public organizations because “the ultimate goal of a company is profitability” and managers are hired to attain the organizational goal, a mandate inconsistent with that of servant-leadership to serve first the interests of the followers (pp. 11, 13).

Daft (2005), however, suggested otherwise, supporting his argument with examples showing that servant-leadership principles have proved successful “even in the business world” (p. 230). Dubrin (2004) built on the same thesis and asserted that

servant-leadership has been gaining momentum in the commercial organizations and is being practiced by “higher levels” at Walmart, for instance (p. 106). Perhaps most significantly of all, Laub (2010) reported that “a positive relationship between the servant organization and key organizational health factors” such as employee satisfaction and team effectiveness has been established empirically via more than 40 studies in a wide range of institutions, from higher education to health care to business and manufacturing companies (pp. 111, 113, 117). As a result, McClellan (2008) contended that a truly servant-led institution would unlikely suffer from an organizational culture that is static (pp. 48-49). In fact, contradicting Smith et al.’s (2004) conclusion, Ogbonna and Harris (2000) pointed out that performance in the innovative and competitive forms of culture can be directly associated with supportive and participative leadership styles (pp. 782-783). Although organizational tough times or financial crisis may call for the use of a leadership style such as charismatic (Grint, 2010, pp. 93-97; Ladkin, 2010, p. 77), this does not necessarily imply that servant-leaders are not tough-minded (Tarr, 1995, pp. 82-83). When difficult decisions are called for, servant-leaders are likely to face them with unyielding character and moral fortitude, the *sine qua non* of servant-leadership (Graham, 1991, p. 117; Page & Wong, 2000, p. 73; Sendjaya et al., 2008, p. 410), to act with the interests of the employees in mind rather than regarding them merely as a cost item on the company’s balance sheet.

Another critical examination of servant-leadership was put forward by Eicher-Catt (2005). Examining the concept from a feministic perspective, Eicher-Catt proffered a deconstruction of servant-leadership with the objective of exposing its “pragmatic

function within organizational life as a cultural artifact” rather than as a natural leadership construct; and its penetrating form as the “theology of leadership that upholds andocentric patriarchal norms” (p. 17). Characterizing Greenleaf’s language of servant-leadership as “deceptively ambiguous,” Eicher-Catt argued that the ambiguity allows politically motivated managers in the organizations to “advance their own agendas” (pp. 18-19). Eicher-Catt further problematized the servant-leadership concept as gender-biased, claiming that its rhetorical language and structure may at first seem to favor feministic leadership with commonly recognized female characteristics such as empathy. But she claimed that servant-leadership privileges an andocentric choice of leadership because its “masculine connotations of the concept” do stems from the “religious, patriarchal ideology” behind Greenleaf’s conceptualization (p. 23). Finally, advocating a leadership that articulates a “rhetorical ethic,” Eicher-Catt concluded that servant-leadership does not meet that ethical criterion because it:

does not begin to highlight the creative potential inherent within organizational discourse that aims to capture a genuine ethical stance . . . (and fails to) articulate a leadership ethic that might be spontaneously produced through on-going communicative deliberations with others. (p. 23)

Eicher-Catt’s (2005) examination of servant-leadership from the perspective of feminism does provide insights into how post-modernist researchers view disciplines such as leadership and is much welcome. For instance, K. Reynolds (2013) argued that Eicher-Catt’s deconstruction serves as a viable framework for problematizing servant-leadership constructs in terms of genders (p. 43). Reynolds extended Eicher-Catt’s stance, characterizing servant-leadership as “a driving force for generating discourse on

gender-integrative approaches to organizational leadership” (p. 51). However, contrary to Eicher-Catt’s gender-based characterization of servant-leadership as a juxtaposition of subjugation (i.e., servant) and domination (i.e. leader) at both extremes, Oner (2009) argued that though servant-leadership is a gendered concept with both feminine and male characteristics, it can be postulated as a gender-integrative leadership approach in offering “the potential to promote gender equality in terms of increased participation, empowerment, and relationship building in a caring humane business environment” (p. 18).

When it comes to Eicher-Catt’s (2005) dissatisfaction with servant-leadership’s failure to articulate a leadership ethic, researchers such as Sendjaya (2010) and Patterson (2010) have clearly established morality—ethics as well as virtue as the core tenets of servant-leadership through empirical studies. In addition, with research on servant-leadership ever increasing as attested to by Eicher-Catt’s own account of more than 21,000 citations in social science indices (p. 17), many theoreticians and practitioners of leadership may well have come to view servant-leadership as more than a mere artifact (Kincard, 2011, p. 103). Finally, although research on gender and leadership is an important subject area to pursue, Jackson and Parry (2011) asserted that the focus of future gender research in the leadership studies would tend to favor “context, power, leadership style, social construction and identity rather than biological gender” (p. 30).

A more recent suite of criticisms leveled against servant-leadership was ignited by McCrimmon (2010). Arguing that the concept offers no appreciably distinguishable features when compared with the “post-heroic models of leadership,” McCrimmon

accused servant-leadership of carrying a “paternalistic overtone” in that serving employees conjures up the image of parent–child relationship (p. 2). Framed in this fashion, servant-leaders may simply be understood as switching from the role of critical parents to that of nurturing parents. In addition, in constituting leaders as servants to the employees, it follows that the employees then have become the leaders’ master and under the spirit of servant-leadership “no servants can fire their masters” when the employees are not performing (p. 1). Although servant-leadership may function well in political or religious organizations whose leaders are elected to serve the interests of the members, if leaders are to survive in the business environment, they must serve the interests of the owner and the customers as well (p. 3). In conclusion, McCrimmon regarded servant-leaders as no different from the “know-it-all” leaders with the emphasis on the leader themselves being in charge.

Part of McCrimmon’s (2010) argument is simply an extension of a previous objection raised by others, such as Smith et al. (2004). In addition, Gill (2011) neutralized McCrimmon’s contention by pointing out that the latter simply “overlooks the possibility that servant-leadership may entail serving the nation . . . shareholders, or even an inanimate but compelling cause” (pp. 70-71). Other criticisms, such as that servant-leadership has paternalistic overtones or a servantmaster relationship between the leader and the employee, represent a misunderstanding of Greenleaf’s core commitment to humility and integrity (Page & Wong, 2000, p. 71); they ignore the interplay between accountability and service in the relationship between servant-leaders and their followers,

a relationship that would be best captured by the phrase “I am your servant, but you are not my master” (Sendjaya, 2010, p. 44).

**Servant-leadership characteristics.** Finally, some of the most severe criticisms leveled against Greenleaf’s servant-leadership since its inception is that the concept is idealistic, and that Greenleaf did not offer any empirically grounded definition for the concept (Reinke, 2004, p. 32), nor did he suggest any ways to measure it (Page & Wong, 2000, p. 84). In addition, the servant-leadership framework was accused of largely being based upon anecdotal evidence (Bowman, 1997, p. 245); being untested (Bass, 2000, p. 33); and lacking a consistent, robust definition (Andersen, 2008, pp. 12-13; Laub, 2004, pp. 2-3). However, McClellan (2009) observed that Greenleaf never intended to establish a research model for servant-leadership, “but rather to advocate for a new conceptualization of leadership grounded in the intent of the leader to serve rather than to wield power or authority” (p. 163). Building upon Greenleaf’s foundational concept of servant-leadership, researchers such as Parolini (2004), Rennaker (2006), and those listed in Table 3 have advanced over the last two decades various models of servant-leadership. Table 3 summarizes the different themes, characteristics, attributes, or constructs that were hypothesized in the models as these researchers described, defined, and measured servant-leadership with the objective of making it a robust theory and a discipline sustainable for ongoing research and practice.

Table 3

*Servant-Leadership Characteristics and Attributes*

| <b>Author(s)</b>  | <b>Characteristics, Themes, Attributes, or Constructs</b>   |
|---|---|
| Barbuto & Wheeler (2006)  | Calling; Listening; Empathy; Healing; Awareness; Persuasion; Conceptualization; Foresight; Stewardship; Growth; Community Building  |
| Farling, Stone, & Winston (1999)                                | Vision; Influence; Creditability; Trust; Service  |
| Laub (1999, 2010)   | Value People; Develop People; Build Community; Display Authenticity; Provide Leadership; Share Leadership   |
| Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson (2008)                          | Emotional Healing; Creating Value for the Community; Conceptual Skills; Empowering; Helping Subordinates Grow and Succeed; Putting Subordinates First; Behaving Ethically; Relationship; Servanthood  |
| Page & Wong (2000)  | <i>Character-Oriented</i> : Integrity; Humility; Servanthood<br><i>People-Oriented</i> : Caring for Others; Empowering Others; Developing Others<br><i>Task-Oriented</i> : Visioning; Goal Setting; Leading<br><i>Process-Oriented</i> : Modeling; Team Building; Shared Decision-Making                        |
| Patterson (2003)  | Agapao Love; Humility; Altruism; Vision; Trust; Empowerment; Service  |
| Russell & Stone (2002)  | <i>Functional Attributes</i> : Vision; Honesty; Integrity; Trust; Service; Modeling; Pioneering; Appreciation of Others; Empowerment<br><i>Accompanying Attributes</i> : Communication; Credibility; Competence; Stewardship; Visibility; Influence; Persuasion; Listening; Encouragement; Teaching; Delegation |
| Sendjaya (2003, 2005, 2010); Sendjaya, Sarros, & Santora (2008) | Voluntary Subordination; Authentic Self; Covenantal Relationship; Responsible Morality; Transcendental Spirituality; Transforming Influence   |
| Spears (1995, 2004, 2010)                                       | Listening; Empathy; Healing; Awareness; Persuasion; Conceptualization; Foresight; Stewardship; Commitment to the Growth of People; Building Community   |
| van Dierendonck & Heeren (2006)                                 | <i>Personal Strength Level</i> : Integrity; Authenticity; Courage; Objectivity; Humility<br><i>Interpersonal Level</i> : Empowerment; Emotional Intelligence<br><i>Organizational Level</i> : Stewardship; Conviction   |

| <b>Author(s)</b>                 | <b>Characteristics, Themes, Attributes, or Constructs</b>   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011) | Empowerment; Accountability; Standing Back; Humility; Authenticity; Courage; Interpersonal Acceptance; Stewardship  |
| van Dierendonck & Rook (2010)    | Empowerment; Accountability; Standing Back; Humility; Authenticity; Forgiveness; Courage; Stewardship   |
| Wong & Page (2003)               | Developing and Empowering Others; Vulnerability and Humility; Visionary Leadership; Servanthood; Responsible Leadership; Integrity (Honesty); Integrity (Authenticity); Courageous Leadership |

Although Table 3 captures most of the characteristics identified by researchers since the turn of the millennium, it is worth noting that many have built upon the initial works of Laub (1999), Page and Wong (2000), Patterson (2003), Sendjaya (2003), and Spears (1995). A summary of these characteristics/attributes/dimensions appears to lead to one conclusion: There is not a consistent singular framework/model/instrument with clearly validated characteristics for the emergent servant-leadership research. In a recent attempt to synthesize the differing characteristics identified through the extant literature on servant-leadership, van Dierendonck (2011) asserted that there are at least 44 overlapping servant-leadership characteristics and a number of standalone attributes (p. 1232). He further noted that these characteristics can be distilled into the following “six key characteristics of servant-leader behavior that bring order to the conceptual plurality” (p. 1232): Empowering and Developing People; Humility; Authenticity; Interpersonal Acceptance; Providing Direction; and Stewardship (pp. 1232-1234).

Of the characteristics listed in Table 3, foresight appears to be the one that is least researched (Spears, 2010, p. 19), and when it is studied, it is often linked with intuition, vision, and insight (Laub, 1999, p. 32, table 1). A large measure of reluctance is perhaps

due to researchers' biased interest in analyzing leadership traits, characteristics, and competencies with the positivistic paradigm of knowing (Ladkin, 2010, p. 4). Thus, many researchers devise instruments to quantitatively gauge the presence and validity of servant-leadership characteristics as reflected in the previous section (Winston, 2010, p. 180). The positivistic approach tends to favor those characteristics whose variables can be defined and measured. Foresight, however, is not a leadership attribute that can be evaluated easily, partly due to the difficulty of operationalizing the parameters that are necessary for any measure to be valid and meaningful (Spears, 1995, p. 6). However, I suggest that the challenge also lies with the difficulty of pinpointing the exercising of foresight that may lead specifically to avoidance of certain events, trends, and decisions. In such contexts of absence of certain consequences, linkage to the causes can be virtually impossible to ascertain. Unlike other servant-leadership characteristics such as listening or courage, exercising of foresight may not yield any specific immediate outcomes for measurement at all, especially when it comes to outcome prevention. For example, implementation of a talent management practice may lead a company to be able to continuously maintain the status quo of talent retention and avoid the flight of top-tier performers. Although it may be possible to gauge why employees maintain their loyalty to an organization, tying loyalty to foresight in the implementation of such talent management practice may prove to be elusive. Yet, as Ladkin (2010) advocated, when it comes to exploring a phenomenon such as leadership, "what one does not see may be as important as what one does see" (p. 6). When leadership, particularly leadership foresight, "is serving its purpose, it is difficult to 'see'" (p. 46). I suggest that an

examination of how foresight operates in servant-leadership is an important aspect of servant-leadership's contribution, and it was drawn on as the leadership framework for this dissertation. Consistent with the purpose of this dissertation, analyses of the presence and absence of servant-leadership foresight on the part of the leaders of both the first-generation Chinese Canadian immigrant churches and the current congregations SGCCE are attending in relation to the transition of SGCCE in the context of ethnicity and religion can provide insights on how the transitory process is mediated. Before the ensuing discussion of Greenleaf's (2002) foresight, a survey of this concept in relation to servant-leadership is presented.

**Foresight and servant-leadership.** Researchers offer divergent opinions with a wide range of definitions when it comes to foresight and its accompanying research. For example, in linking foresight to a corporation's strategy, Courtney (2001) argued that the concept does not originate from thorough studies of the current environment, nor does it emerge from any state-of-the art forecasting techniques. Rather, the capacity for foresight is derived from having a complete understanding of the uncertainty the organization is facing (p. 3). Courtney asserted that 20/20 foresight can be arrived at only by embracing uncertainty, exploring it, investigating it from a variety of different perspectives, and getting to know it (p. 3). For Courtney, having 20/20 foresight does not mean a person can make "flawless future predictions" (p. 3). Instead, this kind of foresight can provide as much clarity as possible about the future. Rejecting what he considered to be a binary definition of uncertainty (i.e., either uncertainty exists or does not), Courtney suggested that four levels of *residual uncertainty* exist; residual

uncertainty is the kind of “uncertainty left after [conducting] the best possible analysis to separate the unknown from the unknowable” (p. 4). Level One of uncertainty, the lowest of all four, is equivalent to a point or concrete forecast with an identifiable outcome. Level Two presents a set of distinct possible outcomes, with one of them being the actual occurrence. Level Three specifies only a range of possible outcomes with no particular forecast of the actual occurrence. Finally, Level Four indicates that no definitive range of outcomes is possible. An organizational strategy can be obtained only by first identifying the level of uncertainty the organization is facing and then addressing the following five issues relative to strategic choices: (a) “shape or adapt”; (b) “now or later”; (c) “focus or diversify”; (d) “new tools and frameworks”; and (e) “new strategic-planning and decision-making processes” (pp. 5-10).

As opposed to locating the study of foresight in an organizational context as Courtney (2001) did, Slaughter (1995) examined the concept in a broader framework of futures study. He argued that the future could not be predicted precisely, nor did any “iron laws” or “blue print” exist for governing “the process of human or cultural development” that might contribute to shaping the future (p. xv). Though the future could not be viewed clearly and precisely in all realms, Slaughter hypothesized that there exist models and constructs by which researchers could come to arrive at a “broad-brush overview of our context in time: past, present and near-term future” (p. xvi). For Slaughter, study of foresight is the discipline that “captures the key quality of all successful futures work” by enhancing “our ability to understand and then to act with awareness” (p. xvii). With this definition in mind, Slaughter characterized foresight as a

“deliberate process of expanding awareness and understanding through futures scanning and the clarification of emerging situations” (p. xvii). He further suggested that such a process could help expand the boundaries of perception for the future in at least four dimensions: (a) “by assessing possible consequences of actions (and) decisions”; (b) “by anticipating problems before they occur”; (c) “by considering the present implications of possible future events”; and (d) “by envisioning desired aspects of future societies” (p. xvii). In addition, exercising foresight in this manner is in perfect alignment with the leadership mandate to execute the “twin themes of prudence and responsibility” (Slaughter, 1991, p. 44).

Slaughter (1995) further postulated that rather than being an ability to view the future precisely for what it precisely is, foresight is a “human attribute that allows us to weigh up pros and cons, to evaluate different courses of action and to invest possible futures on every level with enough reality and meaning to use them as decision-making aids” (p. 1). As such a human attribute, foresight is characterized by Slaughter as the human capacity to be open to the future, and to develop options for the future and for making choices among them (p. 1). With this characterization, Slaughter placed special emphasis on both the necessity to choose and the calling for actions to define “what it is we really want, and then putting in place the means to achieve it” (p. 2). At the same time, Slaughter was careful in insisting on what foresight is not: “the ability to predict the future” (p. 1). Rather, he argued that the entire purpose of future scanning, something he stated to be fundamental in developing foresight, is to seek to understand what options might be available. For Slaughter, then, foresight is not so much about prediction as

about understanding what options are available so that well-informed choices can be made (p. 33). The fundamental ability to make choices is what defines human autonomy in its exercise of foresight in an attempt to “look ahead and to make provision for what may happen” (Slaughter, 1991, p. 44). To make well-informed choices, Cornish (2004) echoed, people need to detect the contemporary currents of change that may become trends in the future (p. 23). Similar to Cornish, Hammett (2004) referenced the role of trends and argued that based on trends, scenarios can be generated to anticipate what futures may look like (p. 2). The studies of scenarios requires, according to Funk (2008), an interpretative approach rather than a predictive approach (p. 42). Funk explained that the predictive approach is better used in scientific or technical systems, which can be measured and quantified. Social systems, on the other hand, are far too complex to be approached with the predictive approach since they are based on qualitative variables such as “values, beliefs, ideologies (and) presuppositions” (p. 42). By focusing on examining “structures and processes,” the interpretative approach “looks back to derive insights, data, and knowledge about the past as a basis for understanding the present and looking forward to create provisional knowledge about futures” (p. 42).

Similarly to Funk, Slaughter (1995) advocated a three-part approach of “looking backward” (p. 5), “looking around” (p. 21), and “looking ahead” (p. 29) to derive foresight about the future. First he looked backward into history to gain insights into the worldviews of the past. Slaughter explained:

Looking back is a kind of ground-clearing exercise to help us locate ourselves in the wider process. By understanding a little of the world we have emerged from

we can more clearly see the world we live in and those that potentially emerge from it. (p. 5)

Slaughter (1995) argued that by looking back into the past, people can identify the defects of what he called the “Western Industrial worldview” (p. 9). This worldview manifested itself as a metaproblem that gave rise to phenomena such as the dominance of instrumental rationality; reductionism and loss of the transcendent; science and technology used for irrational ends; and the de-sacralisation of nature (pp. 15-20). In engaging in the second part of the approach of “looking around,” Slaughter detected that the same defects of the past reveal themselves and affect the major institutions of the contemporary world, institutions that include politics, governance, economics, commerce, and media (pp. 21-27). Slaughter concluded that our past-oriented culture forces us “to move into the future without futures perspective — that is without sustaining and viable notions of how they might be constituted” (p. 28). If the impact is not addressed, Slaughter warned, the future will become “an empty space,” void of existence and meaning (p. 28). To buck the trend, Slaughter suggested, people should take steps to tap into the human capacity to create foresight, to anticipate issues and events, and to understand their potential impacts and significance before the events occur (pp. 48-49). The World Future Society (2009) made a similar point when it claimed that “foresight may reveal potential threats that we can prepare to deal with before they become crises” (p. 2). The Society argued that foresight “gives us increased power to shape our future,” because “people who can think ahead will be prepared to take advantage of new opportunities that rapid social and technological progress are creating” (p. 1). In summary, Slaughter and others argued that there is a need to examine events on a time

continuum to detect whether there are trends that are shaped by devastating events. If such events are detected, viable options need to be developed in advance to allow leaders to choose and implement plans so that crises can be averted or mitigated on the one hand, and growth and prosperity can be fostered on the other.

Extending Greenleaf's (2002) thought on foresight in the context of exploring Native American leadership, Baldwin (2011) characterized the relationship between servant-leadership and foresight:

Servant-leaders cultivate *foresight* in order to apply the lessons of history to the realities of the present and to a compelling vision of the future in such a way as to recognize the probable outcome of the actions about to be taken. (p. 143, emphasis in original)

On the other hand, inspired by the biblical imagery of wisdom building a house with seven pillars, Sipe and Frick (2009) expanded Greenleaf's idea of servant-leadership with the following definition: "A Servant-Leader is a *person of character* who *puts people first*. He or she is a *skilled communicator*, a *compassionate collaborator* who has *foresight*, is a *systems thinker*, and *leads with moral authority*" (p. 4, emphasis in original). Building on Greenleaf's (2002) characterization of foresight as "*a sense for the unknowable*" and as an ability to "*foresee the unforeseeable*" (p. 35), Sipe and Frick averred that "*foresight is a practical strategy* for making decisions and leading" (p. 106, emphasis in original). Unlike the traditional forecasting of pointing to a particular future occurrence, similar to Courtney's (2001) Level One, or mapping out alternative scenarios, similar to Courtney's Level Two, Sipe and Frick surmised that foresight is derived from our intuition that originates from our heart and our gut. They advocated a

five-step approach in harnessing the power of foresight: (a) analyzing the past; (b) learning thoroughly “about the issue at hand”; (c) allowing the information you gather to incubate; (d) being open and ready for discovery; and (e) sharing “your insights with trusted colleagues” (pp. 113-115).

Young (2002) alternatively suggested that foresight in Greenleaf’s conception is “an art, not a science” (p. 245). Foresight helps facilitate the process of drawing together the strands of contributing factors we face in any environment and enable the leaders to “act in that critical moment when we have the ability to do so, and then to move in some direction with a plan” (p. 246). For Young, discernment plays a vital role in shaping foresight (p. 248). Discernment starts with an “ability to step back, to listen, and to nurture wider awareness” (p. 248). With this in mind, Young linked another key characteristic of Greenleaf’s servant-leadership to foresight: listening. Young argued that “to discern is to be able to withdraw and listen to a wider voice, a more overarching purpose” (p. 249). For the first-generation Chinese Canadian Christian leaders, the exercise of discernment implies a practice of listening to the flocks in terms of the various strands of their needs and their individual and collective aspirations. Indeed, Greenleaf’s servant-leadership urges the leaders to get closer to the ground with a full environmental scan, as Greenleaf (2002) suggested:

Servants, by definition, are fully human. Servant-leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground — they hear things, see things, know things, and their intuitive insight is exceptional. Because of this they are dependable and trusted. (p. 56)

Servant leaders are not the power-wielders who bark order and demand subservience. Rather, they work among followers, listening first to their followers. Yukl (2013) summarized: “Servant leaders must listen to followers, learn about their needs and aspirations, and be willing to share in their pain and frustration” (p. 349). The practice of listening can favorably frame the leaders to be regarded as servants and build trust, care, and strength between the leaders and the followers (Bogle, 2002, pp. 174-177; Young, 2002, p. 252). I argue that the art of active listening includes the hearing, seeing, and knowledge of the environmental factors that contribute to a person’s capacity to see the bigger picture.

Young (2002) further suggested that the exercise of discernment would then allow us to detect trends and patterns that help us to see “how things are moving either in the direction of our core values and vision, or away from them” (p. 249). Thus, the exercise of discernment in terms of stepping back and listening allows foresight to emerge and enables leaders to “foresee the unforeseeable” and moves them “into vision and into seeing things whole” (p. 249).

**Greenleaf’s servant-leadership and foresight.** In discussing the idea of the servant as leader, Greenleaf (2004) pinpointed the core of a servant-leader by placing an emphasis on the *servant* part of the equation (p. 6). However, he also discussed what constitutes the *leader* part of the equation. In addressing servant-leadership as a general principle and how it is linked to fields such as education, foundations, churches, bureaucracies, and so forth, Greenleaf (2002) constantly used a simple phrase to describe leadership: To lead is to show the way (pp. 28-29). Greenleaf (1988) further framed the

concept of “lead” in contrast to the ideas of “guide, direct, manage, or administer” (p. 4). Unlike the latter group of concepts, which conjure up the image of “maintenance . . . coercion . . . or manipulation,” the word “lead’ implies creative venture and risk taking (p. 4). Those who are led, therefore, are not forced to follow, but rather are shown how to do so of their own volition (p. 4). In addition, to show the way implies knowing the way, and in this regard, Greenleaf (2002) was more interested in intuitive knowledge than in empirical knowledge when it came to “having a sense for the unknowable” as a key attribute possessed by a leader (p. 35). According to Greenleaf, intuitive knowledge, or insight, is the ability to penetrate beyond what empirical information may present in any given situation and see the patterns and the generalized trends that can be used to make decisions (p. 37). In the decision-making process, Greenleaf asserted, a leader is usually confronted with a gap between the information that is available at hand and what is really needed to make a solid decision, and the “art of leadership rests, in part, on the ability to bridge that gap by intuition” (p. 36). To exercise intuition means to “have a sense for the unknowable,” a sense that is tied inextricably with seeing the way (p. 35). Making leadership decisions based on intuition is what leaders are called to exercise (Greenleaf, 1996a, p. 319). Indeed, a mark of leaders “is that they are better than most at pointing the direction” because they have the ability “to foresee the unforeseeable” (Greenleaf, 2002, pp. 29, 35). Foresight, then, according to Greenleaf, is the ability to make sense of the unforeseeable. Thus foresight is what Greenleaf equated with “the ‘lead’ that the leader has” (p. 40). He further explained, as quoted by Bogle (2002), that:

The lead that the leader has is his ability to foresee an event that must be dealt with before others see it so that he can act on it in his way, the right way, while

the initiative is his. If he waits, he cannot be a leader — at best, he is a mediator. (p. 175)

So paramount is foresight in relation to leadership that Greenleaf (2002) further declared: “Once leaders lose this lead (i.e. foresight) and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only” (p. 40). Indeed, timing and courage to act are so crucial that if a leader waits when he needs to act, he no longer is a leader but functions only as a mediator of events and variables that force his hand (Bogle, 2002, p. 175). And a leader in name only is no longer leading because “he is only reacting to events, and he probably will not long be a leader if he does not recover his ‘lead’” (Greenleaf, 1996a, p. 319).

Spears (2004) regarded the concept of foresight as a “characteristic that enables the servant-leader to understand the lessons from the past, the realities of the present, and the likely consequences of a decision for the future” (p. 15). To examine how this characteristic is related to Greenleaf’s servant-leadership theory, I look at Greenleaf’s conception of foresight in four different dimensions: foresight and the time continuum; foresight and awareness; foresight and consciousness; and the ethical dimension of foresight, giving special emphasis to the ethical dimension.

***Foresight and the time continuum.*** In characterizing foresight, Greenleaf (1996a) differentiated the concept from “the prevailing popular view of prescience” (p. 318). To explain foresight, Greenleaf (2002) started first with an exposition of the concept of *now* (p. 38). He observed that people tend to be fixated on events that are happening *now* and neglect that there is a broader concept of the time continuum. The time continuum is analogous to the spread of light from a narrowly focused beam. The light has a “bright intense center . . . and a diminishing intensity, theoretically out to infinity on either side”

(Greenleaf, 1996a, p. 317). By applying the statistical concept of the “moving average” to the explanation, Greenleaf proposed that *now* is not limited by clock time such that when the clock ticks, *now* moves along (p. 317). Rather, *now* is situated in a continuum that includes the past and the future. In other words, the concept of *now* includes all that is in the past and all that will be in the future. This characterization of the time continuum provides Greenleaf with a framework to differentiate foresight from the popular concept of prescience, something he called “a sort of mystical gift that a seer calls into play now and then when chooses to look at his crystal ball” (p. 318). By extension, for Greenleaf (2002), foresight is the ability to see things in the future from the present moment with a connection to the past (pp. 37-38). Cast in the context of the time continuum, foresight means:

Regarding the events of the instant moment and constantly comparing them with a series of projections made in the past and at the same time projecting future events — with diminishing certainty as projected time runs out into the indefinite future. (p. 39)

In identifying the source of inspiration, Greenleaf (1996a) freely attributed it to Machiavelli in his formulation of foresight (p. 318). According to Greenleaf, Machiavelli provided a fitting approach to harness foresight:

For knowing afar off (which it is only given a prudent man to do) the evils that are brewing, they are easily cured. But when, for want of such knowledge, they are allowed to grow so that everyone can recognize them, there is no longer any remedy to be found. (p. 318)

Thus as a prudent man, a leader needs to be the “one who constantly thinks of *now* as the moving concept in which past, present moment and future are one organic

entity” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 38). In other words, someone who is a practicing leader is “at once, in every moment of time, historian, contemporary analyst, and prophet — not three separate roles” (p. 39). The dimension of the time continuum in Greenleaf’s concept of foresight facilitates understanding of the next dimension: foresight and awareness.

***Foresight and awareness.*** Spears (2004) summarized awareness as the “general awareness, and especially self-awareness, (that) strengthens the servant-leader” (p. 14). Spears further suggested that awareness speaks to the ability to elevate oneself to see the unusual and discern that what is there is more than what meets the eye. Spotting the unusual is not necessarily about looking at the big picture all the time. For awareness also implies having the ability to look into the “grandeur that is in the minutest thing, the smallest experience” (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 41). Having the ability to spot the unusual in the minutest thing is critical for leaders, according to Greenleaf, for they are constantly asked to lead in stressful circumstances and could easily overlook the “smallest things.” In order to detect insights from the smallest things, leaders must engage in a process intended to expand their awareness, a process Greenleaf (1996a) likened to opening the door of perception wider in an effort to take in more from sensory experience than “people usually take in” (p. 322). Greenleaf observed that people move about with very narrow perceptions of sight, sound, touch, and thus would easily miss great opportunities that may have lain in the minutest thing. Leaders need to master the function of awareness so they don’t “miss great leadership opportunities” that the minutest thing may present (p. 323). By extension, Greenleaf suggested that awareness, especially awareness

of danger or harm, could come from examining what would normally be unnoticed details or events (p. 323). Potential dangers are best examined when dangers are seemingly absent, in times of peace and prosperity, according to the Chinese history book *春秋左傳 (Chun Qiu Zuo Zhuan)* (n.d.). The book spoke of preparedness for crisis “有備無患” (*you bei wu huan*) this way: “Where there is preparedness, there is no crisis. (“襄公十一 *xiang gong shi y*” (“11th year of Xiang Gong”). The story behind this Chinese proverb speaks of someone in authority who would be engaged in investigating a potentially lurking crisis 危機 (*wei ji*) (crisis in Chinese characters: danger plus opportunity) in times of peace, when no apparent ills are present. If and when such a potential crisis has been detected and conceptualized, precautionary steps can then be taken in advance. By application, part of a servant-leader’s moral responsibility is to temper unbridled optimism in times of stability by being on the prowl to detect possible risks and to take preparatory actions appropriately, to either prevent the risks from happening or make plans that will mitigate the impact if and when the risks should materialize. In addition, when Greenleaf (2002) wrote about awareness, he was referring to another critical aspect in which awareness is considered as “value building and value clarifying” (p. 41). Not only did Greenleaf focus on what actions need to be taken in advance in order to avert crisis, he also asserted that awareness acts as a sensor for moral and value alignment. The sensory capability of moral and value alignment starts first with what Spears (2004) described as “self-awareness” (p. 14). DeGraaf, Tilley, and Neal (2004) extended the concept further to include the development of self-awareness by advocating the adoption of reflection as part of our daily routine. Reflection would

allow servant-leaders to be purposeful, to renew passion and align values, and to adjust priorities (pp. 143-144). The exercise of daily reflection will have two results, according to Greenleaf (1996a, p. 323). The exercise will facilitate the opening of awareness to stock “both the conscious and unconscious areas of the mind with a richness of resources for any need on faces” (p. 323). But more importantly, the exercise will build and clarify values for leaders that will in turn guide them to “act rightly” (p. 323). It is in this context of understanding awareness as a value-regulating sensor that we come to a greater understanding of Greenleaf’s (2002) characterization of awareness as “*not* a giver of solace,” but rather “a disturber and an awakener” (p. 41). The understanding of Greenleaf’s awareness is critical in explaining the ethical dimension of foresight that is to be examined later in detail. If leaders are to act on foresight from the perspective of the ethical imperative, Greenleaf (1996a) argued, they must have the capacity of awareness fully functional (p. 323). Greenleaf further pointed out that awareness regulates values that would guide leaders to see their own “peculiar assortment of obligations and responsibilities” that facilitate their making the right choices as they sort out what is urgent and what is important (p. 323). If awareness is not being put to its proper use, leaders may miss “leadership opportunities” to detect impending danger and lurking crisis that are less noticeable and to question implications from a long-term perspective (Greenleaf, 2002, p. 41). The absence of awareness is best illustrated by Handy (1989) in a story of a frog in the cold water:

A frog if put in cold water will not bestir itself if that water is heated up slowly and gradually and will in the end let itself be boiled alive, too comfortable with

continuity to realize that continuous change at some point becomes discontinuous and demands a change in behavior. (pp. 7-8)

However, having the capacity of awareness to function properly in detecting dangers and opportunities requires foresight to see the now and here as well as the far and there, something Greenleaf related to the two levels of consciousness that a leader must exercise to capitalize on the insights derived from awareness (Greenleaf, Fraker, & Spears, 1996, p. 22).

*Foresight and two levels of consciousness.* In characterizing religious leadership, Greenleaf described religious leaders as having the role of a prophet, someone who brings “vision and penetrating insights” to their community (Greenleaf et al., 1996, p. 14). Greenleaf suggested that as a prerequisite for establishing a vision, a leader needs to exercise foresight and see the unforeseeable (p. 21). The exercise of foresight requires the leader to operate simultaneously on what Greenleaf called the “two levels of consciousness” (p. 22). Greenleaf explained that on one level, consciousness resides in the physical world: it is “concerned, responsible, effective, value oriented” (p. 22). On the other level, consciousness is detached and rises above the physical world, seeing beyond current events and looking into “the perspective of a long sweep of history. . . . (and projecting) into the indefinite future” (p. 22). Leaders would function as prophets only when they operate on the second level, in foreseeing the “unforeseeable” and shaping and modifying the vision for their community (p. 22).

Greenleaf (2002), however, was not interested simply in explaining how a leader needs to foresee the unforeseeable. More importantly, he was interested in how a leader needs to *act* and *show* the way that the unforeseeable points to (p. 40). For Greenleaf,

what makes these two key leadership characteristics, acting and showing, interconnected is the leader's ability to move between these two levels of consciousness, an ability characterized by what he described as a "schizoid life" (p. 40). Conjuring up an image that an invisible ladder exists that allows the leader to traverse between these two levels of consciousnesses, Greenleaf explained:

From one level of consciousness, each of us acts resolutely from moment to moment on a set of assumptions that then govern our life. Simultaneously, from another level, the adequacy of these assumptions is examined, in action, with the aim of future revision and improvement. Such a view gives one the perspective that makes it possible for one to live and act in the real world with a clearer conscience. (p. 40)

To act with a clearer conscience means being able to execute the responsibilities of a leader freely and, as Greenleaf suggested elsewhere, ethically (p. 39).

*The ethical dimension of foresight.* Northouse (2007) asserted that "ethics is central to leadership" and as such is at the crux of any decision leaders make given that "the choices leaders make and how they respond in a given circumstance are informed and directed by their ethics" (pp. 342, 346). Northouse further singled out Greenleaf's servant-leadership as one of the few leadership approaches that carries strong altruistic ethical overtones in caring for the followers and the less fortunate (pp. 348-349). And if there is any specific reference by Greenleaf (2002) about ethics and leadership, it is found in his discussion of foresight (p. 39). Inspired perhaps by a speech made in 1972 by Howard W. Johnson, chairman of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology as suggested by Bogle (2002, pp. 175-176), Greenleaf pointed out that there is an ethical dimension to

the characteristic of foresight when leaders fail to exercise foresight. Greenleaf explained:

The failure (or refusal) of a leader to foresee may be viewed as an ethical failure, because a serious ethical compromise today (when the usual judgment on ethical inadequacy is made) is sometimes the result of a failure to make the effort at an earlier date to foresee today's events and take the right actions when there was freedom for initiative to act. (p. 39)

Greenleaf (2002) further contended that what is regarded as an unethical action by society is not really an action of making an unethical or a wrong choice, but rather an action of "no choice" (p. 39). By an action of "no choice" Greenleaf meant that leaders could have foreseen the failure of inaction and could have chosen to act constructively when there was freedom to do so earlier. Though they might have foreseen the dire consequence earlier, unethical leaders chose not to act at the time. When the situation has deteriorated to the extent that those constructive choices no longer exist, the unethical leaders are then left with no alternative but to accept the eventual damage (p. 40).

The indictment of a leader for not acting with foresight as an ethical failure is shared by Bazerman and Watkins (2004). They advanced the notion that there is arguably a distinction between what is a predictable event and what is an unpredictable event, though both may well be situated on a continuum of predictability (pp. 4-5). A leader's responsibility is to foresee and identify a potential crisis and take action to prevent it (pp. 1, 4). Bazerman and Watkins pointed out that a predictable surprise "arises when leaders unquestionably had all the data and insight they need to recognize the potential for, even the inevitability of, a crisis, but failed to respond with effective

preventative action” (p. 4). The lack of action, according to Bazerman and Watkins, has an ethical dimension that stretches from committing conflict of interest, as in the case of accounting firms providing audits and consulting services at the same time to the same client to “accepting aggressive accounting practices of clients without complaints” (pp. 49-50). The consequences of these unethical actions go beyond mere loss of profit and demise of corporations. The financial loss would affect other stakeholders, such as individual investors and retired employees whose livelihoods may depend upon the income from the investment and the pension plans that they lost when they put their trust and confidence in an unethical corporation (p. 44).

Yet the impact of the ethical failure to act based on foresight in the case cited would go beyond the loss of profit for the corporation and of income for investors and pensioners. The moral infraction manifests at times in the inability of leaders to prepare the future generation for unseen challenges down the road. Greenleaf (1996b) addressed the ethical dimension of foresight by referencing Thomas Jefferson as a leader, someone whom Greenleaf considered to offer “as good an example as one could want of foresight in action” (p. 78). Yet as much as Greenleaf admired Jefferson, he gave much credit to Jefferson’s contemporary, George Wythe, with whom Jefferson studied law. According to Greenleaf, George Wythe the legislator was instrumental in guiding the young Jefferson through his maturation process and in providing “timely” and “incalculable” influence on him when Jefferson was the lawmaker of Virginia (pp. 79-80). The example of George Wythe prompted Greenleaf to claim that “the greatest foresight, the most difficult and most exciting, is the influence one wields on the future by helping the

growth of people who will be in commanding positions in the next generation” (p. 79). Greenleaf further argued that neither personal wisdom and character nor institutions of society can be used to alter or “bind the future” (p. 79) because by the time personal wisdom is crystallized, the future is already here, and wisdom that was bound to the future would be out of date (p. 79). On the other hand, Greenleaf contended that “the future can be radically altered by the kinds of people now being prepared for the future” (p. 79). In the case of Chinese Canadian immigrant churches, I argue that the first-generation leaders are in such a position to wield influence over the second-generation in their growth and faith journey in such a way that future church leaders may emerge from the SGCCE.

D. Kim (2004) agreed with Greenleaf that servant-leaders are often entrusted with building the future generations in terms of their capacity, and that action taken now or otherwise would often decide the world the next generation will inherit from us (p. 222). D. Kim argued that “in the end, foresight is about being able to see all things that are important to our future” (p. 222). But the most important target in the future that foresight needs to be able to see and induce leaders to act upon, and the target that would suffer the most if foresight is not exercised by leaders, is “our children’s future” (p. 222). In this regard, D. Kim agreed that the failure to act when foresight has shown a clear path of action is indeed to be considered an ethical failure (p. 202). Understood in this context, Greenleaf’s concept of foresight in terms of its ethical dimension stands out from other leadership approaches, which hold foresight either as a skill (Day & Schoemaker,

2008) or as a role-based capacity (Jaques, 1990) rather than as an interior quality of leadership that has an implicit moral dimension.

In summary, the four dimensions of foresight do not stand in isolation from one another in Greenleaf's writings. Collectively, these dimensions are interconnected to support the assertion that Greenleaf (2002) made about foresight being "the 'lead' that the leader has" (p. 40).

**Absence of leadership foresight.** To appreciate the full force of foresight, I suggest that one needs to look into scenarios where it is absent and has not been exercised. And to facilitate the understanding of foresight and its relationship to leadership, I drew on Ladkin's (2010) framework of two suites of phenomenological concepts. The first suite has to do with the phenomenological concepts of a "whole" and a "moment" (p. 25). Extending the study from Sokolowski's (2000) work, Ladkin explained that "wholes" are concrete observable objects that are clearly distinguishable and independent in existence. Conversely, not to be understood as a time-related concept, "moment" is used in phenomenology to characterize the inter-dependence between parts of the whole and the expression of that interdependence (p. 25). Rather than seeing leadership as a "whole," to be studied outside of reference to the particular context in which leadership emerges, leadership is better conceptualized as a "moment" of social relations (p. 26). As such, leadership is entirely "dependent on the historical, social and psychological context from which it arises" (p. 27). Hence its expression can be found only through "particular localized conditions and the individuals who take part in both creating it and making sense of it" (p. 27). Ladkin further argued that the

leadership “moment” functions to identify the “‘pieces’ of leadership which interact in order for leadership to be experienced” (p. 27). With this pair of concepts, leaders are required to relate to followers in such a way that “together they interact within a particular context and work towards an explicit or implicit purpose” (p. 27). I suggest that this expression of leadership fits well in the exploration of the transition of SGCCE conducted in this study. Understood in the context of the leadership “moment,” the transition process does not take place in a vacuum but reflects a great deal of how the first-generational church leaders frame their relationship with their flocks (i.e., patriarchal power-wielders or servant-leaders) and for what purpose (i.e., demanding total obedience and allegiance from the second-generation offspring or valuing the autonomy and growth of their followers, who one day may turn out to be servant-leaders themselves).

The second suite of Ladkin’s (2010) framework has to do with the phenomenological concepts of “ready-to-hand” and “presence-at-hand” (pp. 43-44). These phenomenological concepts were first espoused in Heidegger’s *Being and Time* (1962), in which Heidegger distinguished three modes of experiencing the world: (a) ready-to-hand; (b) unready-to-hand; and (c) present-at-hand. Dotov, Nie, and Chemero (2010) explained these three modes in the following. Ready-to-hand means experiencing an entity without involving an explicit awareness of its property (p. 1), for its existence is governed by its function of “doing something” else (Heidegger, 1962, p. 305). In other words, the existence of the entity together with its properties is seen through in the task the entity is engaged with, and our experience of the entity is overshadowed by our experience of the end result. Dotov et al. observed (p. 1) that according to Heidegger,

this mode of experiencing the entity is our primary way to engage with the world. However, when that entity fails to serve its function entirely according to its property in such a way that the end result is still attainable, our experience of that entity becomes conscious and explicit. We no longer focus only on the end result but also on the way the entity operates in the process of its engagement. This experience of the entity in this mode is now unready-to-hand (Dotov et al., pp. 1-2). Present-at-hand, Heidegger's third mode of experiencing the world, occurs when the process with which the entity has been engaged is halted in such a way that our attention is shifted from the end result the process intends to generate to the entity itself. Experienced with this mode, the entity is considered "no longer useful" but "merely an object with various properties" (Dotov et al., p. 2). An example of ready-to-hand experience can be a screwdriver as a piece of equipment when it is being used to drive in screws. However, when a problem arises in driving in the screws, our consciousness is shifted to unready-to-hand in experiencing the screwdriver, the screws, and the board into which the screws are driven. Present-at-hand is experienced when the screwdriving process is stopped and the screwdriver is examined as an entity.

Leveraging these concepts and applying them to the studies of leadership, Ladkin (2010) asserted that examining the present-at-hand mode of leadership experience allows us to look at the nature of leadership in terms of how leadership fails and what has gone badly wrong and what has been missing. She reasoned that when leadership goes wrong, "it is easier to identify what it is that has failed" (p. 46). A person who examines the leadership's present-at-hand mode, therefore, "may glean new insights into . . . [the

leadership's] 'ready-to-hand' mode" and can allow leadership to "reveal itself more explicitly . . . [in terms of] the purpose it serves when it is there" (p. 46). Ladkin's characterization of leadership's ready-to-hand and present-at modes can equally be applied to foresight. In fact, a good example of this application is the analysis of Hurricane Katrina, which struck the city of New Orleans in August 2005. In commenting on the lack of preparedness for the onslaught of Katrina, Ladkin suggested that the failure of leadership began long before the disaster occurred. She argued that "in order to understand the nature of leadership failure 'in the moment', one also has to understand its history" (p. 49). Ladkin further remarked that if disasters such as Katrina are to be prevented from happening in advance, a comprehensive perspective of the entire situation is required. This perspective is more than a vision; it is:

A way of "seeing" the entire scenario and its attendant intricacies and complexities. Rather than the skill of looking forward, this situation called for the capacity to deeply perceive what was going on in the here and now . . . this perspective (ought to be) large enough to encompass the entire context with its critical interdependencies and from that perspective to create a plan for effective action. (pp. 50-51)

I suggest that Ladkin's (2010) inclusive characterization of the need for seeing the entire scenario is congruent with Greenleaf's articulation of foresight's characteristics: Foresight is not merely a concept of looking forward, but rather involves analyzing the here and now and the history and trends of the situation, as in moving on a time continuum looking at the past, present, and future (Greenleaf, 1996a, pp. 317-318, 2002, p. 38).

I further suggest that Ladkin's analysis offers a useful framework for understanding the absence of leadership. Leveraging this framework, I, in part, analyzed the absence of foresight of the first-generation religious leaders who fail to detect the trends behind the phenomenon of the "Silent Exodus" and neglect to recognize the aspirations of the SGCCE. In analyzing the transition of SGCCE from their parents' congregations to ones of their own, I postulated that leadership of the first-generational pastor leaders and elders plays a critical role in the facilitation and mediation of the transition process. Use of foresight on the part of these spiritual leaders would allow the religious institutions and their leadership to see afar, to detect patterns and trends, to gauge the uncertainty, to devise a plan, and to act at the right time (Bogle, 2002, p. 175). In examining the phenomenon of the "Silence Exodus" from Chinese Canadian churches, one may wonder with Ladkin's astute observation whether exercise of better foresight to detect the dynamic would allow the church leaders to act accordingly in advance to stem the tide (Evans, 2008; Song, 1999).

**Summary.** This section examined briefly the evolution of modern leadership studies. Various theories such as the Great Man, traits, contingency and "New Leadership" were highlighted. A discussion of transformational leadership was presented, followed by Greenleaf's servant-leadership. Limitations, challenges, and characteristics of servant-leadership were introduced. The selection of foresight as a key characteristic in the examination of leadership in the Chinese Canadian churches in relation to the SGCCE's transition was explained. It was followed by an analysis of Greenleaf's foresight in terms of its four dimensions. In closing, a discussion of the

absence of foresight and of how that absence is related to the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon was framed using Ladkin’s (2010) phenomenological concepts.

## Chapter III

### Methods

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this dissertation is to explore through a multi-case inquiry how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the SGCCE's transition from their first-generation churches to the current congregations of their choice. This chapter on methodology starts with a review of research methodology, identifying the epistemological assumptions and theoretical perspective that underpin qualitative methodology. That review is followed by a description of case study research and an explanation of why it was the method of choice for conducting this research. Then a discussion of the research participants and sampling consideration is offered, followed by an explanation of the twin processes of data collection and data analysis as employed for this research. Next to be presented is the description of the researcher's personal bias and bracketing. Limitations of the study will then be discussed, after which the chapter closes with identification of some key ethical considerations that require attention.

#### Research Methodology

**Epistemology and theoretical perspectives for social research.** Creswell (2013) pointed out that in the field of social studies, researchers always bring certain beliefs and philosophical assumptions to their investigations (p. 15). Crotty (1998) too noted that researchers inject into their inquiry a "host of assumptions . . . about human knowledge . . . (and) about realities encountered in our human world" (p. 17). These beliefs and assumptions invariably affect the way researchers approach the inquiry, the

problems they intend to tackle, the questions they seek to answer, and finally, the methodology and methods they select to conduct their research (Creswell, p. 15; Crotty, p. 17). To justify the methodology and the method used to conduct the investigation of interest, researchers are required to address the epistemological assumptions and theoretical perspective that underpin the methodology, which in turn “have implications for the methods, and the techniques they are most likely to use in conducting any research project” (Bakker, 2010, p. 487). For this reason, Crotty maintained that every research study must address the following four foundational questions, whose answers inform and interact with each other in the construction of the research framework: (a) what method should be used? (b) what methodology governs the choice of method? (c) what theoretical perspective lies behind the methodology? and (d) what epistemology informs the theoretical perspective? (p. 2).

For Crotty (1998), at the root of the research process is the foundational question about where knowledge comes from and “how we know what we know” (p. 8). Epistemology is “the science of knowing” (Babbie, 2013, p. 4). Quoting Maynard (1994), Crotty defined epistemology as the discipline “concerned with providing a philosophical grounding for deciding what kinds of knowledge are possible, and how we can ensure that they are both adequate and legitimate” (p. 8). Crotty further identified three schools of thoughts pertaining to epistemology. First, *objectivist epistemology* asserts that “meaning, and therefore reality, exists as such apart from the operation of any consciousness” (p. 8). Consequently, the objective reality can be measured and described accurately by adopting particular methods (King & Horrocks, 2010, pp. 18-19). Next is

the school of *constructionism*, which sees truth not as existing objectively, waiting to be discovered, but as coming “into existence in and out of our engagement with the realities of the world” (Crotty, p. 8). Meaning is a construction of our consciousness in its interaction with the world (King & Horrocks, p. 22). As a result, different people constitute meaning differently, even in relation to the same phenomenon (Crotty, p. 9). Finally, the epistemological stance of *subjectivism* asserts that “meaning does not come out of an interplay between subject and object but is imposed on the object by the subject” (p. 9). In other words, “meaning comes from anything *but* an interaction between the subject and the object to which it is ascribed” (p. 9). In addition to Crotty’s three types of epistemology, King and Horrocks identified *contextualism* as another viable epistemological stance. Contextualism states that “all knowledge produced is dependent upon the context, including the perspective or standpoint taken” to produce it. All knowledge is therefore “local, provisional and situation dependent” (p. 20). However, for Creswell (2013), King and Horrocks’s characterization of contextualism appears to be more in line with constructionism because researchers of this stripe tend to derive meaning by focusing on “the specific contexts in which people live and work in order to understand the historical and cultural settings of the participants” (p. 25). To sum up, a variety of epistemologies exist, and the epistemological stance researchers adopt in executing their investigation will underpin the theoretical perspective they use in framing the studies. For this study, I followed the constructionist stance that meaning is socially constructed as it relates to the SGCCE experience of their transition through their faith journey.

Theoretical perspectives are the “philosophical stance that lies behind our chosen methodology” (Crotty, 1998, p. 7). Drawing from Guba (1990), Denzin and Lincoln (2011) framed theoretical perspectives as paradigms, or interpretive frameworks, that are formed using a “basic set of beliefs that guides action” in conducting research (p. 13). Interpretive in nature, social science research is guided by paradigms that reflect “a set of beliefs and feeling about the world and how it should be understood and studied” (p. 13). Equally inspired by Guba’s (1990) characterization of these perspectives, Creswell (2014), in a recent edition of his book on social science research design rejected referring the characterization of interpretive frameworks as paradigms in favor of conceptualizing them as worldviews; he defined a worldview as “a general philosophical orientation about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study” (p. 6).

Rooted in different nuances of epistemology, a variety of perspectives (i.e., paradigms, worldviews) emerges to inform researchers in the selection of appropriate methodology for their research. Creswell (2014) categorized the worldviews into four sets. First he merged positivism and post-positivism and designated the combined worldview as *postpositivist*, which represents “a deterministic philosophy in which causes (probably) determine effects or outcomes” in an empirically scientific reductionistic manner (p. 7). The *constructivist* worldview, on the other hand, suggests that “individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work” by constituting “subjective meanings of their own experience” through interactions with the world (p. 8). Drawing insights from Mertens (2010), Creswell named the third worldview *transformative*, advocating that “research inquiry needs to be intertwined with

politics and a political change agenda to confront social oppression at whatever levels [on which] it occurs” (p. 9). Mertens’s transformative paradigm focuses on “(1) the tensions that arise when unequal power relationships surround the investigation of what seem to be intransigent social problems; and (2) the strength found in communities when their rights are respected and honored” (p. 10). Finally Creswell described the last perspective as *pragmatic*, a set of worldviews that “arises out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions (as in postpositivism)” and favor instead “applications — what works — and solutions to problems” (p. 10).

Lincoln, Lynham, and Guba (2011), on the other hand, identified five alternative groups of inquiry paradigms in social research: (a) *positivism*, (b) *post-positivism*, (c) *critical theory*, (d) *constructivism*, and (e) *participatory*. While the authors aligned with Creswell (2014) in the common identification of the paradigms of positivism, post-positivism, and constructivism, they offered two other paradigms for consideration. Bearing characteristics similar to those of the transformative paradigm, *critical theory* maintains that “research is driven by the study of social structures, freedom and oppression, and power and control,” with knowledge produced by research having the ability “to change existing oppressive structures and remove oppression through empowerment” (p. 103). The *participatory* paradigm, conversely, suggests that social reality is co-created by mind through “critical subjectivity in participatory transaction with cosmos” (p. 100). *Critical subjectivity*, as delineated by Heron and Reason (1997), represents the awareness of four ways of knowing: experiential, presentational, propositional, and practical; of how they are currently interacting; and of ways of

changing the relations between them so that they “articulate a reality that is unclouded by a restrictive and ill-disciplined subjectivity” (p. 280).

In a nutshell, social science researchers differentiate the positivistic (including post-positivism) theoretical perspectives from interpretivistic perspectives (Snape & Spencer, 2003, pp. 16-17). Rooted in objectivistic epistemology, positivism insists on the “measurability of an objective reality” (Mabry, 2009, p. 215), whereas interpretivism builds on “the constructivist theory that all knowledge is personally constructed” (p. 216).

This research explored how the case of a group of SGCCE experienced the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” from their parents’ church and why it happened. The central focus of the case was on arriving at an in-depth understanding of the meanings of this phenomenon from the participants’ perspectives in terms of how they perceived their own experience in relation to this phenomenon and how they constructed the meaning of that phenomenon. Bakker (2010) stated that “case study research is often associated with an emphasis on the importance of interpretation of human meaning. The assumptions concerning human meaning characteristic of the interpretive paradigm in social science are central to case study research” (p. 486). Mabry (2009) further opined that “personal experience, including the vicarious experience promoted in interpretivist case studies, provides the building blocks for the knowledge base constructed by each individual” (p. 216). This description falls into what Crotty (1998) characterized as the interpretivist approach, which “looks for culturally derived and historically situated interpretation of the social life-world” (p. 67). Thus the approach I take in this study is one of interpretivism that undergirds the constructivist theory of knowledge construction

(Mabry, p. 216). The interpretivist paradigm differs from positivism and postpositivism in the way it affects methodology and methods to be used in conducting social science research, as will be discussed in the next section.

**Qualitative research.** Social scientists such as Creswell (2014) and Babbie (2013) are in general agreement that three options are commonly identified as the methodologies researchers use to conduct investigations in social science studies: quantitative research; qualitative research; and a mixed method approach that uses both. Quantitative research, explained Creswell, is used “for testing objective theories by examining the relationship among variables,” which then “can be analyzed using statistical procedures” (p. 4). To that end, quantitative data are numeric in nature (Babbie, p. 25). Qualitative research, on the other hand, distinguishes itself by studying “things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 3). As a result, qualitative data tend to be detailed descriptions of people in terms of their thoughts, actions, emotions, and attitudes as well as of the environment the people are situated in (Patton, 1980, p. 22). Finally, mixed-methods research is the approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, p. 4).

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) indicated that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research lies not merely in the style of the approach, the nature of the data, and how the analysis is conducted and presented, but rather fundamentally in the different epistemology the researchers uphold in their scholarly investigation (p. 13). The fundamental divergence reflects the deviation in the researchers’ chosen stance regarding

the “uses of positivism and postpositivism” (p. 11). Positivism upholds that there is a reality “out there to be studied, captured, and understood,” whereas postpositivism contends that “reality can never be fully apprehended, only approximated” (p. 11). Although both qualitative and quantitative research approaches have been shaped by both perspectives historically, the former has departed from the historical root and influences of positivism and postpositivism due to the emergent need to address “new social contexts and perspectives” in reflection of the “rapid social change and the resulting diversification of life worlds” that the researchers are confronted with (p. 11).

Based on their epistemological stance, quantitative researchers view their investigation as “good science, free of individual bias and subjectivity,” and as the only way to tell the story of the social world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). Under the influence of positivism and postpositivism, these researchers tend to use impersonal and inferential methods and instruments and render the person under scrutiny as only one of the samples or an impersonal object. In their attempts to develop generalized findings, the quantitative researchers are in favor of examining statistics, trends, and probabilistic outcomes, rather than looking at the rich description of the participants and their social context (p. 12).

Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, underscore:

The socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasize the value-laden nature of inquiry . . . (and) seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8)

In evaluating their work, qualitative scholars tend to use alternative techniques or approaches such as “verisimilitude, emotionality, personal responsibility, an ethic of caring, political praxis, multivoiced texts, and dialogues with subjects” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 12). In so doing, the researchers place a greater degree of emphasis on rich descriptions of the data because these descriptions are valuable to their understanding of the subjects and the social world they are situated in (p. 12).

Creswell (2013) suggested that qualitative research is favored if the following motivations are behind the investigation: (a) an exploration of issues whose variables of the idea cannot be easily measured or voices of participants easily heard; (b) the need to allow the participants to share their views without being encumbered by the presuppositions of the researchers’ view of theoretical framework; (c) an illumination of the context in which participants address the issue or problem when the stories of the participants are inextricably linked to the context within which the view is expressed; (d) the need to develop or enhance theories that may have existed in some areas of population but are insufficient for capturing the complexity of the problem in the context of other areas of population (pp. 47-48). Klenke (2008) further argued that it is the “extensive, thick description of a phenomenon” offered by qualitative studies that adds value to leadership studies by allowing multiple voices and perspectives to emerge (p. 12).

I believe that my research investigation met the criteria for adopting a qualitative approach as identified by both Creswell (2013, 2014) and Klenke (2008) because the study focused on examining the meanings the participants constituted through interaction

with their surroundings and situation (Payne & Payne, 2004, p. 34). Hence, while both qualitative and quantitative methods carry their own merits, a qualitative approach was more appropriate for my research to help me better understand the specificity of the deep experience of SGCCE in their congregational transition process. Finally, Winston (2010) lamented that although many studies may have focused on servant-leadership theories using a quantitative method, deeper understanding of servant-leadership is required, and a qualitative method is preferred to generate better insights (pp. 180-181).

**Research approach.** Researchers can choose among many approaches of inquiry to conduct their social science research within the qualitative research methodology. Crotty (1998) identified the following options as viable approaches for undertaking qualitative investigation: ethnography, phenomenological research, grounded theory, heuristic inquiry, action research, discourse analysis, and feminist standpoint research (p. 5). Characterizing them as qualitative research genres, Rossman and Rallis (2012) organized the approaches into three broad areas: ethnographics, phenomenological studies, and sociocommunication studies (p. 90). Creswell (2013), on the other hand, offered five alternatives to researchers to design their social science study of social behaviors and interactions: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study (p. 70). Wolcott (2009), however, used different categories: ethnography (e.g., ethnology, community study, anthropological life history); field study (i.e., phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, conversational analysis); non-participant strategies (e.g., observer study, human ethology); and archival strategies (p. 84). Each of the approaches carries its merits and For reasons to be discussed later, I

chose to use a qualitative case study to answer the research questions posed by this investigation.

### **Research design.**

*Case study research.* Even though case study approach has been prominent in different academic fields in the history of social science research (Creswell, 2013, p. 97), Yin (2014) observed that this research approach has gained popularity and credibility as the research method of choice only over the last three decades (pp. xix-xxi). Patton (1987) suggested that “a case can be a person, an event, a program, a time period, a critical incident, or a community” (p. 19). Along the same lines, Yin (2012) reiterated that a case can be “a person, organization, behavioral condition, event, or other social phenomenon” but cautioned that the case must be directly related to the unit of analysis of the investigation (pp. 5-6). R. Stake (2005), on the other hand, defined a case for study as a “bounded system” whose key activities are patterned, with coherence and sequences to be observed, and a context to be specified (p. 444). Although scholars such as Creswell (2013) and R. Stake generally agree that case study research involves “the study of a case within a real-life, contemporary context or setting” (Creswell, 2013, p. 97), researchers do not agree about how to classify case study from the research methodology standpoint. Chadderton and Torrance (2011) framed it as an “approach” to research on the social activity and the meanings “social actors . . . bring to the setting and manufactured in them” (p. 53). R. Stake regarded it not as a research methodology but just as a choice of what is to be studied. Thus case study is defined by the “interest in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used” (p. 443). Cousin (2005), on the

other hand, claimed that there is no consensus concerning the parameters of case study research but that broadly speaking, “Case study research aims to explore and depict a setting with a view to advancing understanding of it” (pp. 421-422). Eisenhardt (1989) referred to case study as “a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (p. 534). Yin (2014) echoed this notion and identified case study as one of the five research strategies of investigation in social science (the others being experiment, survey, archival analysis, and history) (p. 9). Because of divergent views about how to position case study within social science research, it is important that researchers be very clear about the specific fieldwork techniques they use and highlight them in the study so as to make the research an explicit case study, rather than relying on the label of the study to convey the nature of the investigation (Wolcott, 2009, p. 85). For the purpose of this study, I followed Creswell’s characterization of case study as a qualitative methodological approach:

In which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a *case*) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving *multiple sources of information* (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a *case description* and *case themes*. (p. 97, emphases in original)

Patton (1987) recommended that in considering which qualitative option to take as a research approach, researchers choose case studies when the objective of the research is “to capture individual differences or unique variations from one program setting to another, or from one program experience to another” (p. 19). One of the strengths of case study, according to Chadderton and Torrance (2011), is that “it can take an example of an

activity . . . and use multiple methods and data sources to explore it and interrogate it” and come up with a “thick description” of the case (p. 54). Through the thick description of the case, both the common and the unusual as well as visible and invisible detail can be unearthed together with their meanings and implications for the case (Mabry, 2009, p. 218; Stake, R., 2005, p. 453). In other words, case study allows researchers to focus on complex situations while taking the context of the situations into account, thereby capturing the holistic and meaningful characteristics of the case (Casey & Houghton, 2010, p. 41). Another strength of case study research lies in its contribution to theory development and theory testing, depending upon the variables, constructs, and framework of the investigation and the rigor with which the study is undertaken (Klenke, 2008, p. 61; Yin, 2014, pp. 37-39). However, criticisms leveled against this methodology include the limitation that findings from one or small number of cases cannot be generalized to a broader level (Chadderton & Torrance, 2011, p. 55; Flyvbjerg, 2004, p. 423). R. Stake (2005) countered this criticism by appealing to the “naturalistic generalization” process, arguing that readers of the case have the capacity to adapt through their personal or vicarious experience such that “enduring meanings” can be formulated and shaped through encounters with case study (p. 454). Another criticism of case study concerns the lack of trust in the credibility of the procedures used by a researcher in the case study (Yin, 2012, p. 6). Being open to changing data collection, analysis, and interpretation as new insights are gleaned during the research process, case researchers are accused of not always following pre-established procedures and analytical techniques and thus of showing bias toward verification and bringing the integrity of the study into question

(Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 309; Klenke, 2008, p. 85). To meet this challenge, case study scholars such as Yin (2012) and Flyvbjerg (2011) called for the deployment of more systematic and rigorous data collection and analysis procedures. Another remedy suggested by Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) is for researchers to make explicit their reflexivity by documenting their research process via a reflective diary that “should provide the rationale for decisions made, instincts and personal challenges that the researcher experienced during research” (p. 15).

In classifying case study research, Yin (2014) distinguished three types of investigations from the perspective of their functions. Explorative case study is typically used in identifying the research questions or procedures for future research usage (p. 238). Descriptive case study is employed to describe a phenomenon in a real-world context, whereas explanatory case study is best used to explain how or why some condition came to be (pp. 6-9, 238). Examining the case in terms of its characteristics, R. Stake (2005) identified three categories of the qualitative case study. First, the study of the case is *intrinsic* when it is undertaken “first and last . . . (to facilitate) better understanding of this particular case” (p. 445). The purpose of intrinsic case study is not primarily theory building; nor is it to come to understand abstract construct or generic phenomena. The purpose is simply to come to understand the case at hand in terms of all of its “particularity and ordinariness” (p. 445). Cousins (2005) suggested that the findings of the intrinsic case, however, can be extended for evaluation research because the insights of the case “can be about assigning worth to a particular set of activities and experiences” (p. 422).

*Instrumental* case study, on the other hand, refers to the scenario in which the purpose of the study is mainly to “provide insight into an issue or to redraw a generalization” (Stake, R., 2005, p. 445). The case itself is not of primary interest; it is undertaken to facilitate the understanding of something else. The same rigor and depth of study apply equally to the instrumental case study as to the intrinsic study, but the key distinction is that the instrumental case investigation is conducted primarily to pursue an interest external to the case itself (p. 445). To sum up, unlike the intrinsic case study, the case in the instrumental study is a means to an end (Casey & Houghton, 2010, p. 42). Klenke (2008) referenced the case of evaluating the merits of different leadership development programs as a good means to understand how leadership effectiveness is enhanced as an example of an instrumental case study (pp. 59-60). Although the classification of these two types of cases is clearly defined, R. Stake cautioned that differentiation between the two is not always explicitly evident because researchers tend to have overlapping interests simultaneously (p. 445).

Finally, R. Stake (2005) suggested that a *multiple* or *collective* case study is warranted when the interest in one particular case is less and a number of cases can be joined together to examine a “phenomenon, population, or general condition” (p. 445). This approach is an extension of an instrumental study to multiple cases when the researcher has no preconceived notion regarding whether the cases share common characteristics, similarities, redundancy, or variety. The cases are selected based on the rationale that understanding them collectively would lead to an understanding and theorizing about something broader than each case itself (p. 446).

Yin (2014) suggested that case studies are the research strategy of choice if researchers seek to answer the “how” or “why” when they have “little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context” (p. 14). I argue that my study meets these conditions since the purpose of the dissertation is to explore why SGCCE exited from their parents’ church and how ethnicity and religion have come to influence their decision to opt for different ethnic and religion composition of their new congregation of choice. In addition, I suggest that the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” is contemporary; it was reported first by Carvajal (1994) and H. Lee (1996) as it emerged from Asian American Christians and soon was recognized in Canada by Evans (2008) as being related to Canadian-born Chinese Christians. Finally, this study does not seek to control the behaviors or events of the participants and this phenomenon. Thus, this study meets the requirements of selection for case study research. As will be made clear in the next section, I propose using an instrumental multi-case design to study this phenomenon, with different cohorts of SGCCE as individual cases bounded by the ethnicity marker of the targeted church of transition for a particular cohort.

***Multi-case design.*** As discussed in Chapter II, the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon accounted for only half of the experience the second-generation and the subsequent generations of Asian American Christians encountered in their transition from their parents’ church. The literature has identified that many of those who left did not abandon their faith, as was first reported (Carvajal, 1994; Lee, H., 1996). Different pathways (congregations) exist whereby this collective cohort of Asian American Christians can

exercise their desire for transition; a decision, according to the literature, is often shaped by this cohorts' view of ethnicity and religion. My study explored the same phenomenon as it unfolded in Canada and as the second-generation Canadian Chinese Christians experienced it. I used the targeted congregations' ethnicity mix (i.e., options in both continuous evolution and discontinuous pathways) as the boundary to group different type of participants for a multi-case analysis of their experience of the phenomenon and the transition.

In recommending the use of a case study design, Yin (2014) advocated using a multi-case design rather than a single-case design, arguing that a multi-case design offers more substantial analytical benefits in that “analytical conclusions independently arising from (multi-cases) will be more powerful than those coming from a single case alone” (p. 64). In multi-case scenarios, researchers have the option of selecting cases that are either replicative or contradictory in terms of their hypothesis or propositions, with effects that may lead to stronger argument for or against the hypothesis, a luxury a single-case design does not have. On the contrary, conclusions from single-case design require an “extremely strong argument in justifying (the) choice for the case” due to the unique constraints of the findings (p. 64).

