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**CHINESE PASTORS' RESPONSES TO ADAPTIVE  
LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES IN LIGHT OF THEIR  
MYERS-BRIGGS TYPE INDICATOR®**

BY

JOHN SMITH JONES

AN ABBREVIATED DISSERTATION  
FROM THE ONE SUBMITTED TO THE  
FACULTY OF COVENANT THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY  
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

SAINT LOUIS, MISSOURI  
2015



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## **Abstract**

This qualitative research concerns current adaptive leadership challenges confronting the Chinese church in China today. “Adaptive leadership challenges” are defined as situations requiring experimentation and unforeseeable alterations from numerous places within the organization or community in order to discover lasting solutions. Without this learning process—involving changing thinking patterns, values, and behaviors—people will not solve problems necessary to thrive in an ever-changing environment.

China has quickly become a major world power as a result of its immense economic success and government initiatives which started in the late 1970’s. Its economic success has made a profound impact in all areas of the country. Unfortunately, as Chinese communities have modernized, Chinese churches have failed to keep the pace. After decades of isolation, Chinese churches, especially among the younger leaders, sense the urgency of re-engaging with the society. In this change process, pastors are the first to feel the pain and struggle, from both the inside and the outside. Pastors are aware of the changing status quo, but they feel powerless and aimless in addressing the needs and cultural shifts of the people. They struggle to determine exactly what they should prioritize and how to do it.

The purpose of this research was to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges, in the hope of gaining an in-depth understanding of the Chinese church today regarding its struggles and needs. Their responses to challenges were also analyzed in light of the pastors’ personality temperaments using the Myers-

Briggs Type Indicator<sup>®</sup>. Starting from these research findings, Chinese church leaders can redesign the church's future development and leadership training.

In this study, six top Chinese pastors' leadership challenges were identified via the qualitative research involved Chinese pastors. The key challenges they face include conflicts between and with coworkers, tensions between church group traditions and modern day society, difficulty maintaining healthy pastoral inner being, conflicts between ministry and family, lack of outward focus for the Great Commission and church planting, and full-time ministers' limited salary. Most of these Chinese pastors' leadership challenges are church/ministry related; the others are personal and family related.

The analysis brought to light common responses to the challenges between the pastors, despite their various situations. The first area they all have in common is consistent suffering. Regardless of their personalities, ministry styles, church position rankings, and church style; the pastors in the study suffer in their church work and in their personal lives. The second common characteristic is their faithful servanthood to church and the Lord.

In attempting to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors and how they have responded to their challenges in ministries and daily lives, four patterns emerged. First, the pastors did not tend to apply theology to their thinking about the challenges. In addition, their struggles with inter-personal conflicts were continuous, their personality profiles predicted their limited responses to the challenges, and church planting efforts solved some church group tradition challenges.

The results of the literature research show that the Chinese pastors' challenges are not unique. The causes of their challenges and the common obstacles can be analyzed and

better understood in light of recent American leadership and ministry research, especially in regard to personality temperament. The findings here can help further pastors' abilities to name and to resolve their future leadership adaptive challenges.

The results of this study provide Chinese seminaries and theological schools rich information to inform curriculum design for spiritual formation and problem solving skills. Teachers and training institutions will then be able to work more effectively with Chinese pastors and leaders in the future. These findings may also help other teachers, trainers, churches, denominations, and seminaries to improve their leadership training subjects and strategies by accounting for contextual similarities to those of the Chinese pastors in this study. Recommendations for practice are proposed at the end. In particular, a two-year, eight-semester pastor training plan is recommended as a framework of future Chinese pastors' leadership training and development.

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## Chapter One: Introduction

Pastor Chen oversees a denomination in east China. She oversees many pastors, and each of those pastors oversees several full time ministers. Pastor Chen reflected upon her work, “I have taken many theological courses in the past twenty or more years. But nothing had happened.” Her theological training has not helped her with leadership challenges.

Pastor Wang is a pastor in a Chinese house church group (团队)<sup>1</sup> in central China. As a young generation pastor, his church group recognized his outstanding work and made him a core member of their top leadership. He told the researcher, “The number one goal of my denomination is to find an effective way to stop the bleeding.” The “bleeding” refers to the church group’s shrinking congregation size and church numbers. People, especially young people, have been leaving his church group. The number of church group churches declined from one thousand and four hundred to one thousand by the year 2011, whereas several years ago, many Chinese Christians regarded Pastor Wang’s church group as a strong group. Another church group founder in central China admires Pastor Wang’s church group and calls it “root is deep and trunk is strong.” This church group founder used a healthy tree as a metaphor to describe it. This church group kept sending young people to a seminary in Beijing area, one of the best house church

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<sup>1</sup> 团队 in Chinese house church means a network of house churches under one top leader. “团队” and the denomination in the West have significant differences. Denominations in West are distinguished by their theological differences in conviction and practices. But the 团队 in China are not. They were developed naturally under the political environment and geography. The detail definition and the general structure of a typical 团队 can be found in the Definition of Terms at the end of this chapter.

seminaries in China, over the past decade for their new pastor development. Nonetheless, the church group today has difficulty reaching out to unbelieving people in its community. Evangelism was their strength in the past, but today they struggle with it. While the group did not change during the past three decades, its community changed dramatically. As a result his group is in a panic mode and held endless meetings, trying to find solutions for its problems. Wang said that other groups, which have close relationships with his group, suffer from similar challenges.

Chinese house churches typically deal with such challenges by offering endless, classical theological training to church leaders and coworkers. One pastor told the researcher that he took a lot of theological courses, and he repeated some courses more than once. Church leaders thought the theological training would solve their problems, but the situation did not get better. Classic, theological courses alone cannot resolve these church difficulties.

Due to the country's unique political/cultural/religious environment, pastors in China face many adaptive leadership challenges. Kouzes and Posner define "adaptive challenges" as:

They require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways- changing attitudes, values, and behaviors - people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in a new environment.<sup>2</sup> ...In order to tackle adaptive challenge, people's hearts and minds need to change, and not just their preferences or routine behaviors.<sup>3</sup>

Kouzes and Posner point out common leadership challenges that Chinese churches face today.

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<sup>2</sup> James M Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 13.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 60.

Chinese church groups run many Bible and theological training programs, called “神学班, or “theological schools,”<sup>4</sup> translated directly from the Chinese term. Churches established such training programs to train and develop their own church leaders and full time ministers. These churches did not register their training schools with the government because the government prohibits such institutions outside of the Three-Self Church.<sup>5</sup> There are eighteen legal seminaries and Bible schools throughout China.<sup>6</sup> The government runs them through the Three-Self Church system. Among the eighteen, one is a national seminary, six are regional seminaries, and the rest are provincial seminaries and Bible schools. The great majority of Chinese Christians are members of the “Chinese house churches.”<sup>7</sup> “Chinese house churches” are a religious movement of unregistered

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<sup>4</sup> “Theological school” is theological training school of house church. Large church groups may have their own teachers and instructors. For small ones their full time teachers are not enough. They usually invite guest teachers from outside to help them. Curriculums in big church groups have similar courses as the seminaries in the West. Library resources are scarce. Students spend significant time in reading Bible daily besides theological courses.

<sup>5</sup> “The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (三自爱国运动, colloquially 三自教会, the Three-Self Church) or TSPM is a Protestant church in the People's Republic of China. The three principles of self-governance, self-support (i.e., financial independence from foreigners) and self-propagation (i.e., indigenous missionary work) were first articulated by Henry Venn, General Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841-73, and Rufus Anderson, foreign secretary of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In 1951 a Chinese Christian leader initiated the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, which promoted a strategy of 'self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation' in order to remove foreign influences from the Chinese churches and to assure the government that the churches would be patriotic to the newly established People's Republic of China. "Three-Self" is a characteristically Chinese way of abbreviating "self-governance, self-support, self-propagation." The movement, in the eyes of critics, allowed the government to infiltrate, subvert, and control much of organized Christianity.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-Self\\_Patriotic\\_Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three-Self_Patriotic_Movement) [accessed January 16, 2013]).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.chinaconnection.org/Seminary1.htm>

<sup>7</sup> “According to state statistics, there are approximately 23.5 million members of officially recognized churches, while China Aid, a Christian non-profit organization based in the United States claims that there are as many as 130 million practicing Christians in China when members of house churches are included.” ([https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=China\\_house\\_church&oldid=593846125](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=China_house_church&oldid=593846125), citing Nicola Davison, “Chinese Christianity will not be crushed,” *The Guardian* May 25, 2011, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/belief/2011/may/24/chinese-christianity-underground>.)



assemblies of Christians in China.<sup>8</sup> House churches do not send their students to the Three-self (legal) seminaries and Bible schools because house church members regard these legal training institutions as liberal and unorthodox. Moreover, the eighteen legal training schools cannot meet the needs of Chinese Christians. Chinese house churches, therefore, need to strengthen and reform their theological schools to help students with leadership challenges. For the purposes of this dissertation, the term “Chinese church” refers to “Chinese house church.”

The Chinese church has developed in many different stages since the Communist revolution in 1949. In each stage, the church faced different challenges and difficulties. Soon after the Communist revolution, and with the same political and cultural background, churches were a special group of people living on the same land with everyone else. The church and the general population faced similar challenges, but in addition to an ordinary citizen’s challenges, Christians’ lives were even more difficult. The church leaders stood on the front lines, facing immense adversity.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> “Chinese house churches (中國家庭教會) are a religious movement of unregistered assemblies of Christians in the China, which operate independently of the government run Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM). They are also known as the “Underground” Church or the “Unofficial” Church. They are called “house churches” because as they are not officially registered organizations, they cannot independently own property and hence they meet in private houses, often in secret for fear of arrest or imprisonment. The Chinese house church movement developed after 1949 as a result of the Communist government policy which requires the registration of all religious organizations. This registration policy requires churches to become part of the TSPM, which may involve interference in the church’s internal affairs either by government officials or by TSPM officials, who are approved by the Communist Party of China’s United Front Work Department. During the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76 all Christian worship was forced underground, even the official churches were closed, and the house church movement was solidified as an ongoing phenomenon. Because house churches operate outside government regulations and restrictions, their members and leaders are frequently harassed by local government officials. This persecution may take the form of a prison sentence, or more commonly, reeducation through labor. Since the 1990s there have been cases of increasing official tolerance in various regions of house churches. Protestant house churches are indigenous to mainland China and are usually not under foreign control; some groups welcome help from abroad as long as it does not compromise their independence.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_house\\_church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_house_church) [accessed on 1-16-2013])

<sup>9</sup> Rachel Sing-Kiat Ting and Terri Watson, “Is Suffering Good? An Explorative Study on the Religious Persecution among Chinese Pastors,” *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 35, no. 3 (2007): 203

The Chinese church shaped its pastoral leadership style during this period of great adversity. The famous Chinese economic reform started in the late 1970s and early 1980s and has progressively developed since that time. The literal Chinese translation of the word “reform” is the “Reform and Opening Up.”<sup>10</sup> The success of China’s economic policies resulted in immense changes in Chinese society. As the Chinese term suggests, Chinese churches started receiving information and help from the outside world. With this new knowledge, many Chinese Christians realized that their belief systems and church systems needed to change. Additionally, many new church leaders received systematic theological training. Western teachers and institutions offered much of this training. During this time, God worked on his pastoral servants, in his time, through his ways. These pastors testify to how God developed servants for his churches in the past thirty years. God has worked unceasingly on his world mission since the Fall, and he is building his kingdom on earth, including China. The old is passing away, and the new is coming. Pastors’ leadership adaptive challenges today fit into God’s eternal plan, namely his Great Commission. Ajith Fernando, a pastor in Colombo Sri Lanka, rightly said, “The New Testament is clear that those who work for Christ will suffer because of their works.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The Reform and Opening Up is the **Chinese economic reform** (simplified Chinese: 改革开放; literally “**Change, Reform, Open up**”) refers to the program of economic reforms called “Socialism with Chinese characteristics” in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that was started in December 1978 by reformists within the Communist Party of China (CPC) led by Deng Xiaoping. ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese\\_economic\\_reform](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinese_economic_reform) [accessed April 17th, 2014]).

<sup>11</sup> Ajith Fernando, “To serve is to suffer: if the apostle Paul knew fatigue, anger, and anxiety in his ministry, what makes us think we can avoid them in ours?” *Christianity Today* 54, no. 8 (August 2010): 33.

Michael Wilson and Brad Hoffmann list seven foundations that govern long-term ministry health.<sup>12</sup> Those seven foundations are intimacy, calling, stress management, boundaries, re-creation, people skills, and leadership skills. Working for Christ leads to many kinds of challenges. The Chinese church pastors face challenges that are similar to those faced in the rest of the world. The challenge comes in part directly from the Christian faith. Contemporary Chinese culture and Chinese church traditions add unique elements to the challenges as well. In this study, the researcher investigated the adaptive leadership challenges of pastors in China from this perspective.

### **Problem and Purpose Statements**

China has quickly become a major world power as a result of its immense economic success and government initiatives. Its economic success has made a profound impact in all areas of the country, including advances in living standards, infrastructure, education (currently twenty four million college students are enrolled in schools<sup>13</sup>), technology, science, art, literature, military, industry, international affairs, and more. Unfortunately, as Chinese communities have advanced, Chinese churches have failed to keep the pace. Churches, especially house churches, have been operating behind closed doors since the beginning, due to security concerns. Foreigners often name these churches the “underground church;”<sup>14</sup> the political environment contributed to this isolation. After decades of isolation, Chinese churches, especially among the younger leaders, sense the urgency of re-engaging with the world. In this changing process,

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<sup>12</sup> Michael Wilson and Brad Hoffmann. *Preventing Ministry Failure*. A Shepherd Care Guide for Pastors, Ministers and Other Caregivers (Downer Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2007), 25-31.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.sundxs.com/baike/7566.html> (accessed March, 24 2015).

<sup>14</sup> Chinese churches do not call themselves “underground church”. They call themselves “house church”. This term “underground church” is known to the outside world.

pastors are the first to feel the pain and struggle, from both the inside and the outside.

Pastors sense the changing status quo, but they feel powerless and aimless. They struggle to determine exactly what they need to do and how to do it.

Pastors lead their churches and congregations daily, and they struggle with leadership challenges all the time. Different pastors have different callings, gifts, experiences, leadership responsibilities, and temperaments, so their challenges and struggles may not be exactly the same. Through studying their leadership challenges, this research can gain a basic understanding of the Chinese church today regarding its struggles and needs. Starting from this understanding, Chinese church leaders can redesign the church's future development and training.

The purpose of this research was to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges.

### **Research Questions**

In order to examine this concern, the following questions were used to analyze the interviews of twelve Chinese pastors:

1. What recent adaptive leadership challenges do Chinese pastors face?
  - a. What types of challenges do the pastors encounter?
  - b. In what ways do the pastors' temperaments contribute to the challenges?
2. What strategies do pastors use to respond to adaptive leadership challenges?
  - a. What factors contribute to the pastors' choices of strategies?
  - b. In what ways do pastors use adaptive challenge strategies?
  - c. In what ways does temperament play a role in the pastors' choice of strategies?

3. In what way and to what extent do the pastors pursue reflective work during the challenges?
  - a. What are the reflective practices the pastors use during the challenges to analyze the effectiveness of their strategies?
  - b. How does temperament play a role in the reflective process?

### **Significance of the Study**

This study sought to understand Chinese pastors' leadership development for the future by analyzing their adaptive leadership challenges now and in the past. Chinese churches are at a crossroads. China needs strong, effective church leaders to make disciples throughout China and beyond. The spiritual formation of future pastors requires strong current leaders to be their mentors.

Unfortunately, many church leaders have distorted views of Christian leadership. For example, almost all pastors in China suffer from insufficient financial support. A pastor's average salary is far below that of blue-collar workers. Many pastors live on a salary equivalent to half of a dishwasher in a city restaurant. Most congregations believe that they should pay their pastor very little so that the pastor will not be corrupted. In addition, many pastors believe that in order to maintain their reputation, they should not teach the discipline of tithing. Most pastors live in poverty and only complain privately. Many pastors feel like slaves, but they dare not engage the issue. Pastors refuse to change the church culture because they do not want their congregations to consider them greedy, and they are afraid of losing church members over the issue of tithing. Also, lay leaders often undermine pastoral leadership in the church. In some Chinese churches, lay leaders supervise their pastors.

### **Benefits of the Study**

This study may help Chinese pastors to see that their challenges are not unique. They will have a better idea how to resolve their future leadership adaptive challenges. They will know what causes their challenges and how to identify the common obstacles in problem solving. This study will help Chinese seminaries and theological schools to design a better curriculum for spiritual formation and problem solving skills.

This study will also help overseas teachers, trainers, churches, denominations, and seminaries - especially those from the United States, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong - to prepare their training subjects and strategies. Teachers and institutions will know how to work effectively with Chinese pastors and leaders in future training opportunities and ministries. This study will help to train both current leaders and the next generation of Chinese church pastors and leaders in contextualization.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Pastor:** Very few full time ministers in China were ordained through the process that is used in the Western church. There is no such ordination system in most house churches in China. “Pastors” are therefore defined as the people who performed pastoral responsibilities like those in Western churches, but without receiving an official ordination or diploma from any theological seminary or school.

**Church group:** This refers to the Chinese house church groups, namely “团队” in Chinese. “团队” in Chinese is a general term meaning a “team or group.” It refers to a team of any organization. “团” means “group.” “队” means “team” or “group.” “团” and “队” together refers to a team or a group. In this research the term “church group” is used

for the Chinese term “团队.” During the past sixty years, many church groups had been formed naturally throughout China. They often started from a few Christians meeting in a house, led by one or more Christians. Through evangelism, more and more churches were established. Christians met in members’ houses. Those churches were grouped into a church network naturally for effective governing and shepherding. Christians called these church networks “团队.” The one who started the first church would usually become the top leader of the church group. Chinese church groups and the denominations in the West have significant differences. Denominations in West are distinguished by their theological differences, conviction, and practices. But the church groups in China were developed naturally, under the political environment, security, and geography. The theological differences between church groups are much less marked in China than in the denominations in the West. A church group has a top leader who leads the group with significant authority and power. Very often, the top leader is also the founding father of the church group. Most of the founding fathers are near their retirement, and many have passed their responsibilities to the next generation. Figure 1.1 briefly illustrates the structure of a typical church group. The “point” is translated literally from the Chinese term “点.” It is an individual church which functions in a way that is similar to its counterpart in the West. It is the place for worship and fellowship. The next lever is called “tract.” The “tract” is translated literally from the Chinese term “片.” Commonly, the tract is the assembly of points in one area. In a point, there may not be preacher to preach the word. The leaders of a tract normally go to the points to preach on Sunday, to lead the Holy Communion, and to perform overseers’ responsibilities. A point has its coworkers for daily pastoral work. Several tracts were grouped into a “big tract.” The

“big tract” is translated literally from the Chinese term “大片.” For a small church group, there are usually three layers as illustrated in Figure 1.1. A small church group may not have the layer of the “big tract.” A bigger church group could have more layers. The commanders of each level have more power and authority than the layer leaders of Western denominations. In general, there are more female pastors at the point level than male pastors. There are more male leaders in the big tract level. The top leader of a church group is usually a male.

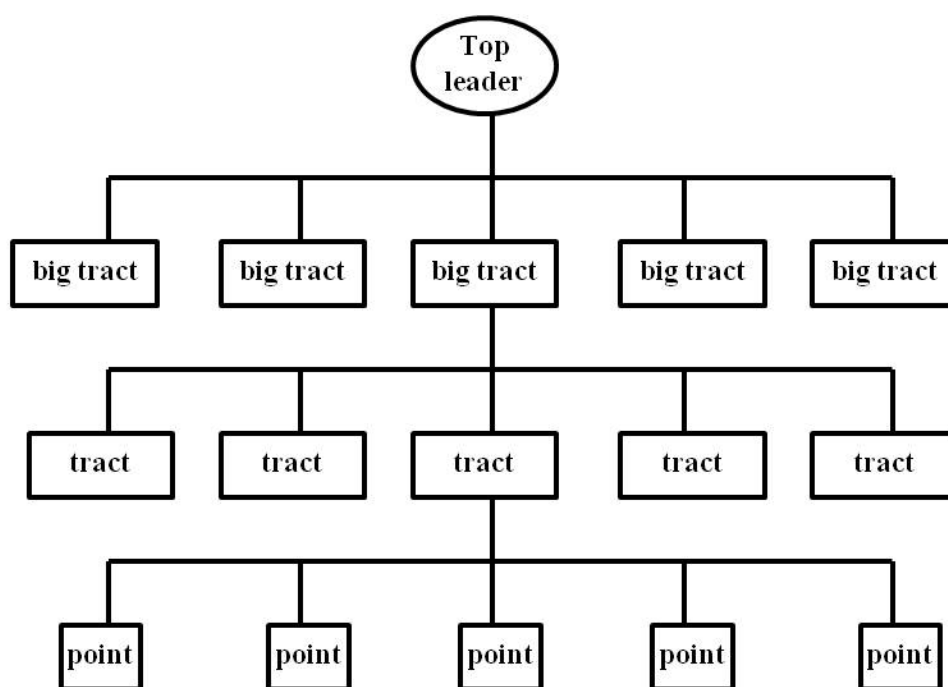


Figure 1.1 A typical church group structure.

**Church:** The term in this research mainly refers to an independent house church, usually a newly emerged church in a big city, or a church belonging to the house church group. Most churches meet in residential subdivisions. Very few urban churches use commercial buildings for meetings. Three-Self churches often have large congregations (several hundreds or thousands), but the total number of Three-Self churches in a city is few compared to the house churches.



**Coworker:** In most of the Chinese churches, there are no officers named “elder” or “deacon.” Elders and deacons are all called “coworkers” as a general term. Pastors are often called “pastor” or “coworker in charge.”

**Seminary and Theological School:** The structure of a Three-Self legal seminary is similar to that of a western seminary. The house church seminaries are often smaller. There are many house church theological schools. The exact numbers are unknown because they operate under the highest security measures. The researcher estimates that there are several hundred or more across China.

**Inner being:** The “inner being” in this study is defined as “the deepest aspects of human nature, known completely by God, to be contrasted with the outward appearance or public image of a person.”<sup>15</sup> In this study, “personal maturity” is a synonym for “inner being”.

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/dictionary-of-bible-themes/5024-inner-being> (accessed June 13, 2015).

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The purpose of this research was to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges. The researcher examined how the pastors' adaptive leadership challenges relate to their family, spiritual, and leadership responsibilities. Four major areas were reviewed. First, this research examined the adaptive leadership challenges of biblical leaders and how God used those challenges to develop his biblical servants. The other three areas are leadership and hardship, leadership of the modern day challenges, and leadership and antagonism.

### **Biblical Review of Leadership**

#### **Biblical Leadership and Vision**

A church pastor or overseer needs to manage the church in an orderly way. Paul taught Timothy about the quality of a church overseer, "He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"<sup>16</sup> According to this passage, God expects pastors to manage the church as well as they manage their household. Peter also addresses pastoral management skills when he says, "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."<sup>17</sup> For

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<sup>16</sup> 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

<sup>17</sup> 1 Peter 5:2-3.

pastors to manage a church well, they must embody a selfless heart, rule without abusing power, and live as role models in their congregations. The Apostle Paul also emphasizes the importance of being good role models in church, “It was not because we do not have that right, but to give you in ourselves an example to imitate.”<sup>18</sup>

Jesus gives pastors his vision for leading church congregations; pastors do not have the liberty to create their own vision. Jesus commands his disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”<sup>19</sup> In this passage, Jesus clearly outlines the responsibility of a Christian: Jesus’ disciples are the ones who make other disciples of Jesus. This is especially true for church leaders, such as pastors. Pastors lead their congregations through Jesus’ authority and vision. Jesus is the church’s true leader. Pastors must lead by submitting to the sovereignty of Jesus.

### **Great Commission**

The Great Commission of Jesus is God’s mandate. The messages of the Great Commission can be found throughout the Old Testament and New Testament. In one of the most familiar passages that explains Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus said:

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come...Then will appear in heaven the sign of the Son of Man, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> 2 Thessalonians 3:9.

<sup>19</sup> Matthew 28:19-20.

<sup>20</sup> Matthew 24:14, 30-31.

Matthew 28:18-20 concludes Jesus' teaching in the book of Matthew. Throughout the book, Matthew expounds upon the Great Commission's themes. Before Jesus was born, Matthew states how his given name, "Jesus," means that he will save his people from their sins. Then the Gentile wise men from the east came to Jerusalem to worship Jesus.<sup>21</sup> By including this story, Matthew gives a very strong message that Jesus' people include Gentiles. Gentile first welcome the Messiah's coming to this world. Jesus' birth fulfilled God's promises in the Old Testament. Jesus commanded his disciples, "and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them and the Gentiles."<sup>22</sup> Jesus told of his return, when all nations will stand before him, and he will identify and keep his own people from every nation, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats."<sup>23</sup>

Jesus' teachings reveal how the gospel will spread to all nations before Jesus' return. This Great Commission messages are revealed repeatedly in Matthew and in all the rest sixty-five books of the Bible. Isaiah said:

Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights;  
I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations.  
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a  
bruised reed he will not break, and a faintly burning wick he will not  
quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will not grow faint or be  
discouraged till he has established justice in the earth; and the coastlands  
wait for his law.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Matthew 2:1-12.

<sup>22</sup> Matthew 10:18.

<sup>23</sup> Matthew 25:31-32.

<sup>24</sup> Isaiah 42:1-4.

In the New Testament, Matthew quoted Isaiah as follows,

Behold, my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved with whom my soul is well pleased. I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not quarrel or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets; a bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not quench, until he brings justice to victory; and in his name the Gentiles will hope.<sup>25</sup>

The Old Testament and the New Testament are coherent and in unity. Genesis first revealed the Great Commission. God proclaimed to Satan how the final victory will be won by the Messiah, “and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”<sup>26</sup> Isaiah also proclaimed the image of final victory:

It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be lifted up above the hills; and all the nations shall flow to it, and many peoples shall come, and say: "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and that we may walk in his paths." For out of Zion shall go the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. He shall judge between the nations, and shall decide disputes for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.<sup>27</sup>

The Great Commission prominence throughout scripture shows that it is the central theme of the Bible. Jesus will save his people from sin. How this could happen? The answer is the Great Commission, to be carried out by Jesus' people, the church of God.

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<sup>25</sup> Matthew 12:18-21.

<sup>26</sup> Genesis 3:15.

<sup>27</sup> Isaiah 2:2-4.

Fulfillment of the Great Commission comes at a price. In Matthew 10, Jesus warns: “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves.”<sup>28</sup> He elaborates:

Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.<sup>29</sup>

The Bible, especially in the New Testament, warns readers about the cost of following Jesus. Jesus said: “a person’s enemies will be those of his own household.” The hindrance and opposition often come from family and church.

### **Financial Support for God’s Servants**

When Jesus was working on his earthly ministry, women who followed and believed in Jesus supported him and his disciples: “and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod’s household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.”<sup>30</sup> The Apostle Paul taught the Galatians to provide for the needs of God’s servants, from whom they received teaching, “...one who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches.”<sup>31</sup> In the Old Testament, God set the Levites’ salary, which was more than the average income of the other eleven tribes:

To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting, so that the people of Israel do not come near the tent of meeting, lest they

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<sup>28</sup> Matthew 10:16.

<sup>29</sup> Matthew 10:34-39.

<sup>30</sup> Luke 8:3.

<sup>31</sup> Galatians 6:6.

bear sin and die. But the Levites shall do the service of the tent of meeting, and they shall bear their iniquity. It shall be a perpetual statute throughout your generations, and among the people of Israel they shall have no inheritance. For the tithe of the people of Israel, which they present as a contribution to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance. Therefore I have said of them that they shall have no inheritance among the people of Israel.<sup>32</sup>

The Levites received a tithe from the other eleven tribes. This implies that the Levites' income was more than any other individual tribe. This echoes Paul's teaching in Galatians.

### **Leadership Challenge**

Jesus faced enormous leadership challenges. Satan tempted Jesus before he launched his earthly mission, and the triune God intentionally guided this adaptive challenge. The scripture says that Jesus was "led up by the Spirit."<sup>33</sup> Satan tempted Jesus by using his physical needs, his rights as the Son of God, and the glory of his earthly kingdom. Jesus responded to Satan by speaking God's word and by giving glory to God. In this leadership challenge, Jesus applied his biblical-theological principles. Jesus faced another adaptive challenge when Judas betrayed him. Hours before his crucifixion, Jesus responded to the Father in agony: "My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done."<sup>34</sup> This is how Jesus' leadership works. He said, "When I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself."<sup>35</sup> The Messiah's hardship and leadership are clear. Isaiah prophesied regarding the coming Messiah, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces

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<sup>32</sup> Numbers 18:21-24.

<sup>33</sup> Matthew 4:1.

<sup>34</sup> Matthew 26:42.

<sup>35</sup> John 12:32.

he was despised, and we esteemed him not.”<sup>36</sup> Isaiah continued: “Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand. After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied.”<sup>37</sup> Jesus taught his disciples that they would be persecuted, but they should stand firm to be saved.<sup>38</sup> Jesus told his followers that hardship is part of following him. When Jesus chose to go to Jerusalem for his last journey, he disclosed his mission to them. He told them that he “...must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.”<sup>39</sup> His disciples tried to stop him, but Jesus told them they would follow his example. He said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.”<sup>40</sup> Jesus prepared his disciples to share his destiny. Disciples will endure tribulation and suffering for the gospel and the kingdom of God. Jesus’ disciples, James and John, asked Jesus if they might sit at his right and left hands. Jesus told them, “You don’t know what you are asking...Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”<sup>41</sup> Jesus was actually asking them whether they could bear the same suffering that he would experience. When they

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<sup>36</sup> Isaiah 53:3.

<sup>37</sup> Isaiah 53:10-11.

<sup>38</sup> Matthew 10:16-22.

<sup>39</sup> Matthew 16:21.

<sup>40</sup> Matthew 16:24-25.

<sup>41</sup> Mark 10:38.



expressed their willingness, Jesus told them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with... whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”<sup>42</sup> Sharing someone’s cup means to share their fate. In addition, a cup of wine is a common metaphor for the wrath of God’s judgment. The image of baptism is parallel to that of the cup. Mark 10 indicates that Jesus’ disciples would participate in his sufferings.<sup>43</sup> Hardship is inevitable for anyone who would follow Jesus. Jesus warned his disciples, “I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you.”<sup>44</sup> Suffering for the faith reflects a Christian’s identity.

There are many faithful leaders and servants of God in the Old Testament. The author of Hebrews named more than a dozen faithful individuals, from Abel to Samuel, who endured hardship and suffering in order that they, “...through commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.”<sup>45</sup> Behind the hardship, there is a spiritual battle. Jesus told Peter, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.”<sup>46</sup> This conversation happened right before Peter denied Jesus three times. This denial event is one of the leadership challenges in Peter’s life.

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<sup>42</sup> Mark 10:38-45.

<sup>43</sup> William L Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1974), 379-381.

<sup>44</sup> John 15:19.

<sup>45</sup> Hebrew 11:39-40.

<sup>46</sup> Luke 22:31-32.

Jesus set his eye on Peter's future ministry as a servant leader. Jesus nurtured Peter as a leader for his kingdom's expansion. Experiencing hardship is part of the Christian life. It is no wonder that after years of ministry Peter said, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."<sup>47</sup> The Apostle Paul also faced many leadership challenges. Throughout Paul's ministry, he encountered much opposition to the gospel. In his early ministry, the first stop of Paul's first journey was Antioch in Pisidia. People in that city gathered eagerly to listen to Paul. However, the Jews were jealous and talked abusively against Paul, eventually expelling him from that region.<sup>48</sup> Paul then travelled to Iconium, where many Jews and Greeks came to the Lord. But, the Jews, Gentiles, and community leaders mistreated Paul and stoned him. Paul and his colleagues escaped to Lystra and Derby. The Jews followed him from Antioch, stirring people to stone Paul again. Soon after, Paul was near death. He regained his strength and moved on to Derby, eventually returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to strengthen the disciples and encourage them to remain true to the faith. Paul exhorted them, "We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."<sup>49</sup> During his first missionary journey, Paul revealed the relationship of leadership and hardship. Hardship is a necessity for anyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God. Thirty years later, Paul commanded Timothy:

You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings—what kinds of things happened to me in Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, the persecutions I

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<sup>47</sup> 1 Peter 4:12-13.

<sup>48</sup> Acts 13:45-50.

<sup>49</sup> Acts 14:22.

endured. Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them. In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,...But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.<sup>50</sup>

Paul's personal hardship in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra deeply shaped his leadership and character. Paul told Timothy about his personal experience of hardship thirty years later and reminded Timothy of the truth about leadership and servanthood.

### **Servanthood challenges**

Jesus taught his disciples, James and John, that genuine leaders must first be servants.<sup>51</sup> Servants and slaves held low social status in Jesus' time. In this story, the disciples requested a seat by Jesus in his future glory. Jesus taught James and John that whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. John C. Hutchison is professor of Bible Exposition at Talbot School of Theology.<sup>52</sup> Hutchison points out that Jesus' teaching violated foundational Jewish and Greco-Roman cultural values.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, becoming an effective leader required transformation of one's view of leadership and authority. As the perfect example, Jesus lived an earthly life to demonstrate to his disciples the true meaning of leadership. Jesus, the king of Israel, spent most of his time with the poor, the sick, and others with low social status. He identified with them, spent time with them, and served them.

People with a high social status, such as the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, criticized Jesus for this. When Jesus washed the disciples' feet, Peter rejected Jesus'

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<sup>50</sup> 2Timothy 3:10-14.

<sup>51</sup> Mark 10:35-45; Matthew 20:20-28; Luke 22:35-45.

<sup>52</sup> John C. Hutchison, "Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, no. 661 (January-March 2009): 53.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.

service. Peter said to Jesus, “You shall never wash my feet.”<sup>54</sup> Peter believed that leaders do not wash feet, but Jesus taught Peter the truth of servanthood, “If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.”<sup>55</sup> Jesus modeled servant leadership for Peter and others to follow. Hutchison explains, “Jesus then revealed that even His position of leadership and authority was established through His servanthood.”<sup>56</sup> Hutchison summarizes three principles from Mark 10.<sup>57</sup> First, spiritual authority and leadership come only through the path of suffering and sacrifice.<sup>58</sup> Second, God the Father sovereignly grants spiritual authority and leadership.<sup>59</sup> Third, spiritual authority and leadership are demonstrated through servanthood, selflessness, and sacrifice for others.<sup>60</sup> Jesus warned his disciples against learning leadership skills from the Gentile leaders. He cautioned, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you.”<sup>61</sup> Jesus’ warning is still applicable in today’s world. Hutchison asserts, “Many government leaders aspire to positions of privilege, power, and authority because these are accepted measurements of importance.

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<sup>54</sup> John 13:8.

<sup>55</sup> John C. Hutchison, “Servanthood: Jesus’ Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, no. 661 (January-March 2009): 54.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>58</sup> John 13:8.

<sup>59</sup> Mark 10:40.

<sup>60</sup> Mark 10:41-45.

<sup>61</sup> Mark 10:42.

Jesus, however, introduced a completely different standard.”<sup>62</sup> Jesus taught on servant leadership throughout the four gospels. Hutchison concludes:

Most models of leadership in secular settings reward those who are self-promoting and ‘climbers’ on the ladder of success....By contrast Jesus is the greater example of servanthood *and* of powerful leadership. Servanthood does not avoid leadership. And much like first-century slaves, true servant leaders give up their rights for the sake of others.<sup>63</sup>

### **Interpersonal Skills**

A Christian leader should develop good interpersonal skills. The scripture is full of teaching in this regard. Jesus says, “Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”<sup>64</sup> Jesus also taught, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”<sup>65</sup> Seeking to live in peace with others and making peace among conflicted people indicates a biblical interpersonal skill of genuine leadership.

## **Leadership and Hardship**

### **Modern Day Hardship and Faith**

Ajith Fernando is the national director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka.<sup>66</sup>

According to Fernando, the modern church often views hardship or suffering through the lens of human rights, not as an essential part of Christian discipleship.<sup>67</sup> He rightly said,

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<sup>62</sup> John C. Hutchison, “Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 166, no. 661 (January-March 2009): 65.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>64</sup> Mark 9:50.

<sup>65</sup> Matthew 5:9.

<sup>66</sup> Ajith Fernando, “To serve is to suffer: if the apostle Paul knew fatigue, anger, and anxiety in his ministry, what makes us think we can avoid them in ours?” *Christianity Today* 54, no. 8 (August 2010): 33.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

“Doing God’s will include the cross. The cross must be an essential element in our definition of vocational fulfillment.”<sup>68</sup> The contemporary emphasis on efficiency and measurable results makes frustration even harder to ensure.”<sup>69</sup>

In his writing, Fernando explains the core issue, “Whether you live in the East or West, you will suffer pain if you are committed to people. This is suffering that can be avoided. We can avoid the pain by stopping the relationship....[T]he church must train Christian leaders to expect pain and hardship.”<sup>70</sup> He cautions against the modern church’s measure of ministry success without counting suffering.<sup>71</sup> Fernando concludes, “In fact, suffering is often the cause for joy.”<sup>72</sup>

To answer the question, “Does hardship play a role in leadership development?” Sylvia Gonzalez<sup>73</sup>, associate professor of Leadership and Education Administration at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, gives biblical insight. Gonzales argues that hardship changes an individual’s life.<sup>74</sup> She defines “critical events” in this way: “These events are transformative experiences through which these individuals come to a

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 53.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 53.

new sense of identity, especially after deep self-reflection that forces leaders to question who they are and what really matters to them.”<sup>75</sup>

W. G. Bennis and R. G. Thomas studied forty top leaders in business and in the public sector. Their findings surprised them. In their article, “Crucibles of Leadership,” published in the *Harvard Business Review*, they reported that the men and women they interviewed mentioned hardship more than any other life experience as being crucial for their development as leaders.<sup>76</sup>

Gonzalez presents four lessons that result from hardship as studied by Velsor and McCauley.<sup>77</sup> They include self-knowledge, sensitivity and compassion, limits of control, and flexibility. Regarding self-knowledge, she explains, “[B]ecause hardship experiences are not intentional, they act as a ‘wake-up call’ to look inwards and decide what is important for one’s life.”<sup>78</sup> She goes on to say that sensitivity and compassion “...make leaders more aware of what others are going through, of the fears and hopes of others.”<sup>79</sup> According to Gonzalez, leaders discover the limits of control through hardship “...against the idea that leaders can have unlimited control of circumstances.”<sup>80</sup> Lastly, she defines

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<sup>75</sup> W.G. Bennis and R. G. Thomas, “Crucibles of Leadership,” *Harvard Business Review* 80, no. 9 (2002): 39-46, quoted in Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 53.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

<sup>77</sup> Cynthia D. McCauley and Ellen Van Velsor, eds., *Handbook of Leadership Development*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass and The Center for Creative Leadership: 2004), 1-22, quoted in Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 54.

<sup>78</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 54.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

flexibility as “an intentional effort on the part of leaders to strike a balance between tasks and people and to understand that one practice needs to co-exist with the other.”<sup>81</sup>

Gonzalez points to resilience as the reason why hardship can make a significant impact on a person’s leadership. She defines resilience as “the ability to bounce back from adversity or hardship,”<sup>82</sup> and this bouncing back consists of the leader’s ability to learn and develop their life purpose and meaning. Resilient people see things as they are and deal with reality in a constructive way.<sup>83</sup> Resilience is not a one-time performance; it is recursive. Gonzalez proposes five essential elements for resilience, including faith, purpose and meaning, cognitive strategies, improvisation, and social support.<sup>84</sup> She concludes with the connection between hardship and leadership:

Christian leaders believe that their effectiveness and success as leaders is due to the way they have processed and faced the hardships in their lives. The experience of bouncing back from adversity and crisis imbues their lives with a heightened sense of purpose and meaning. They have learned to make realistic use of the resources they have at hand. But above all, they consider their faith in God the indispensable component in their ability to bounce back when hardship hits them with full force.<sup>85</sup>

Pastors face great challenges in modern day. Pastors would like to survive and thrive in their ministries. Bob Burns<sup>86</sup>, Tasha D. Chapman<sup>87</sup>, and

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 55.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Bob Burns is senior associate pastor and head of staff at Central Presbyterian Church in St. Louis and adjunct professor of educational ministries at Covenant Theological Seminary.

<sup>87</sup> Tasha D. Chapman is dean of academic services and adjunct professor of educational ministries at Covenant Theological Seminary.



Donald G. Guthrie<sup>88</sup> conducted a study to find answers for pastors to run well for a long haul. They both have served in church as leaders for decades and train people for vocational ministry leadership. In their seven-year studying of participating pastors they discover that there are five primary themes for leadership resilience in fruitful ministry<sup>89</sup>:

1. Spiritual formation
2. Self-care
3. Emotional and cultural intelligence
4. Marriage and family
5. Leadership and management

Burns, Chapman and Guthrie define these five themes as the follows:

Spiritual formation is the ongoing process of maturing as Christians both personally and interpersonally. It is a daily response to the Apostle Paul's exhortation to "train yourselves for godliness" and to "keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching (1 Timothy 4:7, 16).

Self-care is to take care oneself requires conceding that we are finite human beings with limits. Our responsibility as creatures before the Creator is to nurture and steward our capacities for the glory of God.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to manage one's own emotions proactively and to respond appropriately to the emotions of others. Cultural intelligence involves an awareness of regional, ethnic and generational differences and the implications of these differences personally and interpersonally.

Marriage and family focuses on maintaining spiritual and relational health with one's spouse and children.

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<sup>88</sup> Donald C. Guthrie is professor of educational ministries at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois.

<sup>89</sup> Bob Burns, Tasha D. Chapman, and Donald C. Guthrie, *Resilient Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2013), 16.

Leadership is the *poetry* of gathering others together to seek adaptive and constructive change, while management is the *plumbing* that provides order and consistency to organizations.<sup>90</sup>

Burns, Chapman and Guthrie note that these five themes are crucial for enabling resilience in pastoral excellence.<sup>91</sup> They say that these five themes should really be considered as a whole. Each is independent on the others. They stand together.<sup>92</sup>

### **Hardship of Political Challenge**

China's political environment has challenged pastors since the Chinese house church movement developed after 1949. House church leaders need teachers from outside China to assist them with theological training and church development, but the government's religion policy regulates foreigner trainers. Reverend Cao Shengjie, who belongs to the Three-Self church organization<sup>93</sup>, said: "Foreigners are free to worship in China, but not to evangelize or preach without an invitation from a Chinese church organization. Nor is it legal for them to organize any religious programs on their own, or to set up their religious organizations in China."<sup>94</sup> Many foreigners and Chinese nationals with foreign citizenship were under this regulation, which caused significant leadership challenges for the pastors in China. Chinese pastors hosted training events, but only at great risks.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 249-251.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>93</sup> Governmental Three-Self church organizations include Three-Self churches and two governing agencies. They are under the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.

<sup>94</sup> Shengjie Cao, "The Current Situation in the Chinese Church," *Chinese Theological Review* 16 (2002): 58.

The government's policy regarding the development of Christianity in China aims to serve society. House church pastors do not abide by this policy in general, and they suffer for doing so. Xiao Anping, the dean of Wuhan Seminary, which is an official Three-Self Movement seminary, said: "The goal of theological reconstruction is adaption to socialist society. 'Whether or not it can promote the adaptation of Christianity with socialist society is the standard for assessing theological reconstruction.'"<sup>95</sup>

### **Financial Hardship**

The Chinese government does not recognize Chinese house churches. As a result, house churches' financial operations are handled behind closed doors. Pastors' salaries are not public domain. Comparison with pastoral salaries in the western world will provide a helpful means for understanding Chinese pastors' salaries. John Dart, news editor at the *Christian Century*, talked about pastors' salaries when he mentioned, "Given that corporate executives and many other professionals earn far more."<sup>96</sup> Dart points out that, according to a study conducted by George Barna<sup>97</sup> in Ventura, California, Protestant congregations since the mid-1990s assign nearly one-third of operating budgets for senior pastor compensation.

Timothy Jones explained, "In the vast majority of cases, pastors are so reluctant to put a price tag on their ministry that they end up with servants' wages, not paychecks of plenty. Most (pastors) work long hours with little or no applause. Not surprisingly,

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<sup>95</sup> Anping, Xiao, "Theological Change and the Adaptation of Christianity to Socialist Society," *Chinese Theological Review* 16 (2002): 101.

<sup>96</sup> John Dart, "Pastors' salaries rise, pollster says," *Christian Century* 119, no. 13 (2002): 17.

<sup>97</sup> George Barna is a media research specialist. He is the founder of the Barna Research Group.

pastoral morale is sometimes a problem.”<sup>98</sup> Jones points out that the median household income of pastors is \$14,000 less than that of their lay colleagues in church leadership (elders and deacons).

William Bonifield, a professor of Economics in Wabash College, and Edgar Mills, who teaches social science at the University of Texas in San Antonio,<sup>99</sup> said that the labor market for Protestant clergy seems to operate similarly to labor markets for public employees, especially school teachers.<sup>100</sup> They found that congregants tend to believe that clergy are not affected by changes in wages because they are called to their work, and thus have little overt concern for their own support. Churches have also been reluctant to discuss remuneration for a specific performance; they discuss clergy compensation in relation to need, with little or no regard for productivity.<sup>101</sup> The authors point out how churches pay their pastors:

The salary offered the minister is usually a residual found after other expenses are deducted from expected revenue. And expected revenue of a church is typically more difficult to increase than a profit making firm. In many respects, the laity responsible for setting the level of the ministerial salary seem to act with "deliberate" ignorance of the market. They may refuse to assess performance of the minister or to ascertain the market wage. If a congregation is unable to attract a fully qualified fulltime minister with the initial salary offer, it may then accept a part time or less qualified candidate rather than raise its salary.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Timothy Jones, “How to keep your pastor happy,” *Christianity Today* 36, no. 10 (September 14, 1992): 19.

<sup>99</sup> William C. Bonifield is Professor of Economics, Wabash College and Edgar W. Mills, Jr. is in the Division of Social Science, University of Texas, San Antonio

<sup>100</sup> William C. Bonifield, Edgar W. Mills, “The clergy labor markets and wage determination,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 19 no. 2 (1980): 156.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 146-147.

The authors present the factors that determine pastors' salaries. They say the first, most important variable for salary is congregation size and whether the minister serves alone or on a staff. The next most important variable is the minister's age. They say that when all other influences are controlled, age moves up to become the second most important variable. As a minister grows older, his age initially imposes a net reduction in salary that becomes smaller to about age forty. Beyond the age of forty, growing older adds to his salary until retirement age. The third is denominational organization. Centralized denominations pay higher salaries than mixed authority denominations.<sup>103</sup>

### **Leadership of Modern Day Challenges**

#### **Leadership and Temperament**

Several academic scholars in the United Kingdom have conducted significant research studies regarding leadership and temperament. Leslie Francis<sup>104</sup>, Charlotte Craig<sup>105</sup>, Michael Whinney<sup>106</sup>, David Tilley, and Paul Slater see the growing importance of psychological theory in the contemporary church, particularly in areas of practical theology.<sup>107</sup> They note, "A number of possible explanations have been proposed for the

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 155.

<sup>104</sup> Leslie J. Francis is professor of Religions and Education within the Religions and Education Research Unit, University of Warwick. [http://researchgate.net/profile/Leslie\\_Francis2](http://researchgate.net/profile/Leslie_Francis2) (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>105</sup> Charlotte L. Craig is at University of Wales, Cardiff, Wales, United Kingdom. [http://researchgate.net/researcher/443379871\\_Charlotte\\_L\\_Craig](http://researchgate.net/researcher/443379871_Charlotte_L_Craig) (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>106</sup> Michael Whinney is at the University of Wanwick, Department of Psychology. [http://researchgate.net/profile/Michael\\_Whinney](http://researchgate.net/profile/Michael_Whinney) (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>107</sup> Leslie J. Francis, Charlotte L. Craig, Michael Whinney, David Tilley, Paul Slater, "Psychological typology of Anglican clergy in England: diversity, strengths, and weaknesses in ministry," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 11, no. 2 (2007): 266.

growing interest in this particular model of personality within Christian contexts.”<sup>108</sup>

They summarize several researchers’ work:

Commentators argue that psychological type theory helps Christians to identify and appreciate individual differences that psychological type theory is useful as a tool for deepening self-knowledge, that psychological type theory may be employed to guide spiritual development, and that psychological type theory offers a theoretical framework capable of linking psychological and theological exploration of individual differences. This interest is evidenced by the *theoretical* applications of psychological type theory to many areas of Christian belief and practice, such as promoting evangelism, shaping prayer, understanding the person of Christ, developing leadership, interpreting and proclaiming scripture, generating insight into congregational dynamics, and fostering spirituality.<sup>109</sup>

They found evidence that “church leaders and church congregations tend to cluster around some types to the exclusion of others, [and] there may be a case for fostering different types of leaders to work in different ways among the largely unchurched.”<sup>110</sup> The results of their study show that among the 626 male, Anglican clergy, that they surveyed, the three predominant Meyers-Briggs personality types are INTJ<sup>111</sup> at eleven percent, INFP<sup>112</sup> at ten percent, and ISTJ<sup>113</sup> at ten percent.<sup>114</sup> Among the 237

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 269.

<sup>111</sup> INTJ (mastermind): All Rationals are good at planning operations, but Masterminds are head and shoulders above all the rest in contingency planning. Complex operations involve many steps or stages, one following another in a necessary progression, and Masterminds are naturally able to grasp how each one leads to the next, and to prepare alternatives for difficulties that are likely to arise any step of the way. <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/mastermind.asp> (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>112</sup> INFP (healer) Healers present a calm and serene face to the world, and can seem shy, even distant around others. But inside they're anything but serene, having a capacity for personal caring rarely found in the other types. <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/healer.asp> (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>113</sup> ISTJ (Inspectors): The one word that best describes Inspectors is superdependable. Whether at home or at work, Inspectors are extraordinarily persevering and dutiful, particularly when it comes to keeping an eye on the people and products they are responsible for. <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/inspector.asp> (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>114</sup> Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater, 274.

female Anglican clergy they surveyed, the three predominant types are ENFJ<sup>115</sup> at fifteen percent, INFP at fourteen percent and ISFJ<sup>116</sup> at twelve percent.<sup>117</sup> These statistics demonstrate preferences for introversion, intuition, feeling, and judging. However, the combination of these types only represents about nine percent of men and eleven percent of women in the general population. Therefore the authors recommend that:

Introverted clergy may be drained by many other aspects of ministry, such as attending social events, speaking in public, talking with strangers as part of evangelism or parish visiting, and assuming a high profile within the parish. Since many aspects of the clerical profession tend to require an extraverted approach to life, introverted clergy may need to be properly prepared during their initial ministerial training and during their continuing ministerial education to develop effective coping strategies that enable them both to fulfill extraverted expectations and then afterwards to create the personal space necessary to re-energize.<sup>118</sup>

Another interesting finding may be useful for church leaders who prefer intuition more than sensing. The authors point out:

Both male Anglican clergy and female Anglican clergy prefer intuition significantly more frequently than the male United Kingdom population norms and female United Kingdom population norms, respectively. Given that approximately three-quarters of the United Kingdom population prefer sensing over intuition (73% among males, 79% among females), there is a danger that the wider population may view clergy as having little to say to “the real world” or as people who are too “heavenly-minded to be any earthly good.” Clergy should be aware when engaged in ministry and mission that they may often be communicating with people who do not share their preference for intuition. This finding suggests that both male

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<sup>115</sup> ENFJ (teacher): Even more than the other Idealists, Teachers have a natural talent for leading students or trainees toward learning, or as Idealists like to think of it, they are capable of calling forth each learner's potentials. <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/teacher.asp> (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>116</sup> ISFJ (protector): We are lucky that Protectors make up as much as ten percent the population, because their primary interest is in the safety and security of those they care about - their family, their circle of friends, their students, their patients, their boss, their fellow-workers, or their employees. <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/protector.asp> (accessed on April 15, 2014).

<sup>117</sup> Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater, 274.

<sup>118</sup> Francis, Craig, Whinney, Tilley, and Slater, 278.

clergy and female clergy may need to develop their ability to appreciate how individuals with a preference for sensing perceive the world around them, in order to communicate more effectively with men and women who may, among other things, feel uncomfortable with change and with shifting visions for the future.<sup>119</sup>

Leslie J. Francis<sup>120</sup> reviewed various studies of personality psychology relating to practical theology. He assessed the reliability of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and he concluded:

The MBTI should be regarded as a reliable psychological tool when employed to rate individuals on personality continua. The MBTI remains a rich source of theory available to practical theology to account for individual differences in religious preferences and experiences. Empirical research using the MBTI to explore religious questions is able to generate new insight with practical implications for the churches. The churches should be encouraged, therefore, to stimulate further research in this tradition.<sup>121</sup>

Charlotte L. Craig<sup>122</sup>, Leslie J. Francis, and Bruce Duncan<sup>123</sup> argue that psychological type theory has been increasingly recognized as a valuable tool for developing understanding within the church. Appropriate use of type theory within the church may help to promote growth in self-knowledge, appropriate growth in self-love, enhanced sensitivity to others, awareness of alternative ways of praying and fun.<sup>124</sup> Their

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Leslie J. Francis is director of the Welsh National Centre for Religious Education and professor of Practical Theology, University of Wales, Bangor, UK.

<sup>121</sup> Leslie J. Francis, "Personality type and communicating the gospel," *Modern Believing* 42, no. 1 (2001): 43.

<sup>122</sup> Charlotte L. Craig is research assistant at the Welsh National Center for Religious Education, University of Wales, Bangor, UK.

<sup>123</sup> Bruce Duncan is Lazenby Chaplain, University of Exeter and former principal of Sarum College, Salisbury, England, UK.

<sup>124</sup> Charlotte L. Craig, Leslie J. Francis, and Bruce Duncan, "Safeguarding tradition: psychological type preferences of male vergers in the Church of England," *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 5 (2006): 458.



study of the vergers' psychological types within the Anglican Church clarified the relationship between the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and Christians' ministry preferences in church. They found that the most frequently occurring types among the verger sample are ISTJ at twenty-nine percent, ISFJ at twenty-one percent, and ESTJ<sup>125</sup> at fourteen percent.<sup>126</sup> The authors give a good explanation of the four pair of dichotomies (E-I; S-N; T-F; and J-P) within the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as shown in Appendix. The authors say that one third of the vergers are ISTJ. ISTJs are serious and quiet; they earn success by concentration and thoroughness. They see to it that everything is well organized.<sup>127</sup> The authors argue that the result of their study makes sense because the ISTJ personality type matches with the verger's job description. They explain the responsibilities of a verger,

Verger takes little active, public role during services but instead works behind the scenes. Verger is concerned with details of church history and tradition, as well as with the practical realities of current administration distractions. Verger has to take a firm and tough-minded role. The verger is concerned with order, organization, and structure.<sup>128</sup>

Leadership style and success can be deeply influenced by the leader's temperament. Philip Douglass, professor of practical theology at Covenant Theological Seminary, often refers to the topic of church personality and personal temperaments in

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<sup>125</sup> ESTJ (supervisor): Supervisors are highly social and community-minded, with many rising to positions of responsibility in their school, church, industry, or civic groups. Supervisors like to take charge of groups and are comfortable issuing orders. They are cooperative with their own superiors, and they would like cooperation from the people working under them.  
<http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/supervisor.asp>. Accessed on April 15, 2014.

<sup>126</sup> Charlotte L. Craig, Leslie J. Francis, and Bruce Duncan, "Safeguarding tradition: psychological type preferences of male vergers in the Church of England," *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 5 (2006): 461.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*: 462.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*

his writings and teachings. Douglass points out that the spiritual aspects of church are not sufficient on their own for the church to carry out its mission on earth. He said:

There is no guarantee that spiritually mature people will work well with one another. While they usually share the same ultimate goals, there is no assurance that they will agree on the best way to achieve these goals. When people's convictions are strongly held and mutually exclusive, conflict can emerge, which sometimes prevents progress toward the goals that everyone desires. This is why it is important for church leaders to understand their ministry styles and why it is essential to establish philosophical and relational standards of qualification for your church leaders in addition to spiritual ones. Once you recognize the conflict created by different ministry styles, you can work proactively to lead your congregation toward necessary change.<sup>129</sup>

Douglass teaches that a church's philosophy of ministry is comprised of theological convictions, community context, and church personality. It is not difficult for a church to minister the first two elements. However, many do not understand the nature of their church personality, and this can lead to conflict.<sup>130</sup> Douglass asserts that the personality of a church is determined by the true leadership of the church, and the true leadership includes the thirty individuals who exercise the greatest official and unofficial influence on the church.<sup>131</sup> Hence, he has developed an useful church personality diagnostic tool for church leaders.<sup>132</sup> Douglass notes that church longtime insiders and church personality are related. He explains:

Some of the most powerful expressions of a church's personality are the architecture and décor, the clothing people wear, the church processes and structures, its rituals and celebrations....Longtime insiders, however, no

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<sup>129</sup> Philip D. Douglass, *What is Your Church's Personality?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: R&R Publishing, 2008), 3.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 4-5.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 349-357.

longer recognize these symbols on a conscious level, as they have become part of the church personality.<sup>133</sup>

The relationship is important for church leadership studies. Church influential members' Myers-Briggs Type Indicators alone are not enough to diagnose church issues; church personality is also an important factor to consider.

William K. Kay<sup>134</sup>, Leslie J. Francis, and Mandy Robbins<sup>135</sup> compared the personality profiles of male leaders in the twelve apostolic networks of churches in the United Kingdom with the profiles of Church of England clergymen. They made a further comparison with the United Kingdom population norms.<sup>136</sup> Their study illustrates the church philosophy of ministry presented by Douglass. The authors used the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a tool for their study. The authors believe that the theory has been rediscovered as a theological theory, integrated within a broader conceptualization of a theology of individual differences. Citing Genesis 1:27, they argue that psychological type should be seen in an analogous way; it stems from the divine intention and the divine image. Hence, the authors believe human psychological type is a God-given feature and can be placed alongside the working of the Holy Spirit within the life of a believer in the context of the church.<sup>137</sup> Significant differences emerged from their study: In terms of the four binary sets of functions, with the network leaders being more likely to prefer extraversion (70% compared with 47% of the male population), intuition (49%

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<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>134</sup> William K. Kay is professor of Theology at Glyndwr University, United Kingdom, and serves as the editor of the Journal of the European Pentecostal Theological Association.

<sup>135</sup> Mandy Robbins is a senior lecturer at Glyndwr University, United Kingdom.

<sup>136</sup> Kay, William K.; Francis, Leslie J.; Robbins, Mandy, "A distinctive leadership for a distinctive network of churches? Psychological type theory and the apostolic networks," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 2 (2011): 306.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 307.

compared with 27% of the male population), feeling (52% compared with 35% of the male population), and judging (73% compared with 55% of the male population).<sup>138</sup>

The authors present four interesting conclusions:

First, the leaders associated with the apostolic networks are significantly more extraverted and significantly more sensing than their Anglican counterparts. The new leaders are more energized by and more engaged with the outer world. Here are leaders who are more concerned with the practical rather than with the theoretical or theological aspects of ministry. Second, the extraverted tendency of leaders associated with the apostolic networks is beneficial to them in the manifestation of charismatic gifts given that the leaders of the networks emphasize their charismatic gifting and believe themselves to be called and empowered by God for the tasks they perform, their extraverted personalities are an asset. Third, the leaders within the apostolic networks were more extraverted, more intuitive, more feeling, and more judging. Fourth, while Anglican ministry may work most effectively in an introverted style, ministers within the apostolic networks may work most effectively in an extraverted style. In other words, these two distinctive ministries may complement one another and, in so doing, their shared ministry may be effective in extending the outreach of the Church as a whole.<sup>139</sup>

### **Visionary Leadership**

Ministry vision is critical for the Chinese church today. Churches fall behind their communities in many areas. Leadership challenges often relate to ministry vision. Pastors' visions often associate with direction or strategy changes in church. Jim Herrington<sup>140</sup>, R. Robert Creech<sup>141</sup>, and Trisha Taylor<sup>142</sup> discussed leadership and congregational

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 319-320.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 320-321.

<sup>140</sup> Jim Herrington is a pastor, author, and conference leader. He serves as the pastor of Harbor Church in Houston.

<sup>141</sup> R. Robert Creech has been senior pastor of the University Baptist Church in Houston, Texas.

<sup>142</sup> Trisha Taylor is a fellow in the American Association of Pastoral Counselors and practices through the Union Baptist Association Center for counseling in Houston, Texas.

transformation based on their pastoral experiences. Regarding to the formation of a vision community they said:

A congregation is a highly complex human social system. Clearly, a change in the leader's behavior brings about change in the system....Ultimately, the leader increases the effective functioning of the congregation if a core group of key leaders understands and embraces the ability for function as well-differentiated leaders. An effective vision community needs to be a group of such leaders...Forming a vision community committed to personal transformation increases the likelihood of a leader's success in bringing about personal transformation. The impact is felt both personally and corporately.<sup>143</sup>

They define the vision community as follows: A diverse group of key members who become a committed and trusting community in order to discern and implement God's vision for the congregation. The vision community should be a part of the change process from the beginning to end. Its members must become personally prepared, understand and clearly feel the sense of urgency, and agree that change is needed.<sup>144</sup>

Christopher Marshall, a lecturer in Christian theology<sup>145</sup>, connects ministry vision, in terms of characters, values, and goals, to good leadership. He said:

Good leadership, however, is not only about having sound managerial skills or a commanding personal presence. Nor is it principally about the exercise of power and control. The heart of true leadership has to do with values and virtues. The best leaders are ones who model or embody in their own persons and practices the values and goals they want others to espouse.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> Jim Herrington, R. Robert Creech, and Trisha Taylor, *The Leader's Journey* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 153-154.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 154.

<sup>145</sup> Christopher D. Marshall is St. John's senior lecturer in Christian theology at Victoria University of Wellington.

<sup>146</sup> Christopher D Marshall, "The wisdom of knowing nothing: Pauline perspectives on leadership, ministry, and power," *Vision* 5, no. 2 (2004): 63-64.