Apart from stronger methodological coherences and the advantage of more robust findings, R. Stake (2006) highlighted another significant reason for selecting multi-case design. Although each case has its own story to tell, R. Stake suggested that a multi-case study highlights not only the intra-case problems and issues but also the inter-case collective relationship exhibited in these cases (p. vi). The individual cases chosen for

the multi-case study share a common characteristic or condition, and these cases are bounded together by a “quintain” (pp. 5-6). A quintain, as R. Stake explained, is “an object, or phenomenon or condition to be studied — a target, but not a bull’s eye” (p. 6). It is the target collection in the multi-case study that researchers come to seek to understand more thoroughly by studying each case in terms of its similarities and differences in their individual relationship to the quintain. Thus multi-case investigation starts with identifying the quintain of interest for study (p. 6).

In designing a multi-case study, R. Stake (2006) urged, researchers should take heed of the case–quintain dilemma. Two options exist in crafting a case study research, and the choice is guided by the researcher’s epistemological preference to know more about the either the collective quintain or the individual cases. The epistemological choice will direct the researcher to frame the connection between the quintain and the cases differently, either examining the quintain as having loose ties to the cases or the quintain as having vital ties to the cases (p. 7). For R. Stake, the demarcation is clear: a multi-case study of a program, a phenomenon, or an object “is not so much a study of the quintain as it is a study of cases for what they tell us about the quintain” (p. 7).

To further facilitate the multi-case research, R. Stake (2006) identified three main criteria for selecting cases: (a) Is the case relevant to the quintain? (b) Do the cases provide diversity across contexts? and (c) Do the cases provide good opportunities to learn about complexity and contexts? (p. 23).

I argue that my multi-case study meets R. Stake’s (2006) definition of quintain and that the cases selected meet the criteria. The quintain in my study is the phenomenon

of the “Silent Exodus” that emerged first among the Asian American Christians as recognized and reported by Carvajal (1994) and H. Lee (1996), after which the phenomenon was detected as having been occurring in Korean Canadian churches by Song (1999) and in the Chinese Canadian congregations by Evans (2008). The objective of the investigation is to analyze how the presence and absence of servant-leadership foresight on the part of the leaders of both the first-generation Chinese Canadian immigrant churches and the current congregations SGCCE are attending plays a role in the transition of SGCCE in the context of ethnicity and religion through sampling multiple cases of participants bounded by the choices they made regarding the targeted congregations they transitioned to. Although these participants may have experienced the same phenomenon, each may have perceived and experienced it differently, and therefore the meanings and impact of that experience are constructed differently and individually by each participant. This multi-case study consists of an investigation of four cases. The first case is a group of SGCCE who opted to attend an independent Chinese ethnic English-speaking church. The second case is a group of SGCCE who decided to worship at Pan-Asian congregations. The third case is a group of SGCCE who chose to become members of multiethnic churches. Finally the fourth case is a group of SGCCE who congregated with mainstream Caucasian churches. The boundary of each case is defined less by the physical church entity than by the ethnicity the congregations represents. In other words, the first case may have participants from more than one church or congregation, for example, so long as these participants attend churches of the same ethnicity.

## **Research Participants**

All research participants had to meet the criteria of: (a) being SGCCE and (b) sharing the common experience of the “Silent Exodus,” a transition from their parents’ congregations. Due to the smaller sample size in case studies, purposeful sampling will be employed for data collection in which the researcher is required to intentionally sample data that can best inform the research problem and the central phenomenon under investigation (Stake, R., 2006, p. 24). Although purposeful sampling can operate at different levels, such as site, event, or process, this case study research focused purposeful sampling at the participant level (Creswell, 2013, p. 156). Purposeful sampling means that the participants are selected “for their representativeness of a larger population but are more likely to be chosen for their informativeness” (Mabry, 2009, p. 223). Participants for each case in this study are differentiated by the decision they made in choosing their targeted congregation of ethnicity they transitioned to attend. I secured three participants for each of the first three cases and four participants for the fourth case, maintaining gender balance where possible. In order to find these participants, I engaged gatekeepers in the persons of church leaders of these congregations for referral, recommendation, or introduction. Many of these gatekeepers existed as part of my personal network. Although consideration was given to geographical representation of regions of Canada, priority was given to the availability of participants representing each case.

## **Data Collection**

Creswell (2013) advised that a robust data collection process involves not just focusing on the actual types of data and how to collect them but also planning and consideration regarding “gaining permissions, conducting a good qualitative sampling strategy, developing means for recording information both digitally and on paper, storing the data, and anticipating ethical issues that may arise” (p. 145). In this section, I followed Creswell’s lead in discussing the data collection process but defer the elaboration of ethical issues until the last section of this chapter.

To study a case in an in-depth manner and to construct a thick description of it, researchers are required to seek out the common and the particular as well as the usual and the unusual aspects of the case. To that end, R. Stake (2005) identified the following areas about which researchers must gather data in order to build a composite understanding of the case:

(a) the nature of the case, particularly its activity and its functioning; (b) its historical background; (c) its physical setting; (d) other contexts such as economic, political, legal, religious and aesthetic that are relevant; (e) other cases through which this case is recognized; and (f) those informants through whom the case can be known. (p. 447)

In suggesting the forms of data to be collected for qualitative research that are germane to case studies, Creswell (2013) listed four categories. They are: (a) observations (from participant to non-participant), (b) interviews (from open-ended to closed-end), (c) documents (from public to private), and (d) audiovisual materials (from photographs to compact discs to videotapes) (pp. 158-159). Yin (2014), on the other

hand, identified “six sources of evidence” specifically for case studies. They are: (a) documentation, (b) archival records, (c) interviews, (d) direct observations, (e) participant-observation, and (f) physical artifacts (pp. 105-118).

Of all the data-collecting approaches surfaced here either by Creswell (2013) or Yin (2014), Klenke (2008) observed that the interview is being treated as one of the most important data sources by case researchers (p. 66). R. Stake (2005) explained the reason: “What details of life the researchers are unable to see for themselves is [*sic*] obtained by interviewing people who did see them and by finding documents recording them” (p. 453). However, R. Stake (2006) also placed emphasis on direct observation to understand the activities and functions of the case; and on examination of artifacts and documentation that describe the phenomenon under study (p. 27). Mabry (2009) echoed that direct observation and semistructured interviews allow “probative follow-up questions and exploration of topics unanticipated by the interviewer” and “facilitate development of subtle understandings of what happens in the case and why” (p. 218). Irrespective of the data collection approach, Yin (2014) advocated adherence to four principles of data collection to maximize the benefits of case study research and to improve the validity and reliability of the studies: (a) using multiple sources of evidence, (b) creating a case study database, (c) maintaining a chain of evidence, and (d) exercising care when using data from electronic sources (pp. 118-130).

Because the unit of analysis of this study is individual participant, I used a three-pronged approach in collecting data, employing (a) semistructured interviews, (b) direct observation, and (c) artifacts and documentation examination. My goal in using this

approach was to arrive at an understanding of the participants' experience of the "Silent Exodus" phenomenon and to obtain the answers to the research questions through corroboration of the data collected.

Warren (2002) explained that the purpose of the qualitative interview is to "derive interpretations, not facts or laws" from the interview participants, who are viewed as "meaning makers, not passive conduits for retrieving information from an existing vessel of answers" (p. 83). Seidman (2013) concurred and suggested that "at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience" (p. 9). Interviews in case study resemble a guided dialogue rather than "structured queries" (Yin, 2014, p. 110). However, as with any other aspect of qualitative studies, challenges exist in the interview approach to data collection. Creswell (2013), in referencing Weis and Fine (2000), raised the following questions for planning consideration:

Are your interviewees able to articulate the forces that interrupt, suppress, or oppress them? Do they erase their history, approaches, and cultural identity? Do they choose not to expose their history or go on record about the difficult aspects of their lives? (p. 173)

To address these concerns, interview questions need to be designed in such a way that the participants' sensitivities are respected and anticipated, and that a dialogical environment is established. To that end, I used a semistructured format for conducting the interview, with an interview guide prepared in advance (see Appendix A). The guide was designed with two parallel sections, listing research questions on the left and interview questions linking to each research question on the right (Kvale & Brinkmann,

2009, p. 132). Key to the operation of the semistructured interview process is the flexibility the interviewer has in not necessarily having to follow the questions in the order in which they are listed in the guide. Rather it is the “flow of interview . . . (that) determines when and how a question is raised” (Bailey, 2007, p. 100). In addition, the semistructured interview setup allows the interviewer to be aware of the participant’s emotion and the interviewer may engage in a “dialogue with the interviewee, rather than simply ask questions” (p. 100).

Drawing from Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2009) seven stages of interview and Crewell’s (2013) suggested steps, I used a three-phase approach in completing the semistructured interviews. The planning phase started with the design of the interview guide: The guide listed the interview questions and linked them to each of the research questions. In addition, I obtained Institution Review Board approval was obtained and prepared the Consent Form. Then I contacted participants and arranged for a place and time for a face-to-face interview. The location for the interviews was considered carefully in efforts to avoid distraction, maintain comfort and ease of conversation, and respect the privacy of the participants. The next phase was the execution. Two digital recording units were used to ensure that a complete interview was recorded and simultaneous backup was maintained. At the outset of the interview, I introduced the overview of the study and the purpose of the interview, along with the number of questions being identified. I asked participants to agree to the length of the interview and to sign the Consent Form. I tested the recording equipment and then proceeded with the interview, using the interview guide as the lead for conversation. Before ending the

interview, I thanked interviewees for participating and invited them to comment on any items that might be germane to the purpose of the study and of interest to them that had not been covered by the interview; I also invited them to discuss any such items. In addition, I asked participants to reflect on the experience of the interview to shed light on the process and on their interaction with the research. The final phase was the post-interview review. Immediately after the interview, I spent a few minutes writing down thoughts, learning, and first impressions of the interview process to capture my own emotions and reflection.

Additional data were gathered through direct observation. Creswell (2013) defined observation as “the act of noting a phenomenon in the field setting through the five senses of the observer, often with an instrument, and recording it for scientific purposes” (p. 166). R. Stake (2006) further suggested that in case studies, “the most meaningful data-gathering methods are often observational” (pp. 4). Observation allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the activities and the functions as well as the context of the case (p. 27). To that end, I followed a direct participant-observation approach in attending one to two church activities with the participants to take note of how the participants interacted with the targeted church to which they transitioned after their departure from their parents’ congregations. Drawing from Yin (2014) and Creswell (2013), I followed a three-phase approach to complete the observation. In the planning phase, I devised observation protocol intended to capture both descriptive and reflective field notes. I sought, and was granted, permission to participate in church activities from the leaders of the congregations I intended to visit with the participants.

These leaders were the gatekeepers from whom I received the introduction or referral to the participants. In this phase, I made appointments with participants to schedule the observation. The next phase was the execution. I sought an introduction to the congregation once I arrived at the site, and this function was performed by the participant or the gatekeeper. Observational data were then collected following the protocol, identifying the place, date, and time of the observation. At the end of the observation, I “slowly [withdrew] from the site,” thanking both the participants and the gatekeepers (Creswell, p. 168). During the post-observation phase, I followed Creswell’s advice to prepare “full notes immediately after the observation” by providing “thick and rich narrative description of the people and the events under observation” (p. 168).

Finally, to augment the data collection approaches of interviews and direct observation, I collected documents and artifacts that could help shed the light on the experience of the participants in their encounter with the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus.” R. Stake (2006) suggested that in addition to interviews and observation, studying “the records of what has happened” and “artifacts of those happenings” (p. 27) can aid a researcher in arriving at a broader perspective on the central findings of the multi-case study. To that end, I asked the participants and the gatekeepers whether there were relevant documents, records, or artifacts I could gather to strengthen the description of the phenomenon under study, and to deepen the understanding of the decisions these participants made in transitioning to the targeted church of their choice.

## **Data Analysis**

Unlike quantitative research, data analysis in qualitative studies does not follow a formulaic construct of rules and procedures (Spencer, Ritchie, & O'Connor, 2003, p. 200). Creswell (2013) characterized qualitative data analysis as the process of “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p. 180). R. Stake (1995), on the other hand, offered a less rigid view on data analysis by asserting that in case study, the process can begin any time during the data collection process, because analysis “is a matter of giving meaning to first impressions as well as to final compilation” (p. 71). Rossman and Rallis (2012) offered similar reasoning, suggesting that analysis starts when research questions are framed (p. 264). Yin (2014) added an extra layer of complexity by declaring that “the analysis of case study is one of the least developed aspects of doing case studies” (p. 133).

Data analysis in qualitative studies tends to consist of the central steps of getting intimate with the data through reading and memoing; organizing and interpreting the data through coding techniques; developing meaning from the data and surfacing themes; describing and displaying data through tables or charts; and writing up the report (Bailey, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Marshall and Rossman (1989) summarized data analysis procedures as consisting of the following steps: (a) organizing the data; (b) generating categories, themes, and patterns; (c) testing emergent hypotheses; (d) searching for alternative explanations; and (e) writing the report (pp. 114-120). Miles and Huberman (1994), on the other hand, described qualitative data analysis as “three

concurrent flows of activity”: (a) data reduction through “selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data”; (b) data display through organizing, compressing and assembling the information “that permits conclusion drawing and action”; and (c) drawing conclusions and verifying them through validation and tests of plausibility (pp. 10-12). Miles and Huberman suggested further that these three activities are not necessarily sequentially followed. They are “interwoven before, during, and after data collection in parallel form” (pp. 11-12).

R. Stake (1995) highlighted four approaches of data analysis in conducting case study research. First, he suggested that new meanings can be reached through *direct interpretation* of a single individual instance of an event or occurrence without resorting to multiple instances. Analysis and synthesis of the instance in terms of pulling it apart and putting it back together “more meaningfully” is what characterizes direct interpretation (p. 75). Second, issue-relevant meanings can also be unearthed through *categorical aggregation* of instances, either from corroborating instances or disconfirming them (p. 76). Third, researchers can search for *patterns* or correspondence of aggregations, because “the important meanings will come for reappearance over and over” (p. 78). Finally, researchers can derive meanings from the findings of the study via a type of generalization called *naturalistic generalizations*, conclusions that are arrived at, according to R. Stake, “through personal engagement in life’s affair or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the persons feels as if it happened to themselves” (p. 85). Mabry (2009) suggested a variant and called it a *petite generalization* (p. 223). To

these four approaches, Creswell (2013) added a fifth, *description of the case*, which is a “detailed view of aspects about the case” (p. 200).

R. Stake (2006) asserted that data analysis in multi-case studies demands an extra layer of examination in the exercise of cross-case analysis (p. 39). Since the purpose of multi-case study is to surface a deeper understanding of the quintain by drawing findings from each case of the study, insights about the quintain, referred to as “assertion” by R. Stake, must be unearthed (pp. 40-41). R. Stake cautioned here that attention must be paid to the importance of the situationality of each individual case, for it is from the situationality of the member cases that assertions about the quintain arise. To support the analysis, R. Stake proposed, researchers do well to employ a set of cross-case procedures that repeat the analysis steps in single-case analysis but add the assertion analysis based on an examination of the utility of each of the member cases in order to derive a decision regarding the assertions based on a weighing of the prominence of the cases (pp. 50-58).

The intention of this study was to employ R. Stake’s multi-case analysis together with the single case steps as well as Miles and Huberman’s data analysis schema (1994) to uncover a deep understanding of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon taking place in Chinese Canadian evangelical communities.

**Triangulation.** Triangulation, according to R. Stake (2005), is “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (p. 454). Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy (2013) stated that credibility of the data collected and the findings generated can be enhanced by using the method of triangulation to serve two purposes: (a) data confirmation, a “process

of comparing data gathered from multiple sources to explore the extent to which findings can be verified,” and (b) data completeness, dealing with “gathering multiple perspectives from a variety of sources so that as complete a picture as possible of phenomena can be portrayed” (p. 13). This process of triangulation can take place anywhere throughout the fieldwork and analysis (Stake, R., 2006, p. 77). Mabry (2009) echoed that triangulation in case study needs to be operationalized at different stages of the research process to enhance confidence in the credibility of the data collected and the research findings. For instance, data can be triangulated by collecting it from different participants. Methodological triangulation involves verifying data obtained from one method against data collected using another (e.g., data obtained from interviews versus data obtained from direct observation). Triangulation by time implies multiple visits to the site to look for patterns of events or trends. Finally, theoretical triangulation in data analysis requires different abstractions to explain the data where possible (p. 222). For a multi-case study, R. Stake (2006) encouraged researchers to validate the quintain by “checking with people who know of the quintain or related activity” (p. 77). I argue that the requirements for triangulation of my study are satisfied by virtue of the multiple participants selected for each case and the multiple forms of data collected. At the same time, I heeded Yin’s (2014) warning that in order to achieve the objective of triangulation, all sources of data pertinent to a particular finding are to be analyzed together, lest the conclusion drawn resemble “the comparison of conclusions from separate studies (each based on a different source)” (p. 121). Finally, to cross-check against the understanding of the quintain, I conducted a post-analysis interview with two

senior Chinese Church leaders in Canada who had first-hand experience of either observing or being actors in the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” to corroborate the findings. In addition, I interviewed three leaders of those congregations that SGCCE participants chose to see how they saw the “Silent Exodus” in terms of the transition of SGCCE to their congregations.

### **Bias and Bracketing**

One of the most common criticisms leveled against qualitative research is that it lacks objectivity (Paynes & Paynes, 2004, p. 30). However, Klenke (2008) asserted that case researchers are required to “interpret the world through some sort of conceptual lenses formed by our beliefs, previous experience, existing knowledge, assumptions about the world, and theories about knowledge and how it is accrued” (p. 61). Although the researcher has no privileged voice in the interpretations of qualitative research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 17), “bracketing personal experiences may be difficult for the researcher to implement” (Creswell, 2013, p. 83). As a result, bias cannot be completely eliminated and researchers cannot be totally disinterested (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 48). However, to make the investigation reliable and valid, the case researcher must acknowledge personal assumptions and experiences and make explicit their potential influence on the investigation (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 48). Furthermore, the researcher must take steps to set aside personal bias in order to bring fresh curiosity to the investigation (LeVasseur, 2003, p. 419).

Three personal biases that may have influenced this study are based on my personal experience with the Chinese Canadian church as well as my cultural bias and

traditional values as an immigrant Chinese. First, I have been involved in the Toronto Chinese Alliance Church either as a deacon or an elder for almost 35 years. My view of how the second-generation Chinese Canadian Evangelicals should shape their religious identity is affected by my own religiosity and the evangelical tradition that I am involved with. Furthermore, I am influenced by the broader community of Chinese Canadian evangelicals in terms of their concept and discourses regarding how the Chinese Canadian immigrant church should be extended to the next generation as I participate in the leadership roles of some of the organizations that typify their faith and culture (e.g., Association of Canadian Chinese Theological Education; Canadian Association of China Graduate School of Theology; Advisory Council of Chinese Ministry Program at Tyndale University & Seminary; Alliance Bible Center in Canada; Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada). My leadership experience at the local church level and with the para-church organizations and at the denominational level has generated certain religious perspectives and assumptions about how the second-generation Chinese Canadian Evangelicals should behave and grow.

Second, even though I have lived in Canada for almost 40 years and have been “Canadianized,” there remain in me traditional Chinese cultural values such as respect for elders, filial piety, and priority of family, some of which I may not even explicitly acknowledge or be aware of in my consciousness. These values, nonetheless, affect the way I think and act, and most pertinently to this study, the way I relate to the experience of the participants as a Canadian with Chinese ethnicity. My own view of ethnicity may

affect the way I examine the congregational transition process of participants in this study.

Finally, as a first-generation immigrant father to two second-generation daughters, I bring into the study a personal bias regarding how they ought to behave and what choices they might need to make in their own journey of faith. My own personal expectation may skew the objectivity that is necessary in analyzing the participants' transitional experience in this study.

I acknowledge these three areas of bias that may have influenced the study.

### **Limitations of the Study**

As mentioned previously in this chapter, case study is one of the methods scholars recognize as valid for conducting qualitative research. Although this case study yields an in-depth understanding of the rich experience of the case of the second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals who departed from their parents' church to forge their own spiritual destiny, it is limited by the methodology, design, data collection, and analysis that are bounded by the qualitative practices in social research that govern case study research. As such, this case study is not a quantitative study and therefore does not include statistical measurements or a dataset to compare or contrast with other survey or experimental research because the research process cannot be in principle replicated in an identical fashion as it is in quantitative studies (Payne & Paynes, 2004, p. 30). Although the findings of case study are not generalizable to a large population the way quantitative research can be, case study can contribute to both theory development and theory testing (Klenke, 2008, p. 61).

## **Ethical Considerations**

One of the key considerations in planning, designing, and executing a qualitative study is the ethical issues the researcher may face during the study and how to mitigate them. The common mistake, Creswell (2013) cautioned, is the belief that these issues will surface only during data collection, when in reality they arise in many phases of the inquiry (p. 56). Although there may not be any “international agreement or regulations of ethical standards in search” (Ryen, 2004, p. 231), the following common ethical issues are discussed in this section to ensure that all data and participants in this research are treated properly and ethically.

**Right of privacy and confidentiality.** In addressing the insurance of right to privacy and confidentiality for participants, Creswell (2013) recommended the following precautions: (a) replace the real names of participants with aliases or assigned numbers; (b) avoid compromising the site or leakages of insider information by using general information or composite stories instead of drawing information from individual participants; (c) respect cultural, religious, gender, and other differences; and (d) disclose at the outset of the engagement with the participants the purpose, the scope of the study, and the data collection method and the interpretive approach to ensure that they understand their role in the research (pp. 56-60). In this study, each participant was assigned a random number during the data collection process which was then substituted with a pseudonym that bore no affiliation with their subethnicity because among Chinese participants, their last names could be used to identify the region of their ancestral origin.

**Do no harm.** Many of the participants might have experienced psychological trauma when leaving their parents' church to forge their own destiny. They may be sensitive to how this research may arouse their feelings and affect their relationships with their family, friends, and fellow faith adherents. Investigative case study research with the objective of deriving thick description of the participants such as mine may lead to different effects experienced by the participants as a result of the research. P. Reynolds (1979) identified the following effects: (a) temporary or direct effects that are readily reversed or modified by the research and can disappear once the participants return to pre-research state; (b) permanent, direct effects that cannot be eliminated and may persist after the research; (c) socially mediated effects that may be experienced indirectly by the participants by virtue of the impact of the study; and (d) societal right effects that may affect various concepts of individual rights, but not necessarily be experienced directly by the participants (pp. 48-49). Although not all effects are negative, the researcher has an obligation to ensure that the participants are not placed in harm's way. Babbie (2013), citing the *Belmont Report*, subscribed to the following three principles to avoid harm to the participants:

1. Respect for persons – Participation must be completely voluntary and based on full understanding of what is involved. Moreover, special caution must be taken to protect minors and those lacking complete autonomy (e.g., prisoners).
2. Beneficence – Subjects must not be harmed by the research and, ideally, should benefit from it.

3. Justice – The burdens and benefits of research should be shared fairly within the society (pp. 63-64).

As each participant was engaged and his or her current congregation was identified, Babbie's recommended steps were followed to ensure that the participants would not suffer any negative effects from the research.

**Informed consent.** Broadly speaking, informed consent refers to the right of the participants: (a) to know the nature of the research; (b) to know that they are being researched; and (c) to withdraw from the research any time they wish to do so (Ryen, 2004 p. 231). To ensure that they understand, maintain, and reserve these rights, at the outset of their engagement with the research all participants are asked to sign an informed consent form (see Appendix B) specifying the purpose, scope, and research methodology of the inquiry and the potential audiences who might access the study.

**The right to access to the results of the study.** The participants are privileged with the right to access to the summary of the results of the study per the Institutional Review Board consent form. A copy of the dissertation will remain on file with the researcher as well as with the library at Gonzaga University. All participants can access the information by directly contacting either the researcher or the University. Creswell (2014) reminded researchers that, should they want to publish the results of the study, authorship for individuals who contribute to the study is to be made clear before the research begins (p. 96). As the sole researcher for this study, I reserve the right to publish on my own, other than what is bounded by the contractual agreement with Gonzaga University.

In the next two chapters, I present data gathered from interviews with SGCCE, the first-generation Chinese Canadian church leaders, and leaders of the congregations that the participants are currently attending, as well as themes that emerge from analysis of the data of each case (Chapter IV); and discuss findings and conclude with implications and suggestions for further study (Chapter V).

## **Chapter IV**

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

As mentioned previously, the purpose of this dissertation was to explore through a multi-case inquiry how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the transition of SGCCE from their first-generation churches to the current congregations of their choice. This chapter first highlights the research questions and the methodology used to conduct the research. This information is followed by a summary of the profile of the data collected principally through an interview process guided by the semistructured interview questionnaire (see Appendix A). Data collection was further augmented by (a) examining documents such as church bulletins and information on websites; (b) direct observation at the services of some of the church sites; and (c) probing physical artifacts of the churches. The summary is then followed by a synopsis of the interviews divided into two categories, primary participants and church leaders, for triangulation purposes. Themes emerged from participants of each case that are identified within the section relevant to that case, whereas triangulation analysis is included within the section on each triangulation group.

#### **Research Questions and Methodology**

In support of the purpose of study, the following research questions were designed to guide the investigation:

1. What is the extent to which ethnicity and religion play a role in the way SGCCE think of themselves and in the choices they make concerning the congregation where they worship in the transition from their parents' church?

2. To what extent is ethnicity overshadowed by religious identity and vice versa in SGCCE's decisions as they transition away from their parents' congregation?
3. What role does church leadership of the first-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical play in guiding and shaping SGCCE's search for growth and autonomy as expressed in the congregational transition through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?
4. What role does church leadership of the current congregations of the churches that SGCCE are attending play in legitimizing the ethnicity of the congregants and shaping the ethnic boundary of the congregations through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?

The investigation was conducted using a multi-case methodology with participants bounded by the choices they made in terms of the targeted congregations they transitioned to. Although these participants may have collectively experienced the same phenomenon, each may have perceived and experienced it differently, and therefore the meanings and impact of that experience might have been constructed uniquely and individually by each participant in his or her respective congregational context. To reflect the targeted congregations for SGCCE's transition, I investigated four cases for this study. The first case was a group of SGCCE who opted to attend independent Chinese ethnic English-speaking churches. The second case was a group of SGCCE who decided to worship with Pan-Asian congregations. The third case was a group of SGCCE who chose to become members of multiethnic churches. The fourth case was a group of

SGCCE who congregated at mainstream Caucasian churches. The boundary of each case was defined not so much the physical church entity as by the ethnicity the congregations represented. All participants' real identities were disguised with pseudonyms to protect participants' privacy and honor the consent agreement stipulated by Gonzaga University.

### **Data Collection Summary**

In gathering augmentative data for this study, I visited four different churches, each one representing the type of congregation with whom participants from each case were worshipping at the time of the interview, to gain a better understanding of the cases from the perspective of church ethos and culture. I collected and examined church information such as bulletins and communications materials, as well as capturing their signs and posters. In addition, I surveyed the church ambience to obtain a deeper experience of the sites. Finally, I visited their corresponding websites, from which I gleaned insights into the composition of their staff, their vision and mission as religious communities, and programs and activities from which I could determine and validate each congregation's ethnicity based on Alumkal's (2008) framework of determining culture and ethnicity as mentioned in Chapter II.

The primary source of data for this multi-case study came from participants, who were purposefully selected based on referral either by gatekeepers or through my own personal network. In order to probe their transition experience, I conducted semistructured interviews with each participant by using the pre-designed, semistructured interview guide (see Question 1, Appendix A) and by following a modified approach of Seidman's three-interview structure (2013). The first introductory interview was about

thirty minutes long to allow the participants to understand the research objective and questions, as well as to allow me to obtain the background information and profile of the participants. The second, main interview was conducted to obtain responses to the research questions and lasted up to 90–100 minutes. The third and last interview was deemed by Seidman to be largely unnecessary. To the extent that follow-up questions were required, e-mail exchanges were used to obtain the answers. In addition, the interviews were conducted in accordance with the procedures and protocol discussed in Chapter III. Specifically, though the interview was conducted by using the pre-designed, semistructured interview guide, the conversation was also guided by the “flow” of the interviewee (Bailey, 2007). Finally, the interviews were conducted with a deep sense of awareness of my own personal ethnic and religious biases and, to the extent possible, I did attempt to reflexively bracket myself so as not to steer the interviews through the lens of my own views and biases.

Table 4

*Participant Profile*

| <b>Case</b>   | <b># of Participants</b> | <b>Age Range</b> | <b>Gender</b>     | <b>Marital Status</b> |
|---|--------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| #1. 2nd Generation Chinese Independent Congregation | 3                        | 20-30            | 1 Female & 2 Male | All Singles           |
| #2. Pan-ethnic Asian Congregation                   | 3                        | 30-45            | All Female        | 2 Married & 1 Single  |
| #3. Multiethnic Congregation                        | 3                        | 20-45            | 1 Female & 2 Male | 1 Married & 2 Single  |
| #4. Mainstream Caucasian Congregation               | 4                        | 20-35            | All Male          | 2 Married & 2 Single  |

I interviewed 13 participants; Table 4 documents their profile. Probing gender differences was not part of this study, but I will mention that, five interviewees were women. In addition, among the participants, five of were parents, three of whose children were young adults or teenagers. The rest were single. The participants' ages ranged from early 20s to mid 40s; ten of them were in their 20s to early 30s. Participants from Case 4 were on average younger than their counterparts in other cases. Most of the participants were born in Canada with the exception of two who came to Canada at a young age of 2 and 5 respectively. Technically referred to as the 1.5 generation, these two participants were treated as part of the second-generation cohort by scholars such as S. Kim (2010, p. 16). Every participant had already entered the work force, with only two exceptions. At the time of the interviews, a majority of the participants resided in Western Canada, with four in Eastern Canada; they represented five major English-speaking cities in Canada (Calgary, Richmond, Ottawa, Vancouver, and Toronto).

By virtue of their willingness to be interviewed, all participants agreed that the research mattered to them in that it allowed them to revisit their own journey of faith transition and to reflect upon the ups and downs of the process. The significance of the interview was evinced by the common passion they displayed when interviewed. All participants were eager to speak and shared their thoughts in a way that was transparent and genuine. All were candid in exposing their feelings; some were emotional (e.g., gave enthusiastic answers and quick responses); and a few were in tears when painful moments or flash points were touched upon. Many were deferential when commenting on their past leaders. However, most spoke with agony and sadness when recalling their

past experiences with the immigrant churches; yet all expressed joy or relief when addressing their experience with the churches they were attending at the time of the interview.

To achieve the purpose of data validation and completeness, especially validation against the understanding of the overall phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus” (i.e., the quintain), Stake (2006) encouraged researchers to undertake a process of triangulation by “checking with people who know of the quintain” (p. 77). To that end, I interviewed two groups of church leaders using the pre-designed semistructured interview guide (see Questions 2 & 3, Appendix A). The first group consisted of two first-generation Chinese Canadian pastors in their early 50s each with 20 years of experience shepherding Chinese immigrant flocks, including their English-speaking local-born children. The second group of three pastors, one Chinese Canadian, one Japanese Canadian, and one Caucasian Canadian, represented leaders for the cases being studied. All three pastors were the shepherds of some of the participants in their respective case (i.e., Case One, Case Three, and Case Four). When it came time to select these pastors, I did encounter a challenge of scarcity. In particular, I was able to locate a pastor for each case except for Case Two. Pan-ethnic Asian pastors were not available for this study in spite of solicitation through my personal and gatekeeper networks.

Furthermore, I interviewed two additional primary participants whom I had to disqualify because their transitional experience was chiefly motivated by relocation to other cities due to either schooling or occupational changes rather than because of factors related to religion and ethnicity, which are some of the variables for the purpose of this

inquiry into the transitional experience of SGCCE. Last, I did interview another pastor in the second group who worked at the same church as another interviewee who happened to be the senior pastor of that congregation. Not wanting to have data saturation, or in this scenario duplication, I discounted his interview.

### **Case One – Participants Attending Worship in a Second-Generation**

#### **Chinese Canadian Church Setting**

Case One involves participants who were attending churches in an independent second-generation Chinese Canadian congregational setting. Based on the information provided by the participants and my personal research on the information available on the website, I am satisfied that the churches these participants were attending at the time of the interviews qualified for this case. In this case, three participants were interviewed with two of them attending the same church, which I did visit for the purpose of understanding the congregational context of their transition experience. The visit <sup>and</sup> the information I gleaned from the church and its website did guide me in analyzing the data. In the following sections, the synopses of the interviews are presented in a sequential manner, followed by the themes that surfaced within this case.

**Synopsis of interview with first participant: Martha Yeung.** The first participant I interviewed in this case was Martha Yeung, a single, 20–30 year-old graduate with a bachelor's degree in nutrition science, working as a sales representative at a popular electronic appliance chain in a major city in Western Canada. After having left her parents' church 2.5 years previously and visited two other churches for about six

months, Martha decided to attend Salem. She was introduced to me by her pastor and we conducted the interview at a quiet mid-town office.

I started the interview by asking Martha why she left her parents' church. Her response was surprising: The decision was not as much her own as that of the entire Yeung family. She referred to an incident of hiring a replacement for the lead pastor at the church as the ground-zero for her family's exodus and, for that matter, for many other congregants' departure as well. She recalled:

The actual process was not done in a very open church way, because from what I know, usually you get a committee to look into the candidates and then you go through this process of selecting who will become the main pastor. But somehow, the deacon board decided not to go through that process; they just put someone into that spot.

The rule-changing incident was but a reflection of deeper concerns Martha came to understand characterized the immigrant church leadership. I summarize the leadership issues as follows. First, the leadership governance of the immigrant church was very paternalistic. Consisting of Chinese and English congregations, the church was organized and ministered along the line of language and cultural difference. However, Martha observed: "The (overall) style of the culture and practices (with the top leaders) are a little bit different from the (English) side I was used to." For her, the construct appeared to be stacked against the English in favor of the Chinese, especially in terms of the decision-making process: "The Chinese side will decide what's going on and then we'll just follow along. . . . They didn't include us." The concentration of power among the Chinese created a deeper divide between the two congregations than simply along the

line of culture and language. Martha remarked: “There’s a separation between the Chinese ministry and the English ministry. And that might have an undertone of [the] reality of separation.”

The paternalistic model created a culture of control with authority in place such that permission had to be sought to conduct ministry on the English side. Martha added: “We had to go (and) ask the Chinese side first to get permission on any kind of (action), there was no empowerment . . . it felt like control somewhere.” In such a command culture, passivity was likely to be cultivated in the followers; no attempt appeared to be made by the leaders to instill a sense of autonomy or empowerment in SGCCE. Martha recalled: “I felt like it was more passive because a lot of times, they’re (i.e., English congregants) just sitting there in the sense that the Chinese side will decide what’s going on and then we’ll just follow along.” In reflecting on the departure, Martha was very clear that “passivity is one part of (the reason)” for her exit.

The third issue had to do with lack of communication between the leadership and the church, especially as it affected the local-born. Martha lamented, “A lot of times, the English side doesn’t really know what’s happening with the Chinese side.” When it came to the latest updates on the church, Martha had to find out mostly from her parents: “As a church member, there was nothing (communicated). I heard everything from my parents.” The lack of communication engendered rumors and allowed misinformation to fester: “When there’s no official announcement, then that leads to more chances of the rumors, the gossips.” These rumors in turn led to loss of trust in the leadership, Martha

said: “You lose a lot of trust.” Martha concluded, “I couldn’t feel that foundation of relationship with the leaders.”

Corollary to lack of communication was the absence of legitimate channels to voice concerns. When it came to expressing her thoughts about the church ministry to the leadership, Martha explained, “There’s never really that chance to actually talk about . . . how is church life, or what do you see is going on within.” She pointed out that the barrier was inherent in the intergenerational setting: “Growing up in the church, it felt like there’re always going to be uncle or aunties,” and she was treated as the “underling, the kid.” In a culture that values respecting elders, Martha did not feel empowered to speak out.

Finally, the absence of communication pointed to a deeper absence of direction and purpose in the ministry of the church. When asked if the church articulated any direction or purpose, Martha responded succinctly: “They didn’t have any.” In reflecting on the rule-changing incident and its subsequent disarray it created, Martha said, “I want a church that has a direction and a purpose that is aligned with of what I’m looking for.” Martha went on to say:

When I feel there’s no central goal or kind of theme, I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what to go towards. I don’t know how to start that conversation. And I don’t know what I am doing even though I’m serving.

In such a rudderless environment, Martha felt the support for her Christian foundation was being eroded: “I left the church was because I felt there was no solid foundation to support me . . . there wasn’t a support to teach me how to really build on my foundation.”

As we turned our discussion to the requirements for a new spiritual home for worship, Martha expressed an aspiration for growth: “I need a church where my brother and sister (and I) can continue to grow and build relationships.” Martha identified additional considerations for such a new spiritual home: “Number one is I know I need to be at a church where I can serve . . . I need to be at a church where I can build relationships and I can be encouraging to other people as well.”

At Salem, Martha felt right at home, attributing her presence there to divine providence: “We were at Salem and . . . I think a big part of it was . . . I don’t want to use the word faith, but at the same time it almost felt like there’s a path that was . . . built in.” Such providence was further confirmed by a renewed connection with her peers at Salem, many of whom Martha met at the Chinese Christian Winter Conference on the West Coast when she was younger. She explained, “The connection I have with the people at Salem right now is something that’s really unplanned. And I actually met a lot of my peers when I was 13 or 14 . . . at the Chinese Winter Conference.”

As we discussed whether Martha or her family ever considered how ethnicity might have influenced the selection of the targeted church, she replied that the discussion of ethnicity as a selection criterion “never came about,” adding, “We never specifically said: ‘Let’s go find a Chinese church.’ We never specifically said: ‘Let’s try out non-Chinese churches (either).’” Implicit in the decision was the fact that the family was very Chinese and therefore preferred to congregate with ethnic Chinese:

But I think it was more of an untold realization that we were more comfortable in Chinese churches because even though we were brought up in more of a Western practice or culture, we still had a lot of our Chinese practices at home.

In fact, Martha preferred a church with “a Chinese-base but with a multiethnic group.” She further explained that the “Chinese base is in the leadership.” Multiethnic, on the other hand, meant an environment wherein friends with different background feel comfortable in congregating: “Multiethnic meaning (comfortable) . . . if I bring friends of other ethnicity . . . How comfortable do they feel?” Martha asserted that “multiethnic is a good key . . . to know of how accepting and how welcoming a church is.” This criterion is intimately tied with a vested interest Martha had at the time of interview: though her “close friends are mainly Chinese,” her “boyfriend is actually Indian (i.e., South Asian).” Consequently, for Martha, “being able to bring him to church is a big part as well.” At Salem, Martha’s boyfriend “was able to bond with some of the guys in the peer group as well as in the fellowship so that made it a lot easier for him to transition.”

The conversation about her boyfriend was extended to a discussion about her feeling of exogamy. Martha insisted that race or ethnicity was never as important a factor as faith, maintaining that her boyfriend or future husband “must be a Christian,” for “if he’s not Christian, there’s no point in me continuing on a relationship.”

As we discussed her cultural identity, Martha remarked that she was brought up completely immersed in Chinese cultural values and practices: “I still feel like we’re very (Chinese); we celebrate (and) acknowledge we’re Chinese.” These practices included celebration of Chinese New Year, watching Chinese TV shows, and speaking in Cantonese regularly to her relatives in Hong Kong via long-distance calls. The experience of ethnicity was something that, as a local-born, Martha completely embraced, saying, “I love it. It makes us special.” In these cultural practices, she saw something that

not only did her parents or ancestors celebrate but she and her siblings had made it their own: “We make it — not necessarily our tradition, but we make it our own celebration, our own party, our own thing.” With these practices and an unconditional embrace of Chinese culture, it was not surprising that Martha completely accepted her identity to be Chinese at the same time that she recognized her identity as a Canadian. This dual and yet interchangeable identity surfaced itself contingent upon the circumstances and the context she was in. She was Chinese “because that’s the thing that people would see right away.” However, “they look at me and I don’t really have a Chinese accent in my English, right? It’s pretty smooth,” and in that context she was a Canadian. Yet both ethnic and national identity as either Chinese or Canadian paled when compared with her religious identity. Martha vehemently insisted that the comparison was “not even (in) the same category.” For her, being “Canadian and Chinese has to do more of my culture,” whereas “Christianity is my values, my beliefs and my religion.” Indeed, Martha stressed that the “number one (identity is that) I have to be Christian.” The whole issue of faith identity and ethnic identity was not necessarily a subject Salem would discuss intentionally with the congregation or openly from the pulpit. The absence of discussion reflected an unwritten strategy to make the church more welcoming: “We want to be welcoming” at the church, Martha said, and “we want to be able to come to a point where we can invite any of our friends.” Martha added: “Because we have a couple of ethnic groups here already, that we don’t need to dive in to that topic of having to be welcoming to all of ethnic groups because we just have to be welcoming.”

The whole idea of creating a welcoming environment to anticipate multiethnic attendees as the purpose and direction of the church aligned well with Martha's values and requirements for an ideal church: "So their purpose and direction right now is focusing on your role in church and your role outside as dispersed church. And that's where it all ties in for me and where I really relate to it strongly."

When asked if she ever experienced conflict between her faith and ethnic identities or values growing up, Martha cited the Chinese cultural practice of ancestral worship in which offspring were supposed to bow three times at the shrine of the deceased ancestors to express respect and "worship" the dead. Martha recalled:

(The non-Christian relatives) would openly ask us to bow three times. But that's when it gets to a decision. And I don't bow three times . . . And my relatives don't share the faith. I just have to stay strong in what I know and what I believe in.

Martha further attributed this attitude to her parents' faith values and how they shaped hers: "They are the ones who taught me . . . When they (i.e., non-Christian relatives) bow three times, my parents would say: 'Let's just pray.'" However, this stance did not mean Martha and her parents rejected their Chinese roots: "I won't say they reject Chinese values . . . (but) they put their faith first."

With that in mind, I asked Martha whether she was under duress from her parents to pick a certain career to reflect the Asian culture of success and achievement when growing up. She was quick to respond: "They're not the parents (who) need you to be successful. They don't need you to have a doctorate degree. No, they're very special!" Rather, her parents upheld the value of family: "For them, you have to understand their

number one value is family . . . And that's my upbringing, that's how it goes; so that's why family always comes first." To sum it up, education and being able to be self-sufficient were important, but Martha's parents did not inject a strong sense of achievement-centric values in Martha but advocated a balance between pragmatism and freedom to choose:

Education is important, and being able to sustain yourself and being responsible is (also) important. (But) they never outwardly would say you need to get a master's degree or you need to get to a certain amount. They're very understanding and letting me decide where I want to go. And they're very supportive.

In closing, Martha remarked that the experience of settling in at Salem had created a refreshing space that allowed her to re-examine her cosmos in a new perspective with her family, new and old friends, and her faith: "It's given me the environment (and) the place to step out, not necessarily blossom but really open up to take in what is being taught. It's given me a new perspective, a new place to stand." Martha chose not to stay in the disappointment and hurt that could easily be the story of transition. Rather, she elected to make meaning of the experience from the perspective of faith and found a divine purpose in service:

I think God has a plan for me at a different church. And when I was going to different churches, my mindset was: *How can I be a benefit with this church?* A big part for me is finding a sense of (how) I can be a tool for God. I want to be able to be there for God because I think at (her former church), I felt stagnant.

The sense of directionless and drifting or being stagnant was now replaced by a sense of freshness in her faith journey:

I feel rejuvenation (with) a new understanding, a new way to look at my faith. And over the last year at Salem, I've been able to dive into looking in my definition of my faith, my definition of my purpose, and just really looking into how I play a role in my purpose.

The new-found conceptualization of faith allowed Martha to overcome what she perceived to be obstacles in her journey of transition. She said, "There's always going to be something going on. But it's how you deal with it or how you grow with it or how you handle it" that matters. With these remarks, we ended the interview and I thanked her for her participation.

**Synopsis of interview with second participant: Peter Fai.** The second participant I interviewed in this case was Peter Fai, a single, 30–40 year-old IT professional holding a management position at a web-hosting firm in a major city in Western Canada. He joined Salem about 8 to 9 years before when it was just a congregation associated with another Chinese Canadian evangelical church. Peter then joined a core group of local-born leaders to launch Salem, a local-born independent church plant, and continued his involvement as a lay leader. I was referred to him by his pastor, and we conducted the interview at a mid-town office.

I first asked Peter why he left his parents' church. He pointed out that his departure was not triggered by a specific single event but rather was an outcome of an accumulative process of several contributing factors. As a starting point, Peter mentioned the departure of the English pastor at his former church about 10 years previously that resulted in a ministerial vacuum. Soon a void of spiritual guidance and spiritual lethargy seeped into the congregation. In such a minister-less environment, Peter bemoaned that

the church “was not growing . . . and [was] being stagnant” and that he himself “was not growing spiritually either.” To compound the issue, the English congregants appeared to be “complacent in where they were at,” with no fresh leadership emerging to take ownership of the ministry: “No one was really willing to step up,” and “a lot less people started serving at the church.” Furthermore, Peter was frustrated by the lack of commitment shown by the overall church board since even lay leaders from the English congregation quit their duties. The lack of leadership fed into a broader phenomenon within the English congregation: “not enough people stepping up to spread out the load.”

At that time, Peter suffered from being overburdened by his ministry involvement. As a passionate musician and worship leader who sought innovation in the worship service delivery, Peter looked to delegate his work to other team members to balance the load. With no one stepping in to lighten his duty, he experienced deep frustration and feelings of “dread,” of being “not motivated” and “burnt-out.” The spiritual dryness led to his feeling emotionally drained. Being so committed to the cause that he was unwilling to take a sabbatical leave, Peter saw himself caught in a rut of routine: “The week-in, week-out of having to lead worship, it burdened me and that’s when I started thinking maybe I should try another different church.” This dim and somewhat hopeless view arose from Peter’s desperate observation that he did not “see anybody that could step into that role to provide me or the leadership in the church the (relief) that I was seeking.” Without relief, Peter found that exodus was a legitimate way to deal with his feelings of burnout. As he exclaimed: “I’m not getting it (i.e., relief), so I’m going to go elsewhere.”

While Peter was experiencing “burnout” from his ministry involvement, he was increasingly feeling lonely at the church because “the people in my age range kind of dispersed into their other things.” His “core group of friends” had already left the church, with some teaching English overseas and other having already moved on to different churches. With the sense of loneliness looming large in Peter’s spirit, his departure was but a result of the process of attrition.

As we discussed the emotion he experienced in the process of transition, Peter spoke about a strong sense of disappointment that manifested on two levels: “I can say I was disappointed in the church and in myself.” First, he observed, as a “well established church” with its “own church building, an expansion wing” and a long history, the religious organization ought to have been able to anticipate the need in filling the English pastor vacancy. Yet the church did not act decisively enough to stem the tide. Thus “it was a little disappointing to leave because of the situation that had developed there, like the lack of leadership on the English side.” Peter took the blame for the second disappointment himself. Growing up at the immigrant church, Peter admitted, he was expected by his parents to stay put irrespective of the circumstances; their sentiment was: “This is the church that you grew up with; this is where you should continue serving and worshipping God!” In leaving the church, Peter found himself falling short of that expectation:

The disappointment came (from not meeting the expectation): ‘This is your family church, (and) you should stay at this church,’ which is the view that I had when other people left. I was disappointed in myself for doing the same thing.

What aggravated his disappointment further was that Peter felt that there was “no channel where you can be able to communicate . . . (your) thoughts and disappointment” with the church leaders because the decision-makers did not appear to be willing to listen. In fact, he came to characterize the decision-making process at his parents’ church as opaque, especially in dealing with major decisions such as pastor-hiring. “I don’t think the transparency was there,” Peter explained. In addition, he felt that since the English ministry at his parents’ church did not have a strong presence at the church, the decision-makers were all “Chinese adults.” To the extent that the opinion of the local-born was sought, deference was always made to the first-generation. The oligarchy and the lack of transparency, for Peter, were two sides of the same coin: “With no English (representative) presence, what else would you have expected should transparency be there?”

As we moved on to discuss what motivated him to stay at Salem, Peter identified three pull factors. The first one was related to a sense of comfort in worshipping with co-ethnics. Before he went to Salem, Peter visited several congregations of primarily Chinese immigrant churches. For Peter, church affiliation had much to do with connection with friends. He went to those Chinese churches because they were “the churches that I knew friends at” and “therefore, a lot of the churches that I visited were Chinese.” When asked if he ever wanted to congregate at a Caucasian or multiethnic church, Peter responded: “I think back then, even now personally, I don’t like stepping out of my comfort zone too far. So a Caucasian or multiethnic church . . . wouldn’t have

been my number one choice to go to.” For Peter, the reason for not stepping out of “comfort zone” was relational:

So why did I not visit a Caucasian church? Because I did not know any of my Caucasian friends were Christian. So my comfort zone is if I know someone in that church, I would be more comfortable going into that church.

Expanding further on his thought on the comfort zone, Peter offered an explanation that was based on relationship and how it was situated in ethnicity or race:

I mean I would definitely not have problems visiting (a Caucasian church). But say if that church was primarily all Caucasians, I guess that sense of going back into my comfort zone would kick in. Because in all Caucasian church, I would kind of stand out. I’m Asian and I’m like the minority Asian in a White church.

In such a circumstance, Peter expressed doubts about whether Caucasian churches would be “friendly, welcoming, (and) hospitable” in embracing an Asian like him. Part of the reason, Peter theorized, was that church members tended to congregate with people of their own ethnic background:

So they’re already so formed in their groups like cliques . . . It’s almost impossible to get in because they’re so close-knit together that for them to insert a new person in, it’s harder for them to accept than for me to try and work my way in.

Second, Peter experienced a sense of freshness and renewal in coming to worship at Salem. While in transition, he was inspired by various approaches to worship at different Chinese churches he attended: “Inspiration was one thing that . . . I got from visiting other churches because every church has a different way of doing things.” No longer being burdened by a role in leading worship, Peter uncovered a sense of freedom

that motivated him to fully engage in the worship, not as a leader, but as a regular congregant. He stated, “So I’m free to just sit there and just focus on whatever is being taught; and enjoy the worship.” With the new-found freedom and without any emotional attachment to the churches he visited, Peter re-established a connection with passion for his faith. As he put it, “So the inspiration was there . . . when I visited other churches, because I had no . . . obligation to serve in that church, I felt free and burdenless (because) I . . . am there to experience and engage with the congregation.”

With this fresh perspective, Peter went to visit Salem and immediately was drawn by its worship and music. He declared, “I love the music . . . so music was definitely [important] . . . (and) worship team was actually one of the things that attracted me.” Peter was also inspired by the pastors at Salem and in particular cited the English Pastor Howard as a drawing factor. Though Pastor Howard was no longer at Salem, Peter remembered him with fondness: “He was an amazing pastor.” Furthermore, he credited the “the openness and . . . hospitality” at Salem as the tipping point in its favor. The comfort he had in interacting with the “cell group” came from the welcoming gesture of people who shared a similar background with Peter in terms of ethnicity, age, education, and career.

When we discussed how he saw himself from the perspective of ethnic and faith identity, Peter proclaimed: “I just call myself Canadian.” But his understanding of the term *Canadian* was derived from a process of social construction. He theorized that “the term *Canadian* itself holds [a] multiethnicity (connotation),” unlike Americans who “are all Caucasian.” Canadians were different and especially in cities with a high mix of

ethnic immigrants, “Caucasians are the minority.” The term *Chinese*, on the other hand, conjured a stereotype of students who were “completely good at math and science,” subjects that formed a major part of stereotypes concerning Chinese ethnicity. Peter protested that he did not “fit into the stereotype” because he was never good at math or science and thus did not “like being put into a stereotype” or “being labeled.” However, regarding the dynamic between his ethnic origin and the national identity, Peter suggested that it depended upon which group he associated with and how the question came across. For example, when looking for a job, he would identify himself as a Canadian since it “means I’m legal to work here, (and) whether I’m Chinese or not should not make a difference.” In general, he saw himself as a Canadian, but identified himself as a Chinese if and when questions arose about the specifics about his ethnic background.

The interview then segued into discussion of the ethnic composition of Salem. Peter acknowledged that although the church had “a multiculturalism ideal,” the reality was that the congregational ethnic mix was a function of the Chinese congregants’ social network and circle of influence. As a result, Peter said, “It’s hard for (other ethnic or Caucasian Canadians to come to worship at Salem) unless they already have their friends here.” Even though at the time of the interview “different ethnicities” were attending Salem, Peter noted, the ideal of becoming a multiethnic church “is not happening as we want it to be.” Peter recognized that a creative tension existed at Salem, a church aspiring to be community-centric, serving and reaching out to the neighborhood where the church was situated. And yet the church was predominantly “a Chinese church.”

Salem's leadership, Peter argued, never explicitly labeled the church as an ethnic church and wanted to design its programs in an ethnic-neutral manner with the purpose of "engaging the community that is around" the church. On the other hand, the church shied away from labeling itself as multiethnic "because people may have a wrong impression" that "multiethnic may mean Caucasian and then everybody else." Community-centricity was ethnic-neutral to the extent that the church served the community around it irrespective of the neighbors' ethnicity. Peter explained: "If you are around us, you're welcome to join us."

When it came to adjudicating his ethnic identity and his religious identity, Peter saw himself as a "Chinese Canadian Christian." However, when asked about his ethnicity in the light of his Christian faith, Peter said that he did not "believe being Chinese is all that important." After all, for Peter, his Christian identity always trumped his ethnic identity: "All that matters is Christianity."

In reflecting on his upbringing, Peter identified an expectation on the part of his parents that he would excel academically because they believed that educational achievement was the route to upward mobility. Peter said that the litany was as follows: "Getting good grades at school gets you a better placement in terms of getting into university . . . and getting good grades in the university [means] getting your degree and [getting] a better job, [which in turn means getting] a better life." Peter further explained that the stereotypical emphasis on performance-centric values was always centered on "certain subjects, for instance, math and science" and that people expected "the Chinese person to be always getting A's in math, A's in science." Peter, however, defended his

parents' aspirations for him, noting that upward mobility was an ideal not just of Chinese parents, but of all parents. He explained: "I believe in every society, you always want better for your kids . . . you always want them to excel in what they're doing . . . because you want your kids to succeed." That said, Peter never felt parental pressure to get into certain professional arenas of that typify upward mobility. He vehemently insisted:

My parent never said: "Oh, you should be a doctor or you should be a lawyer" . . . they left that up to me on deciding what I would like to do, but they always expected me to do good [*sic*] in school.

However, his parents did inculcate in Peter Chinese values such as honoring parents, respecting elders, and maintaining a strong work ethic. Yet when asked whether he ever experienced any conflict of priority on his parents' part in transmitting values to him in terms of Christian versus Chinese, Peter was quick to answer that Christian values always prevailed "because my parents are also Christian." He reasoned that his parents had "already overcome . . . that cultural struggle versus religion." Consequently, Peter did not "have that experience of (the struggle) . . . because my parents never really pushed too much of, say, the Asian values" into his upbringing.

In closing, Peter took caution not to criticize his parents' church, reiterating that although his departure could be construed as negative, "every church has good points and every church had bad points." Yet the transition process reflected "which church style and which stuff works for the individual." In other words, people like Peter who moved away from their parents' immigrant church to congregations of their own choosing were "looking for what works better for (them) so that (they) can continue to worship God and

to continue to grow in (their) own spirituality.” I thanked Peter as we ended our interview.

**Synopsis of interview with third participant: James Chiu.** The third participant I interviewed for this case was James Chiu, a married, 30–40 year-old with a degree in computer engineering, working as a software project manager at a large corporation in a major city in Eastern Canada. James was referred to me by his pastor and I interviewed him via Skype.

James joined Bethany, a local-born independent Chinese Canadian church, about six years prior to the interview, and his transitory odyssey was different from that of the first two participants; it all started with how and why Bethany was created. According to James, the congregation was “planted as part of the dual church partnership with the Chinese Church” that his parents were still attending. The vision for Bethany had been that the local-born English ministry at the parents’ church would grow into an “independent, autonomous church” of its own, and any existing English ministry associated with the former church was to cease and desist. Given that Bethany was established out of a collective church vision, I asked James whether it was a decision he embraced and whether he had a choice in attending this new congregation. He replied: “I don’t know if there’s a choice. I mean there’s never supposed to be an English ministry (at the former church) as the result of the autonomy; we (only) had a choice to leave.”

During the time when the English congregational transition to Bethany was being finalized, James was working in San Francisco and decided to try out a church that was a “very young, urban professional church that is still Asian in culture with a second-

generation Asian pastor. . . . (with) almost a thousand people (and) a thriving college university ministry, a thriving small-groups ministry, (and) very community based.”

Having experienced an exciting encounter with this U.S. church, James was determined to transplant some of the learning to Bethany, which he characterized as “a traditional, conservative church.” Although the changes he wanted to introduce were not anything “outrageous,” his effort was met with “resistance.” Reflecting on this experience, James came to a new-found awareness of the reserved nature of the church culture that existed at Bethany, which he attributed to two factors: basic human nature to seek comfort within the status quo; and the Chinese culture of resistance to change. When asked about how this culture played out between first-generation immigrants and their children at the former church, James remarked:

First-generation (congregants) would never question and would just do what’s been done in the past. (But local-born) generational people would start questioning: “Is it effective? Is it something that works for us (and) helps us worship corporally? Or is it just out of tradition that we do these things? What’s the background behind this tradition? Is it just because we’ve done it this way or is it something biblical about it that we have to do it this way?”

With such setbacks fresh in his mind, James contemplated exploring churches with other models. When asked what tipped the scale for him to continue to stay committed to Bethany, James attributed it to his having sought divine guidance:

I was just praying and asking God, you know, if you’ve called me to be here, show me (and) open up doors for me to connect. But if you call me to leave, then open doors for me to connect outside.

Yet he felt that “the Lord has never really opened the door” for him to leave. However, once he decided to stay, loneliness and a sense of disconnectedness set in: “When I came back, I felt alone . . . some (of my friends) were still not finishing school but some had just left the church and left the faith completely. So I felt very alone and disconnected.” But over time, James was able to establish new relationships and to reconnect with his church, whereupon he began to get involved in ministry:

I also connected back, joined small group and started (being a) student ministry counselor. So I guess at some point . . . like (God said): “I’ve opened the doors for you here, you’re deeply rooted. I don’t think it’s time for you to go. I think this is time for you to plant and grow and nurture people here.”

When asked about how he would characterize Bethany in terms of ethnic composition, James assessed the congregation as consisting of 40% second-generation Chinese; 20% 1.5 generation, “who grew up in Hong Kong, and moved here (when they were young)”; and the rest was first-generation immigrants. As much as the church aspired “to be multiethnic,” the “ethnic makeup is primarily Chinese . . . (and) holding on to (its) Chinese roots.” James elaborated, suggesting that “the style of worship, the style of preaching, the culture of the way we operate as church in terms of ministries, (are) still very Chinese-centric.” As to what might be holding the church back to becoming a bona fide multiethnic religious institution, James identified a few barriers. First, in his mind, a church ought to be community-based in the sense that congregant ethnicity should reflect the neighborhood’s different ethnic groups. However, Bethany was currently a commuter-church in which only “ten to 15 percent of the makeup lives in the [neighborhood of the church location]. The rest of the congregants live [away from

church]. So there is no sense of local community.” A low level of congregants from the neighborhood led to a second challenge: an inability to establish a meaningful connection with the neighborhood. James added: “If you don’t have a sense of local community, no one is going to be connected to the makeup of the people there, right?” Third, the church’s desire to become multiethnic ran counter to the demographic makeup of the local neighborhood. James explained: “We try to outreach to the people in the area, (but) the people in the area . . . are Chinese. So you’re going (to be) bound to have a very Chinese-oriented church.” This created a vicious spiral effect in that since the church was Chinese-centric, it proved to be difficult to invite non-Chinese attendees, whose ethnicity was the mix necessary for Bethany to become multiethnic. And when these non-Chinese friends didn’t live close by, which because of the current demographic of the neighborhood was the case, realizing the goal of being community-centric and multiethnic was doubly challenging. James lamented:

It’s a very tough sell to ask (non-Asian friends) to come to this borough, to drive 25–30 minutes to go to a church . . . So if I would invite a friend, would I invite them to go to drive 30 minutes (to the church)? Maybe! Maybe not! They might not see the point of driving all the way (here).

The only way to accomplish this ideal for James was for the church to move away from “an area where it’s Chinese-centric . . . (and) plant a new church somewhere else.” The rude awakening led to the final barrier, which was at once philosophical and practical: Bethany was still “using the same resources in the church (building) provided to us by the Chinese immigrant church.” The sharing of the resources reflected a mindset that was

still dominant at Bethany: that the congregants were “still holding on to our roots . . . (and therefore not drawn to) planting out or reaching outside the (current church) area.”

All of these forces colluded to force Bethany to re-purpose itself into “switching (the) focus to be more (local)-centric. So we try to outreach to people in the area, and they’re mostly Chinese. So, it’s, you know . . . We can’t be multiethnic you know.” At this point, James seemed to have resigned himself to the reality and conceded that:

There’s nothing wrong with that . . . we just need to be realistic and say we are a Chinese-speaking English church and not call ourselves multiethnic. I mean (although) our goal is to be multiethnic, our tendency is to congregate [with] the Chinese people. We are always going to be bound to be reaching out to Chinese. I think that’s still in our heart, anyway. So I don’t think we’ll ever lose that.

We then turned our discussion to how James viewed his own identity. He answered without much hesitation:

I see myself as a Chinese. I think by the color of my skin and by my hair and the language that I try to speak, I have a Chinese heritage and I’m proud of that as well as proud of being born in Canada.

In the same breath, James constructed a hybrid identity that blended his ethnic origin with his place of birth: “So I think I’m Chinese Canadian. When people ask me what’s my background, I tell them I’m Canadian. But I’m also Canadian Chinese.” Yet in his religious identity, James was adamant that he placed his Christian identity above the ethnic and cultural identity: “I consider myself Christian first, for sure.” However, depending upon the context, James would judiciously select what he believed to be the appropriate identity to fit the circumstance: “If the question ever pops up, yes I am a Christian. But if people was [*sic*] asking me what’s my ethnicity or what’s my

background, I would say that I'm Chinese Canadian, right? But I consider myself Christian first."

But when James was questioned about how much his ethnic identity affected his religious affiliation and the choice he might exercise in selecting churches to attend, he was swift to point out that he did not "consider my ethnicity as a driving factor unless I'm someone as a visible minority in the church, that might be something, that might be a deterrent." To illustrate his point, he cited a predominantly Black Pentecostal church in the neighborhood as an example: James said that if he were to worship there, "I might feel out of place for sure because I'm Chinese."

In examining how his parents might have been an influence on him, James responded enthusiastically: "very — very influenced. I am — I think like the way that I was raised has shaped me to be who I am today." He recalled how his parents modeled faith values by practicing Christian teachings:

(They were) being so devoted at the church or to people, learning how to be hospitable, very caring . . . ministering [to] the church, taking on ministry . . . I think seeing my parents take on a lot of the leadership roles has encouraged me to obey and to serve the Lord . . . (They are) examples like a Hall of Fame type of thing that I would look up to . . . and follow [in] their footsteps.

As to whether his parents might have imposed Chinese values on him, James was ambivalent, for although he was raised in a Chinese family, he was not certain whether the behaviors that he adopted based on his parents' modeling were related to Chinese values: "I can't tell if it's Chinese." Though he did not speak Cantonese often or observe many Chinese cultural practices, James adhered to what he believed to be "Chinese

virtues.” For example, James claimed that he enjoyed Chinese popular music and was “very studious” and “very hard working.” At work, he maintained a level of respect for authority and tended to follow instructions first rather than questioning them when he was younger, though that “is something that I’m changing now.” At home, he tried to “connect with my parents and my relatives to the best of my ability,” in a way that reflected a deference to elders.

As for how his parents ranked Christian values versus Chinese virtues to him, James reasoned that they were an exception in that they did not overly emphasize academic achievement over religious involvement as was the case for many of his peers. His parents advocated a priority of developing a good set of habits that led to a good “balance between church (participation) and . . . academics.” They believed that “honoring God through outside of academics is just as important as or even more important than my academics.” It did not follow, however, that his parents did not care for academic achievement. They instilled in James a strong sense of the importance of exerting his capabilities to the fullest. For them, academic achievement was defined not so much by the grades on the report card but by striving for excellence, a goal that his parents “demanded” of him in his studies. His parents’ mantra was always: “You should strive for excellence.” However, an unintended consequence of this demand developed in James: a sense of “fear” of his parents and fear of not meeting the expectation. James recounted the way he felt while growing up:

There’s always that expectation. But maybe it was just because I feared my parents and I never really understood what they were trying to accomplish. (It is) not necessarily demoralizing . . . part of it is just because of the whole respecting

elder thing. I did fear my parents. It's not fear like I'm afraid, but I respect them. I love them (and) I don't want to let them down.

Implied within the emphasis on academic excellence was restriction in terms of selecting fields of study or careers. Though his parents never pressured him to get into any specific area of study, they did encourage James "to find something that was a profession . . . (like) an accountant, or finance." The underlying ethos of academic excellence was about achieving stability and certainty in life and career. James explained:

I think it's the fact that there's stability and there's certainty that comes out of a degree. So in theory, if you study accounting, you're going to be an accountant. So it's a defined occupation. (But) if you study political science or you study humanities, it's not a defined, concrete career or occupation.

James perceived this yearning for stability and predictability as "a Chinese thing" or a "Chinese value." In short, although it was not explicitly specified by his parents, for James, the tacit understanding was that he was expected to pursue those well-defined fields so that he could learn enough skills to have a stable life and career. Under this influence, James elected to pursue computer engineering. He reasoned: "Being raised as a very Chinese at the time when the computer boom was so big, I chose computer[s] out the fact that I felt I can secure a job more so (than for) the academic[s] and the learning."

In closing, James offered his hypothesis on the entire transition experience of his cohort, and I summarize it as follows. First, the prevalent reason for the local-born's departure from their parents' church might not necessarily be due to apostasy or to a simple desire to stay away from their "parents' umbrella for all these years." Rather, for

many who left, “the (parents’) church just isn’t the right fit.” James explained further that the departure might reflect more of a desire for these folks to break away from their own “personal baggage” than the force of pull factors such as ethnicity to join other churches of the multiethnic variety. These personal issues were mostly reflected in the life misfortunes some went through in a close-knit community such as the church. There would be bound to be personality conflicts or relationship breakups. James reasoned:

A lot of people are leaving the church because they grew up, for all these years, from as a baby until 30-something. You spent 30 years in this church and there’s so much baggage. Let’s say you dated some person, dated multiple people in the church, you have broken friendships, which caused people to leave.

What was poignant about the departure of the SGCCC was that it could be attributed to the “whole idea of reconciliation and forgiveness” being absent from “the Chinese culture.” James added, “I think it’s very difficult for Chinese people to forgive one another” because “it’s a pride thing . . . (and) we don’t reconcile enough.” One way to mitigate the departure was to do away with the “Chinese (shame) culture” of face saving and practice the biblical teaching of forgiveness: “I think that as a Chinese church, we need to ask and seek for forgiveness on a continual basis for people who [we] have been a hinder [hindrance] to or a hurt to.” After James offered that suggestion, I thanked him for the interview as we ended our discussion.

**Themes for Case One.** As a result of examining the data through analysis and coding, multiples themes emerged for the participants of this collective case and I identify them in the following sections.

*Theme #1: Quandary of ethnic-dominated SGCCE congregation.* The participants in this case came to their current congregations of choice for worship via different pathways. Martha was referred by a family contact. James followed a movement that reflected an explicit vision and decision to establish an independent SGCCE church out of his parent's immigrant congregation, not recognizing "if there's a choice" to go anywhere else. Peter shared the same experience as James, but his church was not necessarily a deliberate church plant for SGCCE initially, though it evolved into one subsequently. All participants expressed the same desire to have their churches be neighborhood churches that were community-centric and multiethnic. James put it succinctly: "Ideally, our church is aiming to be missional. It's aiming to be outreach-centric church. And if we (want) our outreaching and to be missional, (then it is) to the people around us."

In the same vein, Peter's church designed its programs in an ethnic-neutral manner with a purpose of "engaging the community that is around" the church. In so doing, all participants aspired to achieve the same end-game: to see their church become multiethnic in membership. Peter, for example, spoke of "a multiculturalism ideal" at Salem, wanting to be "welcoming to all ethnicities that come and visit us." Martha's interest in embracing multiethnicity, on the other hand, was driven by a desire to see her South Asian boyfriend embraced by the church she attended. And James shared the same multiethnic ideal: "I mean I think our goal is to be multiethnic."

Yet they all faced the same conundrum: Their churches continued to be ethnic Chinese-dominated congregations, albeit second-generation focused. For Peter, the

pursuit of multiethnicity for his congregation was “not happening as we want it to be” because Salem remained predominantly “a Chinese church,” reflecting the congregants’ social network and circle of influence. The same exasperation was expressed by James, who said that the “ethnic makeup (of the church) is primarily Chinese . . . (and) holding on to (the) Chinese roots.” Martha came to the same conclusion: that her church’s leadership was “Chinese-based.”