Marshall points out the critical impact that good Christian leadership can have on churches and Christian institutions: “Good leadership is vitally important for most groups or communities, including the community of faith. Without competent leadership, groups tend to limp along, struggling for a sense of direction or motivation and easily distracted by trivial concerns. For intentional communities such as churches to flourish, effective leadership is critical.”<sup>147</sup>

Marshall argues that good leaders are not extraordinary people, but they must live out a larger vision of their church or institution. He said:

Leaders don’t have to be super-human. In fact, awareness of one’s own human fallibility and alertness to the danger of self-deception are indispensable attributes in any trustworthy leader. Yet leaders still need to be a little further down the track than others in understanding and living out the larger vision of their community or group, albeit imperfectly. They need to walk the talk, not talk the walk.<sup>148</sup>

He uses the Apostle Paul as a good model of Christian leadership: “Paul decided to rest his confidence, not in his own intellectual acumen, nor in his rhetorical skill, nor in the winsomeness of his own personality, but in what he calls ‘the wisdom of God’ and the ‘power of God,’ by which he means the capacity of the Christian gospel to confirm its own truthfulness through its impact on those who respond to it.”<sup>149</sup>

Marshall believes leaders are normally individuals of above-average gifts and abilities, but their leadership effectiveness comes from their radical dependency on Christ and confidence in truth.<sup>150</sup> James, M. Kouzes<sup>151</sup> and Barry Z. Posner<sup>152</sup> are leadership

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

scholars in a secular business school. They presented five practices of exemplary leadership in the modern day.<sup>153</sup> These five practices provide a good map for the personal transformation that Herrington, Creech and Taylor discuss. The first practice is “model the way.” A leader clarifies value and forges agreement around common principles and common ideals. A leader also helps people to think about values and priorities, building on agreement.<sup>154</sup> The second practice is that leaders inspire a shared vision. A leader tells his people to imagine an exciting, highly attractive future. Third, leaders challenge the process, encouraging their people to change from the status quo. Leaders pioneer. Fourth, because leaders’ major contribution involves creating a climate for experimentation, they enable others to act, strengthening everyone’s capacity. They make everyone feel and think that they are owners and leaders. Fifth, leaders encourage the heart, recognizing contributions and showing appreciation for their people’s work.

### **Leader’s Character and Maturity**

Kouzes and Posner researched what constituents expect of leaders by surveying thousands of business and government executives, asking them, “What values, personal traits, or characteristics do you look for and admire in a leader?”<sup>155</sup> The authors used the survey’s results to develop a second survey. They asked more than seventy-five thousand people to select the seven qualities. They concluded a final list of twenty qualities which

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<sup>151</sup> James M. Kouzes is dean’s executive professor of leadership, Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University.

<sup>152</sup> Barry Z. Posner is dean of the Leavey School of Business, Santa Clara University.

<sup>153</sup> James M Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 14-22.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 65.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

are “most look for and admire in a leader, someone whose direction they would willingly follow.”<sup>156</sup> The top four most admired characteristics of leaders include honesty, forward-looking vision, ability to inspire, and competence. The first quality, honesty, demonstrates that people want leaders who are worthy of their trust. This characteristic is the most personal of those on the list. Second, leaders are forward-looking, always aware of what may be in the future of the organization. Third, leaders are inspiring, uplifting their constituents’ spirits and giving them hope if they are to voluntarily engage in challenging pursuits. Fourth, leaders are competent, with a solid track record and the ability to get things done. These four characteristics show that credibility must be the foundation of an effective leader.<sup>157</sup> Regarding to these four characteristics, the authors say, “For people to follow someone willingly, the majority of constituents believe the leader must be honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competent.”<sup>158</sup>

A forward-looking person is often said to possess “vision” in the faith community. The term “vision” is also commonly used outside of Christianity. Vision is important for church leadership in China, and the authors’ research is valuable for Christianity. They said:

A little more than 70 percent of our most recent respondents selected the ability to look ahead as one of their most sought-after leadership traits. People expect leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization....leader must know where they’re going if they expect others to willingly join them on the journey....It’s the ability to imagine or discover a desirable destination toward which the company, agency, congregation, or community should head. Vision reveals the

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 28-29.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 30-36.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 29.



beckoning summit that provides others with the capacity to chart their course toward future.<sup>159</sup>

Kouzes and Posner's research provides very important information for the study of leadership challenges in China. They said that their survey results:

Do not significantly vary by demographical, organizational, or cultural differences....What people most look for in a leader has been constant over time. And our research documents this consistent pattern across countries, culture, ethnicities, organizational functions and hierarchies, gender, educational, and age groups.<sup>160</sup>

Kouzes and Posner give more insight into forward-looking leaders, which is valuable to the Chinese leadership challenge study:

Clarity of vision into the distant future may be difficult to attain, but it's essential that leader seek the knowledge and master the skills necessary to envision what's across the horizon. Comparing to all the other leadership qualities constituents expect, this is the one that most distinguishes leaders from other credible people. Expecting leaders to be forward-looking doesn't mean constituents want their leaders to set out on a solitary vision quest; people want to be engaged in the search for a meaningful future,..but this expectation does mean that leaders have a special responsibility to attend to the future of their organizations.<sup>161</sup>

As previously discussed, there is a significant connection between hardship and effective leadership. If leaders are effective, their hardship will surely increase proportionally. Like Kouzes and Posner, Ronald A Heifetz<sup>162</sup> and Marty Linsky<sup>163</sup> are also leadership scholars in a secular business school. Heifetz and Linsky offered insight into this phenomenon. They explained that when leaders take unpopular initiatives in

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>162</sup> Ronald A. Heifetz serves on the faculty of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is cofounder of the school's Center for Public Leadership.

<sup>163</sup> Marty Linsky serve on the faculty of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. He is faculty chair of many of the school's executive programs.

their communities, the change disturbs people.<sup>164</sup> Leaders, through their leadership, uncover meaning in life. A leader appears dangerous to people when they question others' lifetime values, beliefs, or habits.<sup>165</sup> In light of this response to bold leadership, Kouzes and Posner's definition of "adaptive challenges" provides good insight on effective leadership: "they require experiments, new discoveries, and adjustments from numerous places in the organization or community. Without learning new ways - changing attitudes, values, and behaviors - people cannot make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in a new environment."<sup>166</sup> They warn leaders about the nature of adaptive challenges: "There is a proportionate relationship between risk and adaptive change: the deeper the change and the greater the amount of new learning required, the more resistance there will be."<sup>167</sup>

The single most common source of leadership failure, according to Kouzes and Posner, is that people, especially those in positions of authority, treat adaptive challenges like technical problems.<sup>168</sup> Focusing energy primarily on the technical aspects of complex challenges will result in short-term rewards. Leadership requires disturbing people – but at a rate they can absorb.<sup>169</sup> A leader may be courageous and may have vision, but these qualities have nothing to do with leading people to grapple with hard realities.<sup>170</sup> Most leaders have probably been attacked in one form or another. Perhaps the attack has been

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<sup>164</sup> Ronald A Heifetz and Marty Linsky, *Leadership on the Line* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2002), 2

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>166</sup> James M Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2007), 13.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 18-20.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 25.

in the form of criticizing one's style of communication: too abrasive or too gentle, too aggressive or too quiet, too conflictive or too conciliatory, too cold or too warm. For the most part, people criticize when they do not like the message. The attacks may go after a leader's character, their competence, their family, or may simply distort and misrepresent their views.<sup>171</sup>

### **Leaders' Effective Strategies**

Kouzes and Posner also provide important strategies that can help a leader meet the challenge presented by adaptive problems. The idea is called "self-reflection." Self-reflection does not come naturally. They propose a technique called "getting on the balcony" when they write, "The only way to gain both a clearer view of reality and some perspective on the bigger picture is by distancing oneself from the fray....The process must be iterative, not static...observing their impact in real time, and then returning to the action."<sup>172</sup> How does one tell whether the challenge is primarily technical or primarily adaptive? The following example distinguishes an adaptive challenge: when people's hearts and minds need to change, and not just their preferences or routine behaviors.<sup>173</sup> Kouzes and Posner also advised that leaders need partners, "If a leader disrupts the status quo too much, other factions can push them aside easily if they are without support. Partners provide protection, and they create alliances with factions other than one's own....[Y]ou are building political power as well."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., 41-42.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., 76-78.

Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow<sup>175</sup>, and Marty Linsky say the single most important skill and most undervalued capacity for exercising adaptive leadership is diagnosis.<sup>176</sup> They insist:

When one is caught up in the action, it is hard to do the diagnostic work of seeing the larger patterns in the organization. Adaptive leadership is an iterative activity, an ongoing engagement between you and groups of people. Adaptive leadership is also the practice of mobilizing people to tackle high challenges and thrive. The skills required for solving adaptive challenges are more interpersonal than technical, both in their relationship with each other, with the organization, and in connecting with their customers. When change involves real or potential loss, people hold on to what they have and resist change. Adaptive leadership is not about meeting or exceeding one's authorizers' expectations; it is about challenging some of those expectations, finding a way to disappoint people without pushing them completely over the edge...changing the status quo, raising a taboo issue.... These tactics will scare people and they may want to find a new leader and get rid of you and find someone else. Addressing adaptive challenges requires stepping into unknown space and disturbing the equilibrium. Leaders need patience and persistence to lead adaptive change.... Doing this work requires flexibility and openness. Leaders try things out, see what happens, and make change accordingly. Acts of leadership not only require access to all parts of yourself so that you can draw upon all of your own resources for will, skill, and wisdom; but to be successful, you also need to fully engage people with all these parts of yourself as well.<sup>177</sup>

### **Leadership and Congregational Demands in Modern Day**

Chinese pastors today face challenges from their congregations. Andrew Hsiao, president of Lutheran Theological Seminary in Hong Kong, said, "The Chinese congregations nowadays expect their pastors to be intellectually sound and spiritually

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<sup>175</sup> Alexander Grashow is managing director of Cambridge Leadership Associates, an international leadership development firm with clients from corporate, nonprofit, and public sectors all over the globe.

<sup>176</sup> Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky, *The Practice of Adaptive Leadership* (Boston: Harvard Business Review Press, 2009), 7.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 8, 14, 22, 26, 28, 31, 36, 38.

mature and able to satisfy eager minds and feed hungry souls.”<sup>178</sup> More intellectuals and white-collar church members enter church today, but the majority of Chinese pastors are not adequately trained to meet the challenge.

### **Educational Challenges**

Chinese pastors are facing challenges because of educational deficiencies. Xu Xiaohong, dean of Shanxi Bible School of the Three-Self Movement, noted, “Though many churches are enthusiastic in their evangelism, they overlook the fact that the educational level of the believers, pastoral care and nourishment are inadequate.”<sup>179</sup>

### **Leadership and Financial Challenges**

The policy of Reform and Opening Up<sup>180</sup> produced great wealth for some and at the same time poverty for even more people. Reverend Chen Yongtao said the global financial crisis socially marginalized Chinese believers.<sup>181</sup> There are two types of marginalization. The first is a passive type that includes people such as farmers, the elderly, and the illiterate. Chen points out that these people represent the overwhelming majority of the Christian population in China, as the majority of Christians are neither rich nor well educated. The second type is active marginalization. These people, who are quite theologically conservative, completely separate the church from society. They believe Christians should distance themselves from the world and not let the secular

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<sup>178</sup> Andrew K. H. Hsiao, “Balanced Theological Education and the Chinese Church,” *Theology & Life*, no. 10 (1987): 45.

<sup>179</sup> Xu Xiaohong, “Obstacles in the Path of Theological Reconstruction,” *Chinese Theological Review* 17 (2003): 8.

<sup>180</sup> See the explanation in Chapter One.

<sup>181</sup> Yongtao Chen, “Challenges and Opportunities Chinese Christians Face in the Global Economic Crisis,” *Chinese Theological Review* 24 (2012): 7.

world influence them. They are willingly marginalized by society.<sup>182</sup> Chen also says that under the impact of the economic crisis, Christians suffer unemployment and wage cuts like anyone else. Thus, Christians cannot avoid feeling perplexed and confused, or suffering anxiety about the future.<sup>183</sup> Chen believes that the global economic crisis also challenges theological ideas. He said two extreme theologies rise as a result: prosperity theology and retribution theology.<sup>184</sup> Chen also points out that many Chinese Christians believe that being a Christian means living a life of poverty. The poorer one is materially, the richer one is spiritually, and many Christians are unwilling to discuss anything having to do with money, regarding it as an expression of worldliness.<sup>185</sup>

### **Leadership and Antagonism**

It is important to explain what hardship looks like within the Chinese church. One of the most common hardships is antagonism. Pastor Kenneth C. Haugk<sup>186</sup> gives deep insight in this regard from the pastoral and psychological perspectives. In his book on antagonism in the church, Haugk explains, “Antagonists are individuals who, on the basis of nonsubstantive evidence, go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in a leadership capacity.”<sup>187</sup> Haugk proposes that there are five levels of antagonism, based on the

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<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>183</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Kenneth C. Haugk is pastor and clinical psychologist. He is the founder of the Stephen Series system of lay caring ministry. He is executive director of Steven Ministries.

<sup>187</sup> Kenneth C. Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 25-26.

seriousness of the attack.<sup>188</sup> Levels I, II and III are relatively easy to resolve. Haugk calls Level I “problem to solve,” and it requires working out a solution to the problem. Level II is called “disagreement.” At this level, the objective becomes colored with a need for self-protection. Haugk calls Level III “contests.” At this level, antagonists view conflict from a win/lose perspective; therefore, the objective is no longer to solve the problem. Level IV is “fight/flight.” Here, the antagonists’ objective is hurting their opponents in some way, getting rid of them or both. The good of the organization is not a concern at this level. Being right and punishing those who are wrong predominates. The language used appeals to generalized and personalized principles and avoids the specific issue or issues at hand. The result is either fighting or fleeing. Haugk calls Level V “intractable situations.” Antagonists at this level try to punish or destroy the organization. This level focuses purely and simply on obliterating opponents, irrespective of the cost to self or others.<sup>189</sup> Often, levels IV and V caused long-term damage, and they are very difficult to resolve. These two levels are the most destructive types of antagonism. Pastor Marlin Thomas<sup>190</sup> presents good applications for Haugk’s work. Thomas says that one in ten congregations in the United States experiences some of the stress. He said that church people often have little understanding of the internal dynamics of the conflict.<sup>191</sup> He points out, “Churches are collages of people with different systems of internal wiring and we must recognize those differences if we want people to be whole and at peace with

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<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 33-34.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>190</sup> Marlin E. Thomas is pastor of the Ulysses Mennonite Brethren Church, Ulysses, Kansas.

<sup>191</sup> Marlin E Thomas “The pastor's role in managing church conflict.” *Direction* 19 no 2 Fall (1990):66.

themselves, each other, and with God.”<sup>192</sup> Regarding conflict levels I and II, Thomas teaches, disordered people can serve God, even if they can't get along very well with each other or even with the pastor. But in such cases the pastor must be more than just a pastor; he must be skilled in the taming of hearts.”<sup>193</sup>

Thomas proposes four steps to deal with the Levels I and II conflicts. He says:

The first step must begin by teaching their people a new way of behaving and communicating. The second is to help people learn how to clarify perceptions and avoid assumptions. The third step is to teach people how better to relate to each other. The fourth step is the process of empowering weaker members of the group to act and to speak forth.<sup>194</sup>

Thomas also talks about level III conflict, namely when conflict gets out of hand.

Once the conflict reaches this stage, a pastor needs outside help. He says at this stage:

Where some person or group of persons demands satisfaction as a price for their contentment, the pastor who is committed to church ministry rather than conflict therapy is better advised quickly to seek outside help than to try to address the issues himself. The right kind of outside help is help provided by professionals who are not emotionally connected to the outcome of the conflict.<sup>195</sup>

Thomas advises people who handle the conflict, “Whatever role one plays in encountering conflict in the church, it must be undertaken with a great degree of sanctified professionalism and human dignity.”<sup>196</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Ibid., 66-67.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., 68-70.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 71-72.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., 73.



Charles Chandler<sup>197</sup>, who is helping ministers, reported a profound issue in American churches concerning congregations forcing pastors out of their positions. He quotes a survey:

22.8 percent of the responding readers have been forced out of their church at least once during their careers. In sixty-two percent of these cases, the same congregation had forced the previous pastor out. Of those who said the church had pushed out their predecessors, forty-one percent indicated that the church had done it more than twice. Of those pastors forced out, forty-three percent said a “faction” in the church pushed them out. The faction often numbered ten people or less.<sup>198</sup>

Chandler points out that the Southern Baptist Convention reported in 1989 that during an eighteen-month period, two thousand and one hundred ministers were fired. How did those pastors or ministers respond to the antagonism? Chandler says:

Ministers often remain quiet because they are afraid to take a chance on having nothing with which to house and feed their families. A significant number of ministers have no savings due to inadequate salaries. They often fall victim to the “group’s” argument that remaining quiet is taking the “high road.”<sup>199</sup>

Chandler’s report on the percentage of pastors being forced out is not much different from a recent survey by Christianity Today in 2012. Christianity Today reports,

More than one out of four pastors say they have been forced out of a church due to personal attacks and criticism from small congregational factions, according to new research from Texas Tech University’s Marcus Tanner. Pastors forced out score high on tests for post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and health problems, he found.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Charles H. Chandler is the executive director of Ministering to Ministers Foundation, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia.

<sup>198</sup> Charles H. Chandler, “When churches beat their plowshares into swords: people at war with the pastor,” *Review & Expositor* 98, no. 4 (Fall 2001): 557-558.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, 563.

<sup>200</sup> “Pastors’ Fight and Flight,” *Christianity Today* 56, no 5 (May 9, 2012): 9.

### **Conclusion of Literature Review**

In order to study how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership, four selected major areas were reviewed. They are Biblical Review of Leadership, leadership and hardship, leadership of the modern day challenges, and leadership and antagonism. Each area has one or more sub-areas. There are total seventeen sub-areas studied. It shows that the pastors' challenges could be widely diversified.

It is important to note that great portion in this review is based on the challenges found in the Western churches. The literatures associate with Chinese pastors in China is scarce. The cultural and political environments may be the two important factors contributing to the limited information available. However, many Christians' struggles are timeless. Bible was written two thousand years ago and is still serving as inerrant and complete guide for Christians' earthly journey today. Hence, the existing literature developed in the church of the West can be valuable information to study Chinese pastors' responses to their challenges. Pastors in the East and West may share many common challenges; however, pastors' responses could be different from culture to culture, age to age. The responses can also be influenced by spiritual maturity and temperament. The seventeen sub-areas may not be treated as independent areas; dependency to some degree may exist between them. For instance leaders' temperament and their effective strategies may have a relationship. One temperament can choose and apply an effective strategy easier than the other.

### **Chapter Three: Project Methodology**

The purpose of this research is to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges. This research used a general qualitative research method of study. To accomplish this task through interviewing pastors, the methods, techniques, and nature of questions to be used for interviews were selected with the cultural background of the interviewees in mind.

The research questions used in interviews were the following:

1. What recent adaptive leadership challenges do Chinese pastors face?
2. What strategies do pastors use to respond to adaptive leadership challenges?
3. In what way and to what extent do the pastors pursue reflective work during the challenges?

#### **Design of the Study**

The researcher used qualitative methodology for this study because one of its strengths is its interpretive aspect. Sharan Merriam, author of the *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*, asserts,

Interpretive research, which is where qualitative research is most often located, assumes that reality is socially constructed, that is, there is no single, observable reality. Rather, there are multiple realities, or interpretations, of a single event. Researchers do not “find” knowledge, they construct it. Constructivism is a term often used interchangeably with interpretivism.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 8-9.

The qualitative research method serves this study's purpose very well because the researcher will interpret the data (during and after the interviews) in order to construct realities by acquiring a deeper understanding of the adaptive leadership challenges of pastors. This process is very important for the study. Many churches in China are governed by authoritative leadership. Obedience to church authority is a very important "virtue" in church culture. Church government or structure often reflects cultures, which is especially true for church groups. If a Christian is subjected to criticism, or attack in his or her church, their response is often influenced or guided by the church culture or ideology. In other words, their response might not be guided by scripture. Their responses will likely reflect the church culture or societal culture. The pastor might not be able to evaluate their response using biblical-theological principles properly or adequately. As a result, they might not be able to learn from the challenges with a balanced view. Because there will be multiple perceptions of reality in the raw data collected, qualitative research's strength of interpretation will offer adequate tools to reach this study's goal. In other words, the researcher will use a small sample from his ministry field, go deeper through precise interpretation, and endeavor to develop a deep understanding of the perspectives of the pastors interviewed. The researcher's approach will include using the small sample of field data from the interviews and experiences from ministry.

Merriam explains that "the basic qualitative study would be interested in how people interpret their experience, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences. The overall purpose is to understand how people make

sense of their lives and their experiences.”<sup>202</sup> This explanation confirms that the qualitative research method is a good tool for this research.

Among the many qualitative research methods, the researcher will use the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) for this study. It is a technique which has been widely used since its inception in 1954. Shelagh Fisher and Tony Oulton<sup>203</sup>, researchers from the Manchester Metropolitan University, introduce CIT as the follows:

The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) is a term used to describe a flexible set of principles for qualitative research. The technique was originally developed during World War 2 as a way to identify effective and ineffective behaviors in a variety of military activities. The method was subsequently developed as a tool for the systematic study of human behavior and labeled Critical Incident Technique.<sup>204</sup>

And;

The Critical Incident Technique has been tried and tested in a wide range of discipline areas and for a variety of purposes. It is recognized as a valid, reliable and effective method for gathering rich qualitative data for a variety of purposes.<sup>205</sup>

CIT appears to be a good tool for this study. CIT has another important strength, namely, it can be applied using questionnaires or interviews, which is exactly what this study will do.

Dibba H. Redmann<sup>206</sup>, Judith J. Lambrecht<sup>207</sup>, Wanda L. Stitt-Gohdes<sup>208</sup>, three professors in education field, introduce the CIT as the follows:

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>203</sup> Shelagh Fisher and Tony Oulton are in the Department of Information and Communications, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.

<sup>204</sup> Shelagh Fisher and Tony Oulton, “The Critical Incident Technique in Library and Information Management Research,” *Education for Information* 17, no. 2, (1999): 113.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>206</sup> Dibba H. Redmann is an Associate Professor in the School of Vocational Education, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA.

The American Institutes for Research (1998) defines CIT as a "set of procedures for systematically identifying behaviors that contribute to the success or failure of individuals or organizations in specific situations". It is not an appropriate job analysis tool for every job; it is appropriate for jobs that have a flexible or undefinable number of correct ways to behave. CIT is "an epistemological process in which qualitative, descriptive data are provided about real-life accounts"<sup>209</sup>

Redmann, Lambrecht and Stitt-Goheds outline the structure of CIT:

The structure of CIT involves four phases: (a) developing plans and specifications for collecting factual incidents, (b) collecting episodes/critical incidents from knowledgeable individuals, (c) identifying themes in the critical incidents and sorting the incidents into proposed content categories, and (d) interpreting and reporting. The data can be collected from observations or from viable self-reports, e. g., interviews. The classification and analysis of the critical incidents are the most difficult steps because the interpretations are more subjective than objective.<sup>210</sup>

Professor Marie L. Radford<sup>211</sup>, a researcher with research interests in interpersonal communication and qualitative methodologies, gives a practical illustration how CIT is applied in interview. She said:

The CIT is a qualitative method designed to draw out the most memorable aspects of an event or experience from the study's participants. It has been used to evaluate programs or services and to inform their improvement. CIT questions typically have this format: Remember a time when you had a successful (specify activity)? Please describe. What was it about

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<sup>207</sup> Judith J. Lambrecht is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction in the College of Education, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

<sup>208</sup> Stitt-Gohdes is an Associate Professor, University of Georgia, Athens.

<sup>209</sup> Dibbon H. Redmann, Judith J. Lambrecht, and Wanda L. Stitt-Gohdes, "The critical incident technique: a tool for qualitative research," *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal* 42, no. 3 (2000): 138.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>211</sup> Marie L. Radford is an Associate Professor at Rutgers SCILS. Prior to joining the Rutgers faculty, she was Acting Dean and Associate Professor of Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science. Her research interests are interpersonal communication aspects of reference service, evaluation of digital resources and services, qualitative methodologies, and cultural studies.

(specified activity) that made it successful? Or the negative: Remember a time when you had an unsuccessful (specify activity)?<sup>212</sup>

And;

Qualitative measures, such as the CIT, help to capture the differences that may fall between points on a standard scale. They can answer such questions as “What do programs mean to participants? What is the quality of their experience?” They capture nuances of quality that are lost in most survey data collection.<sup>213</sup>

However, CIT does have challenges in its application. Redmann, Lambrecht and Stitt-Goheds said “Skills needed by the qualitative researcher include the ability to negotiate access to a field site, to establish and maintain trust with participants in the study.”<sup>214</sup>

Establishing trust with participants is a challenge. Participants may not used to or willing to tell a complete story of their incidents. The other challenge is memory. Researchers rely on the incidents being remembered by participants and desire truthful and accurate reporting from participants.

These two challenges are typical regarding data collection in China. How can these disadvantages be minimized in the data collection process? The researcher found that “phenomenological reduction” could be very helpful if applied to the interviews. Merriam defines phenomenological reduction as “the process of continually returning to the essence of the experience to derive the inner structure or meaning in and of itself.”<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>212</sup> Marie L. Radford, “The Critical Incident Technique and the Qualitative Evaluation of the Connecting Libraries and Schools Project,” *Library Trends* 55, no. 1 (2006): 46.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>214</sup> Dibba H. Redmann, Judith J. Lambrecht, and Wanda L. Stitt-Gohdes, “The critical incident technique: a tool for qualitative research,” *Delta Pi Epsilon Journal* 42, no. 3 (2000): 137.

<sup>215</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 26.

According to Merriam, this process requires one to go directly “to the things themselves,”<sup>216</sup> and so the researcher will apply it to the interview process. It will be like a spiral model used in hermeneutics. Imagine this scenario: when a pastor is sharing their experiences, their emotions may dominate their thought process and bias can be significant enough to mislead an interviewer’s perception and understanding. As mentioned before, Chinese pastors tend to talk about their challenges in vague terms and may only give a general idea of the issue. However, for this study’s purposes, the deeper meaning and the facts are necessary and essential. The phenomenological reduction can correct this problem. As in hermeneutics, the famous “spiral” model is a very similar idea. Grant R. Osborne<sup>217</sup> said that

[t]he “spiral” is a better metaphor because it is not a closed circle but rather an open-ended movement from the horizon of the text to the horizon of the reader. I am not going round and round from a closed circle that can never detect the true meaning but am spiraling nearer and nearer to the text’s intended meaning as I refine my hypotheses and allow the text to continue to challenge and correct those alternative interpretations.<sup>218</sup>

Osborne’s strategy can be applied in this study. The researcher can replace the “text” in Osborne’s statement with “a true answer to my question,” and replace the “reader” with the “interviewer.” Getting the actual facts from interviewees is much like getting the actual meaning of scripture. Every question in the interviews will serve as the starting point of a spiral. Each question itself is a spiral set and may have more than one sub-

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>217</sup> Grant R. Osborne is a theologian and New Testament scholar. He is Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Osborne specializes in biblical hermeneutics. He is best known for his concept of the “hermeneutical spiral”, denoting an “upward and constructive process of moving from earlier pre-understanding to fuller understanding, and the returning back to check and to review the need for correction or change in this preliminary understanding.” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grant\\_R.\\_Osborne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grant_R._Osborne) [accessed May 25, 2015]).

<sup>218</sup> Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1991), 6.



question to ask. When the sub-question(s), which will be generated immediately after the answer of previous sub-question, reaches the end of the spiral, then the researcher will ask the next question.

The researcher also used a semi-structured interview protocol, which was very important for this study. The researcher wanted the interviewees to feel comfortable enough to share all important leadership challenges. Thus, the researcher needed to be able to make the interview feel like a normal conversation, which meant avoiding a pure question/answer type of interview. In light of this consideration, the semi-structured interview protocol was the ideal choice for this study. This protocol has three advantages: (1) it is not as invasive as a structured interview; (2) it is useful, not just for confirming the same information, but also for learning more; and (3) it makes it easier for candidates to talk about sensitive subjects and issues.<sup>219</sup> For example, the following is a possible interview question: “Can you describe in detail what are their appeals and purposes?” After they give an answer, the researcher might continue inviting more information related to their answer. A basic follow-up question might be, “Could you elaborate on the meaning of what you just talked about?”

### **Participant Sample Selection**

The first step that the researcher took to minimize the potential challenge of interviewees being unwilling to tell a complete story was to select pastors who trusted the researcher. Talking about personal leadership challenges is a private matter and this is especially true for Chinese.

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<sup>219</sup> Alex Saez, “Semi Structured Interview Protocol,” eHow Contributor, [http://www.ehow.com/facts\\_7247054\\_semi-structured-interview-protocol.html](http://www.ehow.com/facts_7247054_semi-structured-interview-protocol.html) (accessed December 28, 2011).

The purpose of this research was to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors. There are many factors which can cause a pastor to run into specific leadership challenges. Those factors include temperament, gender, culture of regional churches, leadership responsibilities, church style (independent church or church group), pastoral experiences, church location (urban or rural), ministry style (church-planting or ruling pastor), etc. Therefore, the researcher decided to interview more than eight pastors in order to get clearer patterns of leadership challenges.

The main theme of this study is leadership. Therefore, participants with strong leadership capabilities were preferred. A pastor of an independent church should be the senior pastor of the church. A ruling pastor of a church group should be the leader in charge, not a deputy to someone. Regardless of the nature of the participants' styles of leadership, they need to have pastoral responsibility, namely, they need to have a pastoral congregation.

This researcher interviewed twelve pastors. In order to obtain the richest data towards best practices, the researcher carefully selected the pastors for interviews. First, the pastor must have demonstrated significant leadership in their ministry. This study focuses on the relationship between leadership and adaptive challenges. Thus, it is imperative that a pastor has good leadership skills which are obvious to others. Second, the pastor's educational background, social status, economic status, family status, and ministry styles should demonstrate diversity as widely as possible but should not be considered special or unique within a group of leaders in Chinese churches. The reason for this criterion of selection is to reveal a common impact result of adaptive challenges in order to identify common patterns. Third, the researcher will choose twelve pastors

who represent demographic variation of gender and location in order to see if these play a major role or not in this study's findings. Fourth, the twelve pastors who were chosen must represent diverse ministry styles.

Different personalities are likely to respond to challenges differently and lead to different leadership styles. However, it's hard to test potential participants' personalities first and then decide who will be interviewed. Therefore, temperament style was not used in selecting participants.

### **Data Collection**

Every pastor was asked before the interview to prepare three to five adaptive leadership challenges to discuss. The definition of "adaptive leadership challenge" was explained to interview participants.<sup>220</sup>

In order to explore the relationship between the personality of the pastor and the way the pastor responded to challenges, a Myers-Briggs test was given to these pastors before the interview. A hardcopy of the illustration of their identified type was given to each pastor to read before the interview. Sometimes the test score suggests two or more possibilities of personality type. In these cases, the reverse test will be given. The possible personality descriptions will be given to the participant to read in order to identify the personality type which best fits them. It will be helpful for the participant and the researcher to understand the interviewee's basic personality before the interview. This understanding can facilitate more effective exploration of the leadership challenges during the process of interview.

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<sup>220</sup> The definition of "adaptive leadership challenge" was discussed in chapter one.

An interview protocol, derived from the research questions, will be used in interviews. Interview protocol will be repeated for each challenge the participant shares.

The protocol is the following:

[RQ 1] What recent adaptive leadership challenges do Chinese pastors face?

a. What types of challenges do the pastors encounter?

Q: Would you describe your challenge experienced in the past three years?

b. In what ways do the pastors' temperaments contribute to the challenges?

Q: How did the challenge associates with your personality?

[RQ 2] What strategies do pastors use to respond to adaptive leadership challenges?

a. What factors contribute to the pastors' choices of strategies?

Q: How did you respond to this challenge?

Q: What are the considerations which led to your choice of strategies?

b. In what ways do pastors use adaptive challenge strategies?

Q: How do you apply your strategies to the adaptive leadership challenges?

Q: What biblical theological principles do you apply in the process?

c. In what ways does temperament play a role in the pastors' choice of strategies?

Q: How does your temperament contribute to your choice of your strategy?

4. [RQ 3] In what way and to what extent do the pastors pursue reflective work during the challenges?

a. What are the reflective practices the pastors use during the challenges to analyze the effectiveness of their strategies?

Q: How do you reflect on your challenge?

Q: How do you recognize or identify your external environment changing?