The irony of pursuing multiethnic attendees in a predominantly Chinese social and demographic context was not lost on the participants. They all shared common contributing/paradigmatic factors that shaped the ethnocentric composition of their memberships. The first factor had to do with the socialization process. For Peter, his transitory experience had always been centered on ethnic Chinese churches. The key driver for his experience had much to do with connection with friends. Peter explained that he went to those Chinese churches because of the friends he was acquainted with and “therefore, a lot of the churches that I visited were Chinese.” A sense of homophily existed for Peter and his Chinese friends whose connection network formed what Peter conceptualized as a “comfort zone.” To stay in the comfort zone meant going to a church where Peter had an acquaintance. Yet, the same comfort zone modulated his resistance to worship with non-Chinese. Peter explained: “I would definitely not have problems visiting (a Caucasian church) but my sense of going back into my comfort zone would kick in. Because in (a) Caucasian church, I would stand out. I’m the minority Asian.”

The connection with friends as a theme sprang from a life experience that was molded out of a context that combined religion and ethnicity. Peter cited a key

experience as participating in an annual event when he was young: the Western Chinese Christian Winter Conference, which Chinese Canadian Christians of all stripes would attend, coming from provinces in Western Canada. Peter remarked that “it’s through that conference that I attended regularly back then that I met my other friends that are also Christians.”

Martha identified the same socialization experience growing up in the church setting. She recalled, “The connection I have with the people at Salem right now is something that’s really unplanned. And I actually met a lot of my peers right now in Salem when I was 13 or 14 . . . at the Chinese Winter Conference.” Combining this experience with her social circle, which consisted mostly of people with Chinese ancestry, Martha unsurprisingly admitted, “My close friends are mainly Chinese.”

As for James, although he did not explicitly weigh in on the socialization process, the process did play a role in shaping his decision to stay at his church. He was motivated to leave at one point because “a lot of my friends left the church.” However, when he chose to stay, loneliness did set in: “I felt alone . . . some (of my friends) were still not finishing school but some had just left the church (and) the faith completely.”

The second factor contributing to the church’s being dominated by Chinese ethnicity was related to where the church was located. James lamented that as much as his church desired to achieve the goal of being both a multiethnic attending congregation and a neighborhood-centric community church, it was hamstrung by the demographics of where the church was located. He explained, “The people in the area . . . are Chinese. So you’re going (to be) bound to have a very Chinese-oriented church.” Peter shared the

same frustration: “The ideal of becoming a multiethnic church is not happening” because the church was located in a predominantly Chinese ethnic location.

This situation led to the third contributing/paradigmatic factor: The Chinese congregational composition was an exclusionary barrier in terms of the church becoming multiethnic. James protested that because Chinese households predominated in the neighborhood, non-Chinese felt uncomfortable attending his church. And many non-Asian friends were not living in the neighborhood. Many Chinese congregants who were commuters themselves felt that “it’s a very tough sell to ask (the non-Asian friends) to drive 25–30 minutes to go to a church.” Peter expressed the same sentiment, though his narrative was based on the friendship connection. He observed that “it’s hard for them (i.e., other ethnic or Caucasian Canadians) (to come to worship at Salem) unless they already have their friends here.” Thus Peter came to the unpleasant conclusion that “the ideal of becoming a multiethnic church is not happening.”

***Theme #2: Inept leadership.*** A second theme emerging from the interview with the participants in this case centers on leadership at the immigrant church that was visionless in its direction and murky in its practice. With sadness and frustration, Martha spoke about how immigrant church leaders changed the rules for selection of a new senior pastor. Rather than putting a candidate through predefined, agreed-upon steps involving a selection committee and interview process, the deacon board of the church “just put someone into that spot (the senior pastor role),” which, for Martha and her worshippers, “was not done in not very open to the church way.” Behind this uneasy situation lay a lack of fair play undergirded by the democratic, open process of decision

making. This absence of transparency fostered a “control” culture in the immigrant church in which the English congregants needed to “ask . . . first to get permission” before doing anything significant. In such a stifling environment, Martha felt that trust for leadership was quickly replaced by a sense of “betrayal.”

Peter shared a similar experience when his former church’s English pastor left and the leadership was “dragging their feet” in hiring a replacement. No attempts were made by the leadership to articulate the process and the expectation in an open manner such that congregants might have a better appreciation of the lengthy and somewhat convoluted hiring process. Without regular updates and open dialogue, speculation festered, invalid assumptions were made, and incorrect conclusions were drawn. Although James did not level criticism against the leadership, he hinted at the lack of freedom to choose to attend the new church plant: “I don’t know if there’s a choice.”

In articulating their purposes for adherents, religious organizations usually craft a vision that delineates the direction for the community to pursue as its collective goal. Martha longed for clarity about such a purpose and direction. She was animated in expressing that yearning: “I want a church that has a direction and a purpose that is aligned with what I’m looking for and what I need.” Without a direction or a “theme,” a recurring topic in our discussion, Martha experienced a sense of drifting, which represented her state of mind when she left the former church: “When I feel like there’s no central goal or kind of theme, then . . . I don’t know what to go towards.” With no clear direction, the immigrant church appeared to be rudderless.

Yet a subtler subplot appeared to manifest itself in the dysfunctional or ineffective immigrant church leadership, having to do with the lack of willingness to listen to the younger generation, which led the latter to believe that they were powerless to effect any meaningful change. Martha complained that she had no appropriate channel to voice her concerns. She explained: “There’s never really that chance to actually talk about . . . church life, or what you see is going on.” Martha framed this issue in the context of an absence of space and right to speak on the part of the younger generation in the presence of the older one. She referred herself as the “underling, the kid” and said she never felt empowered to voice her thoughts or aspirations. Peter shared the same frustration: “I didn’t voice (his overload) out because there was no one (to listen) . . . no channel to communicate . . . (his) thoughts and disappointment,” because the decision-makers did not appear to listen.

For James, the incompetent leadership revealed itself in an ethos of resistance to change. In introducing change in the worship setting, he was confronted with an attitude of maintaining the status quo that advocated preservation of traditional practices, an attitude that he attributed to the fact that “people have been at the church for all these years and never experienced a church outside of the Chinese church.” James further pinned this ethos directly to Chinese culture: “I think it is in a Chinese culture to be very traditional. Once you have your way set, you stick with what you’ve known and what you’ve been doing.”

***Theme #3: Stagnation.*** Flowing from the theme of inept leadership is the theme of stagnation commonly experienced by the participants. Without a clear direction and

purpose at her former church, Martha reported, she had a sense of loss of direction and a feeling of being stagnant: “I think that a big part for me is finding a sense of (how) I can be a tool for God . . . (and) at (my former church), I felt stagnant.” The centrality of having a direction applied to her search for a new church home. “If the direction doesn’t fit for me,” Martha ruminated, “then it’s more me than it is that church.”

For Peter, the spiritual dryness he endured came from two different but related sources. The first was related to feeling “dread” and “burnt-out” from his own leadership role in the worship service. Peter further pointed to the absence of solid spiritual teaching that he felt could come only from a properly trained clergy person. In the absence of an English pastor, congregants began to self-teach, which was inadequate, and soon Peter experienced a hunger that the church could not fulfill. He reasoned: “There wasn’t someone higher up that would teach the more advanced biblical practices. When you are all in the same level, you tend to just teach at the same level so I was not growing spiritually at the church.” In conclusion, Peter felt that “stagnation is one of the causes of their non-growth at their church.”

Rather than speaking the issue of stagnation as a barrier to growth that individual congregants would have to confront, James problematized it as a broader cultural and theological problem within the Chinese immigrant church. There existed a cultural entrapment at the immigrant church that eventually led to ethnocentricity when a person was constructing religious affiliation based on ethnicity. James reasoned: “(Although) we are blessed to be in such a strong Chinese Christian community, we don’t venture outside. If we don’t open our eyes to other things, we’re stuck and bound to the way that

we've always done things.” The restriction in the practices of immigrant churches could blind them from seeing “other perspectives in theology and practices” in other Christian communities that could spark innovation and preclude stagnation at the community level.

**Theme #4: Relationship.** The participants in this case exhibited a deep desire for connection as part of their religious experience. Highly relational, they valued connectivity with their peers — so much so that absence of such relationship and not being able to connect had become a significant flash point for all participants in their decision to leave their former church. When he returned to Bethany after a brief hiatus in the United States, James lamented that “a lot of (his) friends left the church.” Thus he experienced loneliness and not being connected: “I felt alone and disconnected . . . some (of my friends) were still not finishing school, but some had just left the church and left the faith completely.” Though he contemplated opting out for another church, James managed, over time, to establish new relationships and reconnect with his church.

The theme of relationality resonated equally strongly with Peter. At the time of his departure, Peter expressed, he felt exasperated because “the people in my age range kind of dispersed into their other things.” His “core group of friends” had already left the church, with some teaching English overseas and others having already moved on to different churches. In Peter’s mind, his departure was a result of the process of attrition. In seeking connection elsewhere, he found that friendship became a central criterion in his search for a church to attend. In particular, friendship with co-ethnics created a “comfort zone” that became the drawing factor for him to stay at Salem.

For Martha, her yearning for relationship extended beyond her circle of friends. to the leadership of the church she attended. Having experienced the dysfunctional leadership at her former church in terms of “loss of trust,” she admitted that she no longer experienced a “foundation of relationship with the leaders.” Thus when Martha decided to stay at Salem, not only was she seeking “an environment wherein friends . . . would feel comfortable” worshipping together but she also sought connection with leaders, particularly those of Chinese ethnicity. Martha added that she preferred a church with “a Chinese base but with a multiethnic group.” She further explained that the “Chinese base is in the leadership.” This may have something to do with her deep desire to see the intersection between ethnicity and those she trusted for guidance and spiritual sustenance.

***Theme #5: Social construction of identity.*** Although identity emerges as a theme, as it does for participants in other cases, those in this case interrogated it more from the social constructive stance. For instance, Peter at first claimed himself to be “Canadian” but cautioned that the term was socially constructed. He theorized that “the term *Canadian* itself holds [a] multiethnicity (connotation)” unlike for Americans who “are all Caucasian.” It was with the fluidity the term *Canadian* carries that Peter judiciously selected his identity depending upon the context and to his advantage. For instance, in looking for a job, he would identify himself as a Canadian since being a Canadian “means I’m legal to work here.”

In terms of ethnic identity, Peter somewhat rejected the term *Chinese* because he noted that it carried a stigma because it conjured up images of students who were “completely good at math and science” that form a main part of stereotypical Chinese

ethnicity. He protested that he did not “fit into the stereotype” since he was not good at math or science and did not “like being put into a stereotype” or “being labeled.” Peter exercised similar caution when introducing faith identity into the mix. Peter reasoned: “When you (ask) which (identity) would you use to introduce yourself more, my answer would be based on who I’m talking to. If I have to describe myself pretty accurately in a few words, I’m a Chinese Canadian Christian.”

Conversely, Martha saw herself first in terms of her ethnic identity: “I am Chinese,” she stated, although she added quickly: “I’m also a Canadian.” However her penchant for ethnic identification was front and center when discussing her socialization process. Given her experience of how she was treated, she identified herself as a Chinese “because that’s the thing that people would see right away.” Yet this experience was not replicated with her Caucasian counterparts since it was not likely for a Caucasian to be asked: “Are you White?” Thus for Martha, as a Canadian, ethnic markers appeared to act as an invitation for others to ask about the origin of her ancestry. However, both Martha’s ethnic and her national identity as either Chinese or Canadian paled when in comparison with her religious identity. Martha vehemently insisted that the comparison was “not even (in) the same category.” For her, being “Canadian and Chinese has to do more of my culture,” whereas “Christianity is my values, my beliefs, and my religion.” Martha stressed that “number one, I have to be Christian.”

As for James, he was sanguine in expressing his identity as a Chinese: “I see myself as a Chinese. By the color of my skin and the language that I try to speak, I have a Chinese heritage and I’m proud of that and proud of being born in Canada.” In the

same breath, he constructed a hybrid identity that blended his ethnic origin with his place of birth: “When people ask me what my background is, I tell them I’m Canadian. But I’m also a Canadian Chinese.” Yet he valued his Christian identity above the ethnic identity: “I consider myself Christian first, for sure.” However James appeared to separate the different identities and selected judiciously what he believed to be the appropriate one depending on the context: “If people were asking me what my ethnicity is, I would say that I’m Chinese Canadian. But I consider myself Christian first.”

Table 5

*Ethnic Identity: Case One Participants*

|        | <b>Christian</b>                               | <b>Canadian</b>                                  | <b>Chinese</b>  | <b>Hybrid identity</b>  |
|--------|--|--|---|---|
| Martha | “Number one I have to be Christian.”           | “Canadian and Christian would be tied.”          | “I would identify myself as a Chinese first.”   | “Chinese Canadian”  |
| Peter  | “I’m a Chinese Canadian Christian.”            | “I just called myself Canadian.”                 | “Being Chinese has stigmatism [ <i>sic</i> ]” and admitted to being “Chinese only when asked” | “Some people are sensitive of these things: ‘why do you call yourself a Chinese Canadian?’” |
| James  | “I consider myself Christian first, for sure.” | “Proud of being born in Canada”; “I’m Canadian.” | “I see myself as a Chinese.”  | “I’m Chinese Canadian.”   |

**Summary.** To summarize, analysis of data collected via interviews with the participants, visits to church sites, collection of church bulletins and other materials as well as information from the church websites yielded the following five themes: (a) the quandary of ethnic-dominated SGCCE congregations, (b) inept leadership, (c) stagnation,

(d) relationships, and (e) social construction of identity. In the next section, I present data collected from Case Two participants and the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

### **Case Two – Participants Attending Worship in a Pan-Ethnic Asian Church Setting**

Case Two involves participants who attended churches in a pan-ethnic Asian setting. The case was bounded by the parameters for churches whose ethnic category was determined by Alumkal's (2008) theoretical framework of three lenses for analyzing the multiple variables that contribute to a congregation's ethnic and racial profile as discussed in Chapter II. Based on the information provided by the participants and my personal research into the information available on the website, I am satisfied that the churches the participants were attending at the time of interview qualified for this case. In this case, three participants were interviewed, two of whom attended the same church. However, I did visit the church of the third participant and gained perspective on what constituted a Pan-Asian congregational context, which in turn informed my analysis of the data for this case. In the following sections, synopses of the interviews are presented in a sequential manner, followed by discussion of the themes that surfaced within this case.

**Synopsis of interview with first participant: Eunice Chu.** The first participant I interviewed in this case was Eunice Chu, a single, 30-40 year-old with a master's degree in cross-cultural studies, working in marketing and communications for a local coffee roaster in a major city in Western Canada. Eunice attended her parents' church for almost 27 years and was the interim youth pastor for a time until 2006. After leaving her home church in the summer of 2007, Eunice decided in 2008 to settle in at Upper Room,

a church that was attended by local-born Chinese Canadians, Korean Canadians, and other ethnic worshippers. Eunice came to me via a referral by her pastor, and I interviewed her at a quiet office in mid-town.

When I asked her why she left her home church of 27 years, Eunice offered a terse answer: “I was burnt out . . . (and) wasn’t growing.” She recalled experiencing a sense of loss and disorientation after stepping down from the role of interim youth pastor:

I was out of place, because if I wasn’t involved in doing ministry, I didn’t really know where I fit in. I didn’t know where I belonged. But I didn’t want to belong to serve. Or I didn’t want to serve to find my belonging. I wanted to not serve and feel like, “I still belong.” But I didn’t feel like I did.

Eunice further ascribed the sense of non-belongingness to the absence of meaningful connections to her peers. She elaborated:

You need your own friends, people your age, people you can connect with. I was single and unmarried. And a lot of people older than me were married and had kids. So life stage was different as well. So it was difficult to connect with people because our life stages were completely different.

However, at the time, Eunice “was the only one in my generation” who was still there when “everyone from that youth group (I grew up with) already left . . . There was no one left (behind).” The absence of relationship with her peers, together with not having a role in ministry, led her to develop a strong feeling of “non-belonging” at the church.

As to why her peers left the church, Eunice attributed it to the lack of a support system to assist the youth in transitioning into university. These students were

overwhelmed by the workload and as a result, many abandoned their religious affiliation.

Eunice offered this observation:

We didn't have a solid university program at my church. There were university programs at other churches, and that's why some people left (for) the other churches. But then after university, you kind of faded away as well if you don't get planted in the university.

As a remedy, many older leaders refocused their efforts and "invested in youth ministry . . . they felt a heart for youth ministry because they saw all friends leave."

Eunice went on to lament, "It affects the pastor to see . . . the great exodus. And it's hard to continue (to) do ministry when you see people walk. I know it hurts the pastor."

In Eunice's opinion, there were two antidotes to "stem the tide." First, it was relationship, not just the one existing between the leadership and the youth, but also the one that was developed among the youth themselves. Eunice characterized this kind of relationship as a "deep accountability with each other." Second, a solid discipleship or "relationship with Christ . . . is paramount important." According to Eunice, her church had exerted efforts in running programs such as "camps" to help youth experience a connection with God in a way that was highly emotional: "They experience a high." But absent from the teaching was information about how to relate to God in adversity.

Eunice elaborated:

As a church, I think we failed . . . to help kids go through the ups and downs of life. Instead of just seeing church as a great experience . . . (the church needed) to help young people walk through difficulties and walk through ups and flows of life.

Eunice and I then turned to a discussion of what the criteria were when she selected a church to attend. She highlighted a few factors. First, the church had to be in the neighborhood community where she resided and had to reflect that very community. Eunice explained, "I'm affecting the people that I know, the people who live around me because this is my life, this is my community, (and) this is where I live." Upper Room met that criterion because it was located in a community that reflected a good mix of Asians who were "second-generation with same or similar background."

The second criterion had to do with Eunice's loathing of exclusivity. Eunice was dead set against attending a traditional Chinese church, even though it might have a viable English ministry. Eunice reasoned: "I just left a Chinese church . . . I don't want to attend another Chinese church with the same Chinese problems. I wanted to attend a more dynamic church." By "Chinese problems" she referred to the lack of progressiveness as well as the control exercised by the first-generational leadership at the Chinese immigrant churches. Based on previous experience, Eunice asserted, "I understand how Chinese mentality is. And being in a predominantly Chinese church with a Chinese board, it will affect how the English ministry is run. It's just how things are." Even though some church boards might have "a sprinkling of second-generations," most of the time, she argued, "they would make decisions based on their first-generation values."

To illustrate the control of the first-generation, Eunice discussed the issue of name change at the immigrant churches. When these churches were originally founded, they invariably carried the ethnic term "Chinese" in the church title. The congregants found

the “Chinese church” label necessary to express who they were and to attract co-ethnics. However, raised in the multiculturalistic milieu of Canada, the local-born argued that religious institutions should remove their ethnic marker in favor of a more community-centric posture to embrace the neighbors or friends irrespective of their ethnic origins, arguing that the term *Chinese* carried “exclusivity.” Yet, Eunice observed, the reality of these immigrant churches was that “you can’t see a lot of Caucasians or other ethnicities wanting to walk (into) a church that says ‘Chinese church.’” One way to accomplish the objective of being inclusive was to remove the term *Chinese* from the nomenclature of the church. Thus, Eunice elucidated, local-born were interested in “changing that Chinese name because they want other ethnics to come in or to feel comfortable.” However, any initiative to change the name was usually met with fierce opposition, especially from the board, which had been predominantly controlled by the first-generation leaders. “Name changes are very difficult in a Chinese church” because, Eunice theorized, many of these leaders were intransigent and put their ethnic values above their faith values. The resistance to name change was but one example of the red tape that Eunice characterized as part of a stifling leadership culture that “exist(s) in a lot of Chinese churches.” Eunice went on to identify the rejection of a culture that was controlling or a “seeking permission first” culture as the third factor in her selecting a church to attend.

When contrasting Upper Room and her former church, Eunice cited three differences, and these also constituted reasons for her to stay at Upper Room. First, Upper Room promoted a culture of flexibility and creativity in which having freedom to

try new ideas and not being afraid to fail were exhibited in the leadership behaviors. Eunice recalled that her lead pastor was putting a “chalkboard paint on the wall” in order to allow people to “write their prayers” on it. Flabbergasted by such a move, Eunice asked if he needed approval to do so. The pastor replied, “No...it is a creative (effort) . . . and if it doesn’t work, we’ll repaint it.” This culture of flexibility also extended to the worship setting and content. Eunice pointed out that even the sermon was not a must-have item: “We don’t need a sermon every week,” unlike “my old church.” Second, Eunice repeatedly praised the lead pastor at Upper Room as a “good communicator . . . (and) quick to the point.” For that reason, she loved “the sermons,” for she “could understand them and (the pastor) made a point and I can take the point home.” Third, the worship experience was unique in the sense that her charismatic former church tended to have a longer musical worship section (“maybe 45 minutes”), including “lot of breaks between songs or repetition . . . with the band playing and people praising and praying.” The praise portion of the service at Upper Room, however, tended to be shorter at about “20 minutes.”

As we turned to a discussion of Eunice’s identity, she called herself a Chinese-Canadian. Eunice explained that before she was 21, she was comfortable acknowledging herself “as a Canadian.” An event took place when she was around “21, 22” that made her go “through an identity crisis.” At that time, Eunice was pursuing graduate studies in a small town and “had roommates who never spoke to a Chinese person in their life, never really interacted with Chinese people in their life.” Coming as they did from small White communities across Canada, these students were aghast to find out that as a person

with a Chinese appearance, Eunice spoke perfect English. So foreign was such a discovery that no matter what Eunice did, these students would label it as: “That’s so Chinese,” not because it was an actual Chinese cultural practice, but because of their prejudices in seeing things through the racial lens. Eunice recounted her protest: “No, no, no, that’s what we do in the city. It’s not that I’m Chinese.” This extraordinary experience was then exacerbated by a mission trip to China where her White missionary friends introduced her to their local Chinese acquaintance as “their Canadian friend.” The locals were “so confused because they didn’t understand that I could be — the Canadian friend and I spoke perfect English but I look Chinese.”

These two episodes created an identity crisis in Eunice. She recalled: “I didn’t know who I was because I was really Chinese in a small town. And when I went to China, I was very White. And then I was like, *I don’t know what I am.*” The crisis forced Eunice to rethink who she was and triggered her to start a process of sorting out her values. In the end, she forged a hybrid identity by gaining an “appreciation for my Chinese culture and taking some good things from it.” At the same time, Eunice also decided to take “what is good in Canadian culture (and) make it mine and make it second-generation Chinese.” In the end, she felt that she was completely at ease with the outcome because she was able to “take the best of each culture . . . (and be) in an advantageous position to be able to have this ethnic background yet be born in the luxury of North America.” Reflecting further upon this personal process of social construction of identity, Eunice remarked:

Growing up, most second-generation would have the experience (of living) in two worlds. You speak Chinese at home, and then you go out and you speak English

with your friends . . . you [are] constantly juggling between two worlds that you live in.

The way out of the conundrum, for Eunice, was to “take the best of both worlds. And I like to think I create my own culture. Or our second-generation, we’ve created our own culture that we can navigate between the two worlds, how we see it fit.”

As to how her parents viewed ethnicity and how much influence they attempted to exert on her in that regard during her growing-up process, Eunice recalled an instance of her father’s frustration at her younger brother’s desire to enter seminary. She recalled her father saying: “I worked so hard to put you guys through school, but you guys are choosing to do church work. . . . You guys are both educated. Why don’t you go and get a good job and earn lots of money?” A better or successful life, according to Eunice’s father, would be defined “in terms of good job, good career.” Eunice argued that these were common outcomes that were derived from Asian values, such as attainment of wealth, status, and education. She explained:

These are values that Asian parents want their kids to have; or Asian parents put on their children that they, you know, they worked so hard to give them a good life and so that their kids would have an even better life.

Yet, in Eunice’s opinion, by imposing these choices over his children’s higher “calling,” her father definitely put cultural values above his faith. She singled out the Chinese values of “having face, honor and status” things that were clearly in her father’s mind: “I think in Chinese culture, you want face. Face means you want your kids to have education, you want your kids to be successful, and you want your kids to have money.”

Eunice went on to offer her personal observations on the overall transitional experience. She attested that many of her second-generation friends who grew up in a Chinese church were no long attending Chinese Church. Yet this shift did not necessarily imply that they stayed at a particular church for a long time afterward: “It seems like not a lot of us can get settled in one church for a very long time.” Eunice offered a few observations. First, the second-generation Chinese Canadian Christians are highly relational. Relationship is the linchpin of belongingness, and if relationship changes in a local church context, belongingness to that church changes. Eunice explained:

Because you’re still longing for relationships (and) longing to belong; and if you don’t have that or if you’re lacking a little bit of that then you kind of feel it’s time to go. It’s such a sticking point. Once you lose a certain relationship, you kind of feel like, “Why should I attend (that church)?”

Although faith was a key element in this cohort’s journey, Eunice argued that faith was portable and affiliation with a particular religious institution was not as important: “I could take my faith to another church, why do I have to stick with this particular body (i.e., church).” An example of relational changes could be seen as reflected through changes in our life stages. This shift was clear for those of Eunice’s friends who began to have children of their own. They switched their church affiliation because:

(As) your kids grow up, and maybe they (i.e., the church) don’t have a good kids’ program and you want your kids to be able to have a good foundation. And you attend a church or you look for a church that has a good kids’ program.

Life changes influenced not only one's immediate family but also one's friends in terms of their church affiliation. Eunice suggested that when "your friends leave because of life changes, and they are looking for something else," then "you lose some relationships there." The sudden loss of connection forced those who were left behind to ask: "Should I continue to come" to the same church? Eunice summed up the observation succinctly: "Life changes sort of in some way dictate the pathway."

A second observation was that the local-born attended a church based more on the pastor's reputation or relationship with the pastor and less on the ethnic mixes of the congregation. Sometimes the "pastor changed and you went to that church because of that pastor." In fact, Eunice further hypothesized, "My theory is that a lot of churches take on the pastor." In other words, the ethnicity of the pastoral leadership and its attitude toward multiethnicity determined how open the church was in embracing other ethnics. Eunice opined that "the ethnicity of the pastor or the familiarity of the pastor to other ethnic groups (is critical in attracting other ethnics), so multicultural leadership is very important in a multicultural or a church that is driving to multiculturalism."

Asked why her friends tended to be Asian or Chinese, Eunice admitted: "In my world, I just connected better with Asians." For her, there appeared to be a sense of comfort and safety or even homophily in being with Asians: "When I grew up — elementary school, all of us, all the second-generation Asian kids just hang out together."

Finally, Eunice offered her observations on the difference between the first-generation Chinese Canadian immigrants and their local-born children from the

perspective of ethnicity and religious affiliation. When the first-generation immigrants came to Canada, they needed:

A place that was familiar to them. And so they started a Chinese church (that they're familiar (with). And that created a sense of belonging. . . . Because they had to go work and they worked with another culture. And that was hard for them because they operated in a language that they didn't quite understand. Yet, they can go back and feel some sort of security back on Sunday mornings or Sunday afternoons, like they can meet other people who have the same background as them. Like my parents who bused to church so that they can feel a sense of connectedness with their fellow Chinese friends. And they could share it together and share their experiences and struggles from the week.

SGCCE have an entirely different set of needs, and Eunice cautioned the first-generation to pay attention to these needs so as not to risk losing the local-born:

But our generation, we don't have that same need because we grew up here. And that's why the Chinese church has to change, because they're going to lose this generation; because they we don't have that same need. We don't have a sense of needing to belong with our same ethnicity. I could communicate with Chinese people or my friends over social media or e-mail. I don't need to go on Sunday. Or we have the luxury of — everyone drives a car now. Second-generation are just blessed with cars because their parents worked so hard to create this lifestyle for them that they are just handed vehicles so we can drive to go any place . . . But we don't have — our generation, we don't need that as much in that Chinese context.

On that note, we ended the interview.

**Synopsis of interview with second participant: Phoebe Lee.** The second participant I interviewed in this case was Phoebe Lee, a 40–50 year-old married mother

with a commerce degree working as a human resources manager at a firm in a major city in Western Canada. I came to know Phoebe through another participant, John Yang, and interviewed her at a quiet office in the downtown area.

I started the interview by asking Phoebe why she left her parents' church. She was quick to answer: "I got married and we left the church." Because her husband was a relatively new believer at the time, Phoebe "wanted him to step up to be the head of the household" and they decided to move to create the necessary space for him to do so. Thus they moved to "a (local) Baptist (church)" and stayed there for "5 years." Afterward the Lees were on the move again, and this time they decided to attend Uptown, a Chinese church plant with a large English congregation and a much smaller Chinese-speaking one. The move was also motivated by life changes: They wanted to start a family and "wanted to go to (a) church with a solid children's ministry." The Lees stayed at Uptown for about ten years. Three and half years before the interview they began to attend Summit, a Pan-Asian church with a Mandarin ministry but started by a Korean pastor and "a small group of Korean" second-generation congregants. In describing her reason for leaving Uptown, Phoebe pointed to the staleness of her children's faith as a concern. She explained:

The reason I left was because my kids were starting to say: "It's okay, we don't have to go to church." They were starting to say that because they had a lot of head knowledge, but there wasn't the relationship amongst even the kids.

This concern of hers was further compounded by the fact that her husband had become an irregular church-goer and her children at time followed their father's example and said: "Let's stay home with daddy." Phoebe felt the need to make a pre-emptive move when

the children were “around ten” to avoid the potential that they might “drop off (for) good.”

Phoebe observed that other people were also leaving the church at the time. Central to the reason for departure appeared to be a “lack of connection . . . with peers” and “with pastors,” and “between the kids and God, and among themselves.” To Phoebe, the “lack of connection” feeling was also almost palpable. She explained: “I didn’t have any connection with any of the leadership.” She cited a personal incident of sickness in 2010 to illustrate the point. At that time, she received only scant attention from her lead pastor. She protested: “I sent him an e-mail with my whole testimony with my heart pouring, (but received) not even a response.” Phoebe further suggested that this incident underlined a much deeper relational problem at Uptown: “It is symptomatic of everything that I’m hearing. You know, the other pastor to the teenager; and what I see, from the kid’s pastor to my kids; there’s a lack of relationship all around.”

Our discussion then turned to how ethnic or cultural factors affected the choice of congregation in her transition experience. Phoebe was candid, admitting that the churches of her choice had been ethnically Chinese: “Every church that I chose (to attend) was Chinese. . . . because it’s important to me.” However, Phoebe was also drawn to a broader Asian heritage. Though Summit was not entirely Chinese, the pastor was “Asian himself but speaking perfect English, ministering in English, you know, it’s very similar, so I’m looking for that type of church.” When asked why it was important to worship with co-ethnics in an English-speaking context, Phoebe singled out three reasons:

I'm more comfortable with a group that is Chinese. I can understand the background that they come from. That's one reason. (Second), every church that I choose is a church where the pastor is speaking English almost perfectly because I can't speak Chinese very well. So that is the type of culture that I'm going into. I don't think I did it consciously, but if you look at everything, it's exactly like that.

Third, she offered that she wanted "my kids not to lose the identity with their Chinese blood," or at least with "the Asian at this point . . . since their friends are a mix of Chinese and Koreans at this point . . . at church."

The discussion of her children's cultural heritage led to a discussion of how she saw her own identity. Although she did not "feel very Canadian," Phoebe characterized herself as "100% Chinese (and) 100% Canadian." She further distinguished herself from the immigrant generation by identifying with those Chinese who had "grown up here" in Canada. However, when juxtaposing her faith identity with her cultural identity, she was adamant that "I'm more than 100% Christian before I'm 100% Chinese."

Part of the comfort in socializing and worshiping with people of "likeness of background" arose from the fact that they all "shared (Asian) values," such as holding a high regard for "education." Phoebe added that "all Asians know school is very important . . . (unlike) the White culture." The bias toward education was deeply rooted in what Phoebe described as an Asian "performance culture" that treasured high achievement in academic standing above all else. Yet this Asian focus could deceive children into thinking incorrectly that achievement alone could "earn the parent's love." She admitted her own folly with an anecdote about her children: Once they brought "back a test that's 25/27. I don't look at the 25. I look at the 2 that are wrong . . . (and) that's

just an automatic thing.” Phoebe further attributed the origin of such values to her parents. At a young age she was inculcated by her parents with the “Asian” ideals of being “a doctor, a lawyer, or an accountant” so that by being “a professional,” her children could lead “a better life.” This notion of better life arose from the immigrant generation, whose narrative had always been: “I work really hard, I’m emigrating, and I’m trying to give you a better life in Canada.” She further added that such a narrative may not have been spoken out loud or directly to her but that the presence of such values were deeply felt. Phoebe asserted that she could see them “through what (the parents) admire” and even though “they’ve never said to me, but you know it from everything that you hear.” This expectation did affect the choices of careers for her brother and Phoebe. Her brother became “a dentist” and she wanted to be a chartered accountant but she “hated numbers” and thus ended up working in human resources.

The Asian success-driven, performance-based culture also spilled over to the spiritual realm of her life. Phoebe confessed that she would carry an image of God modeled after that of her “earthly parents” and admitted, “We equate in some way God to be like that, so we become performance-based Christians.” And through testimony of others, Phoebe learned that many Asians “don’t consciously realize it, but then they start thinking, ‘Oh, God is, you know, the punishing kind so I have to be like this, I have to be like that’ (to meet his expectations).” The disciplinarian image of God then prevented them from truly coming to know God as a loving father because “it’s hard . . . to bridge that gap” between the affection for, and fear of, God.

In addition to the performance-centric culture, Phoebe further asserted that Asian values such as honoring duties and hard working also affected her in many ways and that they could in fact be a force of negative influence in the spirituality of Asian believers. It was one thing to be hard working, but it was another to be hard working to pursue the fulfillment of the success-driven expectations as opposed to pursuing God's glory.

In terms of how such Asian values were being relayed to her children, Phoebe acknowledged a strong desire to mold the children's cultural identity as Chinese with Asian values. But she cautioned that the negativity of these values must be mitigated by faith values to foster a healthy spiritual development. As a result, rather than being preoccupied with her children's grades, Phoebe started asking the question: "What does God want me to teach (them)?" She acknowledged that she had now abandoned instilling the cultural expectation into her children in favor of focusing on developing them to follow their own "passion." Phoebe said of her son, "I want him to be passionate about what he is because I do think that God gave us a passion . . . (and) we're supposed to be somewhere in this world to make an impact."

Phoebe credited the shift in her awareness directly to participation at Summit: "This type of thinking, I didn't get as much before I joined (Summit)," a church she praised for "intentionally" addressing the negative impact of cultural values from the pulpit. This was not to say the church did not value or "embrace . . . cultural diversity" but at the same time, pastors took pains to point out the biased behavior when they "see where it's not godly." At the same time, the church leadership tackled or "reframed" these issues "explicitly . . . (and) purposefully" by not denying or "putting down" the

Asian “cultural identity” or directly attacking the value of pursuit of success, but by clearly explicating where the desire to pursue excellence might come from. The ethos underneath the teaching was the reflection of Summit’s attempt to shift the ethnic culture to a “kingdom culture” in which adherents were encouraged to excel in everything they did and in whatever career they pursued: “You could be in the movie industry. It’s not doctors, lawyers, and accountants. You could be in ministry, in media, in government.” The key lesson was about scaling “whatever mountain that you think God gave you the passion and the ability . . . (to) go as high as you can” because with performance and excellence, the faithful could exert positive influence upon those around them.

We then moved to a discussion of the key differences she came to observe between Summit and “traditional” churches. First, Phoebe suggested that Summit appeared to be “anti-religious” or traditional and was dead set against the institutionalization of the church, citing the worship experience as an illustration. Summit’s worship was an “at least two and half hour” experience, with the praise portion extending for over an hour in a free-flowing format. The worship leader could be “singing the same song . . . three or four times, (sometimes for) 15 minutes” depending on “where is the spirit leading,” whereas traditional churches would be very “formulaic,” following a set flow of singing “four songs” with “all the verses.” Phoebe postulated that the adherence to a fixed-flow approach might be due partly to the traditional Chinese churches’ being bounded by a “structure” of having to schedule worship services in a sequential order to meet different congregational needs. As a result, the English service started at “9:15 am (and) you had to leave there by 10:30 am” to make room for another

service, and the church as a whole was “very conscious of lunchtime.” Conversely, the service at Summit took place in the afternoon and in spite of its length, attendees were “free to leave” at any time.

Another example that came to her mind was the distinctive flavor of religious narratives at Summit. The Korean pastor loved to eat and integrated food into his sermon from time to time. At the same time, the church promoted a holistic gospel message that addressed not just the spiritual needs but also the physical and mental wellbeing of the congregants. Programs such as a “40-day challenge (of) physical fitness” or “40-day fasting” were promoted in the congregation.

Third, Phoebe characterized Summit as “non-traditional” because the leaders adhered to values of openness, vulnerability, authenticity, and transparency. She commented:

The pastor talks about his marriage. He talks about his mistakes. All the leadership talks about that, talk about very intimate issues of their marriage and how it wasn't as strong. They will talk (about) pornography. They will talk about all of these things about themselves. They're saying, “This is my struggle. This is how it affected my marriage.” So there's a huge transparency in leadership.

Conversely, at traditional Chinese churches, leaders and congregants would outwardly be “putting up a façade” and saying “everything is fine” when their “marriage (could be) breaking up.” The behavior was motivated by a fear of “certain judgment that people make” because the critical spirit in traditional churches was “very real.” This spirit of judgment discouraged adherents from being open and truthful about their life challenges.

The culture and values of openness and transparency were also apparent in how conflict was tackled at Summit. Phoebe recalled how people's departures were addressed:

Some people have left but the transparency of the leadership (is evident) . . . and the leadership (would say): "They have left for certain reasons, but if you're friends with them, please, continue friendship." And they were very transparent in kind of saying what some of the issues were without (necessarily) going into the detail.

Such was not the case with Uptown. Not only were leaders not open but they were distant in response to congregants' needs, as Phoebe illustrated by describing her disappointment with leadership when she was ill and received no support from them. This impression was reinforced by another negative experience. No contact was made by the church leadership to find out the reason for her departure. Phoebe further remarked that she was not alone in having such an experience. She discovered from her circle of ex-attendees of Uptown that "there was a same pattern, same concerns" about the dysfunction of pastoral staff. Yet Phoebe's friend discouraged her from communicating her thoughts with these pastors, cautioning her that the leadership did "not take criticism well" and might "shut down" and "ostracize" those whom the leadership perceived to be a threat to their authority.

The last example of differences between Summit and traditional churches Phoebe discussed was related to an approach to ministry that was based on either religious rigidity or relationality. Phoebe recalled her experience as a volunteer with children ministry at both Uptown and Summit. The criteria for volunteer service at Uptown and

other traditional churches Phoebe attended in the past were based on formal qualifications: “The first question is: ‘Are you a Christian?’ Or to ask them a little bit about their faith, and if it’s like okay then ‘Great, come and help me.’” With nontraditional churches, ministry was relationship-driven but not at the expense of teaching the biblical faith. Ministry was so relationship-centric that recruiters “cared more about relationship with the child and introducing them to Jesus rather than teaching them the bible” because they believed that “once you have the relationship, you will hunger for the bible.” Thus the focus at Summit was not so much on any formal qualification of the volunteer as on the value of the volunteer and her/his ability to create a relational culture in the ministry. After Phoebe made that remark, I thanked her for her participation in the interview.

**Synopsis of interview with last participant: Lois Yung.** The last participant I interviewed for this case was Lois Yung, a 40–50 year-old married mother who was working as a peer grief counselor at a post-abortion service center in a major city in Western Canada. Lois attended Evangelical Chinese Grace (ECG) church in the city she grew up with her parents but left about ten years before the interview in favor of attending Anchor, a Caucasian church with multiethnic attendance near to her residence, a church considered to be the largest one in Canada in its denomination. Three years before the interview she started worshipping at Summit. I came to know Lois through Phoebe, and I interviewed her via Skype.

I started the interview by asking Lois the reason for her departure from her parents’ church. Lois was concise and precise in her reply: “I didn’t leave because of the

church; it was more because of my parents.” She then proceeded to tell a story of her journey filled with bitterness, rejection, betrayal, and with “growing and healing.” Lois’s decision to leave was cemented on the pivotal occasion of her younger brother’s wedding banquet. Typical of a Chinese wedding, particularly for the man, a “very large, prominent wedding dinner” was arranged. According to Chinese custom, close family members and relatives were to be seated at tables next or close to the head table. But Lois was not:

All the families including my daughter were sitting at the very front of the wedding banquet but then they placed me and my husband at the very back. We were in at a table with neighbors that I haven’t seen in 20 years.

Lois attributed the seating arrangement to the Asian value of parental favor of sons over daughters, or male over female. Yet this incident aroused in her a very deep sense of rejection that had built up for decades: “So you know, that brought up my rejection wound (caused by) my parents. It made me realize that I had to get healing.” To Lois, “to get healing” meant for her “to leave my parents’ church . . . (and) to basically disentangle from my family . . . [and] then grow and heal from my family.” The theme “to grow and to heal” recurred repeatedly in the earlier part of our discussion and was central in her story, which I summarize in the following section.

Lois’s parents were overseas-born Chinese immigrants who were married at ECG. Their marriage, however, deteriorated over time and the couple contemplated getting a divorce. Lois remarked during that time: “They found out they were pregnant with me and they felt they had no choice but to continue on with the marriage.” As a result, Lois became the lightning rod for her parents’ subsequent dysfunctional behaviors. She

recalled vividly they “blamed me for their marriage,” openly accusing her: “If it wasn’t for you, we wouldn’t be together. It’s your fault that we are (still) married . . . if you weren’t here, we would be much better off.” The parents’ resentment soon turned into abusive behavior. Lois recollected that “it was definitely abusive, physically and emotionally abusive . . . My dad used to beat me.” The abusive behavior stopped after Lois moved away from her parents after getting married. Only then was Lois able to begin to “heal from the abuse that took place at home.”

Another impetus for Lois to seek to “grow and heal” was her parents’ controlling behavior; they hovered constantly in the background, expressing direct or indirect approval or disapproval for her demeanors as a young child. Lois cited two examples to illustrate the impact on her life. First, at worship service Lois’s mother would make eye contact with her as if saying “What are you doing?” When Lois displayed emotion at church, such as crying during the communion service, her mother would chide her afterward: ““Why are you crying for? . . . That’s so wrong.”” Another example of her parents’ control was related to Lois’s choice of universities. Lois remembered:

My parents are very controlling . . . I didn’t have a choice, I was only allowed to go to School A, I wasn’t allowed to go to School B . . . My parents thought that School A is a better school than B . . . (because) A was more prestigious.

After severing the relationship with Lois’s parents, Lois and her husband transitioned to worshipping at Anchor. At the same time, she sought professional therapy from a “counselor” and engaged in a process of “inner healing” wherein she was able to “break off a lot of bitter roots (and) judgments towards (her) parents.” Additionally, she felt a sense of “relief” in that she could now “freely worship (at Anchor). I could be

myself. . . . I don't have to worry" about being watched or judged by her mother. Lois and her family spent 7 years at Anchor, and then 3 years before the interview they moved to worship at Summit.

Regarding her motivation to shift the place of worship to Summit, Lois singled out her daughter as the main reason: "My daughter is 20. Three years ago . . . I could see that her faith was not growing" at Anchor. As her daughter was "becoming a young adult," Lois's desire was for "her to grab on to her own faith (and not be) hanging on to my coattails." The family decided to give Summit a try, knowing that "their population, their demographics were younger." In reminiscing about the last 3 years of experience at Summit, Lois clearly felt very much at ease and comfortable with this place of worship, so much so that she declared: "Summit is the first time after I've left my parents' church that is my home church." When I dug deeper into their separate experience at Summit, Lois related that her husband "feels more comfortable at Summit because there is a large Asian population," whereas "for my daughter and I, we wish it wasn't so many Asians, we wish it was more multicultural."

Lois and I transitioned then into a discussion of her past experience with Canadian culture. Her desire of her faith community was to reflect the larger Canadian society, which was more multicultural. To prove a point, she recalled her own school experience: "We (Lois and her brother) grew up with a multiculturally diverse school and we didn't grow up in a school with all Asians." The school at that time was "very White (and) there's only five or four Asians in the entire school (of) a few hundred (students)." The socialization experience in a predominantly White school environment appeared to

have shaped Lois's view about how important it was to worship with co-ethnics: "not that important." This sentiment did not necessarily imply that worshipping with people of other ethnicities was important either because ethnicity was not the number one priority for her to choose to join Summit, an Asian congregation.

As to her view of ethnic identity, Lois was rather sanguine: "I would see myself [as] Canadian first and then Chinese second," or as she called it, "Canadian Chinese." Yet when I asked her about her religious identity compared with her cultural identity, she placed supremacy on her Christian identity. Lois declared, "My faith is my identity." She went on: "I am a daughter of God . . . (and) that's first and foremost, that's my whole identity and self-worth." When asked about whether she was influenced by her parents' cultural values in becoming who she was, Lois expressed ambivalence in her reply, "because I married my husband at a young age and he has influenced me more culturally than, I feel, than my parents." But if there was one set of cultural values Lois felt her parents passed on to her, it was the Asian emphasis on collectivity as opposed to the Western ideal of individualism. Lois explained, "We Chinese tend to think of us as a group more than an individual mentality." She recalled that her White peers could not understand "why I always had to think about my parents, think about my family," when her peers would counter with an individualistic perspective: "You are your own person."

As for teaching faith and ethnicity at ECG, her former church, Lois remembered distinctively that "ECG was very good at not mixing up their (Chinese) cultural values with Christianity. They were able to put those two distinctly." That is not to say that ECG did not promulgate cultural values, especially those that intersected with the

Christian faith, such as excelling in “education (and) honoring our parents . . . (having) a prestigious job and having family.” Yet Lois recalled instances when, faced with conflicts between the two sets of values, church leadership always favored the Chinese values. Lois was quick to conclude that the leadership was “hypocritical (because) the Christian faith and its values should reign over cultural Chinese values.”

Toward the end of the interview, Lois remarked, “It makes me think back how much I realized (how) Chinese values and cultural values were being pushed versus Christian values. As a child, you really can’t tell the difference until you get older.” However, she recognized that her parents did exert a considerable amount of pressure on her to follow the Asian values of academic achievement and the performance culture to “go to university, (and) that was like the minimum requirement . . . (and to) have good grades and go to School A.” Her Chinese peers experienced the same expectation that they would “get straight A’s in the school and . . . to become a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer,” whereas the parents of her Caucasian peers would encourage them “to do what they had a passion for.” But Lois was steadfast in maintaining that:

Christian faith values are more important to me than cultural values. So with my children, I’m not saying to them: “You have to get straight A’s” or “You have to be a doctor, lawyer, or dentist,” but [instead] “You need to be who God is calling you to be.”

For Lois, her Christianity was expressed through her motherhood in this sentence: “I need my children to become who God has created them to be and not what I want them to be!”

Looking back to her parents’ cultural ethos, Lois was convinced that for them, “Everything was (centered) around shame” and how to avoid it. Thus her parents’

highest value was “saving face, looking good in front of other people.” Lois postulated that her parents’ sense of self-worth and identity was something that was ascribed to them by others through judgment of how they behaved. Lois was adamant that this shame-and-honor practice was not the core value she wanted to transmit to her children. She explained:

I don’t want to raise my children up on thinking about (how) other people are thinking of me. Because (based on) kingdom values, it doesn’t matter what man is saying about you. What matters is what God is saying to you.

Lois admitted that her view of kingdom values was greatly shaped by the teaching of the lead pastor at Summit, who insisted that “as Christians, we (need to) know (that) kingdom values come first, not cultural values.” According to Lois, Summit did intentionally engage in pulpit teaching on the priority of kingdom values:

(The pastor) does talk about it quite a bit. He talks about how a lot of the Asian values are contrary to kingdom values. He talks about how it [the emphasis on Asian values] interferes . . . with one’s identity. And how it can keep one from discovering who they are because they’re too busy . . . to subscribe to always wanting to save face or to look good in front of other people, you may miss out what God is calling you to be.

After Lois made this comment, I ended my interview with her and thanked her for her participation.

**Themes for Case Two.** Analysis of the data of in this case resulted in the emergence of a number of emerging themes, identified in the following sections.

***Theme #1: Life stage changes.*** In analyzing the reasons for their departures from their former churches, I detected a common trigger among all the participants that can

best be described as life stage changes that serve as the fault line for the transitory trend. For instance, Phoebe spoke passionately about how her departure from her parents' church was important to create the necessary space for her husband, who at the time was a new believer, to "step up to be the head of the household." Later on the Lees moved again due to their growing family and their need to find a church "with a solid children's ministry." When their children entered puberty, the Lees moved again. This time Phoebe was alarmed by the staleness of her children's faith and concerned that they might abandon their religion altogether, as her children began to say: "It's okay, we don't have to go to church." She behaved proactively in an effort to avoid her children "dropping off for good" from faith.

For Lois, her life stage change took on a different meaning than just being an expected phase of an organic lifecycle. She moved to another church because of her need "to grow and heal" from years of mental and physical abuse and the inexorable control she experienced under her parents. Her desire to leave her parents' watch reflected a yearning for an unbridled freedom, growth, and independence. The motivation for her next move coincided with Phoebe's: spiritual growth of her daughter. Lois spoke desperately of her child's spiritual condition: "Three years ago . . . I could see that (my daughter's) faith was not growing." Lois's desire was for "her to grab on to her own faith" and not be "hanging on to my coattails."

For Eunice, her departure from her parents' church added yet a different dimension to this theme. She viewed herself as a collateral victim of a movement of transition partly justified by life changes. At the time of her departure from her parents'

church, she observed that “everyone from that youth group (I grew up with) already left (the church).” As a result, she experienced a sense of loss and reported feeling “out of place.” Though single, Eunice offered an observation about her friends who were parents and how the focus of their spiritual engagement and church affiliation was dictated by the children’s needs: “(As) your kids grow up, maybe (the church) doesn’t have a good kids’ program and you want your kids to be able to have a good foundation. Then you look for a church that has a good kids’ program.”

Life changes and the resulting church affiliation can affect not just one’s immediate family but also one’s friends. Eunice suggested that “your friends leave (due to) life changes. They are looking for something else. And you lose some relationships there.” The loss of connection forced those who were left behind to ponder: “Should I continue to come” to the same church? Eunice came to the realization that while couples might have moved on to another church, friends of theirs who did not share the need to move at first might be affected. As a result, she concluded: “Life changes sort of in some way dictate the pathway.”

***Theme #2: Relationality and adhesiveness of congregational community.***

Underneath Eunice’s observation about those who were in lock-stepp with friends who had children in terms of church attendance lay a theme of yearning for meaningful relationship and how it is affected by the adhesiveness of the congregational community. For Eunice, the loneliness she felt at her parents’ church was related not simply to life stage changes but also to a deeper loss of friendship and connectedness. She remarked:

You need your own friends, people your age, people you can connect with (because) I was single and unmarried. And (yet) people older than me were

married and had kids. So life stage was different as well. So it was difficult to connect with people because our life stages were completely different.

Eunice recognized that her experience reflected a trend shared by many of her SGCCE friends who had grown up in a Chinese church but no longer attended it. This cohort did not necessarily stay at a particular church for a long time: “It seems like not a lot of us can get settled in one church for a very long time.” Eunice theorized that SGCCE were highly relational and relationship was the underpinning of belongingness. If the relationship changed at a local church, belongingness to that church changed. Eunice explained:

Because you’re still longing for relationships, you’re still longing to belong; and if you don’t have that then it’s time to go. It’s such a sticking point. Once you lose a certain relationship, you kind of feel like, “Why should I attend (that church)?”

Though faith was a key element in the SGCCE’s journey, Eunice argued that faith was portable and that affiliation with a particular religious institution was not as important: “I could take my faith to another church, why do I have to stick with this (church).”

Connection was also a dominant term used by Phoebe, a term she used more than 10 times to characterize her transitional experience. Apart from her concern about her children’s spiritual stagnation, Phoebe spoke about the “lack of connectivity” that was widespread at Uptown. She recalled that “I talk to other people, and they are leaving for the lack of connection as well.” Phoebe explained further: “One of the friends . . . said, ‘You know, I got to tell you I’m considering leaving.’ And (then she) told me why:

‘There’s a lack of connection with peers, there’s a lack of connection with the pastor.’”

However, it was a personal experience of lack of connection that hit home the hardest.

Phoebe lamented, “I didn’t have any connection with any of the leadership. I mean I came for so many years (yet) nobody (in the leadership) knew me.” She explained that

her lead pastor did not reply her e-mail when she sought pastoral care while ill in 2010.

For her, this incident underlined a deeper relational problem at Uptown: “It is symptomatic of everything that I’m hearing (as well as) what I see, from the kid’s pastor to my kids; there’s a lack of relationship all around.”

As for Lois, she might not have discussed relationship and connectedness as deeply and widely as Eunice and Phoebe, but the topic of church as a home for nurturing relationship did surface in the discussion of her transitional experience. Lois attended Anchor, a Caucasian church, for 7 years after exiting her parents’ church and contemplated enrolling in the membership. Yet at the very last minute she withdrew the application. She explained that even though she had been attending “a small group (at the church) faithfully, the relationships at that small group really didn’t deepen.” Though Lois could not pinpoint exactly what the reason might have been, she reasoned that “(the church) didn’t really feel like home” despite her family’s effort to make connections. As a result, Lois and her family moved to Summit, where Lois declared: “Summit is the first time after I’ve left my parents’ church that is my home church.”

***Theme #3: Chinese values and their adjudication with faith values.*** Another theme uncovered through data analysis was related to how Chinese cultural values were adjudicated by faith values as suggested by the teaching of the pastors of their current

congregation. All participants in this case described a similar set of values their parents advocated and imposed on them. Eunice, for instance, argued that the pursuit of a “better or successful life” was measured “in terms of good job, good career.” These were common aspirations that were derived from Asian values, such as attainment of wealth, status, and education. For that reason, Chinese had been typecast as those who maintained a disciplined work ethic in pursuit of material safety and comfort. Eunice explained, “These are values that Asian parents put on their children, that they worked so hard to give them a good life and so that their kids would have an even better life.”

Phoebe shared the same experience as she recalled that at a young age she was inculcated with the “Asian” ideals by her parents to be “a doctor, a lawyer, or an accountant” in order to lead “a better life.” For Lois, having “a prestigious job” or becoming “a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer” reflected a strong Asian value in the performance culture. A fundamental anchor for a pursuit of these values was academic achievement. The minimum requirement for many of the local-born was not only to “go to university” but “go to (a prestigious) school” and “get straight A’s.”

Behind the emphasis on such pursuits lay a key to how Asian parents constructed self-identity. For them, success and social status brought honor to the parents and the family. Conversely, a less stellar attainment of social status as defined by what the parents believed to be inferior careers or occupations attached shame to the family. Eunice recalled how his father opposed his children’s desire to enter into ministry. She singled out the Chinese values of “having face, honor and status” as those that were clearly in her father’s mind: “I think in Chinese culture, you want face. Face means you

want your kids to have education, you want your kids to be successful (and) to have money.”

Lois’s narrative described a similar experience. In terms of her parents’ cultural ethos, Lois was convinced that “everything was (centered) around shame” and how to avoid it. Thus her parents’ highest value was “saving face, looking good in front of other people.” Consequently, Lois’s parents’ sense of self-worth and identity were ascribed to them by others through judgment of how they behaved.

With these experiences under their belts, participants in this case unequivocally felt that their parents’ generation placed cultural values above faith. For Eunice, by insisting on valuing what he saw as advantageous career choices for his children over their “calling,” her father definitely put an imbalanced emphasis on cultural values. In the same vein, Lois felt strongly that her parents’ generation was “hypocritical (because) the Christian faith and its values should reign over cultural Chinese values.”

Phoebe experienced a counter to that emphasis on traditional achievements when she underwent a sea-change in her attitudes toward Asian values. She credited the pastors at Summit, who unequivocally placed a premium on “kingdom values” in the context of Christian faith. Rather than denigrating the Asian “cultural identity” and its associated values, the pastors at Summit “reframed” these issues “explicitly and purposely” to redefine such cultural values such as success and pursuit of excellence. The faithful were encouraged to excel in everything they did and in whatever career they pursued. Phoebe recounted:

You could be in the movie industry . . . You could be in ministry. You could be in media. You could be in government . . . (Scale) whatever mountain that you

think God gave you the passion and the ability [for] . . . (and) go as high as you can.

Through excellent performance and high standards, the pastors reasoned, Christians could exert positive influence upon those around them.

Lois shared a similar experience at Summit. She recalled how her pastor spoke purposefully and explicitly about Asian values and of how he saw them as subject to faith values:

He talks about a lot of the Asian values and how they are contrary to kingdom values. He talks about how they interfere with one's identity and how it can keep one from discovering who they are. Because they subscribe to wanting to save face or to look good in front of other people, they may miss out what God is calling them to be.

Finally, for Eunice, there was hardly any explicit conversation at Upper Room about ethnicity in the context of their ministry.

***Theme #4: Identity and how it relates to their choice of congregation.*** When it came to identity, all three participants placed their faith identity over their ethnic identity. In addition, all showed openness toward a hybrid identity. Yet not all shared the same degree of attachment to Chinese identity. Each of them came to a hybrid identity through a unique individual experience. For Lois, her identity was shaped by an experience with mainstream Canadians when she attended a school with fewer than five Asian amid “a few hundred students.” This socialization experience in a predominantly White school environment appeared to have shaped her view about the unimportance of worshiping with co-ethnics.

For Eunice, her hybrid identity was born out of an identity crisis that began with her encounter with small-town White classmates during graduate studies that subjected her cultural identity to the racial prejudices of these classmates. What she believed to be her identity as a “Canadian” was refuted by the White Canadian classmates. To compound the problem, her Chineseness was questioned by native Chinese in China, where she could only speak English to them. These experiences forced Eunice to adopt a social construction of an identity that was malleable; she judiciously selected cultural elements from each side that would be advantageous in whatever context she found herself.

As for Phoebe, she juxtaposed her hybrid identity not with a racial prospective as in the spectrum of Chinese versus Canadian, but rather with a generational prospective. She reasoned: “I do see myself as quite different as someone (who) just came from Hong Kong . . . or even my parents’ generation who’ve lived here as long as I have.” Table 6 exhibits how the participants characterized themselves across the identity spectrum.

All participants demonstrated that their ethnic identity did play a role in their ability to relate to their current congregation. However, each one came at it differently. The participants’ choice of identity did not necessarily dictate with whom they socialized and worshiped. In the example of Eunice, her friends tended to be Asian or Chinese because, as she admitted, “I just connected better with Asians.” For her, there was a sense of comfort and safety or even homophily in being with Asians: “When I grew up, all of us, all the second-generation Asian kids just hang out together.” However, her choice of a congregation to worship with was clear: “I don’t want to attend another

Chinese church,” she said, adding that she preferred to “attend a church in my (neighborhood) community” that would reflect the demographic of the neighborhood. Eunice’s decision was not necessarily motivated by a repulsion of her ethnicity. She simply wanted to avoid the problem of confronting the first-generational cultural practice of decision making because “they would make decisions based on their first-generation values.”

Table 6

*Ethnic Identity: Case Two Participants*

|        | <b>Christian</b>   | <b>Canadian</b>                | <b>Chinese</b>  | <b>Hybrid identity</b>         |
|--------|--|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Eunice | “I am a good Christian girl.”  | “I’m Canadian” before 21.      | “Maybe I am Chinese” after encountering prejudices against her. | “Chinese Canadian.”            |
| Phoebe | “I’m more than 100% Christian before I’m 100% Chinese”; “My loyalty is, of course, with faith.”  | “ I don’t feel very Canadian.” | “I am Chinese” for both herself and her children.               | “100% Chinese, 100% Canadian.” |
| Lois   | “My faith is my identity . . . I am a daughter of God . . . (and) that’s first and foremost, that’s my whole identity and self worth.” | “Canadian first.”              | “Chinese second.”   | “Canadian Chinese.”            |

Phoebe exhibited a different disposition by admitting, “Every church that I chose (to attend) was Chinese” because “I’m more comfortable with a group that is Chinese.” Furthermore, she specifically wanted her children “not to lose the identity with their

Chinese blood.” That said, the churches Phoebe was referring had English-speaking congregations with ethnic Chinese congregants whose background was similar to her own.

Of the three, Lois seemed to be most mainstream oriented despite the fact that she was attending a pan-ethnic Asian church. She did express her desire regarding what the church ought to be: “We wish it wasn’t so many Asians, we wish it was more multicultural” and thereby reflective of the larger Canadian society.

Table 7

*Congregation Selection: Case Two Participants*

| <b>Church of Their Choice</b> |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Eunice                        | “I want to attend a church in my community”; “I’m affecting the people that I know, the people who live around me because this is my life, this is my community, this is where I live.”               |
| Phoebe                        | A church that is “ministering in English, it’s very similar, so I’m looking for that type of church”; “Every church that I choose is a church where the pastor is speaking English almost perfectly.” |
| Lois                          | “I enjoy meeting, talking and being with people from different ethnic background”; “For my daughter and I, we wish it (the church) wasn’t so many Asians, we wish it was more multicultural.”         |

**Summary.** To sum up, the analysis of the data collected via interviews with the participants, visits to church sites, collection of church bulletins and other materials, as well as gathering information from the church websites yielded the following four themes: (a) life stage changes, (b) relationality and adhesiveness of the congregational community, (c) Chinese values and their adjudication with faith values, and (d) identity

and how it relates to choice of congregation. In the next section, I discuss data collected from Case Three participants and the themes that arose out of the analysis of the data.

### **Case Three – Participants Attending Worship in a Multiethnic Setting**

Case Three involves three participants who attended the same church in a multiethnic setting at the time of the interview. In addition, they all attended the same immigrant church for a long period at one point in their experience as a Christian, and they left to attend the same multiethnic religious institution. The case is bounded by the parameters for churches whose ethnic category is determined by Alumkal's (2008) theoretical framework of three lenses for analyzing the multiple variables that contribute to a congregational ethnic and racial profile as discussed in Chapter II. Based on the information provided by the participants and my personal research gathered either by having attended the church or through analyzing the information available on the website, I am satisfied that the church the participants were attending at the time of interview qualified for the multiethnicity of this case. The synopses of the interviews with the participants are provided in the following sections in a sequential order, followed by the themes that were identified as having emerged within this case.

**Synopsis of interview with first participant: John Yang.** The first participant I interviewed for this case was John Yang, a 40–50 year-old married family physician in a major city in Western Canada. John grew up in the city and attended an immigrant church with his parents. He left his parents' immigrant church when he attended medical school elsewhere in Canada, where he also attended a Chinese immigrant church. His internship led him and his wife to California, where the family worshipped at an Asian

church. Upon their return to Canada, they attended Anchor for a short while and then switched Uptown and stayed for 9 years. Three years before the interview, John and his family again switched churches, this time to Temple, and found a home with this multiethnic congregation. I interviewed John at a quiet mid-town office.

As we started the interview by discussing his experience at Anchor when he moved back to Canada from the United States, John began to express a feeling of unease. In spite of the presence of an excellent children's program at the church, which was the drawing factor for the family since John and his wife had begun to have kids, John realized: "I wasn't comfortable. I can't really connect as well with people there." He further explained that the lack of connection was related not to "personality" but was "more of a cultural thing." As the only Chinese couple in the small group, John and his wife felt that they had difficulty relating to the experience, background, and values of Caucasian members. John explained:

I thought initially it would be okay because we (returned) from the States and we went to a fairly Westernized church. But once we start talking and sharing, their view of parenting, and background of the world, the cultural view, it's just different. It was hard to really share common experiences. It was different enough that . . . I found it hard to have friendships in that way.

The dissimilarity lay mainly in the different values they held. John and his wife valued "academics and discipline . . . and which school is best for them (the kids)," whereas his group members were more "concerned about socialization, how to make friends, how to encourage parties and getting together with kids." Under these circumstances, John

concluded, “I really didn’t understand (them) and they didn’t really understand me where I was coming from . . . So it’s hard to make a friendship that way.”

John attributed his inability to connect with his group members not to difference in social and economic background but to a “clash” of values. Despite “growing up in the Western culture,” John recognized that “at the heart of it, I’m still fairly Asian.” With this conflict of values fresh in his experience, and wanting to make his kids’ spiritual growth a priority, John and his wife started to attend Uptown, which was more Asian-centric in its outlook and ethos. Immediately, John found synergy with his co-ethnic worshipers, who shared John’s values and background. John added:

At Uptown, they understood where I was coming from (with) the same values I can relate to. I can share easier without having to explain so much. Some of my best friends are from that first small group. Because all of our backgrounds are so similar, we made automatic connections in a higher (and) deeper level.

After 9 years at Uptown, John and his family were on the move again. He offered three reasons for their departure. The first one, which was the paramount concern, was related to the children’s spiritual journey. As they grew into their teenage years, John observed that due to a change of youth pastor at the church, his children “just couldn’t connect, with the other kids or with the (new) pastor.” Worried that his children might “fall away” from faith and yet desiring that they be able to “make their own decisions . . . (and) to own their faith,” John “wanted to find a church where they could connect, not just with other people but also the pastors . . . (so that) they feel like they can serve (and) be really engaged.” He explicitly stated: “I hate to see my kids fall away.”

John then surfaced a “secondary issue” for their departure: he and his wife were “getting a little stale spiritually” and they “weren’t getting much [out] of the pulpit.” At the same time, John was quick to point out that he could have remedied the situation by “self-study” since “it’s not their (the church’s) responsibility 100 percent for my spiritual growth. It’s not fair to expect that from them.”

Finally, as much as he enjoyed worshipping with those who shared a common set of Asian values, John was repelled by the way in which the dark side of these values manifested themselves under the Uptown leadership. He cited the hiring of the new youth pastor as an example. John opined that the hiring was pursued not on the basis of competency but in accordance with the Asian concept of connection or who knew whom in advance that privileged the candidate. John’s assessment of the candidate was that he was “very young . . . not very experienced . . . and did not really seem to connect well or handle that position well.” “How did they choose him?” he questioned openly. Rather than looking for “the best pastor we can get,” the leadership hired the young pastor because his father-in-law “was a well-know Chinese pastor within the community.” In John’s words, “The choice of the teen pastor was sort of influenced by connections. . . . I see a lot of that in nepotism. A lot of ‘Oh, you know, I help you, you help me, we got connections,’” which John saw as a prevalent practice “in Chinese community in general and in church.” This type of decision making practice appeared to “lack transparency” and rejected feedback. John observed that no one could voice an opinion unless he or she had “some kind of connection” or worked themselves into a certain position to earn a place to speak that was based on seniority or connection. John concluded, “The Asian

church is kind of like that. They choose people to do things not because they're competent or best to do it but because of some other reason. And it may be just because of connections."

A second issue with the leadership at Uptown was that they showed no concern for why people like John left the church. No attempt was made to contact John, for instance, to find out the reason for his departure. There was "nothing (contact or inquiry) from the pastor," nor was there an "exit interview," lamented John. He recalled feeling "frustrated . . . and trapped because I thought it needed to be said, but I had no one to say it to." He further reasoned that in such an Asian setting, people like him "didn't feel the freedom to be able to say exactly what (was in their mind)." He attributed this reticence to the Asian cultural practice of deferring to the elders or leaders in positions of power and authority. And to speak out could be interpreted as being "disrespectful." John added:

It's cultural (that) you're not supposed to say anything to your elders and people that you're supposed to respect. The pastors are in the positions of respect so you will respect them. You're not supposed to, just like your parents, to criticize them.

As for his transitional experience that in the end led him to the Temple, John highlighted two episodes in the process. The first one had to do with a Caucasian church John tried out after they left Uptown. Immediately the family was confronted with the reality that they were treated differently. This church offered a Caucasian service and a separate worship for Mandarin-speaking Chinese attendees. Without any prompting or attempt to find out which worship service they wished to attend, the usher greeted John

and his family by saying: “Oh, the Chinese service is over there.” This experience made him feel “very uncomfortable” because he and his family were welcome not based on who they were as Christians, but on their ethnicity even though they were local-born.

The second encounter was a positive one that occurred at Temple. John was delighted that he was valued for who he was, not what he did. He reminisced:

When I walked in, I was welcomed for who I was. They didn’t ask me: “What do you do?” They didn’t care about the color of my skin, because everybody there is different. You know this kind of welcoming without any questions.

As a physician, John juxtaposed this experience with other social encounters, especially in the Asian context. He observed:

If you go to a Chinese church, (the) first thing they would ask you is: “What do you do?” And as soon as you say that (your occupation), they look at you differently, or I feel that way anyway. If you tell them you are a physician, they’re like “Whoa” — their view of you goes up and they treat you as not the same.

John further commented on a motif in the Chinese church regarding how Chinese values would favor certain occupations, accomplishments, and social status — so much so that the Chinese church congregants would place these values above their Christian identity. John argued that such a practice might be “subtle (and) tempered, but in a Chinese ethnic church, I think it’s almost unavoidable.”

As John settled in at Temple, his desire for homophily continued. He recalled: “When we go to Uptown, we were hanging out with almost Asians.” Though he found a wider acceptance by non-Chinese worshippers at Temple, John continued to congregate

with Chinese. In an apologetic tone, John said that he realized that for him, “It’s easier to have close friends and people who just have similar backgrounds (and) ethnicity.”

The desire for co-ethnic socialization did not fully reflect the normal practice at Temple. John observed that the attitude that everyone should be welcomed and embraced stemmed from the vision of the Japanese Canadian senior pastor, who intentionally shaped the church to be one that was open not only to ethnically diverse attendees but also to those who reflected the neighborhood community with a wide spectrum of socioeconomic backgrounds. Simply put, the pastor “wanted (it) to be a community church.” Thus the church welcomed “homeless” worshippers and at the same time had members who were in different professional careers. In addition, the church building was open for community programs such as day care, youth activities, and a homeless shelter.

This was not the case at Uptown. John recollected that his former church was homogeneous in ethnicity as well as in socioeconomic status: The members were “all educated and Chinese.” Furthermore, Uptown carried no community programs during the week: “Once Sunday is over, the compound is fenced off and locked up.” When John and others recommended opening up the building for social activities during the week, they were met with opposition on the part of the church leaders, who cited concerns about liability and about “wear and tear.” John attributed this attitude of playing it safe to the Asian mindset of “selfishness” as opposed to the Caucasian value of generosity. He exclaimed, “It’s very selfish . . . ‘I’m going to do well for myself and I’m going to keep my little kingdom intact. And I don’t want anybody to disturb it.’” He argued that this selfish attitude was so ingrained not only in the mindset of leadership but also in the

congregants that when the senior pastor at Uptown advocated employing a community-centric model of ministry, it was opposed because it was at odds with the model embraced by the rest of the congregation. John concluded that it was this attitude of exclusivity that prevented Uptown from integrating with non-Chinese attendees: “If you’re a Caucasian, you walk into Uptown, you’re singled out, ‘Oh you’re new, you’re new,’ right off the bat.”

Our conversation led to a further discussion of Asian values. John was frank in admitting that not all of them were negative so long as they intersected with Christian values. “One of [the] Asian values” he judiciously adopted was the primacy of “education,” which had guided his decision of to enroll his children in Christian school because there the kids could “make connections, have friends, (and) their parents were like-minded, have Christian values.” On the other hand, certain Asian values as espoused by his parents were definitely not viewed favorably by John. He cited an example of how his parents maintained certain Asian values in their social behavior and attempted to inculcate them into John’s children. For example, they attempted to teach the grandchildren “to make a judgment about people based on their race, their occupation, or their status.” John found himself calling his parents out:

There were family situations that would arise, and my parents would think of a certain way. It’s very Asian; it’s definitely not a Christian viewpoint of how they want to respond. And that remind me of ‘How is it that you’re a Chinese, you’re a Christian, but your response to it is more Chinese than Christian?’ You know, it’s a lot of bitterness and backbiting and judgment and being judgmental, right? And so we have some discussions about that.

Another Christian values were certainly ones that facilitated the moderation of his Asian heritage, John also pointed to the Canadian milieu of multiculturalism as another mechanism that served the same function. Unlike the “melting pot” ethos of Americans in which one had to lose one’s cultural roots to be American, multiculturalism was “healthier” because it facilitated choice regarding identity and values. John explained that choice:

I can choose how Canadian I want to be or how Chinese I want to be. I can because I know it’s a continuum. I don’t think you’re just Chinese (or) you’re just Canadian. There’s kind of gray in between that you can move along. Sometimes, your decisions are influenced more by your Asian culture, sometimes more by Western values that you grew up with; and Judeo-Christian Western values, you know. So I think there’s a bit of a continuum (and) I think that’s healthy.

For John, it was important to understand “where you’re coming from” and that understanding of the heritage allowed him to “pick and choose how much of that (values) do I want to embrace and continue.” He further admitted:

Despite everything I’ve said about Asian culture, I think there are some things of value that you can take from there . . . There are lots of good things in this Chinese culture so you want to sift through that a little bit. But in order to do that, you have to understand it a little bit.

As we moved into a discussion of identity and values and how they related to his faith and ethnicity, John was quick to offer his view. He saw himself as a “Chinese Canadian” who was able to “straddle between the two.” He clarified, “I’m not purely Canadian but I’m not actually Asian either. I’m kind of (a) Chinese-Canadian.” He

acknowledged that growing up in Canada, he was socialized both at home and at church predominantly in the context of Chinese culture, which shaped his cultural identity: “I grew up in the Chinese (culture and) it had a huge influence when I was growing up (at home and) in church.” However, when pondering his faith identity, John offered an insight that saw a cross-influence between faith and culture: “My faith trumps my culture and my nationality. But I also realized that my ethnicity affects my faith as well.” As we ended the interview, I thanked John for his participation in the study.

**Synopsis of interview with second participant: Nathaniel Lam.** The second participant I interviewed for this case was Nathaniel Lam, a 20-plus fourth-year student at a major university in a large city in Western Canada. Nathaniel went to church with his parents when he was young but had left 3 years ago for Temple at the time of interview. He was referred to me through his pastor, and I interviewed him at a quiet mid-town office.

After I asked Nathaniel what caused him to leave his parents’ church, he offered an answer filled with dark experience: He was bullied. Nathaniel recalled how his peers began “getting into trouble in a lot of things (he) didn’t participate in” in high school. They started bullying Nathaniel when he refused to join them. Yet the appalling factor was that his peers were his Sunday school classmates, and acts of bullying occurred mostly in class. Speaking with despair, Nathaniel related how “every Sunday I would try going to Sunday school, I would get picked on. I hated it!” Encouraged by his parents “to walk away,” Nathaniel left the church. When asked why he chose this route of avoidance, Nathaniel opined that “conflict is always bad,” not just from the “Chinese or

Christian perspective” but from the Canadian viewpoint as well: “It is actually a very Canadian thing.” As a result, the way to resolve conflict was not necessarily to engage in any situation that might give rise to it. “To walk away . . . (and) to avoid my peers completely” was a good “exit strategy” for Nathaniel.

Once he had determined to leave the church, Nathaniel felt “relieved” and “fantastic.” I asked him if he ever thought of giving up his faith because of this hurtful experience, Nathaniel replied emphatically, “No!” He attributed his commitment to faith to his parents, who he said “raised me as a Christian” and “helped me make faith my own.” Nathaniel told me about his parents’ influence on his faith:

They taught me that (faith) isn’t (just) going (to church) on Sunday . . . It’s a daily thing. They taught me to pray every night before I go to bed, to read my bible, do devotions, and they taught me why my faith is important, like Jesus came and died for me and my sins and God is in everything I do, that He’s here all the time. He’s with me. He loves me and that made me not want to get out of my faith.

When asked if any leaders from his former church expressed any concern regarding his departure, Nathaniel was crisp in his answer: “No.” He went on to postulate that “if there’s a genuine care . . . if they actually cared about me as a person, about my faith, about where or what happened to me, I think they would have contacted me.”

Nathaniel characterized the leadership of his former church in the by offering the following comments. First, he postulated that an inherent conflict in culture and values existed in the Chinese church, which housed congregations with diverse languages. Nathaniel reasoned:

With every Chinese church I've heard of, it's almost the same thing: there's a white pastor or a pastor speaks (at) English services, and [the] Chinese congregation or someone in the Chinese community there isn't happy with what they're saying, or their values or whatever.

The outcome of the conflict always favored the Chinese congregation because "the leadership was very Chinese." As a result, "there's a big emphasis on the Cantonese and the Mandarin services. There's [a] little less with English services." Nathaniel cited the example of an attempt to switch the worship schedule to accommodate the English service to illustrate the point:

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

Nathaniel hypothesized that the imbalance of favor toward the Chinese congregations could be an explanation for "partially why (English speaking) people left" the church because it could no longer "cater to (their) needs." He elaborated:

One of the reasons why people are leaving is because they (the leaders) are not flexible and . . . not willing to accommodate Chinese Canadians who are English speaking. And I think (for) a leader, (it) can create real holes in anything.

A second problem with the leadership was that the Chinese cultural value of deferring to elders had morphed into a significant barrier that precluded the opening of a

frank and open dialogue between the younger generation and the Chinese leaders.

Nathaniel bemoaned the fact that:

We (the immigrant children) are taught that with Chinese elders, they are supposed to be recognized as important (and to be respected). (Consequently), somebody can't go out to them and tell them: "You are wrong. You're doing this incorrectly. This isn't a good idea!"

With this observation in mind, Nathaniel suggested that "a lot of (English-speaking) people left because of . . . the conflict (and lack of open space for dialogue)."

Third, Nathaniel took steps to make a distinction among leaders, mentors, and staff in the discussion of leadership at the immigrant church. Spiritual mentors, for Nathaniel, were those "who can actually sit down with you and help your faith grow." Mentors' emphasis was "on forging (a) community and (building) authentic relationship." To them, "titles are very secondary." Staff, on the other hand, focused on tasks rather than relationship. Were he a staff member at the church, Nathaniel surmised:

I would show up. I would sit in my office. I would reply to e-mails that I had to. I would set up meetings that I had to. I would sit with a sermon if I had to. I maybe step outside and have some lunch, talk to some people, get back in my office and leave at 5:00.

With this as a backdrop, Nathaniel commented that pastors at Temple, the church he had settled in, "seem less like staff and pastors and more like mentors." However, when characterizing pastors at his parents' church, Nathaniel was first circumspect about his evaluation, claiming that he "didn't know them very well." Yet Nathaniel came close to labeling them "staff", as he described the pastors at his former church this way:

"People were just kind of sitting in the office, do anything."

Finally, Nathaniel went on to postulate that church culture, values, and practices had much to do with the top leader. Just as “Steve Jobs” had a large impact on Apple, Nathaniel hypothesized, so did “Conrad,” the senior pastor at Temple, who left an imprint of his “values and community” through the “people he hires who obviously then continue to reflect onto how the church is run and how it affects the congregation.” The same praise was not sung for the former church’s senior pastor. Again Nathaniel was cautious, claiming, “Once again, I didn’t know the staff very well.” Yet he expressed the belief that his former church was “kind of dead” because “there wasn’t much going on.” He concluded by saying, “If it’s a reflection on the senior pastor, then I got bad news for him.”

Before he settled in at Temple, Nathaniel did attend another Chinese church because of a growing relationship with a female friend. At that time, Nathaniel found it “very comfortable to be around other Chinese Christians (with) similar background (and) similar upbringings” and said he “liked the community there.” However, after about one year, Nathaniel broke off with his friend and found himself being “hurt a lot” again. Fresh on the heels of this emotional trauma, Nathaniel quit the church but insisted he did not give up God. He underscored his point: “(Though) I’m really sick of this church thing . . . I’m sick of the people in it; God is still very important to me!”

Nathaniel’s experience of being bullied and hurt, together with his exposure to the leadership and culture at the immigrant church, made him somewhat sardonic about ethnic Chinese churches. He recalled the anguish: “I’ve been burned . . . In some ways, after a while, Chinese churches kind of scared me a little, to be honest. I guess it’s just

that I've been burned twice by Chinese churches." Consequently, Nathaniel looked suspiciously at anything related to the Chinese church. He went on to relate that "when I walk into that church, the hairs on my back, the hairs stood up." So haunting was the hurt that Nathaniel remarked: "If I have to go to drop something for my mom, I'm in and out of the shortest route. I would take any door. I would take any window." He further related that:

When I see Chinese worship leaders on stage, it does kind of make me tense up a little bit . . . makes me a little distrusting because every other time I've seen it at Tabernacle, and I knew a lot of people standing on stage were full of it.

Conversely, Nathaniel's journey at Temple could be described as therapeutic. His spirit seemed to have been buoyed by a sense of renewal. Nathaniel summarized his feeling this way: "Between Tabernacle and Temple, I changed a lot as a person." He delineated the change:

I was more social, I was funnier, and I made friends from scratch. I didn't know any of these people prior to this (but) I made relationships. I was very comfortable with these people. I felt like they genuinely cared about me. I'm not sure if it's because they're White or they're Chinese, but I just liked it better there.

Nathaniel went on to explain that he had found a genuine feeling of connection, acceptance, and care among the congregants: "These people are Christian and they like me. This is so different. (And) they enjoyed hanging out with me." These congregants were those "people who value my friendship, and people who thought I was important to have around or I was someone that they wanted around, (even though) I wasn't perfect." The feeling was mutual: "These people were friends that I held dear, that these people

were close, they're valued and important to me." It was important to note that Nathaniel's worshipping experience at Temple shifted from co-mingling with Chinese, with whom he said was more comfortable in the past congregational experience at immigrant churches, to socializing with a mix of White, Chinese, and multiethnic congregants. He declared: "I like that there's a very different congregation of White people. There were people of other colors as well."

Our discussion then led to a conversation about how much Temple celebrated ethnicity with the congregants. Here the idea of "acknowledgement" was frequently invoked by Nathaniel to characterize the stance Temple and its pastors took to approach ethnicity and the diversity of the congregation. The "acknowledgement" lay not simply with ethnicity and "culture" but with "different walks of life." To begin with, Temple "acknowledged" a variety of ethnicities in their midst. Not only were there "a lot of Asian people (and) a lot of White people," but there were also "a lot of people who are Muslim at one point and people from other countries." The diversity traversed the socioeconomic spectrum. For instance, Nathaniel said that Temple was likely to "acknowledge" congregants who were "doctors and lawyers (and also) homeless people." However, as much as the church "acknowledges" diversity, it maintained a strong sense of oneness in the community. Nathaniel stressed that "they acknowledge that there're always different cultures there, (but) there's a big emphasis on community (as a whole)."

Our interview then moved into a discussion of ethnic and faith values and identity. Nathaniel portrayed himself as having a dual identity: "I see myself as a Canadian. I do see myself as Chinese." Yet when prodded further, he did not completely

embrace the idea of a hybrid identity, of being labeled as a “Chinese-Canadian”; he said that he was “very whitewashed.” To the extent that he saw himself as a Chinese, his heritage was most strongly manifested in his love for “Chinese food” including delicacies such as “chicken feet,” for example. Yet he insisted that there were certain Chinese values that he upheld that differentiated him from his “White friends.” These values included an emphasis on education, the practice of frugality, a belief in working in a hard and disciplined manner, pursuit of a professional occupation, and striving for a better life. Under the influence of these values, Nathaniel ceded that his definition of success at one point was defined by material possessions, such as owning “a Lamborghini and a big house,” which could through better jobs and contribute to a comfortable lifestyle. However, as he matured in his faith, he came to realize that success was “better gauged by how happy you are.” Happiness and success, Nathaniel further contended, could be found only in God’s calling: “The ultimate measure of success for a Christian (is) doing what God calls me to do.” As a result, Nathaniel stated very clearly, “My goal in life is to do what God wants me to do.” He further reasoned that if he did that, two results would emerge: “One, he (God) won’t leave me, broke and hungry . . . and second, I’ll be most satisfied with my life.” With this narrative of faith values, Nathaniel indicated that he felt called to be a teacher.

In closing, Nathaniel gave credit to his parents, whom he believed to be very different from other Chinese parents, for shaping his faith, character, and values. He pointed out that they “straight up said that the most important thing, more important than your school, is relationship with God.” In addition, when it came to marriage, his parents

rejected the traditional Chinese mentality of preferring endogamy in favor of faith identity. Nathaniel remarked: “More important (for his parents) than the ethnicity of the girl you marry is her relationship with God.” Nathaniel further attributed his parents’ strong stance of faith over cultural practices to the fact that they too grew up in Christian families of their own and were able to navigate “cultural conflict” with their faith values. With the interview drawing to an end, I thanked Nathaniel for his participation.

**Synopsis of interview with third participant: Mariam Yeung.** The third participant I interviewed for this case was Mariam Yeung, a 20–30 year-old counselor with a master’s degree who was working in a major city in Western Canada. Mariam had worshiped at a Chinese immigrant church for about two decades with her parents. Born to a Hong Kong Chinese father and a Filipino Chinese mother, Mariam exuded a gregarious personality. She was referred to me by her gatekeeper at Temple, and I interviewed her at a cafe on a summer morning.

Mariam left Uptown in the fall of 2013 and visited a few churches. Specifically she was drawn to two vibrant Asian churches with local-born congregations during the time of transition. With respect to Upper Room, Mariam loved the “family feel” and the dynamic of the church, but it was located in an adjacent city and didn’t have the scale of congregants and services that was offered at Temple. Furthermore, Mariam felt that Upper Room was “too close to Uptown” in terms of ethnicity.

As for Summit, Mariam loved “the worship” and could see that she could “fit in great” with the congregation. However, she took issue with the preaching of the head pastor as well as with the hierarchical culture of the church. Mariam observed that the

head pastor carried himself with a mentality that suggested, “The top dog is the top dog and you need to respect me.” In addition, she “got that feel” that the church was “being cultural” and was concerned such a model might carry “less accountability.”

As to why she left Uptown in the first place, Mariam appeared not to feel any rancor, but rather suggested that she had outgrown its nurture. Upon reflection, she offered the following reasons. The first one had to do with misalignment of vision. As a child of a Filipino Chinese mother, Mariam described herself as “expressive and open” compared with her peers. Her personality led her to experience a variety of different ministerial and worship models and practices outside of Uptown, including pursuit of deeper experience with the Holy Spirit in the charismatic movement and seeking better discipleship development with Power to Change. The novelty of the experience whetted Mariam’s spiritual appetite and opened up imaginative and creative avenues for constructing her social and religious experience. She prided herself on being a “visionary” when it came to matters such as worship, teaching about the Holy Spirit, discipleship, and mentorship, and she wanted to introduce these experiences to her co-worshippers, because “if you don’t know the taste of something, you don’t know that it exists.” Yet in so doing she found herself at odds with the vision of the leadership of Uptown, especially in areas that were “never talked about” at Uptown, even though she had maintained a very cordial relationship with them, especially the lead English pastor. The discipleship program for the millenials that focused on “mentoring relationally” was one such area. Mariam remarked:

I think they didn't really understand the importance of (a discipleship program) or the importance of how it gets . . . the importance of like this day and age or millennials or the culture. And how we appreciate that mentorship at this time.

In promoting this discipleship program for the millennials, Mariam faced the challenge of dealing with leaders who "at that time, did not know of that need, or did not think about it as a need." She found the whole experience frustrating not because "they didn't really listen or understand," but rather because the leadership saw this ministerial program through the lens of their own values: "It was a little bit about not understanding, not really knowing in their own lives. Like what they valued was back then . . . so therefore not seeing that there is a value now." Mariam said she felt she was finally vindicated because the same program that was rejected before was now being implemented "5 years later."

Second, closely related to the vision issue was the idea of being stifled in a traditional cultural setting. As a creative and artistic person interested in music and painting, Mariam was able to extend her creativity into ministry. For example, she started an initiative called "Praise Chapel" that promoted the concept of free worship in "many creative ways, not just with signing, and realizing that worship is like a lifestyle." Yet in a reserved and conservative environment such as Uptown, where new ideas were under close scrutiny and any change was implemented at a cautionary pace, her creativity could not fully blossom, be utilized and appreciated. In the end, Mariam recognized that her desire was for her spirituality to grow in the direction of creativity but "the culture of the church held me back." Mariam expressed feeling that she could not "progress further in ministry or spiritually" and that she "was stuck" or "trapped in this culture." Mariam

soon came to a realization: “I felt not free.” She described the stagnation of her growth as follows:

I was stuck in the sense (that) all these different things that I was doing; or different things where you would hope that the congregation would get to eventually. It was just such a slow process that it was really hard to see that happening. I felt like there were just so many parts of myself that were being held back, and there were different dimensions, that it was hard to really stay there.

Another factor that contributed to her departure was the limitation of Uptown’s leadership. Mariam reasoned that leaders could not elevate followers to a level that they had not been to or attained themselves. She described the limitation of Uptown this way: “I believe it’s hard to move past the understanding of your leadership if they’re not at a certain level. And if they have not gone there, it’s hard for the people in the congregation to go there.” Conversely, “If the pastoral staff are visionary, and they see things happening in a certain way, and they’re looking in that direction, then it gives the congregation space to move in that direction.” However, when the leaders and congregants were at odd in terms of the vision, then conflict arose:

If there are people in the congregation who are visionary and see certain things, like moving forward, but then the leadership is not the same type of visionary, then that is hard. You can’t really surpass the leadership. Because it’s like dishonoring the leadership.

Mariam went on to explain the concept of “dishonor.” Rather than postulating it through a cultural lens, Mariam expressed the belief that as spiritual leaders, pastors were appointed by God. Consequently, “we (the congregants) don’t want to surpass our goal, pass the boundaries if they’re not really ready for it,” for to do so is to “dishonor” the

spiritual leaders. Mariam's desire to not "dishonor" the leader stemmed from her respect for their office and who they were. She explained: "I really do respect the pastors and I think it is their flock and this is their church; then I'm not going to step over boundaries and this is not my call."

Looking back at Uptown, Mariam went on to hypothesize that having a vision was necessary but not sufficient to move the church forward. Progress would require someone who could operationalize the vision and translate it into reality. She explained:

Even if that person is visionary, but they don't have someone who can define the steps in order to get to where you want to be, then there's always going to be a gap . . . if there isn't yet someone who is gifted in that, being able to implement the steps, then you're not going to be able to get anywhere.

In this context Mariam could not see anyone from the leadership at Uptown qualified to lead such an implementation.

A final aspect of the leadership challenge Mariam observed at Uptown lay with a church polity structure that saw tension arising between this church and the one that gave birth to it. Although these two congregations worshiped on two separate "campuses," they were led by one centralized board of elders. With responsibilities of overseeing these two campuses as well as different congregations within them, the board members were bound to have conflict and tension among them. As a result, "rivalry," "imbalance" of representation, and favoritism were common accusations directed to the board by the congregations.

In closing our discussion on her departure from Uptown, Mariam pointed to what she believed to be a fundamental issue at the immigrant church. The issue was related to

how Chinese culture and ethnicity affected the way congregants constructed their religious experience. First, Mariam asserted that culture adjudicated our conception of God. She reasoned: “You see culture and you see God through that lens; you might project your own view of say honor or say cultural relationships with your dad or your mom, it’s easy to like project them onto God.” Second, culture and ethnicity affected the way the congregants socialized with their own norms and values. As a result, many immigrant Chinese congregants with middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds tended to co-mingle with people of similar background in terms of ethnicity and social status. Mariam observed: “I think this is like due to socioeconomic status as well too. If you’re all the same type of people, you will attract the same type of people.”

The forces of culture and ethnicity had an impact for the local-born who did not necessarily share such an intimate connection with the traditional Chinese cultural values. The penchant for socializing with mainstream Canadians led them to desire “to reach out (to) the broken-hearted” and yet they faced a barrier because the Chinese church consisted of “upper middle-class and working professionals (with families with) one or two kids.” This ethnic and socioeconomic boundary made it “really hard for people from different cultures to come in (because) they (would) feel uncomfortable.”

Mariam further narrated a mode of existence or life journey for the local-born that had been framed within this cultural milieu that tended to “box (them) in” at Uptown: “There is this model of . . . this is what life is: ‘I will grow up, I will be a working professional. I’ll get like a degree. I will get married. I will have children. I will have a house.’” With everyone being from the same “demographic,” this model of existence

was promoted by both the families and the church, though not in an explicit manner: “And it’s not intentional, but everyone is attracted to the same thing.” Viewed as a “collectivistic approach” by Mariam, this model of existence was underpinned by the Chinese values of pursuit of stability and social status as manifested in professional careers in such fields as “lawyer, doctor, and dentist.” Being “boxed in” by their parents’ culture and not being able to extend themselves to embrace other ethnicities in the religious setting, many local-born at Uptown, as Mariam observed, “were kind of shut down.”

Along the lines of cultural and ethnic restriction, Mariam further expanded her thought on the limitations of Uptown. First, the fact that it was a Chinese immigrant church (“everyone is Chinese”) had unnecessarily created an invisible, though unintentional, boundary for membership that seemed to be unwelcoming to “White people.” This boundary, or “bubble” as Mariam characterized it, created an inclusivity for the Chinese that inevitably led to a “lack of awareness of how (to accommodate) different cultures . . . in this bubble,” which made non-Chinese “feel uncomfortable.” The ethnic exclusivity was so pervasive and the underpinning so strong that despite valiant attempts made by the head pastor at Uptown to turn it into a “multiethnic church,” many in the congregation rejected the initiative.

The interview then turned to a discussion of religious and cultural identity.

Mariam characterized herself this way:

I see myself as a Chinese Canadian. But *Canadian* is packed as well too, like that, you know. Like that’s a packed statement as well. I see myself as a

Westernized Chinese person who is born in Canada and has different — has different parts of culture from different sides of family.

Yet when comparing her ethnic identity with her faith identity, Mariam was quick to respond:

I do feel myself as a Christian first before thinking of myself as a Chinese. I think the fact that I see myself as Christian first is the fact that (regarding) the decisions that I make, I know that I'm accountable to God first.

When Mariam left Uptown in search of another spiritual home, she was “feeling freedom” for her personal growth. So cathartic was the experience that she described the decision to leave as “one of the best (choices) that I've made.” After having visited a number of Asian and multiethnic churches, Mariam decided to settle in at Temple. In so doing, she named a few collective factors that drew her to Temple. First, to fulfill her yearning for being in assembly with multigenerational faithful, Mariam expressed interest in “looking for a church that was multigenerational but also had people that were my age as well too because I think, yeah, that's important.” Mariam then identified the leadership characteristic of vision and ethos as the next factor: “visions — like vision of what the lead pastor has; but also kind of like what the vision of the church is, what the ethos of the church is.” Finally, Mariam pointed to the desire to worship in a multiethnic setting so that she could invite her non-Chinese friends to attend, a mission she felt was impossible to accomplish at Uptown because of the ethnic exclusivity:

I really wanted to (worship at) a multiethnic type church. Because I felt in the past, like I have a lot of friends that are not Chinese and it was hard for me to even think at all of bringing these friends to Uptown.

Mariam further commented on the characteristics of Temple and singled out two more reasons for her continued attendance there. First, the community-centric model of ministering to its neighborhood of multicultural and socioeconomic diversity at Temple was in alignment with the multicultural milieu of the city she lived in, and she felt God “had created (and called her) to serve (that) community (of congregants).” The factor of multiculturalism weighed heavily in Mariam’s thought because it was the context in which she saw herself expressing her faith identity. She explained:

In such a multicultural city, if you’re not really being aware of different cultures around you, then it’s easy to like be in a bubble. And you just flock with the people that you like as well. And I think in order to engage in the public spheres of life and work and Christianity and art and culture, for me, at least, it’s important to be aware and know that there’re differences, that there’re different thoughts, and different biases in different culture but also being aware and tolerant and also understanding of where people are at.

Second, with this ministerial ethos at Temple, the church was able to “attract different people (with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds and ethnicity to congregate together).” The ethos reflects an inherent culture of the church of “vulnerability and openness.” In contrasting this ethos with that at Uptown, Mariam was quick to conclude that because of the way congregants were shaped by their own “cultural values” in “how they live (their) lives,” Uptown could not have been able to attract those diverse congregants, not “in a hundred years.”

To further compare Temple with Uptown, Mariam noted an extensive phenomenon of exodus and transition: “A lot of people from Uptown have moved to Temple,” so much so that, to Mariam, “it almost feels like there’s a second Uptown

emerging in Temple.” Mariam further observed that these ex-Uptowners came to Temple with a variety of motivations. Some genuinely desired growth and felt the call to exit Uptown and come to Temple. Others came because they just followed suit, exhibiting a herd mentality without reflecting much on how the transition experience might address their needs and salve their wounds of discontent with Uptown. Yet others came because of other reasons, such as life stage needs of family and the development of children. No matter what the motivation was, the transition greatly affected their involvement at Temple and their socialization process. Those who desired to address their families’ needs, Mariam observed, quickly found themselves associating with others in similar life stage circumstances regardless of ethnicity. For example, a woman with children was able “to be connected with the mothers at Temple, whether it would be Caucasian or Asian.” Others might just keep to themselves and not interact actively with fellow congregants. For instance, there was a couple Mariam noticed at Temple of whom she said, “They’re kind of just (keep to) themselves, mostly probably because they have each other.” In addition, there were “people who have come as a movement and group from Uptown and they still stick with each other.” In this regard, Mariam viewed herself as an exception: “I like to meet people and I like to get to know my situation in the surroundings. So I’m connected with a lot of people (at Temple), even if they’re not in my demographics.”

Central to socialization in the new context at Temple was the extent to which one had dealt with one’s reason for departure from Uptown. For Mariam, she came because she “wanted the multiethnic feel” of Temple. However, regarding those who came with a

lot of “resentment” and were not “satisfied (with Uptown),” Mariam noticed that they “have (not fully) processed that (hurt or wounds)” and had not addressed those issues appropriately. As a result, these issues continued to hold them back in starting afresh at Temple.

Mariam went on to offer a unique insight into why people might be staying in the immigrant church, and the reason was not because of their being enamored of the congregation. She observed that many “really want to leave, but they don’t or they’ll just stay there.” Mariam attributed the reluctance to leave to the force of the cultural values that bound them to the community, saying, “Culture really prevents people from leaving.” According to Mariam, many of the local-born were conditioned by the cultural context in which they grew up. In this context, they were bound by an ineluctable combination of guilt, betrayal, honor for elders, duty to the family, and therefore responsibilities for the church. These cultural forces colluded to keep them from switching congregations in spite of their desire to leave. Caught in the liminality between duties and desires, these local-born had built up frustration and resentment regarding “the leadership and structure” of the church and complained that “the preaching is not good enough, the direction is not good enough.” With the struggle simmering in the background, Mariam argued, those who stayed exhibited “jealousy and resentment (and projected) against” those who left them, usually with the narrative of: “You’re leaving and then I need to stay here to put this together.” One of the unintended consequences of this experience was the manifestation of the Asian value of favoring rationality over

emotion as the best approach with which to address the transitional experience. Mariam suggested that in dealing with this type of struggle:

There is a separation between head and heart. And it's very traditional Chinese (to) see the world through the head and you put extra importance on knowledge or intellectual thinking (such) that it's hard sometimes to come into a place where someone really acknowledges the importance of both the emotions and the heart.

Those who stayed would rationalize their stance without figuring in emotion, thereby neglecting the need to integrate thought and feeling. Mariam further spoke of "how people feel in emotions but how Jesus speaks to both of those things, and how they're actually integrated. But I think it's very separate in a Chinese culture and within the Chinese church." As our interview drew to an end, I thanked Mariam for her candor and participation.

**Themes for Case Three.** In analyzing the data collected for this case, the following themes emerged.

*Theme #1: Ethnic culture and values is a double-edge sword.* The first theme that emerged from the discussion with the participants had to do with ethnic culture and values in the Chinese immigrant church setting. Coming from an experience of clashes with non-Chinese congregants at Anchor regarding why they placed a premium on the Chinese value of excellence in education, John and his wife discovered synergy with congregants at Uptown who shared the same ethnic values and cultural background.

Explaining his penchant for such homophily, John remarked:

At Uptown, they understood where I was coming from. They had the same values I can relate to and identify more with. I can share easier without having to

explain so much. Some of my best friends are from the first small group at Uptown.

This sentiment was extended to his worship experience at Temple. In spite of the diversity and the multiethnic and socioeconomic mix of the congregants, John continued to co-mingle with Chinese Canadians at that church: “I realized that about myself, that it’s easier to have close friends and people who just have similar backgrounds.”

The idea of constructing friendships along the line of shared cultural values was not lost on Nathaniel. Though he now attended Temple and became more open to embracing multiethnic friends, his experience in his younger years spoke volumes about how ethnicity affected his choice of which church to attend after his departure from Uptown. Nathaniel talked about being “very comfortable to be around other Chinese Christians (with) similar background (and) similar upbringings.”

For Mariam, culture, in particular ethnic culture, was also a key theme in her spiritual journey. In our interview, Mariam mentioned the term “culture” nearly 50 times and argued passionately that it was the lens through which she and others like her constructed their congregational experience. For Mariam, “culture really influences religion and the way that we live and how we view the world.” She explained: “You see culture and you see God through that lens; you might project your own view of say honor or cultural relationships with your dad or your mom, it’s easy to like project them onto God.” She also suggested that culture and ethnicity affected how the congregants socialized with their own norms and values. Thus many immigrant Chinese congregants from middle-class socioeconomic backgrounds tended to co-mingle with people with similar backgrounds in terms of ethnicity and social status. Mariam observed: “I think

this is like due to socioeconomic status as well too. If you're all the same type of people, you will attract the same type of people.”

Although Chinese culture might very well be the tie that bound the immigrant congregations through the bonding capital with those who shared the same membership, at the same time it carried a number of negative connotations as far as SGCCE were concerned. Chief among them was the exclusivity against non-Chinese attendees. Reserved and conservative in nature, Chinese culture tended to be protective and less open to other ethnics. Although the participants did not observe that such an exclusive stance was struck intentionally, nor were restrictions regarding membership accepted openly, the ethos was palpable at the immigrant church. John, for instance, highlighted this effect when discussing the idea of opening up Uptown's facility for community service during weekdays. The church leadership, mainly first-generation immigrants, opposed the suggestion on the pretext of liability. John detected an Asian mindset of “selfishness” being at play. He exclaimed: “It's very selfish. So Asian I think is a little bit selfish by nature, right? ‘I'm going to do well for myself and I'm going to keep my little kingdom intact. And I don't want anybody to disturb it.’”

Such observations resonated in Mariam's mind. She suggested that the fact that Uptown was a Chinese immigrant church had unnecessarily created an invisible, though unintentional, boundary for membership that seemed to be unwelcoming to “White people.” This boundary, or “bubble” as Mariam characterized it, created an inclusivity for the Chinese that inevitably led to a “lack of awareness of how (to accommodate) different cultures . . . in this bubble,” which would make non-Chinese “feel

uncomfortable.” The ethnic exclusivity had become such a bulwark for protecting the community that even when the English pastor at Uptown did make valiant attempts to turn it into a “multiethnic church,” the immigrant congregation rejected the initiative.

Not only did the exclusivity affect the territory across ethnicities but its negative effect spilled over the generational boundary. Though raised at home and church with the traditional Chinese culture, SGCCE were educated in a multiculturalistic milieu at school. Mariam argued that this cohort did not necessarily share an intimate connection with the traditional Chinese cultural values. In fact, they wanted “to reach out (to) the broken-hearted” and longed to embrace their community and neighborhood. For Nathaniel, this implied accepting people with different “ethnicity” in “different walks of life.” To Mariam, ministering to the neighborhood of multicultural and socioeconomic diversity was in alignment with the multicultural milieu of the city she lived in.

This leads to the third negative impact ethnic culture had created among SGCCE. Being “boxed in” by their parents’ culture and not being able to extend themselves to embrace other ethnicities in the religious setting, many SGCCE, Mariam observed, “were kind of shut down.” For instance, the ethnic culture had “held her back” in terms of her spiritual growth at Uptown. For this reason, Mariam could not “progress further in ministry or spiritually” and stated that she felt she “was stuck” or “trapped in this culture.”

Nathaniel, on the other hand, problematized this issue through the frame of cultural conflict that arose between the congregants, which primarily reflected generational differences. Given their culturally reserved nature, Chinese people tend to

be averse to risk and to react to change slowly, if at all. SGCCE such as Nathaniel were frustrated by this mindset. The proposal to change the worship schedule to accommodate the English-speaking congregation at Uptown was a case in point for Nathaniel:

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

Cultural conflicts such as the one depicted in this instance explained “partially why (English-speaking) people left” the immigrant church, according to Nathaniel.

In the case of John, one of the reasons he did not stay at the immigrant church was the archaic practice of decision making that was often marked by a “lack (of) transparency” and by rejecting feedback or the practice of listening. In this context, views were evaluated based not on their own merits but on who expressed them. To earn the right to speak, John argued, one had to have “some kind of connection” or have worked himself/herself into a certain position that was based on seniority or connections. John illustrated this point by citing an example of the process by which a youth pastor was hired at Uptown. He observed that the hiring was not based on a fair evaluation of competence but rather on the Asian concept of connection or who knew whom in advance that privileged or favored the candidate. The youth pastor was retained because his father-in-law “was a well-known Chinese pastor within the community.” Vexed by the decision, John attributed it to a prevalent Chinese cultural practice of reliance on

connections and “nepotism.” Here John referred to the practice of the Chinese value of *quan-xi* or connection, an idea defined by Tsui and Farh (1997) as “the existence of direct particularistic ties between two or three individuals” that favor “reciprocal bonds” (p. 57, 59). John concluded: “The Asian church is like that. They choose people to do things not because they’re competent or best to do it but because of other reasons that are not of worth. And it may be just because of connections.”

Another double-edged value of ethnic culture the local-born found repugnant was the concept of being deferential to elders. According to this cultural practice, the younger generation was to defer to the older one to honor their elders’ status, age, and position. However, after being carried too far, the value had become a stifling and overbearing presence that prohibited genuine, frank, and transparent communication between the generations. In the case of John, he recalled his disappointment when he was not able to speak with the Chinese leaders about leaving Uptown. John reasoned that in such an Asian setting, people like him “didn’t feel the freedom to be able to say exactly what (was in their mind).” He attributed this reticence to the Asian practice of deferring to the elders or leaders in position with power and authority. And if he were to speak forthrightly he might be considered “disrespectful.” John explained:

I think it’s cultural because you’re not supposed to say anything to your elders and people that you’re supposed to respect. The pastors are in the positions of respect so you will respect them. You’re not supposed to criticize them.

Nathaniel shared a similar view. He argued that the Chinese cultural value of deferring to elders had unintentionally morphed into a significant barrier that prevented a frank and open dialogue from taking place between the younger generation and the

Chinese leaders. Nathaniel explained, “(The immigrant children) are taught that with Chinese elders, they are supposed to be recognized as important. (Consequently), somebody can’t go out to them and tell them: ‘You are wrong. You’re doing this incorrectly. This isn’t a good idea!’” With this observation in mind, Nathaniel theorized that “a lot of (English-speaking) people left because of . . . the conflict (and lack of open space for dialogue).”

Mariam took a slightly different interpretative lens and cast it on spiritual leadership. In portraying the conflict regarding the vision at Uptown, Mariam commented:

If there are people in the congregation who are visionary and see certain things, like moving forward, but then the leadership is not the same type of visionary, then that is hard. You can’t really surpass the leadership because it’s like dishonouring to the leadership.

Mariam took a step further in explaining the concept of “dishonor.” Rather than postulating it through a cultural lens, Mariam expressed the belief that as spiritual leaders, the first-generation leaders were appointed by God. Consequently, congregants were not to “pass the boundaries if (the leaders were) not really ready for it,” for to do so was to “dishonor” the spiritual leaders. The desire to refrain from dishonoring the leaders stemmed from Mariam’s respect for their office and who they were. She explained: “I really do respect the pastors and I think it is their flock and this is their church; then I’m not going to step over boundaries and this is not my call.”

In all three participants, the Chinese cultural value of deference functioned as a restrictive force that curbed a genuine exchange of views that could be based on the

inherent validity of ideas and point of view. SGCCE perceived themselves as the ones who were suppressed and unable to speak out under the invisible presence of such a force.

Finally, as an outlier singling out a unique characteristic of cultural values in the Chinese immigrant church, Mariam argued that those local-born who stayed put at the church did so not because of their enamouring of the congregation. She observed that many “really want to leave but they don’t or they’ll just stay there.” Mariam attributed the reluctance to leave to the force of the cultural values that bound them to the community: “Culture really prevents people from leaving.” According to Mariam, many of the local-born were all conditioned by the cultural context in which they grew up. In this context, they were bound by an ineluctable combination of guilt, betrayal, honor for elders, duty to the family and therefore responsibilities for the church. These cultural forces colluded to keep them from switching congregations in spite of their desire to leave. Caught in the liminality between duties and desires, these SGCCE had built up frustration and resentment in “the leadership and structure” of the church. With the struggle simmering in the background, Mariam argued, those who stayed exhibited “jealousy and resentment (and projected) against” those who left them, usually with the narrative that “you’re leaving and then I need to stay here to put this together.”

*Theme #2: In search of autonomy: Freedom and its many faces.* Given that ethnic culture has played a vital role in the SGCCE’s decision to stay with or leave their parents’ congregation, another theme emerged that has to do with their desire to be set free from that cultural ambience of the immigrant church. When ruminating on the

reasons why she left Uptown, Mariam exclaimed: “I felt not free.” Her idea of “being free” has nothing to do with her physical movement or verbal expression. Rather, it had something to do with her spiritual growth. Feeling that she had reached a “cap,” Mariam acknowledged that any pursuit to better her “own personal relationship with Jesus . . . was hard . . . in a community where it feels like almost — not stagnant but just like really, really slow.” For her, Uptown was a community where the congregants were “complacent” and “comfortable” where they were. Mariam singled out the major reason for this state of mind with this community, saying, “There’s not someone who is visionary in front (to lead).” She remarked:

It’s frustrating because you feel like you’re (stuck). There’s always this entire set of high expectations. And then when it doesn’t happen, your hopes are dashed, right, because it’s like, you think that you hope you’d be here. Everyone is hoping that we’d be here but it’s not going to get there.

Caught in this stagnation of a visionless culture and not being able to progress further in ministry, Mariam decided to leave the church for better pastures. In reflecting upon her decision to leave, Mariam said that it was one of the best decisions she had ever made: “After I left (and) looked back at it, on leaving, I feel like for me that was one of the best (choices) that I’ve made for myself (and) my personal growth, but also in the sense of feeling freedom.”

Contrasting this experience with her participation at Temple, the idea of “freedom” re-emerged for Mariam. She commented: “But with Temple, the culture is very affirming and very freeing and very empowering.” Mariam discovered a newfound

sense of freedom to pursue her spiritual growth and her vision of ministry engagement without being pulled back in her journey of faith.

The sense of freedom took a different shape for Nathaniel. Hurt by the bullying of his peers at his parents' church, he was eager to being freed from the trauma he suffered, and the yearning for that freedom was strong. The desire grew when leaders at the church who were supposed to be the guardians of the physical and spiritual welfare of the flocks exhibited no concern for his wounds. Nathaniel lamented that if there were a "genuine care about me, if they actually cared about me as a person, about my faith, about where or what happened to me, they would have contacted me directly." Under the circumstances, Nathaniel decided "to walk away . . . (and) avoid my peers completely." In making that decision, he said he felt a sense of freedom, a sense of being "relieved" and described feeling "fantastic . . . it was great."

Nathaniel's experience of being bullied, together with his exposure to such uncaring leadership at the immigrant church, resulted in his becoming somewhat derisive about the ethnic Chinese church, a place and space that he attempted to stay away from as much as he could. He remarked: "I've been burned . . . In some ways, Chinese churches kind of scared me a little, to be honest. I guess it's just that I've been burned twice by Chinese churches." Anything related to the Chinese church would be looked upon with suspicion. He went on to observe that "when I walk into that church, the hairs on my back, the hairs stood up." So haunting was his hurt that Nathaniel remarked: "If I have to go to drop something for my mom, I'm in and out of the shortest route. I would take any door. I would take any window."

Free from the entanglement of hurt and disappointment, Nathaniel transformed himself into a much more sociable individual at Temple. He portrayed himself this way: “I was more social, I was funnier, and I made friends from scratch. I didn’t know any of these people prior to this, and I made relationships. I was very comfortable with these people.” For Nathaniel, the overarching panacea for such transformation was care, acceptance, and genuine relationship. One of the examples he cited in support of this thought was the discovery at Temple of “people who value my friendship, and people who thought I was important to have around or I was someone that they wanted around.” Another example at Temple that characterized his newfound freedom was the ability to engage with the pastoral staff, whom he described as “mentors” and “friends,” not simply “pastors” or “staff.” For Nathaniel, these were the “friends” whom he “would go out and do things with.” The sense of being free to connect at a deeper level without having the fear of being harmed underpinned Nathaniel’s newfound experience at Temple.

For John, the reasons for leaving Uptown had more to do with the stagnation of his children’s spiritual life, as well as his and his wife’s. Yet the theme of freedom was subtly evident in his narrative about his transition experience and displayed itself in the juxtaposition of his congregational experiences at Temple and at Uptown. John embraced a sense of freedom after having been straightjacketed by the Chinese cultural value of attainment of social status and occupation as the criteria by which people were defined. Longing for authenticity of faith and not being stereotyped by this Chinese value, John, as a physician, compared his experience at his new church with social encounters he had had in the Asian context. He explained:

If you go to a Chinese church, (the) first thing they would ask you is: “What do you do?” And as soon as you say (your occupation) they kind of look at you differently, or I feel that way anyway. If you tell them you are a physician, they’re like “Whoa” — their view of you kind of goes up and they kind of treat you as not the same [as] if you said you were (something else).

John further commented on a motif in the Chinese church as to how the ethnic Chinese values favored certain occupations, accomplishments, and social status — so much so that the Chinese church congregants placed these values above their Christian identity. John argued that such a practice might be “subtle (and) tempered, but in a Chinese ethnic church, I think it’s almost unavoidable.”

Yet the experience at Temple was dramatically different. John was delighted that he was valued for who he was and not what his profession was. He remembered:

When I walked in, I was welcomed for who I was. They didn’t ask me: “What do you do?” They didn’t care about the color of my skin, because everybody there is different. You know this (is a) kind of welcoming without any questions.

With this in mind, John did not have to be concerned about warding off the cultural façade and became free and genuine in his worship and socialization with his fellow congregants at Temple. He said of this experience: “It’s more free,” implying he was “more accepted” for who he was.

***Theme #3: Leadership matters.*** A third theme emerged from the analysis of the interviews with the participants in this case; it has to do leadership and how it affects the comings and goings of these participants. All participants viewed leadership effectiveness as a central factor in their decision to leave Uptown and to stay at Temple. For Mariam, the essence of leadership was embodied in the “vision” of a leader. She was

adamant that leaders could not elevate followers to a level that the former had not been to or attained. In other words, as she argued, “If you don’t know the taste of something, then you don’t know that it exists.” As a result, the congregants could not move “past the understanding of the leadership if they (leaders) are not at a certain level. And if they have not gone there, it’s hard for the people in the congregation to go there.” Conversely, “if the pastoral staff are visionary, and they see things happening in a certain way, and they’re looking in that direction; then it gives the congregation space to move in that direction.” The barrier at Uptown was that leaders were not “visionary” and it caused a misalignment with Mariam’s vision in terms of the direction for certain programs (such as the discipleship program for millennials) that she believed to be important but for which she could not secure endorsement from the leadership. She lamented that she felt caught in a rut, adding:

But say if there are people in the congregation who are visionary and see certain things, like moving forward, but then the leadership is not the same type of visionary, then that is hard. You can’t really surpass the leadership.

The issue of leadership continued to roil in Mariam’s mind as she searched for a new spiritual home for worship. As she was matching her goal and interest with Summit, a predominantly Asian church, Mariam decided not to engage further after a few visits since she took issue with the preaching of the head pastor as well as with the hierarchical culture of the church. Mariam related that the head pastor carried himself with a mentality that seemed to say: “The top dog is the top dog and you need to respect me.” She argued that such a culture models “less accountability.”

The situation was completely turned around at Temple. Mariam was quick to identify the leadership characteristics in terms of vision and ethos as the drawing factor for her to stay: “visions — like vision of what the lead pastor has; but also kind of like what the vision of the church is, what is the ethos of the church is.” The ethos she surfaced had to do with Temple’s inherent culture of “vulnerability and openness” as exemplified by the lead pastor. Such a leadership ethos and culture, according to Mariam, was “very affirming, very freeing, and very empowering.” Indeed, the whole idea of visionary leadership had to do not only with direction but also with empowerment for followers to realize their own growth and autonomy. Mariam concluded: “If the church leaders empower people who are really passionate and knowledgeable about a certain field, to go forward and just like (give) birth (to) those certain ministries, then it becomes a very organic place of life and breath.”

As for Nathaniel, leadership was a critical “staying” factor as he decided to adopt Temple as his church of choice. He hypothesized that church culture, values, and practices had much to do with the head leader. Just as “Steve Jobs” had a great impact on Apple, Nathaniel reasoned, so did “Conrad,” the senior pastor at Temple, have one on his congregation, because he left an imprint of his “values and community” through the “people he hires who obviously then continues to reflect onto how the church is run and how it affects the congregation.” The same praise was not sung for leadership at Nathaniel’s former church. Though he claimed that “I didn’t know the staff very well,” Nathaniel expressed that Tabernacle as a church was “kind of dead” because “there

wasn't much going on." He concluded his observation by saying, "If it's a reflection on the senior pastor, then I got bad news for him."

In contrast to Mariam, Nathaniel viewed leadership more from the lens of relationality as opposed to the process of influence. He valued leaders based not on the position they occupied or the title they carried — "Titles are very secondary," he asserted — but on the way they nurtured relationships. Leaders were "friends" or "mentors" who expressed their care and concerns for him. They were the ones "who can actually sit down with you and help your faith grow." They were the "people who value my friendship." In addition, leadership was about authenticity, and leaders at Temple "were very real" and they focused on "how they would build authentic relationships." As a result, the value Nathaniel placed on the relationship was based not on what position the pastor occupied but on the enduring friendship that bonded him and the leaders together. Nathaniel added, "If these people were not pastors, if they did other jobs, I would still want to, you know, go get a coffee with them."

In contrast, while describing the leadership landscape at Uptown, Nathaniel observed that "the leadership was very Chinese" in the sense that leaders were to be respected rather than befriended, for this is the ethnic practice: "(The fact that) you respect your elders was very Chinese." Construed in this ethnic context, relationship existed in the order of hierarchy. Reflecting on what he believed to be practices of leadership at Uptown, Nathaniel suggested that the leaders, whom Nathaniel believed were on the top rung of the ladder, simply failed to understand his need for protection: "You know, if you have a CEO who doesn't understand some of the lower level's needs,

then there's gonna be problems." No one from the Uptown leadership contacted Nathaniel when he left to show their concern: "I'm sure you'd hope your friends will contact you or try to see who you're associated with."

John spoke of a similar experience when he left Uptown. It was as if a shroud of silence existed between the leaders and his family, making it seem to John as if the leadership did not care too much about why people like him left the church. Nobody made contact with John to find out the reason for his departure. There was "nothing (contact or inquiry) from the pastor," nor was there an "exit interview," lamented John. And he felt that he was culture-bound to refrain from speaking out against the leaders at Uptown, whom he saw through the lens of position of power.

The leadership experience at Temple, on the other hand, was dramatically different. Unlike leaders at Uptown who were to be revered and respected, leaders at Temple were to be befriended. John spoke of an experience of having a meal with the pastors; it was just like having dinner with friends. The added advantage of such a hospitable environment was that John and his family "(could) really try to get to know the pastors," and "they get to know our kids. . . . And that's one of the reasons why we bring our kids (to the dinner), we want them to be connected to the pastors." The motivation of creating connection between his children and the pastors was not to be underestimated, for this was the main reason John and his family had left Uptown in the first place. For John, pastoral leaders were to be connected with his children as role models and mentors. If leadership was diminished or no longer functional, John would

not hesitate to take action to create connections in a new setting, as was shown by his departure from Uptown.

*Theme #4: Identity and values: An exercise of social construction.* When it comes to positioning their faith and ethnic identity, the theme of social construction prevailed for the participants. All three upheld the supremacy of their Christian identity over other identities, ethnic identity included, as Table 8 attests. In addition, they all agreed that they saw themselves as having a hybrid identity: “Chinese-Canadian.” The similarity, however, stopped when the participants were asked about the implications of these identities.

For John, he admitted that even though he had grown up “in the Western culture,” he recognized that “at the heart of it, I’m still fairly Asian.” Part of the motivation of leaning toward Asian identity for John was that it was important to understand “where you’re coming from,” and that understanding of the heritage allowed him to “pick and choose how much of that (values) do I want to embrace and continue.” He further suggested that in Canada, the multiculturalistic milieu facilitated choices regarding identity and values, choices that John valued immensely: “I can choose how Canadian I want to be or how Chinese I want to be.” Central to the whole exercise was flexibility in picking the identity he believed to be advantageous for him in a particular context. John remarked, “Sometimes, your decisions are influenced more by your Asian culture, sometimes more by Western values that you grew up with, and Judeo-Christian Western values. So I think there’s a bit of a continuum (and) I think that’s healthy.”

However, for Nathaniel, as much as he labeled himself as a Chinese-Canadian, he admitted that he was “very white-washed.” To the extent that he associated himself with being Chinese, he singled out his appreciation for “Chinese food,” including such as delicacies as “chicken feet.” Yet the force of social constructivism was much more salient in the way he adjudicated his cultural values by way of his faith values. When pondering the overarching concept of success that was underpinned by such traditional Chinese values as the importance of education, frugality, hard work, discipline, a professional occupation, and the pursuit of a better life, Nathaniel was quick to reinforce his faith values. Happiness and success, Nathaniel contended, could be found only in God’s calling: “The ultimate measure of success for a Christian (is) doing what God calls me to do.” As a result, Nathaniel stated very clearly: “My goal in life is to do what God wants me to do.” He reasoned that if he did that, two results would emerge: “One, (God) won’t leave me broke and hungry . . . and second, I’ll be most satisfied with my life.”

As for Mariam, her view on identity was unique. In constructing an identity that could be true to both her ethnic background and the place she was born, Mariam defined it from the perspective of diaspora Chinese. Influenced by her mother who was a Chinese descendent born in the Philippines, Mariam viewed herself as “a Westernized Chinese person who is born in Canada and has different parts of culture from different sides of family.” Mariam’s desire to construct her own faith identity, rather than simply incorporating one that was mediated by her parents, was very evident. Mariam commented:

(Though) they (her parents) did instil a lot of values into me, I think I had to find my own way of thinking about Jesus and God. Because I think that my understanding was also melded with the church's understanding of it.

Table 8

*Ethnic Identity: Case Three Participants*

|           | <b>Christian</b>  | <b>Canadian</b>                           | <b>Chinese</b>  | <b>Hybrid identity</b>                       |
|-----------|---|---|---|--|
| John      | “Christian first”; “my faith trumps my culture and my nationality.” | “I’m not purely Canadian.”                | “I’m not actually Asian (i.e. Chinese).”              | “Chinese-Canadian.”                          |
| Nathaniel | “Always Christian.”   | “I see myself as a Canadian.”             | “I do see myself as Chinese”                          | “Chinese-Canadian” but “mostly whitewashed.” |
| Mariam    | “A Christian first.”  | “ <i>Canadian</i> is a packed statement.” | “A Westernized Chinese person who is born in Canada.” | “A Chinese Canadian.”                        |

**Summary.** In short, an analysis of the data collected via interviews with the participants, visits to church sites, collection of church bulletins and other materials as well as gathering information from the church websites yielded the following four themes: (a) ethnic culture and values is a double-edge sword; (b) in search of autonomy: freedom and its many faces; (c) leadership matters; and (d) identity and values: an exercise in social construction. In the next section, I present data collected from Case Four participants and the themes that emerged from the data analysis.

#### **Case Four – Participants Attending Worship in a Mainstream**

##### **Caucasian Church Setting**

Case Four involves participants who were attending churches in a mainstream Caucasian setting at the time of interview. The case is also bounded by the parameters for churches whose ethnic category is determined by Alumkal’s (2008) theoretical

framework of three lenses for analyzing the multiple variables that contribute to a congregational ethnic and racial profile as discussed in Chapter II. Based on the information provided by the participants and acquired through my personal research conducted by attending one setting and analyzing the information available on the website, I am satisfied that the churches the participants were attending at the time of interviews qualified for this case. To gain better insight into the congregational setting of the mainstream Caucasian church, I did visit a church where one of the participants worshipped and the experience aided in my analysis of the data. In this case, four participants were interviewed and the synopses of the interviews are listed in the following sections in a sequential order, followed by the themes that surfaced within this case.

**Synopsis of interview with first participant: Mark Luk.** The first participant I interviewed for the case was Mark Luk, a 20–30 year-old married father with a 6-months-old son, working as an independent wedding photographer in a suburb of a major city in Eastern Canada. Mark left his parents' church, which was part of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) tradition, in 2008 and visited a number of churches with different models and ethnicity, including Chinese immigrant churches with English ministry and mainstream Canadian churches with Caucasian and multiethnic congregations. Shortly after church-hopping, Mark and his wife decided to settle in at a multiethnic mainstream evangelical church with a predominantly White staff. Mark came to my attention through my personal network of SGCCE and agreed to be interviewed at his home.

The first question I asked Mark was why he left his parents' church. His reply was very succinct: The SDA doctrine was not robust enough, and sometimes even incorrect, which meant it could not motivate the second-generation to stay. Mark added: "It's God's word that lasts for generations." He elaborated that his struggle with doctrines as espoused by the SDA started during his university years spent away from his home:

It really caused me to think about: Is it faith yours or is it the faith of your parents? In other words, make it your own. So diving into the questions such as: Is the Bible trustworthy? Is Jesus who he says he is? Is Jesus really believable? Is six days of literal creation true?

These questions prompted Mark to dig deeper, examining his faith in detail and conducting research of his own. As a result of this process, he concluded:

A lot of the things that I grew up with and had in my parents' church doctrinally didn't seem to line up to everything that I was looking up when I was researching. So I say that's one of the biggest factors is (whether SDA is) doctrinally sound.

Armed with his own findings, Mark became very sensitive to the teachings of the leadership at his parents' church. After his return from university, for instance, when he heard a leader from the "upper echelon level" advocating the superiority of the SDA's teachings, he came to the conclusion that "wow, that is so wrong . . . let's get out of here."

In addition to his disagreement with SDA's denominational teachings, Mark identified the second factor for his departure as the "dispassionate" worship experience at his parents' church. Mark's complaint took him back to SDA's teachings again, which

he believed to be focused too much on a religious lifestyle that was centered on “legalistic living” as opposed to a life that was rested “in the covenant of grace and liberty and freedom to live in a very non-legalistic way.” Mark argued that things change “if we truly understand what Jesus Christ has done for us and then our lives look different.” His bone of contention with the first-generation was: “How can you possibly just sit (with) your hands and be dispassionate about singing to the God that created you?” The passionless worship was not simply exhibited by his parents’ generation; it was evident among the local-born as well. The discontented sentiment against “nonpassionate worship” gave rise to a strong sense of alienation on Mark’s part. He concluded that he was “not really feeling that (he was) part of the community.”

Finally, Mark cited a very personal factor that was unique to his life experience having to do with his then girlfriend, whom he had since married. Mark met his girlfriend at University, where they both attended the “Asian Christian Fellowship” on campus. In the context of the newfound romance, Mark had to contend with a few dilemmas along the lines of faith and cultural identities. On the one hand, his girlfriend was “a regular Christian, an Evangelical Sunday church-going Christian.” Mark, on the other hand, was “a Saturday church-going Adventist.” Furthermore, Mark’s mother’s insistence that his girlfriend conform to SDA compounded the problem. Mark recalled that his mother would urge him to make sure that his girlfriend “goes to church on Saturday,” and that she needed to be made aware of all the “legalistic things” in SDA doctrine. Mark needed a way out of the the quagmire with his mother over the choice of faith identity. The option of leaving his parents’ church seemed attractive given the way

Mark and his wife saw themselves culturally and ethnically. In reflecting on how much ethnic values informed and shaped his decision to leave, Mark spoke about his own journey of intersecting ethnicity and church affiliation:

I started with my parents' Chinese church, and then university was actually Asian Chinese fellowship. And when I was there, (I attended a) multiethnic Seventh-Day Adventist Church. And then it was primarily White Sunday Evangelical church. And after that, it would be covenant, so multiethnic.

Since his wife and Mark “grew up in Chinese churches,” they naturally wanted to stay with the ethnic church. The process of sorting out which church to attend started when they were dating:

When we were looking for a church together, when we were still dating, looking ahead to have a family, we got to find something to call home. When we were looking around, I think we even give Chinese churches a second chance.

However, “what really annoyed” them was the ethnocentric practices of the Chinese church in which ethnic values overshadowed faith values, or “‘Chineseness’ trumped your ‘Christianness.’” This juxtaposition of “Chineseness” and “Christianness” was a recurring point of discussion throughout the interview and appeared to have framed Mark’s thinking and guided his actions when it came to adjudicating his values and navigating his identities. Mark cited two examples that, in his opinion, showed that Chinese cultural practices were placed above faith. The first had to do with his parents’ paying respect to the deceased ancestors by “bowing” to the grave. For Mark this was analogous to worshipping the dead, together with the practice of “lighting the incense and . . . taking (the) food out . . . [and] burning your (fake) money.” Another had to do with

not attending a wedding when someone experienced a death in the family because superstition suggested that doing so might bring bad luck to the celebration. Mark was adamant that it was another instance of “‘Chineseness’ (trumps) ‘Christianness’ [because] there’s no such (thing) as bad luck.” So heavy was the “emphasis” his parents’ generation put “on traditional Chinese values” that, Mark argued, when it came to choosing faith or culture to follow, tradition always prevailed. Mark declared: “When in doubt, go Chinese.” The repugnant choice of his parents’ generation reinforced Mark’s need to navigate his decision through the lens of faith values. Not being willing to subordinate his faith to cultural values, Mark and his wife opted for a church they said was more “reflective of the demographic of their community.”

This discussion led to Mark’s describing how he saw himself from a cultural and ethnic perspective. Mark spoke about his ethnic identity through the lens of his faith:

I’ve always been annoyed by the fact that most Chinese Christians identify themselves as more Chinese than Christian. What I mean by that is there are Chinese traditions, acts and attitudes, and traditions for the lack of a better term [that] . . . trump what should be (Christian values). Christian should be our number one priority . . . our number one identity; it should be our number one citizenship. I have always felt that I’m more Christian than Chinese. I mean I’m a Canadian-born Chinese but my identity, I feel like if I have to call myself Chinese (it) is so far removed from that (since) I’m born and raised here in Toronto.

When I asked him to address his ethnic identity without looking at it from any other perspective, Mark admitted that he was a Canadian Chinese but he further clarified: “I don’t really think it’s a 50–50 split. If I have to say, it would be probably more like 80

percent Canadian, 20 percent Chinese.” Mark’s formulation of his ethnic identity appeared not to be cast in stone, as he said later on that his view changed somewhat because of his son. He added:

I think having a kid, just thinking about legacy and you know, legacy previously and legacy future. I think that’s what’s made the 10 percent (incremental) push. Who knows? As time goes, who knows, maybe we all get close to 50–50. But it’s just one of those things. I think having a kid actually has changed it.

As to how ethnicity became a factor in determining with whom he would worship in the context of socialization, Mark started his explanation with his university experience:

At university, I was in an Asian Christian fellowship. And I think worshipping with those people at that time, actually, was very important (because) I think (I was) just being lost and having that feeling of hugeness in a massive school, and being able to find people that you’re like, “Hey, you’re Asian.” At least we have one connection point that I really say hi to . . . (So) in my university (days), (with) the Asian Christian fellowship, I think worshipping (with Asians) was very important just because I was just so lost.

However, the social context shifted once Mark returned home after school, and ethnicity began to yield to religion when it came to choosing a place to worship:

I think that now I’m little older and I’m more comfortable with interacting with people as a whole. (And) thinking about what God’s words say: (that) if we’re really all brothers and sisters, we’ll all be a family anyway. And so the ethnic side, I guess (it) is important but not as important. If anything, I’d say that’s when my wife and I were looking for a church, she was thinking of all the scriptures where in heaven, you’re with every nation, tribe, and tongue, we’re like, “Dude, where is happening here now?” Right? We’re always praying: “Let

your kingdom come, let it be like it is here on earth.” We should all be looking for something like that. And so almost, we made a flip to the opposite side (and multiethnic was more of a priority, as opposed to finding more people like us.

As to how leadership of his former church related to his departure, the conversation appeared to unleash much emotion in Mark. First he spoke about how some of the leaders were elected not on the basis of “biblical” criteria or spiritual qualities but rather because of material wealth, social status, and achievement in society. Mark referred them as “the old rich guys in Chinese churches . . . the rich business owner, CEO guy . . . (those were the ones who) were on the board.” It was little wonder he received no spiritual support from them. With that in mind, Mark asked rhetorically: “How did they influence you at all?” That said, Mark did credit the leadership for spotting “the trend (that) younger people (have been) leaving the church (and the leadership warned themselves, saying): ‘Hey, we’ve got to make sure these young people stay and like because we all die.’” But Mark said he thought their desperation was “purely reactionary” and lacking in “foresight”; no attempt was made to understand the “root cause” of the departure. To illustrate his point, he related the story of how the English service at this church arose out of complaint about the local-born not understanding the service conducted in Chinese while being forced to co-worship with their parents. The situation deteriorated to such a grave extent that Mark, together with his peers, protested when they were still teenagers: “We just had to tell them, ‘We’re not getting anything. You know, we might as well just sleep’” during the service. Only then was a separate “young adult service” conducted in English started.

As to how the leadership at Covenant saw ethnicity, Mark replied that although the senior pastor would acknowledge the diversity in the attendance, no specific program or attempt was tailored to address the needs of, or to attract more, ethnic believers. Mark admitted that the leaders recognized that Asian adherents had begun to join the church in recent years. However, this influx was not necessarily an outcome of having the “foresight of targeting of a specific group.” The church attempted to carve out “a position of ‘Let’s bring in the community.’” As a result, the “goal is to reach the community around” the neighborhood of the church. If there was any foresight about this objective, it was in the context of the “desire to reflect the demographic of the community.” And since the city Mark resided in has “some huge percentage of Chinese,” the corresponding composition of the congregant would naturally reflect the demographic. “The number (i.e., the congregant composition) should be the equivalent (of the neighborhood),” Mark added.

In addition to the community-based model, Mark argued that faith was always given top priority at Covenant. The proof lay with the four-fold mission that was clearly articulated and made an indelible impression on Mark. He recited:

The first is proclaiming the authority of God’s words without apology; . . . the second is a lifting the name of Jesus Christ high in worship; . . . the third is believing firmly in the power of prayer; [and] . . .the last is sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with boldness.

In closing the interview, Mark wanted to highlight the quality of the leadership at Covenant to contrast it with that of his former church. In summary, the elders at Covenant were “biblically qualified” and “vetted by a heavy process.” These leaders led

“by example” with a “strong modeling approach.” In addition, they were authentic and “very real (and) approachable, passion[ate] in worship and bold in evangelism.” And finally, these leaders focused on prayer. Mark said in an admiring tone: “You hear them pray and like as if God actually hears them.” With this portrayal of church leadership by Mark, we ended the interview.

**Synopsis of interview with second participant: Matthew Ly.** The second participant I interviewed in this case was Matthew Ly, a 20-plus year-old recent graduate with an undergraduate degree in sociology working at a government agency in a mid-size city in Eastern Canada. Matthew attended an independent Chinese immigrant church with his father (his mother was a Buddhist) while growing up in the city but left when he was in second/third year of university. He had been attending Zion Fellowship, an independent evangelical church in the downtown area, since May of 2013. Matthew came to my attention as the result of a snowball process of soliciting participants from gate-keepers of local Chinese churches. I interviewed him at a local hotel after his office hours.

The first question we discussed was why he left his parents’ church in favor of Zion Fellowship. Matthew identified three reasons for his exit. The first had to do with a sense of stagnation and a loss of connectedness. While attending university, Matthew reported, he began to feel disconnected in the “adult group” and experienced the loss of the close-knit relationships he was accustomed to from his youth. This in turn led to a strong sentiment of being “confused,” feeling “frustration,” “anger,” and “restlessness.” Matthew traced the root cause of the negative orientation to an experience of stagnation.

He explained that it “was this spiritual stagnation that . . . (prevented the local-born generation from) not necessarily growing numerically but even just as a community.”

Matthew went on to identify the second reason for this departure: bureaucratic leadership at the local church and lack of support for the local-born ministry. He argued that over the year, the church was run “with the business model” that regarded the religious community as a secular organization. Decision making under this model tended to take a long time due to the complex composition of the congregants. Matthew was appalled by the impact of this foot-dragging mentality of the leadership:

I saw that sometimes, when there’s opportunity to take action, whether it would be to initiate a bible study, to hold a community potluck, to do this or that or to have prayer meeting or whatever, sometimes there’s quite a bit of delay.

He lamented that “the church (has become an) organization . . . (and the) church just becomes one big bureaucracy, and nothing gets done.”

The leadership behavior of indecisiveness revealed a deeper issue regarding who held the power to make decisions and how authority was exercised. The church was established more than 20 years before the interview by the Cantonese-speaking immigrants from Hong Kong. Because of the first-comer privilege, these Cantonese-speaking leaders, according to Matthew, “have the most power in the Church . . . (Consequently) they are the people who have the last say.” This power dynamic was illustrated in an example of allocation of church facilities for worship. Matthew was upset that no attention was paid to the growing need of the English congregation for a bigger facility. He commented: “I started to see like, why can’t we switch it (the venue for service) up because the English congregation is growing numerically? It’s like we

could use some more room.” When the call to capitalize on the growth trend by expanding the facility was ignored, Matthew was frustrated and complained: “There was always like a bureaucracy that nothing happened . . . Or they just bounced us off.”

The final reason Matthew identified for his departure had to do with an encounter with Islamic teaching. While in university and experiencing “stagnation” and a sense of being “lost” at church, Matthew was intrigued by other “Abrahamic religions,” particularly Islam in terms of “the arguments that they presented against Christian theology.” His faith in God was further shaken by news on “any level of persecution or suffering” around the globe. Matthew admitted that this collective experience “makes me doubt” the authenticity of the Christian faith. The episode of wrestling with his doubt motivated him to seek out a place of worship where he hoped to satisfy his yearnings not only for connection but also for a deeper understanding of his faith.