- b. How does temperament play a role in the reflective process?

Q: Does your temperament affect your reflection?

The researcher used a SONY ICD-AX412F digital recorder for the interviews. This type of recorder has high-quality sound recording ability and the data can be easily uploaded to a computer. The interview data was transcribed in the native language, namely Chinese, for analysis and comparison. The data quoted directly in this research was translated into English by the researcher.

### **Data Analysis**

For the data analysis, this study will use the “constant comparative” method.

According to Merriam, this method

[i]nvolves comparing one segment of data with another to determine similarities and differences. Data are grouped together on a similar dimension. The dimension is tentatively given a name; it then becomes a category. The overall object of this analysis is to identify patterns in the data. These patterns are arranged in relationships to each other in the building of a grounded theory.<sup>221</sup>

Merriam points out that the function of the constant comparative method, as its name suggests, is to do constant comparison. The researcher will begin with a particular incident from an interview and compare it with another incident from the same interview or the interview of another participant. The comparisons may be grouped into tentative categories. These tentative categories may be compared to each other. As comparisons are made, a broader category or theory can be developed.<sup>222</sup>

The constant comparative method provides a very good analytical technique for this research. The researcher coded each interview for relevant data and emerging themes.

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<sup>221</sup> Sharan B. Merriam, *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2009), 30-31.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 199-200.

Also, interview transcripts were compared and contrasted throughout the analysis process. The purpose of this research is to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of the twelve Chinese pastors and how they responded to their leadership challenges in their ministries and daily lives. One specific challenge collected from different pastors might be expressed in various ways, based on the pastors' personal factors such as personalities, communication skills, experiences, etc. This specific challenge which is presented in various expressions will be identified and be treated as one category. This study's findings were not used to formulate a substantive theory but to gain an understanding such that others would be able to help Chinese pastors' ministries and to inform similar future research in a more substantive way.

### **Study Limitation**

The purpose of this research is to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges. The researcher will try to find a pattern of challenges which Chinese pastors share in common so that future church leader training and development programs can be adjusted accordingly. Unfortunately, this study can only interview a small number of pastors. Despite the diversity of backgrounds included in the pastors' selection, it is not possible to get a generalizable result or pattern to represent all pastors throughout China. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the reader to consider and compare contexts when seeking to transfer any of the findings to another situation.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher has chosen the qualitative methodology for this research. More specifically, the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) will be used for the data collection. In this chapter, the researcher discussed the advantages and disadvantages of this method

and proposed the “spiral” method to minimize the effects of the disadvantages. The researcher also discussed the criteria for choosing the twelve pastors interviewed for this study. In addition, the interview protocol is also presented.

The Constant Comparative Method was used for data analysis. This method is ideal for this research.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

The purpose of this research is to identify how Chinese pastors respond to adaptive leadership challenges. The researcher will try to identify a pattern of challenges which Chinese pastors have in common so future church leader training and development programs can be adjusted accordingly. The Critical Incident Technique (CIT) and the “spiral” methods were used for the data collection.

Three research questions guided this study. They are:

1. What recent adaptive leadership challenges do Chinese pastors face?
2. What strategies do pastors use to respond to adaptive leadership challenges?
3. In what way and to what extent do the pastors pursue reflective work during the challenges?

Twelve<sup>223</sup> pastors were interviewed in this study. They were selected based on the criteria specified in chapter three.

### **Introduction to Research Participants**

The twelve participants’ ministry locations are marked in China’s regional map in Figure 4.1 (a)<sup>224</sup>. They are from five out of the total six regions of China. The numbers on the map represent the number of participants serving in that region. The Christian density

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<sup>223</sup> A total of thirteen pastors were actually interviewed. One of the thirteen, the twelfth participant in interview order, was not included in this study. The reason for the exclusion is because of validity concerns. Some of his answers avoided questions and pointed to other directions. It appeared that trust was not strong enough to provide accurate data.

<sup>224</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_regions\\_of\\_the\\_People's\\_Republic\\_of\\_China](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_regions_of_the_People's_Republic_of_China) (accessed May 25, 2015).



map of China is shown in Figure 4.1 (b)<sup>225</sup>. The ministry locations of the twelve participations are proportional to the Christian population of China. Only two of the twelve participants serve in the same location, a major city.



Figure 4.1(a) Interview participants' ministry locations.

<sup>225</sup> <http://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Oct/18/map-showing-distribution-christians-china/>. The density map was published in October, 2010.

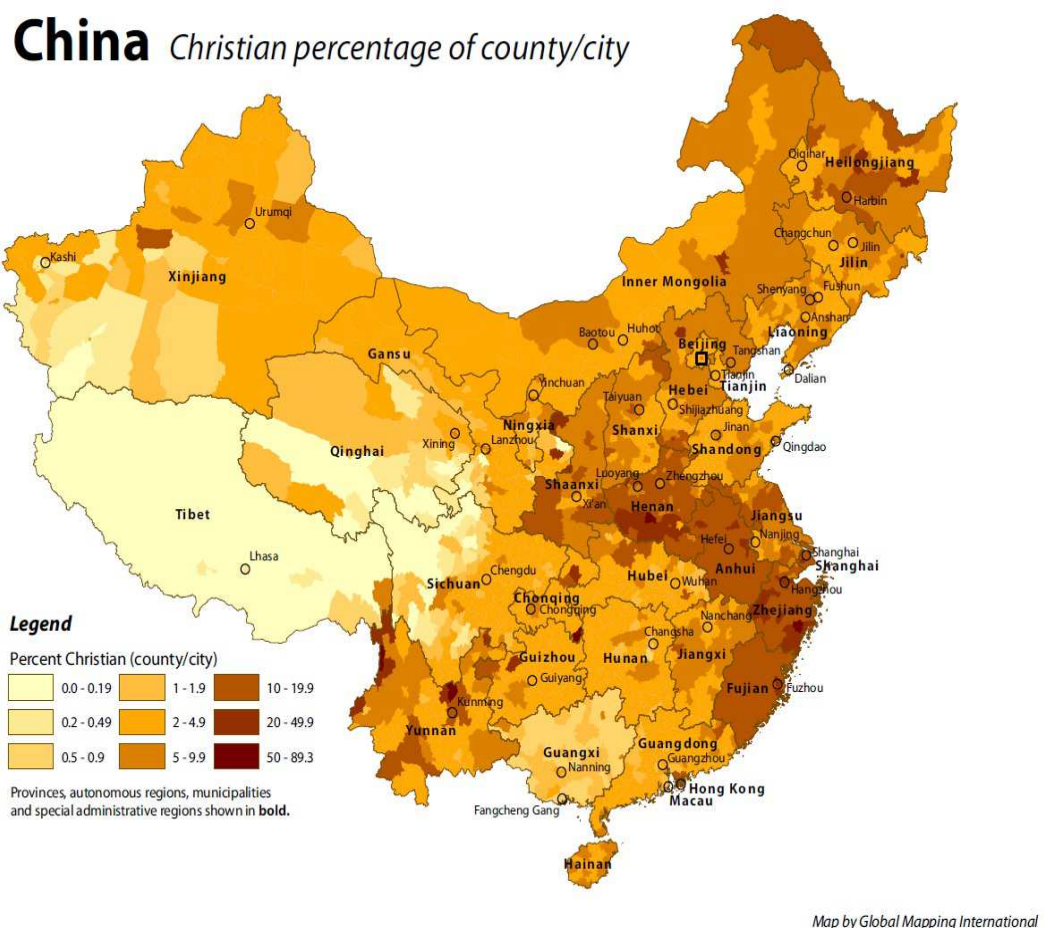


Figure 4.1 (b) Christian density of China.

The basic personal data of the participants are included in Table 4.1. The introduction to the four letters of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator is in Table 4.2. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator of participants are in Table 4.3(a) and Table 4.3(b). The job descriptions of the participants are found in Table 4.4. Some serve in major cities and some in small cities. Participants are both male and female pastors.

Table 4.1 Basic data of the twelve participants.

Participant Personal Data						
Interview order	Code # <sup>226</sup> in study	Myers-Briggs type indicator	Gender	Belongs to a church group (G) or independent church (I)	Age range <sup>227</sup>	Years of full-time ministry
1	<b>MG1</b>	ENTJ	M	G	35-40	12
2	<b>FI2</b>	INTJ	F	I	50-55	10
3	<b>MI3</b>	ISFP	M	I	45-50	9
4	<b>FG4</b>	INFJ	F	G	45-50	9
5	<b>MG5</b>	ISTJ	M	G	45-50	20
6	<b>MG6</b>	ISTJ	M	G	50-55	10
7	<b>MG7</b>	ISTJ	M	G	45-50	7
8	<b>MI8</b>	ISTJ	M	I	35-40	15
9	<b>FG9</b>	ISTJ	F	G	50-55	20
10	<b>MI10</b>	ENFJ	M	I	50-55	9
11	<b>MG11</b>	ENTJ	M	G	45-50	10
12	<b>MI12</b>	ESTJ	M	I	30-35	6
The code number: the first letter represents gender; the second letter represents their church style: church <u>G</u> roup or <u>I</u> ndependent church. The numerical number is the order of interviews.					Avg. 44 years old	Avg. 11.4 years in service

<sup>226</sup> The code number is designed to show participant's gender and church style (church group or independent church). The illustration is at the bottom of the Table 4.1.

<sup>227</sup> In order to protect the identity of participants, their ages are presented in ranges.

Table 4.2 Introduction to the four letters of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

<b>Myers-Briggs Type Indicator - Four letters' explanation</b> <sup>228</sup>	
<b>Extroverts (E)</b>	<b>Introverts (I)</b>
Prefer being around people	Are comfortable spending time alone
Are interested in many things	Are selective and like to focus on one or a few things
Have many friends and associates	Have a few very close friends
Jump into things pretty quickly	Think about things before they act
Are usually pretty talkative	Are usually fairly reserved
Are more public and easier to get to know	Are more private and harder to read
Are enthusiastic and outgoing	Appear calm and self-contained
Represent about 55% of the American population	Represent about 45% of the American population
<b>Sensors (S)</b>	<b>Intuitives (N)</b>
Focus on the facts and specifics	Focus on the possibility
Are more concrete; like ideas to be practical	Are more abstract; like idea and theories for their own sake
Trust their direct experience	Trust their gut instincts
Like to operate in the here and now	Like to imagine and think about the future
Are realistic and practical	Are innovative and imaginative
Like established ways of doing things	Like to create new ways of doing things
Think and talk in a step-by-step manner	Frequently jump around from topic to topic
Represent about 65% of the American population	Represent about 35% of the American population

<sup>228</sup> Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger, *Just Your Type: Create the Relationship You've Always Wanted Using the Secrets of Personality Type* (Little, Brown and Company, 2001), chapter 2, locations 1301-1305, Kindle.

<b>Thinkers (T)</b>	<b>Feelers (F)</b>
Are more logical and analytical	Are more sensitive and sympathetic
Believe it's better to be truthful than tactful	Believe it's better to be tactful than truthful
Are fair and consistent; apply one standard to all	Like harmony; look for extenuating circumstances
Are motivated by achievements	Are motivated by being appreciated
Like to compete and win	Like to cooperate and create consensus
Easily see flaws; can be critical and brusque	Like to please others; express appreciation easily
Are thick-skinned and not easily offended	Get their feelings hurt more easily
Comprised about 65% of males	Comprised about 65% of females

<b>Judgers (J)</b>	<b>Perceivers (P)</b>
Like to make decisions; decide quickly	Like to keep options open; may procrastinate
Prefer to make and keep plans	Prefer to be free to act spontaneously
Are usually well-organized	Are often disorganized
Like to be in control	Like to adapt to changing situations
Have a strong work ethic; work, then play	Have a strong play ethic; play then work
Are more formal and conventional	Are more casual and unconventional
Tend to see things as black or white	Tend to see things as shaded or gray
Are often better at finishing projects	Are often better at starting projects

Table 4.3(a) The Myers-Briggs type indicator of participators (ISTJ, ESTJ, ENTJ, and INTJ).

Myers-Briggs type indicator <sup>229</sup>				
	ISTJ	ESTJ	ENTJ	INTJ
Mark of the type <sup>230</sup>	Inspectors	Supervisor	Field Marshal	Mastermind
	General description - Strength			
Leadership	ISTJs are responsible, reliable, hardworking people whose word is their bond. Literal, precise, and no-nonsense, they say what they mean and mean what they say. ISTJs have a strong work ethic and always choose to get their tasks done before they take time to relax. They know what they have to do and how to do it and seldom need or want any supervision or input from others. Their single-minded determination is one of their greatest assets.	ESTJs are natural leaders and quick decision makers. Their serious, no-nonsense approach to life inspires confidence and trust in the people with whom they live and work. Respected for their objectivity and fairness. but ESTJs are also highly competitive and have a strong need to be in control. They are loyal team players who are more interested in maintaining than challenging the status quo. They respect authority and expect others to do the same.	ENTJs are natural leaders whose competence and strength inspires confidence and respect in others. They analyze problems logically and objectively, weigh the pros and cons, and then make efficient, sensible, and often tough decisions. ENTJs are capable of anticipating how current actions may affect future decisions.	INTJs are global thinkers with original minds. They are able to see connections and understand the long-range implications of current actions and events. Ingenious and innovative, INTJs have a unique talent for looking at almost anything and seeing how it can be improved. Able to grasp and analyze complex issues quickly, INTJs are excellent strategic problem solvers with highly developed critical thinking skills that allow them to perform incisive analysis.

<sup>229</sup> Paul D. Tieger and Barbara Barron-Tieger. *Just Your Type: Create the Relationship You've Always Wanted Using the Secrets of Personality Type*, (Little, Brown and Company, 2001), locations 809, 770, 1066, 1111, 1029, 1234, 1272, Kindle.

<sup>230</sup> <http://www.keirsey.com/4temps/composer.asp> (accessed February 2014).

<b>Relationship</b>	Although they like to be of service to their families and friends, they can also remain utterly objective and make the tough calls when necessary. ISTJs are eminently fair people.	They are often very outgoing and friendly,	Typically friendly and outgoing,	INTJs are particularly romantic ones. They are capable of caring deeply for others (usually a select few), and are willing to spend a great deal of time and effort on a relationship <sup>231</sup> .
<b>Inner belief and nature</b>	Quiet and independent, ISTJs are often happiest when they have plenty of time alone without interruption.	Typically strong-willed and very verbal. Practical and realistic, ESTJs consider it important to be accurate with facts and pay close attention to details. They are rarely convinced by anything other than hard facts and sound reasoning.	ENTJs are always looking for ways to improve themselves and increase their expertise and power. They are often very articulate, think quickly on their feet, and speak publicly with skill and confidence. They like to work hard and eagerly take on challenges, the more complex the better.	INTJs are independent people who set very high standards for themselves and usually reach or exceed their goals. They are hard workers capable of persevering against great odds. INTJs have enviable focus and determination, and they will not be deterred from reaching their goals.
	<b>General description - Weakness</b>			
<b>Leadership</b>	ISTJs focus so completely on present realities rather than on future implications, their skepticism can sometimes impede real and needed progress. Because their Least function is Intuition, they are naturally mistrustful of unproven ways of doing things.	They are not particularly good at anticipating future needs or forecasting future trends. They tend to make quick decisions and sometimes rush to judgment before they have carefully and thoroughly considered all their options. Because ESTJs focus primarily on the present, they may fail to appreciate how current actions may affect the future.	ENTJs also have the propensity to be bossy and may intimidate others into supporting their positions. They may fail to express their appreciation when others have helped them or have done a good job. ENTJs may not spend enough time reflecting and thoughtfully considering the immediate, practical, or personal consequences of their actions.	They are sometimes condescending or highly critical of those who fail to live up to their expectations and are parsimonious in their praise for the few who do. INTJs have also been known to take it upon themselves to implement critical decisions without consulting their supervisors or co-workers <sup>232</sup> .

<sup>231</sup> <http://www.typelogic.com/intj.html> (accessed February 26, 2014)

<sup>232</sup> <http://www.typelogic.com/intj.html> (accessed March 7, 2014)

<b>Relationship</b>	<p>They are not likely to be significantly influenced by how people will feel about their decisions , so they may at times seem aloof or uncaring.</p>	<p>Because ESTJs' least function is Feeling, they may inadvertently act insensitively at times. Because they are not focused on the emotional side of life, they sometimes don't stop to consider or find out how people feel about an issue before making a decision. They frequently intimidate less assertive people.</p>	<p>ENTJs can be unaware of the impact their actions have on others. They may behave in ways that are insensitive to the needs or feelings of others. They can be brusque and critical and can appear arrogant when they become impatient with people. ENTJs are so preoccupied with furthering their careers that they neglect their personal or family's lives in the process.</p>	<p>They often have trouble communicating clearly with people who are not as technically oriented, and they may not be very patient in working to find common ground. They are sometimes unaware of or surprised by the emotional reactions of others. They may be insensitive or neglectful of those close to them. They are especially reluctant to take the time and energy to explain themselves or their ideas to people they perceive to be less competent.</p>
<b>Inner belief and nature</b>	<p>ISTJs are happiest living with a familiar routine and may become uncomfortable or anxious when faced with new challenges. They tend to resist any change if they don't immediately see its practical benefits. They become stubborn or inflexible when they are unexpectedly forced to change their plans or act spontaneously.</p>	<p>Once they've made up their minds, they are difficult to convince otherwise.</p>	<p>Once they have embarked on a course of action, they can be unwilling or unable to modify their plans and pursue a new direction, even if it's warranted.</p>	<p>INTJs sometimes have difficulty operating comfortably in the real world. They tend to spend most of their time and energy in the inner world of ideas and possibilities, and they may be completely unaware of, or utterly uninterested in, the more realistic details of their physical surroundings. Their single-mindedness may result in their being stubborn and inflexible.</p>



Table 4.3(b) The Myers-Briggs type indicator of participators (ISFP, ENFJ, INFJ).

Myers-Briggs type indicator			
	ISFP	ENFJ	INFJ
Mark of the type	Composer	Teacher	Counselor
	General description - Strength		
Leadership	They are usually much happier working quietly, behind the scenes, doing their best as part of a team.	They also are excellent at helping people solve personal problems in creative ways. Most ENFJs are highly productive and organized people who run on high energy. They are happiest when they have a plan and can work cooperatively with others to realize their goals; and they derive satisfaction from helping others find ways to reach their full potential.	INFJs have vision and creativity. They are especially gifted at thinking up new and better ways to help people satisfy their needs and are usually eager to provide whatever support is necessary. They are willing to subject themselves to skepticism or criticism in order to make their vision, driven by their strong values, a reality. They are earnest and exude an unshakable faith in their beliefs that engenders trust and respect in others. For this reason, they often make inspiring leaders.
Relationship	They demonstrate their deep commitment and unwavering loyalty first to their friends and families and second to the few select causes that are dear to them. They are people of loving action rather than words. ISFPs are deeply affected by the pain and misfortune of others. ISFPs are so sensitive that they tend to take on the worries of those near them.	Maintaining harmony in relationships is a lifelong goal as well as a natural skill. They understand other people's feelings and it drives them to make people happy. They often anticipate others' needs, especially their emotional ones. They are blessed with a rare gift for making personal connections and thus are skillful communicators.	As thoughtful, caring, and sensitive people, INFJs will usually go the extra mile to maintain harmonious relationships. They are usually excellent listeners, as they are naturally patient and insightful.

<b>Inner belief and nature</b>	ISFPs are typically the most unassuming and down-to-earth of all types. They are intensely private people and highly selective about whom they take into their confidence. Because they value inner balance, they like to keep their lives as uncomplicated as possible and rarely place a higher importance on their work than on their families or personal lives.	ENFJs usually have strong, value-based opinions that they feel free to share.	They have integrity and originality. INFJs do not like to call attention to themselves and often are content to work behind the scenes. INFJs are decisive and organized, and they like living according to their plans. They are often extremely productive. They like to set goals and work tirelessly to achieve them.
<b>General description - Weakness</b>			
<b>Leadership</b>	They can lose their objectivity and become exhausted in the process. They don't readily speak up in their own defense and are sometimes taken advantage of by others who are more dominating. Because they dislike planning, they are often taken by surprise by unpleasant situations that could have been avoided. Trying to manage complicated or long-range projects can leave them feeling overwhelmed.	They often suffer from a serious lack of objectivity. They may have trouble making decisions based solely on logic, often finding it hard to know whether a particular behavior or action is fair, and may not trust themselves to make a just and impartial ruling. Sometimes ENFJs are in such a hurry to make a decision or complete a task that they discard options prematurely.	Because INFJs prefer to focus on the big picture, they sometimes miss or choose to ignore important everyday details. INFJs' single-mindedness can become a liability if they are not flexible enough to modify their plans once they have embarked on a course of action. They can become so preoccupied with making their vision a reality that they lack the ability to act spontaneously.
<b>Relationship</b>	Since they are highly motivated to help in any way they can, they often become overly involved. In their desire to maintain harmony and please others, they also may be less than forthcoming about negative feelings, holding on to their hurts for longer than is healthy. Because they are so trusting, some ISFPs are vulnerable to fast-talking, charismatic, and unscrupulous people.	ENFJs are prone to idealize relationships, so they can be deeply disappointed when people let them down. And because they value diplomacy so highly, they sometimes trade honesty for what they perceive as immediate harmony. They may be overly sensitive and take things personally.	Unfortunately, their sensitivity can cause them to become defensive, to cut people off, or to reject ideas that don't meet their high standards.

<p><b>Inner belief and nature</b></p>	<p>They tend to follow the path of least resistance, responding to change rather than trying to control or resist it. Similarly, because they don't easily foresee what might be coming down the road, they may become pessimistic and discouraged if it looks as if they have no attractive options at the present moment.</p>	<p>In their desire to get the job done as quickly as possible and according to the way they feel it should be done, ENFJs can become inflexible and resist acting spontaneously, even when the situation calls for it. Once they feel reassured of their worth and of the value of their contribution, ENFJs are usually able to regain a sense of balance and objectivity.</p>	<p>INFJs' perfectionism also can result in a tendency to be stubborn and unyielding. But sometimes in their haste to come to a conclusion, they miss out on experiencing and enjoying the process. INFJs are motivated by their values and deeply held convictions, they tend to take things personally or become offended when no hurt was intended.</p>
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Table 4.4 Job descriptions of participants.

<b>Participant job description</b>		
<b>Interview order</b>	<b>Code # in study</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
1	<b>MG1</b>	Pastor and church planter in a medium size city. Church type: church group with white collar congregation
2	<b>FI2</b>	Pastor in a major city. Church type: independent church, congregation: mixed with white and blue collars
3	<b>MI3</b>	Pastor in a major city. Church type: independent church, congregation: mixed with white and blue collars
4	<b>FG4</b>	Pastor and church planter in a major city. Church type: church group with blue collar congregation
5	<b>MG5</b>	Pastor in a medium size city. Upper leadership in a church group with blue collar congregation
6	<b>MG6</b>	Pastor in a major city. Church type: church group with blue collar as majority.
7	<b>MG7</b>	Pastor in a small city. Church type: church group. Congregation: mixed with white and blue collars.
8	<b>MI8</b>	Pastor in rural area. Church type: independent church with blue collar congregation.
9	<b>FG9</b>	Pastor in a medium size city. Upper leadership in a church group. Congregation: mixed with white and blue collars.
10	<b>MI10</b>	Pastor doing church planting in many major cities across the nation. Major congregation: mixed with white and blue collars.
11	<b>MG11</b>	Pastor in a major city. Upper leadership in a church group. Major congregation: mixed with white and blue collars.
12	<b>MI12</b>	Pastor in a major city doing church planting.

The Myers-Briggs types of the twelve participants are shown in Figure 4.2.

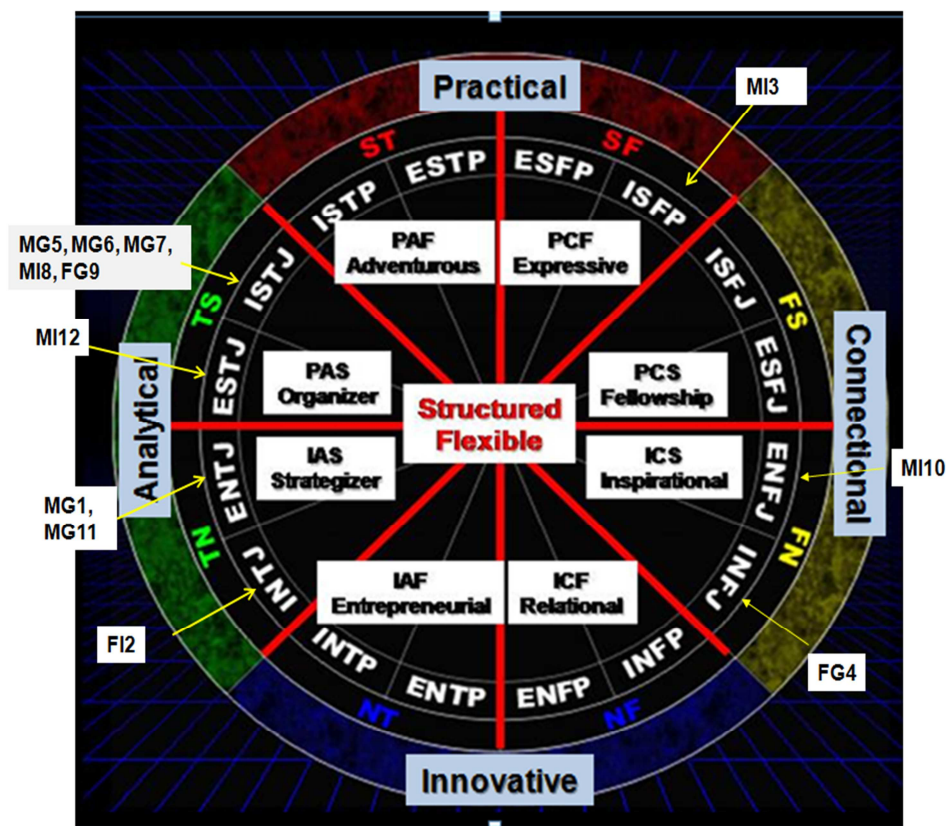


Figure 4.2 Myers-Briggs type indicators of the twelve participants.

### Analysis of the Data

Each of the twelve participants provided a few pre-selected adaptive challenges to discuss in the interview. Participants gave a simple title to each of their adaptive challenges. As a result, each challenge might cover multiple issues. All of these issues collected from the participants were grouped into thirteen major categories. These thirteen categories are different in nature. From time to time, participants presented a specific challenge and that challenge may be grouped into several sub-challenges. In this study these sub-challenges are called sub-categories. The total issues provided by the twelve participants were grouped into thirty-eight sub-categories. Most of the major

categories contain more than one sub-category. All of the thirteen major categories and associated sub-categories are listed in Table 4.5.

On the left column of Table 4.5, the thirteen major challenges are in bold. Under each major category are the associated sub-categories. On the right column are the nomenclatures of the categories in short form. The nomenclatures are used for plotting.

Table 4.5 Pastors' challenges in major categories (bold) and associated sub-categories.

<b>Code # of category</b>	<b>Category</b>
<b>(1)</b>	<b>Church group tradition and its modern day challenge</b>
(1a)	Patriarchalism and rigidity of church tradition impacts church governing and development.
(1b)	Young workers fear of taking authority.
(1c)	Lacking church growth, small group leaders, and training materials.
(1d)	Aging and the loss of young people causes shortage of workers and offering.
(1e)	Antagonism
(1f)	Central government controls local church workers' salary
(1g)	Conflicts of denominationalism
<b>(2)</b>	<b>Conflict of ministry and family</b>
(2a)	Priority challenge between church ministry and family (Priority of ministry and family)
(2b)	Church power struggle between husband and wife
(2c)	Different ministry view between husband and wife
(2d)	Ministry hindrance from unbelieving spouse
(2e)	Conflict related to roles of husband and wife
(2f)	Family physical violence

<b>(3)</b>	<b>Challenge of inner being</b>
(3a)	Low education level causes communication difficulty
(3b)	Lacking shepherding and leadership capacity and skill
(3c)	Low education level causes problems of self-esteem and evangelism
(3d)	Lacking spiritual maturity
(3e)	Lacking faith and struggle with challenges
(3f)	Leadership difficulties due to strong personality
(3g)	Inner holiness challenge
(3h)	Challenge of finding ministry direction
(3i)	Personality lacks leadership character
<b>(4)</b>	<b>Conflicts between coworkers including ministers</b>
(4a)	Conflicts due to temperament
(4b)	Conflicts due to ministry leadership, idea, church structure, and goal
(4c)	Influential lay coworkers abuse power and hinder church development
(4d)	Power struggle between full-time minister and lay coworkers
(4e)	Conflict between senior pastor and young ministers – control and distrust
(4f)	Antagonism
<b>(5)</b>	<b>Handling sins of church congregation</b>
<b>(6)</b>	<b>Difficulty of doing discipleship training – capability and training materials</b>
<b>(7)</b>	<b>Difficulty of doing Great Commission and church planting</b>
(7a)	Lacking church support – money and man-power - and training
(7b)	Challenge of city church planting - lacking support and difficulty of church development

(7c)	Reach out unbelieving world and start church from scratch
(7d)	New startup church negatively influenced by Chinese church tradition of evangelism
<b>(8)</b>	<b>Full time ministers lack salary</b>
(8a)	Salary is not enough, affects family and ministry
(8b)	No salary but serves as full-time pastor
<b>(9)</b>	<b>Minister burning out</b>
<b>(10)</b>	<b>Future church ministerial strategy, goal, value and guidance</b>
<b>(11)</b>	<b>Need spiritual mentor and know how to be mentor of others</b>
<b>(12)</b>	<b>Church hinders young people to serve</b>
(12a)	Suppress young people and do not give opportunity to serve
(12b)	Do not give young people financial support to serve
<b>(13)</b>	<b>Divorce and remarriage issue</b>

The thirteen major challenges are presented in Figure 4.3. The vertical axis of the chart shows the number of participants who experienced the challenge. No matter how many times the participant mentioned a specific category, that category is counted as one. For example, ten out of twelve participants encountered the challenge of conflict between coworkers (4).



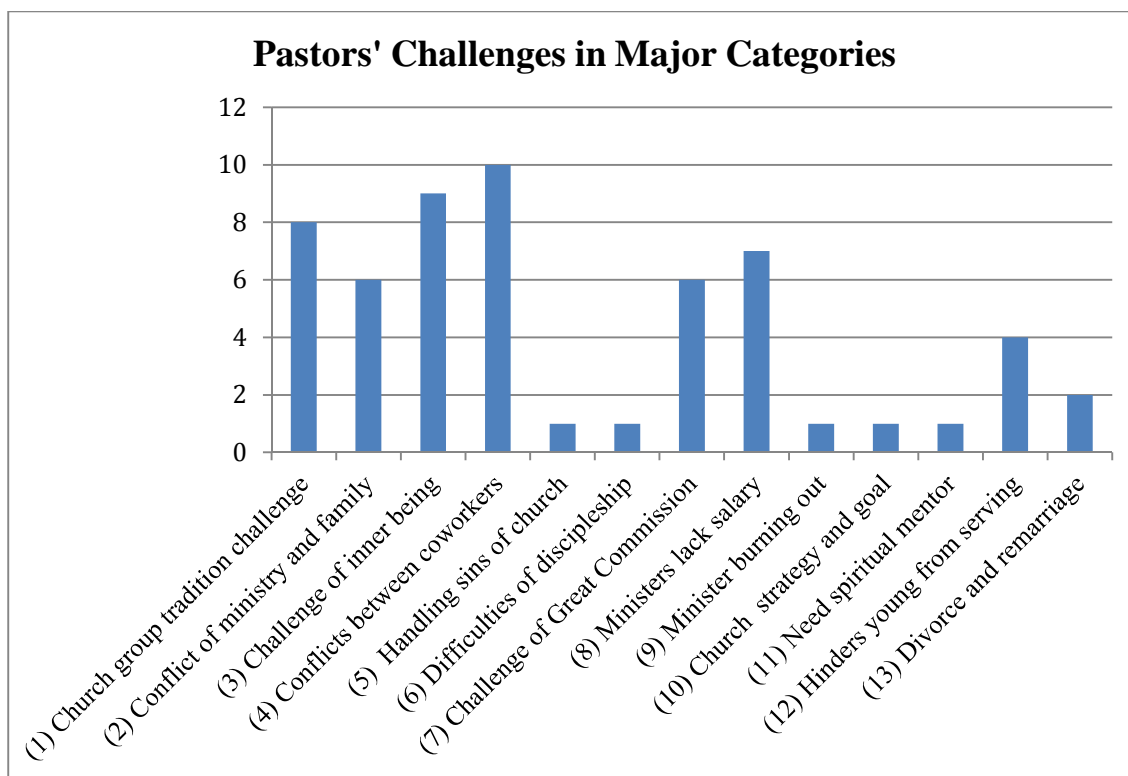


Figure 4.3 Pastors' challenges with respect to the major categories.