Turning our discussion to ethnicity and how it related to his former church, Matthew spoke about two opposing sentiments. The first had to do with how the local-born viewed the ethnic identity of the immigrant church. Central to their sentiment was the term “Chinese” in the name of the church. Although the local-born generation recognized that the church was “started in Ottawa . . . by a group of immigrants (who) had trouble with English [and] . . . there’s a linguistic need to communicate with them so you need to speak Chinese . . . (So it was named) the Chinese Christian Church of Ottawa.” For the English-speaking second-generation, however, “the Chinese part in the name almost was kind of a barrier” for two reasons. First, the term “Chinese” conjured up the image that the church continued to conduct its business in “the Chinese way of

doing things,” which was not in line with the local-born who grew up with the “Canadian way of doing things.” More importantly, the term “Chinese” implied that the church had drawn a boundary and would welcome only ethnic Chinese. Matthew reasoned, “Having the (term) Chinese there, it kind of makes (the church) as an exclusionary community” and as such, it would make newcomers feel “uncomfortable” no matter whether they were “Chinese friends (and) secondgeneration” or non-Chinese friends. The second sentiment was the one advocated by the immigrants who valued ethnic tradition at times above the faith values. Matthew cited the “lion dancing (or dragon dancing),” a traditional ceremony to celebrate the arrival of the New Year, as an example of how mindless the immigrant generation was in carrying out these activities without thinking through the faith implications given that the image of the dragon could be conceived to be the Antichrist portrayed in the Bible.

As Matthew and I moved on to discuss his motivation for choosing Zion Fellowship as his new church home, Matthew highlighted three factors. The first had to do with his personal view of cultural and faith identity. Matthew was clear about how he saw himself: as a “Canadian” but at the same time one who was not “ashamed that I am Chinese at all.” And he welcomed the label “Canadian Chinese.” But because of his Canadian values, Matthew felt it necessary to worship at a church with a diversity of ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds, and Zion Fellowship met all the criteria.

Matthew described the congregants at Zion:

They are mostly White but still multiethnic. Filipinos, not Blacks but actually Africans . . . They’re studying in Canada. There’re people from different educational backgrounds; there’re people that work in government; there’re

homeless people. Where they're coming from takes more precedence than their ethnicity.

Matthew said that he was also motivated "one hundred percent" by the argument that the church should reflect the community it was situated in. He reasoned that "because of the country that I've grown up in, of the province, and of the city that I've grown up in . . . it's important (to reflect) the demographic." That said, this desire did not overtake the value of being a "Christian" since "being Canadian and Chinese only pertains to this life being, and Canadian Chinese as an identity does not come close to giving me any fulfillment in my life."

Matthew then articulated the second factor for coming to this church: "the enormous sense of community at Zion." With the word *community*, Matthew referred to people of his own cohort regarding background and age. Matthew went on to state: "So number one, almost as much as I hate to admit it to myself . . . age and life experience, they're together and so they matter." For that reason, he reported feeling as if he "belonged," adding that he spent "time with them a lot."

The last factor Matthew identified was the pastor's teaching. Unlike the monolithic technique deployed at immigrant churches of "portraying one interpretation of a chapter, verse or whatever," the head pastor at Calvary always provided "an overarching focus" on the Bible and took time to expound the text "verse by verse and chapter by chapter . . . from Genesis." Contemporary issues such as creationism versus evolution were addressed, with different views being presented and analyzed and an appropriate stance being singled out at the end.

When the interview turned to a discussion of how he viewed Chinese cultural values, Matthew admitted that he would “pick and choose” them based on whether they “align with Christian practice . . . within biblical bounds.” He affirmed the value of “family” and “respecting elders” because the “Bible exhibits relationship with God is like family.” However, honoring elders did not mean a Chinese Christian should go as far as to endorse the “Confucian (teaching of) filial piety” or the traditional hierarchical social order of favoring “man over woman; father over son” or being obsequious to the elders to the extent that “if someone older is wrong, you don’t dare even correct them on that.”

Finally, we talked about how often the leaders at his parents’ church engaged in discussion about tradition, culture, custom, and Chinese identity with Matthew and his peers. He gave a succinct answer: “There was none.” Yet it appeared that the leaders spoke louder with their actions than with words. Matthew went on to characterize a chasm between the first-generation and the local-born with the metaphor of a building. The Chinese congregation and their leaders worshiped in the main sanctuary of the church whereas the English met in the basement. These two groups did not mix, and as a result, Matthew referred to the Chinese leaders as being “upstairs” whereas he and his peers “grew up in the basement.” The divide certainly reflected the physical partition of the building; but it also represented the great separation of two completely different worldviews and cultures at the church. “Upstairs” or “the upper generation” was the “Chinese-speaking” congregants who sang “hymns” with a “middle-age choir.” The “stories” they told were traditional, and “upstairs” represented the center of the powers. “Basement,” on the other hand, referred to the “English congregation that I grew up in,”

said Matthew, where “the worship style is different.” He further explained: “English congregation is drums, guitars, in English.” But more importantly, “basement” belonged to a world that was oblivious to most of what was going on in the other congregations and unaware of “the clashes between the English pastor and the Chinese pastor.” In closing I asked Matthew if he had felt he was being treated as less important and even as a second-class congregant at his parents’ church. Matthew was quick to answer: “Well I guess just, where I am right now, just give that away. I’m not even conscious of it but I did feel (that way).” I thanked him for the interview as he left the hotel.

**Synopsis of interview with third participant: Paul Ling.** The third participant I interviewed for this case was Paul Ling, a 20-plus year-old with an undergraduate degree in social work who was working at a government agency in a mid-size city in Eastern Canada. Paul attended an independent Chinese immigrant church with his parents when he grew up in the city but left in 2011. After having attended a “nondenominational generic White church” for a year and a half, Paul went to a downtown Caucasian mainline Anglican Church, St. Jude, a “high church” with an evangelical pastor and some Blacks and Portuguese in the congregation. Paul was referred to me by his former youth pastor and I interviewed him at a hotel.

I began by asking Paul what motivated him to leave his parents’ church and transition to his current church of worship. Paul came up with a set of push and a pull factors. The main push one was related to the shift in his theological thinking toward mainline Anglicanism. While attending university, Paul began to be drawn to studying “the Patristic era” and “the liturgical tradition” of the early church fathers . . . (in terms

of) their theology and practices.” This interest then led him to a “higher view of sacraments and . . . Episcopalian ecclesiology,” one in which the church was structured with bishop leadership, hierarchical governance, and emphasis on obedience to ecclesiastical authority. He explained that there were three “churches” or traditions that fitted into the framework of the Episcopalian ecclesiology: Roman Catholicism, the Orthodox Church, and the Anglican Church. Paul rejected Roman Catholicism for the reason that “there are too many doctrines that are medieval innovations.” The Orthodox Church was eliminated because “it’s too far removed from Western culture, as well as it was too ethnically based.” Paul further explained that the contemporary Orthodox Church always expressed itself through association with a race or an ethnicity: “Like you always had the Russian Orthodox, the Greek Orthodox, (and) the Bulgarian Orthodox.” Finally, the Anglican tradition appeared to have met all of Paul’s criteria because “the church is evangelical, and it’s preaching in faith that’s catholic in its doctrine and still orthodox in its faith.” The Anglican Church became “the best option” because of its theology and lack of specific ethnic association. This distancing himself from ethnic association reflected another dimension of Paul’s thinking about the church: The church must be contextualized to reflect the demographics of the community. Paul reasoned, “Whatever the society is, the church should be representative of that (demographic and culture).” Consequently, since the city Paul lived in was “predominantly White,” the church he attended would also “be predominantly White.” I then asked Paul why he did not join the Chinese Anglican Church in the city, since one existed in the city. He explained:

One of my disgruntle[d] things is that I can't go to a church that (is entirely ethnic). Say it is a Russian church, (or) . . . a Chinese church, (or a) . . . Korean church, because the gospel supersedes ethnicity . . . What I wanted to avoid (was) churches that were specifically ethnic. Because if I wanted to bring someone (who) is White or Black to a Chinese Anglican Church, I don't think they would feel 100 percent comfortable.

Paul found the solution to both his theological and his ethnic conundrums at St. Jude, an Anglican Church that conducted its worship in a communicable, "meaningful (and) vernacular" language, in English, and at the same time celebrated the congregants' diversity, recognizing such things as "Black history month" without favoring one specific ethnicity.

The nub of the push factor for Paul's "leaving (the) Chinese church and seeking something different" lay with the church's ethnocentricity. First, Paul argued that the older immigrant generation often carried "a judgmental attitude toward people who are outsiders." The mindset of exclusivity ran against Paul's own ideal of ecclesiology. In his mind, "a true church, a true congregation needs to be able to (allow) the young person that just came off the street . . . to be able to talk with an elderly person." Conversely, his observation of the immigrant generation suggested that they adopted a practice of "compartmentalization" in the church in which "the old people sit on this side, the young people sit on that side, and the middle-aged sit here and they don't ever mingle." Second, Paul expressed the opinion that the church had to reflect the dominant culture of the neighborhood where it was located in. He recalled how his growing-up experience mirrored the Canadian view of a cultural "mosaic": "I grew up with White people . . . with Blacks . . . with people from other ethnicities or other cultures." He admitted that he

“wasn’t very Chinese growing up” because his friends were predominantly “White people.” This reality of cultural diversity, however, was a stark contrast to his church experience because “when (he) went to church, it would always just . . . there’re these Chinese persons. . . . Not even Koreans or (Asians), (but) it was just Chinese.” Paul concluded that the problem with “being in that kind of culture is that (it) wasn’t fully satisfying.” Thus ethnic exclusiveness furnished the push-factor that motivated Paul to leave his parents’ church.

When discussing how ethnicity was expressed at his parents’ church, Paul expressed frustration that even though the church was a Christian institution, his parents’ generation collectively advocated for the Chinese values of career success and performance-oriented academic pursuit over faith values. Paul recalled, “Growing up in a Chinese (church), even though it’s Christian, there is still always a pressure to want to go (into) engineering, law, business, science, medicine, even from a Christian standpoint.” Paul recollected vividly:

(Many) uncles and aunties, they (said to) their sons . . . “No bible study, you have to stay at home to study because I want you to get into a top university, because you’re going to be a doctor or you’re going to be a lawyer, you’re going to make a lot of money.”

Paul further attributed the parental desire for success to the Asian ethic of the importance of being “hardworking” and suggested that the definition of success was driven by “social standards as well as monetary standards.” It was these types of Asian values that were being transmitted generationally at the immigrant church. Paul postulated, “And clearly, if you (the parents) keep pushing your kids towards success, (it)

is because you want success as well.” Paul cited two examples to prove his point. The first had to do with how a local-born who chose to get into “industrial design” but was not “in business” or “in science” was chided by his father for not being able to obtain “successful big-money, big-status jobs.” The second example was that of a young adult who wanted to go to bible college but whose parents “weren’t very happy of her choice.” In telling these two stories, Paul exclaimed that “it really got me pissed off when parents would push academics over the gospel.” Paul went so far as to accuse the first-generation parents of being hypocritical:

They would come and they would worship God, sing songs and say: “We give God everything.” (But) you’re lying, you clearly put academics over God, you get angry at your son because he wants to be a pastor. But then you have another son and he wants to go to law school and you praise him. You should be praising your (other) son because he wants to be a pastor.

Clearly, to Paul, the practice of overemphasizing cultural values in pursuing academic excellence at the expense of pursuing spiritual growth was intrinsically not aligned with Christian values: “It’s very much academics and not so much of a pursuit of living a life of holiness or life of submitting to God’s law or Christ’s commandments.”

The conflict between cultural values and Christian teachings did spill over from the arena of family to the church practices. Paul explained that the immigrant church structure could be characterized as having “three churches in one,” consisting of “Cantonese, Mandarin, [and] English” congregations, and the structure led inevitably to “cultural clash.” The first trigger for clashes among the groups lay in the collective

inability to communicate effectively because of the language barrier. Paul expressed his frustration this way:

I can't speak, Mandarin . . . but yet I'm in a church building with Mandarin people. And (they) could barely speak English . . . I couldn't communicate with them and yet we worship God in the same building. I just saw so much chaos and . . . I didn't see this church growing in terms of making disciples out of everyone.

In addition, from Paul's perspective, the immigrant church's lack of commitment to "making disciples of all nations and bringing people in the community — from the local community or from (the city to) the church" had put the "English congregation . . . on life support."

Different approaches to ministry with contrasting focuses also underlay the clashes among the congregations and their pastors. The immigrant church conducted services with "different messages; one in Mandarin, one in Cantonese, one in English. Trying to reconcile all the congregations in different places and their walk with Christ or culturally" had proven to be futile. Paul related an example of cultural and generational conflict in which the English pastor preached "a message on giving money and sacrificing" to the local-born children of the Mandarin-speaking parents. However, the parents got "angry at the English pastor (and said), 'Why are you telling my kids these things?'" even though the English minister maintained that "I'm (just) trying to preach the gospel. And I'm going to teach the bible." Paul deduced that these kinds of clashes created a "disharmony in the church" and said they left "a bad taste in his mouth" about the immigrant church. What exacerbated the situation was that the immigrants were not "necessarily critical of their culture first." Paul cited the example of having a dragon

dance at church to celebrate the Chinese New Year with no one critically assessing what the dragon represented biblically. The immigrant generation would “compartmentalize” their identity and pursue Chinese cultural practice in “its fullness” without doing any cross-referencing with their Christian identity. More importantly, it appeared to Paul that when there was a conflict between faith and culture, Chinese cultural values were always placed above Christian teaching. Paul attested: “The Chinese side (of tradition or culture) supersedes because that’s what they (i.e., the immigrants) have been taught when they’re raised.” This type of cultural practice extended to how leaders exercised power and authority in the decision-making process. Paul recalled a few instances in which there was tremendous “resistance to change” on the part of the leadership when opportunities presented themselves for becoming more “relaxed (and) more open in terms of free flowing.” This sense of not wanting to rock the boat might have come from the Chinese tradition of being “reserved,” but it could also mean that the leadership was merely exercising “control,” knowing change might bring unknown consequences.

When it came to the assimilation process, Paul favored the American model of a melting pot over the Canadian model of multiculturalism. He argued that the “melting pot” represented a “uniting factor” that tied everyone together. To Paul, the uniting factor was twofold: “English” language and “Western values.” Paul suggested that although citizens “can keep (their own) cultural values,” each person “needs to be able to carry those two things.” Without the “unified agent (or) unifying characteristics,” Paul contended, the situation is “just going to be chaos, especially when you’re talking about a (Canadian) society of 30 million people. From a government (standpoint) trying to create

institutions . . . (to meet the needs of such diversity), it's just chaos." Paul went on to identify the following as Western values: "choice" or "freedom to choose," "individualism," and "nuclear family."

The interview then moved to a discussion of Paul's ethnic and faith identity. First, Paul was adamant that "I'm a Canadian first." However, when he pondered his ethnic roots, Paul acknowledged a hybrid identity of being both Canadian and Chinese: "I would say if you're going to say Chinese Canadian or Canadian Chinese, I would say I am a Canadian first . . . and then Chinese. They're not mutually exclusive, they do intersect."

At the same time, Paul was very insistent upon the supremacy of his faith identity: "I would say first and foremost I'm a Christian . . . whenever I do something, it has to be Christian . . . period." He further expressed the view that in a secular and liberal society such as Canada, it was his faith identity that helped him navigate a pathway out of different popular societal norms and lax moral behavior such as drunkenness.

When it came to the transition experience, I asked Paul whether the leadership of his parents' church ever engaged in helping him through the process. His answer was curt: "There was not like a pastor or a leader who tried to transition me out of the church." That said, Paul admitted that the pastoral staff did spend time talking with him to figure out "why (he's) leaving." In particular, Paul spoke fondly of his youth pastor in empowering him to leave. Paul recalled:

(The youth pastor did) see how much I was growing in God. And although there was a conflict (in) wanting me to come back, he saw that I was loving God in

being in a different community. So he kind of let me (go). He wanted my relationship with God first over coming back to our church.

This exit experience was in stark contrast to the welcome he experienced when coming to the Anglican Church. Paul detailed his experience this way:

The rector was very good at introducing me into the church and bringing me in. How I found the church was . . . I just Googled up “Evangelical,” “Anglican,” and “church” in (the city), and found them, called the receptionist; they sent me [to] the pastor, pastor met with me like within the same week.

According to Paul, the church leadership continued to “put in effort to try” to integrate him into this newfound faith community. Paul continued:

(And) there were a lot of young adults that invited me to come to the young adults group . . . And then an associate priest who runs the youth ministry . . . also invited me, like “Hey, if you want to like volunteer and help with our youth ministry, you’re welcome to (join us).”

As we completed the interview, I thanked Paul for his participation.

**Synopsis of interview with fourth participant: Luke Lau.** The fourth and last participant I interviewed for this case was Luke Lau, a 20–30 year-old married father of a 6-months-old son and a part owner of a software business with Caucasian partners. Luke was referred to me through a network of gatekeepers in the Prairie provinces of Canada. Having grown up in the same city in which he was born, and attended a Chinese evangelical church in the city with his parents, Luke left the immigrant church with his wife two and a half years before the time he was interviewed. Without sampling other options, they came to attend the Rock, “the biggest . . . mainstream Canadian . . . church”

in the city. And they decided to stay and settle in because the church “hit all the points that (they) felt (they) were missing.”

I interviewed Luke over Skype and first asked him why he and his wife left his parents’ church. Luke’s reply was succinct: “We just weren’t feeling like we were being fed.” Luke expanded further on this point:

We personally weren’t being fed (either) through the pulpit ministry or through small groups and . . . if we’re just staying there because of our social group (then) that’s not good sufficient reason, so we decided that we had to make a change.

As for the root causes of why he was not being fed, Luke traced the answer back to the departure of the former senior pastor that had occurred more than a decade before. This event had become the fault line for a number of moving forces that motivated Luke to eventually leave the church. Without a senior pastor, Luke observed, the guidance of the church fell into the hands of the elders. As a result, the church faced a number of challenges. First, “without (top) leadership, everything was kind of in sustenance [subsistence] mode (and) everyone tried to maintain status quo,” Luke lamented. Second, the “not rocking the boat” mentality led to stagnation and consequently “there was a lack of spirituality of developing (the younger) generation anyway.” Third, without a top leader “to steer the flock,” Luke felt that “there was a void of direction . . . a lack of vision” and that people were “unable to move forward.” The concept of vision and its corresponding idea of the mission of the church re-emerged several times throughout our conversation. Finally, the absence of a lead voice to inspire a vision gave way to “politics” in dealing with ministries at this three-congregational church. Luke recalled:

Being a three-congregational church, it's tough to make decisions and to move forward, and so a lot of the times, you go to general meetings . . . and you get bogged down in a lot of politics . . . in terms of where the church is going and there's a lot of decisions that need to be made.

By "politics," Luke meant specifically the conflicts related to how decisions were made at the church. He cited the decision to deal with the lack of facility capacity as a prime example. Erected by the immigrant generation many years previous, the church building was "older" and in need of renovation "for years." Facing the options of "whether to renovate the existing building (or to) move to a new building," the church experienced "politics" in three dimensions. First, there was a lack of willingness to make a decision. Luke remarked:

They always were continually going in cycles (of) 2, 3 years. A new project was defeated for whatever reason and then somebody else came up with (a) new idea. So it just felt the church didn't move (forward) because it didn't have (a vision) of where it was going.

Yet underneath the senseless delay lay a second challenge: the first-generation's unwillingness to fund the project. Luke pointed out that while his parents' generation "took a lot of risk" in faith and established the church in their "college" years decades before, they were now approaching "retirement age." As such, these leaders did not want to be burdened with mortgages again and thus failed to see the value of investing financially in a facility project in support of the younger generation. Luke explained:

The younger generation, which is predominantly the English congregation, will say: "We want a future in this church. We need a new building, or at least renovate this one." This one was an older (building) . . . and the roof was leaking

(but) they're trying to stall. They've been trying to stall that project for a long time. I think it's the mismatch in vision really. The Chinese are in a more of a sustaining mode . . . whereas [the] younger English congregation is [in] more of a growth stage. But (they) aren't able to see eye to eye.

Finally, Luke observed that there were opposing cliques in the church whose members carried a "lot of baggage" in terms of having a vendetta against one another. He commented:

There definitely was baggage. There's people (who kept) fighting against each other for the sake of fighting. So say a group had their project defeated in the past, then another group had a project going, and so for the sake of defeating the project, (the first group) would just try to be obstacles at every turn.

The political wrangling became so severe that at one meeting to determine whether to move forward with a fresh proposal for building renovation, Luke decided to leave the church. The new project proposal, for Luke and his peers, was supposed to represent a centripetal force that would pull the congregations together. He explained:

We're all looking for a vision . . . that will unite us as a church because as three-congregation, it's still hard to find a common purpose. And so we were looking for building projects, the kind that finally decided "This is where we're going to go. We're gonna do this together as a church to unite the congregations," and so there was the one last building project that (the) younger guys were really excited about.

But "one group which in the past was hurt" was there to cause "disruptions . . . for the sake of disruption." They insisted on changing the rules of the decision-making process, and as a result the motion was defeated based on a technicality. Luke explained how this event became the reason for him to leave:

I guess that was the tipping point. I decided that there is too much baggage here and I just want to start fresh. . . . I didn't wanna wait another cycle . . . I didn't wanna be wrapped up in this politics and be brought down with it. And for me, I thought it was just a fresh start.

As we moved to a discussion of Rock, Luke offered the following salient points:

The preaching there is excellent. But it's the purpose and the vision of the church and how everything ties into it . . . The church basically has one mandate: to spread the gospel . . . regardless of ethnicity . . . And everything is done with (that) purpose.

In commenting on the key differences between Rock and the immigrant church, Luke first cited the example of how finances were being managed. He explained that contrary to "the (conservative) Chinese culture (in which) finance is always a big issue . . . (and the ethnic church would) scrutinize every single purchase," Rock operated with a "different culture (and) spent (money) purposely." Thus the Chinese church wanted to "meet the budget" and it was "always about the number," whereas the Caucasian church treated finance with a purposeful "forward looking" perspective and planned it "by faith."

Luke further noted that he was able to "interact with other cultures" at Rock and socialized with a diversity of people who were "Caucasian . . . Mexican . . . South American and Malaysian." I then asked him how he saw himself in terms of identity, Luke replied at first: "I am Chinese." However, since he was born in Canada, he was "every bit a Canadian." Luke went on to say that while he was not that attached to Chinese culture, he acknowledged that his values were "from [a] Chinese background" because he was at the same time "raised as Chinese." With that in mind, he reasoned that he would judiciously instill in his son what he believed to be the appropriate Chinese

values such as “honoring your parents and grandparents . . . having good decorum and decency.” Yet Luke recognized that his efforts would be tempered by the limitation of his Chinese language skill and the degree to which he was inculcated with those values. He commented: “I only know so much Chinese; I know that he will only have as much as I have and less, maybe 50% of what I have.”

Reflecting on his socialization process, Luke admitted that growing up in the city he was born in, he was “much more comfortable to be with the people that are similar looking, and so that’s why we always go to the Chinese church, and knowing that we’re there because we’re comfortable with our (ethnic) friends.” On the other hand, Luke recalled that he didn’t get along “well with the Canadian classmates because of the values that didn’t go with them.” The cohort of Canadian-born Chinese (CBC) shared the same Asian values that were “instilled” in them as “expectation . . . from the young age and on” by their parents. Luke expanded on what those values were: “To save money, to buy [a] house or a car, to have children, to save up for the future . . . and a lot of our friends were professionals and such . . . Get into (university), finish it with a Ph.D., get a job, get married.”

I then asked him if his parents ever explained to him why these values were important. Surprisingly, Luke was able to articulate it well:

I understand why they’re important. Coming (from the) Chinese culture where there’s a lot more competition, from a poor background with not much education, I see why those things were stressed. Get to the top; get educated. Because that’s the way they earned (money) and that’s how you will support a family. That’s how you’ll support your parents when they’re older. (Because) in Asian societies there isn’t much social assistance and your family is your social assistance.

On the contrary, it was different in Canada, Luke reasoned: “Raised in a community culture, the parents are better educated (here), and there’s more social assistance . . . (but they) weren’t there before like my grandparents. And there’s a lot more opportunities here because there’s a lot less competition.”

As for his view on multiculturalism, Luke suggested he favored “more of the American view of the melting pot than the Canadian view.” Luke felt strongly that when you emigrated to another country “on your own will, it’s somewhat of a responsibility to adopt their culture” through “a process of convergence.” Therefore in the United States, “people embrace the American culture. (And identify with) the American first and then Chinese and African or whatever (second). It’s more of assimilation.” Luke’s concept of assimilation was not so much about advocating an American approach of conformity to the dominant White culture as converging with what was recognized to be the mainstream culture against the backdrop of immigrants maintaining their own ethnic culture. So for him, the mainstream Canadian culture was indeed the multicultural mosaic that prevailed in the country. It was through this lens of assimilation through convergence that he came to characterize Rock’s history. Starting as a small Germanic congregation, the church grew to embrace “all kinds of people there, but they are converging towards Canadian culture.” Luke observed that the church embraced multiculturalism by hosting ethnic celebrations, such as Mexican and Spanish festivals. In addition, a young Indian pastor was given free rein to preach for two months at Rock even though he was from India and spoke with a “thick accent.” With this in mind, I asked whether Chinese culture or traditions were celebrated or discussed at his parents’

church. Luke answered in a concise statement: “Not that much.” The reason was that for a long while, the English congregational pastor at the immigrant church was actually a Caucasian. This exchange instigated a conversation about why Chinese churches would retain Caucasian pastors, and Luke wondered aloud, “how the Caucasian pastors fit in to (Chinese church purpose of serving ethnic Chinese). Because they’re not really holding those Chinese values that we’re all together for.” However, in the same breath, Luke refuted the practice of having a Cantonese pastor preaching in English as a substitute because he reasoned that the local-borns’ “thought process occurs in English, and so when I’m in English, reason English, and I personally think in English, I can connect better to someone whose thought process was English.” For the Cantonese pastors, on the other hand, “the thought process occurs in Cantonese and then it’s translated,” which was not desirable because of differences in cultural paradigms. This discussion then brought us to Luke’s final thought, which was related to “the purpose of a trilingual church.” While he recognized the value of having an ethnic Chinese church to “minister to Chinese-speaking individuals,” especially those who “don’t speak much English” like his in-laws, Luke strongly questioned the validity of the existence of the English congregation at the immigrant church. Conceding that it might have existed for the purpose of “the children of the Chinese people,” Luke observed that the separation of these congregations “was creating cultural divides between generations from parents to children.” But if the purpose of the English congregation was just to serve in support of “a certain ethnic group which is being the Canadian-born Chinese (CBC) group, then it is fine because there are cultural similarities (among) CBCs . . . (and there are) individuals

not fully Canadian.” If that was the purpose, Luke argued, the church should not retain Caucasian pastors because they could not “harness . . . the specialness of that congregation and the cultural difference” through “preaching . . . everything as Caucasian.” Luke suggested that having Caucasian pastors preach would hasten the departure of the local-born because they would say to themselves: “I can go find a church that can do it better” than this Caucasian pastor. Luke drew an analogy to make his point:

Like (buying) apples in the Wal-Mart and the convenience store, right? If I have to travel to the convenience store (to) get it . . . so the specialness of a convenience store is that it’s located close to you, right? (But) if I have to get in my car and travel to the convenience store, why not I just go to Wal-Mart where the prices are cheaper anyways, right?

With that analogy, I thanked him for his participation and ended the interview.

**Themes for Case Four.** In analyzing the data collected, I detected the following emerging themes.

***Theme #1: Yearning for meaningful religious teaching.*** In analyzing the emerging reasons for the participants’ departures, I noticed that all participants in this case attributed their departure to a high degree of dissatisfaction with the teachings at the immigrant church. This was evident in the disapproval of Luke and Matthew regarding the “peer-teaching” arrangement; and Mark’s reaction to the imposition of the Adventists’ “28 fundamental beliefs.” The dearth of meaningful teachings fueled these participants’ desire to take a deeper dive into the reservoirs of historical and contemporary Christian teachings to satisfy their quest. Three of the participants, Paul, Matthew, and Mark, spoke of their separate journeys of seeking a theology that would

meet their desire to find an intersection between their ethnicity and their faith. For Paul, that need was met through Episcopalian ecclesiology and Anglicanism. In making a decision to move over to Anglicanism, Paul explained that he wanted “to be theologically a small ‘c’ catholic but not Roman Catholic, but still having a strong expression of an evangelical expression of the faith.” Anglicanism as an expression of religious practice known as “high church,” for Paul, was the best form of expression of faith in that critical elements such as “the teachings of Jesus [about] living a righteous life” were “something that you practice every single day.”

For Matthew, his encounter with Islam forced him to deal with his doubts about Christianity by coming to grips with what he believed to be the core of Christian teaching: the cross. He concluded that “despite Islam being a very moral and good religion, I can say there’s no hope in it because . . . it’s like meritocracy, like you worked your way to please Allah.” The Christian faith, on the other hand, was centered on the concept of grace whereby “Christ dies on the cross for us and he died on the cross for our sins; sins that we cannot pay him back.” Matthew continued to opine that “the cross is like an aberration in Islamic theology. It’s a big no-no, like God can’t die and like God can’t be in the trinity.” Matthew’s experience at Zion further validated his desire for orthodox and sound teaching as he found the pastor’s expository preaching in edifying the Christian faith in a “holistic” manner a breath of fresh air in comparison to the preaching at the immigrant church.

For Mark, though he did not specifically name the brand of theology that might satisfy his quest for meaningful teaching, he recognized that the teaching he received at

his parents' church was "kind of doctrinally just not in line with truly God's words." And this constituted the key reason for his leaving the church. For Mark, a doctrinally sound faith must be based on "God's word." In fact, the phrase "God's word" was mentioned no less than 10 times during our discussion. Phrases such as: "living their lives with God's word"; "understanding God's words"; "the exaltation of God's word"; "thinking about what God's word says"; "spend their time in God's word"; "passion in God's word"; and "proclaiming the authority of God's word" were so central to Mark that they defined his faith: Teaching that was doctrinally sound must be "God's word."

Finally, without talking about how he might have been attracted by a specific type of teaching at the Rock, Luke was quick to point out the key salient feature of the church he now attended: preaching. He spoke enthusiastically about how his response to the preaching was drastically different from a state of not being fed at his parents' church: "The preaching there is excellent and most people go there because the preaching is excellent, but what we realized was that over the years that we've been there is that the preaching is good."

The experience of all four participants seemed to confirm one of the key hallmarks of Evangelicalism as referenced in Chapter II: a high regard for the Bible as the revelation from God and the authority for their faith and morality.

***Theme #2: Identity and its influence over choice of congregation.*** When it came to identity, three of four participants (Mark, Paul, and Matthew) attributed supremacy to their faith identity as a Christian over their cultural and ethnic identity. However, all participants showed a propensity to lean toward the identity of being a Canadian over

being a Chinese, though all of them found a hybrid identity of Chinese Canadian or Canadian Chinese acceptable for acknowledging their ethnic roots. Table 9 exhibits how they characterized themselves across the identity spectrum.

Table 9

*Ethnic Identity: Case Four Participants*

|         | <b>Christian</b>  | <b>Canadian</b>             | <b>Chinese</b>                              | <b>Hybrid identity</b>   |
|---------|---|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Mark    | “Christian should be our number one priority.”  | “I am Canadian-born.”       | “Far removed” as a Chinese.                 | 80% Canadian; 20% Chinese  |
| Matthew | “A follower of Christ” since “being Canadian and Chinese only pertains to this life.”                       | “More and more Canadian.”   | “Neither ashamed that I am Chinese at all.” | “Canadian Chinese.”<br>“I align more with Canadian values than Chinese values.”  |
| Paul    | “First and foremost I’m a Christian.”   | “I’m a Canadian first.”     | “I would say (I am) partly Chinese.”        | “If you’re going to say Chinese Canadian or Canadian Chinese, I would say I am a, I am a Canadian first . . . and then Chinese.” |
| Luke    | “If I were introducing myself with somebody, I would say I’m Canadian or Chinese before I was a Christian.” | “I’m every bit a Canadian.” | “I am Chinese, but I live in Canada.”       | “I know my values and such are from Chinese background.”   |

The strength of their identity as a Canadian corresponds to their view of their church of choice from the perspective of ethnicity versus mainstream culture. Each participant opined strongly that the church he or she attended must reflect the Canadian

community setting where the church was located as opposed to sticking with the ethnic setting of the immigrant church. Table 10 exhibits their views.

Table 10

*Congregation Selection: Case Four Participants*

| <b>Church of Their Choice</b> |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Mark                          | The church needs to be “reflective of the demographic of their community”; “to reach the community around us”; “let’s bring in the community.”  |
| Matthew                       | “I don’t care for like the nicest building ever or like the worst building ever, as long as we are a community, it’s what the church is. So having the Chinese there (in the name of the church), it kind of makes it as an exclusionary community”; “because of the country that I’ve grown up in, of the province, and of the city that I’ve grown up in, it’s important (for the church to reflect) the demographic”; “So, honestly what drew me — it was like the enormous sense of community at Zion.” |
| Paul                          | “Bringing people in the community — from the local community or from greater area (of the city) into the church”; “wherever the culture is, or whatever the society is, the church should be representative of that society . . . but in this city, it’s predominantly White. So your congregation would be predominantly White.”   |
| Luke                          | The church “started small (but now) you have all kinds of people there, (and) they are converging towards a Canadian culture”; “the origin of the church used to be a German church . . . but it is (now) mainstream Canadian.”   |

The ideal of being community-centric was driven by the deep desire to see the church as a reflection of the demographic of the locale. The concept of community, however, could be a fluid one, as in the example of Matthew, who mentioned the term “community” 11 times and it was mostly applied to the church as a community as opposed to the neighborhood. What lay underneath the fluidity was the ethnic-centric boundary perceived to be drawn by church leadership as well as the complexity set up to

meet the needs of the three co-mingled congregations (i.e., Cantonese, Mandarin, and English speaking) at the immigrant church, a theme that is discussed in the next section.

*Theme #3: Distaste for cultural divide in a tri-congregational milieu.* As was explained in Chapter II, the Chinese Canadian immigrant churches originated to meet the needs of Chinese immigrants from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Asia, and other parts of the world over the last several decades. Because of the subethnic nature of these immigrants as well as their diverse language requirements, the congregational set-up at these churches has been established along the linguistic boundary to facilitate worship and church ministry. The unintended consequence was the creation of an internal divide not only among different subcultures and subethnicities but also between the local-born and the immigrant generation. For all the participants, a Christian church's identity and purpose were supposed to be defined by the church's religious teachings and faith values and to be united by a vision and mandate that would create a tie that bound all congregations. Yet the experience of the participants compelled them to conclude that the reality was otherwise. It led Luke, for example, to openly question "the purpose of a trilingual church" when he observed that the separation of these congregations "was creating cultural divides between generations from parents to children." In addition, decision making was slow and challenging because of the inherent competing interests of the three congregations. Luke went on to delineate the challenges of the church. First, there was the issue of facility allocation to meet programming demands of three congregations. Then trying to meet the diverse needs of all three congregations put an extra burden on framing a vision that was supposed to tie the congregants together at his

former church: Luke had hoped to see the implementation of “a vision . . . that will unite us as a church.” However, when Luke discovered that there was “the mismatch in vision” since different generations envisioned different directions for the church, he left the community for good.

In addressing the tri-congregational setting, Paul went one step further to characterize his parents’ church as “compartmentalized” in that congregants of different backgrounds and ages worshiped separately and did not mingle. With three separate congregational setups for churchgoers who spoke different languages, “you have three different pastors, preaching different messages.” This concept of compartmentalization was exemplified not just in terms of language differences but also in terms of a churchwide bias toward ethnic exclusivity. Paul explained that older immigrant congregants did not get along with others and “there was little bit of a judgmental attitude towards people who are outsiders.” Furthermore, “compartmentalization” was extended to adjudication of values when conflicts between faith and culture arose in the church. Rather than allowing Christian faith to illuminate meanings of cultural practices, the older generation “would try to keep the Chinese side intact and they keep the Christianity side intact (separate from each other).” Paul explained: “It was compartmentalized like we’re Chinese, but we’re Chinese Christians. And so we’re going to do our Chinese thing in its fullness, whereas we’re going to do Chinese things or Christian things too. And there wasn’t necessarily a mingling.” However, to the extent that they did mingle “the Chinese side supersedes because that’s what they’ve been taught when you’re raised.”

Matthew shared Paul's observation about the immigrant church erecting a boundary based on ethnic values and identity at his former church and noted that it resulted in disconnection: "There's like a disconnect between the different congregations as well." The disconnect was best portrayed by the distinction between where the different cultural groups congregated within the building. The English congregation worshiped in the basement, whereas the Cantonese were in the sanctuary. Drawing from the metaphor of height difference and physical partitioning of a building in terms of "upper" and "basement," Matthew spoke about the cultures being a world apart in terms of diversity of language and style of worship. "Upstairs" was older "Chinese speaking" congregants who sang "hymns" with a "middle-age choir." "Basement" was the "English congregation (who uses) drums, guitars (in worship) . . . (and sing) in English."

But more importantly for Matthew, the compartmentalization of the congregations represented not simply a cultural divide along language, ethos, ethnicity, and values; it also signified who held power at the church and who could exercise control. For Matthew, the "upper generation" was the one who "have the most power in the Church." For those who "grew up in the basement," there appeared to be a prevailing sense of being powerless and not being able to navigate their fate with autonomy.

Finally, for Matthew, the tri-congregational church represented an active agency in maintaining a divide between itself and the nonethnic outside world. This separation was exemplified by the use of the word "Chinese" in the name of the immigrant church, an ethnic marker the foreign-born generation was not willing to delete. The term "Chinese" represented "the Chinese way of doing things," which was not in line with

culture of the local-born, who grew up being familiar with the “Canadian way of doing things.” In addition, the term “Chinese” represented a barrier to welcoming non-Chinese to attend the church. Matthew reasoned: “Having the (term) Chinese there, it makes (the church) as an exclusionary community.”

As for Mark, although he did not speak specifically to the tri-congregational setup at SDA, he did express that one strong reason for his departure from the SDA church was that he was “not really feeling that you’re part of the community.” Unlike the other participants in this case, the alienation Mark reported feeling was due not so much to ethnicity as to a religious factor: the “dispassionate” worship style of the first-generation. In turn, Mark attributed this lack of exuberance to SDA teachings that were too focused on a religious lifestyle centered on “the sense of legalistic living” as opposed to a life that was centered “in the covenant of grace and liberty and freedom to live in a very nonlegalistic way.”

***Theme #4: Dysfunctional leadership at the immigrant church.*** The last theme that surfaced from the interviews of participants in this case was directly related to their collective indictment of the immigrant-generation for incompetent leadership. To the participants, immigrant church leadership was deeply mired in confrontation, obfuscation and dysfunction. Mark offered the criticism that at the SDA church, leaders were elected not on the basis of “biblical” criteria or spiritual quality but rather because of their “material wealth, social status, and achievement in society.” He recalled that leaders were “the old rich guys in Chinese churches . . . the rich business owner, CEO guy . . . (those were the ones who) were on the board.” Matthew, on the other hand, was irked by

“the business model that (had turned the) church (into an) organization (and the) church just becomes one big bureaucracy, and nothing gets done.” In such a model, leaders appeared to be dragging their feet when it came time to make decisions or to appoint mentors or facilitators to lead the adult group, Matthew complained, “It “will take months before you can get a reply.” It was this “lack of organization(al) (effectiveness)” that drove him away. The indecisive leadership behavior revealed a deeper leadership issue at his former church that had to do with who held the power and authority to make decisions. Matthew argued that since the power was concentrated among the Cantonese-speaking immigrant church founders, it often led to “clashes in the leadership” with other cohorts at the church and subsequently created “a disconnect between the different congregations.” In such an environment, the second-generation cohort had very little say in the affairs of the church. Matthew felt that the Chinese leaders “bounced us off,” for instance, when the second-generation requested a larger facility to accommodate the growth of the English ministry.

From Paul’s perspective, his former church’s indecisiveness and slowness in making decisions reflected cultural “traditions that were reserved (in nature).” In addition, the church leadership might not have wanted to rock the boat because they merely wanted to exercise power and authority to maintain “control,” fearing change could bring unknown consequences.

But for Luke, the senseless delay in decision making signified a different level of incompetent leadership behavior. It underlined a lack of unifying vision and the absence of a clear mandate at his former church. Without a senior pastor to steer the congregation

in a concrete “direction,” leadership was hesitant to make critical decisions and wanted “to maintain (the) status quo” or as Luke characterized it, a “sustenance mode.” An unintended consequence emerged under this “don’t-rock-the-boat” mentality, and it pointed to the rising conflicts among the congregants. Knowing that there was no top leader, and sensing that existing leadership “was unable to move forward,” congregants began to exhibit dysfunctional and toxic behaviors and “politics” emerged in the church as a whole: schisms, infighting, uninspired quick fixes, and holding back on investing when doing so might benefit the local-born. These types of behaviors led to a sense of chaos that eventually gave rise to collateral damage in the spiritual aspect of the ministry: “a lack of spirituality of developing (the younger) generation.”

Leadership support for the participants’ transition to another church was equally wanting. Although immigrant leaders might have witnessed the trend, there was no foresight in either proactively stemming the tide or providing support for their journey outward. In Mark’s scenario, he described the leadership’s action as “purely reactionary” and lacking “foresight” and not involving any attempt to understand the “root cause” of his departure. Matthew’s assessment of the leaders of his former church of his exit was that “they understood it but they didn’t empathize with it!” The only exception was Paul, who had maintained a fruitful relationship with his former youth pastor.

**Summary.** In summary, an analysis of data collected via interviews with the participants, visits to church sites, collection of church bulletins and other materials as well as information gathered from the church websites yielded the following four themes: (a) yearning for meaningful religious teaching, (b) Identity and its influence over

choice of congregation, (c) distaste for cultural divide in a tri-congregational milieu, and (d) dysfunctional leadership at the immigrant church. In the next section, I report on the data collected and their analysis for Triangulation Group One.

### **Church Leaders From the Chinese Immigrant Church (Triangulation Group One)**

As part of the data collection strategy, perspectives from first-generation Chinese immigrant leaders were gathered in order to provide triangulation of the data collected from the cases I examined. To that end, two leaders were solicited and their interview synopsis is documented in the following sections. The synopsis is followed by an analysis of the interviews for triangulation purposes.

**Synopsis of interview with first Chinese immigrant pastor: Silas Wong.** Silas Wong was a senior pastor of an evangelical immigrant Chinese church in a major city in Canada, and I came to know him through my ecclesiastic network of friends and pastors. He agreed to be interviewed on a fall day at a café.

I started the interview by asking whether he had noticed the exit of SGCCE from their parents' congregations and if so, how serious he thought it was. In his 20 years of service in a variety of capacities, Silas noticed that a significant leakage did occur in the cohort of SGCCE. He also observed that leadership in the Chinese immigrant church by and large had been aware of the problem and subsequently "some (first-generation) pastors" did "try to do something" with the "intention to stop the leaking." Silas cited two examples to support his observation. First, he suggested that SGCCE are "more sensitive to (issues such as) social concerns." Thus activities such as a "sandwich run . . . (in the) downtown area" by the second-generation were fully supported by the first-generation

leaders because they firmly believed that “in order to keep the second-generation within their church they need to do that.” The second example was the local-born’s desire to pursue “spiritual formation” practice, an exercise that the first-generation might not fully “understand what it is.” Nonetheless, the leaders endorsed the pursuit because they believed “it is the right thing to do.”

Yet at the same time, Silas observed that many other leaders did “hold back” their support. He offered an example that illustrated the complexity and dynamics of the interrelationship between the first-generation and the local-born cohort; it had to do with a different convictions regarding what constitutes authentic worship. Growing up in the secular and multicultural milieu in Canada, many local-born were influenced by contemporary music in terms of its style and ethos and desired to worship in a similar style, favoring musical instruments such as guitar and drums rather than relying on piano and organ. In particular, Silas singled out one particular contemporary Christian musical movement led by a ministry called Hillsong that fashioned a new paradigm of worship making use of multimedia formats such as slides and videos. This school of worship philosophy tended to be very animated, with a band-like atmosphere and a pop music ambience. Silas explained:

That’s why they need to use the Hillsong, you know, when you watch all those video or the worship from Hillsong. The whole congregation or the whole church is worshipping with more explicit way to express their worship.

Conversely, the older Chinese generation was raised in a completely different tradition that favored hymnody with piano as the primarily instrument. Rooted in a more conservative ethos, the immigrants preferred to worship in a more solemn style, one that

discouraged displays of visual expression and body movement. Rather than a band-based style favored by SGCCE, the first-generation preferred a choir-based model, which they believed was supposed to lead to a “deeper” worship experience. Silas commented: “For the first generation, they like to see their choir to sing the worship song. They would like to go back to the hymnody, which, to them, has more depth, more in-depth (experience).”

Silas further problematized this flashpoint as a conflict of theological conviction, asserting that “(the first-generation) theology, their spirituality, all play a part (in contributing to discord).” Though many churches permitted and even encouraged the second-generation to pursue and adopt a contemporary worship style, some still believed that this style was not “the official worship,” implying that it was not genuine or authentic. Thus these churches canceled the contemporary worship “according to (their) own values.” Silas observed: “There are some [who] “hold back.” I heard that there are some churches, they even cancel the new worship several years after they have been started. They take away the contemporary worship . . . and go back to the traditional worship.”

On a deeper level, Silas hypothesized, the rejection of “performance-oriented” worship had its root in the immigrants’ desire to stay connected with a spirituality that reflected the culture of the “old home.” Given the amount of turmoil immigrants had to face in Canada, there had been already “too much changes for them” in the assimilation process. Yet the religious institution was the arena that could “reproduce traditions and maintain certain pattern of life” for these immigrants (Breton, 2010, p. 100). Many of them found solace in maintaining a style or tradition that reflected “their own

spirituality,” something that they felt comfortable with and that could mimic a “back home” experience. The idea of change fatigue or resistance to change showed up in another context. Silas related a conversation with an older “senior” pastor at a Chinese church about his mentality in dealing with his new ecclesiastical context in Canada.

According to Silas, the man stated:

In my first 20 years in ministry, I build up the team. We have a good team. We don't even need to do much communication, and we've grown up together from our teenage years, and (we) served in 20s, in 30s, and in 40s, and (we) came to Canada, and now we're 60s.

Silas added, “The second 20 years in ministry, they have a hard time to work with different people from different denominations, and now they need to work with the second-generation. (There were) too much changes to them.”

Another seed of discontent could be postulated from the perspective of value and investment. The contemporary style of music required a new set of equipment to create and sustain the ambience of worship. Thus demands began to emerge from the local-born for a “better projector, better sound system, and better sermon.” Not sharing the same value, the immigrant leaders wanted to “limit the expense on all those material things.”

Silas theorized that conflict such as this had caused the exodus to happen. He further hypothesized that the second-generation's exit was indeed silent. Silas added:

They leave with respect, saying: “You guys are doing your own thing. That's good for you, but I have my own spiritual desires to go forth.” And so they don't stand up to criticize (but) rather to move on to find another church.

The discussion then turned to an examination of such leadership issues as decision-making and leadership development at the immigrant church. In reflecting on the issue of “who is in charge,” Silas offered his perspective: “I think this is one of the problems that the first-generation immigrant Chinese church has struggled [with],” and he traced the root of the problem to a fundamental structural issue. Situated in a bicultural milieu (i.e., Canadian and Chinese) and operating in three different languages (i.e., Cantonese, Mandarin, and English), most of “the (Chinese) churches in North America (have) stem(ed) off from the Cantonese congregation as their (founders).” Silas observed that the first-generation “have been the leaders for all these years” and therefore they were the *de facto* decision makers. These leaders “have their own values which have been cultivated in Hong Kong back to 30, 40 years ago . . . (and) their values have (not) been changed much.” Consequently, many of these pastors exhibited resistance to adopting new ideas or models of ministry. Silas commented further on the mentality of the first-generation pastors: “They don’t see (the need to change). It’s hard for the first-generation to listen to their children’s leadership (when they) want to try to follow the Canadian churches. They just don’t see the value of those changes.” Facing such a reluctance to change on the part of the immigrant leaders and realizing they were not in the position to make further progress, SGCCE chose to back off and “to leave the church rather than change their mother church.”

The next leadership issue was related to second-generation leadership development at the immigrant church. Silas contrasted the way this issue was addressed in the Chinese Canadian immigrant church and the way it was handled in the church of

Hong Kong, which he believed to be less “conservative” than the Chinese Canadian church. Unlike the Hong Kong church, which allowed “more 30 to 40 years old younger generation to pick up the leadership position,” the Chinese immigrant church did not turn over the reins. Silas commented: “In Canada, they do not let the 30 or 40 years old (local-born) to pick up the leadership (position on) the Board.” Silas observed that even though this group had “been having certain status from their career or from the society,” the local-born of this age group “do not have much to say. . . . they would kind of respect and submit to their uncle and aunties, their parents, and their leadership.”

When I asked how far in advance he thought the immigrant church leadership in general saw the leakage trend coming, Silas offered his opinion:

I think they see it but don't recognize it is there. The problem from the first-generation leaders . . . (is that some) see that there will be a problem in advance. I heard some first-generation leaders, they see that eventually, the church will hand [leadership] over to the second-generation, and they would like to train the new leaders. Some of them do, but mostly don't. I would say [the] majority didn't see it or take action.

Silas further suggested that the reactive nature of the Chinese immigrant church leadership might be attributable to the traditional Chinese agricultural background. In such a tradition, farmers, as a metaphors for leaders, “try to keep it safe so that they have the harvest next season. So the agricultural culture is kind of more reactive . . . than proactive (when) compared with the business culture of (the West).” Thus, to Silas, this reserved and reactive culture was linked to the mentality of resistance or of anticipating the need to support such ideas. Because of this reactive nature, many of the leaders were resigned to the notion that they were powerless in stemming the tide of the leakage and

appeared to feel that the outcome was perhaps inevitable: “I think they are kind of accept this,” Silas remarked. Silas further recalled conversations with these leaders: “Some first-generation leaders said that it is like that. Let us accept that. Our Chinese churches has long way to go to change, okay.” Although other leaders did not want to give up the struggle after having nurtured SGCCE for “15 or 20 years,” Silas observed, they still could not see the root cause of the exodus. He added: “They want to do something about it, but what they need (to) know (is) that they need to change, to (change) their customs and worship style, (and) they need to pay the price (for the change).” To effect any change to address the leakage issue, Silas concluded, these older church leaders would “need to change their paradigm.”

The interview then turned to his role as a senior pastor at a Chinese immigrant church. Silas reiterated that when he came to this current church, he set a goal that he would develop the English ministry further, because “it is the future of this church.” Under his leadership, he had started to restructure the church ministry in such a way that it would grant a “high level of autonomy” to each congregation within his church. To that end, Silas talked about assigning authority and creating flexibility for the English elders together with the English ministry team so that they would be fully responsible for developing the direction of the English ministry.

I then asked how, under this new model, the church board viewed the budgeting process in terms of who had the authority to plan, submit, and approve the budget for the English ministry. Silas replied that it was the collective responsibility of the English elders, deacons, and staff of the English congregation to plan and submit the budget,

which was then approved by the board. If the budget was put together according to the pre-published guidelines of iteming and accounting for the ministry activities, the board would just “rubber-stamp” it. Silas wanted to be a servant-leader rather than a command-and-control head of the board in facilitating the discussion and mobilization of ministry at this church, even though he carried the title of senior pastor.

When I asked whether there was anything else he wanted to comment on regarding second-generational leakage, Silas offered two more observations. First, he said he believed that the whole notion of “respecting elders” might be a disguise for the second-generation’s disdain for the first-generation. Silas spoke about the local-born’s mindset in terms of how they “looked down” on the first-generation because the latter offered no “creative ideas” in addressing their needs. As a result some left, without wanting to discuss the discontent with their leadership, resigning themselves to the notion that there was no possibility of achieving an innovative breakthrough. The second observation Silas discussed concerned the mentality of the SGCCE who left: the mainstay of the parents’ congregation. Silas suggested that the local-born felt free to leave because “the mother church would stay.” Silas elaborated that this observation extended from the first. The second-generation believed that not only was there no creative solution but also that there would be no solution at all proffered by the first-generation. Since the immigrant church’s existence could continue to be justified by the influx of immigrants and the church was there to meet their needs, the only way to break the impasse, as far as the local-born were concerned, was to “leave and search for a better congregational environment. Silas further postulated that “the second-generation had the concept that

the immigrant church would not change, could not change, do not want to change and is resistant to change.”

Finally, Pastor Silas identified one more reason for the SGCCE’s departure: “They left for content.” He cited teaching about sexual orientation as an example. Silas lamented that preaching at an immigrant church on issues of sexuality was not encouraged because the Chinese culture tended to be conservative when it came to discussing this issue, treating it as a taboo. Yet “the Canadian churches have been talking about homosexuality for a long time.” Confronted with issues such as sexuality on a day-to-day basis at school, for instance, the younger generation longed for relevant teaching that addressed their curiosity but found it wanting at the Chinese church. In this context, Brain further identified a group of younger-generation Chinese Canadian Christians who would attend services at Canadian church just to listen to the sermon but would continue fellowshiping at the ethnic church. I asked him why that would be the case. He hypothesized that although the second-generation was drawn by “the content-rich teaching” of the Canadian churches, they still preferred to socialize with their friends at the immigrant church because of the long-lasting relationships they had with people at that church. He further opined that this preference was due to the “individualistic mentality of Canadians” as opposed to the mindset of the Chinese, who valued “communities” where relationships had been fostered and maintained.

**Synopsis of interview with second Chinese immigrant pastor: Adam Wang.**

Adam Wang was a full-time church minister who had just transitioned from his former church in the city to an evangelical Chinese immigrant church as a senior pastor in a

suburb of a major city in Canada. I came to know him through my ecclesiastic network of friends and pastors. He agreed to be interviewed on a winter morning at a quiet corner in a shopping mall.

We started the conversation by talking about his experience in supporting the second-generation Chinese Canadian ministry. Adam first spoke about the attempts he and his church made to learn from the blunders committed by the earlier Chinese immigrant pastors in this regard. The first mistake they tended to make was in the area of exercising power and authority. Mostly raised in the traditional Chinese culture that favored hierarchy and a “centralized power base and structure,” these earlier leaders were perceived as being “authoritative” and as such, decision-making authority was limited to the “senior pastor” or the “church board,” many of whom didn’t “speak English very well” or “attend the English congregation.” In such a cultural milieu, SGCCE were often treated as just “children” or “Sunday school students.” Adam said that “to rectify the mistake,” he started an English-speaking ministry at his former church with one key principle in mind: “Position it as an equal kind of congregation within a church.” He insisted on establishing a “partnership between [the] Mandarin and the English, even though the English congregation is much smaller.” This leadership posture and practice of partnership created an “atmosphere” that “the English-speaking [congregation] is an equal partner in the gospel (ministry).” Consequently, the second-generation attendees “were really happy, they felt that they’re at home. They had that feeling of ‘Oh, we are one family.’”

Equal partnership in this case implied a high degree of self-determination for ministry. Adam suggested that a church could set up a separate and independent board to facilitate such autonomy for the English ministry. Alternatively, local-born ministry could continue to be subjected to one overall church board with adequate representation of both Chinese speaking and English speaking leaders so as to facilitate communication and understanding. Adam pointed out that his church had adopted this second model whereas other churches favored the first. No matter which model was used, he asserted, the key was to “give some sense of empowerment” to the English-speaking congregants, enabling them to deploy their own ministry as an “equal partner.”

As the interview transitioned into a discussion of the leakage of the second-generation Chinese Canadian Christians from their parents’ church, I asked Adam whether he had heard or been aware of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon. Adam answered with bemusement: “In most Chinese churches, we do know that there’s a silent exodus or a loud exodus.” He further suggested three possible causes for the leakage. Chief among them was the one related to “church conflicts” or “disputes,” ecclesiastical squabbles that he characterized as the churches’ “inner fights (with) a lot of power struggle: power struggle between the pastors, power struggle between their leaders.” Two outcomes typically ensued. First, internecine discord resulted in blockage of communications among the leaders: “The leadership is fighting each other all the time and it’s very difficult for them to sit down and you don’t talk to each other — ‘Okay, what’s the problem here?’” In such an environment, leadership behaviors degenerated to such an extent that leaders had become oblivious to issues such as the exodus

phenomenon. Because the leaders were preoccupied with in-fighting, Adam argued, they “don’t want to face the truth. They don’t want to make you know, like this is the reality that they have to understand and face. They don’t sit down enough to talk about these things.” Second, regarding the local-born, Adam noted that they valued “authentic relationship, authenticity, in their belief and credibility, and want people to treat each other with respect.” Yet in an environment that was fraught with conflict, respect tended to vaporize quickly. Adam concluded that “once the respect is gone, it’s very difficult to talk about the leadership issues in church because you have lost certain credibility with the congregation.” With that in mind, the local-born cohort could easily become frustrated by the rancor and want to disassociate themselves from the church. The typical reaction was: “Enough is enough. I think I don’t want to be here.” Adam observed, “Some did choose to leave. And some choose to leave to go on to other churches, new church. Some choose to leave for good.”

The second cause that led to the exodus of SGCCE had to do with the cultural differences between SGCCE and the first-generation believers. For many of the local-born, some areas of the differences had become so irreconcilable that they had no choice but to leave. Adam did elaborate on the cultural difference between the groups later in the interview.

The third cause Adam mentioned was rooted in theological differences between by the two generations. Adam contended that the theology the first-generation immigrant faithful came to subscribe to was more “conservative, traditional and classical.” With that mindset, they did not want to explore “too much” any “new dimensions of faith.”

Conversely, being raised in a “post modern” culture, the local-born were “much more open to different ideas.” And as far as faith was concerned, they wanted to “explore and experience for ourselves.” This attitude reflected a way of attempting to assert knowledge or truth not by way of cerebral comprehension but via experiential attestation. Therefore the local-born suggested: “We want to make sure that what you told us, you know, what you parents told us is true” by exploring different approaches to authenticate the claim of truth. One example Adam said came to mind was how his English pastor adopted an “open table” theological stance when administering the rite of communion by inviting all believers to come participate, rather than adhering to the more traditional stance of restricting participation to the baptized faithful. To the first-generation Chinese leaders, this instance was appalling and they “just pulled their hair out and screamed and (were) really angry.” Regarding the second-generation, however, “a lot of them just said, ‘What’s the big deal?’” Such rancor over theological differences could in fact cause the exit to occur, as Adam attested: “Theological issue, it can also cause, you know, exodus.”

I then asked Adam how proactive the Chinese immigrant church leadership had been in taking action to address these issues. His answer was swift: “Not enough.” He further expanded his perspective by suggesting that the best thing most church leadership could do would be to make token actions such as to “throw in a workshop or two to the leaders and also perhaps to ministry council people and say: ‘Okay, let’s think about this issue today.’” No real meaningful actions would be taken unless leadership sensed that crisis was looming that might “rift the church” or “tear it apart.” Wrapped in such a reserved and reactive mentality, Adam concluded, “most Chinese churches would kind of

like sweep the dust under the carpet and say ‘Well, we can wait. We can – it’s not that bad.’”

Adam commented further that most Chinese church leaders did not understand the second-generation’s aspirations mainly because “they don’t communicate. They’re probably not willing to put their feet in the shoe of the younger generation.” The lack of communication sprang from the fact that the two generations had been “living in a different — very different (cultural) context.” Being immigrants to Canada, most of the older leaders were not “schooled” in Western culture. When it came to comprehending the cultural nuances and subtleties of SGCCE, immigrant church leaders simply admitted: “Sometimes, we just don’t understand.” The situation was further compounded by “a refusal to dialogue” between the two groups. Adam firmly believed that the exercise of dialogue and communication was fundamental to enhancing mutual understanding between the generations. Through this exercise, he commented, both sides could “kind of loosen up a little bit to try to understand each other’s position. It’s very important.”

As for his approach at the new church he had just engaged with, Adam indicated that he was making an attempt to proactively address SGCCE’s needs by adding capacity to the pastoral leadership. In so doing, he attempted to change the pastoral philosophy and approach. Adam asserted that very often, Chinese church leaders would merely “hire (an) English-speaking pastor,” instructing him/her by saying, “Okay, here, you take care of them (English speaking congregants),” and then concluding that “we have done our duties.” To buck the trend, Adam wanted to undertake a holistic “one-church approach” on “how we can approach it differently.” His vision was to recruit “bilingual and

bicultural leaders who have a little bit of sense, you know, ‘Oh, okay. I may not understand fully but at least you know, I’m willing to try.’” These “dynamic leaders” should be “able to shepherd the Chinese but also, when required, shepherd the English and vice versa.”

In closing, Adam cited a personal example that illustrated the subtlety of the different cultural perspectives of the two generations. He first talked about how as a parent, he faced a dilemma in relating to his children regarding the things that he did for them. These actions were sometimes perceived by the younger generation as “manipulative.” Adam commented further: “You know, from the parents’ perspective, we want to shower our children with love and we try to do everything for their good and for their benefit. That’s our thinking.” But he observed that this mentality of parental care and oversight had crept into the ministry philosophy of Chinese immigrant churches, where many of the parents took up leadership positions. A vivid example came to his mind when he recalled a decision made by one of the Chinese churches he used to attend before he entered into ministry. The leadership at one point was pondering how best to address the growth of the immigrant population as well as the rising attendance of the SGCCE congregation. A decision was made to erect a new building nearby to facilitate the growth of the immigrant attendance and at the same time, a decision was also made by the leaders to “give the old church building to the English congregation.” Yet to their astonishment, the first-generation leaders found that “the English-speaking congregation doesn’t want that church building.” This episode demonstrated the different perspectives of these two groups regarding church ministry. The younger ones approached this

decision with much suspicion, asking openly: “Oh, so you’re building a new building. Okay. And you tell me that there’s nothing wrong with the old building?” With this decision, SGCCE believed that they were not being treated as equal partners but were relegated to using a building the first generation did not want. The Chinese-speaking leaders, on the other hand, were appalled with this reaction. To the immigrant leaders, their mindset about the church building was:

Wow, this is like your ancestral home. You should treasure it you know. You should be grateful for it. Your parents sacrificed so much to build up this church. You know how much this church building cost? . . . And now you can have this house, right? We give it to you as a gift.

Yet the English congregation’s response was curt and simple: “Yeah, but this is not what I want.” They further explained:

I’d rather have a basement or a bungalow or something but you give me a 5,000 square feet monster house. And I don’t have money to maintain it. I don’t even know how to drill a hole, let alone repair some of the damages. So what am I going to do with the building?

In looking further into this example, Adam recognized that the immigrant leaders truly believed that they had the best interests of the younger generation in mind. But their good intention backfired on them: “We are deciding the future of our children to a point that sometimes we think that you know, what we do is for their good but perhaps not.”

Adam noticed that this type of situation of missing each other’s perspective and therefore misunderstanding each other’s intention at the Chinese church very often festered first as a result of something small and then “snowballed” into a “huge rift.” But the misunderstanding worked both ways. Adam also noticed that there was a sense of

“entitlement” seeping through the mindset of the younger generation. For example, the two congregations might both have a line-item for a particular office supply item in their budgets, but the number on the two budgets could be very different. Whereas the Chinese congregation valued frugality and wished to purchase the supply in the cheapest way, SGCCE had a very different idea and argued, “We want the best. We love to have this. We don’t want the other. We don’t want the cheaper version.” Incidents such as this have often become the flash points for the “potential conflicts and struggles between the two groups.”

With this in mind, we ended the interview and I thanked Adam for his participation.

**Triangulation analysis: Group one.** The intention of conducting the triangulation interviews with the first-generation Christian leaders from the Chinese Canadian church was to provide completeness and validation of data gathered through the interviews of the primary participants in all cases. Therefore, the analysis of the triangulation interview aimed not to surface any themes of their own similar to those of the primary participants but rather to examine the salient data and topics from this group that validated, corroborated, or refuted the themes or data of any one of the cases or all cases. The following sections provide synopses of such data and themes.

*On the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon and how the Chinese Canadian Church has viewed it.* Both pastors interviewed in this group acknowledged that the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon had been occurring in the context of the Chinese immigrant church. Silas observed that significant numbers of the cohort of SGCCE had left their

parents' congregation and that some church leaders were aware of the phenomenon on the surface. However, most did not seem to grasp the gravity of the situation and therefore were either unable to respond to it or took no proactive actions to stem the tide.

Silas explained:

I think (the first generation leaders) see it but don't recognize it is there. The problem (is that some) see that there will be a problem in advance. Some of them do, but mostly don't. I would say [the] majority didn't see it or take action.

For those immigrant church leaders who recognized that phenomenon, many resigned themselves to the notion that they were powerless in stemming the tide of the leakage and admitted that the outcome was perhaps inevitable. Silas noted, "Some first-generation leaders said that it is like that. Let us accept that. Our Chinese church has long way to go to change." Yet for those who were not willing to give up the struggle just yet, they still could not see the root cause and therefore were not prepared to pay the price to make the changes necessary to address the issue.

Adam suggested that the phenomenon was not so silent because it was highly noticeable: "In most Chinese churches, we do know that there's a silent exodus or a loud exodus." Analogous to Silas's observation, Adam asserted that foot-dragging and reactivity was the prevalent stance adopted by immigrant church leaders in addressing the leakage. No real meaningful actions were taken unless the crisis loomed large such that it might "rift the church" or "tear it apart." Wrapped in a more reserved and reactive mentality, he concluded, "most Chinese churches would kind of like sweep the dust under the carpet and say: 'Well, we can wait. We can — it's not that bad.'"

*On root causes of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon.* Adam offered three reasons for SGCCE’s departure. The first had to do with avoidance of conflict at the immigrant church. SGCCE valued “authentic relationship, authenticity in their belief and credibility, and (a desire) to treat each other with respect.” Yet the Chinese Canadian churches were rife with the internecine conflict among the leaders that inevitably led to an absence of trust and respect. Thus the SGCCE became frustrated by the rancor and wanted to disassociate themselves from it. Adam observed: “Some did choose to leave. And some choose to leave to go on to other churches. Some choose to leave for good.”

The second reason was related to cultural misunderstandings between the SGCCE and the first-generation immigrant leaders. Adam noted that the two generations had been “living in a very different (cultural) context.” As immigrants to Canada, most of the first-generation were not “schooled” in the Western culture and could not comprehend the cultural nuances and subtleties of the SGCCE. Well-intended actions by the first-generation could be interpreted as deceptive moves by their children. Adam cited the gifting of the church building by the first-generation to the SGCCE as an example. SGCCE approached the decision with much suspicion, postulating that something must have been wrong with the building. The suspicion reflected an assumption that the SGCCE were not treated as equal partners and their input was never sought in terms of what they really wanted: respect and equal partnership, not parental care or a “gift” like a run-down building.

The third cause Adam mentioned was rooted in theological differences of the two generations. The theology the first-generation immigrant faithful subscribed to was more

“conservative, traditional and classical.” With that mindset, they did not want to explore “too much” any “new dimensions of faith.” Conversely, being raised in a “post modern” culture, SGCCE were “much more open to different ideas” and wanted to “explore and experience for ourselves” when it came to faith. This thinking reflected an attempt to assert knowledge or truth not by way of cerebral comprehension but via experiential attestation. In other words, SGCCE argued: “We want to make sure that what you told us, what you parents told us are [sic] true” by exploring different approaches to authenticate the claim of truth. Disagreement over theological stances could in fact cause the exit to occur, as Adam observed: “theological issue can also cause exodus.”

Silas also problematized one of the reasons of departure for SGCCE along the lines of differences in theology or spirituality. He cited the example of the two generations’ different worship services. On the surface, these differences may appear to be merely a matter of style and preference. Growing up in the secular and multicultural milieu of Canada, many SGCCE were heavily influenced by contemporary music in terms of its style and ethos and desired to worship in a similar style, favoring musical instruments such as guitars and drums rather than relying on piano and organ. Conversely, rooted in a more conservative ethos, the immigrants were inclined to worship in a solemn style, discouraging displays of visual expression and body movement. Disapproving of the band-based style adopted by the local-born, the first-generation favored a choir-based model, arguing that it led to a “deeper” worship experience.

Yet on a deeper level, Silas hypothesized that the aversion of the older generation to a “performance-oriented” worship style had its root in the immigrants’ desire to stay

connected with a spirituality that reflected the culture of the “old home.” After facing so much turmoil in the immigration process and in adjusting to their new lives in Canada, the first-generation were simply tired of all the change. For them, church represented the arena that “can reproduce traditions and maintain certain pattern of life” (Breton, 2010, p. 100), so the first-generation found solace in adhering to a style that reflected “their own spirituality,” something that mimicked a “back home” experience that they felt comfortable with. Such a rift in the mindset of the generations had no doubt caused SGCCE to leave their parents’ church to seek a better experience.