The results can also be presented in a different way. If the participant talked about two sub-categories which fall into the same major category, then the major category will be counted twice for that participant. The major category gains weight due to the multiple sub-categories within it. The results are presented in Figure 4.4. For example, conflict between coworkers (4) has been identified twenty-three times through various sub-categories by the twelve participants. With this figure, one can clearly see the amount of emphasis the different categories played during the interview discussions.

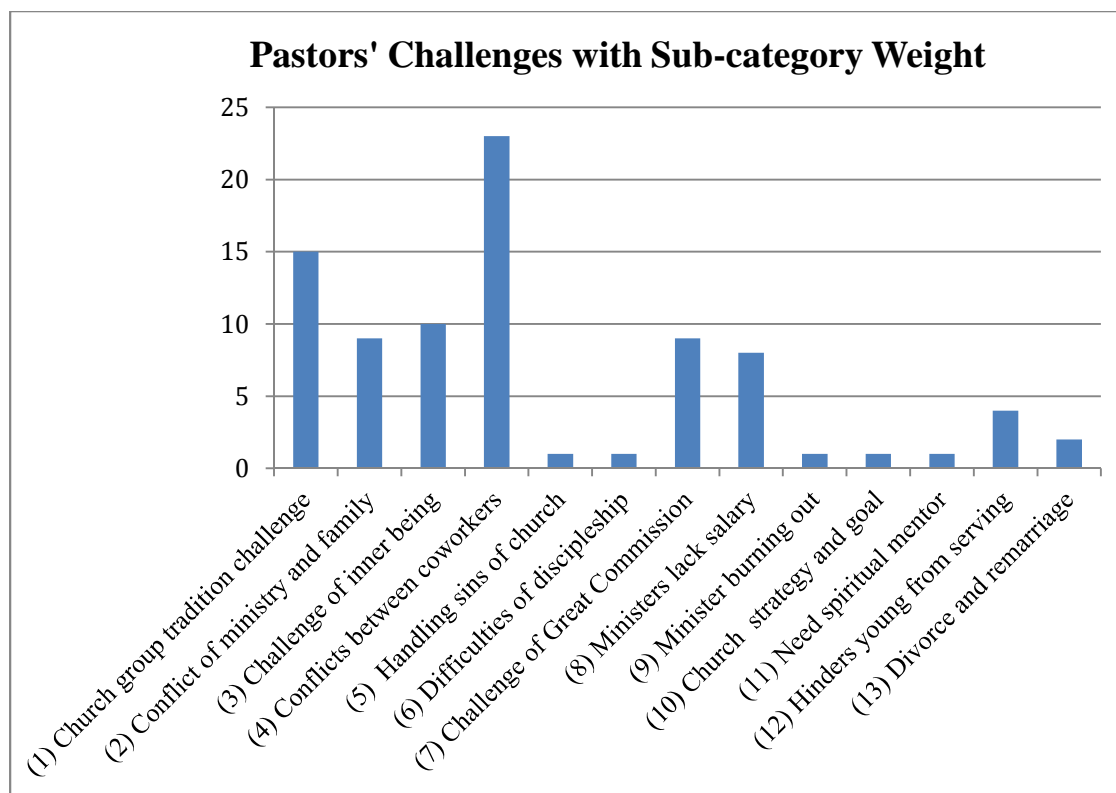


Figure 4.4 Pastors challenge with respect to the sub-categories.

In Figure 4.4, six out of the thirteen major categories stand out as consensus challenges among the pastors. They are:

- (1) Church group tradition and its modern day challenge.
- (2) Conflict of ministry and family.
- (3) Challenge of inner being.
- (4) Conflicts between coworkers including ministers.
- (7) Difficulty of doing Great Commission and church planting.
- (8) Full-time ministers lack salary

For these six consensus challenges, the primary research questions will now be addressed.

### **(1) Church group tradition and its modern day challenge**

Eight of the participants encountered the church group tradition and its modern day challenge. These eight pastors presented seven sub-categories in this challenge: patriarchic rigidity, young workers fearing authority, church growth lacking, aging congregation and loss of young people, antagonism, church group controlling salary, and conflicts of denominationalism.

Nearly all of the participants encountered the challenge of patriarchal power and rigidity of church tradition impacts church governing and development. MG1 explained that the tradition of a church group has its advantages, such as conservatism and stability. Newcomers can follow the existing path and move forward. But the tradition often kills creative thoughts and ideas. If someone has good thoughts and ideas, they may feel that it is best to hide them. People in this tradition tend to work like machines following a pre-set program. As a result, people work in a church group without sentiment. Everyone follows the same pattern. Even worse, it can destroy the gifts given by God to individuals in the church. Regarding the impact of the tradition's impact on himself, he said:

The church tradition asks lower-ranking Christians to obey unconditionally. I have seen many in the last five to ten years. If people act differently from the tradition they are regarded as an alien, a strange person. I acted differently; people treated me as an alien. I was hurt by the tradition. The upper leadership represents authority, lower lever submits to the authority. In church, your words and deeds are tied to the tradition. The church requires my speaking, my ministry style, preaching, deeds, concepts, and my own church governing style to align with the tradition. When I made a change they treated me as a different kind of person, and their evaluation of me dropped from the sky to the ground. My good reputation became awful. The criticisms are hard to put in words. I have been very sad for about six months to one year. I could not believe how the church tradition had hurt me. They hurt me.

He was asked to give an example to illustrate but he paused for a long while without saying anything. It appeared that it was difficult for him to speak out.

The subject was changed and the interview moved on. He was asked to share his strategy for responding to this challenge and why he made such a decision.

He explained,

My first step was to discern whether the issue was a minor or a principle matter. If it was a minor one, I wouldn't try to change it right away. If it was a principle one, I acted accordingly and insisted on doing the right thing. This decision caused criticism and some people were dissatisfied and became unhappy. I cannot make the whole world happy with all I do. If I think it's the right thing to do, I will do it and the good result will change their mind.

MG1 said the church tradition negatively influenced the congregation in the church he planted. The church culture was influenced by Chinese culture and in Chinese culture, in general, if a person with authority is absent; his subordinate will not dare to make a decision for his boss and does not believe that he has actually been given the authority to make decisions. In general, decisions are made when the top leadership is present. No matter how many meetings had been held regarding an issue, the leader with authority can overturn all the conclusions with one word. All previous efforts would be wasted. Once people were hurt by this experience, they would keep silent and dare not speak anymore. As a result, everyone kept silent in meetings and obeyed whatever their leader said.

This challenge impacted MG1 in two ways. One is regarding his supervisor, and the other is regarding his subordinates. He wanted his subordinates to serve in the church with authority given by him, but his subordinates were afraid of using that authority. They were afraid of making a mistake and being scorned. It is part of the Chinese culture.

MG1 exerted great effort to change his subordinates' hearts and minds. Despite the fact that MG1's teaching and training are biblically based in this regard, the progress was not as significant or as fast as he desired. Regarding how MG1 chose his strategy to respond to this church culture challenge from the top leadership of his church group, he said he chose to stand firm to his own opinion and strategies. He applied his strategy this way: he communicated with his supervisor first. If his supervisor agreed with him, there was no problem. If not, he did it his own way despite the inevitable attacks that would follow his disobedience. MG1 responded to the question of whether his strategy worked or not. He said the attack lasted for a while until his supervisor saw the good result coming from his works. His supervisor did not say anything good about his work but did stop criticizing him. MG1 described the top leadership's response to his good work and disobedience: "They all saw my good works. They understood in their hearts. But because of the influence of the church tradition they could not praise my good works in the assembly meeting. If they did it meant they were wrong."

MG1 believes that this church tradition is deeply influenced by the Chinese culture. His strategy is not to change the tradition of his church group. His strategy is to change his own church. He is a church planter. He can change the church tradition of his church group starting with his own church. He authorized his church coworkers to make their own plans and he observes their creativity in breaking church tradition, such as the choosing of hymns used for worship and budget planning. He allows different ideas although he does not always like their decisions. If his coworkers did things differently he felt satisfaction. Some of the church group's leaders could not accept his reformation but others supported him.

FG4's challenge is the tradition regarding money. Her church group, like the other groups, requires all churches to send a portion of monthly church income to headquarters. This troubled her a lot. She was sent by her group to a major city to plant churches. She has not been given any financial support or salary. She was on her own from the beginning and did well during the past several years and established several dozen churches. However, her churches' income cannot meet their own needs. Most of her church congregations are migrant labor workers. The church's income is not enough for their ministry use. The group top leader bypassed FG4 and went to her church treasurer to get money routinely. The church treasurer became loyal to the top leader and kept sending money to the headquarters of the group despite the objection of FG4. FG4 had felt a grievance for a longtime but remained patient. FG4 said the group's leadership believes that if you give money you are doing good ministry, otherwise you are doing a poor job. She believes this challenge has nothing to do with her temperament. The researcher asked her why she chose the strategy of patience in response to unreasonable actions; she said, "This is the way of bearing the cross. I shall be patient. I became a Christian in this group. This group is like my parents. They gave birth to me. I have to satisfy them." Her coworkers joined the group's top leader to harass her when she opposed their choice to keep sending money to headquarters without her consent. The group's leadership not only collected 10 percent of the church income, they also collected some of the congregations' tithes and 10 percent of the income of training. This caused her great suffering. She reflected on this challenge, but the only thing she could do was to endure the suffering and comply with the unreasonable demands.

MG6's challenge is that the church group controls church's finances and their administration. His monthly salary is 1500 yuan,<sup>233</sup> an amount set by the headquarters<sup>234</sup> of his church group. It takes a pastor ten years of full-time service to get this amount of salary. In his city it takes about 1000 yuan a month to rent an ordinary apartment. As a result, his daughter owed 5000 yuan of her tuition loan when she graduated from college. He appealed to headquarters asking for a salary adjustment, but headquarters ignored his request. He had no strategy for this challenge. He explained, "I have no strategy to resolve this issue. My own church cannot control the church's income. We send part of our income to headquarters and headquarters gives a salary to me." Two of his church's young people went to Malaysia to study theology. After their graduation they were summoned to the headquarters of his church group and were told they could not stay in his church to serve. He was told that the seminarians belong to the church group and that local churches cannot keep them. He complained that the church group has no set regulations or rules he can follow. One of his church's core coworkers wanted to resign because the coworker did not want to serve anymore. But, headquarters rejected the resignation. All the core coworkers were installed by headquarters; therefore, headquarters is actually governing local churches' core coworkers. MG6 explained:

The church's core coworkers and the church's pastor are actually at the same level. Pastor is only a title. If I obey the coworkers then everything will be fine. If I want them to obey me, I become a dictator in the coworkers' eyes. Because there are more in number, they are not dictators. The local church has no structure and vision; the top leadership of the group may not know what happens in local churches.

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<sup>233</sup> "Yuan" is Chinese dollar. It means RMB. One U.S. dollar exchanges approximately 6.06RMB by 2-10-2014.

<sup>234</sup> The headquarters of his group is about 1600 miles away from his church.

MG7's church group affiliates with the theology of RPC.<sup>235</sup> The rigidity of his group brought him significant difficulty. As a result he worked like a full-time pastor but was essentially unpaid. For instance, if he serves after 5:00 p.m., he receives no pay. However, most of his services are after 5:00 p.m. If he works at home instead of in the church office, he's not paid. For instance, he needed to stay home during the day to cook lunch for his daughter, who is studying in high school, and send lunch to her school. The rest of the day he prepares his sermons. He needs to preach six times every week and four out of the six have to be new sermons. Most of his time is spent on sermon preparation and service in churches. But, headquarters requires their paid staff to stay in the church office twenty-six days out of the month. He wasn't able to do that. As a result, he serves without pay.

He is not the only one who suffers from the system. There are many other issues like the issue of salary. One young minister told the top leadership of the group, "In order for you to accept the different idea, in order for the church to change, we have to wait until you die." The leadership was hurt badly by this bold statement. MG7's strategy for this challenge is simple. He simply waits for the full scale confrontation among congregations. He believes the system will implode upon itself. At that time, the opportunity for making change will come. Regarding this event, he said, "I just pray and wait. Things will explode. This world is changing and brothers and sisters' views and perspectives renew every day. This church system will move toward an explosion. I believe God will lead to this result." MG7 was asked how he reflected on his challenge. He offered this:

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<sup>235</sup> Reformed Presbyterian Church.



In my reflection, I realize the Reformed camp has many good things. The Reformed theology is very good. We all need to acknowledge this. But the system and structure is not good. It is too rigid. The rigidity has killed brothers and sisters' motivation and enthusiasm. Therefore, we shall keep the theology, but abandon its structure and regulation.

MG7 believes this strategy is derived from the Chinese culture. He said, “(If a bad thing) develops to a threshold then it will lead to a change. When all other choices run out, change emerges.” He said his reflection on this issue came out of denominationalism. He and his wife discussed their future and he said that instead of fighting the church group, they can go to remote areas to serve. Many remote areas have no pastors and they can apply his formal education in those remote areas. During the last round of pastor ordination in his church, he was excluded. Many church members were angry about his exclusion. They thought MG7 was the most qualified candidate in the group for ordination. But, due to the Reformed church structure, he was not qualified. His wife could not accept it, but he was able to move past it eventually.

FG9's challenge is the fear of confrontation with her subordinates. She is a decision-making leader of a big tract<sup>236</sup> in her group. Many pastors in her group, most of whom are male and are between forty and fifty years old, report to her. Her challenge has been the issue of communication with those pastors. Those pastors each have young, full-time ministers reporting to them directly. However, the young ministers have brought their complaints and fears regarding their supervising pastors to her from time to time. She views this conflict between the pastors and the young ministers her greatest frustration. The young ministers complain that the supervising pastors never recognize their work. But, the truth is that the supervising pastors consistently receive negative

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<sup>236</sup> See the structure in Figure 1.1 of chapter 1.

reports about the young pastors. As a result, the supervising pastors have reprimanded the young ministers subsequently making those ministers afraid of their pastors. In order to avoid criticism, the young pastors have gone to other locations to serve and then reported to their supervising pastors afterward. From time to time the negative reports have been brought to the pastors by their wives who are present in meetings. FG9 has not developed a strategy for this challenge and is, in fact, afraid of conflict with these supervising pastors. She recognizes that these pastors are good pastors, which even the young ministers have admitted to be true. The researcher asked her what would be the consequence if she talks directly to the pastors about this issue. She replied, "They will be mad and be embarrassed. But, they will change their behavior because they are good pastors." The researcher then asked why she had not already had this conversation with them. She explained, "I just cannot break my (psychological) barrier to do so." She was asked to share her strategy in dealing with the challenge of her coworkers' relationships and she explained:

Regarding the problems in our church (group), I cannot solve the tough problems. I am a person who does ministry in tough ways, but my strategy can only solve surface problems.<sup>237</sup> The deeper issues cannot be solved.

She said that the strategy she had used often in the past was apologizing to people she had offended. She was asked whether she had found a better way to deal with her specific challenge. She answered, "No, I don't have a better way. But there may be one: I let young ministers speak out, and when they finish speaking, the problem is solved."

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<sup>237</sup> She is talking about scratching the surface of tough problems.

MG11, the next pastor interviewed, shared that patriarchy (家长制度<sup>238</sup>) in the church group is his specific challenge. According to MG11, everything in a church group is typically guided by one man's will and opinion. This one man is considered to be special and authoritative. Usually he is the most senior person in the church group. It has nothing to do with age or spiritual gifts or capabilities. This idea has ties to the Chinese traditional culture, which dictates that the father of a family is the most senior person in that family. MG11 referred to a father in a family as an "old man" and said, "The old man never makes a mistake. If he says something wrong, because he is an old man he is right anyway. This is out of our respect for an old man. This is the fundamental element of a house church tradition." Like FG9, MG11 is a decision-making leader of a big tract. He explained that a house church usually starts with a family. The family head became the church head. The father of the family inevitably becomes the top leader of the house church. Brothers and sisters become the senior or core coworkers of the church. Decision making is tied closely to personal relationships.

MG11 was asked if his temperament influenced his strategy. He answered positively.

I want to see reality. I am also not satisfied with the status quo. A church cannot just maintain its daily routine work. The church needs to be adaptive to this age and fulfill the urban church-planting mission as well as be capable of doing overseas missions. The traditional church cannot accomplish these goals.

MG11 answered the probing question of what factors contributed to his choice of strategy to meet his challenge:

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<sup>238</sup> Literally translated as "household head system." Some Chinese call it "大家长制度." One more word is added to this phrase to make it "big household head system."

The old system had caused a lot of issues and the issues keep coming up. If we don't resolve the problem, the church will continue to wither and deteriorate. Brothers and sisters are losing strength. Now there is another thing we have to change. The church must follow the will of God. Currently, church workers are influenced by inertia and church tradition. It should not be this way. A church leader should help the church to be better, not build up his own power. However, it seems that the church does not want to change because of the issue of power possession and the sense of insecurity.

MG11 made many efforts to reform his group in order to build a new system, but ultimately, he failed. He said, "Unfortunately, I am not the top leader of the group. The top leader could not accept my thoughts and my vision. He could not see the blessing of the reformation. He wants to keep the status quo. It is the most stable way for him." Changing the existing system is very difficult for MG11. His strategy for this challenge is to plant a new church and start the reformation of his church group from the new church he plants.

Another pastor, MI12, shared his challenge of experiencing difficulty with group leaders regarding his view of baptism and Holy Communion. His group's tradition requires a person to serve as a full-time minister for over ten years and have been ordained in order to minister these two sacraments. MI12 was a church planter sent by his group to a place more than one thousand miles away from home. When he ministered these two sacraments by himself, the conflicts occurred.

He explained the reason why he made the decision to minister the sacraments by himself:

The Bible defines a good servant of the Lord and the qualities of such a person. The Bible did not say who has the qualifications to minister Holy Communion. Not everyone can minister these two sacraments, but someone who follows God is able to. It's impossible for a person to go to

a place to serve the Lord for ten years without ministering these two sacraments.

He was asked whether his temperament contributed to this challenge. His answer was yes. He said he challenged the regional leaders to identify which scripture in the Bible prohibits a church planter from ministering the sacraments? They could not answer the question. The leaders brought their charge against him to the top leader. MI12 then challenged the top leader, asking him, “Do I have the authority to minister the sacraments?” The top leader did not reply to him directly. The leader then asked MI12 to let regional leaders administer the sacraments. MI12 replied, “I will not comply with your rule on this issue. I follow the vision of church. I have my purpose.” He said that whether the top leader agrees with him or not really doesn’t matter.

MI12 also refused to give any church income to headquarters. Headquarters asks for 20%. MI12 believes that giving the money is wrong, since the process for spending the money is not open and transparent. The top leader regards him as the most disobedient person in the whole group.

There is a deeper reason which drove him to follow this strategy to tackle his challenge. He is currently doing church planting on a college campus and has a goal for his ministry there: “I want to equip students to do the same as I did after they graduate. Students need to practice (ministering sacraments) while they are in school. I ministered the sacraments and directed students to do the same. After graduation they can do all these things by themselves. After I had this vision, I did it my way.”

Before long the showdown time arrived. MI12 was given two choices. One was to obey all the group traditions fully; the other one was to get out of the group. He could not choose the first one and so they announced his secession to everyone in the group across

the nation. By the following month he was very depressed and doing nothing at home. Many in the church group attacked him for weeks as a traitor. This hurt him deeply. He was deeply sad. One month later, after an intense reflective process, he recovered and was able to move on.

## **(2) Conflict of Ministry and Family**

Six of the participants encountered the conflict of ministry and family. These pastors described a total of six sub-categories in this challenge. These six sub-categories include prioritizing between church ministry and family, power struggles between spouses, differing ministry philosophies between spouses, hindrances from an unbelieving spouse, spouse role conflict, and physical violence in the family.

Three participants encountered this challenge of prioritizing between church ministry and family needs: MG1, MG7, and MI8. MG1 shared his experience with the crisis of life priority setting. During the day his child is in school and his church congregations are at work. But, in the evening, they all are available and need his time, which creates conflict. He explained that the crisis was, in part, due to his temperament. He could not sense the need of his family. One day he came across his daughter's writing from school which said, "My father is extremely busy." He felt as though he was hit by lightning at that moment. His wife also complained that he paid more attention to the church than to her. Additionally, he noted similar complaints from the wives of the men in his church and their children's rebellion. He concluded, "If I confuse my priorities by getting my church and my family out of order, that will be a bad example for church members. No one will follow me anymore."

The strategy he chose to implement for this challenge was to set aside Saturday and Monday evenings for his child. Every day at noon he would also set aside for his daughter and they would have lunch together. The crisis was relieved. One day he came back from a conference meeting held out of town and found his wife was very sick. However, that evening he needed to lead discipleship training at his church. The standard procedure was to pray for her and then go to the training. But, instead, an hour and a half before the training started, he made phone calls to cancel the training. He was very worried about the consequence of canceling the meeting and he made a survey to gauge people's feelings regarding the cancellation. Surprisingly, he found that reactions were very positive. His people wanted to see their pastor as someone who loves his family.

He was asked to share his reason behind the strategy he chose for his challenge. He said, "The idea is keeping balance, which is important. Church tradition seems to encourage imbalance, which is somehow actually seen as more spiritual." He was asked where he got the idea of balance, and he explained that he got it from books he read and through observing the lives of other pastors. He had noticed some of them led balanced lives while some did not. These two groups of pastors living with balance and those who were not form a strong contrast. Additionally, the Bible provides teaching regarding this issue. These factors all helped his understanding. He elaborated on the Bible's teaching: Jesus said we need to seek his kingdom first. The most frequent conflict observed in church is the conflict between church and family. It's not right to set first and second priorities between them. The priority between church and family should be considered case by case.

MG7 also experienced challenges associated with his daughter. Six years after his conversion he decided to serve the Lord full-time. He wanted to go to a major city to study theology, which is about twelve hundred miles away from home. Everyone in his family opposed his plan but he decided to go anyway. He said, “The Chinese church tradition is that if you want to serve the church you cannot consider your own family. For the church’s sake you need to give up your ‘small home.’<sup>239</sup>” Fortunately, his father volunteered to take care of his daughter and he left for school. He explained how “at that time I didn’t have the concept of taking care of my family. I ignored my family and my daughter’s character became distorted.” After the theological training in the major city was completed, he went overseas to study theology again. He learned the Western idea of taking care of one’s family. After he returned home his daughter, eleven years old by then, was in very bad shape. She became rebellious and her school performance was very poor. He made the decision to take time off from the church to spend time with his daughter. Taking off time from church meant he could not leave home for several days to serve churches outside of his city; however serving in the church in his city was fine. But, this decision caused significant conflict with the leadership of his church group. The leadership thought his decision was irrational.

In the meantime, the leadership suspected that he wanted to leave the church group to do his own ministry independently like others who had left to study theology before him and then returned home to become independent pastors. Subsequently, misunderstanding arose. He tried numerous times to communicate with the group’s leadership but difficulties remained. The researcher asked him whether his particular

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<sup>239</sup> “Small home” refers to one’s own family. Church is referred to “big home.”



temperament contributed to this conflict. He said, “My character is such that if I make up my mind, it’s difficult for me to change. If I believe something is right, I will not change my position. If it is the principle of the Bible, I will not change.” He was then asked how he responded to his specific challenge and what his strategy was for overcoming it. He explained, “From the beginning, I believed I was right. I didn’t care if you understood me or not. I didn’t care about your approval. One or two years later, God helped me to see the weakness of my temperament.” He was asked how he reflected the incident in this challenge.

My reflections are in two areas: one is that I must give time to my daughter; second, my churches’ leaders are not united among themselves. The more I explain the more misunderstanding will occur. The best way to accomplish anything is to not give them an explanation.”

For the following two years the church did not assign work to him. He decided to sit in church quietly for two years. In that time, he saw his daughter’s life turned around dramatically.

He reflected on what happened in the past and said, “If my tone was soft and my decision was not so arbitrary at the beginning, the situation would not have been so tense.” Regarding his strategy to respond to the church’s decision of stopping his services, he said, “I decided not to explain when it happened. I accepted their decision.” Two years later his daughter had changed significantly and the church started to understand that he had not wanted to leave the church and become an independent pastor. He took the opportunity to give his explanation to the group’s leadership on several casual occasions. Things started to turn around.

Not like MG7, MI8’s family challenge is salary related. His monthly salary is around 400 yuan, which is far from enough. He has one child. Up until now, his parents

have worked and supported his family financially, but recently his father decided to be a missionary overseas which means his mother would be the only one supporting his family. His mother could not accept this and asked him to find a job and let his father be the one to serve the Lord. This situation is a challenge to him and he does not want to see his mother take on hard labor work on a farm for him. He called his mother to ask her not go to work. He has an idea to resolve this challenge which includes him finding a job and his wife serving full-time in the church. However, he is afraid to tell his wife this idea. He described his strategy for resolving this problem:

I am concerned that if I find a job and only serve in my spare time, the church will criticize me of becoming corrupt.<sup>240</sup> My struggle is that I cannot take care of my family and the church at the same time. And yet working in the secular world is not the thing I want to do.”

He said he is worried about two things: the first is finding a job which fits him. The second one is fear of the criticism from the church. He said:

I think my strategy is right. But church tradition does not allow this. Church leaders and coworkers will criticize me running into this world. I have this struggle deep in my heart. On one hand I feel I should do this thing, on the other hand I feel I should not do this thing. The reason I am struggling is that I am not sure this is God’s will to do so. Because my current pastor job was called by God.

### **(3) Challenge of inner being**

Nine out of the twelve participants encountered the challenge of inner being.<sup>241</sup>

These pastors presented a total of eight sub-categories in this challenge. These include the challenges of lacking spiritual maturity, faith over fear, leadership skills for dealing with strong personalities, inner holiness, service orientation, and lacking leadership

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<sup>240</sup> Leaving full-time ministry and finding a secular job was not acceptable for many house churches. It implies the person loves this world and does not love the Lord anymore.

<sup>241</sup> “Inner being” is defined in the “Definition of Terms” of Chapter one.

qualifications. The two most common sub-categories have been chosen for discussion below. They are the challenges of the lack of education and pastoral leadership training and skills.

### **(3a) Low education level challenges**

Three of the nine participants encountered this challenge. They are MG1, FG4, and MG11. MG1 said that in the church today there are many people with high levels of education. In his church, 70 percent of his congregations have college degrees. His educational level is a junior high school equivalent to twelfth grade in the U.S. In light of this difference in education, he has experienced communication challenges with his congregation. He has used several strategies to deal with his challenges. One is to avoid his weakness. For some tasks he will ask someone who is an expert to take charge. The other strategy is to fully utilize his strengths. For example, he had been educated in theological schools for many years in his church group and in a house church seminary in Beijing. His Bible knowledge and spiritual maturity are strengths which can be used to serve his people. The third one, which is actually a long term goal, is enrolling in a university's adult education program. This study is ongoing. It will take him three to five years to complete his education. He was asked whether his chosen strategies were due in part to his temperament. He answered,

Yes. I sensed my shortcoming. I sensed the challenges in the future. I did this in order to handle the future challenges. I had this thought of pursuing an undergraduate diploma five years ago. But, I did not take action at that time. I did not think of the future at that time. But, now I think of my future every day. I have long-term and short-term goals. However, recovering my missing education is not easy. I need to take many tests and read many books. I need to sacrifice many things in order to get it.

He was asked why he would be willing to pay such a price when his daughter is complaining that she does not have enough time with him. He explained that he has sacrificed many training opportunities offered by his church group. He elaborated more on his temperament:

My character determines if something is important to me. Once I identify that thing's value I will take hold of it and rid myself of irrelevant things, low value things, despite other people regarding them as valuable. Therefore, I gave up those training opportunities, which many people regard as high value things.

Regarding why he chose this strategy, he said he needed to consider his influence in the church in the future. This thought forced him to reflect. He said:

In ten years China will be urbanized, many people will be highly educated. To communicate with the future world I need to prepare for it today. I am a church leader. This world will have contact with a church leader first before having contact with a church. The image of a pastor determines the image of a church. Church should be more outstanding than the world.

In addition to a college education, MG1 did two other things to make up the disadvantage of a low education. He recently passed governmental exams and received certificates of spiritual mentoring for youth and web-site tutoring. He also recently obtained a certificate of a second degree physiological counselor recently. He felt it was worth it to spend five years to get an undergraduate degree.

Like MG1, FG4 has low education level but different challenge. FG4 is a church planter in a major city. One of her challenges is losing church members. The majority of her congregation is made up of migrant labor workers. She explained her church group's strategy to meet this challenge: If churches are successfully established among migrant workers, the whole nation's church planting will be boosted. Her challenge is that many workers came to the Lord, but then a significant number of them left the church for

different reasons. For instance, some of the workers were sent to different worksites, which meant they had to leave. In the past several years almost 50 percent of her congregations have left their church. If this were not the case, she should now have fifty to sixty churches established. She was asked why she did not reach out to white collar workers who typically are more stable. She said it's difficult to reach out to them; especially considering her level of education is low. She had tried to reach out to them but the effect was poor:

I could not communicate with them (the white collar people). We don't have a common language. I have the feeling of inferiority. This is the inner barrier. Whenever I thought of reaching out to white collar people this feeling came immediately. The thought of "What can you say to them?" came to my mind. Then forget about it. I just handed out a tract to them and that's it. When they refused to take my tracts, I felt embarrassed. This is a barrier to me.

She was asked what about her reflection on this challenge. She said she had discussed with her coworker the thought of sharing the gospel with the city's mayor. But when she thought of her limited education, she gave up. She said, "I gave up many times, even though I thought of doing this several times." She could not stop laughing when she said this.

Similar to FG4, MG11 encountered the difficulty of reaching out to intellectuals. He said he had the challenge of self-confidence and self-image. He had served people who were not well-educated in rural areas for more than ten years without any problem. One day, several years ago, he came to the major city – where he is serving now – and he felt inferior when he contacted strangers and people in the upper class. One day someone wanted him to take care of a group of college students, he refused. He said, "I did not

even graduate from junior high school (twelfth grade). I could not overcome this psychological barrier – a cross cultural barrier.”