Silas identified resistance to change on the part of the immigrant church leaders as another cause of friction between the generations. The reluctance first stemmed from a fundamental structural issue. Silas observed that the first-generation “have been the leaders for all these years” in founding and leading the church as the *de facto* decision makers. Many of the older leaders “have their own values, which have been cultivated in Hong Kong back to 30, 40 years ago . . . and their values have (not) been changed much.” Consequently, many of these pastors resisted any new ideas or models of ministry. Silas commented further on the reluctant mentality of the first-generation pastors: “It’s hard for the first-generation to listen to their children’s leadership (when they) want to try something (new) and to follow the Canadian churches. They just don’t see the values of those changes.” Silas also attributed such resistance to change to the reactive nature attributable to the traditional Chinese agricultural background. In such a tradition, farmers, as a metaphor for church leaders, “try to keep it safe so that they have the harvest next season. So the agricultural culture is kind of more reactive.” For Silas, the

mentality of resistance or slowness to adopt new ideas was deeply rooted in such a tradition. With this backdrop in mind, some SGCCE did not believe there could be any solution at all to the conflict with the first-generation, and the only way to break the impasse between the two generations was for the SGCCE “to leave” and seek a better congregational environment that fostered transformation and creativity. To sum up: “The second-generation had the concept that the immigrant church would not change, could not change, do[es] not want to change and is resistant to change.”

Finally, Silas suggested that the departure of the SGCCE had to do with a desire for more relevant teaching and preaching. Topics such as sexual orientation were seldom discussed at the Chinese immigrant churches, whose reserved culture tended to treat such topics as taboo. Yet “the Canadian churches have been talking about homosexuality for a long time.” Confronted with such issues on a day-to-day basis at school, SGCCE longed for relevant preaching that would address their curiosity but found it wanting at the Chinese church. Seeking for “content-rich teaching” and not getting it at the immigrant church, the younger generation left for good to attend venues that provided relevant and contextual teaching that would guide their faith journey in the broader Canadian society.

*On the cultural value of respect for elders.* Both Silas and Adam discussed the Asian value of respect for elders. Silas argued that such value was a double-edged sword. In his mind, the value could be a good norm for practicing honor in the ethnic community; but at the same time, it could curb truthful and open dialogue. As a deferential value, respect for elders was saliently at work in the Chinese Canadian context in a way that might circumvent conflict and confrontation. Silas spoke about the local-

born refraining from discussion of their deep-seated desire to be equal partners with the first-generation leaders in spite of their own accomplishments of “having certain status from their career or from the society.” He attributed this stance to the concept of submission to elders: “They would kind of respect and . . . submit to their uncle and aunts, their parents and their leadership.” When such a desire to be equal was not addressed, exodus occurred and the exit was indeed silent when no complaint was raised. Silas added:

They leave with respect, saying: “You guys are doing your own thing. That’s good for you, but I have my own spiritual desires to go forth.” And so they don’t stand up to criticize (but) move on to find another church.

The value of respecting the elders could also be a disguise for the SGCCE’s disdain for the first-generation. SGCCE “looked down” on the first-generation because the latter offered no “creative ideas” in addressing their needs. As a result, some left without wanting to discuss their discontent with their leadership, resigning themselves to the idea that there was no possibility for innovative breakthrough. On this note, Adam chimed in with his own assessment. In an environment that was fraught with conflict, respect tended to vaporize quickly. Adam concluded that “once the respect is gone, it’s very difficult to talk about the leadership issues in church because you have lost certain credibility with (SGCCE).”

*On finding the way out: Attempts to stem the tide.* Both pastors made spirited attempts to address the leakage issue in their ministries. Yet neither saw the solution as being a total separation of the congregations into independent, self-reliant entities. Each pastor attempted to create space within the pathway of continuous evolution as discussed

in Chapter II to facilitate dialogue, partnership, and autonomy with the SGCCE under the umbrella of an overall church board that would invite SGCCE's participation in the decision-making process. Adam theorized that the key to stopping the leakage of SGCCE was to treat them as equal partners with a high degree of self-determination for ministry. This stance was critical to SGCCE as they had come of age and grown up under a regime of centralized leadership of the first-generation. Adam reasoned that the key blunder earlier immigrant church leaders made was in the area of exercising power and authority. Raised in the traditional Chinese culture that favored hierarchy and a "centralized power base and structure," these leaders were perceived as "authoritative," and decision-making authority tended to be limited to the "senior pastor" or the "church board." To allay the SGCCE's concern, Adam suggested that a church could set up a separate and independent board to facilitate autonomy. Alternatively, the local-born's ministry could continue to be subjected to one overall church board with adequate representation of both Chinese-speaking and English-speaking leaders to facilitate communication and understanding. No matter which solution the church might adopt, the key was to "give some sense of empowerment" to SGCCE to deploy their own ministry as an "equal partner."

Adam commented further that most Chinese church leaders did not understand the second-generation's aspiration mainly because "they don't communicate, (and are) not willing to put their feet in the shoe of the younger generation." The ability to understand the aspiration and perspective of both sides was what the necessary communication was all about. Fundamental to achieving such an objective was the recruitment of bilingual

and bicultural pastoral leaders who could facilitate such communication between the two generations. Adam added that these “dynamic leaders” should be “able to shepherd the Chinese but also, when required, shepherd the English.”

In his role as a senior pastor at a Chinese immigrant church, Silas established a goal of further developing the English ministry in a way that granted a “high level of autonomy” to the congregation. To that end, authority was assigned to the English elders together with the English ministry team so that they were fully accountable for developing the direction of the English ministry, empowering them to plan and implement programs directed toward that goal. It was the collective responsibility of the English elders and the ministry team to recommend the budget, which was to be then approved by the board. Silas believed that by so doing, and by rejecting the command-and-control leadership style in favor of being a servant-leader, he could achieve the facilitation of dialogue and mobilization of ministry at this church with SGCCE.

**Summary.** In short, the triangulation analysis of the interviews with Silas and Adam surfaced the following key points: (a) awareness of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon and how the Canadian Chinese church views it, (b) root causes of the “Silent Exodus,” (c) the cultural value of respect for elders, and (d) finding the way out. In the next section, I report on the data collected and their analysis for Triangulation Group Two.

### **Church Leaders From the Congregations (Triangulation Group Two)**

To triangulate the data collected in the cases I also examined interview data from three church leaders from congregations the participants were attending at the time of

interview. Specifically, Charles Ho is the senior pastor of the church that two of the participants from Case One attend. Tim Conrad is the senior pastor of the congregations of all three participants from Case Three. Finally, Issac Gregorcic is a minister from a church that one of the participants from Case Four attends. The interview synopses are documented in the following sections.

**Synopsis of interview with first pastor: Tim Conrad.** Tim Conrad was the senior pastor of a multiethnic church in the Christian & Missionary Alliance denomination in a major city in Western Canada. His church was the one at which all Case 3 participants worshiped at the time of the interview. I came to know Tim through my denominational contact, and he agreed to be interviewed on a July morning at a conference venue.

I first asked him to comment on an article he wrote in the 1990s about a trend of establishing multiethnic churches. Tim replied by tracing his spiritual journey as a start-up church planter in Orange County in California. He reminisced about his original aspiration:

I had been involved in planting a primarily Asian church in Orange County California. And our hope was to be pan-Asian, multiethnic. It was primarily Asian. But I felt that God was calling me not (necessarily to establish) a larger church (but) to be engaged in a community of faith that would be truly welcoming of people, of all races, of all cultures, all sorts of economic backgrounds and all faiths or lack thereof.

What had “profoundly shaped (his) thinking” was Tim’s understanding of the biblical principle of acceptance and forgiveness. He claimed that:

Whether we're Jew or Gentiles, slave or free, we have been brought together in Christ. (If we separate ourselves based on ethnicity, then) the gospel's power in Christ, death on the cross isn't sufficient to bring us to God as equals.

Tim acknowledged that this vision was diametrically opposed to the homogeneous unit principle espoused by McGavran (1959), which states that "from a sociological perspective, we can probably plant a fast-growing church and be a focused ethnic group." However, he was convinced that this was not what the Gospel called the followers of Jesus Christ to do. Tim reasoned that "if you show how the gospel brings us together across the different cultural and ethnic divides, the church may grow more slowly, but it would be more reflective of the multicultural multi-socioeconomic kingdom of Jesus." This line of theological thinking had guided him when he took up the pastoral leadership at the church attended by the three participants. With that in mind, Tim started to carve out a vision and mission for Temple:

Our vision is really simple: It's to be a place where people of different background, racially, ethnically, culturally, socioeconomically, spiritually, can come and discover or rediscover Jesus . . . a place of healing for the broken. And a mission-sending base back into our city and wherever in the world God leads us.

Tim reiterated that "it's been the mission all along . . . informed by text like Galatians 2 and the belief that, whether we're slave or free, we are all equal at the foot of the cross."

However, this vision of his did not compel Tim to discredit his own ethnic heritage. As a visible minority himself, Tim felt that he was more "aware of the different influences of race, culture, and economic background" than his Caucasian counterparts. In addition, he purposefully and openly discussed "my cultural inheritance as a Japanese

person and how it shifts my thinking and how the gospel transforms that part of who I am.” In fact, he observed that when he “referenced his cultural heritage” and values such as his disciplined work ethic, Asian congregants felt “a sense of resonance” and connection that “a pastor from a cultural[ly] dominant group who perhaps has never had a cross-cultural immersion experience” would not have been able to establish.

With this as a backdrop, we then discussed the duality of ethnic culture through the lens of faith in a manner that both engaged and critiqued culture. First, Tim acknowledged that “every culture in some ways resembles the image of God.” The other side of the coin was that “there’s also sinful fallenness manifesting in the culture.” As a Christian and a pastor, Tim would “encourage people to embrace those parts of their culture that are congruent with the kingdom of God.” For example, this practice necessitated opting for collectivism over individualism, embracing “values not just about your own personal flourishing or self-interest, but what is good for the group.” Furthermore, Christians were to practice any “Confucius value that happens to cohere well with Christianity (such as) honoring people with age and experience, which (is also evident) in Hebrew culture.” On the other hand, “there are parts of Asian culture that can be antithetical [to] and undermining” of faith practice. Tim pointed to an example to bolster his argument: “too much of consciousness of what other people think and desperately trying to validate our existence through achievement in the eyes of others, through education, professional advancement, accumulation of wealth, and so forth.” As a pastoral leader, Tim took pride in addressing these values with a prophetic voice:

I address those (values) with the gospel, trying to affirm the beauty of culture, whether it’s Asian or other. Then (I) also seek to be a prophetic voice to speak

against the values of our society, whether Asian or not, that undermine the values and the ethos of the kingdom of Jesus.

Tim judiciously spoke against some of the salient Asian values that resonate well with Asian congregants through the lens of faith:

I think that for many people, Asian in particular, but not just exclusively Asian, we have this feeling that we need to achieve something significant outside ourselves. And so we become so driven that we neglect the cultivation of our own inner life and our life with God.

Another critique centered on the individualistic propensity of the Western culture that might undermine the communality of the Christian community. Tim explained:

As someone coming from Asia, originally from Japan, I would from time to time name the individualism that is sort of a part of Western culture and is part of the air we breathe, and I would re-interpret text in light of the more communal mindset of the first-century world of Palestine.

Fully recognizing that culture deeply influences the way we came to perceive any narrative about the world around us, Tim took on the role not only of cultural entrepreneur but also of contextual expositor of the sacred text, translating the teachings of Jesus into lessons relevant to a contemporary setting that were acceptable to his multiethnic congregants. Tim went on to discuss the values of Temple that could best be symbolized as the five R's: (a) relating to God and other people; (b) relying on the spirit; (c) raising disciples; (d) reconciling; and (e) reaching out. Of these five values, Tim singled out reconciliation as the one that undergirded the ethos of Temple that reflected a "visible demonstration of the gospel's power to bring us together across cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic lines."

Another key teaching Tim championed at Temple was the concept of loving “people who are different from us.” Tim explained in detail why this concept was essential. He observed that attendees at Temple could find it “possible to be technically multiethnic but (still) to stay (in contact with) very much people within (their) own cohort,” reflecting a deep sense of homophily. Yet Tim argued that of all the distinctive elements that set Christianity apart from, for example, Hinduism and Islam, it was not so much the ability to perform “miracles” in terms of speaking in tongues or performing healing but rather “the miracle of Black and White and Brown, people of different classes coming together. And only the gospel of Jesus Christ and the power of the spirit can do that.” In other words, Tim asserted:

The definitive sign that you belong to Jesus and that you’re filled with his spirit is not the capacity to speak in tongues or do a spectacular miracle, though God may grant those abilities, but it is love for people who are different from us.

Reflecting upon his theological stance, Tim acknowledged being greatly influenced by reading Martin Luther King Jr.’s “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” He further pointed to religious and human rights leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and Gandhi as his “heroes . . . who have reached across ethnic lines.” Their life examples inspired Tim to adopt a principle of ministry that was designed to “appeal to people to cross (the) lines of race and ethnicities to (focus on) our gift and passion and calling.” That said, it was decidedly not the purpose of Tim’s ministry to denigrate ethnicity because “ethnicity is always going to be part of any kind of human enterprise” and therefore the concept was unavoidable in conducting ministry in a human context. As a leader, Tim had to be “very self-aware (of) my own biases as a Japanese Canadian”

as well as the “strengths and the dysfunctions of my inherited culture.” By extension, the implication was that in a “(non)monolithic culture (such as) in Canada,” Tim recognized that he was “called to shape (his congregants) so as to be able to most aptly apply the gospel to their lives.”

With this as the backdrop, Tim attempted to, as a “cultural architect,” create “a place of welcome” at Temple that was “largely Asian, multiethnic, and multi-socioeconomic.” And Temple was a church that had members who were “CEOs, university professors, medical doctors, professional athletes, celebrities . . . homeless, people that are underemployed, and people who are under margins of poverty.”

The realization of the described ministry philosophy was not completely natural to Tim because he was raised with an elitist mentality and therefore naturally “gravitated towards the elite kind of (companion).” However, he acknowledged that “the gospel calls me to do the exact opposite.” Rooted in a biblical understanding of how God openly accepted human beings of all tribes, people and languages, Tim’s practice of hospitality, or “welcome” as he called it, sprang from his personal experience of always sojourning when younger and not having settled in at one place that he would call home. Having been born and raised in Tokyo, Tim moved to New York City at a young age, and then to London and then Vancouver. He returned to work in Tokyo in his 20s before pursuing theological studies and ministry in Boston, Oxford, and Los Angeles. Though he was Japanese by descent, he felt that he was not fully embraced as a bona fide Japanese while working in Tokyo. Conversely, he was never completely accepted as an equal while living in North America. Tim admitted, “I’ve never really felt at home

anywhere.” This experience of unsettledness drove him to practice “a table of welcome” wherever he had been, accepting people as they were, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or social or economic status. He recounted that no matter where he was, he would:

Set a table of welcome, a table where everyone will be welcome . . . whether a person is very successful in a worldly sense or pretty much in the margins, I’ve started to create a place of welcome through the gospel, through the spirit.

Tim’s personal conviction had transformed him into someone who saw his reality not from a vantage point of value-judgement but through the lens of God’s love, forgiveness, and unconditional acceptance. This personal conviction led to a ministry philosophy at Temple, where Tim became lead pastor and transformed what had been a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture into one that was now attracting multiethnic congregants who came from a wide spectrum of social and economic standings.

Central to the promotion and the realization of such a vision and practice of hospitality in Tim’s mind was the cultivation of “a healthy leadership.” Tim saw this as the key differentiator between Temple and an immigrant church where leadership was problematic. He elaborated further:

We’ve got a very engaged board; we’ve got a great staff. And that’s not perfect by any means but if my intuition and observation is (correct), there are many people who leave the so-called ethnic churches, the Chinese churches, because there is unnecessary conflict, perhaps inevitable conflict between the first- and second-generation over cultural matters or the secondary matters in some ways. And so they feel like it’s not just about the gospel or about Jesus but it’s about these power plays or about insecure leaders or leaders with big egos or a combination of both.

Healthy leadership meant an “engaged board” that was “centered in Christ” with “godly and humble” attributes. In addition, it also implied a staff that genuinely “like each other and get along so there’re not a lot of unnecessary conflicts.” Tim even put his reputation on the line when it came to establishing such a “healthy leadership” by promising any newcomers to Temple that they were:

Not going to have to spend political energy maneuvering behind the scenes because (Temple’s) arrows are pointed in the direction of the gospel moving through our lives and through this community and through this city (and) everywhere in the world God leads us.

As the interview drew to an end, I asked Tim whether there was anything he wanted to add to our discussion. He offered two additional reasons for Temple’s being attractive to SGCCE. First, he ruminated: “Part of the attraction of a church like Temple is that people who want to reach out to their colleagues at work or their fellow students who are not Asian can invite them easily to Temple.” In other words, Temple was somewhat ethnically neutral and yet still celebrated its diversity. Tim added:

If you’re Chinese and you have a White friend, Caucasian friend that you want to invite to church, you can do it to a place like Temple because it’s multiethnic. Conversely, if you’re a Caucasian and you’ve got an Asian friend, it’s also easier to invite your friend I think to a multiethnic church than [to] an all-White church because people feel like that they would be more comfortable.

Second, Tim added that “because (Temple) is multiethnic and because of the culture of welcome and trying to lower unnecessary barriers, it’s the easiest place to bring people who don’t believe but who maybe [are] spiritually curious.” Such an ethos and

community was “an attractive place for people, for people who are on the borderlines of faith.” Tim cited the positive experience of many of his attendees:

And so people say that this is one of the few churches that they’ve ever been to where people actually invite their friends who don’t believe, you know. So it’s encouraging and that’s part of the reason Temple is the way it is.

These attractive features of Temple were no accident, for they reflected Tim’s purposeful commitment to creating a safe haven where people could feel completely at ease and free of judgement. He added:

My vision is to always have that kind of church that people who otherwise don’t go to church would be welcomed. And that meant people who aren’t believers, but it also came to be a place of welcome for people who had been in disillusion, maybe by an ethnic church.

Tim expanded further on the last point regarding disillusion about the ethnic churches and contrasted it with his own style. He suggested that:

I think partly because of my style and my genuine love for people outside of faith and my comfort with them that there’s a kind of atmosphere. At certain times, it’s very hard (for the SGCCE at the ethnic church) to invite (friends), right? Because (the ambience is) embarrassing.

To further illustrate Temple’s ethos, Tim pointed to its rising attendance, especially on special occasions such as Christmas or Easter; at such times the church’s regular attendance doubled.

Tim stated that the core of Temple’s multiethnic diversity appeal lay with its strategic choice of being “outward” oriented, which meant that Temple was able to “connect with people and to reach with people who otherwise wouldn’t be in church.”

This orientation resonated well with the multicultural ethos and policy of Canada: acknowledging individual heritage but at the same time celebrating the diversity in a multiethnic, multiracial society that was Canada. Tim concluded:

We tend to be more honoring of the individual cultural inheritance that people have and to honor the beauty of that (heritage) which is true of Canada. I think that there's lots of room for diversity, not just racially and ethnically but ideologically too. And in that sense, I think we're shaped by that. There isn't this sense that everyone needs to fit into this one culture. And even the gospel is going to look different depending on the verses, there's Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John have slightly different emphasis because of their different backgrounds

On that thought, I thanked Tim for the interview.

**Synopsis of interview with second pastor: Charles Ho.** Charles Ho was a senior pastor of Salem in a major city in Western Canada. Born in Hong Kong and having moved to Canada with his family when he was 12, Charles was bi-vocational in the sense that he was running an ad agency as well as shepherding his flock. He came to me through my contact with the denomination of Christian and Missionary Alliance Canada and agreed to be interviewed on a summer afternoon at his office.

I started the interview by asking Charles to characterize Salem and describe how it had come into existence. He was concise in offering his opinion: Salem was "very much a second-generation Chinese church because that's really who we are with the people who started it." The impetus to start a new but unique church stemmed from having "much more aspiration in the things that we want to do and how we do it." Despite an aspiration to establish Salem as a multiethnic congregation, the "Chineseness" of the church revealed the reality that the "people who came were also pretty much of the

same demographics (i.e., Chinese) in the 5 to 7 years of church planting,” with half of the congregants being “bilingual or trilingual.” In reflecting upon this experience, Charles admitted that the thinking regarding establishing a multiethnic congregation was “a little bit more naïve” because the church was bounded by its demographic and “what ends up happening is (that) it’s just became an English-speaking Chinese church of [the] younger generation.” As a result, despite their lofty aspirations, the congregants at Salem were “ultimately Chinese” and “that Chinese identity is still very core to who we are as much as many people are born in Canada.” In addition, the ethnic composition of the congregants was inseparably bounded by the socialization process, which was pursued largely within their own Chinese ethnic circle. To illustrate the point, when Charles asked his parishioners, “How many of your friends are not Chinese?” their response was that “the percentage is extremely, extremely low (and) some of them don’t even have any.” Thus the termination of Salem as a Chinese congregation is perhaps inevitable and predictable. Charles added:

Because they’re going to be bringing their own friends, right? And if their friends are more multiethnic like in their own social network, of course, then they would bring that, but then the people who are at our church so happened that all their friends are probably Chinese, right?

Charles further asserted that his congregants’ socializing was heavily affected by the demographic of where they resided as well, as this major city on the West Coast celebrated a large Chinese Canadian population.

Another aspect of the earlier aspiration had to do with the desire to spur numeric growth for the local-born ministry at the immigrant church. Charles recalled the

observation at the time that the local-born ministry exhibited “rarely any growth.” To the extent that there was “growth,” it would be a natural extension of “kids graduating from children’s service or they came through Awana (i.e., an organized children’s program).” In a sentiment that reflected the lifecycle hypothesis of immigrant churches (Goette, 1993, 2001; Mullins, 1987), Charles at the time of the interview recognized that this pattern of growth, or lack thereof, was a natural part of the life cycle of the immigrant church. He concluded: “So I think part of it is true that for the Chinese church, the first-generation immigrants, that the core of who they are is in their ethnicity.” That said, he also attributed the lack of growth to the culture, lamenting, “I think the culture is the bigger part of it.” The ethnic Chinese culture erected boundaries that excluded other ethnics in such a way that the ethnic Chinese church tended to welcome only Chinese adherents. To perpetuate the exclusive ethnic identity within the Chinese immigrant church community, the first-generation immigrants attempted to “reinforce their own” practices and tradition. Although no explicit behavior or norms suggested that the local-born were second-class congregants, the mindset of ethnic exclusivity was so obvious that the local-born just “knew that they (church leaders) continue to reinforce their ethnicity and their identity as first-generation Christians . . . It’s not really going to speak into the second generation about perpetuating what it means to be churching.”

Charles proceeded to cite two examples to illustrate his point. The first was related to the venue of the church. For a long time, the immigrant church rented a building owned by a Caucasian church in the southern part of the city. Yet, according to Charles, the local-born believed that in the northern part of the city “there was much

more opportunity and this is kind of where the heartbeat of the city is.” In spite of the local-born clamoring to move, the first-generation leaders, who were the decision makers “felt a very, a high level of comfort where they’re at so they were resistant to move.”

The second example involved funding the new church plant. The first-generation immigrant church-goers were building-adhesive in that they found their comfort in the confines of the rental space and viewed it as their material and spiritual investment. The local-born, on the other hand, placed less of a premium on the church building since, according to Charles, “much of our church is run out of homes and so much of our community life doesn’t have to be within the church building. So the sense of a church building to us is actually not that important.”

Indeed, the second-generation had a vision bigger than merely owning a building. Charles explained: “Vision-wise I think (we have) a lot bigger aspiration, bigger dreams. I mean for us, like we were in our 20s or 30s, and I think we have much bigger dreams for (the church).” The broader aspiration focused more on “evangelism . . . (and) how we (can) participate in social work.” This type of aspiration represented a marked difference from that of the first-generation immigrant believers. Charles went on to cite an example of a summer event to illustrate the disparity. Contrary to a program at a traditional Chinese church that designed a Vacation Bible School that focused on the kids of the church community and typically lasted for a couple of weeks, Salem now ran a summer-long program for children in the neighborhood community. Charles asserted that this program would fulfill the “dreams or aspirations . . . to make a church that isn’t about us” but was rather for the community around the church. Reflecting on this key difference,

Charles agreed that the gap was not only cultural but also theological or ecclesiological. In “reinforcing” the cultural and ethnic practices and traditions, the first-generation tended to seek conformity. Charles explained further:

I think the Christians of the first generation like my parents, they all kind of feel the same because of they’re first-generation Christians (whose) vision of the church being a shadow or a projection of kind of the church that they had in Hong Kong.

Salem, according to Charles, was “an extension” of that immigrant church. Yet what Salem was did not reflect what he and other founders had envisioned it to be: a multiethnic congregation. And the discrepancy had to do with how ethnicity and culture shaped and influenced their faith identity and community. Charles explained:

It has to do with our own ethnicity culture, how we perceive faith and how community life is defined. I think that has a lot to do with people’s ethnicity and what they expect out of community, how they interact socially with other people.

Charles went on to spell out three dissimilarities between the local-born and the first-generation church-goers. The first had to do with the socialization process. Charles said of the second-generation, “The network connection, the chemistry and how that takes place, how they socialize (is) very different from how Chinese people socialize.” Second, “the level of trust” and “the way it works is very different.” Third, “permission is very different.”

Lacking a prior understanding of what these dissimilarities were and how ingrained ethnic culture had been “within (the) social networks,” Charles recognized again that “we’re naïve.” In elaborating on what the naivety entailed, he admitted:

We never really had a very solid understanding of all those factors, that they come and play in some very significant ways and [were] influencing where the church goes. But now to sort of looking back then, I realized those factors do have a very important part in shaping who we are today.

Charles further acknowledged that his vision at the time of church planting of a multiethnic congregation was heavily influenced by the U.S. church planting research: “I think back then, we read too much of what’s going on out there.” Specifically, Charles was inspired by the “successful examples” of people such as Francis Chan and Ken Fong in the United States regarding “the multiethnic church” planting. With many years of Salem experience under his belt, Charles realized that he had “no idea that everything (was) just different in the United States with the whole pan-Asian culture but that’s not directly translated into Canada.” In other words, he recognized that saliency of ethnicity was much more visible and at work on a deeper level in the city where he resided, which boasted a large and diverse Chinese population. With that in mind, Charles concluded that “our ethnicity and our culture have really heavy bearing in shaping who we are.” In projecting into the future, he did not see such ethnic saliency waning in the community at Salem:

When I think about where Salem going to be in 10 years from now, I think we’re going to be a Chinese church, and we have to be at peace with that. That’s because of who we are. We may lose that Chineseness maybe one more generation from now but we will not be a typical Chinese church as seen with the (traditional) Chinese church we know.

Central to his prediction was the fact that, according to Charles, the SGCCE at Salem “are very Chinese” and “all their friends are Chinese.” Yet the irony of this

phenomenon, which explained Charles's and Salem's conundrum, was that the "(Chineseness) has no bearing on their faith." In other words, SGCCE at Salem continued to be in the awkward position of adhering to a faith that transcended ethnicity at the same time that they were being restricted by the church's ethnic boundary. The inexorability of being bounded by such a dilemma was very strong in Charles's mind irrespective of his original intention to shape Salem to be multiethnic. He admitted, "No matter how hard I try to steer it, I don't think it's actually steerable because . . . when people bring their friends, right, the church is going to be a function of people's own social networks."

Although Salem might continue to be a "Chinese" church, Charles acknowledged, diversity within the Chinese ethnicity did exist, involving subethnicities that consisted of "Chinese like Taiwanese, mainland Chinese, (and) Cantonese Hong Kong." So much of Charles's view was shaped now by the presence of such diversity that included, for example, Mainland Chinese students who were comfortable with Canadian culture and conversant in English but bicultural in their outlook, that he framed his vision for Salem to be a "Pan-Chinese" church. Yet Charles acknowledged that he had never "highlighted the ethnicity card" in conducting or promotion of ministry at Salem. However, his preference for keeping the ethnic factor low-key did not prevent him from tackling the problematic Asian or Chinese "hard work ethics" and pursuit of "money" with the congregants, many of whom were "professionals, lawyers (and) accountants" and thus were well-off financially. Charles believed that wealth-amassing was a reflection of "our cultural upbringing (in which) work (and material success) is such a huge part of that."

However, a pursuit of wealth must be tempered by a commitment to using such wealth for God's ministry. He exhorted: "If God has put you in that position of influence and, and as a result of that, you also financially are quite capable, then you should not shy away from what God has given you but instead use that."

When I asked where these values might have originated, Charles attributed them to "an inferior[ity] complex for the Asian" and a sense of "insecurity" that might have subconsciously been "ingrained in (the) ethics" among the Chinese. Because they weren't the "dominant culture" in Canada, Asians believed that they needed to "keep working harder and harder" to pursue upward mobility in a mainstream society dominated by "White culture." Another reason for the practice of being "hard-working" had to do with the ethics of the first-generation immigrant parents who were "very hard working" in their own efforts to provide for the family as they settled into a new country. To Charles, "it was always their work ethic that inspired" their children in their own pursuit of life goals and careers. Such was the case with his parents, though they never dictated career choices for Charles and his siblings. He recalled his parents said to him: "We would love you for whatever you want to do in life."

From this point, our interview shifted to further discussion of the key issues that shaped church planting among Chinese ethnic communities in Canada. Charles asserted that at "the core of the issue, a lot of it has to do with sociology, (and) a lot of it is culturally driven." Specifically, he singled out the ethnic identity of the founding core group as the overriding factor that shapes, enables, and for that matter restricts, the subsequent ethnic DNA of the resulting congregation. In other words, if the core group

was entirely Chinese, then the congregation would most likely be Chinese. The church was unlikely to become a pan-Asian or multiethnic church because its members were limited by their own socialization process. Conversely, a multiethnic core group stood a better chance of creating a multiethnic church due to the absence of the ethnic boundary the monoethnic church might unintentionally have erected. Charles explained:

The second-generation Chinese church planters that I know of are much less Chinese than I am because they're born here. They probably can't speak Chinese. They planted churches with their friends (who) were not Chinese, be it Pan Asian or even some White people. And (by so doing they) basically reset or re-establish who they are as their identity; they already started it as a pan-ethnic church.

The weightiness of this factor could not be reversed, according to Charles, even with the attempt to cede the church leadership to a "White pastor." Charles recalled Salem's own experience in such an attempt:

How naively we thought about: "Let's hire a White pastor and he will help make us multiethnic, right?" People always tell me (that) when you look at the church leaders (and) the pastoral team, right? There is a direct projection. People will look at that and say okay, that's basically a projection of the church, right. You have a white pastor. You have a Chinese pastor. You have a Filipino pastor, but that was not the case. But the reality was his presence as the only Caucasian didn't really draw, didn't alter, it didn't steer us into go[ing] multiethnic.

What mattered the most was the ethnicity of the core group. Charles concluded:

The pastoral team has less of an influence . . . whereas the core group, and this is not just core leadership, this would be the core group of the church (which) has a much bigger weighting on kind of the ethnicity and aspirations of the church, and what . . . (and) where do they end up.

Thus Salem was “just very much still Chinese” because “we kind of didn’t ever really think much of that (factor).”

Finally, Charles and I discussed how much of his own personal ethnic experience had affected the way he shaped Salem in his capacity as the lead pastor. As a 1.5-generation Chinese Canadian, being born in Hong Kong and emigrating to Canada when he was 12, and married to a Taiwanese Chinese, Charles admitted that his understanding and grasp of the culture and language certainly had been “a factor in affecting (his) thinking in terms of how (he) construed Salem and its Pan Chinese characteristic.” With language skills and understanding of the cultural nuances as assets, Charles believed that Salem could “break (intra-ethnic) cultural barriers if we want to reach a different (subethnic Chinese) people.” Consequently, Charles was confident that he was able to reach “the immigrants, the Mainland Chinese (student) group, (etc.)” as part of Salem’s mission in constructing the Pan-Chinese composition because “I bridged the gaps. I’ve bridged a lot (of the Chinese subethnic) cultures.” With the interviewing coming to an end, I thanked Charles for sharing his thoughts with me.

**Synopsis of the interview with the third pastor: Issac Gregoric.** Issac Gregoric was a full-time minister at Covenant, a Caucasian mainstream church with multiethnic attendees located in a suburb of a major city in Eastern Canada. He is the pastor of Mark in Case 4 and was referred to me by Mark. Issac agreed to be interviewed on a summer morning at a coffee shop near his church.

I started the interview by asking Isaac whether he was aware of the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon that had been occurring for the last few decades at Asian North

American churches. Issac's answer was affirmative and derived from his own personal experience of "seeing the influx of second- or third-generation Asian folks arriving at (Covenant, his church)." In other words, the phenomenon was not restricted to describing SGCCE abandoning their faith when they left their parents' church; it was enlarged to include those whose samples were studied in my dissertation research: the cohort who transitioned to worship at other churches. Issac then went on to identify a few factors that he stated he believed caused the transition to happen. First, he pointed out that there was a desire to "assimilate" into a "broader kingdom community" on the part of the local-born cohort when they entered young adulthood and began to exercise independence from their parents. Many of the second-generation had completed their university and were focused "on their own life." Additionally, "some of them are married" and collectively they came to recognize that they wanted to be part of a "Canadian" church by joining a "broader (church) community" that reflected the Canadian multiethnic and multicultural societal mix-up. This aspiration, Issac attested, had been "a prevalent theme that comes up over and over again: 'We want to just be a broader community. We want to be part of what God is doing in our community.'"

The second cause Issac singled out was related to a desire among the second-generation to seek an authentic faith expression as disciples of Jesus Christ. His experience informed him that at the ethnic churches, "there is reluctance or a lack of making disciples." Issac recognized that disciple-making as a theme had been a mainstay in most of the churches irrespective of their ethnic affiliation. However, he argued that such an exercise was being pursued differently because "in the ethnic church, it's

[pursued] through the eyes of ethnicity.” As a result, churches “do discipleship through the filter of specific ethnic cultures.” Though discipleship at its core consisted of universal “parameters and boundaries” that any churches “should not cross” regardless of ethnicity, the culture that the churches associated with themselves “adds in a filtering layer that sometimes hinders or restricts the practice.” The barriers, as Issac would often hear them cited by his congregants, included a set of behaviors that was culturally enforced and reinforced, such as “things you say and do not say and things you do and things that you just do not do.” These cultural practices in turn repressed the growth of SGCCE at the ethnic church in such a way that their desire to be authentic disciples was repressed. Yet once they transitioned into churches such as Issac’s, a genuine transformation appeared to take place. Issac observed:

As they arrive, and it’s not long after that, they just seem to flourish and there’s been this almost a latent, almost a repressed kind of sense of what it means to be a disciple or make disciple and a sense of freedom that comes with that.

Third, Issac related that “another thing that comes up frequently, and this is not necessarily a phenomenon to an ethnic church, we hear this regardless of Chinese church or whatever church, (that there is) a lack of preaching God’s word.” He argued enthusiastically that the mysterious divine message in God’s word and therefore its preaching was the fundamental element that drew people to a certain church. Issac was convinced that “people are hungry (and) starved for God’s word. And where God’s word is being proclaimed, clearly and with authority, God will draw his people there.”

Issac went on to offer some specific examples of Chinese cultural values that were perceived to be barriers. First he cited the value of honoring the parents or

authority. The issue came from not having a clear faith-adjudicated boundary for the SGCCE to recognize what was appropriate from the faith's perspective. Issac commented: "One of the things I've heard, sometimes even subliminally, is that, the hindrance is that where does that begin, where does that end?" Because "there's a specific hierarchy and the things that you do and you do not do and you don't cross that line," the local-born at times were found to be stymied in their desire to communicate and even share their faith with their parents. Immediately questions arose, such as:

Am I honoring those in authority over me by reaching out, by coming out of my "comfort zone," quote unquote, by even sharing my desire with my parents for instance, sharing my zest and zeal for God with my parents?

The second example Issac mentioned was the biblical concept of grace and how it was such a challenge for SGCCE to comprehend following a growth process that was laden with emphasis on pursuit of success and academic and career achievement. He first hypothesized what the definition of grace ought to be. It is "God's unmerited favor," he contended. As a result, no one can "do anything to earn it!" Yet with a high-achievement-oriented culture, the Asian church had seemingly produced "high achievers" who were "hard working" with much "success." There appeared to be a belief or ethos in the Asian church that these high achievers could "do all those tangible (and) good things" all on their own. The challenge, as Issac saw it, was that "the achievement and the success and the things I do can become almost regimental" such that humans were claiming all the credit for their success. In such an ethos, grace became a "foreign" concept, for "this concept of grace means that it is not something I can do, is not

something that I can somehow apportion by the things that I do. It's unmerited; it's God's favor. I can't do anything to earn it."

In this context, the Chinese value of success "can become stifling" to the SGCCE because the self-centric pursuit of success stood diametrically opposed to the God-centric concept of grace. Issac further offered his insights by postulating a series of questions: "Who determines what is successful and what isn't? Who is the one who says that this is good enough or this isn't good enough?" He further commented:

From a young person's point of view, you obviously want to honor your mother and father and they have high aspirations for their children, but is (honoring your parents) enough? Have I achieved enough? I have heard over and over again that A's are not good enough; it has to be A plus. So there can be an almost unwritten or unspoken sense of this is good and not good enough.

The sense of not being good enough also crept into how SGCCE practiced their faith, for they often questioned, according to Issac, "even in the walk with the Lord. Is this — am I doing enough?" If unbridled, this mentality would slide into what Issac called "work-based theologies," something that was convenient to pursue because it was "the easiest thing to preach; it's [an] easy thing to ascribe to because there's a cause and effect." Yet grace transcended human efforts because "God is so broad" as to be able to cover their not being "good enough."

Yet "caught between two cultures," SGCCE were found to be in the mode of seeking "affirmation or confirmation." This search led them to question their own identity and belongingness: "Am I this or am I that? Do I belong here? Do I belong there?" Issac expressed the firm belief that in the quest for meaning, purpose,

belongingness, and identity, faith identity trumped ethnic or cultural identity, and that faith could lift SGCCE out of the liminality “between two worlds” because “Jesus transcends all of that.” Yet in the same breath, he was postulating faith in the context of assimilation with respect to SGCCE. Putting himself in the shoes of SGCCE in the faith context, he added:

I find myself living as a second-generation ethnic person Asian (or) Chinese. I embrace that, praise God for that and my rich traditions. But I live here. I live in this country called Canada which is diverse and celebrates all of its diversity.

For Issac, not only did faith transcend the ethnic values, it also functioned as bridge that could close the gap in the struggle regarding identity that many of the local-born had been experiencing.

When I asked him where he saw this struggling evidenced, Issac singled out the family with a newborn child as the arena in which this conflict was brought to the forefront. The new parents had been raised in their own ethnic tradition but in terms of how they planned to raise their own children, they asserted: “I don’t want to become the carbon copy of that.” However, they were caught in a quandary in that their parents insisted that they raise the grandchildren in a traditional Chinese manner. So “domineering” were the grandparents that they left “very little room for dialogue or suggestion. (They would say): ‘Oh this is the way it will be . . . And you will do this and you will do that.’” These grandparents’ behaviors had unwittingly caused a “bit of pain” on the part of the parents such that there seemed at the time to be no apparent way to break through the impasse. Yet the discouraging aspect of this conflict was that, caught between not wanting to dishonor their parents and yet not wanting to follow their practice

of children-rearing, these new SGCCE parents often found themselves abandoning any hope of a dialogue with their parents. There appeared to be a cultural assumption that parents did not listen to children and, on the part of the children, that dialogue was futile because it was not acceptable conduct. Issac recalled that the usual reply to his nudging the SGCCE to talk to their parents was: “Oh, they won’t listen. There’s no use.”

Issac and I then discussed whether church leadership did devise any specific ministry program or direction to support this cohort of SGCCE at his church. His reply was concise: “There is nothing specific.” That said, he relayed that his church did have a set of clearly articulated vision and values to support every congregant irrespective of his or her ethnic background. Isaac opined that clarity of value and direction was the foremost centripetal force to attract and keep congregants as an integral part of the faith community. Issac recalled having a conversation with a young Asian congregant who had just recently come to join Covenant. Something she said to him had completely surprised him. “You know what I like about this church, Pastor Issac?” she said, “You know where you’re going.” Sensing that her statement “was a validation that the church leadership was “succeeding in communicating,” Issac took pride in providing vision and purpose to his flocks. But what the young woman said about the ethnic churches afterwards was illuminating. When it came to figuring out a direction at the Chinese church, this newcomer observed, the pattern of behavior had been that “we were constantly changing. It was the theme this year and ‘Well, let’s just scrap that and try this.’” When that did not work, she added, the ethnic church tried to emulate someone else: “When it was not working and the guy down the street’s having success doing that,

so ‘Let’s do what he’s doing.’ Well that doesn’t seem to be working and then on and on it went.” The lesson to Issac was simply that persistence in the pursuit of the vision was as important as the clarity of vision and that was what the Chinese ethnic church might be wanting.

When I asked him about the demographics of his church, Issac replied that there were “Asian folks, Chinese folks, Black folks, (and) Indian folks” worshiping in his midst, with Chinese constituting at least 25% “and growing.” Many of these Chinese congregants were young adults with an age range of 18 to 30. When I inquired whether the church had any special program that taught these congregants to embrace the Chinese ethnic identity, he answer again was crisp: “nothing specific.” The church, however, acknowledged key cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year. Reflecting on the multicultural composition at Covenant, Issac was fond of saying that “we celebrate the diversity.” But at the same time, he recognized that the major reason SGCCE congregated at his church was because “they do want to celebrate their Christian identity, maybe in a more expressive way, or maybe with a little bit more freedom.” Constrained by their parents’ tradition, they wanted to be free in their celebration of their faith identity. Yet not wanting to “forsake where I’ve come from,” SGCCE felt that their time had come to forge a new path, avowing that “it is my time . . . (so I will be) stepping out and growing up and starting my own traditions.”

I then asked Isaac for his perspective on how the ethnic church leadership could come to terms with this phenomenon of exodus or transition. Issac named three scenarios. In the first one, the ethnic church leaders “are embracing it, certain folks see

the kingdom, embrace God.” The second scenario saw an opportunity to better serve SGCCE in their midst by “rallying the troops.” In the last scenario, by far the worst one according to Issac, the leaders would “circle the wagons,” declaring, “We have to stop this. This has to end.” He said that based on his interaction with those who had left the ethnic church after experiencing the last scenario, his understanding was that they were hurt by the leadership’s attempts to instill guilt in SGCCE by protesting: “This is your church, this is your culture.” Under the circumstances, people who left might feel guilty and as if they had betrayed culture that they had been brought up in.

Another interesting anecdote Issac recalled was an exchange he’d had with a Chinese immigrant pastor who came to inquire about the status of one of his former sheep. To the surprise of the pastor, this young adult was totally accepted and immersed in the ministry at Covenant and was doing something that the pastor would not have thought he was capable of doing. The crux of the matter, as it turned out, was that at the Chinese church, there was a cultural assumption that age conferred maturity, and that youth signified immaturity. As a result, as a teenager, this young SGCCE was not taken seriously when he wanted to serve in a particular capacity; the judgment was made based not on his precocity, gifting, or skills, but on his age. Upon finding out this young adult’s situation at Covenant, the Chinese pastor’s reply was straightforward: “See, I told them (the leadership at the immigrant church), we’re going to lose our people. We’re going to lose our young people if we don’t begin to encourage them.”

In closing, Issac summarized his thoughts about the “underlying factors” that would cause people to leave a church irrespective of whether it was an ethnic church or

not. He first came back to the centrality of God's word. Issac argued: "If God's word is being preached, and people are being encouraged to serve and become disciples, for the most part, they're not going to leave." So the first reason that people left the church had to do with either "they don't like the preaching, so the word is not being preached or they don't like the preacher." The second reason Issac cited for people departing was that "they don't like the worship, or the music, or the style, or the worship leader." He argued that music was "hugely important, because music is the language of the soul (and) it transcends language . . . music speaks to the soul." Specifically situating music in the context of the Chinese ethnic church, Issac observed that "more contemporary style of music is not as accepted." Although there was not necessarily a doctrinal argument about whether the contemporary music style was acceptable to the faith community, SGCCE in general tended to embrace it much more openly than did those of their parents' generation. Thus many simply exercised their freedom in opting to attend a church that met their "preference" for a more culturally accepted contemporary worship style. Issac concluded that "a person oftentimes leaves the church because of preference. 'I prefer this music over that, and I prefer this preaching over that, and I prefer this preacher over that.'" The key for Issac was that no matter where the faithful landed, it had to be for God's kingdom:

But we're about the kingdom. And if you're here about the kingdom, then if you find yourself more suited to another place, here's what I say, wherever it is, Jesus Christ exalted and that his word be preached. And the third thing, will you be challenged to become a disciple of Christ? Then go. Thrive. Be blessed.

On that high note, I thanked Issac for his perspective and ended the interview.

**Triangulation analysis: Group Two.** As in the case of Group One, triangulation analysis for Group Two is provided to enhance completeness and validation of data gathered through interviews of the primary participants in all the cases. As with Group One, the analysis of the triangulation interview aims not to surface any themes separate from those of the primary participants but rather examines the salient data and topics that validate, corroborate, or refute the themes or data of all cases. However, because each church leader was selected to reflect his congregational context in which the experience of participants in each case is rooted, the analysis results may at times speak to a particular case rather than to all cases. The following sections provide synopses of such data and themes.

*On the salience of ethnicity and how it affects church ministry.* In an examination of how ethnicity shapes church ministry, church leaders in this group expressed views that were predictably in line with their congregation's ethnicity. Simply put, Charles, the pastor of two participants in Case One, observed that ethnic saliency was strongly embedded in his congregation; whereas Tim, the pastor of all three participants in Case Three, argued that although ethnicity was a factor in his congregation, the diversity at his multiethnic congregation could be construed along the diverse social-economic spectrum rather than along the line of ethnicity. Finally, Issac, the pastor of one participant in Case Four, ascribed much less weight to ethnicity when it came to his church ministry, believing that adherents wanted to be assimilated into the mainstream culture and religion trumped or transcended ethnicity when it came to ministering his congregants.

For Charles, ethnicity weighed heavily in congregational ministry and had been an unsteerable force in moderating his church's vision. In reflecting on how formidable this force had been at Salem, Charles, time and again, spoke of his naivety in not having recognized this factor sooner. Ethnicity worked on two levels. On the first level, ethnicity was the determinant of the composition and the ministry focus of the first-generation Chinese immigrant church. In a sentiment that reflected the lifecycle hypothesis of immigrant churches (Goette, 1993, 2001; Mullins, 1987), Charles stated that his parents' church was a mirror image of that sort of life cycle. He concluded: "It is true that for the Chinese church, the first-generation immigrants, that is the core of who they are as in their ethnicity." Charles lamented, "I think the culture is the bigger part of it (in determining the ministry focus of the immigrant church)." The ethnic Chinese culture formed a boundary that excluded those whose ethnicity was not Chinese, making them feel that they were not welcome. The naivety of Charles came into his thinking when he assumed that by establishing a church plant that was divorced from his parents' congregation, he and the church planning core group could establish a multiethnic congregation. Yet on the level of church planting, ethnicity was an equally weighty variable affecting how the church plant shaped and influenced the second-generation's faith identity and community. Charles explained:

It has to do with our own ethnicity culture, how we perceive faith and how community life is defined. I think that has a lot to do with people's ethnicity and what they expect out of community, how they interact socially with other people.

In other words, Charles recognized that the impact of ethnicity was much more visible and at work on a deeper level in the city he resided in that contained a large

number of diverse Chinese populations. With that in mind, Charles concluded that “our ethnicity and our culture have [a] really heavy bearing in shaping who we are.”

The ethnic factor was not lost on Tim when he started his ministry journey in California. Tracing his spiritual journey as a start-up church planter in Orange County in California, Tim reminisced about his original aspiration to set up a Pan-Asian multiethnic congregation that “would be truly welcoming of people, of all races, of all cultures, all sorts of economic backgrounds and all faiths or lack thereof.” What “profoundly shaped (his) thinking” was Tim’s understanding of the biblical principles of acceptance and forgiveness. He claimed that:

Whether we’re Jew or Gentiles, slave or free, we have been brought together in Christ. (If we separate ourselves based on ethnicity, then) the gospel’s power in Christ, death on the cross, isn’t sufficient to bring us to God as equals.

The key difference between Salem and Temple, according to Charles, lay with the ethnicity of the very core group with whom the church was started. In Tim’s case, he took over a Caucasian church 20 years previously, privileging him with an existing mainstream racial framework to start with. In Charles’s case, he singled out the Chinese ethnic identity of the founding core group as the overarching factor that shaped and at once restricted the subsequent ethnic DNA of the resulting congregation. In other words, if the core group was entirely Chinese, the congregation would most likely be Chinese and would be unlikely to become a Pan-Asian or multiethnic church because it was limited by its own congregants’ socialization process. Conversely, a multiethnic core group stood a better chance of creating a multiethnic church due to the absence of ethnic boundaries such as those the mono-ethnic church might have unintentionally erected.

Thus SGCCE at Salem continued to be in the awkward position of adhering to a faith that transcended ethnicity at the same time that they were restricted by the church's ethnic boundary. The inexorability of being bounded by such a dilemma was very strong in Charles's mind irrespective of his original intention to shape Salem to be multiethnic. He admitted, "No matter how hard I try to steer it, I don't think it's actually steerable because . . . when people bring their friends, the church is going to be a function of people's own social networks."

From Issac's perspective, one of the main reasons SGCCE transitioned to Covenant was a desire to "assimilate" into a "broader kingdom community" when they entered young adulthood and began to exercise autonomy from their parents. In so doing, they wanted to be part of a church that was "Canadian," that reflected the ideal of multiethnic and multicultural societal diversity. This aspiration had been "a prevalent theme that comes up over and over again: 'We want to just be a broader community. We want to be part of what God is doing in our community.'" Constructing faith in the context of assimilation, Issac attempted to put himself in the shoes of SGCCE:

I find myself living as a second-generation ethnic person . . . Asian (or) Chinese. I embrace that, praise God for that and my rich traditions. But I live here. I live in this country called Canada which is diverse and celebrates all of its diversity.

In other words, ethnicity, for Issac, was not a particularly potent factor in the broad process of assimilation into the Canadian mainstream society of which his church was a part.

*On how socialization enables and limits church affiliation.* In many respects, a church was bounded by its congregants' demographics, and the congregational

composition was in turn a function of the congregants' socialization process. In the case of Salem, chief among the reason that it was Chinese was that "all (the congregants') friends are Chinese." To elaborate the point, when Charles asked his parishioners, "How many of your friends are not Chinese?" he reported that they responded by telling him that "the percentage is extremely low (and) some of them don't even have any." Thus that Salem continued as a Chinese congregation was inevitable and predictable. Charles further asserted that socialization of his congregants was heavily affected by the demographic wheres they resided, as this city on the West Coast contained a high number of Chinese Canadians.

At Temple, Tim confirmed the effect of socialization on its congregants. The key difference was that since Temple was multiethnic, an ethnic Chinese could bring his or her ethnic Chinese friend to worship and could still manage "to stay very much [in contact with] people within your own cohort," which reflected a deep sense of homophily. Yet at the same time, Temple's multiethnic orientation presented an environment that enabled non-Chinese to attend, something that was not likely to happen if the congregation was Chinese in the first place. In that regard Temple was somewhat ethnically neutral and yet still celebrated the diversity of its congregants. Tim added:

If you're Chinese and you have a White friend that you want to invite to church, you can do it to a place like Temple because it's multiethnic. Conversely, if you're a Caucasian and you've got an Asian friend, it's also easier to invite your friend I think to a multiethnic church than an all-White church because people feel like that they would be more comfortable.

As a mainstream Caucasian congregation, Covenant did not weigh in on ethnic socialization since it had taken an assimilation stance that did not pay specific attention to each ethnicity. Reflecting on the mainstream and yet multicultural composition at Covenant, Issac was fond of saying: “We celebrate the diversity.”

*On how ethnic or cultural values must be subjugated to faith values.* When it came to the Chinese cultural or ethnic values, church leaders in this group took a position of subjecting them to the lens of faith, evaluating and criticizing when necessary to ensure the supremacy of faith values. As a Japanese Canadian, Tim asserted that he “referenced his cultural heritage” and values such as a strong work ethic. But he felt it necessary to view the duality of ethnic culture through the frame of faith in a manner that both engaged and critiqued culture. Tim acknowledged that “every culture in some ways resembles the image of God.” The other side of the coin was that “there’s also sinful fallenness manifesting in the culture.” According to Tim, Christians are called to “embrace those parts of their culture that are congruent with the kingdom of God.” Tim went on to cite the values that needed to be critiqued: the emphasis on hard work; collectivism versus individualism; the need for validating one’s existence through achievement in the eyes of others, through education, professional advancement, and accumulation of wealth. Thus Tim appeared to take pride in assessing these values with a prophetic voice:

I address those (values) with the gospel, trying to affirm the beauty of culture, whether it’s Asian or other. Then (I) also seek to be a prophetic voice to speak against the values of our society, whether Asian or not, that undermine the values and the ethos of the kingdom of Jesus.

The need to address Asian values through faith's adjudication process also resonated in Charles's mind. He discussed how he tackled the problematic Chinese values of "hard work ethics" and pursuit of "money" with the "professionals, lawyers, (and) accountants" in his congregation. Charles expressed the belief that an emphasis on amassing wealth was a reflection of "our cultural upbringing (because) work (and material success) is such a huge part of that." However, Charles asserted that such a pursuit of wealth must be balanced with using wealth for God's ministry. He exhorted: "If God has put you in that position of influence and . . . you also financially are quite capable, then you should not shy away from what God has given you but instead use that."

Charles further attributed the origin of wealth-amassment to "an inferior[ity] complex for the Asian" and a sense of "insecurity" that might have subconsciously been "ingrained in (the) ethics" among the Chinese. Not being the "dominant culture" in Canada, Asians needed to "keep working harder and harder" to pursue upward mobility in a mainstream society dominated by "White culture." The pressure to be "hard-working" also was reflected in the immigrant parents who were "very hard working" in their own efforts to provide for the family as they settled in the new country. To Charles, "it was always their work ethic that inspired" their children in their own pursuit of life goals and careers.

For Issac, Asian values were an active agent in shaping the life of SGCCE in their parents' congregations, so much so that he heard from his congregants about a set of behaviors that was culturally enforced and reinforced, behaviors such as "things you say

and do not say and things you do and things that you just do not do.” These cultural practices repressed the growth of SGCCE at the ethnic church in such a way that their efforts to be authentic disciples were curbed. Once the second-generation transitioned into churches such as Covenant, a genuine transformation took place. Issac told the story this way:

As they arrive, and it’s not long after that, they just seem to flourish and there’s been this almost a latent, almost a repressed kind of sense of what it means to be a disciple . . . and a sense of freedom that comes with that.

In explicating this phenomenon, Issac cited the pursuit of success and the achievement orientation of Asians as examples of issues that he had helped address with SGCCE now at Covenant by examining them through the biblical concept of grace. In a high-achievement-oriented culture, the Asian church had seemingly produced “high achievers” who were “hard working” and attaining much “success.” The challenge was that “the achievement and the success and the things (SGCCE) do can become almost regimental,” such that humans were claiming all the credit instead of giving thanks and credit to God. Yet questions emerged: “Who determines what is successful and what isn’t? Who is the one who says that this is good enough or this isn’t good enough?” It was this sense of not being good enough that crept into how SGCCE practiced their faith. They often wondered, Isaac told me, “even in the walk with the Lord. ‘Is this — am I doing enough?’” If unbridled, this mentality would slide into what Issac labeled “work-based theologies,” something that was convenient to pursue because it was “the easiest thing to preach, it’s [an] easy thing to ascribe to because there’s a cause and effect.” Yet

grace transcended human efforts because “God is so broad” as to be able to cover their not being “good enough.”

Yet “caught between two cultures,” the local-born was often found to be in the mode of seeking “affirmation or confirmation.” This search led them to question their own identity and belongingness: “Am I this or am I that? Do I belong here? Do I belong there?” Issac expressed the firm belief that in the quest for meaning, purpose, and belongingness, faith identity trumped ethnic or cultural identity, and that faith could lift SGCCE out of the liminality “between two worlds” because “Jesus transcends all of that.”

*On the dysfunctional leadership at the Chinese immigrant church.* All pastors spoke about the inertia of the leadership at the immigrant church, though not all were aware of it through firsthand experience. Charles commented on the reserved nature of first-generation leadership in their reluctance to change or be receptive to new ideas. He gave the example of conflict surrounding the church location and building. For a long time, his parents’ church had rented a church building owned by a Caucasian church in the southern part of the city. Yet the local-born believed that in the north “there was much more opportunity and this is kind of where the heartbeat of the city is.” In spite of the local-born clamoring to move, the first-generation leaders who were the decision makers did not want to relocate. They were building-adhesive in that they found their comfort in the confines of the rental space and viewed it as their material and spiritual investment. Yet the local-born placed a lower premium on the church building, since “much of the church is run out of homes, small groups, and cell groups. And so much of

the community life doesn't have to be within the church building.” Indeed, the second-generation had a vision bigger than merely owning a building. Their broader aspiration focused more on “evangelism . . . (and) how we (can) participate in social work.” Yet Charles lamented that the first-generation leadership lent very little support to that sort of initiative because of a lack of vision.

In discussing his cultivation of a “healthy leadership” at Temple, Tim compared and contrasted it with leadership at typical Chinese Canadian churches based on his own observations and conversations with SGCCE who had shifted their attendance to Temple. Tim expressed the belief that “healthy leadership” was the key differentiator between Temple and an immigrant church where leadership was problematic. He elaborated:

If my observation is (correct), there are people who leave the Chinese churches because there is unnecessary conflict, perhaps inevitable conflict between the first- and second-generation over cultural matters. And so they feel like it's not just about the gospel or about Jesus, but it's about these power plays or about insecure leaders or leaders with big egos or a combination of both.

Healthy leadership, on the other hand, meant an “engaged board” that was “centered in Christ” with “godly and humble” attributes. In addition, it implied a staff that genuinely “like each other and get along so there're not a lot of unnecessary conflicts.” Tim even put his reputation on the line with the practice of “healthy leadership” by promising any newcomers to Temple that they were:

Not going to have to spend political energy maneuvering behind the scenes because (Temple's) arrows are pointed in the direction of the gospel moving through our lives and through this community and through this city (and) everywhere in the world God leads us.

In discussing leadership at the Chinese church, Issac placed it in the context of how Chinese leaders reacted to the “Silent Exodus” phenomenon; his comments revealed how defensive and short-sighted leadership had become and their inability to frame the problem in the context of the SGCCE desiring to pursue a better environment in which to grow their faith. Issac identified three scenarios. In the first one, the ethnic church leaders “are embracing it (the “Silent Exodus”).” In the second scenario, the first-generation leaders saw an opportunity to better themselves by serving SGCCE in their midst by “rallying the troops.” In the last scenario, by far the worst one according to Issac, the leaders would “circle the wagons,” declaring “We have to stop this. This has to end.” He said that based on his interaction with those who had left the ethnic church after experiencing the last scenario, his understanding was that they were hurt by the leadership’s attempts to instill guilt in the SGCCE by protesting: “This is your church, this is your culture.” Under the circumstances, people who left might feel guilty and as if they had betrayed the culture that they had been brought up in.

Another example of the inept leadership at the ethnic church had to do with the cultural assumption of what qualified a leader. Issac relayed a story of a Chinese pastor who visited him to inquire about a youth who had left his church to attend Covenant. He told the pastor that the young man was fully accepted and integrated with ministry at his church. The Chinese pastor was incredulous. The crux of the matter was that there was a cultural assumption at the Chinese church that determined maturity or the lack of it. As a teenager, this young SGCCE was not considered as a candidate for service based not on his precocity, gifting, or skills, but on his age. Upon finding out this young man’s

situation at Covenant, the pastor's reaction was: "See, I told them (the leadership at the immigrant church). We're going to lose our young people if we don't begin to encourage them." This episode revealed the cultural assumption of valuing age more than skills and how it limited leadership development at the immigrant church.

*On the centrality of relevant teaching and authentic practices.* All three church leaders recognized the power of relevant teaching backed by consistent and authentic practices. Charles, for instance, took steps to address values that were problematic, such as the Chinese emphasis on strong "work ethics" and pursuit of "money" and judged these values from a faith perspective. In addition, he made it very clear through preaching to his congregants that his vision involved shaping Salem into a Pan-Chinese church. Tim, on the other hand, took on the role not only of cultural entrepreneur but also of contextual expositor of the sacred text who translated the teachings of Jesus into lessons relevant to a contemporary setting that was germane to his multiethnic congregants. Furthermore, Tim was a very capable communicator of Temple's values and vision, which he had purposefully constructed to guide the congregation forward. Tim summarized the vision this way:

Our vision is really simple: It's to be a place where people of different background, racially, ethnically, culturally, socioeconomically, spiritually, can come and discover or rediscover Jesus . . . a place of healing for the broken. And a mission-sending base back into our city and wherever in the world God leads us.

As for the values of Temple, Tim suggested they could best be symbolized as the five R's: (a) relating to God and other people; (b) relying on the spirit; (c) raising disciples; (d) reconciling; and (e) reaching out. Of these five values, Tim singled out

reconciliation as the value that undergirded the ethos of Temple that reflected a “visible demonstration of the gospel’s power to bring us together across cultural, ethnic, racial, and economic lines.” Another key teaching Tim championed at Temple was the concept of embracing diverse people. Tim explained: “The definitive sign that you belong to Jesus and that you’re filled with his spirit is not the capacity to speak in tongues or do a spectacular miracle . . . but it is love for people who are different from us.”

In putting his teaching of the vision statement into practice, Tim did make valiant and successful attempts to create “a place of welcome” at Temple that was now “largely Asian, multiethnic and multi-socioeconomic,” including members who were “CEOs, university professors, medical doctors, professional athletes, celebrities . . . homeless, people that are underemployed and people who are under margins of poverty.” Rooted in a biblical understanding of how God openly accepted human beings of all tribes, people and languages, Tim’s practice of hospitality, or “welcome” as he called it, originated from his personal experience of always sojourning and not having settled in one place that he could call home. This experience of unsettledness drove him to practice “a table of welcome” wherever he was, accepting people as they were, irrespective of their race, ethnicity, or social or economic status. Tim’s personal conviction transformed him into someone who saw his reality not from a vantage point of value-judgement but through the lens of God’s love, forgiveness, and unconditional acceptance.

As far as Issac was concerned, clarity of values and direction was the foremost centripetal force that attracted congregants and made them want to be an integral part of a faith community. Through his own exchanges with SGCCE now attending Covenant, he

concluded that the primary attribute that the Chinese church lacked was clarity of vision and persistence in pursuing that vision. Issac recalled that the need for relevant preaching “comes up frequently . . . we hear this regardless of Chinese church or whatever church, (that there is) a lack of preaching God’s word.” He argued enthusiastically that the mysterious divine message in God’s word and its preaching was the fundamental element that drew people to a certain church. Issac was convinced that “people are hungry (and) starved for God’s word. And where God’s word is being proclaimed, clearly and with authority, God will draw his people there.” At the same time, vision and mission also needed to be communicated through the ministry of preaching. Issac proclaimed, “If God’s word is being preached, and people are being encouraged to serve, and become disciples, for the most part, they’re not going to leave.”

Issac also singled out the desire of the SGCCE to seek an authentic faith expression as a disciple of Jesus Christ. His observation informed him that at the ethnic churches, “there is reluctance or a lack of making disciples.” Issac recognized that churches “do discipleship through the filter of specific ethnic cultures.” He explained that though discipleship at its core consisted of universal “parameters and boundaries” that any churches “should not cross” regardless of ethnicity, the culture that the churches attach themselves to “adds in a filtering layer that sometimes hinders or restricts the practice.” The barriers included a set of behaviors that was culturally enforced and reinforced, such as “things you say and do not say and things you do and things that you just do not do.” These cultural practices in turn inhibited the growth of SGCCE at the ethnic church in such a way that their desire to be authentic disciples was repressed.

*On exercising autonomy.* Although it was not a pervasive topic for all church leaders, some talked about the SGCCE transitioning away from their parents' church to a new one in the context of a search for maturity and autonomy. Isaac gave three examples. The first was about SGCCE exercising freedom to be assimilated into a mainstream religious institution. In characterizing such a move, Issac pointed out that such a desire to "assimilate" into a "broader kingdom community" on the part of the local-born cohort occurred when they went through different life stages, such as marriage. The SGCCE might have come to recognize that they wanted to exercise their autonomy to be part of a "broader (Canadian church) community."

The second example had to do with freedom for the SGCCE to exert their Christian identity. Issac asserted that one of the reasons that SGCCE congregated at Covenant was because "they do want to celebrate their Christian identity, maybe in a more expressive way, or maybe with a little bit more freedom." Not wanting to "forsake where (they've) come from," SGCCE felt that their time had come to forge a new path, avowing that "it is (our) time . . . (for) stepping out and growing up and starting (our) own traditions."

The final example was related to the freedom to choose the form of expression for the worship experience. Issac attributed the "Silent Exodus" to the fact that "(SGCCE) don't like the worship, or the music, or the style" at the immigrant church. He argued that music was "hugely important, because music is the language of the soul (and) it transcends language (and) speaks to the soul." Regarding music in the context of the Chinese church, Issac observed that a "more contemporary style of music is not as

accepted.” Although there was no doctrinal argument about whether a contemporary music style was acceptable to a faith community, SGCCE in general tended to embrace the modern style much more openly than did members of their parents’ generation. Thus many switched churches simply to exercise their freedom in opting to attend a church that met their “preference” for a more culturally accepted contemporary worship style.

**Summary.** In short, a triangulation analysis of this group surfaced the following key points: (a) the salience of ethnicity and how it affects church ministry, (b) how socialization enables and limits church affiliation, (c) how ethnic or cultural values must be subjugated to faith values, (d) the dysfunctional leadership at the Chinese immigrant church, (e) the centrality of relevant teaching and authentic practices, and (6) the desire to exercise autonomy.

In this chapter, data analysis for all four cases and their respective 13 participants was discussed, and the emerging themes from each case analysis were identified. In addition, two groups of data based on the interviews with five pastors that were pertinent for purposes of triangulation were presented, with their topics of discussion highlighted. In Chapter V, I discuss the cross-case analysis and findings and conclude with implications and suggestions for further study.

## **Chapter V**

### **Findings and Conclusion**

Chapter I provided an introduction to this study by establishing the rationale, significance, research questions, and structure for the multi-case inquiry. Chapter II established the theoretical frameworks for the historical background of the Chinese Canadian evangelical church; ethnicity, religion, incorporation, and congregational transition pathways for second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE); and leadership as it was applied to the congregational setting of Chinese immigrant churches and the churches SGCCE were attending in Canada. Chapter III delineated the research methodology for the qualitative multi-case inquiry and described how data were to be collected and analyzed. Chapter IV reported on the data collected on a case-by-case basis and the themes that emerged within each case together with data gathered for triangulation purposes. This chapter reports on the cross-case analysis, findings, and conclusions that emerged from the analysis of data collected in Chapter IV; and identifies limitations of this study as well as future research opportunities that may build on the findings of this study.

As stated in Chapter I, the purpose of this dissertation was to explore through a multi-case inquiry how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the SGCCE's transition from their first-generation churches to the current congregations of their choice. In support of the purpose of study, the following research questions were established to support the investigation:

1. What is the extent to which ethnicity and religion play a role in the way SGCCE think of themselves and in the choices they make concerning the church where they worship in the transition from their parents' church?
2. To what extent is ethnicity overshadowed by religious identity and vice versa in SGCCE's decisions as they transition themselves from their parent's congregation?
3. What role does church leadership of the first-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical play in guiding and shaping SGCCE's search for growth and autonomy as expressed in the congregational transition through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?
4. What role does church leadership of the churches that SGCCE are attending play in legitimizing the ethnicity of the congregants and shaping the ethnic boundary of the congregations through exercising the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight?

In response to these questions, three overarching arbitrating factors have been identified as key agents in mediating the overall transitional experience of SGCCE. First, ethnicity and socialization of SGCCE played a key role in affecting how they viewed themselves and the choices of congregations in the transition process. This factor represents broadly the response to Research Question 1. Second, supremacy of religious identity SGCCE held helped shape and negotiate their pathway in fostering intimate relationship with co-worshippers. This factor contributes to a large degree to the response to Research Question 2. Third, the presence and the absence of compelling vision and

clear foresight of church leaders from both the Chinese immigrant churches and the newly chosen congregations was another key factor that affected the SGCCE's transition from their parents' church to their new congregations. This factor represents the answer to research questions 3 and 4.

### **Cross-Case Analysis**

As discussed in Chapter III, multi-case study demands that the researcher undertake an extra layer of examination in the exercise of a cross-case analysis (Stake, R. E., 2006, p. 39). In following R. E. Stake's (2006) suggested guidelines for gaining deeper insights into the characteristics of the quintain of the overall study from the findings of each case, I started cross-referencing each theme and its content and data against those of other themes across all cases. In addition, I triangulated these themes with topics of common interests as surfaced through interviews of two groups of pastors as reported in Chapter IV. Table 11 summarizes the cross-references of these themes. Table 12 shows the common topics of the interviews with pastors for triangulation analysis. In Table 11, themes are arranged by case and listed in alphabetical order. For example, Theme #3b represents the second theme of Case 3. In analyzing the "common relationships across cases" (Stake, R. E., 2006, p. 39) or the correlation utility among the themes, a rating of "H" (high), "M" (medium), or "L" (low) was assigned to each theme's correlation across other cases (p. 48). For example, for theme # 1a (Quandary of ethnic-dominated SGCCE congregation), which is the first theme of Case 1, cross-case analysis shows that the degree of correlation with theme # 2b (Relationality and adhesiveness of congregational community), which is the second theme of Case 2, is "M" (medium).