He was asked whether his temperament affected his reaction to the challenge. He said, “Yes. I am an introvert. My family also influenced me. I used to obey my parents’ guidance. I have lived my life following rules and regulation.” He was afraid he did not have the capability to lead Christian college students. They knew something he did not know, which made him afraid he could not satisfy their intellectual needs. Two years later, he began to study college students and research that demographic online. He learned that the past spiritual revivals in China were closely connected to college student movements. His interest was aroused. In the meantime, he saw many college students lived corrupt lives on campus and he felt a burden to help them. He also realized his nation’s future was tied to college students. He decided to give college ministry a try. There were college students who came out of his church group’s rural churches and studied on campuses in the city. He got them together and found that college students were not as unreachable as he thought. He knew a lot of things that the students didn’t know. His confidence started to build. The students could not solve their own moral challenges and he found that those students paid him great respect. He encouraged them to reach out to their friends on campus and, as a result, many new students came to his church meetings.

MG11 was asked how his strategy influenced him. He said, “I discovered that I had looked down on myself in the past. I realized that I needed to see myself transcendentally. God works on his servant.” He was asked whether he discovered this fact by accident or if he intentionally guided himself to it. He said, “I had no choice, I had to

change. I determined to take the initiative to try, regardless of success or failure.”

Regarding which biblical principle helped him, he said that Matthew 28, the Great Commission, helped him. He explained that when the Apostle Paul went to Macedonia, he reached out to upper class people. This story gave him courage. He was also asked whether he is now confident to reach high level people in his city and he answered that his heart is ready now. He said, “I focused on college students in the past several years; two hundred of them have graduated and twenty to thirty of them stayed in my church after graduation. They became church coworkers reaching out to people in the business world.” He was asked how he reflected on his strategy in the midst of his challenge. He said he reflected continuously. Specifically, he reflected on his student ministry: “If students cannot serve and lead ministries independently in church, then after they graduate from school they will have big problems.” Regarding his reflection, he did not set aside a fixed time for reflection. He did so whenever there was an issue. As he reflected, he sought a strategy to do damage control, to minimize the loss. He was asked how he reflected on his self-confidence issue. He explained that when students asked him, “Which university did you graduate from?,” his confidence rose. He replied to them by saying, “I graduated from ‘Farmer’s University’.” He could not stop laughing at this moment.

### **(3b) Lacking shepherding and leadership capacity and skill**

Two participants encountered this challenge: FI2 and FG9. For FI2, her challenge was the criticism of her preaching. There was an incident which involved two of her congregants leaving to become Jehovah Witness. She tried to bring them back but failed in convincing them in a debate. Eventually the two left the church. However, the other

church members do not believe these two are heretics. Most of her church members are senior Christians. The members of the church have criticized her failure to provide the two who left enough spiritual food, so they “left due to spiritual hunger.”<sup>242</sup> Regarding her strategy of response to this challenge, she told those who criticized her that it is not a problem for those two members to leave the church. In a church, quality is more important than numbers. She explained, “Those two people gave way to Satan.” However, there were always people criticizing her preaching and teaching. Their criticism was “If there is food, sheep will come automatically.” FI2 reflected on the issue and turned to her critics asking them to give her the reason they felt hungry and the why this had caused a problem. She asked for suggestions from them.

However, no matter how hard she tried to improve her preaching and teaching, there were always people criticizing her.

I constantly felt pressure when I stood in the pulpit. Senior church members thought my preaching was shallow. Younger members thought my preaching was too hard to understand. At other times the junior members were satisfied and the senior members became spiritually hungry.

She said most of those who criticized her were the church coworkers. The general congregation would not do so. The coworkers complained that her preaching talked too much about the Bible and they asked her to give more life examples. They often told her that certain pastors they knew were very good preachers. They visited other churches and admired those churches’ dynamic way of singing and worshiping. They criticized her meeting style for lacking dynamics and claimed it could not attract people to church. The

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<sup>242</sup> This is a common saying in the Chinese traditional church referring to a poor sermon which could not satisfy the congregations’ need. This metaphor refers to the church congregation as sheep and preaching as the food for sheep. If the preaching is poor, the sheep become hungry.



researcher asked her how she responded to her challenge. She said she explained to the coworkers:

Everyone has a different way of life. I will not impose mine on you and you cannot force yours on me. We all have a relationship with God. My relationship with God has reached a certain level and your relationship has reached a certain level. Each level reflects a way of life respectively.

She was asked how she reflected on her strategy and how she evaluated its effectiveness. She said, “I did not think about it afterward. After I told them my opinion, I did not think about it anymore.” She said there is always criticism in every place, in every country.

FG9’s challenge was how to lead people effectively. She used an example to illustrate. A leader in her church group - who is a sister and under FG9’s supervision - is gifted in healing and praying. Several weeks in a row she did not preach but prayed and performed healing instead. FG9 heard about it and went to check it out. She found that the report about this leader was true but she did not take action about the problem. Later on there was another sister who loved listening to Bible preaching instead of being involved in healing. She came to FG9 and complained about that leader’s way of handling the meeting. FG9 told her she could go to a place where she could listen to God’s word. Somehow FG9’s advice was relayed to the leader. The leader was hurt deeply. FG9 went to see the leader and explained to her why she said what she did and then apologized to her. FG9 said, “I learned a lesson in this incident. I handled it poorly. Similar kinds of incidents have happened several times after that incident.” FG9 was asked whether her temperament contributed to the incidents. She laughed and said that it did. She said, “All of my coworkers are afraid of me.”

Then she was asked what strategy she used to deal with this challenge. She said, “I apologized to them because I embarrassed them.” The researcher asked, “You apologize to them because you did wrong or because they were hurt and felt bad?” She said, “I saw them keep talking and complaining about me, so I decided to take all the responsibility (and apologized). I told them I handled it wrongly.” He then asked, “But, you think you are still right despite your apology?” She replied “Yes.” FG9’s strategy is “because your feelings were hurt by me, I apologize.” She admitted she is very dominant in the church, but she is still afraid of offending people.

#### **(4) Conflicts between coworkers including ministers**

Nearly every participant discussed the challenges involving conflicts between coworkers and fellow ministers. It is interesting to note that the only one who did not mention this challenge happens to hold the second highest position in his church group. From interview analysis, the researcher found that the pastors talked about six distinct sub-categories in this challenge area. These six include conflicts due to personality temperament, ministry focus, abuse by lay coworkers, power struggles among coworkers, conflicts between senior and young ministers, and general antagonism.

##### **(4b) Conflicts due to ministry leadership, idea, church structure, and goal**

The five pastors who encountered this challenge are MI3, MG6, FG9, MG11, and MI12. MI3 says the biggest struggle he had encountered in the last two years was that his church did not have a direction or a goal and the church was established this way by its first pastor. He said, “The church has no constitution and by-law. As a result, anybody can speak whatever he wants and can set up a roadblock. There is no discipline, no order. The church did one thing this way today and another way tomorrow.” The challenging

problem is his relationship with the other full-time minister, a sister. This sister is one of the study participants, namely FI2. There were two full-time pastors in the church at the time of the interview. The third pastor is studying theology overseas. He said the sister has a strong desire to govern the church and he became her roadblock.

The researcher asked him whether he and the sister are parallel<sup>243</sup> in church. He explained, “This situation is the biggest problem of this church. We are equal in a broader sense, but most of the church coworkers recognize me as the leader.” He said the church congregation and the coworkers recognize him as the senior pastor and no one will think the other way. He said she, however, does not think she is under his authority. He said his strategy for this challenge is to tolerate her. The researcher asked him what factor caused him to choose this strategy and he said, “This is her knowledge and temperament problem. She wants the right to make final decisions. One thing I could not accept is that when I do not agree with her viewpoint, she refuses to come to meetings. However, I still try my best to tolerate her and protect her.” He was asked whether he used biblical principles to handle the conflict. He said, “I did not use the Bible to blame her.” He dislikes criticizing.

Similarly, MG6 also has difficulties with his coworkers. His daughter, along with another student, graduated from seminary and decided to go to Burma to be a missionary. She needed financial support, but the church coworkers refused to support her. Her seminary supports her financially but asked that her church support her with whatever amount the church decides. Helping her would not be a big burden to her church, but the church refused to support her. The coworkers refused because this involved giving

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<sup>243</sup> It means the same status and ranking.

money away. MG6 said, “This is my challenge. My challenge is how to change the coworkers’ minds and views.” His city has a food bank program and he believes Christians should actively participate in social care. However, the church coworkers refused because it involved spending money. Church members are satisfied with themselves if they come to church once a week and the church coworkers are disconnected with society, which saddens him. The researcher asked him, “Can you change the church status quo if the leadership of your church group gives you the freedom to do so?” He said:

When I brought up an issue, the coworkers would say “Let five of us ask our church group leadership what they think.” They wanted to ask the group leadership about this issue I brought up. The regulations for authority and accountability in our church group are ambiguous. Coworkers did not cooperate with me in problem solving. This troubled me.

The researcher asked him what was his strategy was to help the two seminary graduates financially, considering the two seminarians are members of his church. He replied, “I have no way to help.”

In another example of this type of conflict, MG9 experienced conflict between her and her subordinate coworkers. She oversees many pastors, but when pastors did something wrong she was afraid to confront them despite the fact that she is accountable for those wrongdoings. She said, “Now there are many problems among coworkers. But, I still have no solution to solve the problems.” The coworkers she mentioned refer to pastors and full-time young ministers reporting to pastors. The researcher asked her, “Is the relationship issue a system problem or a temperament problem?” She replied:

I think it is system problem, not my personal problem. Issues often involve the problems of brothers and sisters. Those issues include tradition, way of speaking, etc. There are always differences between coworkers. For

instance, a brother preached and said something improper. Once I heard it for myself, I spoke to the brother about it.

Then the researcher asked her, “In your church structure, is this brother your subordinate and accountable to you?” She said,

In our church structure he is not my subordinate. We all regard each other as coworkers. But, he started his ministry later than I did. Those who passed issues on to me and those who are involved in problems are less senior than I am. They respect me because of my seniority. We are good coworkers. We will not give a bad impression to people around us.

Her strategy to avoid offending others is bringing a witness with her. She said, “When I talk with people, I will find a third person to be with me as a witness. I talk straightforwardly but someone is next to me. I am afraid of offending people. Someone with me can be my witness.” She has a third person stay in her meetings with the one who committed wrongdoing so that “the person can help me. Otherwise, the person who I talk with refuses to accept me; what can I do?” She was asked whether she has a strategy which can resolve her challenge effectively. She said, “I don’t have a good strategy. But, at least I have something to think about.”

Unlike MG6, MG11 is one of the top leadership in his church group. MG11 has a church structure (教会体制<sup>244</sup>) challenge which is part of his church group’s tradition. His challenge of church structure reformation is two-fold. One is the reformation of his church group’s structure. The other is reformation in the church he planted. These two reformations are closely related. He gave a parable for illustration. He explained, “It’s like my parents, who have fought with each other since I was young. I was tired of it. I vowed not to fight with my wife after I got married. But, after I got married, I fought with

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<sup>244</sup> This common term used broadly in Chinese house church refers to the church administrative system and the governing system. There is no written constitution as in the Western church. But there is a tradition for people to follow.

my wife anyway, following the same pattern. This kind of influence you simply cannot avoid.” He continued, “After I established a new church, I naturally wanted to be the number one boss in the church, similar to the operation of the church group. All the church development plans would follow my desire and will. Whatever I said, my coworkers dared not to say no.” But, he now has planted a city church. It’s different from a farmers’ church in rural areas. People in his big city are not the same as the congregation in rural areas. They have their own ideas. They speak out straightforwardly and make an impact on tradition. Therefore, he wanted to establish a new church culture and break the tie with tradition. He wanted to help his own church not fall into to the crisis of patriarchalism.

He is one of the most senior and influential leaders in his church group, and he put forth great effort to reform his church group in order to survive in the new age. But, he failed. His strategy for this reformation was to start a new church and go from there. But, starting a new one created another challenge. He needed to resist the interference of the traditions of his church group. For instance, his church group’s theological school sends graduates to his church to be interns. He could not refuse this tradition. But, his strategy was to prohibit those graduates from leading church ministries, such as worship. This frustrated the graduates and teachers of the school. However, he stood firm and let his church members lead the church ministries. Regarding the graduates, he said:

Those graduates can preach but cannot do one-on-one training. They lack experience, commitment, and the capability of doing evangelism, discipleship training, and follow up. I myself was an example. After I graduated from school, I loved teaching. But when someone asked me to give discipleship training, it gave me a headache. I did not know how to do it.

Teachers of the theological school complained to him, “You don’t let our students work in your church. Working in your church after graduation is their biggest dream.” The leadership of the church group criticized him, too. They said, “You are building your own church.”<sup>245</sup> The researcher asked him whether he could resist the pressures placed on him and he replied, “Regardless of what they said, I had no choice. I must resist them and pursue my goal. I insisted on doing the right things. I did my best to keep a good relationship with them while in the meantime passing my visions and convictions on to my people.” The researcher asked whether his strategy was related to his temperament. He responded, “I am a different person from other people in my group. My temperament is willing to try new things. I want to break through. My personality is to create new things.”

His own church’s senior Christians, especially senior coworkers, did not want to change the status quo either. His responding strategy was to (1) bring more young people onto the decision-making coworker board. The ratio of young and old became half-half; and (2) to select a young person and develop him to take over his job. He taught him the strategies, gave him true authority, and helped him in building a relationship with the congregation. For the senior church coworkers, of course they felt a sense of loss. They used to take charge of church ministries in the past. As time went by, they saw the good results from young people’s works and they started to recognize the young people.

As he reflected on his strategy, he saw that he needed to overcome his inner problem, namely, the sense of losing power. He said:

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<sup>245</sup> It implies he is building his own empire within church group, which is a serious matter in a church group.

In my reflection I sensed my insecurity. I needed to face it. I handed over my authority to young people and I have nothing left for myself. Now the young people have established a direct relationship with the congregation and the congregation recognizes them not me. I have no power and authority anymore. My sense of loss occurs. This is my reality.

MG11's reflection helped him in this regard: it forced him to go back to the Bible and there he found true security and joy in God. He defines his ministry success: "New coworkers stood up and served independently; my goal is accomplished."

Contrasting to MG11's high ranking position in his church group, MI12 is at bottom in his church group. MI12 had conflict with regional leaders of his church group over baptism. One specific regional leader has more seniority than he does and felt he should exercise his authority over MI12. But, this obviously caused conflict. MI12 arranged the first baptism for new college Christians and he invited a respected senior minister to perform the baptism with himself assisting the minister. At the beginning of the baptism, the regional leader walked to the front and took his place for the baptism. MI12 restrained himself, but felt frustrated. At the next baptism event he simply did not inform the regional leader and did the baptism by himself. He was confronted by the regional leader and criticized as one who despised the sacraments. He was told he was not qualified. The leader could not accept MI12's view of authority for baptism. This leader invited him to discuss the issue with the senior leader of his group. In the discussion MI12 talked a lot and the regional leader kept silent. At the end of the meeting, MI12 was harshly chastised by the senior leader.

The researcher asked him how he reflected on this challenge. He said, "My temperament is task-oriented. To the unreasonable things in my church group, I would speak out straightforwardly. This is my character. I also thought carefully about the



whole thing. I believe a true servant of God is a humble and gentle one and so I continue doing my reflections.”

**(4d) Power struggle between full-time minister and lay coworkers**

The four pastors who encountered the challenge of a power struggle are MI3, MG6, MI8, and MI10. MI3 said that at the beginning of his church, all the church members had good relationships with each other and every issue could be handled and so that the church kept going. When he became the pastor of his church he faced a challenge from church coworkers. He explained:

Now my responsibility is greater. When I became the pastor of this church I was the only full-time minister. I was the only one who had experience in all areas of church ministries. Before long I was used to making decisions by myself. After I made a decision I informed my coworkers. I am a person who is feelings-oriented. My temperament does not fit a job that requires careful and comprehensive thinking. If you ask me to do a task demanding comprehensive thinking, I will do it but I cannot do it in depth. This created a misunderstanding with other people. This is my problem.

He gave an example. One day he told his coworkers that the church should launch a program to send clothes to the poor in a remote rural area. The coworkers agreed but he did not explain to them how he would do it. This omission caused trouble with the coworkers later. Another example is when he went to the same rural area for a short mission and returned with a lot of tea. He told his coworkers that the tea would be sold at the church and the money would go to the mission fund. The coworkers became angry and told him, “You made promises to the people on the field first and then came back to inform us.” They accused him of taking the tea money for personal use. He was asked by the researcher how he responded to this challenge. He said, “I did not feel there was a need to explain to them. And this is my challenge. I need to adjust my perspective, how I

do ministry, so that I can be more understanding of their feelings. They thought I had overlooked them.” The researcher asked him how he reflected on his challenge and his strategy. He replied, “I reflected on the church’s chaos. The problem of the church could be traced to the problem of the coworkers. The coworkers’ problem could be traced back to the problem of the pastor. I must process this.”

MG6 also has had challenges with his coworkers regarding a power struggle. His coworkers complained to him that he did not give them decision-making power. Whether they agreed with him or not they had to listen to him. However, he had a different view regarding this accusation. He said, “When I gave them the right to speak out, they went in a different direction from mine. I felt sad about it.” He has four church coworkers. One of the four is his wife. These four coworkers treated him as an equal coworker. He thinks this situation is a church structure problem. His wife reminds him frequently, “You see, you regard yourself as a pastor again. This is your pride.” He explained that he and his wife started serving as coworkers from the beginning. Thus, she could not accept that he should stand out as a pastor. She criticized him for even having the thought of being a pastor. He said he was hurt by his wife deeply.

Normally, the coworkers would listen to him on many things. Whenever there was an issue regarding his going to another church to preach, or with anything related to money, conflict occurred. He said, “I have to get their permission first before going to another church to preach.” He shared how the coworkers argued with him, ““Church coworkers laid hands on the Apostle Paul and sent him out to do mission work. You went out to preach without our permission; is this your personal deed or church ministry?”” He went on to explain how three coworkers often said to him, ““See, we three have the same

opinion. Yours must be wrong.” The researcher asked him, “Can you change the church status quo if the leadership of your church group does not want to be involved?” He said:

When I brought up a specific issue, the coworkers would say “Let five of us ask the church group what they think” They want to ask the group leadership about every issue. The regulation of authority and accountability is ambiguous in our church group. The coworkers did not cooperate with me in problem-solving. This troubled me.

Similar to MG6, MI8 also experienced a power struggle among his coworkers but in different type. When he was studying in a theological school – sent by his own church – his church coworkers informed him that he had been excommunicated from his church. The reason: he went to the training without permission from the church. He was stunned. He was sent out by the church along with three others. There was a power struggle in his own church and one of the church coworkers seized church governing power and wanted to get rid of MI8. While MI8 was out of town to study, this person informed him of his decision. MI8 returned home immediately and confronted that coworker. That coworker decided to take all eight churches with him, but eventually was only able to take one church. MI8 became the new church leader, but the one who had left returned and conspired with a senior church coworker against MI8. However, the rest of the church coworkers supported MI8 as their church leader. That ambitious coworker’s plan failed and so he left. MI8 and a senior coworker became the co-leaders of the church. The senior coworker made several ministry mistakes and his influence in the church dwindled. MI8 became the leading pastor of the church. The researcher asked him if there was any connection between his temperament and his handling of this challenge.

At the beginning, my temperament was not like what people see today. At the beginning of the conflict, I should have stood up and spoken out to make my position clear to others. Because I would like to silence the conflict, I handed my top leader position over to the senior coworker

privately. I was regarded by all church coworkers as the top leader at that time. But, I did not speak out openly that I wanted this top position. When the ambitious coworker and the senior coworker joined together in attacking me, I handed this top position to the senior coworker. This senior coworker admitted later he did not stop the wrong doing of the ambitious coworker.

He was asked how his temperament led him to give up the top church position to the senior coworker. He replied, “If we fight for power, it will damage the church severely. I would rather have harmony and unity in order not to hurt the church.”

Handing over his power to the senior coworker was his strategy. The researcher asked him whether there was any hindrance to his strategy. He replied:

No, because the senior coworker did not have influence among the coworkers and congregation. Only he and I knew that the role of top leader had been handled over to him. He did not have a good reputation among the lay coworkers despite the fact that he served the church with zeal and did a lot for the church. Therefore, I was bold to use that strategy. After this incident both of us could not serve in harmony.

He was asked how he reflected on the process of this challenge. He replied, “I did not reflect on it.” He said he and the coworker are still serving together, but that the coworker is not satisfied with what he has now. Regarding his temperament, he said, “I was easily influenced by other people but today I am more decisive.”

In another example of conflict with coworkers, MI10 shared that he was a member of a Three-Self church but left because he believes the church was the Babylon of religion. He established a new church by himself, but his coworker managed to steal it away. The coworker had been his disciple from the beginning. Later on, this coworker joined with a new Christian and forced MI10 out of his church. He said at that time he was a person greatly controlled by his flesh. He was the mentor of his coworker and the coworker was still very immature when they had their power struggle. According to

MI10, his coworker had behavior problems; for example, he had kicked a sister. As a result of the power struggle, MI10 decided to let go<sup>246</sup> and they went their separate ways. During that period of time, he related to Job's experience. The biblical story of Abraham and Lot<sup>247</sup> also helped him to make the decision to use the strategy of letting go. The researcher asked him whether his strategy had anything to do with his temperament.

Yes, it did. I tried to control him too much. Eventually, he could not bear with me anymore. He preached very well in church. God told me not to hurt him. We had been good coworkers until now. Half a year after our separation he came back and reconciled with me. He held me and cried and said, "It is all my fault." I said to him, "It is God's will."

MI10 said that this coworker later established a theological school and that he kept praying for this coworker. The researcher asked him what factor caused him to use such a strategy. He said:

If I refuse to let go, the church members will get hurt. Many of them will leave the church. That particular church is made up of college students. I called them to accept Christ as their savior in every meeting. Every time, there were students who accepted Christ. The church grew very well. I obeyed God's word. I always yield in conflicts. I let the coworker take over the church, but he was not mature at that time. I struggled in my heart about this. Later on he confessed his wrongdoing. He asked me to come back to lead the church again, but I declined. I told him "I will not come back." We were still good coworkers. Today we are even closer than before. Now he is studying for his doctoral degree.

#### **(4f) Antagonism**

The five pastors who encountered the challenge of antagonism are MG1, MI3, FG4, MI8, and MI12. MG1 experienced antagonism due to his church group's tradition. This type of challenge was noted in the previous section concerning patriarchalism and the rigidity of church tradition. He said:

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<sup>246</sup> It means he let the coworker take over the church which he established.

<sup>247</sup> Genesis 11:13

I did things differently; people treated me as an alien. I was hurt by the tradition. When I made a change, they treated me as a different kind of person, and their evaluation of me dropped from the sky to the ground. My good reputation became awful. The criticisms are hard to put in words. I have been very sad for about six months to one year. I could not believe that the church tradition had hurt me. They hurt me.

He was asked to give an example to illustrate but he paused for a long while without saying anything. It was apparent that it is difficult for him to speak about it.

Regarding how MG1 chose his strategy of response to this church culture challenge from the top leadership of his church group, he said he chose to stand firm to his own opinion and strategies. He applied his strategy this way: he communicated with his supervisor first. If his supervisor agreed with him, there was no problem. If not, he did it his own way, despite the attacks coming after his disobedience.

MI3 experienced antagonism in his relationship with his church coworkers. Most of his coworkers are senior Christians. As mentioned in (4d) - the power struggle with church coworkers - his coworkers accused him of making decisions and bypassing them. He said they were right, but that they exaggerated. He talked about the issue of the tea. He had brought the tea back for mission fundraising. Some coworkers argued with him that he did not get their approval before bringing tea back to the church to sell. He said to them, "At that time, if you did not give me permission I would not do it." He said the coworkers twisted his situation, changing the essence of the incident, and accused him of taking money for his personal use. He decided not to discuss the issue with them anymore. He also experienced other similarly challenging incident. The third full-time minister of his church is studying theology overseas. This minister and the current chairman of the deacon board joined together and fought against him. That minister's supporters in the church became antagonists against MI3. MI3 said, "The goal of his supporters was to

make all kinds of hindrances so that I could not finish any tasks. They wanted to create as much chaos in the church as possible. They wanted me to fail in everything. They wanted to put everything on hold until the minister returns from his studying.” MI3 said all they wanted was to kick him out of the church and let the minister become the church pastor when he returned. The researcher asked MI3 how he responded to this challenge.

I insisted on doing my job and I did not give any explanation. Those who believed in me did not need my explanation. Those who opposed me would not believe my explanation anyway. My strategy was to give no explanation. When the minister returned home last summer during school break I made an appointment with him and explained to him; he did not say anything. I invited him to preach on Sunday. He said he was too busy to preach. But he made several phone calls to the congregation and formed a meeting in his home.

When the researcher asked him what his ultimate goal is for this challenge. He said:

The greatest crisis of this church will come when the minister returns; the church will have great conflict. The worst case scenario is that the church breaks up. But my temperament makes me more inclined to perform the role of someone’s assistant. If I serve independently, it will be very hard for me. If I become the minister’s assistant, it would be no problem for me. My goal is to move in the right direction.

In another case of church antagonism, FG4 experienced this from two directions.

One came from the leadership of her church group. The other came from her church coworkers. The antagonism from her church group was noted in the section above on patriarchalism and the rigidity of church tradition. In that example, the leadership of her church group came to her church and determined that the church income’s and church members’ tithes would go to headquarters without her consent. When she opposed this decision, her coworkers refused to obey her and obeyed the leadership at headquarters instead. This situation caused FG4 great distress.

She also encountered antagonism from her coworkers. Her church coworkers are all senior Christians and are between fifty and sixty years old. They were all members of Three-Self churches before they moved to FG4's church. At the beginning of her church planting she needed money for planting churches. Her church group sent her to the city she is in now to plant a church, but did not give her any salary or financial support for the ministry, as mentioned before. As a result, the wealthy, older Christians gave money to the church, but then demanded decision-making authority. She said, "Because they gave money to the church, they demanded to have power to make final decisions in the church." The older coworkers were opposed to the young Christians serving in the church. They insisted on preaching by themselves, teaching, leading worship, and singing songs by themselves. According to FG4, they argued, "What can young people do? They are little babies. When Moses became eighty years old God started using him. We are not eighty yet." In the past she had several theological training opportunities out of town. She wanted to take the training because she had never taken formal theological training in the past. However, she faced strong opposition from the older coworkers. They told her, "You stay home reading the Bible and sharing the gospel with people; isn't it your vision?" She also taught the subject of church development to the congregation. Older coworkers opposed this teaching. They said, "You move too fast, we cannot catch up." They suppressed her so that they would not fall behind too much. They asked her to preach in church and said to her, "You preached very well, why should you go out of town to learn how to preach? Which sermon that you have given in the past could not meet the needs of sheep? Our preaching is falling behind. Your preaching is good. Why do you want to go away to receive training to preach?" She said they don't allow her to



go out of town to receive training; in the meantime, they wanted to control ministries in church.

The researcher asked her why the older coworkers believed they had the authority to control her. She said, “They think they give me money so that I can do ministry in this city. Without them, I cannot do any church-planting work. They, therefore, became my boss. They want to control me. They want to make final decisions and I cannot argue with them.”

She was asked how she responded to this challenge. She said she used two strategies: the first one is prayer and the second is to secretly find gifted young Christians and train them to do ministry and lead. This strategy has to be done in secret. If she did it openly she would get into trouble. She elaborated on her strategy:

For the sake of church education, young people need to come forward to serve. I encouraged them to serve in sub-divisions and lead. The older coworkers cannot reach that far. Setting aside sub-divisions for them is something I can do. I did this as an experiment and within a year young people established ten new churches. Of course, there are challenges with the young people, such as, they could not handle pastoral work well.

She said that as for the older coworkers, when they are given new believers to take care of, they can only handle them for about one to two years. Beyond that they become incapable. But, they claimed loudly, “I am a senior, is there anything I don’t know?” She said, “The older coworkers felt that they were falling behind, but they have seniority in the church. They are qualified for governing anything due to their seniority.”

The researcher asked her how she resolved the challenge with the older coworkers. She said, “I let God do it. I just have no way to do anything about them. The only thing I can do is be patient with them. I gave them up. I do whatever I can do. Even if they refuse to give me money, God will provide.”

The researcher asked her whether her temperament had any impact on the strategy she chose. She said:

My personality dislikes conflict. I don't like fighting. I want to see the whole church moving in the right direction. Despite their opposition, God has blessed me. I insist on doing my work according to my vision of the Great Commission. Every Friday, there are several dozen people accepting Christ to be their savior. Police intervened several times, but they gave up because I insisted on my way. Our evangelism is very effective. Not long ago someone offered his place to the church for meeting use. That place can host three-hundred to five-hundred people. Considering God's blessings, I can endure those oppositions from the old coworkers.

She shared that the older coworkers were mad with her and brought her case to the top leader of her church group. The top leader reprimanded her and told her, "You need to listen to the older coworkers. The roads they have walked are more than your roads. You did your ministry too fast. You need to slow down and wait for them." The researcher asked her how she reflected on her strategy. She said, "It is very difficult for me. I just keep moving forward."

MI8 experienced similar antagonism from his coworkers. This situation was noted in (4d), the power struggle. While he was studying in a theological school, his church coworkers informed him that he was excommunicated from his church. He was accused of going to the training without permission from the church, but he had proof that the accusation was not true. There was a power struggle in his own church and one church coworker seized church governing power and wanted to get rid of MI8. However, MI8 fought back and that plan did not go through. That coworker took one church and left. Eventually, MI8 was recognized by most of the church coworkers and became the top leader of the rest seven affiliated churches. The coworker who took one church away returned and joined a senior coworker of MI8's church and attacked MI8. MI8 said,

“That coworker who left the church before attacked me fiercely. Because I was elected as the new church leader, I was attacked.” After he took over the leadership of the church, the same two coworkers joined together and attacked him. He said, “They opposed me on everything I did.” Later the one who took a church away left the church. But, the senior coworker still wanted MI8’s leadership position. MI8 said, “The senior coworker kept giving me a hard time. The church people saw us serving together as coworkers, and we did our work normally. But, in his heart he is not satisfied with the current situation.”<sup>248</sup>

MI12 also experienced antagonism, which was noted in (1) Church group tradition and its modern day challenge. After several head-on conflicts with regional leaders and the top church group leader, he was given two choices. One was to obey all the group traditions fully; the other one was to get out of the group. He chose the second option. The group announced his secession to everyone in the group across the nation. In the following month he was in depression and doing nothing at home. He fell into a deep sadness. After a month had passed, he recovered and resumed his normal work. But, during that month he had been in intense reflection process.

### **(7) Difficulty of doing Great Commission and church planting**

Half of the participants encountered four sub-categories in the challenge area of the Great Commission. These challenges include the lack of support and resources, city church planning, evangelism in general, and struggles with tradition in new churches. The two sub-categories that were discussed the most during the interviews are analyzed in detail below.

#### **(7a) Lacking church support – money, man power, and training**

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<sup>248</sup> This statement in Chinese implies he is not satisfied with the power he has now.

The three pastors who encountered the challenge of a lack of church support are FI2, MG6, and MI10. FI2 said that planting churches in response to the Great Commission is very important. She had planted a rural church six years ago and then wanted to hand responsibility of that rural church over to her city church, but her church coworkers refused to take it. The coworkers told her that the church had no money, governing capability, or pastoral follow-up available for the rural church. She said, “The church had no resources to support that rural church. I was frustrated.” She said this challenge has nothing to do with her temperament. The researcher asked her what her strategy is for this challenge. She said: “I will wait for the church to change its mind. In the meantime, I will continue going to the rural church to help them, using my own money and time to do the ministry. I do not know what the long term plan is. I do not know what the next step is.”

The rural church kept asking her to help with money to rent a place to meet. She wanted to help but felt powerless and felt that what she was supposed to do was to wait for her church to change its mind.

The researcher asked her what factor helped her keep moving forward with her strategy. She said, “Planting churches is my vision and calling. The purpose of doing evangelism is to plant churches. The purpose of planting churches is to do evangelism. A church that does not plant another church will have consequences: the church congregation will not grow in numbers and there will be no church expansion.”