However, the same theme (i.e., # 2b) is designated as “H” (high) for theme # 1d (Relationship) because the correlation of relationality being the key variable for congregational adhesiveness between the two cases is direct and high. Similarly, the correlation between theme # 2a (Life stage change) and theme # 1a (Quandary of ethnic-dominated SGCCE congregation) is assigned an “L” (low) because when it comes to leaving the parents’ church, only Eunice of Case 2 shared an experience that was similar to that of Peter in Case 1: Both of their departures were necessitated by the depletion of friends and peers in their age cohort at the parents’ church due to these friends’ life stage changes. Other participants in both cases did not mention this factor when they described their transitory experience.

Table 11 summarizes the “similarities and differences” (Creswell, 2013, p. 209), or the “uniformity or disparity” of the cross-cases themes (Stake, R. E., 2006, p. 40). Through analyzing the data and individual case themes identified in Table 11, six highly correlated themes as well as two outliers emerged that are listed in Table 13, with each cross-case theme and outlier being discussed in the following section.

**Cross-case theme #1: Dysfunctional and inept immigrant church leadership.**

Leadership is referred to as the process that leaders engage in to influence the followers to achieve a mutual goal (Northouse, 2007). As such, leadership is a lived experience (Ladkin 2010) and can be characterized not only by the leaders, but also by the led. In this multi-case research study, leadership referred to the lived experience of the participants. Yet leadership experience was multifaceted, and each participant’s lived experience was unique when it came to how each was led by the leaders at the Chinese

immigrant church. Although the dimensions of leadership experience at the participant's former churches as surfaced in each case analysis (such as Mentorship in Case 3) were worthy components to stitch onto the overall understanding of the lived experience, the following aspects of such experience were found to be highly correlated under a cross-case analysis. These experiences were not unique and independent in their own right but at times could be observed overlapping with one or the other. Described in more detail in the following sections, these aspects of lived experiences include (a) vision; (b) decision-making, and (c) exercise of power and authority

**Vision.** According to Greenleaf (2002), foresight is “the ‘lead’ that the leader has” (p. 40). In particular, religious leaders playing the role of a prophet are those who bring “vision and penetrating insights” to the community (Greenleaf et al., 1996, p. 14). From the perspective of the participants, church leaders were expected to be visionary in formulating a direction and constructing meaning for that direction for them to follow. In other words, a unifying vision and a clear mandate were required to elucidate the end-game and the immediate goals the church ought to pursue and how the congregants were to be led in pursuit of that direction. Yet, the cross-case analysis showed that a high correlation among the participants viewed the Chinese immigrant church leadership as visionless and rudderless when it came to providing clarity of direction for SGCCE. For many participants, vision, or the lack of it, was a flash point for their departure from their parents' church. Frustration flared up in the case of Martha (Case 1), for instance, when direction and purpose were not evident at her former church and therefore she experienced a sense of loss and drifting from her bearings. Martha lamented that “when I

feel like there's no central goal or kind of (a) theme, then I don't know what to do. I don't know what to go towards." Under such circumstances, Martha left and went on to search for "a church that has a direction and a purpose that is aligned with what I'm looking for."

Table 11

*Summary of the Analysis of Cross-Case Themes*

| <b>Case</b> | <b>#</b> | <b>Themes</b>   | <b>Correlation/Common Relationship</b> |
|-------------|----------|---|--|
| 1           | a        | Quandary of ethnic-dominated SGCCE congregation             | 2b (M), 2d (H), 4b (H)                 |
| 1           | b        | Inept leadership  | 3c (H), 4d (H)                         |
| 1           | c        | Stagnation  | 2a (M), 3b (H), 4a (H)                 |
| 1           | d        | Relationship  | 2b (H)                                 |
| 1           | e        | Social construction of identity                             | 2d (H), 3d (H), 4b(H)                  |
| 2           | a        | Life stage changes  | 1a (L)                                 |
| 2           | b        | Relationality and adhesiveness of congregational community  | 1d (H)                                 |
| 2           | c        | Chinese values and their juxtaposition with faith values    | 1c (M), 3a (H), 4c (M)                 |
| 2           | d        | Identity and how it relates to their choice of congregation | 1a (H), 3d (M), 4b (H)                 |
| 3           | a        | Ethnic culture and values as a double-edge sword            | 2c (H), 4c (M)                         |
| 3           | b        | In search of autonomy: Freedom and its many faces           | 1c (M)                                 |
| 3           | c        | Leadership matters  | 1c (H), 4d (H)                         |
| 3           | d        | Identity and values: An exercise of social construction     | 1e (H), 4b (H)                         |
| 4           | a        | Yearning for meaningful religious teaching                  | 1c (H), 2a (M), 3b (H)                 |
| 4           | b        | Identity and its influence over choice of congregation      | 1a (H), 2d (H), 3d (H)                 |
| 4           | c        | Distaste for cultural divide in a tri-congregational milieu | 2c (M), 3a (H)                         |
| 4           | d        | Dysfunctional leadership at the immigrant church            | 1b (H), 3c (H)                         |

Table 12

*Triangulation Analysis*

| <b>Group</b> | <b>#</b> | <b>Common topics</b>   |
|--------------|----------|--|
| T1           | a        | On the “Silent Exodus” and how the Chinese Canadian Church has viewed it |
| T1           | b        | On root causes of the “Silent Exodus”                                    |
| T1           | c        | On the cultural value of respect for the elders                          |
| T1           | d        | On finding the way out: Attempts to stem the tide.                       |
| T2           | a        | On the salience of ethnicity and how it affects church ministry          |
| T2           | b        | On how socialization enables and limits church affiliation               |
| T2           | c        | On how ethnic or cultural values must be subjugated to faith values      |
| T2           | d        | On the dysfunctional leadership at the Chinese immigrant church          |
| T2           | e        | On the centrality of relevant teaching and authentic practices           |
| T2           | f        | On exercising autonomy   |

Table 13

*Cross-Case Themes and Outliers*

| <b>#</b>       | <b>Cross-Case Theme</b>  |
|----------------|--|
| 1              | Dysfunctional and inept immigrant church leadership            |
| 2              | Mutuality between ethnic salience and boundary of congregation |
| 3              | Relationship   |
| 4              | Stagnation, solid teaching, and growth                         |
| 5              | Indictment of ethnic culture and values                        |
| 6              | Social construction of identity                                |
| <b>Outlier</b> |  |
| 1              | Abuse as a trigger to move                                     |
| 2              | Spiritual need of children as paramount                        |

For Luke (Case 4), having no senior pastor at the helm for a long period meant that the church was operating in a “sustenance [subsistence] mode,” offering no clear

pathway “to steer the flock.” Experiencing a “void of direction . . . a lack of vision” at the immigrant church, SGCCE such as Luke were “unable to move forward.” Yet the issue of vision took on a different dimension in Luke’s case. For him, vision was not merely a direction or what needed to be achieved in the future, but a unifying ideal that was needed in a tri-lingual congregational setting with competing demands and priorities. To address the diverse and sometimes conflicting aspirations of the three congregations, a vision that could bind them together with unity was needed. Simply put, Luke yearned for a “vision . . . that will unite us as a church because of the three congregations.” However, when faced with the stark reality of a “mismatch of vision” given that different congregations at his church favored divergent directions, Luke left for good.

Perhaps no participant was as elegant and eloquent in articulating the centrality of vision as Mariam (Case 3). For her, the essence of leadership was embodied in the “vision” of a leader. Without vision, leaders forfeited their ability to elevate followers to new heights. Conversely, Mariam argued, if pastoral leaders are “visionary,” they “see things happening in a certain way and they’re looking in that direction; it gives the congregation space to move in that direction.” Misalignment of objectives was present and conflict flared up when vision was lacking. Mariam elaborated:

If there are people in the congregation who are visionary and see certain things, like moving forward, but then the (church) leadership is not the same type of visionary, then that is hard — you can’t really surpass the leadership.

Because of the lack of such a uniting vision, Mariam left Uptown. And yet it was the well-articulated vision and mission of the senior pastor at Temple that Mariam was

attracted to and that convinced her to stay at that church. Corroborating Mariam's experience, Tim (T2), the senior pastor at Temple, explained his vision this way:

Our vision is really simple: It's to be a place of where people of different background, racially, ethnically, culturally, socioeconomically, spiritually, can come and discover or rediscover Jesus . . . a place of healing for the broken. And a mission-sending base back into our city and wherever in the world God leads us.

***Decision-making.*** According to Patterson (2003), servant-leaders are those “who lead an organization by focusing on their followers, such that the followers are the primary concern” (p. 5). However, almost to a person, the participants viewed church leadership and its practices at the immigrant churches as murky, opaque, hierarchical, and kryptocratic, especially in the area of decision making. In a few instances, leadership and decision making could in fact be characterized as Machiavellian in the sense that manipulative tactics were favored over fairness and moral or biblical principles. For instance, Martha (Case 1) leveled a complaint against her former church leadership of not following the predefined and pre-publicized due process of pastor recruitment but rather of making the decision in a “not very open to the church way” by appointing a candidate directly. Martha viewed this practice as being diametrically opposite to the fair-play and openness that were highly valued in the Western democratic process of decision making. In the case of Mark (Case 4), the prevalent practice of appointing church leaders at his parents' church privileged those who had “social status and achievement in society with material wealth.” Leaders on the board at his former church were portrayed by Mark as the “old rich guys . . . the rich business owner, the CEO guy.” Disdain for such a bias in favoring cultural values in decision making also resonated with Eunice (Case 2), who

loathed the cultural practices at the immigrant church at which the first-generation leaders would “make decisions based on their first-generation values.” Finally, John’s (Case 3) experience in dealing with the method his former church used to hire a pastor echoed that of Martha. The appointment of the youth pastor at John’s former church was prejudiced by the Chinese value of *guan-xi* (i.e., connection) instead of being based on a process that reflected a meritocracy. John concluded: “The (Chinese) church is kind of like that. They choose people to do things not because they’re competent but because of some other reasons that are not of worth. And it may be just because of connections here.”

Another aspect of decision making that was spotted by most participants through the cross-case analysis had to do with not only the opaque nature of how decisions were made but also the unbearably slow pace at which decision were made. The SGCCE expected decision making to be decisive, open, and collaborative. However, from Peter’s (Case 1) perspective, immigrant church leaders were “dragging their feet” when it came to the replacement of the English pastor, which in turn created a big void in the ministry and precipitated Peter’s leaving the church. No explanation or update was given about whether the replacement process had progressed; nor was the process fully explained by the leadership. Peter postulated that without regular updates and open dialogue, his cohort was left to speculate and draw premature and perhaps incorrect conclusions based on invalid assumptions. On the other hand, Matthew (Case 4) attributed this snail-paced process to a bureaucratic business model his father’s church adopted that eventually turned ministry into an unwieldy administration. In such a model, leadership took long hours in weighing every piece of information, and decision making appeared to be foot-

dragging. When Matthew made a request for mentorship, for example, it took “months before (he) can get a reply.” Simply put, “lack of organizational effectiveness” drove him away. Luke (Case 4) shared the same frustration. When faced with the stark reality that the church building was “older” and had been in need of renovation for years, church leaders were reluctant to make a decision and kept deferring it from one Annual General Meeting to another. Luke grumbled, “They always were continually going in cycles (of) 2, 3 years. A new project was defeated for whatever reason and then somebody else came up with (a) new idea. So it just felt the church didn’t move (forward).”

Participants offered a few common explanations for this ineffectual behavior on the part of leadership. For Matthew, leadership indecisiveness represented an attempt to avoid conflicts and reflected an inherent “disconnect between the different congregations” that emphasized to the inevitable competing values and directions of three congregations at his church. Mariam (Case 3) pinpointed the mismatch of cultural values between the leaders and SGCCE as the key factor in the Chinese leadership’s resistance to change at Uptown. Paul (Case 4) echoed their sentiments but proffered a different viewpoint. He argued that vacillation in decision making had to do with the Chinese “traditions that were reserved (in nature), because (the Chinese immigrant leaders) don’t want to change things.” Such a mindset might merely be a reflection of the first-generation leaders’ desire to maintain the grip of power and authority to exercise “control,” fearing that change might result in unknown consequences.

Nathaniel (Case 3) shared a similar experience regarding the risk-adverse mindset of the immigrant church leadership. He cited an example of appealing for a change in

worship schedule to illustrate how this mindset triggered the exit of his fellow SGCCE from Uptown. He explained:

We (English) want a change the time for this. They (Chinese) want a change of time for that. Some people want more emphasis on Chinese side because (those) Mandarin Chinese . . . saw it as more valuable. But you have this increasing population of Chinese kids in Vancouver who are like me who speak English as their primary language who are more comfortable listening to [a] sermon in English.

Such a mindset explained “partially why (English speaking) people left” the immigrant church, according to Nathaniel. Finally, James (Case 1) attributed reserved nature of traditional Chinese culture to a desire to maintain the status quo. He concluded that “it is in the Chinese culture to be very traditional. Once you have your way set, you stick with what you’ve known and what you’ve been doing.”

Corroborating this sentiment, Pastor Silas (T1) ascribed resistance to change on the part of the Chinese immigrant leaders to the reactive nature that stemmed from the traditional agricultural background of Chinese, in which farmers, as a metaphor for church leaders, “try to keep it safe so that they have the harvest next season. So the agricultural culture is kind of more reactive.” In closing, Pastor Adam (T1) was sanguine in speaking about how resistance to change was manifested in the attitude of immigrant church leaders in addressing the “Silent Exodus” of SGCCE: “Most Chinese churches would kind of like sweep the dust under the carpet and say ‘Well, we can wait. We can — it’s not that bad.’”

*Exercise of power and authority.* According to Tseng (2005), “Asian immigrant church leadership is often plagued with power struggles. Conflicts persist among leaders

and between clergy and laity” (p. 22). The final highly correlated dimension of leadership as experienced by SGCCE in this study had to do with how participants perceived power and authority being exercised. Adam (T1) observed that, regarded as paternalistic, hierarchical, and oligarchic, Chinese church immigrant leadership tended to be concentrated in the positional power of the “senior pastor” and the “church board.” Implicit in this leadership construct was that the Chinese congregation side of the church held the power. As Martha (Case 1) attested, “The Chinese side will decide what’s going on and then we’ll just follow along.” Yet this ethos at times created not simply an intergenerational conflict but also intramural discord among the Chinese between the Cantonese and the Mandarin. Such conflicts fed the impetus for local-born to leave the ethnic church, according to Pastor Tim (T2). Matthew (Case 4) explained that most of the church founders were immigrants from Hong Kong and had funded the church building construction in the early days. Because of the first-comer privilege, these Cantonese-speaking leaders “have the most power in the Church . . . they are the people who have the last say.” Yet while the congregation continued to have the wherewithal to finance any renovation project to meet the needs of SGCCE as in the case of Luke (Case 4), they refused to do so. Thus when it came to exercising power, position and finance were two pillars of its visible manifestation. In such an environment, as Matthew attested, SGCCE had very little say in shaping and deciding church affairs.

Yet another manifestation of power, as far as Matthew was concerned, was symbolized in the way the Cantonese congregation was situated physically in the church building when they conducted their worship service at his church. Failing to exercise

any foresight regarding the rising influx of Mandarin immigrants and the growing demands of the SGCCE, Matthew's church leadership was forced to partition the building as a reactive measure to accommodate three different services in three different languages (i.e., Mandarin, Cantonese, and English). Because of its power and influence, the Cantonese faction continued to use the sanctuary and the SGCCE were left in the basement. Drawing from the metaphor of height or level difference in terms of "upper" and "basement," Matthew came to characterize the divide between the two congregations in terms of liturgical practices, cultural ethos, and most important of all, power modulation. "Upstairs" were the older Cantonese generation who favored "hymns" with a "middle-aged choir." "Basement," on the other hand, was the SGCCE who used "drums, guitar (in worship) . . . (and sang) in English." Yet above all else, "upper" was the generation that had "the most power in the church." But for those who "grew up in the basement," there was a prevailing sense of being powerless and of not being able to navigate their autonomy. Thus, to no one's surprise, as pastor Adam (T1) came to triangulate, this was one area of immigrant church leadership that wreaked the most havoc in the intergenerational conflict. Mostly raised in the traditional Chinese culture that favored hierarchy with a "centralized power base and structure," immigrant church leaders, according to Adam, were perceived as "authoritative" or autocratic.

For Martha (Case I), such a perception implied church governance and a set of practices that were paternalistic and based on a culture of command and control when it came to ministry development for the SGCCE. Any time the local-born wished to pursue an initiative, they had to first "ask the Chinese side first for permission." So stifling was

the power structure that it eliminated any possibility for genuine and transparent intergenerational dialogue because the SGCCE never felt empowered to have a voice regarding their thoughts or aspirations. Martha complained that “there’s never really (a) chance to actually talk about what do you see as going on within.” When it came down to who held the power at the church, Martha bemoaned that she was just an “underling and a kid.” Peter (Case 1) shared the same feeling about his inability to speak out: “There was no one (to listen) . . . no channel where you can be able to communicate . . . thoughts and disappointment.” Finally, Phoebe (Case 2) shared a different perspective on the communication gap. When she desired to share her reasons for departure with Uptown’s pastoral staff, she was cautioned by ex-Uptowners that the leadership did “not take criticism well” and might “shut down” complainers and “ostracize” those whom the leadership perceived as a threat to their authority. This type of defensive behavior at the immigrant church was also noted by Pastor Issac (T2) in his discussion with those SGCCE who shifted their attendance to Covenant. Rather than openly and honestly addressing the leakage phenomenon, some immigrant church leaders were defensive and attempted to instill guilt in the SGCCE by protesting: “This is your church, this is your culture.” Under the circumstances, anyone who attempted to leave the church might feel guilty about betraying the culture he or she was reared in.

**Cross-case theme #2: Mutuality between ethnic salience and boundary of congregation.** A second highly correlated phenomenon surfaced in the cross-case analysis has to do with the degree to which ethnicity and its saliency affected the choices of churches the participants went on to attend. Although factors such as stagnation,

hunger for growth, and search for autonomy had colluded to contribute to the participants' decisions in selecting their new churches, this section addresses how the influence of ethnicity, or the absence of it, determined the pathways or models of churches the participants chose. Given that no participant was under any duress to choose any one of the four models of churches as their designated congregation, with the exception of James who professed that he was not given a choice but felt he had to join his parents' church in establishing a church plant for its own SGCCE, ethnic saliency was detected as a key factor in Case 1, with its effect waning across the cases. Simply put, if ethnic saliency was the strongest for the participants in Case 1 and considered "high," I argue that it was "medium" for Case 2, "medium to neutral" for Case 3, and "neutral" for Case 4. Although all participants were ultimately their own agency of self-determination, seven out of nine participants in the first three cases revealed that they had a high level of desire to congregate with co-ethnics and that their decision to select the eventual congregation was highly predicated by that desire. Martha (Case 1), for example, revealed the "untold" expectation that she was looking for a church that had a "Chinese-base" in leadership because she and her sibling were "more comfortable in Chinese churches." For Peter (Case 1), there was a "comfort zone" that was conceptually defined by his strong sense of homophily with the ethnic Chinese that influenced his choice of site of worship. Many churches he went to before settling in at Salem were "Chinese" because he knew "friends there." The same comfort zone influenced his resistance to worshipping with non-Chinese:

I would definitely not have problems visiting (a Caucasian church). But say if that church was primarily all Caucasians, I guess that sense of going back into my

comfort zone would kick in. Because in [an] all-Caucasian church, I would stand out, I'm the minority Asian in a White church.

Phoebe (Case 2) shared the same feeling when she declared: "Every church that I chose (to attend) was Chinese . . . because it's important to me." In part, the choice reflected her sense of homophily: "I'm more comfortable with a group that is Chinese." But more importantly, the decision was also for the benefit of her children, since she wanted them "not to lose the identity with their Chinese blood."

The saliency begins to wane with Eunice (Case 2). As in the scenario with the aforementioned participants, relationship with her fellow SGCCE continued to be a factor in affecting where she congregated: "In my world, I just connected better with Asians." So critical was relationship that she was prepared to relinquish her loyalty to a given congregation. Simply put, faith was portable and so was relationship. Without relationship at a certain congregation, there was no sense of attending. She explained:

Because you're still longing for relationships, you're still longing to belong; and if you don't have that or if you're lacking a little bit of that then you kind of feel it's time to go. If you don't have — it's such a sticking point. Once you lose a certain relationship, you kind of feel like, "Why should I attend (that church)?"

Yet in Eunice's framework of church affiliation, one key exception was conspicuous: Her desire for friendship with Asians did necessarily mean that she would want to attend the English congregation of Chinese churches after her departure from her parents' church. The reason was twofold. First, Eunice was repelled by the tendency of the Chinese immigrant church to favor cultural values over faith values. More

importantly, Eunice desired to “attend a church in my community that reflected the demographic of the neighborhood,” and ethnicity took a back seat in this equation.

Moving across to Cases 3 and 4, the ideal of attending a church that was community-centric that reflected the multiethnicity of Canada’s multicultural milieu began to overshadow ethnic saliency. For instance, whereas John (Case 3) continued to co-mingle with Chinese at Temple “who just have similar backgrounds (in similar ethnicity,” Mariam and Nathaniel, his counterparts in Case 3, were enamored of the Temple’s ministry in regard to the way it reached out to Christians and non-Christians alike who were not only multiethnic but also across a diverse social and economic spectrum. To Mariam, this community-centric model of ministering was in better alignment with the multicultural milieu of the city she lived in, and she felt God “had created (and called her) to serve (that) community (of congregants).” The factor of multiculturalism weighed heavily in Mariam’s thoughts because it matched the context of how she saw herself expressing her faith identity. She explained:

In such a multicultural city, if you’re not really being aware of different cultures around you, you just flock with the people that you like. And I think in order to engage in the public spheres of life and work and Christianity and art and culture, for me, at least, it’s important to be aware and know that there’re differences, that there’re different thoughts and different biases in different cultures but also being aware and tolerant and also understanding of where people are at.

For Nathaniel, his worshipping experience at Temple shifted from co-mingling with Chinese, with whom he once said was more comfortable in his past congregational experience at immigrant churches, to socializing with a mix of White, Chinese, and multiethnic congregants at Temple. He declared: “I like that there’s a very different

congregation of White people (and) people of other colors.” Nathaniel also stressed that Temple “acknowledges that there’re always different cultures there, (but) there’s a big emphasis on community (as a whole).”

The theme of community centrality continued to be prominent among participants in Case 4. Mark, for instance, advocated that his church needed to be “reflective of the demographic of the community,” and therefore it needed to orient itself “to reach the community” around the church. Matthew shared the same sentiment and argued that “because of the country, of the province, and of the city that I’ve grown up in, it’s important (for the church to reflect) the demographic.” Paul was even more explicit about his desire for the mainstream Caucasian composition in his church when he said: “Wherever the culture is, or whatever the society is, the church should be representative of that society . . . but in this city, it’s predominantly White, so your congregation would be predominantly White.” Similarly, for Luke, the multicultural mosaic that existed in the country was indeed the mainstream Canadian culture. It was through this lens of assimilation or convergence that Luke came to characterize the history of Rock, which started off as a small Germanic congregation. Rock had grown to embrace “all kinds of people there, but they are converging towards Canadian culture.” It was this kind of cultural milieu that Luke favored in his religious identification.

While one can argue that a proclivity for community orientation that reflected the mainstream Caucasian composition in Case 4 was somewhat predictable due to these’s very nature, the underlying factor for such a proclivity lay with the participants’ lack of strong socialization with ethnic Chinese. For example Paul spoke about having a

socialization experience that was much more inclusive than that of their counterparts in Cases 1 and 2 given that his upbringing did mirror the Canadian view of a cultural “mosaic.” He explained: “I grew up with White people . . . with Blacks . . . with people from other ethnicities or other cultures.” Paul admitted that he “wasn’t very Chinese growing up” because his friends were predominantly “White people.” Socialization as a critical factor was clearly articulated by Case 1 participants as well. Contrary to Paul’s experience, Martha and Peter cultivated their social contacts via, among other things, a Chinese Christian event with entirely Chinese attendees that they attended when they were “13 or 14” years old.

The socialization process of SGCCE was not only a determinant for which pathway the participants chose when selecting a congregation, but it also inadvertently enforced and reinforced the ethnic saliency of those congregations. All of the participants in Case 1, for instance, expressed a strong desire to see their churches become neighborhood oriented and multiethnic, consistent with the viewpoint of the participants in Case 4. This desire was also confirmed by Charles (T2), the senior pastor of Martha and Peter. Yet in spite of such a noble ideal, all participants in Case 1 together with Charles fully recognized that the existing Chinese ethnicity was prohibitory in allowing the congregation to move toward such a goal due to the congregants’ social networks and circles of influence. The stark irony was that ethnic saliency had become an exclusionary and restrictive force that bound the congregants within an ethnic boundary. Thus for Charles, Chinese “ethnicity and culture have really heavy bearing in shaping who we are” as a second-generation Chinese Canadian congregation at Salem.

The importance of the role ethnicity plays in shaping a congregation was not lost on Tim (T2). Both Charles and Tim aspired to lead their respective congregation toward multiethnicity; Tim succeeded because, according to Charles, his church had already had a core group of Caucasians with a multiethnic presence when Tim assumed his role as the senior leader, which shaped the subsequent ethnic DNA of the resulting congregation. In other words, if the core group were entirely Chinese, Charles contended, the subsequent congregation would most likely be Chinese.

Finally, reinforcing the emphasis on Chinese exclusivity in Case 1, James cited the demographic of the neighborhood as another key variable that determined the subsequent ethnic mix of the congregation. James expressed frustration that no matter how strongly he desired that his church become multiethnic, efforts toward that goal were hamstrung by the demographics of the area where the church was located. He explained: “The people in the area . . . are Chinese. So you’re going (to be) bound to have a very Chinese-oriented church.”

**Cross-case theme #3: Relationship.** Closely related to the desire to socialize with people of one’s own ethnic group as a factor in determining the religious pathway participants chose was the third highly correlated theme of relationship. Although being with co-ethnics was important for participants in Cases 1, 2, and to some degree 3, equally critical in staying at a certain church, and for that matter leaving their parents’ church, was the relationship participants struck up with their fellow congregants in a way that in some instances transcended the ethnic boundary. As previously mentioned, Peter (Case 1) mentally constructed a “comfort zone” that was clearly framed

by both friendship and ethnic affiliation. For Peter, staying in the “comfort zone” meant going to a church where he knew people. As he put it: “If I know someone in that church, I would be more comfortable going into that church.” The friendship factor helped explain why he did not attend a Caucasian church: “So why did I not visit a Caucasian church? Because I did not know any of my Caucasian friends were Christian.” Similarly, for Martha (Case 1), relationship ranked high on her list when shopping for a church home. She remarked, “I need to be at a church where I can build relationships.” And that was exactly what she found, connecting, or in many ways reconnecting, with “peers” whom she had first met when she was “13 or 14 . . . at the Chinese Winter Conference.” Combining this experience with her experience of socializing mainly in her ethnic circle, Martha candidly admitted: “My close friends are mainly Chinese.”

The strong longing for relationship was equally evident in Case 2. Eunice singled out the loss of connection at her parents’ church as one of the key reasons for her departure. She recalled:

You need your own friends, people your age, people you can connect with because at the same time, I was single and unmarried. And a lot of people older than me were married and had kids. So [the] life stage was different as well. So it was difficult to connect with people because our life stages were completely different.

Friendship, connection, and relationship continued to be a dominant factor in guiding Eunice forward in her decisions about where to congregate and when to leave. She confessed:

Because you’re still longing for relationships, you’re still longing to belong; and if you don’t have that or if you’re lacking a little bit of that then you kind of feel

it's time to go. If you don't have — it's such a sticking point. Once you lose a certain relationship, you kind of feel like, "Why should I attend (that church)?"

Lois (Case 2) used a different lens to characterize relationship. For her, a church should be a spiritual home that espouses and sustains close relationship among the congregants. From this perspective, she explained why she abandoned the pursuit of membership with Anchor because "the relationships at (the) small group really didn't deepen" and the church "didn't really feel like home." Yet at Summit, her experience was that for "the first time after I've left my parents' church that is my home church."

For Phoebe (Case 2), connection or relationship was such a dominant factor that she mentioned it no less than 10 times in her transitory experience. Lack of connection was the most critical defection factor for her and her co-worshippers who left Uptown. She stated, "I talk to other people, and they are leaving for the lack of connection as well." She explained further that lack of connection was prevalent in that "there's a lack of connection with peer[s], there's a lack of connection with pastor, and there is a lack of connection and relationship between the kids and God."

Connection between children and the pastors was an equally important aspect of the drawing factors for John (Case 3) in his decision to attend Temple. For him, pastoral leaders were to be connected with his children as models and mentors. The characterization of pastoral leaders as "friends" or "mentors" resonated a great deal with Nathaniel (Case 3). Having being abandoned by the leaders at Tabernacle, Nathaniel longed for spiritual leaders "who can actually sit down with you and help your faith grow . . . (and focus on) how to build authentic relationship." However, friendship or relationship goes beyond merely with leaders. Having suffered from a bullying

experience and hurt from broken relationship with a female friend, Nathaniel explained that he had found a genuine feeling of connection, acceptance, and care among the congregants at Temple. These congregants were those “people who value my friendship, and people who thought I was important to have around or I was someone that they wanted around.” The feeling appeared to be mutual as Nathaniel described the relationship: “These people were friends that I held dear, that these people were close, they’re valued and important to me.”

Matthew (Case 4) recounted a similar departure experience. In transitioning into college studies, he began to feel disconnected at the “adult group” and experienced a loss of the close-knit relationship he was so accustomed to when he was young with a stable of friends growing up together at the ethnic church. Yet at Zion, he experienced a fresh connection that he yearned for. Matthew felt that he “belonged (to this group of friends) . . . and hanged [*sic*] out with them a lot. Spend time with them lot.”

**Cross-case theme #4: Stagnation, solid teaching, and growth.** The fourth highly-correlated factor for SGCCE’s journey of transition that emerged in the cross-case analysis has to do with the stagnation the participants experienced when they were at the immigrant church. So prevalent was this factor that 10 of the 13 participants, most of whom were in the first three Cases with two being in Case 4, spoke openly and explicitly about this unsatisfying and inhibitive experience that harmed their spiritual wellbeing. For example, Martha (Case 1) lamented that without a clear vision at her former church, she felt a sense of loss in terms of a *raison d’être* for being a member. Central to her faith was “finding a sense of (how I can be a tool for God). I want to be there for God

because. . . I think a part of it, at (my former church was that) I felt stagnant.” Peter (Case 1) shared a similar plight. When the English pastor of his parents’ church left, a big void was opened in the congregants’ life. In such a minister-less environment, Peter bemoaned that the church “was not growing . . . and [was] being stagnant” and that he himself “was not growing spiritually either.” When Eunice (Case 2) was asked why she left her parents’ church, she offered a terse answer: “I was burnt out . . . (and) wasn’t growing.” Mariam (Case 3) expressed similar frustration when recounting her departure experience: “I think the real reason why I left was I didn’t really free like I could progress further in ministry or like spiritually . . . I felt like I was stuck.” Again, the jingle of being “caught in the spiritual rut” was clearly reverberated in Matthew and Luke (Case 4). For Matthew, it was a “spiritual stagnation” . . . (resulting from SGCCE) not necessarily growing numerically but even just as a community” that caused him to feel “confused,” experiencing “frustration,” “anger,” and “restlessness.” Under such circumstances, Matthew opted to leave. Finally, for Luke, the absence of the senior pastor caused the church leadership to maintain the status quo and stand in neutral. The “not rocking the boat” mentality led to stagnation and consequently “there was a lack of spirituality of developing (the younger) generation.”

Upon further analysis, stagnation was not merely a concern for the participants individually. For those who were parents with teenage or young adult children, it was the ostensible spiritual stagnation the children experienced that triggered the move to another congregation. For instance, Lois (Case 2) noticed that the faith of her 20-year-old daughter was not growing at Anchor, and Lois’s desire was for “her to grab on to her own

faith (and not) hanging on to my coattails.” So they moved to Summit where Lois’s daughter experienced a fresh renewal in her spiritual journey. Phoebe (Case 2) was equally concerned for her children when she spoke about the staleness of their faith: “The reason I left was because my kids were starting to say: ‘It’s okay, we don’t have to go to church.’ They were starting to say that because they had a lot of head knowledge.”..To make sure that her children didn’t “drop off (for) good,” she decided to make a pre-emptive move to Summit.

For John (Case 3), the paramount reason for him to leave Uptown was the stagnation of his children, who “just couldn’t connect. They couldn’t connect with the other kids or with the (youth) pastor.” Worried that his children might “fall away” from faith, John “wanted to find a church where they could connect . . . they can serve (and) can be really engaged.” He explicitly stated: “I hate to see my kids fall away.”

Finally, James (Case 1) offered a unique outlying perspective on the issue of stagnation by problematizing it as a cultural entrapment at the Chinese immigrant church where religious affiliation was constructed partly based upon ethnicity. James acknowledged:

We are blessed to be in such a strong Chinese Christian community, but sometimes, we don’t venture outside. (And) if we don’t open our eyes to other things, we’re stuck and bound to the way that we’ve always done things.

The restriction in the practices of immigrant churches could blind its members to “other perspectives in theology and practices” in other Christian communities that could spark ideas for innovation and prevent stagnation at the community level.

If stagnation was a push factor of departure for these participants, a pull factor, among others, was the desire for solid teaching, found in the new churches, that was found to be missing in many of the participants' former congregations that eventually contributed to their stagnation in faith. Considering their tradition to be a normative prescription of Christian faith, as Silas and Adam (T1) attested, immigrant church leaders tended to operate in a comfort zone of teaching that reflected the culture and practices of "back home" religious affiliation. The SGCCE found teaching of this variety too stifling and not germane to their context. Thus, along the lines of wanting to examine "other perspectives in theology and practices," participants searched elsewhere for teachings that were relevant to their lives, sound in theology, and fulfilling in exhortation. Phoebe and Lois (Case 2) were delighted that the pastors at Summit spoke about how "kingdom values" transformed the ethnic "cultural identity" so as to redefine ethnic values such as pursuit of excellence in the context of Christian faith. For Mariam (Case 3), the teaching of Pastor Tim at Temple was "affirming, freeing, and very empowering."

Nowhere was the deep longing for solid teaching expressed as strongly as by the participants in Case 4. Luke singled out, the key salient strength of his new church, stating that it was "teaching." He spoke energetically about how his experience at Rock was drastically different from his previous experience at the immigrant church: "The preaching there is excellent, and most people go there because the preaching is excellent." For Mark, the key reason behind his leaving his parents' church for the mainstream Caucasian church was his quest for meaningful exposition of "God's word," a phrase he mentioned no less than 10 times. Phrases such as "living their lives with

God's word"; "understanding God's words"; "spend their time in God's word"; "passion in God's word"; and "proclaiming the authority of God's word" were so central to Mark that they defined his faith: Teaching that was doctrinally sound must be "God's word." Similar to Mark, Matthew embraced preaching at Zion wholeheartedly. Unlike the monolithic technique employed by the preachers at immigrant churches of "portraying one interpretation of a chapter, verse or whatever," the head pastor at Zion always provided "an overarching focus" on the Bible and took time to expound the text "verse by verse and chapter by chapter." Contemporary issues such as creationism versus evolution were always addressed, with different views being presented and analyzed, with an appropriate stance highlighted at the end. Matthew found this analytical and systematic approach most appropriate in expositing the text. Finally, for Paul, his search for solid teaching was not so much related to proper preaching *per se* but rather to proper theology and its expression in the intersection between ethnicity and his faith. His investigation led him to adopt an Episcopalian ecclesiology and move to the evangelical brand of Anglicanism in rejection of Roman Catholicism and Orthodox tradition because it reflected the right theology, governance, and diversity of adherents.

In corroborating the participants' desire for solid teaching, all three pastors in Triangulation Group 2 recognized the power of relevant teaching backed by consistent and authentic practices. For example, Charles took steps to address the damaging implications of such Asian values as "hard work ethics" and pursuit of "money." Tim, on the other hand, took on the role of not merely a cultural entrepreneur but a contextual expositor of the sacred text that translated the teachings of Jesus to lessons relevant to his

multiethnic congregation. Issac commented that, in his interaction with SGCCE who had switched to Covenant, “(the need for relevant preaching) comes up frequently, and this is not necessarily a phenomenon [specific] to an ethnic church; we hear this regardless of Chinese church or whatever church, (that there is) a lack of preaching God’s word.”

**Cross-case theme #5: Indictment of ethnic culture and values.** As children of immigrants, SGCCE went through a double process of socialization (Isajiw, 1999, p. 193). On the one hand, they were being incorporated into the broader society through the school system and other societal agencies. At the same time, they also received socialization in the culture and identity of the first generation at home or in the ethnic organization they were associated with. Very often clashes of these two cultures and values arose, and the conflict forced the SGCCE to regroup and attempt to make meaning out of the whole experience through the lens of faith. In the cross-case analysis, a fifth theme related to these clashes emerged in three particular expressions.

*Double faces of honoring your elders.* Raised religiously in a traditional Chinese cultural milieu, most participants recognized and adhered to the virtue of respecting and honoring their parents or elders. Yet many appraised and critiqued this practice through the lens of faith. Matthew (Case 4) affirmed the value of “family” and “respecting elders” but only because the “Bible exhibits relationship with God is like family.” But honoring elders did not imply that a Chinese Christian should go as far as to endorse the “Confucian (teaching of) filial piety” or the traditional hierarchical social order of favoring “man over woman; father over son”; or of being obsequious to the elders to the extent that “if someone older is wrong, you don’t dare even correct them on that.” Other

participants did express a certain degree of cognitive dissonance regarding this issue but did not take any actions to counter the Asian value. Many participants attributed their inaction to the strength of this value, which had engendered an ethos that would mute the dissenting voice of the younger generation should they disagree with their elders. Under the guise of respect, honor, or deference to the elders for their status, age, and position, first-generational leaders intentionally or otherwise disempowered SGCCE from communicating their thoughts and aspirations openly and freely, let alone expressing a difference of opinion. For instance, in an attempt to provide feedback to Uptown's leadership, John (Case 3) recalled feeling "frustrated . . . and trapped because I thought it needed to be said but I had no one to say it to" because he "didn't feel the freedom to be able to say exactly what (was in his mind)." Martha (Case 1) shared exactly the same quandary. She highlighted an inherent barrier that existed in an immigrant church that was intergenerational in setting: "Growing up in the church, it felt like there're always going to be uncle or aunties," and she was treated as the "underling, the kid." In such a culture, Martha did not feel empowered to speak out about her complaints with the leaders regarding the rule they had violated in hiring the pastor. Along the same lines regarding codes of conduct, Mariam (Case 3) said she would be "dishonoring" the elders if she were to "step over the boundaries" of the pastors by speaking out. Similarly, Nathaniel (Case 3) bemoaned the restrictive ethos that prevented the SGCCE from pointing out the folly of their elders. He complained: "(SGCCE) are taught that with Chinese elders, they are supposed to be recognized as important (and respected). (Consequently), somebody can't go out to them and tell them: 'You are wrong. You're

doing this incorrectly. This isn't a good idea!" With this in mind, Nathaniel argued that "a lot of (English-speaking) people left because of . . . the conflict (and lack of open space for dialogue)."

To sum up, the Chinese cultural value of deference functioned as a restrictive force that curbed a genuine exchange of views based on the inherent validity of ideas and point of views. For these participants, the local-born perceived themselves as the ones who were suppressed and unable to speak out under the invisible presence of such a force.

*Exclusionary boundary of ethnic identity.* As indicated in Chapter II, one way to conceptualize ethnicity is through the concept of boundary. In his seminal work, Barth (1969) reasoned that what differentiates an ethnic group is not its culture but rather the group boundary that is determined both by the members and the outsiders (pp. 14-15). For SGCCE, no ethnic boundary was more palpable than the one that was drawn by the first-generation. Raised in a much more tolerant and inclusive multicultural setting in Canada, many participants found such a boundary distasteful if not abhorrent. Paul (Case 4) cited this boundary as a flash point for internecine conflict within the Chinese church as well as the "judgmental attitude towards people who are outsiders." The mindset of exclusivity ran against his ideal of ecclesiology. In Paul's mind, "a true church, a true congregation needs to be able to (allow) the young person that just came off the street . . . to be able to talk with an elderly person." He concluded that "being in that kind of culture . . . wasn't fully satisfying." Thus ethnic exclusiveness furnished the push-factor that motivated Paul to leave his parents' church. Irked by a similar instance at his

previous immigrant church, John (Case 3) called the church leaders “selfish” for not opening up the ministry to include non-Chinese. Such an attitude of exclusivity that prevented Uptown from integrating with non-Chinese attendees became a vicious circle: The less welcoming the church had become in terms of embracing multiethnic attendees, the less non-Chinese were likely to socialize religiously with the church: “If you’re a Caucasian, you walk in into Uptown, you’re single[d] out: ‘Oh you’re new,’ right off the bat.”

Along the same lines, Mariam (Case 3) characterized the boundary as a “bubble” that was created unintentionally by virtue of the Chinese ethnic composition of the immigrant church. Such a “bubble” shielded those were inside from having a necessary “awareness of how (to accommodate) difference culture” and of how to make non-Chinese comfortable. Yet the ethnic exclusivity at Uptown had become such a bulwark for protecting the boundary that no possibility could be entertained that might move the church further toward multiethnicity.

The dispute between the two generations regarding the exclusivity created by the ethnic boundary was perhaps most poignantly expressed in the argument about a potential name change at the Chinese immigrant churches. Eunice (Case 2) spoke of a controversial debate at her former church about dropping the term “Chinese” from the church name. When immigrant churches were originally founded, they invariably had the word “Chinese” in the church name to express their ethnic identity and to attract co-ethnics as part of an effort to establish “bonding social capital” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Raised in the Canadian multiculturalistic milieu, SGCCE argued that religious

institutions should remove the ethnic marker in favor of adopting an inclusive posture to embrace neighbors or friends irrespective of their ethnic origins, arguing that the term “Chinese” carried “exclusivity.” However, a proposal to change the name was met with fierce opposition, especially from the board, which was predominantly controlled by the first-generation leaders. “Name changes are very difficult in a Chinese church,” predominantly because many of these leaders, Eunice attested, were intransigent and put their ethnic values above their faith values.

Matthew (Case 4) shared the same sentiment about the exclusiveness of the ethnic marker that the name “Chinese” conjured. The SGCCE at his former church were somewhat sympathetic to the history and the need for such a marker as it clearly pointed to the goodwill and sacrifice of the early immigrants who founded the church. This cohort of congregants might have had “trouble with English so . . . there’s a linguistic need to communicate with them so you need to speak Chinese.” Yet for the SGCCE, “the Chinese part in the name almost was kind of a barrier” for two reasons. First, the term “Chinese” connoted that the church continued to conduct its business in “the Chinese way of doing things,” which was not in line with the local-born who grew up with the “Canadian way of doing things.” More importantly, the word “Chinese” implied that the church had drawn its boundary to be welcoming only of ethnic Chinese. Matthew reasoned: “Having the (word) ‘Chinese’ there, it kind of makes (the church appear) as an exclusionary community” and as such, it would make newcomers feel “uncomfortable” no matter what ethnicity they represented.

*What constitutes success?* The most problematic ethnic value expression had to do with the Chinese value of pursuing success. So ubiquitous was this value that 10 of the participants spoke about it passionately. To address this concern, pastors at the churches these participants had switched to found it necessary to confront it head-on by reframing it from a religious perspective. For example, Pastor Issac constructed his narrative in a way that challenged the ethnic judgment about success: “Who is the one who determines what is successful and what isn’t? Who is the one who says that this is good enough or this isn’t good enough?”

Given that first-generation immigrants were likely to experience “discrimination, social exclusion, and social aggression (verbal or physical)” (Breton, 2012, p. 27), they wanted to safeguard their children from such an experience of social marginality. Although the desire of parents to have their children engage in upward mobility was widespread, as Peter (Case 1) asserted, the Chinese immigrant parents were particularly biased in framing the engagement process in the name of the Chinese value of pursuing success with a focus on the value of hard work. For instance, Eunice (Case 2) recalled her father’s diatribe when she and her brother chose to follow their calling to be pastors at one point: “I worked so hard to put you guys through school. You guys are both educated. Why don’t you go and get a good job and earn lots of money?” A better or successful life, according to Eunice’s father, was defined “in terms of a good job (and a good career.” Eunice argued further that the outcomes as derived from the Chinese value of achieving success were always related to attainment of wealth, status, and education. These achievements would then in turn bring to the family the “face” or “honor” that

most of the traditional immigrants sought after in the battle against social marginality. Eunice explained: “I think in Chinese culture, you want face. Face means you want your kids to have education, you want your kids to be successful, and you want your kids to have money.” Likewise Luke (Case 4) recalled a similar material expectation on the part of his parents while he was growing up: “to save money, to buy [a] house or a car, to have children, to save up for the future . . . and a lot of our friends were professionals and such . . . Get into (university), finish it with a Ph.D., get a job, get married.”

While some participants (e.g., James [Case 4] and Martha [Case 1]) recollected no specific overt pressure being exerted on them by their parents when it came to choices of specific academic fields or careers to pursue, all spoke about the invisible presence of unspoken expectations that they would excel academically as well as engage in certain professions. These expectations were manifested in different forms. For James (Case 1), academic excellence was not necessarily measured by the school he attended or the grades or standing he achieved. He spoke of how his parents instilled in him a strong sense of exerting his capabilities to the fullest. In fact their mantra had always been: “You should strive for excellence.” Yet an unintended consequence of this demand developed in James’s psyche: a “fear” of his parents and of not meeting their expectations. James recounted how he felt as a youth:

There’s always that expectation. But I never really understood what they were trying to accomplish. (It is) not necessarily demoralizing . . . part of it is just because of the whole respecting elder thing. I did fear my parents. It’s not fear like I’m afraid, but I respect them. I love them. I don’t want to let them down.

Conversely, other participants spoke of specific goals in terms of grades and schools that came to characterize what constituted success. Peter (Case 1) recounted his parents' pressure to conform to an achievement-oriented mindset: "Getting good grades at school gets you a better placement in terms of getting into university . . . and getting good grades in the university (means) getting your degree and (getting) a better job, (which in turn means having) a better life." For a few participants, explicit choices of schools or specific programs were targeted or even imposed (e.g., Lois [Case 2] and John [Case 3]) by the parents as legitimate pathways for academic achievement. And when it came to career path selection, professional fields such as medical, finance, engineering, accounting, and law were openly touted as the areas for SGCCE to pursue. In John's words, "these are the four, five you know, occupations" that were sanctioned. Paul (Case 4) spoke about the pressure to excel as a broad phenomenon at the immigrant church he used to attend: "Growing up in a Chinese (church), even though it's Christian, there is still always a pressure to want to go (into) engineering, law, business, science, medicine, even from a Christian standpoint." These professions, as conceived by James (Case 1), exhibited concrete pathways to achieving stability and certainty in life and career. On the other hand, fields such as "political science or . . . humanities" were "not a defined, concrete career or occupation" to achieve stability. Consequently, Chinese parents looked askance at these career choices and in so doing, they unintentionally squelched the SGCCE's the freedom to pursue their own aspirations and at the same time cast aspersions on their children when their expectations were unmet. Paul relayed a story to illustrate this point. A local-born at his former church chose to get into "industrial

design” and not work “in business” or “in science” and as a result, was chided openly by his father for not being able to obtain “successful big-money, big-status jobs.”

Some of the participants who were parents admitted that they had unintentionally put similar pressure to achieve academic excellence and pursue prestigious career choices on their own children. John (Case 3), a family physician, talked about how he valued “academics and discipline” and wanted to know “which school is best for them (the children).” Thus, “because one of [the] Asian values is education,” John’s children were placed in private school. Phoebe (Case 2) also talked passionately about how she was affected by the Chinese value of educational success. For her, the bias for such a success was deeply rooted in an Asian “performance culture” that treasured achievement of academic standing above all else. Influenced by such a value, she admitted her own folly, describing how, in an instance when her children “bring back a test that’s 25/27, I don’t look at the 25. I look at the 2 that are wrong . . . (and) that’s just an automatic thing.”

For most of the participants, the pressure to pursue success was one of the most deadly flash points in the intergenerational conflict. Many participants expressed the belief that, by overemphasizing the importance of success in terms of academic achievement, status, and material wealth, not only did Christian parents stifle the growth of their children and eliminate their freedom to shape their own path but in fact also placed Chinese cultural values about faith values. Eunice (Case 2), for example, spoke of her own and her brother’s calling to be a pastor, and yet the divine initiative was totally eclipsed by her Christian father’s imposition of career choices upon them. In such an

instance, Eunice was convinced that her father definitely put the cultural values above those of his faith.

Paul (Case 4) took the displeasure to a higher level, indicting those parents who frowned on their children going into bible schools or seminaries as hypocrites. In commenting on how a friend of his wanted to attend a bible college and how his parents reacted unfavorably, Paul complained, "It really got me pissed off when parents would push academics over the gospel." He continued to rant against the parent:

They would come and they would worship God, sing songs and say: "We give God everything." (But) you're lying, you clearly put academics over God, you get angry at your son because he wants to a pastor. But then you have another son and he wants to go to law school and you praise him. You should be praising your (other) son because he wants to be a pastor.

No one, however, spoke as lengthily or as passionately as Mariam (Case 3) on this subject. Probematizing the value of success not just as in the context of an individual pursuit, Mariam asserted that it spilled over onto the collectivity as a church. The pursuit of success, stability, and social status had become so pervasive at the immigrant church that it had come to define the socioeconomic mix of the congregants, which in turn created a comfort zone and at the same time a boundary in the church setting to facilitate socialization with only people from a similar background and social stratum. As Mariam pointed out, this phenomenon is "due to socioeconomic status. If you're all the same type of people, you will attract the same type of people."

Many of the SGCCE at Uptown were immersed in such an ethos and therefore took on an identical mode of existence or life journey: "There is this model of . . . what

life is: 'I will grow up, I will be a working professional. I'll get like a degree. I will get married. I will have children. I will have a house.'" But other, more broad-minded SGCCE did not necessarily embrace traditional Chinese values so fervently. The preference for socializing with mainstream Canadians led them to want "to reach out (to) the broken-hearted," and yet they faced a barrier because the Chinese church consisted of "upper-middle-class and working professionals (with) one or two kids." The ethnic and socioeconomic boundaries made it "really hard for people from different culture[s] to come in (because) they (would) feel uncomfortable." Many of these local-born who found such a boundary too repugnant sought refuge in other churches that were more in line with their aspirations of inclusivity.

With the transitory experience in a fresh church setting, many of the participants reported a newfound appreciation for reframing the virtue of success from the perspective of faith. Nathaniel's (Case 3) account exemplified this stance. At one point, Nathaniel ceded that his definition of success was defined by material possessions: to "own a Lamborghini and a big house" that could be won through better jobs and represent a comfortable lifestyle. However, as he matured in his faith after switching to worshipping at Temple, he came to realize that success was "better gauged by how happy you are." Happiness and success, Nathaniel further contended, could be found only in God's calling: "The ultimate measure of success for a Christian (is) doing what God calls me to do."

Similarly, Lois (Case 2) spoke about her personal progression as she recalled her painful experience of being physically and mentally abused by her parents. Under the

circumstances, she was never given a choice in selecting a higher educational institution.

Lois recounted:

My parents are very controlling . . . I didn't have a choice; I was only allowed to go to School A, I wasn't allowed to go to School B . . . My parents thought that School A is a better school than B . . . (because) A was more prestigious.

Moreover, she was under the same expectation as other participants to “get straight A’s in the school . . . [and] to become a doctor or a dentist or a lawyer.” But having been influenced by the teachings at Summit, Lois reported that the core values she wanted to keep and to transmit to her children were drastically different from those her parents attempted to inculcate in her, because they were built upon her faith. She explained:

I don't want to raise my children up on thinking (how) other people are looking at me, (how) they're thinking of me. Because (with) kingdom value[s], it doesn't matter what man is saying about you. What matters is what God is saying to you.

Phoebe (Case 2) shared the same outlook. Congregating at Summit with Lois and her family and being influenced in the same way by its teachings, Phoebe came to recast her definition of success. To her, success was no longer defined by the professions that Chinese parents valued. A successful person could be “in ministry, (or) in media, (or) in government.” The key to success, as reframed through the lens of faith, was about scaling “whatever mountain that you think God gave you the passion and the ability . . . (to) go as high as you can” because with performance and excellence, the faithful could exert a positive influence upon those around them.

**Cross-case theme #6: Social construction of identity.** Like their visible minority counterparts who were also children of immigrants in Canada, the SGCCE at

times found themselves struggling with their own identity: Are they Chinese, or are they Canadian (Costigan, Su, & Hua, 2009; Lee & Hebert, 2006; Ooka, 2002, Tung, 2000)? This uncertainty was further compounded by their need to negotiate their faith identity as Christians (Cha & Jao, 2000; Chen, J., 2006; Jeung et al., 2012) in the religious context, as most of them had grown up in their parents' churches. Socially constructed and negotiated identity surfaced as the sixth and final highly correlated theme under the cross-case analysis, with the following four salient features being identified.

***Religious identity reigns supreme.*** All of the participants in this multi-case study took their faith seriously. When they were asked about their faith identity in terms of its relationship to their ethnic identity, 12 out of 13 answered without hesitation that they had a "Christian-first" identity, with the last one being ambivalent about the supremacy of his Christian identity. The strong attachment to their faith also explained another aspect of the participants' transitory experience: No one contemplated giving up their faith when they decided to leave their parents' church despite the pain and agony they might have experienced in that religious context.

When it came to their national or ethnic identity, all of the participants from the first three cases conceptualized themselves as having a vibrant hybrid identity: "Chinese Christians." However, such an ascription of identity was not shared by participants in Case 4. Choosing the pathway of mainstream Caucasian congregational experience to express their faith, most participants in Case 4 showed a strong proclivity for identifying themselves as Canadian first, with only one participant viewing himself as a part-Chinese and the others being ambivalent about the Chinese identity. In total, eight out of 13

considered themselves Canadian first when juxtaposing their national identity with their ethnic Chinese identity. Of the five who looked upon themselves as Chinese first, one was not entirely on board, with another one conceptualizing herself as a Westernized Chinese. Table 14 further explains the participants' identity affiliations.

Table 14

*Identity Comparison*

| Case | Participants | Christian first | Canadian first | Chinese first | Hybrid identity |
|------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1    | Martha       | √               | X              | √             | √               |
| 1    | Peter        | √               | √              | X             | √               |
| 1    | James        | √               | √              | X             | √               |
| 2    | Eunice       | √               | X              | X             | √               |
| 2    | Phoebe       | √               | X              | √             | √               |
| 2    | Lois         | √               | √              | X             | √               |
| 3    | John         | √               | X              | √             | √               |
| 3    | Nathaniel    | √               | √              | √             | √               |
| 3    | Mariam       | √               | X              | X             | √               |
| 4    | Mark         | √               | √              | X             | X               |
| 4    | Matthew      | √               | √              | X             | X               |
| 4    | Paul         | √               | √              | X             | X               |
| 4    | Luke         | ?               | √              | X             | X               |

***The socialization experience determines the propensity for ethnic identification.***

Upon further analysis, a common dimension emerged that helped account for participants' propensity to identify with their ethnicity, and that had to do with the childhood socialization experience in Canada. Simply put, the higher the interaction of the participant with the mainstream Caucasian or multiethnic demographic, the higher the likelihood that he or she would self-identify as Canadian first, regardless of the ethnic

socialization experienced at home. Lois (Case 2) spoke about her socialization experience at a high school that was multiculturally diverse. She explained that the school was “very White (and) there’s only five or four Asians in the entire school (of a few hundred (students).” In the same vein, Nathaniel (Case 3) portrayed himself as having a dual identity: “I see myself as a Canadian. I do see myself as Chinese”; yet he admitted to being “very whitewashed” in his upbringing. Paul (Case 4) shared the same experience as Lois in his socialization experience. He recalled that his upbringing mirrored the Canadian view of a cultural “mosaic,” explaining, “I grew up with White people . . . with Blacks . . . with people from other ethnicities or other cultures.” He admitted that he “wasn’t very Chinese growing up” because his friends were predominantly “White people.” Finally, this socialization experience with other ethnics was replicated in James’s (Case 1) school year as well. He explained: “In school I hung out with my Caucasian friends. I never even grew up in a Chinese community, I grew up in a Jewish community; and I was the only Chinese person and Christian at the school.”

A reverse identical socialization influence as a factor could be pinpointed for those participants who identified themselves as Chinese first. For Martha (Case 1), the process was very much a familial experience. She recounted that she was brought up completely immersed in Chinese cultural values and practices: “I still feel like we’re very (Chinese); we celebrate, we acknowledge we’re Chinese.” These practices included celebrating Chinese New Year and festivals and watching Chinese TV shows. This experience of ethnicity was something that as a local-born, Martha completely embraced: “I love it. It makes us special.” The influence of his ethnic upbringing was also evident

in John's (Case 3) case: "I was growing up in the Western culture but at the heart of it, I'm still fairly Asian." Mariam's (Case 3) experience added a vignette effect to the socialization factor. With a Chinese father from Hong Kong and a Chinese mother from the Philippines, she talked about drawing formative influences from all sides of the family and their associated culture and heritage to shape who she was: "a Westernized Chinese." She explained: "I see myself as a Westernized Chinese person who is born in Canada and has different parts of culture from different sides of family."

*Identity is malleable and can be either self-subscribed or ascribed by others.* In negotiating ethnic identity versus national identity, participants demonstrated that cultural identity could be malleable, situational, and ascribed to them by outsiders. John (Case 3) argued that the Canadian multiculturalistic milieu did facilitate choices regarding identity and values, which John treasured: "I can choose how Canadian I want to be or how Chinese I want to be." Central to the whole exercise was the flexibility he had in picking the identity that he believed to be advantageous in a particular context. John remarked:

Sometimes, your decisions are influenced more by your Asian culture, sometimes more by Western values that you grew up with; and Judeo-Christian Western values. So I think there's a bit of a continuum (and) I think that's healthy.

Peter (Case 1) shared the same sentiment and reasoned that negotiating which identity to associate with was a function of who raised the question: "When you say who, which (identity) would you use to introduce yourself more. I mean, my answer again would be based on who I'm talking to."

Eunice (Case 2), on the other hand, had a different set of experiences in terms of an identity crisis. She was subjected to racial prejudices when her small-town White

graduate school classmates saw her as being more Chinese than Canadian, a perception that was not in alignment with her own. Yet her Chineseness was challenged by native Chinese in China when she could converse with them only in English. The combination of these unique experiences forced Eunice to construct a social identity that was malleable, judiciously picking from each side cultural elements that she believed would be advantageous to her within any given context. Thus she was the only participant who did not choose one identity as the primary marker as she negotiated her cultural identity (see Table 14). The way out of the conundrum, for Eunice, was to “take the best of both worlds. And I like to think I create my own culture (and identity). Or our second-generation, we’ve created our own culture (and identity) that we can navigate between the two worlds, how we see it fit.”

Finally, Martha’s (Case 1) experience of racial prejudice was similar to that of Eunice in that at times her identity was socially ascribed by those with whom she interacted. Based on the context and how she was related to, she normally identified herself as a Chinese “because that’s the thing that people would see right away.” However, she noticed that this experience did not seem to be replicated among her Caucasian counterparts since it was not likely for a Caucasian to be asked: “Are you White?” Martha argued that mainstream Canadians would not accept a visible minority’s claim of being Canadian as his or her default identity.

**Outlier #1: Abuse as the trigger to find a new church.** As discussed previously, most participants embarked on the journey of transition motivated by painful experience with first-generational leadership; stifling cultural and ethnic confines;

stagnation; and yearning for solid teachings, growth, and freedom. However, cross-case analysis identified an outlying exit factor that applied to two participants, Lois (Case 2) and Nathaniel (Case 3): abuse. Lois candidly told candidly a story filled with bitterness, rejection, and betrayal, and about how it was necessary to leave her parents, and by extension, the church where they used to collectively congregate, “to grow and heal” after years of experiencing emotional and physical abuse. Nathaniel, on the other hand, spoke about his painful experience of being bullied by his peers at church. Speaking with despair, Nathaniel related how “every Sunday I would try going to Sunday school, I would get picked on. I hated it!” As a result, Nathaniel came to the conclusion that “to walk away . . . to avoid my peers completely” was a good “exit strategy.”

**Outlier #2: Meeting spiritual needs of children is paramount.** Another outlying factor focused on the spiritual growth of the teenage and young adult children of the participants as a variable. In contemplating the transition to other churches, these parents placed an premium on the growth of their children that was equal to that placed on their own growth. For instance, in explaining the shift to worship at Summit, Lois (Case 2) singled out the needs of her daughter as the main reason: “My daughter is 20. Three years ago . . . I could see that her faith was not growing” at Anchor. Lois’s desire was for “her to grab on to her own faith (and not be) hanging on to my coattails.” Phoebe (Case 2) was equally sensitive to her children’s spiritual wellbeing. In explaining the reason for leaving Uptown, Phoebe pointed to the staleness of her children’s faith as a concern. She stated:

The reason I left was because my kids were starting to say: "It's okay, we don't have to go to church." They were starting to say that because they had a lot of head knowledge, but there wasn't the relationship amongst even the kids.

As a result, Phoebe felt the need to make a pre-emptive move when the children were "around 10" to avoid the possibility that they might "drop off (for) good."

Finally, John (Case 3) moved twice, the last time from Uptown despite 9 years of worship tenure, mainly because of the needs of his children. As they were growing into their teenage years at Uptown, John observed that due to a change of youth pastor at the church, his children "just couldn't connect. They couldn't connect with the other kids or with the (new) pastor." Worried that his children might abandon their faith and also motivated by his desire to have them be able to "make their own decisions . . . to own their own faith," John decided to seek out a church where his children could find connection "not just with other people but also the pastors . . . (so that) they feel like they can serve (and) be really engaged." He explicitly stated: "I hate to see my kids fall away."

### **Findings**

This multi-case inquiry explored how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the SGCCE's transition from their first-generation churches to congregations of their choice through four research questions introduced in Chapter I. Eight findings were identified as responses to these research questions. In addition, these findings can be characterized as converging toward three overarching arbitrating factors that mediated the transitional experience of the SGCCE: ethnicity and socialization, supremacy of religious identity,

and presence or absence of leadership vision and foresight. Table 15 lists the findings in their relationship to these overarching factors and as responses to the research questions.

Table 15

*Findings, Arbitrating Factors, and Research Questions*

| <b>Overarching Factor</b>      | <b>Finding</b>   | <b>#</b> | <b>Research Question</b> |
|--------------------------------|--|----------|--------------------------|
| Ethnicity & Socialization      | Ethnicity retention and congregational affiliation: a function of cultural incorporation.  | 1        | 1                        |
| Ethnicity & Socialization      | Ethnic identity for SGCCE is a social construction experiment and a function of socialization process.   | 2        | 2                        |
| Ethnicity & Socialization      | All things being equal, SGCCE placed a high premium on relationship and ethnicity plays a significant role in it.                              | 3        | 1                        |
| Ethnicity & Socialization      | Ethnic exclusivity and internecine conflicts contributed to the "Silent Exodus."   | 4        | 3                        |
| Religious Identity             | Stagnation and yearning for growth and freedom motivated the SGCCE to engage in the transition.  | 5        | 1                        |
| Religious Identity             | Religious identity reigns supreme.   | 6        | 2                        |
| Presence/Absence of Leadership | Dysfunctional leadership and lack of vision and foresight at the Chinese immigrant church thwarted the SCGGE's growth and search for autonomy. | 7        | 3                        |
| Presence/Absence of Leadership | Compelling vision, explicit foresight, and narratives of inclusivity over ethnicity are a big draw for SGCCE.                                  | 8        | 4                        |

**Finding #1: Ethnicity retention and congregational affiliation: A function of cultural incorporation (Ethnicity and Socialization; RQ #1).** Isajiw (1999) suggested that second-generation Canadians go through a double process of socialization: one that takes place through ethnic settings in families and ethnic communities, and the other that takes place in public institutions in their interaction with broader society (p. 193). The

SGCCE whom I studied corroborated Isajiw's assertion. For example, Eunice (Case 2) remarked: "Growing up, most second-generation would have the experience (of living) in two worlds. You speak Chinese at home, and then you go out and you speak English with your friends . . . you [are] constantly juggling between two worlds that you live in."

Isajiw (1999) further identified five social-psychological options available to the second-generation to address conflicts arising from this double process (pp. 193-194). These options are: (a) keeping the two worlds apart, (b) favoring the ethnic world and rejecting the broader society, (c) rejecting the ethnic world in favor of the broader society, (d) pushing both worlds aside and seeking alternatives, and (e) bringing the two worlds together in creative ways (pp. 193-199). In addition, Isajiw (1975) further introduced three patterns of ethnicity retention or loss for the second-generation. Transplantation means adhering to parents' traditions, practices, and values (p. 132). Distancing and rebelling represent rejection of the parents' traditions, practices, and values (p. 133). Discovery means symbolic attachments to traditional and cultural values (p. 134).

As the SGCCE considered which churches to attend, ethnicity clearly dominated their thoughts and affected their actions. However, they did not necessarily conform as an overall collectivity specifically to any of the five options in addressing ethnic conflicts during this experience of religious socialization. Conversely, a high correlation was detected between some of the options and the propensity of the participants, on a case level, to worship with people of like ethnicity; therefore the issue needs to be reflected upon on a case-by-case basis. For instance, all participants in Case 4 and most in Case 3

seemed to have exhibited a strong identification with Option 3 in rejecting the ethnic world in favor of the broader society when participating in the religious socialization process (Isajiw, 1999). In this fashion, these SGCCE exhibited what Isajiw characterized as a “distancing” more than they did a “rebellious” stance since no visible uniformity of “negative ethnocentrism” was discerned (p. 194).

Conversely, participants in Case 1 exhibited a high correlation with Option 2, which saw the SGCCE and their churches primarily engaged with the second-generation Chinese ethnic congregants. Their socialization experience reflected Isajiw’s (1999) claim that their doing so “did not mean that . . . they reject their socialization into the mainstream society altogether” (p. 194). Evidence suggested that participants in Case 1 had a high desire to help the congregation “to adjust better to the broader society” by organizing children’s program for the neighborhood to orchestrate a deeper integration with the mainstream society, as in the example of Salem (p. 194).

As can be seen from the discussion of cross-case analysis in Themes # 2 and # 6 regarding the way the SGCCE associated themselves with the congregations as well as the way they negotiated their cultural versus national identities, participants from Cases 1–3 accepted a hybrid identity of Chinese Canadian that was subjectively constructed and socially malleable, depending upon with whom they interacted and what benefit they could accrue in a given context (Breton, 2012, p. 48; Isajiw, 1979, pp. 11-12). I argue that for the participants from Cases 2 and 3, the way they addressed their socialization experience tended to align with Option 5 in “bringing the two worlds together in creative ways” (Isajiw, 1999, p. 196). In other words, no cases and their corresponding

participants seemed to comply with Option 1 (i.e., keeping the two worlds apart), Option 2 (i.e., favoring the ethnic world and rejecting the broader society), and Option 4 (i.e., pushing both worlds aside and seek alternatives).

No participant followed the Isajiw's (1975) "transplantation" path in completely adhering to parents' traditions, practices, and values; nor did anyone totally rebel against them. The ethnic retention behavior of the SGCCE I studied tended to follow the pattern of "rediscovery" in attaching symbolic meanings to traditional and cultural values or altering their content based on faith teachings.

No overall collective correlation with any one of Isajiw's options of dealing with socialization was discernible. However, a case-by-case examination showed that ethnic salience and proclivity toward incorporation of a multiculturalistic society was a key determinant of the choice of congregation in each case. As the cross-case themes # 2 and # 6 shed light on Cases 1–4, ethnicity salience can be seen as waning: It is strongest in Case 1 and absent from Case 4. Though all participants expressed their endorsement of multiculturalism as an ideal and strived to practice it, the strength of multicultural practices at the religious institutions and among the congregants I studied, as pointed out in cross-case theme #2, rose from Case 1 to 4: It was weakest in Case 1 and strongest in Cases 3 and 4.

When compared with the transitional models of the discontinuous pathway discussed in Chapter II, ethnicity as a factor that affected SGCCE's choice of congregations was by and large consistent with the findings for all cases. For instance, Case 1 participants exhibited ethnic salience and homophilic force similar to those found

in the research of Blau (1977, 1984), Chai (1998), Edward (2008), S. Kim (2010), R. Kim (2004), and Mak (1995). Yet the experience of participants in Case 1 was in only partial alignment with S. Kim's (2010) and Matsuoka's (1995) research, as SGCCE in this case did not find themselves not fitting in to the broader society and therefore suggested that they saw no necessity for defending their ethnicity, which appeared to be accepted by the broader Canadian society. Conversely, the study agreed with Matsuoka's assertion in that this cohort was determined to creatively engage in ways to relate to the broader society (pp. 50-51).