MG6’s challenge regarding church support was mentioned above; the conflicts due to ministry leadership, idea, church structure, and goal. Two of his church members, one of whom is his daughter, graduated from overseas seminaries and asked for the

church's financial support. His daughter decided to go to Burma to be a missionary, but the church coworkers refused to support her. He has no strategy to resolve this challenge.

MI10 established a successful hospital ministry in his home town several years ago. At that time he was not the senior pastor of his church. Through his church ministry, patients and their families came to know the Lord. His church supported his ministry in his city. He prayed to expand his ministry into other major cities, including Beijing. Through the ministry he wanted to plant new churches in those cities. After two years of prayer, he decided to launch the new ministry. He told his church's senior pastor his vision and plan but his pastor did not understand and did not want to support him. His pastor told him, "It's very good to do the ministry in our city. You did a good job reaching out in hospitals in our city. That's enough. There is no need to expand the program to other cities." As a result, he did not get the church's support in prayer and money. The researcher asked what his strategy was for this challenge. He said,

It's very obvious to me. I must launch the new program. My Lord told me in my devotion through the message of Joshua,<sup>249</sup> God does not let man hinder his work. I am under God's authority.<sup>250</sup> The senior pastor could not see the vision. My strategy is moving on because I was convinced by my vision. The Bible gave me words for the confirmation. In addition to these, God supported me through two churches in other cities.

He then went to Beijing, the first city to launch his ministry. He and his wife worked very hard, but they did not see fruit in the first year. His hair turned white in that year, as he was under great stress. He said God had guided him through many difficulties in that year so he would not boast for himself after he bore fruits later. Eventually, he established a

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<sup>249</sup> Joshua 1:3.

<sup>250</sup> Refers to his church senior pastor.

church through his work among patients and patients' families. There were thirty more people in that church. His home church saw the result and the whole church turned around. All the coworkers of his home church went to hospitals to do ministry. He said, "Before I returned home and visited my home church, I prepared myself to be fired by my church due to my rebellion."<sup>251</sup> But, I was not fired. Instead, the whole church turned around." Regarding how he implemented his strategy at the beginning, he said, "I refused to compromise with my pastor, and I avoided confrontation. This is the decision coming from my vision."

### **(7c) Reach out to an unbelieving world and starting a church from scratch**

The three pastors who encountered this challenge are MI10, MG11, and MI12. MI10 said he encountered great challenges in reaching out to this unbelieving world. The challenges came from both inside and outside. When he launched the new ministry in Beijing, his wife was pregnant and the doctor told him the baby had no heartbeat. This news was a hard hit to them. Eventually, the baby was born and was very healthy. His child was later found to have a serious physical problem. He strongly expressed that God had miraculously healed the child. When they started their work in the hospital, they were physically thrown out by doctors and nurses. Doctors harassed him frequently. The researcher asked him how he responded to these challenges. He said, "I knew this was the work of Satan. My strategy was insisting on doing my job. They pushed me away from the hospital, but I returned right away." The researcher asked him, "Your strategy was insisting on doing your work?" He replied, "Yes. For example, one

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<sup>251</sup> He meant he went to Beijing without the permission of his church.

doctor - who used to call me 'Sir Western Religion' - called me one year later and said to me, 'Okay, you win.' The doctor wanted to accept Christ as his savior."

The researcher asked him how he did his reflection. He said:

Yes, God wanted me to reflect. My reflection is this: I need to change myself inwardly first before I walk out to share the gospel to others. Sometimes, I felt I had a good relationship with the Lord and my evangelism became very effective. For example, once, while I was in the middle of sharing the gospel, a person interrupted and told me he wanted to accept Christ.

MG11's challenge of evangelism was noted in above, in the area of low education level challenges. He experienced the challenge in his church planting among college students.

MI12 was sent by his church group to a city more than one thousand miles away from his home to plant a church. To live in that city, his family needed an income of three-thousand yuan per month at that time. But, his church group gave him 1,000 yuan per month. It was a three-year salary plan. After three years the salary would stop. 1,000 yuan covered everything. Sometimes he and his wife only had 200 yuan to spend for food for a whole month. They lived in a place that was only twelve square meters. The researcher asked whether his church group responded to his hardship. He said, "They did not care." Two years later the 1,000 yuan dropped to 900 yuan. 100 yuan was taken out of that automatically to support the ministries of headquarters. The 1,000 yuan did not even come from his church group. The money was given by an overseas mission organization. At the beginning, the missionary organization gave 1,100 yuan and 100 was taken away by the church group. Two years later another 100 yuan was taken away. The overseas support came to headquarters first and was then channeled to him.

He complained that his church group controlled his ministry. He said, “Whatever I do, I must listen to them and work through and under them.” His church group has a different view of the Great Commission than him. His view of the Great Commission is to bring the gospel to non-believers, to bring new converts into the church, and to train them to be the Lord’s disciples. But, his church group did differently; they approached churches that not belong to them and invited those churches to join their church group. MI12 told his own group that it was wrong to do so. His group criticized him, “You don’t understand the concept of a church group!” The leaders in his church group criticized his vision of planting a church among college students. They told him, “Working among college students is like a program to help the poor.”<sup>252</sup> It has no future. Three years from now your salary will be terminated and you will have no way to survive.” But, MI12’s strategy and reflection are the following:

I started my ministry with three brothers and sisters. It was difficult at the beginning. God helped me and my wife see that the first two years would be difficult. However, the future of China will be in the hands of college students. They will lead the future of China. We got regular jobs. My wife had a part-time job babysitting and cleaning restrooms. Students started coming to the Lord. Later, students offered us house rental money. Gradually, we had enough financial support. This is the evidence God gave us for our vision.

MI12’s wife, who has had several years of Bible school training in their church group, gave him full support.

### **(8) Full-time ministers lack salary**

Seven of the participants encountered the challenge of lacking a salary. These pastors presented the issues in two fundamental sub-categories: how a lack of salary

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<sup>252</sup> It means college students are poor. They cannot offer any money. You just keep spending on them like you are helping the poor.



impacts ministry and issues when serving full-time without salary. The seven pastors represented here are FI2, MG5, MG6, MG7, MI8, MG11, and MI12. Most of their discussion focused on how their salary is not enough and impacts both family and ministry.

FI2 said she is a full-time pastor but the church only paid her 600 yuan per month. The church owed her proper salary. She has been serving the church for ten years. When she was young her mother told her, “Do not consider money when you serve the Lord.” Although she is retired and only has retirement pay, she told the church she did not need money. The church coworkers took her at her word and did not pay her. Later on, the church paid her 600 per month. The other full-time pastor is paid 1600 yuan for his salary. She believes this difference in salary is wrong. She said, “The church congregation does not have basic knowledge of or a burden for the Great Commission. I paid all the expenses of the rural church-planting ministry. Despite the fact that I don’t want the salary, the church should still pay me. I am emotional now.” Despite the fact that she told the church she did not need a salary, the church should still give to her according to her work. She said because the church coworkers know she has a retirement payment; they don’t need to pay her. She said the church coworkers believe that giving her 600 yuan is already a lot. She said her husband is very good and he supports her work financially. The researcher asked what her strategy is for this challenge and she said, “Because of the love of Christ, we continue to serve. My husband really knows about getting blessings through offering.”

MG5 is one of the top leadership of his church group. He said that whenever his son asked him to give him money, he was challenged. He said, “We don’t have a salary.

What we have is the supplement of daily living. The church's routine expenses are very high. The church needs to provide young people a place to live and food to eat." His church provides church pastors and full-time workers places to live and food to eat. Church even gives clothes to them. MG5's church group operates like the early church described in Acts. The church provides housing and food to church pastors and full-time coworkers. The church gives them money to buy supplements like toothpaste. As a result, MG5 is very worried that his son cannot be a pastor like him. His son is from a younger generation with a different perspective of life. MG5's son married not too long ago, and wife is a full-time minister. MG5 worries that his son may not share his faith, instead of worrying whether his son will have enough salary. MG5 felt very bad when his son asked for money from him, because he did not have money to give to his son. MG5 has no better strategy for it except trusting God and praying. The researcher asked him what his strategy for this challenge was. He said, "I encouraged those who do not have the gift of preaching to find a job. Then give their tithe to the church." The researcher asked him another question: "What if he does not give a tithe to the church?" He replied, "If he refuses to give a tithe, that is a problem of his spiritual life." The researcher also asked, "Did you reflect on this challenge?" He said, "Yes, but not every day. I did talk to my people about my strategy." researcher asked, 'Are they willing to find a job and work?' MG5 replied "Those who did not have the gift of preaching<sup>253</sup> were willing to go and work." The researcher followed up with another question: "How was the result?" His response was, "Not bad." The researcher then asked, "Was there any hindrance to your reflection?" He replied, "No hindrance. After I prayed about it, I left it to God."

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<sup>253</sup> He referred to the gift of preaching.

MG6's challenge was noted above in the area of patriarchalism and the rigidity of church tradition. In that example, he said his salary was 1500 yuan per month, which mean he could not pay for his daughter's tuition. When his daughter graduated, he was 5000 yuan in debt. He went to headquarters to ask for a salary adjustment, but headquarters ignored his request. He had no additional strategy for this challenge. He said, "I have no strategy to resolve this issue. My own church cannot control the church income. We send part of our income to headquarters and headquarters gives a salary to me."

MG7's challenge regarding his salary was also noted in the area of patriarchalism and the rigidity of church tradition. He said, "I have a lot of services in the evening, but the church does not count these. The church assigns work to me, but does not pay me. There were many similar cases like me, so they didn't pay." During the day, he spent most of his time in preaching preparation and served a lot. He needed to preach six times every week. Any service done after 5:00 p.m. is not counted for payment. There are seven days every month when he serves all day long, from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. For those services performed before 5:00 p.m., he was paid for his time. His wife has a full-time job to help with expenses. The researcher asked him whether he had any hindrance to his reflection on this challenge. He said, "The first half year after I returned from my theological studying, there was no effective reflection. At that time I did not have time for reflection. While dealing with my daughter's problem, I was in terrible shape."

MI8's challenge was noted in above in the area of priority challenge between church ministry and family. His monthly salary is around 400 yuan per month, which is far from enough for supporting his wife and child. He gave an example of this challenge.

A brother from his church returned from theological studying and served as a full-time coworker. He was single and his salary was 300 yuan per month. MI8 said, “It means his salary is 10 yuan per day. It’s not enough even for food.”<sup>254</sup>

After MI8 graduated from theological school, he started serving in the church full-time. The first two years, the church did not give him any salary. But during that period of time he needed to pay for the expense of a motorcycle and a cell phone. The researcher asked him what his strategy is. He said, “I considered the possibility that my church could run its own business. We can invite labor manufacturing business to our area.” The researcher asked, “Will any company come to your rural area to invest?” He replied, “Our church members under fifty years old can work.” MI8 implied that company can come because his church members are still young enough to work.

Recently, his father decided to be a missionary overseas. This means his mother will be the only one supporting his family. He plans to find a job and let his wife serve full-time in the church. He cannot take care of his family and the church at the same time and this is his challenge.

MG11 said financial burden is one of his challenges as well. When he became a full-time pastor, the church took care of his housing and food. At that time everybody was poor, and there was no problem. Regarding a pastor’s income, the church tradition is summed up this way: “The poor, the glorious.” Gradually, his children’s education became a problem. His salary was 7,200 yuan per year. His child’s high school tuition alone was 8,000 yuan a year. His salary could not pay even the tuition. He had no choice but to send his child to a remote rural area to attend a school. He has seen his child three

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<sup>254</sup> According to the exchange rate of USD and RMB, 10 Yuan is less than 2 USD.

times in the past four years. He visited his child and saw that his child's sleeves were too short, and he felt very sad. He could not tell the church that he needs additional salary. He said, "I could not tell the church that I need a higher salary. Asking for money is not spiritual. Brothers and sisters in the church may think you have a problem. I will be criticized if I mention a salary raise. You cannot mention or speak about it even you have the need." His strategy was asking guest speakers coming to the church to preach about tithing. He said:

I cannot speak on this subject. If I do, people will think I am asking for money. Today, church members' incomes are much higher than pastors'. Pastors appear to have nothing. I have served for twenty years and what do I have? I don't have any insurance. How can my son get married?<sup>255</sup> I feel insecure about the future. I feel dissatisfied for today.

The researcher asked him what his strategy was. He said:

I spoke to the coworkers in a coworkers' meeting in 2008 regarding the financial problem. The church needs to build up a good management system. When brothers and sisters in the church see it, they will offer money. We need to let the coworkers know the need of pastors. The church already knew that pastors need a basic salary. The question is how to set a standard. The average income of a lower end labor worker is 2,000 yuan per month. The higher end is 10,000. The average is 5,000. Today pastor's income cannot even measure up to this standard.

He said it would take time to get to 5,000 yuan. People cannot accept jumping to 5,000 immediately. His church members' average monthly income is about 3,000. He said it will be a challenge for his church to pay the pastor this amount of salary. The researcher asked him what was his reflection and how did he evaluate it. He said, "I did reflection all the time. For example, our finances are not open to the public. But, we can release to

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<sup>255</sup> Traditionally parents will pay for the wedding. If a son and his wife have no place to live, parents will feel it's parents' responsibility to help them.

different groups different levels of detail. People in the core group will know everything. Regarding the salary, we will raise it gradually.”

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of this research is to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors and how they have responded to their challenges in their ministries and their daily lives. In this chapter, the participants of the study were introduced and their experiences and insights related to the research questions were analyzed and presented.

The next chapter will integrate the study of this chapter, the literature reviewed in chapter two, and the researcher’s perspective. The researcher will share his conclusions and offer recommendations for future Chinese theological school curriculum design, pastor and leadership training, as well as a development program.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion and Recommendations**

This chapter will summarize the study of Chinese pastors' adaptive leadership challenges, discuss the findings of the study, and recommend methods for leadership development for Chinese pastors.

### **Summary of the Study**

The purpose of this research was to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors, and how they have responded to these challenges in their ministries and daily lives. Three research questions guided the study:

1. What recent adaptive leadership challenges do Chinese pastors face?
2. What strategies do pastors use to respond to adaptive leadership challenges?
3. In what way and to what extent do the pastors pursue reflective work during the challenges?

The researcher first conducted a literature review involving seventeen categories (four major areas with a total of seventeen sub-areas discussed in chapter 2) that are possible challenge references for Chinese pastors today. This review helped the researcher and readers understand the challenges of Chinese pastors. In chapter three, the researcher detailed the qualitative methodology for this research as well as the use of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) for the data collection. The "spiral" method was used along with the CIT to maximize the findings for this study. The researcher also discussed the criteria for choosing the twelve pastors for this research. In chapter four, the twelve participants' leadership challenges and their responses to their challenges were presented. The twelve participants' Myers-Briggs temperament indicators were also presented.

This chapter will draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the literature review and the experiences of the twelve participants.

### **About the Participants**

Eleven out of the twelve total pastors are from five regions, out of six total regions of China, as shown in Figure 4.1 (a). The locations of their ministries and the Christian population density as shown in Figure 4.1 (b) are consistent.

The chosen pastors included only those who had demonstrated significant leadership in their ministries. This study focused on the relationship between leadership and adaptive challenges. Thus, it was imperative that the pastors have good leadership skills that are obvious to others. Seven participants are pastors of church groups. Five participants are pastors of independent churches. MI12 left his church group not long before the interview. His challenges associated with the church group deeply. It is reasonable to say that eight participants have church group background and four have independent church background. The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test results showed that eight participants are introverts, and four are extroverts. Great majority of the participants (nine out of the total twelve) have analytical personalities (see Figure 4.2). Half of the participants are organizers (STJ). There are only two participants on the connectional side. No participants are from the fellowship style. Most of the pastors with an analytical type personality,<sup>256</sup> namely ISTJ, ESTJ, INTJ, and ENTJ, demonstrated explicit and strong leadership. Three participants are non-analytical type (ISFP, ENFJ, and INFJ). Among these three, the inspirational pastors (INFJ and ENFJ) are doing outstanding church planting work. The expressive pastor (ISFP) prefers to work as a

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<sup>256</sup> See the Figure 4.2 of chapter 4.



subordinate pastor. Although he faced a great challenge in leading his church, he brought harmony and unity into the congregation when it was experiencing conflict.

### Discussion of Findings

The participants experienced diversified challenges, and those challenges were grouped into thirteen major categories. About half of the categories have more than one sub-category. Sub-categories relate to the major category but have their own distinctive natures. The frequency with which pastors mentioned major categories can be presented in two different ways. One is by using the number of occurrences of major categories experienced by the twelve pastors. The other is by using the number of occurrences of sub-categories as weight given to the major categories. These two presentations are in the following figures:

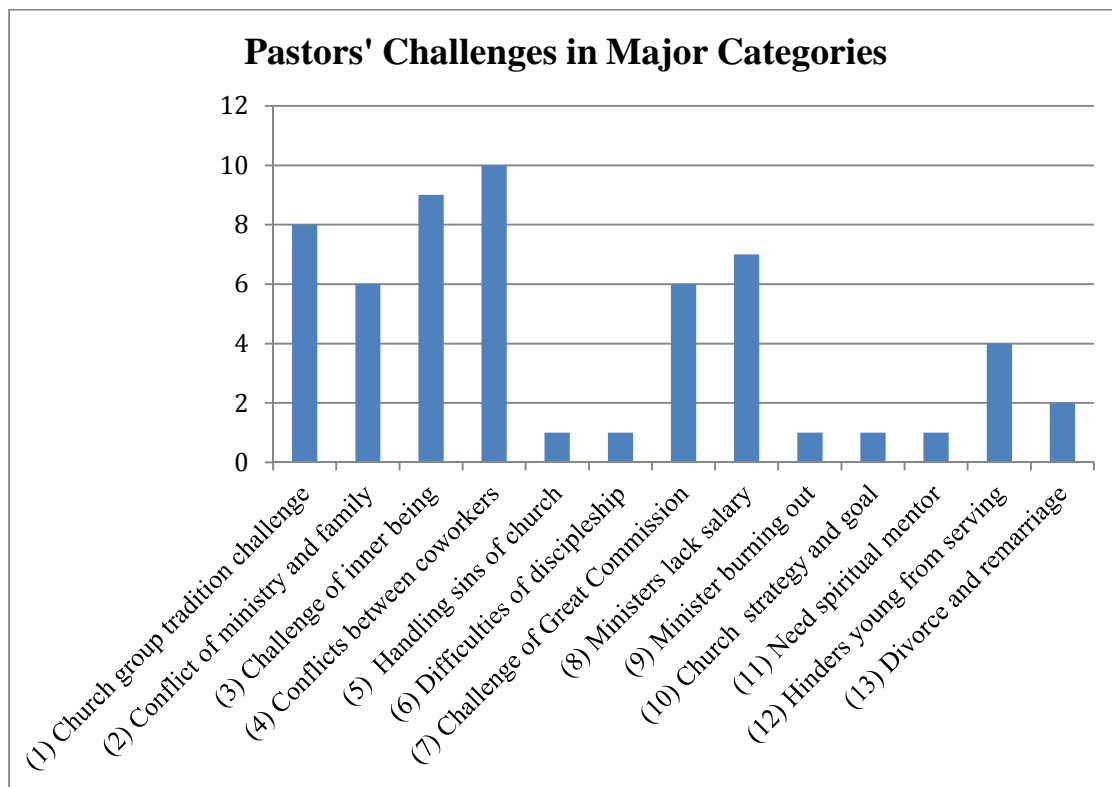


Figure 5.1 Pastors challenge with respect to the major categories. (The same as the Figure 4.3 of chapter 4).

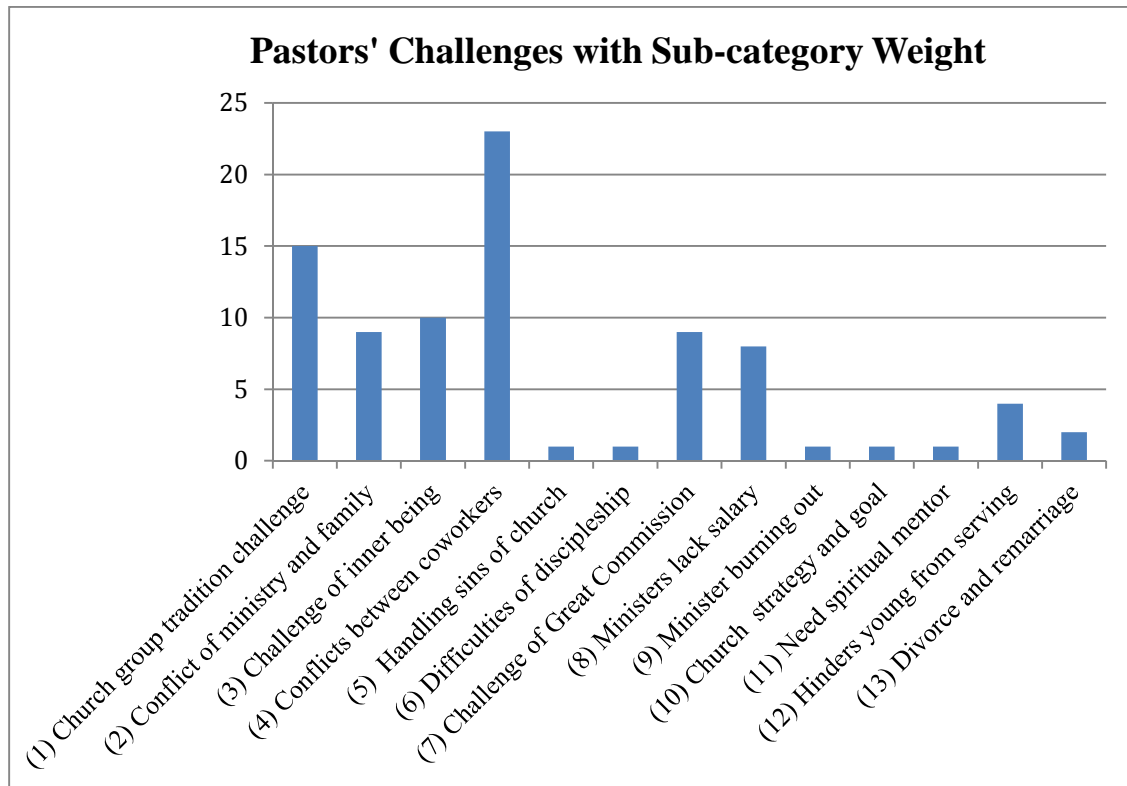


Figure 5.2. Pastors challenge with respect to the sub-categories. (The same as the Figure 4.4 of chapter 4).

Both the Figure 5.1 and Figure 5.2 suggest that the major challenges (1), (2), (3), (4), (7), and (8) can be treated as significant Chinese pastors' consensus of challenges. From the Figure 5.1, at least half of the total twelve pastors experienced these six challenges. At least two-thirds of the pastors mentioned (1), (3), and (4). If we consider the weight of the frequency of sub-categories, (1) and (4) stand out further as shown in the Figure 5.2.

Challenge number one, (4), often involved conflicts between pastors and their coworkers (elders and deacons) in their churches. However, challenge number two, (1), often involved conflicts between a church group's upper leadership and the lower ranking

pastors. Therefore, challenge number one and challenge number two can be seen as church conflict as a whole. As a result, the challenge of church conflict stands out with an absolute consensus of Chinese pastors' as the most common leadership challenge.

Considering the six challenges as a whole, half are church/ministry related challenges, namely number one (4), number two (1), and number five (7). The other half relates to or associates with pastors' personal lives. They are number three (3), number four (2), and number six (8). The challenges' occurrence numbers of sub-categories can be used to calculate the ratio of challenges with respect to the ministry and personal. The ratio is sixty-four percent (47/74) versus thirty-six percent (27/74). Therefore, sixty-four percent (approximately two thirds) of Chinese pastors' leadership challenges are church/ministry related and thirty-six percent (approximately one third) are personal and family related.

The following discussion of each of the six challenges of consensus will be conducted in two parts. The first part will examine the challenges of church/ministry. It will look at challenge number one (4), two (1), and five (7) respectively. The second part will examine personal and family challenges, which are challenge number three (3), four (2), and six (8).

### **Conflicts between ministry coworkers including ministers**

The pastors talked about six distinct of conflicts they experienced with other ministry coworkers and other ministers. The six sub-categories include temperament, different ministry views, lay coworkers' spiritual maturity, power struggles, pastoral seniority, and antagonism. The root causes of the conflict may be related to personality, spiritual maturity, and comprehension of the Bible.

Conflict due to ministry leadership, idea, church structure, and goal

Among the five pastors who mentioned this challenge (MI3, MG6, FG9, MG11, MI12); there are two ISTJs, one ESTJ, one ENTJ, and one ISFP. Four of these participants are analytical; one is practical. Four out of the total nine analytical type pastors encountered this challenge. Three are from church groups, and two are from independent churches. They all experienced conflict with their coworkers. MI3's challenge stems from another pastor in his church who is also one of the study participants, namely FI2.

MI3 is an ISFP, and FI2 is an INTJ. These temperaments are opposite to each other. MI3 said, "When I do not accept her viewpoint, she refuses to come to meetings." MI3 believes that FI2 has a strong desire to govern the church and wants to make the final decisions. MI3 blames the lack of a church constitution and by-laws that could curb FI2's behavior. MI3 is not aware of FI2's INTJ temperament. INTJs are excellent strategic problem solvers with highly developed critical thinking skills that allow them to perform incisive analysis. But INTJs have also been known to take it upon themselves to implement critical decisions without consulting their supervisors or co-workers.<sup>257</sup>

However, ISFPs are usually much happier working quietly, behind the scenes, doing their best as part of a team. They do not readily speak up in their own defense and are sometimes taken advantage of by others who are more dominating.<sup>258</sup> However, the challenge is that MI3 believes the church recognizes him as the senior pastor, and FI2 does not think so. She thinks that they are parallel to each other, a disagreement that has

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<sup>257</sup> Column of INTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

<sup>258</sup> Column of ISFP, Table 4.3 (b) of chapter 4.

caused daily conflict. MI3 does not use the Bible to resolve conflicts with FI2 because FI2 does not like criticism. The conflict between MI3 and FI2 is a vision and temperament combined issue that happens frequently in Chinese churches. Interestingly, this (4b) type of challenge is not one of FI2's top challenges. Her top challenge involves the church deacons. It appears that the challenge from MI3 is easier for FI2 to handle.

MG6's challenge comes from the fact that he has a different mindset and viewpoint than his church coworkers. When there is conflict without consensus, his coworkers want to bring the issue to the church group's headquarters for a verdict. Headquarters often sides with his coworkers, and this causes his trouble. His coworkers want to have equal power and authority with him, and this has hindered his leadership in church. He has no better way to resolve this challenge.

MG9 is a leader who supervises her subordinate pastors. But she fears confronting those pastors about their wrong-doing. There are always differences or issues between those pastors. She admitted, "I am afraid of offending people." She is afraid her subordinate pastors will refuse to listen to her, and she has no good way to resolve this kind of problem.

MG11 has tried and failed to reform his church group. As a result, he chose to plant his own church and to reform his church group eventually. However, he paid the price of building a healthy church by taking on conflict with seminary professors who send their students to his church as interns. The seminary is part of his church group, so MG11 cannot stop the seminary from sending students to the church, but he decided not let students dominate church services.

Conflicts arose between the seminary and MG11, but MG11 held on to his viewpoint. However, there were also conflicts between him and his own church coworkers, who are city people with new ideas. He had to change his own mind and heart in order to build a healthy church. He did it, but the process forced him to deal with his feelings of inner loss. New, young leadership emerged in his church as he tried hard to develop it. His power and authority eroded, and his sense of job insecurity became real to him. He needs to go back to the Bible to find divine security from it. He talked about his temperament as a factor in his success. He explained, “My temperament is willing to try new things. I want to breakthrough. My charter is to create new things.” This kind of church planting is rare in Chinese churches.

MI12 faced conflict over the church sacraments with his region’s church group leaders, who insisted that he was not qualified to administer the sacraments. He disagreed and administered the sacraments in spite of their disapproval. The leaders eventually kicked MI12 out of his group. He noted, “My temperament is task oriented. To the unreasonable things in my church group, I would speak out with straight attitude.” His ministry grew quickly, and he became an admired and effective church planter.

These five pastors’ challenges fall into two categories. One is ministry vision, and the other is interpersonal skill. Ministry vision is critical for Chinese churches today. Leadership challenges often relate to ministry vision. Christopher Marshall rightly said:

Good leadership, however, is not only about having sound managerial skills or a commanding personal presence. Nor is it principally about the exercise of power and control. The heart of true leadership has to do with values and virtues. The best leaders are ones who model or embody in their own persons and practices the values and goals they want others to espouse.<sup>259</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Christopher D Marshall, “The wisdom of knowing nothing: Pauline perspectives on leadership, ministry, and power” *Vision* (Winnipeg, Man.) 5 no 2 (2004) 63-64.

The lack of biblical values and virtues can cause serious ministry conflicts. Marshall said that a good leader does not have to be super-human. Rather, leaders need to be a little further down the track than others in understanding and living out the larger vision of their community or group, albeit imperfectly. Leaders need to walk the talk, not talk the walk. Marshall points out the importance of Christ and the Bible in this regard. He said, “Leaders are normally individuals of above-average gifts and abilities. But their leadership effectiveness comes from their radical dependency on Christ and confidence in truth.”<sup>260</sup>

It appears that sound biblical theology is needed in pastoral training. The biblical truth includes biblical interpersonal skills. Scripture includes plenty of teaching in this regard. Jesus said, “Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”<sup>261</sup> Jesus also said, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”<sup>262</sup> Living in peace with others and making peace among conflicted people indicates a biblical interpersonal skill of genuine leadership.

Among the five pastors, three are still searching for a resolution to their challenges. Two pastors, MG11 (ENTJ) and MI12 (ESTJ), fought successfully against the obstacles they faced. Temperament seems to have played an important role in their struggles. ENTJs are natural leaders whose competence and strength inspires confidence and respect in others. They analyze problems logically and objectively, weigh the pros

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<sup>260</sup> Christopher D Marshall, “The wisdom of knowing nothing: Pauline perspectives on leadership, ministry, and power” *Vision* (Winnipeg, Man.) 5 no 2 (2004) 64-65.

<sup>261</sup> Mark 9:50

<sup>262</sup> Matthew 5:9

and cons, and then make efficient, sensible, and often tough decisions. They are always looking for ways to improve themselves and to increase their expertise and power.<sup>263</sup>

ESTJs are natural leaders and quick decision makers. Their serious, no-nonsense approach to life inspires confidence and trust from people. ESTJs are highly competitive and have a strong need to be in control. They are rarely convinced by anything other than hard facts and sound reasoning.<sup>264</sup> Interestingly, the weaknesses of ESTJ and ENTJ may become their assets in the middle of oppression and attack. For ESTJs, “Once they’ve made up their minds, they are difficult to convince otherwise.”<sup>265</sup> For ENTJs, “Once they have embarked on a course of action, they can be unwilling or unable to modify their plans and pursue a new direction.”<sup>266</sup>

Every Myers-Briggs personality type has natural strengths that can be learned by other types. This is especially true for Christians who have unimaginable power and potential in them, given by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul said to Timothy, “God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.”<sup>267</sup> For instance, MG12’s leadership weakness is, “They are not particularly good at anticipating future needs or forecasting future trends.”<sup>268</sup> However, the Great Commission has been his central conviction for years; almost all his ministerial tasks aim for the future.