Similar to Case 1, the SGCCE's experience in Case 2 was consistent with findings by Jeung (2005), Kim and Kim (2012), Matsuoka (1995), and J. Park (2008). However, although these participants were motivated to attend the pan-ethnic church based on a strong Asian ethnic affiliation, they did not experience a "racial uniform orientation" similar to that of their Asian American counterparts as surfaced by Matsuoka (1995, p. 49; Tuan, 1998, p. 39). Part of the reason could be that, collectively, Canada views its populace in a way different from the United States of America. Unlike the United States, which categorizes its population based on the racial categories of White, Black, American Indian, Hispanic, and Asian American (Jeung et al., 2012, p.7; Zhou & Lee, 2004, p. 11), Canada tracks its population using three broad categories: people Caucasian in race or white in color, aboriginal people, and visible minorities (Statistics Canada, 2013b, p. 14). Consequently, the SGCCE cohort in Case 2 had no strong experience of the so-called "racial uniform orientation."

For Case 3, SGCCE's affiliation with multiethnic experience appeared to be in alignment with the research by De Young et al. (2003), Garces-Foley (2007), Garces-Foley (2013), Ley (2008), and Shigematsu (1996). However, the desire to congregate in a multiethnic setting was not necessarily motivated by the same desire of their counterparts in United States to engage in a racial reconciliation project (De Young et al., pp. 68-70; Emerson & Smith, 2000, pp. 51-68). When engaging with multiethnic congregations, these participants tended to subscribe to the framework of ethnic transcendence as opposed to that of ethnic inclusion as articulated by Marti (2008, pp. 13-15). This tendency was clearly demonstrated by Nathaniel and by Mariam (Case 3) with their open embrace of a "new shared identity on the basis of a uniquely congregational understanding of what it means to be a properly religious person" (p. 14). This embrace was also affirmed by their pastor Tim in how he purposefully framed a redacted meaning of a multiethnic religious identity for his congregants by judiciously affirming those Asian values that were consistent with biblical teaching and refuting those that were not. When he did so, an integration of values and practices that transcended ethnicity took place in a ministry that was consistent with the "integrated multiracial/multiethnic model" that De Young et al. advocated in that the congregants were expected "to do things in a new way, truly integrating the diverse membership" (pp. 168-169).

Regarding Case 4, the experiences of the SGCCE were consistent with the hypothesis of Ley (2008) and of Mullins (1987). Building on a strong proclivity for assimilation into the broader society, participants in this case exhibited a desire to be "de-ethnicized" (Mullins, p. 328), as in the case of Paul and Matthew. Yet, while SGCCE in

this case demonstrated a strong desire to create “bridging social capital” by attending mainstream Caucasian churches, the finding of my study is not in agreement with Mullin’s prediction of an extinction of ethnic church (p. 327) nor with Ley’s prognostication of a “cultural funeral” (p. 2068) for these churches. Rather, the participants in this case, as in other cases, exhibited a strong alignment with multiculturalism as part of the broader process of incorporation in such a way that ethnicity was not completely denigrated by most of the participants, a stance that is encouraged by the Canadian policy of multiculturalism (Bramadat, 2009; Kallen, 2010; Kymlicka, 2012; Leung, 2011/2012; Satzewich & Liodakis, 2013; Wilson, 1993).

Finally, looking at how ethnicity and multiculturalism affected SGCCE in their affiliation with congregations from the assimilation/incorporation framework of Driedger (1989), I argue that participants from Case 1 belonged to Cell E of Driedger’s model in the sense that they remained distinct and separate from the mainstream society on a voluntary basis when it came to the congregational boundary of being an ethnic church (p. 51). Traversing across from Case 1 to Case 4, a movement can be detected in that participants crossed from Cell E to Cell C, which implies that such participants gave up some ethnic and structural characteristics through voluntary conformity to the assimilation process. Thus, this finding indicates that the incorporation process as it took place in the congregational setting for the collective cohort of participants was not a straight-path, zero-sum process as advanced by Gordon (1964) or W. Herberg (1983). If anything, the process exhibited similarity to the segmented assimilation advocated by Portes and Zhou (1993) in that Canada as the host country was receptive as opposed to

being indifferent and hostile toward SGCCE, evidenced by their relating few discriminatory experiences in the course of this study (pp. 83-84). In addition, the SGCCE in this study were highly upward mobile and therefore did not suffer from an absence of “mobility ladders” (pp. 83-85). Finally, sufficient social capital was available to the SGCCE from the co-ethnic community to aid them in their incorporation process (p. 86). The outcome of this process was not necessarily a uniform pattern of segmented incorporation but varied based on the degree of the ethnic retention of these participants (e.g., Case 1 still showed a high degree of ethnic affiliation in the religious setting while individually each participant incorporated well with the broader society in a way that reflected upward mobility).

To summarize, ethnicity did play a role in how the SGCCE in different cases assimilated themselves into the mainstream society via the religious institution. Consistent with their choice of congregation, the SGCCE exhibited a degree of ethnicity retention based on its corresponding salience.

**Finding #2: Ethnic identity for SGCCE is an experiment in social construction and a function of the socialization process (Ethnicity and Socialization; RQ #2).** Isajiw (1999) asserted that ethnic identity definition is a “process of self-inclusion or exclusion and inclusion and exclusion by others” (p. 176). In addition, Bell (1975) suggested that “ethnicity . . . is best understood not as a primordial phenomenon . . . but as a strategic choice by individuals who in other circumstances would choose other group memberships as a means of gaining some power or privilege” (p. 171). Collins and Solomos (2010) problematized ethnic identity either as agency and resistance

depending upon whether the person is situated in the context of power dominance or facing such a dominance and how that identity could be employed to exercise the power or to deal with the power in social relations (p. 5). Finally, Zhou and Lee (2004) opined that for Asian American youth, identity expression is a choice made through a dialectical process that involves an internal process of socialization of Asian values and shared experience of growing up Asian, and an external process of outsiders' ascription of who they are (p. 21).

The finding regarding the experience of the SGCCE in this study through the cross-case analysis in Theme #6 was by and large consistent with the research of Isajiw (1999), Bell (1975), and Collins and Solomos (2010). Most of the participants in this study appeared to see their Chinese ethnic identity not so much from the "primordial" perspective (McKay, 1982) but rather as a social construction of a hybrid entity when construing it with the national identity (Table 14). For instance, all participants from Cases 1-3 embraced this hybrid identity whereas participants in Case 4 saw themselves as primarily Canadian. Yet when asked whether they saw themselves first as Chinese or as Canadian, four from Cases 1-3 agreed that they were Chinese first, whereas four identified themselves as Canadian first, with one not choosing either answer.

When examined further, the salience of identity appeared to be a matter of social construction and negotiation. Eunice (Case 2) represented a vivid example of the negotiation process. She was ethnicized by her Caucasian graduate school classmates as Chinese even though she viewed herself as Canadian first. On the flip side, Eunice's Chineseness was challenged by native Chinese while in China, where she could converse

with them only in English. This paradoxical and confounding experience forced Eunice not to take one identity over the other but to view her identity as malleable and to negotiate it deftly by taking from each side what might be the cultural elements that would be advantageous in any given context. The way out of the identity quagmire, for Eunice, was to:

Take the best of both worlds. And I like to think I create my own culture (and identity). Or our second-generation, we've created our own culture (and identity) that we can navigate between the two worlds, how we see it fit.

Martha (Case 1) echoed a similar experience in that her ethnic identity was ascribed to her by Caucasians with whom she interacted in the broader society, an experience she argued her Caucasian counterparts would never have had because it was unlikely for a Caucasian to be asked: "Are you White?" Thus, based on the context and how she was related to, she normally identified herself as a Chinese before she called herself Canadian "because that's the thing that people would see right away." John (Case 3), for example, argued that the multiculturalistic milieu in Canada did facilitate choices regarding identity and values, choices that John cherished; as he put it, "I can choose how Canadian I want to be or how Chinese I want to be." He too was subjected to an experience of being ethnicized by a church greeter when he and his family attended a Caucasian church. They were immediately treated as ethnic Chinese and were pointed to a separate Mandarin service even though they were born in Canada. Collectively, the participants' experience was very much in line with what Bell (1975) and Collins and Solomos (2010) asserted: that ethnic identity is a strategic choice to exercise. And who they were in terms of ethnicity was due as much to who they claimed themselves to be as

to how others saw them, an experience consistent with Isajiw's (1999) definition of ethnic identity as well as Zhou and Lee's (2004) research into the dialectic process of identity expression.

The social construction of ethnic identity was an exercise not limited just to the national context. For Mariam (Case 3), the experience was problematized in a transnational context. With a Filipino Chinese mother and a Hong Kong Chinese father, Mariam grew up under the influences of different subcultures that were inherent in the Chinese diaspora. Some influences were more Westernized than the others. Thus Mariam constructed her ethnic identity in a way that reflected the incorporation of these subcultures that were transnational: It was at once Chinese, Filipino, and Canadian. She explained: "I see myself as a Westernized Chinese person who is born in Canada and has different parts of culture from different sides of family."

For those participants who saw themselves as Chinese first, clear evidence was present in terms of ethnic saliency in the socialization process of their upbringing. John (Case 3) articulated it well: "I was growing up in the Western culture but at the heart of it, I'm still fairly Asian" because of the language and cultural ethos at home. Martha (Case 1) shared the same familial experience; she was brought up completely immersed in the Chinese cultural values and practices. As she said, "I still feel like we're very (Chinese), we celebrate Chinese New Year; and watching Chinese TV shows, we acknowledge we're Chinese."

Shaping ethnic identity through the socialization process resonated in those who claimed to be Canadian first, except in the opposite fashion. Lois (Case 2) related that

she was one of very few Chinese in her school growing up and that her school was “very White.” Similarly, Nathaniel (Case 3) admitted that he was “very whitewashed” in his upbringing. Paul (Case 4) recalled how his growing-up experience mirrored the Canadian view of a cultural “mosaic”: “I grew up with Whites . . . with Blacks . . . with people from other ethnicities.” He admitted that he “wasn’t very Chinese growing up” because his friends were predominantly “White people.” This process of socialization with other ethnics was echoed in James’s (Case 1) school year. He explained, “In school I hang out with my Caucasian friends. I never even grew up in a Chinese community, I grew up in a Jewish community; and I was the only Chinese person and Christian at the school.” Finally, for SGCCE in Case 4 who saw themselves as Canadian first, all did so at the expense of their ethnic identity. In this fashion, their experience was contradictory to the “adhesive pattern of adaptation” of identity as posited by Kim and Hurh (1984, p. 188) and to Yang’s (1999a) suggestion of “adaptive integration” of “multiple identities together without necessarily losing any particular one” (p. 185).

In conclusion, all participants spoke of their penchant for ethnic or national identity. Although many adapted a hybrid identity, how SGCCE saw themselves was a combination of how they constructed that identity and how others saw it; as well as a function of the socialization process growing up in Canada.

**Finding #3: All things being equal, SGCCE placed a high premium on relationship, and ethnicity played a significant role in it. (Ethnicity and Socialization; RQ #1).** One of the major functions of religion is the provision of belongingness (Griel & Davidman, 2007, p. 549; Herberg, W., 1983, pp. 12-13;

Matusoka, 1995, p. 39). According to R. S. Warner (1998a), congregations as the expression of religion are the “worlds . . . where new relations among the members of the community . . . are forged” (p. 3). Ammerman (1997) further asserted that “congregations are places of belonging . . . and among the most effective generators of ‘social capital,’ those connections of communication and trust that make the organization of a complex society possible” (pp. 362-363). Regarding the main concerns of SGCCE in their transition to different congregations, the questions of identity and belongingness remained the core requirements in their journey, consistent with the assertion of Ammerman. Pastor Issac summed it up this way: “Caught between two cultures, (SGCCE asked): ‘Am I this or am I that? Do I belong here? Do I belong there?’” Based on the cross-case analysis in Theme # 3, I found the experience of belongingness of SGCCE in this study was encapsulated within the same notion found in the context of congregation these scholars have collectively advanced. For the participants of this study, relationship was a key factor in selecting a congregation. Yet belongingness, to these SGCCE, was not necessarily related to the congregation as an institution. The participants sought belongingness through personal intimacy in the form of close-knit relationships with fellow Christians, and they valued such relationships above congregational affiliation. So long as their religious loyalty to the evangelical faith was not compromised, the expression of such relational loyalty was not necessarily tied to a specific congregation such as their parents’ church. In these circumstances, relationship was the underpinning of belongingness, and if relationship changed in a local church context, the sense of belongingness to that church changed. When the SGCCE did not

find such an intimate relationship, especially with the cohort of their own age and background, they left the immigrant church for good. Eunice (Case 2) explained that they would depart:

Because you're still longing for relationships (and) longing to belong; and if you don't have that or if you're lacking a little bit of that then you kind of feel it's time to go. It's such a sticking point. Once you lose a certain relationship, you kind of feel like, "Why should I attend (that church)?"

Although faith was a key element in this cohort's journey, Eunice argued that faith was portable and affiliation with a particular religious institution was not as important: "I could take my faith to another church, why do I have to stick with this particular body (i.e., church)."

On the other hand, a hurtful or abusive relationship can be a key reason for leaving a congregation. In the case of Nathaniel (Case 3), who was bullied by his peers at his parents' church, the congregation as an entity was casted with aspersion. So disenchanted was he about the church that not only did he want to distance himself from a place that symbolized an abusive relationship but he also carried a sense of animosity: "When I walk into that church, the hairs on my back, the hairs stood up." Haunted by the hurt and snake-bitten by the bullying experience, Nathaniel wanted to disassociate from the congregation as much as possible. Along the theme of emotional and physical abuse, Lois (Case 2) shared a similar experience of a fractured relationship with her parents. When she left her parents and the church, Lois retraced a very deep sense of rejection that had been built up for decades: "So you know, that brought up my rejection wound (caused by) my parents. It made me realize that I had to get healing." Getting healed, for

Lois, meant she had to sever the relationship and “to leave my parents’ church . . . (and) to basically disentangle from my family . . . then grow and heal.” Finally, James (Case 1) summed up broken relationships at the immigrant church this way:

A lot of people are leaving the church because they grew up from as a baby until 30-something. You spent 30 years in this church and there’s so much baggage. Let’s say you dated some person, dated multiple people in the church, you have broken friendships, which caused people to leave.

Conversely, in locating a church to attend, a church they could call “home” (e.g., Lois), relationship, or connection, or friendship, was of paramount importance for the participants. For instance, Peter (Case 1) mentally constructed a “comfort zone” that was clearly framed by both friendship and ethnic affiliation during his transitory process. To stay in the “comfort zone” meant going to a church where he had established acquaintance, as he explained further: “If I know someone in that church, I would be more comfortable going into that church.” The friendship factor helped explain why he did not attend a Caucasian church: “So why did I not visit a Caucasian church? Because I did not know any of my Caucasian friends were Christian.”

Peter’s experience pointed to a different level of understanding of belongingness from the perspective of ethnic homophily as suggested by Blau (1977, 1984), Edwards (2008), and Kim and Kim (2012). Not all participants expressed the same desire for ethnic fellowship as was evident in Alumkal’s (2001) research into Korean American Christians (p. 184). In this study, the tendency of all participants in Case 1, and some in Case 2 (e.g., Phoebe and Eunice), to worship with co-ethnics was strongly evident both in the case and in the cross-case analysis. This preference waned in Case 3 and diminished

in Case 4. Consequently, belongingness as expressed in ethnic homophily for all of the Case 1 participants and Phoebe and Eunice in Case 2 was a key determinant in their choices of congregations, in line with Phoebe's report that the churches of her selection had been ethnically Chinese: "Every church that I chose (to attend) was Chinese. . . . because it's important to me . . . I'm more comfortable with a group that is Chinese." Conversely, participants in Cases 3 and 4, while not rejecting socialization with their ethnic friends, exhibited a greater acceptance of multiethnicity when choosing a church to attend, a stance that reflected their stronger desire to be incorporated into the mainstream society. For them, the multiethnic milieu of the community or the city in which they resided and the church that was situated in that milieu must be a mirror image of one another. As such, friendship and relationship continued to reign supreme, but they were forged with ethnicities that were no longer just Chinese, which was more in line with the multiracial/multiethnic church model as articulated by De Young, Emerson, Yancey, and Kim (2003), Emerson and Smith (2000), Garces-Foley (2008), Garces-Foley and Jeung (2013), Marti (2008), and Shigematsu (1996). Nathaniel's (Case 3) experience at Temple, for instance, served as an illustration. To him, his religious socialization can be encapsulated by the term "acknowledgement," a concept he evoked several times when he described his experience in recognizing, respecting, and socializing with multiethnic congregants at Temple.

Finally, for Paul (Case 4), the desire to be incorporated into the mainstream Caucasian culture in a religious context reflected not only his sense of belongingness acquired from his national identity as Canadian but also his rejection of his ethnic

identity; one of the reasons for his leaving his parents' church in the first place was its ethnocentricity. Paul lamented that "one of my disgruntle[d] things is that I can't go to a church that (is entirely ethnic because) . . . being in that (ethnocentric) kind of culture wasn't fully satisfying." The experience of Paul and his fellow participants in Case 4 appeared to contradict Evans's (2006) assertion that "there is no correlation that points to culture or ethnicity as being the catalyst that is driving away the second-generation" (p. 69).

To sum up, for the SGCCE I studied, belongingness as expressed in relationality, though more with co-ethnics in some cases and with multiethnic in others, trumped church affiliation as far as their faith expression and religious loyalty continuing to thrive.

**Finding #4: Ethnic exclusivity and internecine conflicts contributed to the Silent Exodus. (Ethnicity and Socialization; RQ #3).** As indicated in cross-case analysis in Themes # 1, 2, and 5, the SGCCE I studied observed that the Chinese immigrant church leadership was mired in confrontation, obfuscation, and dysfunction and as such contributed to the leakage of SGCCE from their parents' congregations. This experience of the participants was consistent with the assertion of Tseng (2005) that Asian North American churches were fraught with "conflicts among leaders and between the clergy and laity" (Tseng, 2005, p. 22). In addition, this finding of internecine conflict in this study was in alignment with the findings of studies by Jeung (2005), J. Kim (2003), S. Kim (2010), H. Lee (1996), and Song (1997, 1999).

Situated in an intersection of different dialects, languages, and subethnicities, the typical Chinese immigrant churches found themselves having to address the different and

at time competing demands of three different congregations with Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong immigrants, Mandarin-speaking mainland China immigrants, and English-speaking SGCCE. Nested in such a social framework, internecine conflict in terms of the cultures and values of the congregations and of the generations inevitably emerged. Cliques began to grow with a power structure that privileged the Hong Kong immigrant church leaders who, by and large, were the first arrivals and the founders of the Chinese Canadian churches as they came into existence. Nathaniel (Case 3) recalled that the outcome of the conflict always favored the Chinese congregation because “the leadership was very Chinese.” As a result, he explained, “there’s a big emphasis on the Cantonese and the Mandarin services. There’s [a] little less with English services . . . (and leadership was) not willing to accommodate Chinese Canadians who are English speaking.”

Paul (Case 4) reiterated the same concern: that within an institutional setting of “three churches in one,” the inherent language differences and “cultural clash” made it very difficult for the entire church to communicate effectively and march in unison toward the same goal. As a result, attempts to reconcile all the congregations in different places and in their walk with Christ proved futile.

In such a tri-lingual context, Matthew (Case 4) suggested that his parents’ church engaged in a vicious circle of a decision-making process that devalued the English-speaking ministry. The effort to evaluate every bit of information and assess risks and benefits often led to a protracted process that was unsuccessful in arriving at a conclusion. He bemoaned that the institution had become an unwieldy “organization . . . (and the) church just becomes one big bureaucracy, and nothing gets done.”

Finally, Luke (Case 4) lamented that without an overall vision to bind the three congregations together, his parents' church was drifting apart with each group advocating divergent influences and approaches in ministry. Yet an attempt to unite them via a proposed building project revealed political baggage and a vendetta at the church. Friction in priority and interests emerged as older Hong Kong "Chinese are in a more of a sustaining mode . . . whereas [the] younger English congregation is [in] more of a growth stage. But (they) aren't able to see eye to eye." Given a lack of financial wherewithal and support, SGCCE found themselves in a stalemate at the church.

From the perspective of many SGCCE in this study, the internecine conflict was tied to ethnic exclusivity that was exhibited in the behaviors of first-generational congregants and leaders at the Chinese immigrant churches. This perception is consistent with Chen's (2002) finding that for the ethnic immigrant church, "its most valuable resource for outreach, its members, is simultaneously an obstacle that hinders it from outreach beyond" its community; the first-generation often erected both a visible and an invisible wall to differentiate themselves from the nonethnic world (p. 226). Paul (Case 4) argued that these congregants often carried "a judgmental attitude towards people who are outsiders" and adopted a practice of "compartmentalization" whereby different groups worshiped on different schedules and "they don't ever mingle." Because of this exclusive mindset, Paul's church was incapable of honoring the biblical commitment of "making disciples of all nations and bringing people from the local community or from [a] greater area of the city into the church," besides which the church put the "English congregation . . . on life support."

In the same vein, both Mariam and John (Case 3) experienced frustration when they advocated a community-centric model with a “day-care center operating during the weekday at the church.” Their proposal was met with resistance, mostly from the immigrant congregants and the lay leaders. John concluded that ethnic exclusivity was largely at work in their mindset: “It’s very selfish. So Asian, I think, is a little bit selfish by nature, right? ‘I’m going to do well for myself and I’m going to keep my little kingdom intact. And I don’t want anybody to disturb it.’”

Nowhere was the issue of ethnic exclusivity as pronounced and poignant as in the confrontation regarding the name change of the Chinese immigrant church. Eunice (Case 2) spoke of a controversial and divisive debate at her former church concerning dropping the term “Chinese” from the church name. The ethnic term “Chinese” in the church name was included by the earlier immigrants to express their identity and to attract co-ethnics, as part of an effort to establish “bonding social capital” (Putnam, 2000, p. 22). Yet the local-born argued vehemently that such an ethnic marker should be dropped in favor of a more community-centric name that would feel welcoming to neighbors or friends irrespective of their ethnic origins. However, a proposal to change the name was met with fierce opposition, especially from the board, which had been predominantly controlled by the first-generation leaders. As Eunice noted, “Name changes are very difficult in a Chinese church”; she theorized that this was the case chiefly because many of these leaders were intransigent in putting their ethnic values above their faith values.

Matthew (Case 4) attested to the same frustration. He and his peers at the immigrant church argued that “the Chinese part in the name almost was kind of a barrier”

for two reasons. First, the term “Chinese” conjured up the image that the church continued to conduct its business using “the Chinese way of doing things,” which did not sit well with the SGCCE, who grew up with the “Canadian way of doing things.” More importantly, the term “Chinese” implied that the church had drawn its boundaries in such a way that only ethnic Chinese were welcome. Matthew reasoned, “Having the (term) ‘Chinese’ makes (the church) an exclusionary community.”

The inherent conflict of the Chinese immigrant church was not lost on Pastor Adam and Pastor Silas. As a first-generation leader, Adam recognized that an immense cultural gap existed between the generations. He recognized that the two generations had been “living in a very different (cultural) context.” As immigrants to Canada, most of the first-generation were not “schooled” in Western culture. When it came to comprehending the cultural nuances and subtleties of SGCCE, Adam just confessed: “Sometimes we just don’t understand.” Silas echoed that sentiment. Drawing an example from how the two generations approached worship with different styles and instruments, Silas suggested that it was not so much a difference of preference or taste, as that the first-generation continued to find comfort and safety in religious practices that mimicked the “back-home” culture, whereas the SGCCE were thoroughly immersed in the “new-home” milieu. Such normative prescriptions of church leadership styles and practices, according to the participants, contributed in no small way to the strife and conflicts between the generations that they had often encountered at the immigrant church. With an experience of cultural dissonance, the local-born cohort became

frustrated by the rancor and wanted to disassociate themselves from the immigrant church.

**Finding #5: Stagnation and a yearning for growth and freedom motivated SGCCE to engage in the transition (Religious Identity; RQ #1).** Consistent with the findings of Alumkal (2003), Ebaugh and Chafetz (2000b), Jeung (2005), H. Lee (1996), J. Kim (2003), S. Kim (2010), and Song (1997, 1999), the SGCCE I interviewed cited spiritual stagnation as one of the key factors that spurred their transitioning to other churches. All the SGCCE in this research followed a multi-faceted narrative of being spiritually underfed, stagnant in their growth, and stuck in the traditional Chinese cultural milieu. Cross-case analysis in Theme #4 revealed that 10 out of the 13 participants spoke openly and explicitly about the unsatisfying and inhibitive experience of being “stagnant,” getting “stuck,” and not “growing.” Many factors appeared to have contributed to the spiritual dryness the participants experienced.

The first had to do with the traditional teaching at the immigrant church being irrelevant and culturally too restricting and the yearning for deeper and theologically sound teaching. For example, all participants in Case 4 spoke about their deep desire for spiritual richness in teaching. For Mark, this desire was reflected in his focused narrative on the critical importance of “God’s word” in his congregational experience. Matthew, on the other hand, spoke of being refreshed by the expository, holistic teaching at Zion as compared with the teaching at the immigrant church. Luke summed up his experience at Rock this way: “The preaching there is excellent and most people go there because the preaching is excellent.” Lois and Phoebe in Case 2, on the other hand, raved about how

effective the Korean pastor was in mitigating the prohibitive forces of Asian values by sagaciously reframing them in the light of biblical teachings. Their experience was consistent with the study of J. Kim (2003), which demonstrated the Korean American Christians's desire for biblical teaching over cultural instruction with the cry: "Teach me about Jesus, not about Korean culture" (p. 63).

As Pastors Silas and Adam (T1) corroborated, immigrant church leaders tended to operate in their comfort zone of teaching that reflected the culture and practices of the "back home" religious affiliation. The SGCCE found teaching of this sort too stifling and not germane to their context. Many immigrant churches attempted to ameliorate these shortcomings by hiring an English pastor who was either a Caucasian or a local-born Asian Canadian to minister to the SGCCE. However, consistent with J. Kim's (2003, pp. 63-69) finding, an insufficient or inappropriate supply of these pastors often left the position vacant, as in Peter's (Case 1) and Luke's (Case 4) experience.

The second source of stagnation had to do with the ethnic boundary and its inherent culture at the immigrant church. James (Case 1) shed light on the cultural entrapment of the immigrant church that limited imagination and possibilities of "other perspective[s] in theology and practices." He problematized the issue this way: "We don't venture outside. (And) if we don't open our eyes to other things, we're stuck and bound to the way that we've always done things." Mariam (Case 3) echoed the same concern but framed her narrative from the perspective of aspiration and freedom. Reserved and restricted in its inherent nature, ethnic culture at the Chinese immigrant church operated in a manner that was diametrically opposite to that of the more open and

egalitarian ethos in the mainstream Canadian society. Mariam desired for her spirituality to grow into that direction, but “the culture of the church held (her) back.” In these circumstances, she felt that she could not “progress further in ministry or spiritually” and that she “was stuck,” “trapped in this culture,” and “not free.” This sentiment was widely shared by her cohort. “Boxed in” by their parents’ culture and unable to extend themselves to embrace other ethnics in the religious setting, these SGCCE “were kind of shut down.”

Yet Mariam’s outlook was completely changed at Temple. Contrasting the experience with that at Uptown, she explained that the idea of “freedom” re-emerged. She commented: “But with Temple, the culture is very affirming and very freeing and very empowering.” Finally, John (Case 3) expressed a similar desire to be freed from the straightjacket of the Chinese cultural value on social status and occupation that came to define and shape congregants at the Chinese immigrant church at the expense of authenticity of faith.

The last catalyst for stagnation was the lack of vision and purpose often found at the Chinese immigrant church. For instance, Martha (Case 1) was disillusioned by the lack of an enduring vision and purpose at her parents’ church and subsequently found herself at a loss for an anchor for her growth. She acknowledged that at her former church, “I felt stagnant.” Luke (Case 4) wrestled with the same plight. In the absence of a unifying vision and a clear mandate, church leaders operated in a mode of maintaining the “status quo,” not wanting to “rock the boat” and initiate transformative change. In

Luke's words, "There was a void of direction . . . a lack of vision" and "people were unable to move forward."

In short, stagnation resulting from traditional and inadequate teaching, a stifling and restrictive church culture, and visionless and purposeless congregational ministry triggered the SGCCE to leave their parents' churches in search of growth, freedom, and spiritual nourishment elsewhere.

**Finding #6: Religious identity reigns supreme (Religious Identity; RQ #2).**

Collins and Solomos (2010) asserted that "at a basic level, identity is about belonging, about what we have in common with some people and what differentiates us from others" (p. 5). Jeung et al. (2012) argued that second-generation Asian Americans had to negotiate their identity and belonging in the intersection of religion, race, and ethnicity (pp. 2-3). As the cross-case analysis in Themes # 2 and # 6 demonstrated, the SGCCE in this study shared an experience of identity negotiation similar to the one described by these researchers. Four pathways emerged from Jeung et al.'s research in speaking to the identity negotiation process: (a) "religious primacy," (b) racialized religion," (c) "ethnoreligious hybridization," and (d) "kin centered ethnic faith tradition" (p. 3). Cross-case analysis of discourses and narratives of the participants in Theme #6 showed that as a collective cohort, the SGCCE in this research exhibited a strong proclivity toward upholding a "Christian first" identity when religious and ethnic identities were juxtaposed with one another. This group's propensity was aligned with the first pathway Jeung et al. advocated, namely, "religious primacy," in which adherents of religions placed their religious identity over all other identities. In addition, this study's finding was also

consistent with that of Alumkal's (2001) research, which concluded that "religion has supplanted ethnicity as the primary focus for identity and sense of self" for Asian American Christians (p. 183). For instance, Martha (Case 1) argued that being "Canadian and Chinese has to do more with my culture," whereas "Christianity is my values, my beliefs, and my religion." Indeed, Martha vehemently insisted that the "number one (identity is that) I have to be Christian." Peter (Case 1) echoed the same view. For him, his Christian identity always trumped his ethnic identity because "all that matters is Christianity." James (Case 1) too he was adamant about placing his Christian identity above his ethnic and cultural identity, stating, "I consider myself Christian first, for sure." Phoebe (Case 2) was in complete agreement: "I'm more than 100% Christian before I'm 100% Chinese." As for Lois (Case 2), she simply declared: "My faith is my identity." She went on to proclaim: "I am a daughter of God . . . (and) that's first and foremost, that's my whole identity and self worth." Mark (Case 4) agreed: "Christian should be our number one priority . . . our number one identity; it should be our number one citizenship." Matthew (Case 4) summed it up this way: "Being Canadian and Chinese only pertains to this life being, and Canadian Chinese as an identity does not come close to giving me any fulfillment in my life." Of all participants, John (Case 3) was perhaps most succinct in his narrative: "My faith trumps my culture and my nationality."

The upholding of religious identity above all else by the SGCCE in this research was in alignment with one of the core tenets that came to define evangelicalism: the belief in the life-transforming experience of being "born-again" (Noll, 1994, pp. 7-10). The tone of Matthew's narrative (Case 4), for instance, in which he described ethnic

identity as pertaining to “this life,” implying that the faith identity is born out of a transformative experience that is transcendental in nature, was perhaps the best illustration of the religious construction of identity and meaning for SGCCE. In addition, while not explicitly surfaced as a variable, the desire of the SGCCE in this research for sound teaching as discussed in the cross-case analysis of stagnation in Theme #4 indicates an alignment with another key evangelical feature in having a high regard for the Bible as the authority for their faith and morality (Guenther, 2008, p. 375). The respectful view of the Bible as a key element of evangelicalism was not lost on the pastors at the churches the participants attended. These religious leaders constructed discourses and narratives that spoke directly to the supremacy of religious identity when compared with ethnic and national identity. For example, Pastor Issac proclaimed succinctly: “Christianity and the church and Jesus transcends all of that.” In this regard, the SGCCE’s desire was in line with the finding of J. Kim (2003), who concluded in his study of Korean American Christians that there was a rallying cry among them: “Teach me about Jesus, not about Korean culture” (p. 63).

However, I did not find the religious identity stance of the SGCCE to be completely consistent with the finding of Busto (1996), who reported that Asian American college students underwent a process of ethnic dis-identification in favor of an evangelical Christian identity as a greater likelihood of gaining acceptance by the mainstream society (pp. 141-142). SGCCE in this research upheld their religious identity without necessarily compromising their ethnic identity; it was not hard for them to maintain both given that they demonstrated little frustration with their process of being

incorporated into the multiculturalistic society of Canada. Most participants reported no instances of suffering from blatant discrimination or open rejection by the broader society. To the extent that they were subjected to prejudicial behavior, it was centered around a subjective ethnic ascription by Caucasian Canadians based on physical characteristic such as skin color, as in the cases of Eunice (Case 2) and Martha (Case 1) (Min, 2002a, p. 7; Zhou & Lee, 2004, p. 21). Conversely, I found that the SGCCE's choice of religious primacy was more in line with the assertion of C. Smith (1998) and of Griel and Davidman (2007) in that the emergence of evangelical Christian identity reflected the appeal of fundamentalism in providing a firmer anchor for identity due to the encapsulated nature of evangelical churches as opposed to the "fluid, tentative, differentiated identity of late modernity" (Griel & Davidman, 2007, p. 558). Such an anchor of identity was best illustrated by Paul (Case 4), who argued that in a secular and liberal society such as Canada, it was his faith identity that helped him navigate a pathway out of different popular societal practices or norms as well as lax moral standards "like for drunkenness . . . or (taking) drugs."

Although this research found a high degree of uniformity in asserting the supremacy of religious identity by the collectivity, as in the first pathway of Jeung et al.'s (2012) research, individual cases exhibited different degrees of variance when religious identity intersected with ethnicity. For instance, participants in Cases 3 and 4 (e.g., Matthew and Mark) showed strong alignment with this pathway with very little or virtually no influence by ethnicity, though John (Case 3) admitted that "my ethnicity affects my faith as well." Yet by virtue of the ethnic composition of congregations for

participants in Cases 1 and 2, SGCCE in these two cases showed an additional tendency to see themselves in alignment with the third pathway: ethnoreligious hybridization. This tendency appeared to be the strongest among participants in Case 1. Though as inspired by the ideal of a multiethnic congregation as their counterparts in Case 4, Peter and James (Case 1), who resided in two different cities, resigned themselves to the reality that their churches were Chinese and their religious pursuits continued to be influenced by their Chinese ethnicity. Pastor Charles, Peter's spiritual shepherd, echoed the same predicament, though the "Chineseness" the congregation now embodied was not that of the first-generation but that of the second-generation. Charles explained:

It has to do with our own ethnicity culture, how we perceive faith and how community life is defined. I think that has a lot to do with people's ethnicity and what they expect out of community, how they interact socially with other people.

To summarize, participants in this research saw themselves as "Christian first" above their national and ethnic identities and exhibited a very strong alignment with Jeung et al.'s (2012) first pathway of religious primacy when they negotiated their identity and belonging in the intersection of religion and ethnicity, although Case 1's participants also showed an additional tendency to be affiliated with Jeung et al.'s third pathway: ethnoreligious hybridization.

**Finding #7: Dysfunctional leadership and lack of vision and foresight at the Chinese immigrant church thwarted the SCGGE's growth and search for autonomy (Presence/Absence of Leadership; RQ #3).** According to Ammerman et al. (1998), congregational leadership is construed to embody three key roles: (a) helping the congregant to gain a realistic current-state assessment in terms of its particular situation

and circumstances; (b) assisting members to develop a future-state vision of their corporate life that is faithful to their best understanding of God and God's purposes for the congregation in this time and place; and (c) helping congregants execute that vision in the congregations' corporation life (p. 17). Yet Asian North American immigrant church leadership is fraught with "conflicts among leaders and between the clergy and laity" due to cultural, religious and intergenerational differences (Tseng, 2005, p. 22). Embroiled in a culture that condoned "coercive expression of power," Asian North American leaders were steeped in an ethos that celebrated hierarchical order and reinforced the concentration of power and authority of an oligarchy that privileges a few senior leaders at a local church setting (p. 22). The cross-case analysis in Theme #1 found that the SGCCE's experience of immigrant church leadership was consistent with Tseng's assertion. As Pastor Adam (T1) corroborated, Chinese church immigrant leadership tended to be concentrated in the positional power of the "senior pastor" and the "church board."

From the perspective of many of the participants, the older first-generation leadership, who were often the earlier Cantonese immigrants from Hong Kong, tended to look after their interests at the expense of that of other congregants when it came to collective church affairs. The bias was clearly evident in the way leadership deployed resources at the immigrant church. Many of the SGCCE's complaints were raised in the face of the growth the local-born ministry. For instance, Luke (Case 4) bemoaned that leadership chose not to fund the new building project to support the second-generation's expansion but to focus instead on their retirement needs. The observation of reluctance

was shared by Nathaniel (Case 3) as in the intransigency of the Chinese leaders regarding switching the worship schedule to accommodate the increasing needs of the English congregation. Paul (Case 4) spoke about the similar experience of encountering tremendous “resistance to change” when he proposed a worship approach that was more in line with the SGCCE’s preference for being more “relaxed (and) more open in terms of free flowing.” Matthew (Case 4) added to the same complaint about the Cantonese leaders being either slow or noncommittal in the context of appointing mentors or trading worship spaces when the English-speaking congregation was growing noticeably.

The foot-dragging mentality or resistance to change that was precipitated by a desire to refrain from “rocking the boat” or to remain in “maintenance mode” in ministry management reflected at least three characteristics of Chinese church leadership. First, the collective mindset of being slow to act was attributed to the reserved nature of Chinese culture, as was corroborated by Pastor Silas (T1). Hofstede and Bond (1988) too found that due to the influence of Confucian dynamism, Chinese culture placed a premium on a long-term orientation with a pragmatic acceptance of change and an emphasis on the value of perseverance, thrift, and saving for the future (as cited by Jackson and Parry, 2001, p. 81). Second, this leadership characteristic reflected how power and authority were exercised in a way that fostered and enforced a normativity of permissioning that disempowered the SGCCE from exercising their creativity and autonomy. To participants such as Martha (Case 1) and John and Mariam (Case 3), this permissioning culture was disguised as the Chinese ethic of honoring elders. Third, as a result of concentrating power with a selected few, the decision-making process tended to

be opaque, murky, and kryptocratic, favoring cultural norms and values over biblical or faith principles. This was clear from the examples given by Martha (Case 1) and John (Case 3), in which the recruitment process was not followed or selection criteria were overlooked in favor of *guan-xi*, or connection with well-know characters in the Chinese church community, when a new pastor was hired. Fourth, Mark (Case 4) echoed this observation in his description of how the board of elders were elected based not upon biblical principles but on the Chinese “tradition of the elders” ( Mark 7:3, New International Version) that favored social status, achievement in society, and material wealth.

Criticism of the immigrant leadership was perhaps most severe regarding the lack of vision for the SGCCE as a cohort. The participants in this study expected that church leaders would be visionary in formulating a direction and constructing meaning for that direction for their followers, as explicated by Ammerman et al. (1998). Therefore explicit foresight, a unifying vision, and a clear mandate were required to elucidate the end game and the immediate goals of the religious institution and how the congregants were to be led in pursuit of these objectives. Yet with only one exception, the case of James’s former church leadership who collectively applied forethought to the possibility of establishing a separate independent English congregational entity for the SGCCE, many participants (e.g., Martha, Eunice, Matthew, Mariam, Luke, and John) felt that their leaders lacked such foresight and failed in providing clarity in terms of a future vision regarding what the pathway for SGCCE development and growth ought to look like. For many, the absence of a vision and foresight was nested within even a broader context: the

need for a collective vision or ideal that was supposed to bind the three congregations (i.e., Cantonese, Mandarin, and English) together so that they could maintain unity and still celebrate the diversity among them. Yet when these participants found the vision to be lacking, the only viable pathway out of the quagmire was for them to leave and seek a new home. For instance, Martha (Case 1) bemoaned the loss of purpose and direction and stated that as a result, “I don’t know what to go towards.” She left to search for “a church that has a direction and a purpose that is aligned with what I’m looking for.” Likewise, Luke (Case 4) expressed the same frustration when the immigrant church was operating in a “sustenance [subsistence] mode,” offering no clear approach “to steer the flock” due to the absence of a senior pastor for a lengthy period. With the immigrant church being “void of direction” and demonstrating “a lack of vision,” SGCCE such as Luke were “unable to move forward.” Of all the participants, Mariam (Case 3) was the most passionate and elegant in articulating the centrality of vision. For her, the essence of leadership was embodied in the “vision” of a leader. Without vision, leaders forfeited their ability to elevate followers to new heights. Conversely, Mariam argued, if the pastoral leaders were “visionary,” they could “see things happening in a certain way and they’re looking in that direction, it gives the congregation space to move in that direction.”

The participants’ criticism was not at all a surprise to the pastors at the Chinese immigrant church I interviewed. Both Pastor Silas and Pastor Adam recognized the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus,” and both were eager to learn from the failed efforts of the previous immigrant church leaders to stem the tide. However, in their observation,

a majority of the Chinese church leaders were caught in the difficulty of having either power without knowledge or knowledge without power. Immigrant church leaders were vested with positional power and authority to exert change for the good of the congregants in alignment with divine purpose for the church. Yet most did not seem to grasp the gravity of the leakage and therefore they either were unable to respond to the “Silent Exodus” or took no proactive actions to stem the tide. Pastor Silas commented on the lack of awareness on the part of these leaders:

I think they see it, but they don't recognize it is there. The problem from the first generation leaders . . . (is that some) see that there will be a problem in advance . . . I heard some of them do, but mostly don't. I would say [the] majority didn't see it or take action.

On the other hand, as both pastors attested, although some realized that the phenomenon was palpable (Pastor Adam called the phenomenon a “loud exodus”), at the same time they found themselves somewhat powerless in effecting any meaningful dialogue or change amid the SGCCE, a difficulty due in part to the language barrier but mainly to a restriction of their mindset of normativity that reflected the “back home” culture. To the extent that attempts were made to address the issue, actions were token in nature at best with no real meaningful steps being taken unless these leaders sensed that crisis was looming that might “rift the church” or “tear it apart.” Wrapped in a more reserved and reactive mentality, Pastor Adam concluded, “Most Chinese churches would kind of like sweep the dust under the carpet and say ‘Well, we can wait. We can — it's not that bad.’” Thus, for these leaders who had been addressing church issues by and

large with “back home” cultural practices for many years, the knot of the SGCCE exodus proved to be intractable.

The absence of meaningful vision from the leadership to stem the tide was to a significant extent consistent with Ladkin’s (2010) framework of the leadership concepts of “moment” and “whole” in the sense that leaders and followers were required to “interact within a particular context and work towards an explicit or implicit purpose” (p. 27). Leadership “moments” of social relationship were required to enable the Chinese immigrant church leaders to understand the SGCCE’s aspiration and to nurture their growth. In addition, such an absence of vision was also consistent with what Ladkin advocated in examining the present-at-hand mode of leadership experience. The participants’ criticism of the first-generation’s lack of vision can be seen as being in alignment with Ladkin’s absence of a call for vision, a perspective that she defined as: “a way of ‘seeing’ the entire scenario and its attendant intricacies and complexities. Rather than the skill of looking forward, this situation called for the capacity to deeply perceive what was going on in the here and now” (p. 50).

For Greenleaf (2002), a hallmark of leaders is that “they are better than most at pointing the direction” because they have ability to “foresee the unforeseeable” (pp. 29, 35). Foresight, according to Greenleaf, is the ability to make sense of the unforeseeable. Thus foresight is what Greenleaf equated with “the ‘lead’ that the leader has” (p. 40). So paramount is foresight in leadership that Greenleaf further declared: “Once leaders lose this lead (i.e., foresight) and events start to force their hand, they are leaders in name only” (p. 40). My analysis of Greenleaf’s conceptualization of foresight in Chapter II

identified four interrelated dimensions within this notion. They are foresight and time continuum, foresight and awareness, foresight and consciousness, and ethical dimension of foresight. Sifting the analysis of this research through these four dimensions, I argue that the first-generation leaders by and large did not measure up to the foresight requirements as articulated by Greenleaf, especially the ethical dimension of foresight, including taking meaningful actions early enough to address the phenomenon of the “Silent Exodus.” I argue, based on cross-case analysis as well as the triangulation data, that many of these leaders as observed by the participants either did not take meaningful actions to address the leakage or resigned themselves to a stance of powerlessness regarding their ability to effect any meaningful change, as Pastor Adam attested.

**Finding #8: Compelling vision, explicit foresight, and a narrative of inclusivity over ethnicity were big draws for the SGCCE (Presence/Absence of Leadership; RQ #4).** Griel and Davidman (2007) asserted that “the provision of meaning and belonging are two of the most important functions of religion” (p. 549). Ladkin (2010) further suggested that “meaning-making enables organizational members to work together towards a common interpretation of reality” (p. 103). As congregational leaders, one of the key functions church pastors need to accomplish, according to Ammerman et al. (1998), is to create a vision for the future state as well as a believable plan for the congregants to follow in order to realize that vision (p. 17). The participants’ experience, as corroborated by the Pastors I interviewed for Triangulation Group 2, affirmed the roles of the pastors at the churches the SGCCE in this study shifted to as meaning-makers and vision casters, a finding that was consistent with the assertions

made by Ammerman et al. (1998), Griel and Davidman (2007), Jeung (2005), and Ladkin (2010).

As many of the participants in this study attested, it was in part because of the lack of a clear vision at their parents' church and the presence of a clear vision at their new churches that many left the former and selected the latter. Martha (Case 1) summarized her state of mind when she left the immigrant church this way: "When I feel like there's no central goal or kind of theme (that reflects a vision), I don't know what to go toward." Similarly, Mariam (Case 3) identified the leadership characteristic of vision and ethos as key criteria for selecting a church to attend, citing the importance of "visions — like vision of what the lead pastor has; but also kind of like what the vision of the church is, what the ethos of the church is."

Upon closer examination, leaders at these congregations all subscribed to a vision in which the church embraces a composition that reflects the multicultural demographic of most major cities of Canada, a stance consistent Ammerman et al.'s (1998) assertion. With clear foresight regarding creating a multiethnic model, these pastors exhibited a common characteristic as religious entrepreneurs who strung together a narrative that transcended ethnicity, one that simultaneously engaged purposefully and judiciously criticized Asian values through the lens of faith. For instance, Luke (Case 4) assessed the vision at Rock in the context of preaching this way:

The preaching there is excellent. But it's the purpose and the vision of the church and how everything ties into it . . . The church basically has one mandate: to spread the gospel . . . regardless of ethnicity. . . And everything is done with (that) purpose.

Phoebe's and Lois's (Case 2) experience of narrative at Summit as a pan-ethnic church, on the other hand, appeared to focus more on adjudication of Asian values. For example, Phoebe argued that the church leadership tackled or "reframed" the values "explicitly" and "purposefully" not by denying the Asian "cultural identity" or directly attacking the value traditionally placed on the pursuit of success but rather by clearly explicating where the desire to pursue excellence should come from.

The narrative of these pastors at times was constructed as much along the line of multiethnicity as across the socioeconomic spectrum as an ideal to appeal to the SGCCE's need to be incorporated within the broader society. All of the participants expressed a desire to see their church as a reflection of the community the institution was situated in. For Mariam (Case 3), the implication was that Temple ought to be as multiethnic as the neighboring community and the city as represented by its multicultural demographics with different socioeconomic dynamics. John (Case 3) attributed his church's attitude of embracing people of all ethnicities to the vision of the Japanese Canadian senior pastor, who intentionally shaped the church to be one that was open not only to ethnically diverse attendees but also to those who reflected the socioeconomic demographic of the neighborhood community. Simply put, the pastor "wanted (it) to be a community church.

Paul (Case 4) shared the same multiethnic ideal but from the perspective of theological pervasion. For him, the church must be contextualized to reflect the demographics of the community. Paul reasoned, "Whatever the society is, the church should be representative of that (demographic)." Consequently, since the city Paul lived

in was “predominantly White,” in turn the “congregation would be predominantly White.”

Corroborating the lived experience of the participants regarding how the leadership of these pastors shaped or broadened their ethnic identity, pastors in Triangulation Group 2 whom I interviewed offered similar insights. Mobilizing their congregations through worship, discourses, and narratives, pastors in this group attempted with foresight to address the ethnicity of SGCCE in their individual case contexts along the same lines as the multiethnic ideal, a finding consistent with Jeung’s (2005) finding that leaders in the pan-ethnic and multiethnic church openly adopted multicultural policy and practices that valued inclusivity and affirmed diverse ethnic collectivity (p. 148).

Pastor Issac, for instance, spoke about how SGCCE he came to be acquainted with at his church desired to “assimilate” into a “broader kingdom community” and welcome the nonethnic vision of his church. In a manner typical of evangelical teaching, Issac and his colleagues purposefully framed their value of the supremacy of religious identity over that of any salient ethnicity that might creep into his church fabric. In his words, the SGCCE at this church might not have wanted to “forsake where I’ve come from,” but felt that their time had come to forge a new path, avowing that “it is my time . . . (for) stepping out and growing up and starting my own traditions.” In other words, ethnicity, for Issac, was not much of a factor in the broad process of assimilation into the Canadian mainstream society of which his church was a part.

As for Pastor Tim, he acknowledged that this vision was diametrically opposed to the homogeneous unit principle as espoused by McGavran (1959), which stated that one “can probably plant a fast-growing church and be a focused ethnic group.” Rooted in the Gospel mandate to bring people across the different cultural and ethnic divides, Tim carved out a vision and mission for Temple:

Our vision is really simple: It’s to be a place where people of different background, racially, ethnically, culturally, socio-economically, spiritually, can come and discover or rediscover Jesus . . . a place of healing for the broken. A mission-sending base back into our city and wherever in the world God leads us.

With this in mind, Tim was able, as a “cultural architect,” to create “a place of welcome” that was “largely Asian, multiethnic, and multi-socioeconomic.” Thus Temple had become a church with thousands of attendees, including those who were “CEOs, university professors, medical doctors, professional athletes, celebrity . . . homeless, people that are underemployed, and people who are under margins of poverty.”

For Charles, having a vision of a multiethnic congregation alone was necessary but not sufficient to bring it to fruition. In his experience, the pursuit of the multiethnic ideal was thwarted by the Chinese ethnic composition of the congregation as well as the social network of the congregants. As indicated by cross-case analysis in Theme #2, a mutuality between the ethnic boundary of the congregation and the social network of the congregants existed in that the more ethnic the congregants’ social circles had become, the more unlikely it was that they could attract non-Chinese attendees. In addition, as James and Peter (Case 1) echoed, the demographic of the neighboring community did play a role in shaping the ethnicity of church. Located in a predominantly ethnic Chinese

neighborhood, Salem in the case of Peter and Bethany in the case of James both found that their power to attract and retain non-Chinese worshipers from the neighborhood had weakened. The neighborhoods no longer resembled the ethnic enclave of the past, as in the case of the Chinatown of major cities. However, the degree of institutional completeness as advanced by Breton (1964) remained high for the purpose of religious socialization at the second-generation ethnic Chinese churches such as Salem. This phenomenon was also consistent with the finding of Ooka (2002) in that the stronger the ethnic socialization the participants received from parents or friends and the deeper they were embedded in Chinese-dominated friendship networks, the higher the tendency of these participants to experience the so-called non-zero sum process of acculturation and remain bicultural as opposed to being wholly incorporated into the mainstream societal and religious culture. Thus the conclusion of Salem as a Chinese congregation was perhaps inevitable and predictable due to the social network of the congregants and the neighborhood demographics. With that in mind, Charles declared that “our ethnicity and our culture have [a] really heavy bearing in shaping who we are.”

Recognizing this restriction, Charles began to show adaptability and foresight in creating a different narrative to shape Salem’s vision, helping the church to shift from a multiethnic to pan-Chinese identity by embracing SGCCE as well as Chinese from other regions of the world who shared the same desire to celebrate the new Chineseness that was second-generation. This vision was found appealing by Martha and Paul, two of the participants in Case 1, as well as by others attending Salem.

In this context, perhaps Charles's insight was worth noting: The higher the ethnic composition in terms of the visible minority of the start-up core group, the less likely it was that the church could become multiethnic. This appeared to hold true with the pan-Asian congregation in Case 2 with the founding group being predominantly Korean. As for Temple of Case 3, it was predominantly a Caucasian church when Tim was hired. With the presence of Caucasians, and located in a place where homeless and hopeless constituted part of the neighborhood, Temple, according to Charles's hypothesis, stood a better chance of shaping the congregation into a multiethnic reality, irrespective of Tim's vision and leadership. Such a hypothesis did not apply, however, to the mainstream churches of Case 4 since there was never any intention for such congregations to uphold any ethnicity as part of their mandate for being mainstream Caucasian churches.

When it came to examining the servant-leadership characteristic of foresight of these pastors and how they attempted to reinforce the ethnicity of SGCCE and the ethnic boundary of the congregation, I found them to be highly aware of the "Silent Exodus" phenomenon, conscious in shaping their vision, and proactively mobilizing programs, worship services, and narratives and discourses to embrace ethnicity and multiethnicity in their various contexts where possible for Cases 1–3. In this regard, they exhibited the servant-leadership of foresight. As for the leaders for Case 4, I found their narratives and concerns more focused in shaping a superior religious identity that completely overshadowed the ethnicity of their congregants, regardless of how salient it might be.

## **Conclusion**

As indicated in Chapters I and II, second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals as a cohort had grown up and come of age. As such, they were capable of exercising self-determination in terms of how they constructed and negotiated their faith and their ethnic identity in their own journey in the “new-home” that is Canada. In so doing, SGCCE asserted their individuality, autonomy, and desire to be incorporated into the broader multicultural milieu of Canada through a congregational context of their own choice. This dissertation examined the catalysts that spurred them to leave their parents’ churches and the ways in which religion and ethnicity affected the pathway of transition. The findings of the dissertation clearly show that as a collectivity, the SGCCE expressed a longing for a deeper and richer meaning and intimate relationship in their pursuit of belongingness in the context of new congregations. Being held back by, and trapped in, the traditional Chinese immigrant culture, the SGCCE found themselves experiencing stagnation and spiritual dryness, complaining that the ethnic church fostered command and control leadership practices that were both disempowering and encouraging of a “permissioning” culture. In addition, they observed that the first-generation leaders tended to embroil themselves in internecine feuds between congregations and between generations, so much so that needs resulting from the SGCCE’s growth and expansion had typically been put on the back burner. Never treated as equals and not content to play second fiddle at the immigrant church, the SGCCE wanted to distance themselves from an environment that was ethnic-centric in creating a boundary against non-Chinese, one that SGCCE believed to be fraught with unacceptable ethnic values and stifling

practices. Furthermore, triggered by experiences with either life misfortune or broken relationships, the SGCCE were motivated to seek freedom and autonomy in crafting a faith of their own in a religious context that they believed to be more in line with the multicultural ethos of Canada.

However, the endeavor did not necessarily follow a straight path. This study identified three factors that mediated the second-generation's choices of new congregations. The first factor was related to ethnicity in terms of how their history of socialization with ethnic Chinese and their current social networks played a pivotal role in how they viewed themselves and in how they participated in the congregational transition process. In short, ethnicity was a prominent factor affecting how they chose a church to affiliate with. The greater a role their ethnicity played in their identity; the more ethnicized they had been in their upbringing; and the more confined they were at the time of the transition in socializing with ethnic Chinese, the higher the likelihood that they would choose to attend either an ethnic second-generation English-speaking church or a pan-Asian church. Conversely, the more they viewed their national identity as predominant; the more assimilated they had been growing up in a multicultural milieu; and the broader their social acquaintance in terms of ethnicity at the time of the transition, the more likely they were to choose multiethnic and mainstream Caucasian churches.

The second factor had to do with how the SGCCE negotiated their identity out of the liminality that existed in the intersection of religion and ethnicity. As much as they might have had challenges in constructing their ethnic identity, their religious identity had always been head and shoulders above their ethnic identity for this cohort. For that

reason, ethnicity as a variable notwithstanding, the SGCCE sought a place that bolstered their faith commitment; fostered intimate personal relationship with co-worshippers; and allowed them to grow and to be free to engage actively in ministry that was no longer constrained by an ethnic boundary.

Finally, as the SGCCE searched for new congregations in which to their faith, they were enamored of the clarity of vision and the distinctive foresight of the pastoral leadership at the congregations they chose in terms of how faith and congregational practices needed to embrace a community-centric approach, accepting congregants from more diverse multiethnic or socioeconomic backgrounds. In addition, the SGCCE were captivated by the preaching and teaching of their new pastors, who purposefully took on the role of a “cultural architect” or “religious entrepreneur” in clearly articulating how faith values must transform ethnic values by engaging and critiquing ethnic and broader mainstream culture at the same time. In so doing, the leadership of these congregations demonstrated clear servant-leadership foresight in taking appropriate actions necessary to assist the SGCCE in forging a new path of religious expression of their own.

In examining the lived experience of SGCCE regarding the Chinese immigrant church leadership as corroborated by the pastors interviewed in this study, it is apparent that SGCCE saw the leadership as dysfunctional and inept, as being often mired in their own normativity of “back-home” culture and practices. The SGCCE did not believe that these leaders exhibited any foresight or were visionary and broadminded enough to embrace a wider stance regarding multiethnic community. Furthermore, the SGCCE were frustrated with first-generation leaders’ insensitivity to the broader multicultural

conditions and their outdated teachings and lifestyles that often dominated the teaching at the immigrant church. Entrapped in a homogenous ethnic model of a faith community, these first-generation leaders often found themselves lacking understanding of the multicultural nuances of the mainstream society such that the aspirations of the SGCCE were either not addressed properly or at times completely ignored. In this regard, I find that Breton's (2012) observation strikes a resonate chord:

If the loss of relevance and the resulting weakening or even disappearance of the church is to be prevented, new organizational forms may be needed and new patterns of relationship and communication between the clergy and the laity may be required. Modifications in rituals and religious practices may also be necessary. (p. 105).

One of the areas primed for modification may well be figuring out how intergeneration leadership at the immigrant church needs to be construed and negotiated if SGCCE leakage is to be plugged. Tseng's alarm bell, as reported in the interview by H. Lee (1996), needs to be heeded: "Unless the first-generation leaders are able to give second-generation pastors (and leaders) the freedom to lead, their young people will not go to these churches. First-generation pastors need to be aware of this dynamic" (p. 52).

Finally, servant-leadership as advocated by Greenleaf (2004) exhorts the Chinese immigrant church to bless and release SGCCE to shape their path, forge their own identity, and fashion their own faith. This is what Greenleaf has told us the quintessence of servant-leadership is: followers would become freer and wiser and become servant-leaders themselves (p. 6). Otherwise, my daughter Sarah's exclamation: "How am I

going to grow up?” will continue to ring in the ears of Chinese Canadian immigrant church leaders for years to come.

### **Limitations of This Study and Future Research**

As stated in Chapter IV, participants in this study were purposefully selected from the major cities of Canada and therefore included a broad representation of Chinese Canadian immigrants and the local-born population (Table 1). Rural areas were not represented, and findings cannot be automatically extrapolated to cover those areas that have a lower degree of ethnic socialization and less institutional completeness for ethnic organizations such as Chinese schools (Breton, 1964; Ooka, 2002). In addition, although the participants offered a good balance in terms of gender, this study did not intentionally examine how gender might have been a variable in affecting the transitory experience of SGCCE. Gender could have a significant implication for such findings as #3 in determining how relationship may play out in the SGCCE’s choice of congregation. Finally, this study focused on the transition experience of second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals and therefore did not investigate the experience of the third and following generations regarding how religion and ethnicity may influence their congregational affiliation; nor did this study examine the experience of the foreign-born Chinese Canadian evangelicals who emigrated to Canada at a young age and were fully acculturated in the multiculturalistic milieu of the country.

Future studies can inquire how the three areas —rural demographics, gender, and third-generation and foreign-born Chinese Canadian evangelicals — may add to the overall knowledge of the transition experience of young Canadians with Chinese ancestry

from their parents' congregations to churches of their choosing. In addition, comparative studies can be pursued in investigating how other Asian visible minorities in Canada, in particular Koreans, shaped their transition experience, since the Korean Canadian Christian community is a vibrant faith community worthy of further exploration.

### **Personal Reflection**

As a lay leader in the Chinese Canadian Christian community, I was deeply moved by the openness and the authentic emotion the participants shared during the interviews. The stories of their transition experience from their parents' churches to congregations of their choice were filled with pain and agony over the departure, and yet with relief and joy in experiencing growth and a newfound sense of freedom at the churches where they now congregated. Their journey has shown me the necessity of raising my own awareness of their aspirations and of taking necessary leadership actions to help them shape their path, forge their own identity, and fashion their own faith. In that context, I am reminded of the words in the song "Details in Fabrics" by Jason Mraz, a popular singer many of the SGCCE follow: "Hold your own, know your name, and go your own way, and everything will be fine." These words speak to the upbringing experience of any young adults irrespective of nationality, ethnicity, and religion. But as far as the SGCCE are concerned, their name is not simply one that suggests their ethnicity. It is one that carries their religious identity as they negotiate themselves out of the liminality that exists in the intersection of religion and ethnicity. They are, in the end, Christians in their own right. I cannot help but be reminded of a Christian song that is followed by SGCCE like Agnes, my younger daughter: "Who Am I?" by Casting Crown

in which the song writer asks a question about faith identity: “Who am I?” The answer, as the song writer asserts what Christians have always found in the abiding presence of God, is: “You’ve told me who I am. I’m yours.” As much as the SGCCE in this study may shape a new path in their faith journey by “going their own way” and “holding their own” identity, they have told us that, irrespective of where they congregate, their religious identity reigns supreme. They know their name. They are Christians, for God has told them, they are His.

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**Appendix A**  
**Semistructured Interview Guide**

This semistructured interview guide consists of three components: (a) a set of questions designed to interview SGCCE in response to Research Questions 1 & 2; (b) a set of questions designed to interview first-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical leaders in response to Research Question 3; and (c) a set of questions designed to interview representatives of leaders from the different models of the churches SGCCE are currently attending.

1. For the SGCCE, in response to Research Questions 1 & 2:
  - a. What has caused you to leave your parents' church?
  - b. In choosing to come and stay at your current church for worship:
    - i. What were the factors that affected your decision?
    - ii. How much are faith or religious values being an influence when you chose to come and stay at this congregation?
    - iii. To what extent did your ethnic values inform and shape your choice when you thought about different congregations you may choose to attend, such as second-generation Chinese Canadian church; pan-Asian Church; multiethnic church; or mainstream Canadian church?
    - iv. How important is it to be worshipping with co-ethnics? How important it is to be with people of other ethnic origins?
  - c. How do you characterize your identity? Canadian? Chinese? Or Chinese-Canadian?
  - d. In thinking through your affiliation and identity, do you feel you are a Christian first before you think of yourself as a Canadian or ethnic identity? Or vice-versa? Why? How significantly does this thinking affect your decision to continue to stay at the current congregation?
  - e. In growing up in your parents' church:

- i. How much were you influenced by your parents' culture, tradition, and practices? How did you feel about the experience? Do you think you embrace it? If not, why not?
    - ii. Did you ever find yourself in a bind in choosing between your religious values and your parents' cultural and traditional values? If yes, can you tell me how you felt about it and what attempts you made to resolve it?
    - iii. To what extent did your parents' generation mix up faith and tradition in their teaching, rhetoric, and practice of rituals and custom? What priority do you think they placed on their values, religious values, or traditional Chinese values?
  - f. To what extent did the leadership from your parents' church discuss tradition, culture, custom, and Chinese identity with you and try to influence your decision with cultural considerations? How do you compare and contrast their efforts in mediating religious values?
  - g. Is there anything else related to your transition experience that you think I have not covered but you want to talk about?
2. For the first-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical leaders, in response to Research Question 3:
- a. Can you describe how you support the SGCCE in your church in terms of ministry focus and direction?
  - b. Have you noticed any departures of SGCCE from your church? How significant is the leakage?
  - c. What actions has the leadership taken to stem the tide?
  - d. In looking at this leakage:
    1. Are you aware of a broader phenomenon called the "Silent Exodus" or something similar to this that describes the leakage that has been happening in Asian North American churches over the last few decades?

2. How much attention did the leadership devote to analyzing the situation, and to what extent did you think it could have been either prevented or “managed” better?
    3. What do you think the root causes of this leakage are?
    4. Did you see that coming and if so, what steps did you take to attempt to alter either the course of the phenomenon or its outcome?
  - e. In terms of your church mission and direction, how much attention has been given to, or what priority has the leadership given to, staying in front of the problem and leading the SGCCE in your church in facing the challenge and working in partnership with them to address the issue?
  - f. Looking back at the leakage,
    1. How would you describe your role in the whole process? Would you see yourself as an active “actor” / “participant” in the process? Or passive? Or not even playing a part in the process at all?
    2. If you think that you have played a role in the process, what leadership style would you characterize yourself as having used in this whole process? (i.e., command and control; facilitative; servant leadership).
    3. How many of the aspirations of the SGCCE who eventually left your church have you come to recognize? What were they? And how much did these aspirations play into your leadership styles and the way the leadership shaped your decision and effort in addressing the leakage phenomenon?
  - g. Is there anything else related to your experience about this interview that you think I have not covered but you want to talk about?
3. For the representatives of leaders of the models of current congregations SGCCE are attending, in response to Research Question 4:
- a. Are you aware of a broader phenomenon called “Silent Exodus,” or something similar to this, that describes the leakage that has been happening in Asian North American churches over the last few decades? And how does the phenomenon affect the SGCCE in choosing to attend your church?

- b. Can you describe how you support the SGCCE in your church in terms of ministry focus and direction?
- c. Can you describe your church from the ethnicity perspective? Do you see it as a second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelical church? A pan-Asian ethnic church? Or a multiethnic church? Or just simply a mainstream Canadian church?
- d. What specific intention have you placed through your teaching and preaching on:
  - 1. Embracing and celebrating the SGCCE's ethnic identity? or
  - 2. Discouraging their ethnic values and encouraging them to blend into the ethnic milieu of your church?
- e. What other programs, plans, or events have your church leaders designed specifically for welcoming the SGCCE's continued participation in your church?

**Appendix B**  
**Consent Form**

## **CONSENT FORM**

### **An exploration of congregational transition among second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals and servant-leadership**

The Principle Investigator is Enoch Wong, 416-224-0179, Doctoral student, and Ph.D. Candidates in the Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University. Chris Francovich, Associate Professor of Leadership, is the Committee Chair for this dissertation and is the Responsible Project Investigator.

#### **Purpose and Benefits**

This research is designed to explore how the foresight of church leaders in the context of ethnic and religious social change mediated (or failed to mediate) the second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals (SGCCE) transition from their first-generation churches to the current congregations of their own choice.

#### **Procedures**

The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of how ethnicity and religion affect the ways SGCCE sees themselves when undergoing congregational transition; and how leadership of church leaders mediate that process. The research is a multi-case study based on semi-structured interviews supplemented by participant observation. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. As many as 2 interviews with each of 14 participants will be conducted over a period of 3 months. Interviews will be informal and should last about an hour each. The types of issues to be discussed with participants will include their experiences of transition in the context of ethnicity and religion as well as their lived experience of leadership as exercised by church leaders.

#### **Risk, Stress, or Discomfort**

The researcher will rigorously treat all participants with strictest confidentiality and unanimity. The names of participants will remain anonymous for the duration of the research process and beyond. All personal information, data analysis, and observations will be held in strict confidence. Any agreement made with the participants verbally or in writing will be honored and fulfilled on the part of the researcher. All results will be reported accurately and honestly without manipulation or deception.

**Other Information**

All information will be kept confidential. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants. Participants are free to withdraw at any time without penalty. Participants will not receive any inducements. Participants can request a summary of the results and will have access to the completed dissertations at the Gonzaga University library.

Signature of Principal Investigator

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Understanding**

The study described above has been explained to me and I voluntarily consent to participate in this research. I have had an opportunity to ask questions. I give permission to record and divulge conversations in which I participate during this research.

Signature of Subject

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix C**

**Internal Review Board Approval**



**GONZAGA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)  
PROTOCOL REVIEW & EXEMPT DETERMINATION LETTER**

May 04, 2014

**Gonzaga IRB Protocol Number:** 1405DPLSWON

**Approval/Determination Date:** May 04, 2014

**Continuing Review Date:** N/A

**Principal Investigator (PI):** Enoch Kin On Wong

**School Division:** Doctoral Program in Leadership Studies

**Study Category:** Exempt, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2)

**Protocol Title:** "How am I going to grow up? An Exploration of Congregational Transition among second-generation Chinese Canadian evangelicals and servant-leadership"

Dear Mr. Wong,

The Gonzaga Institutional Review Board (IRB) reviewed the protocol cited above on May 04, 2014. This research protocol qualifies as for an expedited review, and has been given an **IRB Exemption determination under category, 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).**

**(2)** Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless:

- (i)** information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and
- (ii)** any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

Please note that Exempt research does not require (but can allow) a signed research Informed Consent Form (ICF), e.g. you can use a short information sheet. If you have any further questions, please contact the IRB at [IRB@gonzaga.edu](mailto:IRB@gonzaga.edu).

Sincerely,

Adrian B. Popa, Ph.D., M.P.A.  
Chair, Institutional Review Board  
Gonzaga University