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<sup>263</sup> Column of ENTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

<sup>264</sup> Column of ESTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

<sup>265</sup> Column of ESTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the “Inner belief and nature”

<sup>266</sup> Column of ENTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the “Inner belief and nature”

<sup>267</sup> 2 Timothy 1:7

<sup>268</sup> Column of ESTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.



Four out of five pastors in this sub-category are analytical people. The only exception is MI3, who is an ISFP. However, MI3 conflicts with FI2, who is an INTJ, an analytical person. Therefore, all five cases involve analytical people. This suggests that analytical people may be more likely to get involved in conflict than other people due to different ministry views. Temperament understanding is essential to pastors, and many evangelical seminaries in the United States give students temperament tests.<sup>269</sup>

#### Power struggle among pastors and church coworkers

Among the four pastors in this category (MI3, MG6, MI8, MI10), there is one ISFP, two ISTJs, and one ENFJ. Two are analytical persons, one is practical, and one is connectional. One is from a church group, and three are from independent churches.

In the early years of his church, MI3 (ISFP) made all the decisions by himself and then informed his coworkers. Gradually, his church coworkers demanded decision-making power. However, he slowly captured the change. As a result, two incidents caused antagonistic attacks upon him by his coworkers. MI3 confessed, “My temperament does not fit a job that requires careful and comprehensive thinking. This caused misunderstanding from other people.”

MG6 (ISTJ) faced power struggles with his coworkers, as they complained that he did not give them decision-making power, but MG6 has his reasons for this struggle. He shared, “When I gave them right to speak out, they went in a different direction from mine. I felt sad about it.” His four coworkers, including his wife, asked for equal status and authority from him, because they and MG6 have the same seniority in church. For

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<sup>269</sup> There are a few temperament tests which are widely used. Myers-Briggs is one of the popular tests.

instance, MG6's coworkers demanded that they have the authority to approve his activities outside of the church.

MI8 (ISTJ) also experienced power struggles with his coworkers. They fabricated a reason to kick him out of his church and take over his pastoral position. MI8 fought back by giving his top church position privately to the one who wanted power. Eventually, he regained the power that he gave up purposely. During his power struggle, he reflected on what was happening and why. Regarding to his temperament, he admitted, "I was easily influenced by other people, but today I am more decisive." If MI8 reflected upon the Bible's teaching, he would not have handed his power (pastoral authority) to the senior coworker privately. His goal was to maintain church harmony, but he chose an unbiblical approach to deal with his challenge.

MI10 (ENFJ) also encountered power struggles with a coworker. He established a new church by himself, but his coworker stole it. In the beginning, the coworker was his disciple, but later, this coworker joined with a new Christian and forced MI10 out of his church. The biblical story of Abraham and Lot helped him to let go of the power. MI10 pointed out that his temperament played a role in the struggle. He said about his adversary, "I controlled him too much. Eventually he could not bear with me anymore." His patience was eventually rewarded. His coworker repented later and reconciled with him. They have become good coworkers since then.

All four pastors were the victims in the power struggles. Two of them (MI3 and MG6) did not find good solutions to their struggles. The other two (MI8 and MI10) successfully resolved the challenges. MI8 is an ISTJ, and he fought back using his own plan. ISTJs "have a strong work ethic and always choose to get their tasks done before

they take time to relax. They know what they have to do and how to do it.”<sup>270</sup> M18’s opponent also made mistakes in the process. M18 eventually got what he wanted. However, MG6 is also an ISTJ. During his conflict, there was not much he could do. MG6 is part of a church group. Whenever there is a conflict, his coworkers bring the issue to their headquarters for a verdict. The issue is complicated by the fact that his wife is involved in the power struggle against him. For MI10, an ENFJ, maintaining harmony in relationships is both a lifelong goal and a natural skill. But the weakness of ENFJs in leadership is also reflected in the process. ENFJs, “often suffer from a serious lack of objectivity. They may have trouble making decisions based solely on logic, often finding it hard to know whether a particular behavior or action is fair, and may not trust themselves to make a just and impartial ruling.”<sup>271</sup> MI10’s coworker was not mature and had behavioral problems, such as kicking a sister in the Lord, but MI10 handed the church to his coworker anyway. Apparently, God’s mercy turned the thing around. His coworker repented and returned to him, asking for reconciliation.

Power fatally attracts many people, including pastors, but the Bible teaches that Christian leaders must serve. Jesus taught his disciples, James and John, that in order to lead well, one must be a servant first. Jesus taught them that whoever wants to be first must be the slave of all. John Hutchison said that becoming an effective leader demanded a transformation of one’s view of leadership and authority. Jesus spent most of his time with the poor, the sick, and the lowly in social status. Jesus identified himself with them. Power struggles in the church oppose the biblical definition of Christian leadership.

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<sup>270</sup> Column of ISTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

<sup>271</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4 about the “Leadership” in the weakness section.

Hutchison's three principles are helpful in understanding biblical leadership. His first principle is that spiritual authority and leadership come only through the path of suffering and sacrifice. Second, God the Father sovereignly grants spiritual authority and leadership. Third, spiritual authority and leadership are demonstrated through service, selflessness, and sacrifice for others. Hutchison also points out that self-promotion opposes the biblical model of leadership. Any form of power struggle in the church deviates from the biblical model of genuine leadership. All of the four pastors' power struggles involved church coworkers. Sound biblical teaching, discipleship training, and leadership training are recommended in Chinese churches. Pastors need to know their temperaments' strengths and weaknesses, as well as their coworkers' temperaments. Various temperament strengths can be trained to a certain degree by everyone in order to grasp biblical truth and serve in church with righteousness and justice. Proper reflection on the truth in the process of challenges will also help pastors keep on the right track in their ministry. The skill of reflection can also be learned through proper training.

### Antagonism

Among the five pastors (MG1, MI3, FG4, MI8, and MI12), there is one ENTJ, one ISFP, one INFJ, one ISTJ, and one ESTJ. These personalities cover three temperament areas (see Figure 5.2 of chapter 4), namely analytical, practical, and connectional types of persons. Two pastors serve in church groups, and three are from independent churches. This suggests that antagonism can happen with any type of person and church.

MG1's (ENTJ) top leadership in his church group attacked him because he did ministry differently from his church group's tradition. They treated him as an alien and

purposefully damaged his reputation. Their verbal attacks were difficult for him to describe, but the attacks hurt him. In facing the attacks, he chose to stand firm on his opinions and ministry strategy. He applied his strategy this way: he communicated with his church group's leadership first. If the leadership agreed with him, he solved the problem before it started. If not, MG1 proceeded with his own way despite the attacks about his disobedience. MG1 responded to the questions about whether his strategy worked or not. He said the attack lasted for a while until the leadership saw the good results coming from his works. ENTJs tend to "analyze problems logically and objectively, weigh the pros and cons, and then make efficient, sensible, and often tough decisions. They like to work hard and eagerly take on challenges, the more complex the better."<sup>272</sup>

MI3's (ISFP) coworkers accused him of personally using the tea selling money. MI3 decided not to explain his actions to them because his coworkers insisted that he acted without church permission. He disagreed with them. A church minister's supporters antagonized MI3. They worked against MI3 in everything he did, hoping he would fail. MI3 believes all these attacks goaded him into leaving his church so that the minister would become the new pastor. MI3's strategy was to keep doing his job, and he refused to give any explanation. The minister is still studying theology overseas but has regular connection with his supporters in the church. MI3 is waiting for the minister to return, and he is ready for the worst case scenario, a church split. He does not have a better way to resolve the issue. Regarding his temperament, he stated, "My temperament makes me perform a role of someone's assistant. If I serve independently, it will be very hard for me.

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<sup>272</sup> Column of ENTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "Inner belief and nature".

If I become the minister's assistant, it will be no problem for me." ISFPs "are usually much happier working quietly, behind the scenes, doing their best as part of a team. They don't readily speak up in their own defense and are sometimes taken advantage of by others who are more dominating."<sup>273</sup>

FG4 (INFJ) faced antagonism on two fronts. One came from her church group leadership; the other came from her church coworkers, all of whom are fifty to sixty years old. Her church group leadership came to her church and built a financial channel to get money without her permission. Her church coworkers complied with the leadership and obeyed their demands. When she complained to her church coworkers about the wrong doing, she faced criticism from her coworkers, who called her a selfish person. On the other hand, her church coworkers are also her antagonists. They opposed her reforms in the church and tried to stop her from pursuing outside theological training. They insisted on taking important church jobs for themselves, such as preaching and teaching, despite being unqualified for such services. These coworkers criticized her, saying she hindered their power and authority in church. They told her, "You move too fast, and we cannot catch up." She dealt with this antagonism by praying and secretly training young people to fill places where the coworkers could not reach. She has no good strategy for changing the deeds and minds of her coworkers. She said, "Let God do it. I just have no way to do anything about them. Only thing I can do is be patient with them. I gave them up. I do whatever I can do. Even if they refused to give me money, God will provide." Regarding her temperament, she observed, "My personality dislikes conflict. I don't like fighting. I want to see the whole church moving to a right direction." INFJs tend to "have vision and

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<sup>273</sup> Column of ISFP, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4 about the "Leadership"

creativity. They are especially gifted at thinking up new and better ways to help people satisfy their needs and are usually eager to provide whatever support is necessary. They like to set goals and work tirelessly to achieve them.”<sup>274</sup> This may explain why she successfully plants churches. MG4’s strong ministry convictions and work ethic helped her endure antagonism and keep moving toward her goals.

MI8’s (ISTJ) church coworker tried to kick him out of his church. His antagonist accused him of going to training without first receiving permission from the church. MI8 fought back and regained the pastoral position of his church. After the church elected him pastor, the attack was intensified. He said the antagonist and his followers opposed everything he did.

MI12 (ESTJ) also experienced antagonism from his church group’s leadership. He refused to obey the leadership fully and did his ministry independently. The church leadership harshly reprimanded MI12 many times due to his disobedience. Finally, he was given two choices: he must either obey completely or he must leave the church group. MI12 chose to leave because he could not obey. As a result, many in the church group attacked him for weeks as a traitor. This hurt him deeply.

Three of these pastors experienced attacks from their church groups’ leadership. Three of them experienced attacks from within their own churches. FG4 experienced both. Four of the five pastors, including MG1 (ENTJ), FG4 (INFJ), MI8 (ISTJ), and MI12 (ESTJ), survived the antagonism and continued their ministries. All types are either strong leadership types (NTJ, STJ) or task-oriented people (NFJ). These characteristics

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<sup>274</sup> Column of INFJ, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4.

appear to be helpful in handling antagonism. The one who had more difficulty with the antagonism is MI3 (ISFP). His personality tends to deal with antagonism passively.

It appears that the church groups' leadership often caused lower-ranking pastors to suffer. Paul taught Timothy about the quality of a church overseer who takes care of his church just as he takes care of his own house. The Apostle Peter's teaching is also very helpful to church groups' leadership, "Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock."<sup>275</sup> The Apostle Paul called his listeners to imitate him as a role model for serving in God's house.

Kenneth Haugk defined antagonism, "Antagonists are individuals who, on the basis of non-substantive evidence, go out of their way to make insatiable demands, usually attacking the person or performance of others. These attacks are selfish in nature, tearing down rather than building up, and are frequently directed against those in a leadership capacity."<sup>276</sup> According to Haugk's five levels of antagonism, the five pastors experienced at least level three antagonism. FG4 received level three attacks. Level three is called "Contests," because this level views conflict from a win/lose perspective. The antagonist no longer desires to solve the problem but wants to win the struggle. The other four pastors received level four attacks. Level four is fight/flight, where antagonists try to hurt their opponents in some way, get rid of them, or both. According to Haugk, levels four and five can cause long-term impact. Specifically, levels four and five are very

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<sup>275</sup> 1 Peter 5:2-3

<sup>276</sup> Kenneth C. Haugk, *Antagonists in the Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1988), 25-26.



difficult to resolve. For those four pastors who encountered level four attacks, MI12 was the only one who was expelled from his church group. However, he intentionally let it happen.

### **Church group tradition and its modern day challenge**

Though there are seven sub-categories in this major category, nearly all the participants who have a church group background discussed the challenge of patriarchy and rigid church tradition impacting church government and development. Other sub-categories included the six challenges of young workers fearing authority, church growth lacking, aging congregation and loss of young people, antagonism, church group controlling salary, and conflicts of denominationalism

#### Patriarchalism and rigidity of church tradition impacts on church governing and development

Eight participants in this study have a church group background, and seven out of those eight reported this challenge. Only MG5 did not report this challenge. MG5 is the second top leader in his church group, and therefore, it is unlikely he would report this challenge. The high percentage of pastors reporting this problem suggests a wide spread issue. Among the seven pastors, there are two ENTJs, one INFJ, three ISTJs, and one ESTJ, all of whom are either strong leadership types (NTJ, STJ) or task oriented (NFJ).

MG1 (ENTJ) said that his church group's traditions killed creative thoughts and ideas. People work like machines, following a pre-set program. This tradition destroyed the gifts given by God. Church tradition requires lower ranking Christians to obey unconditionally. MG1 faced these challenges and decided that if the challenge did not violate his principles, he would obey it. If it did violate his principles, he resisted it and

insisted on going his own way. MG1 paid the price for this choice. He believes that church group tradition is deeply influenced by the Chinese culture.

MG11 holds the same view about Chinese culture. Interestingly, MG11 is also an ENTJ, a temperament that tends to see the big picture and to strategize. MG1's strategy is not to change the tradition of his church group, but rather to change the churches that he planted. MG1's ministry talent has made him a rising star in his church group. MG11 is doing exactly the same thing: reforming his church group, starting with the church that he planted. His success is drawing attention in his group.

FG4's (INFJ) challenge is also an issue of obedience, with the problem focusing on money. The church group leadership forced her church to routinely give money to headquarters. Despite her church's shortage of money for church development, the church group leadership asked FG4 to obey their demands and give them money. MI12 (ESTJ) refused to give money, not even a penny. MI12 believes that giving the money is wrong, since the process for spending the money is not open and transparent. MI12 paid a huge price for his disobedience. MG4 believed that obedience to the church group is a matter of biblical principle, so she endured the suffering and complied with the unreasonable demands.

MG6's (ISTJ) challenge is that his church group controls his church's finances and administration. Headquarters sets the pastors' salaries, receives the money from churches, and then gives church pastors their salaries. His salary does not cover his living expenses, but the church group refused to resolve the problem. He had no good strategy for this challenge. Headquarters installed his coworkers, so if there is any tough conflict or power struggle between him and his coworkers, the coworkers will bring the issue to

headquarters. As a result, pastor MG6 has to share power and authority with his coworkers. This dynamic became difficult for the church administration. “Pastor” is only a title, MG6 said. He has no good strategy for handling this challenge.

MG7’s (ISTJ) challenge is similar to that of MG6, but worse. MG7 works as a full-time pastor, but the church pays him only a very small amount. He preaches six times each week, and four out of the six messages are new sermons. The church group requires a paid staff member to stay in the office twenty-six days or more per month. MG7 could not fulfill the requirement due to family needs, but the church group nonetheless required him to obey to all the church regulations completely. MG7 said the rigidity of his church group’s system and structure killed the brothers’ and sisters’ motivation and enthusiasm. His strategy is to not take any action. He believes the system will be forced to change because this world is changing, and such a system cannot survive for long. The ISTJ’s weakness may play a role in facing challenges: “ISTJs are happiest living with a familiar routine and may become uncomfortable or anxious when faced with new challenges. They tend to resist any change if they don’t immediately see its practical benefits.”<sup>277</sup>

FG9 represents the upper leadership of patriarchalism. She suffered in this tradition too. FG9 is also an ISTJ. She is one of the top leaders in her church group, and she faces a challenge with church governance, fearing confrontation with her subordinates. The most of the tension comes from the poorly defined job description between her and her subordinators (pastors who are forty to fifty years old). The pastors are not required to report to her or be accountable to her. But FG9’s job description requires her to ensure that all things go well. She feels she has a responsibility to address

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<sup>277</sup> Column of ISTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the “Inner belief and nature”.

wrongdoing, but her fellow pastors do not feel they are accountable to her. As a result, she is afraid of confrontation because the pastors respect her. FG9 struggles to communicate with those pastors. Patriarchy has a tradition of family-style governing structure. Its responsibility and accountability are vague, and seniority is probably one of the most important factors in church government. The senior person in a family will try to keep family harmony. FG9 did not have any good strategies for the challenge, because the system does not function properly. She lamented, “I cannot solve the tough problems. I am a person who does ministry in tough ways; but my strategy can only solve surface problem. The deeper issues cannot be solved.” ISTJs tend to resist any change if immediate benefits cannot be seen.

MG11 (ENTJ) explained that the patriarchy of the church group is his challenge. Although he is one of the top leadership in his group, MG11 failed to reform his church group because he is not the number one top leader of his church group. MG11 started to plant a church in a major city and made good progress. He gave a comprehensive explanation of how the church group started and grew into a big system. He is an ENTJ, so he sees the inherent problems of church groups from a big and future perspective, “I want to see reality. I am also not satisfied with status quo. A church cannot just maintain its daily routine work. Church needs to be well adaptive to this age, fulfill urban church planting mission and capable of doing overseas mission. The traditional church cannot accomplish this goal.” MG11’s analysis of church groups is right on target. His church group’s number one top leader wanted to keep the status quo. MG11 could not do anything to change the number one top leader, so he chose to plant a church by himself and start his long-term reforms from there. MI12’s (ESTJ) confrontation with his church

group reached a climax when a sacrament issue surfaced. In his church group, only an ordained pastor who has served more than ten years can administer the sacraments. MI12, a church planter, has a hard time accepting this requirement. Years' worth of dissatisfaction and conflict within the church group tradition came to a showdown moment. MI12's ESTJ temperament performed an important role, and he realized that he is a task-oriented person.

Through the experiences of these seven pastors, three themes arise: the suffering of pastors, the vision of church group leadership, and the pastoral heart. Regarding suffering, pastors shall try to understand hardship through Jesus' suffering in his time. Mark 10 indicates that Jesus' disciples would participate in the sufferings of Jesus.<sup>278</sup> Hardship is inevitable for anyone who follows Jesus, and Jesus warned his disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you."<sup>279</sup> Suffering for faith reflects a Christian's identity. The Apostle Peter encourages, "Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed."<sup>280</sup>

Ajith Fernando rightly warns, "Doing God's will include the cross. The cross must be essential element in our definition of vocational fulfillment."<sup>281</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez

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<sup>278</sup> William L Lane, *The Gospel of Mark*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 1974), 379-381.

<sup>279</sup> John 15:19

<sup>280</sup> 1 Peter 4:12-13

<sup>281</sup> Ajith Fernando, "To serve is to suffer: if the apostle Paul knew fatigue, anger, and anxiety in his ministry, what makes us think we can avoid them in ours?" *Christianity Today* 54, no. 8 (August 2010): 32

believes that hardship has a life-changing impact on the individual.<sup>282</sup> She calls these “critical events,” and she defines critical events as, “These events are transformative experiences through which these individuals come to a new sense of identity, especially after deep self-reflection that forces leaders to question who they are and what really matters to them.”<sup>283</sup> Gonzales points out that critical events serve as wake-up calls for leaders to look inward and decides what is important for their lives. Gonzalez reasons that hardship makes a significant impact on a person’s leadership and builds resilience. She defines resilience as, “the ability to bounce back from adversity or hardship.”<sup>284</sup> This bouncing back consists of people’s ability to learn and develop their life purpose and meaning. Resilient people see things as they are and deal with reality in a constructive way.<sup>285</sup> The experiences shared by MG1, FG4, MG11, and MI12 illustrate Gonzales’ point. Their temperaments’ (ENTJ, INFJ, ENTJ, and ESTJ respectively) significant resilience helped them survive and even break through this challenge.

The other three leaders, MG6, MG7, and FG9 did not have effective solution for their challenges. Their temperaments are all ISTJ. They are responsible, reliable, hardworking people. But when they face with new challenges they may become

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<sup>282</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 53.

<sup>283</sup> W.G. Bennis and R. G. Thomas, “Crucibles of Leadership,” *Harvard Business Review* 80, no. 9 (2002): 39-46, quoted in Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 53.

<sup>284</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2010): 55.

<sup>285</sup> Sylvia Gonzalez, “Hardship and Leadership: Is There a Connection?” *Journal of Applied Christian Leadership* 4 no. 2 (Fall 2010): 55

uncomfortable or anxious. When they are unexpectedly forced to change their plan they may become stubborn or inflexible.<sup>286</sup>

It appears that church group leadership is often lacking vision in today's fast-paced world. As a result, suffering occurs among lower ranking pastors. Kouzes and Posner's view of visionary leadership can help Chinese church group leadership. The authors present five practices for visionary leadership. First, leaders must model the way: leaders clarify values and forge agreements around common principles and common ideals. Leaders help people think about values and priorities and then build on agreement.<sup>287</sup> Second, leaders inspire a shared vision: leaders tell their people to imagine an exciting, highly attractive future. Third, leaders challenge the process: leaders encourage people to change from the status quo. Leaders pioneer. Their major contribution is in creating a climate for experimentation. Fourth, leaders enable others to act: leaders strengthen everyone's capacity. They make people feel and think that they are owners and leaders. Fifth, leaders encourage the heart: a leader recognizes contributions and shows appreciation for the people's contributions. The third and fourth practices are especially important and crucial for the leaders in church groups. Their traditional practices appear to be just the opposite.

From the beginning of any church group's development, the church group's leadership most likely does not utilize Kouzes and Posner's idea of visionary leadership. A proactive approach would have a leadership training program for church groups across China. All sixteen Myers-Briggs types of leaders are trainable. In Kouzes and Posner's

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<sup>286</sup> Column of ISTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "leadership" and "Inner belief and nature."

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 65.

research, they found that the quality of being forward-looking was at the top of the admirable leadership list, second only to honesty. This forward-looking quality is also called “vision” and is defined as:

A little more than 70 percent of our most recent respondents selected the ability to look ahead as one of their most sought-after leadership traits. People expect leaders to have a sense of direction and a concern for the future of the organization....leader must know where they’re going if they expect others to willingly join them on the journey....It’s the ability to imagine or discover a desirable destination toward which the company, agency, congregation, or community should head. Vision reveals the beckoning summit that provides others with the capacity to chart their course toward future.<sup>288</sup>

The key factor of the success of MG1, FG4, MG11, and MI12 are their forward-looking ability. MG1 trains his subordinates to serve with authority. He wants his church’s coworkers to take up the responsibility of leadership. He believes that this is the way to transform his church group’s patriarchalism. FG4 believes that developing young people to serve without senior coworkers’ interference is the future of her church. She implemented and got good results. MG11 and MI12 believe that college student ministry is the future of their churches. They both developed young people by training them to serve. As a result they established good ministries. These four pastors’ forward looking practice helped them break through their adaptive challenges.

### **Difficulty of doing Great Commission and church planting**

There are four sub-categories in this major category involving half of the twelve participants. The four sub-categories included lacking church support, challenge of city church planting, reaching out to unbelieving world, and new church struggling against tradition.

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<sup>288</sup> Ibid., 33.



Lacking church support – money, man power, and training

Three pastors reported this challenge (MI2, MG6, and MI10). There is one INTJ, one ISTJ, and one ENFJ. MI2 (INTJ) planted a rural church six years ago. Her church coworkers refused to support this ministry because of a lack of money. MI2 is frustrated, because she believes this ministry is in response to the great commission. As a result, MI2 is planting the church using her own money. Her strategy is to wait for her church to change its mind. The rural church needed to rent a place to meet and asked her to help. In China, a church needs to put down a yearly rental fee at the beginning of its rental term. This need is beyond the capability of MI2. Meeting places are a challenge for church planting across China. Renting an ordinary apartment in a major city can cost 15,000 to 40,000 Chinese dollars per year. In rural areas, the cost is less, but people's income is lower. MI2 believes that without church planting, her own church will not grow. However, her church coworkers do not share her vision. On the other hand, INTJs communicate poorly with people. They also may not be very patient in working to find common ground. Temperament appears to be one of the important factors hindering MI2 from gathering church support.

MG6's (ISTJ) challenge is similar to that of MI2. His church coworkers refused to give financial help to missionaries in overseas ministry. Like MI2, MG6 has no strategy to resolve the problem. MI10 (ENFJ) has a similar challenge to that of MI2 and MG6. He wanted to plant churches in different cities. He needs financial support, but his church opposed it. However, he moved on without help from his church. Instead, Christians in a remote city and an established church helped him through their hospital ministry. MI10's perseverance and faith bore fruit. His good ministry results turned his home church

around completely. MI10's home church began actively participating in the hospital ministry. His ENFJ temperament may have helped MI10 to overcome this obstacle. ENFJs "are excellent at helping people solve personal problems in creative ways"<sup>289</sup> and "usually have strong, value-based opinions that they feel free to share."<sup>290</sup> Most ENFJs are "highly productive and organized people who run on high energy."<sup>291</sup>

Jesus commissioned church planting when he commanded his disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."<sup>292</sup> Therefore, churches around the world must prioritize the Great Commission. Chinese churches used to pursue the Great Commission with zeal, but now however, Chinese churches appear to face difficulties in evangelism and church planting because China is quickly changing into a modern nation. Christians became disengaged from the world in the midst of various kinds of internal church challenges. The challenges are mostly systemic issues, not personal conviction issues about the Great Commission.

#### Reaching out to unbelieving world and start church from scratch

Three pastors reported this challenge (MI10, MG11, and MI12). There is one ENFJ, one ENTJ, and one ESTJ.

MI10 (ENFJ) encountered challenges from two fronts when he was doing evangelistic work in a city away from home. First, his child faced a serious sickness, and

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<sup>289</sup> Column of INFJ, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4 about the "Leadership".

<sup>290</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4 about the "Inner belief and nature".

<sup>291</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(b) of chapter 4 about the "Leadership"

<sup>292</sup> Matthew 28:19-20

second, hospital personnel strongly opposed and harassed him for reaching out to patients. MI10 believes that all these hindrances were Satan's work. His perseverance eventually bore fruit. MI10 shared about his difficulties, "God wanted me to reflect. I need to change myself inwardly first before I walk out to share gospel to others." Inward holiness is the most important thing in MI10's life and ministry. Through it, God does miraculous work to establish new churches.

MG11's (ENTJ) challenges in evangelism were from his inner life struggle. MG11's low-level education hindered his evangelistic work in the city until he worked among college students who came from church families living in rural areas. That successful experience with college students eventually helped him overcome his inner fear of white-collar people. He was surprised that college students looked up to him as a spiritual leader. His low-level education is really irreverent, because the college students found that he had many things they did not have. MG11 can really provide help to college students in how to live abundantly in this world. MG11's self-confidence increased greatly.

MI12 (ESTJ) also encountered challenges from two fronts. First, he lacked financial support, and his church group opposed paying him more. His wife supplements their income with janitorial work because the salary from his church group is far from enough. Second, the church group's church planting policy conflicts with his convictions. MI12's church group's policy requires him to join a local church outside of their church group. MI12 would then work in the local church as a coworker, and he would eventually take over that church and bring that church into his own church group. That local church would then have to give twenty percent of its monthly income to his church group's

headquarters. MG12 opposes that policy and believes it is wrong. The church group ordered him to obey completely, but MG12 refused. His church group also opposed his church planting among college students because college students are poor, and they believe that there is nothing to be gained by working among college students. MG12 refused. His education level is elementary school, but it is not a problem for him. MG12 persevered and worked hard with his wife, eventually establishing a healthy college church, but he paid a price for it. His church group eventually kicked him out of the group, and many people in his church group criticized him as a traitor.

These three pastors' temperaments may play an important role in the struggles and hardships they face in their church planting ministry. ENFJs,

...usually have strong, value-based opinions that they feel free to share. They understand other people's feelings and drive them to make people happy. Most ENFJs are highly productive and organized people who run on high energy.<sup>293</sup> ENTJs are natural leaders whose competence and strength inspires confidence and respect in others. They like to work hard and eagerly take on challenges, the more complex the better.<sup>294</sup> ESTJs are natural leaders and quick decision makers. Their serious, no-nonsense approach to life inspires confidence and trust in the people. ESTJs are highly competitive and have a strong need to be in control. They are rarely convinced by anything other than hard facts and sound reasoning.<sup>295</sup>

The three pastors who experienced this challenge have strong convictions about fulfilling the Great Commission. They plant churches as their major ministry. As Jesus warned, there will be costs involved in fulfilling the Great Commission. A person's enemies will be those of his own household. There is no surprise that these three pastors encountered challenges from this unbelieving world and from their own churches.

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<sup>293</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "Leadership".

<sup>294</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "Inner being and nature".

<sup>295</sup> Column of ESTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "Inner being and nature".

The three pastors have strong conviction for the Gospel of Jesus and their calling. The Great Commission is given to the disciples of Jesus, namely all Christians. Therefore the strong conviction can be developed through training and coaching for all Christians. As a result, the applied theology shall be given much more attention in the conventional seminary programs in China and outside of China.

### **Personal and family challenge of inner being**

The challenges experienced by pastors are diverse. There are eight different challenges to a pastor's inner being that the participants discussed. This suggests a complex model of inner challenges. The six issues of minor participant discussion include the challenges of lacking spiritual maturity, faith over fear, leadership skills for dealing with strong personalities, inner holiness, service orientation, and lacking leadership qualifications. The more often mentioned challenges for the participants were low education level and lacking pastoral skills of leadership and shepherding. Only the challenge of low education level involves a heavily environmental issue. The other seven are more spiritual issues.

The importance of this inner being challenge lies in the diversity of answers. However, the following two selected challenges were used to illustrate pastors' struggles in this regard. The other six sub-categories should be included in the future pastors' leadership training and development.

#### **Low education level challenges**

Low education level challenges cause communication, self-esteem, and evangelism difficulties. MG1 (ENTJ) experienced communication challenges with his congregation. Seventy percent of his congregation has a college degree, and he has a

junior high school diploma. MG1 also sensed the challenges of low education for the future. His strategy has in three parts. First, he avoids his weakness by assigning qualified church people to do certain church work. Second, MG1 maximizes his strength, namely his good seminary training. Third, he has a long-term strategy to increase his education level. MG1 is investing five years into studying for a bachelor's degree. He explained how his temperament led him to pay such high price to pursue education. He shared, "In my character, I will grasp something important to me. Once I identify their values I will grasp them and get rid of irrelevant things." He set his eyes on future ministry. In ten years, through the ongoing urbanization and modernization, many people will be highly educated, so he needs to catch up. MG1 has struggled to divide his time between ministry and family, and now he is willing to set aside time for education.

FG4 (INFJ) is planting blue-collar churches. She does not have the same concerns as MG1. How China will be changed in the future is not her major concern. However, the high turnover rate for members of her church who work in labor worries FG4. To solve this problem, FG4 needs to reach out to white-collar people in her city. Her low education level became a great mental obstacle to her. FG4 tried to reach out to white-collar people several times but failed. She had no strategy for resolving this issue.

A lack of self-confidence challenges MG11 due to his low education level. This problem surfaced when he moved from a rural area to a city, doing urban church planting ministry. MG11 regained his confidence when he started doing college ministry. His sound theological school training and teaching experiences earned great respect from the college students. This surprised him greatly. This effect was also observed in MG1. MG1

has very sound seminary education. However, FG4 did not have any formal theological school training.

MG1 experienced this challenge, but he has an effective strategy to resolve this issue. He uses capable people to do church ministries. He also set goals and strategy to get more education for himself. His ENTJ temperament may reveal the reason why he chose this response for his challenge. ENTJs “are always looking for ways to improve themselves and increase their expertise and power. They like to work hard and eagerly take on challenges, the more complex the better.”<sup>296</sup>

Not all pastors with low education levels experienced this challenge. MI12 is a good example. He graduated from elementary school, but his college church members are either undergraduates or graduate students. He is a fully respected and influential pastor in the church. His high self-esteem and confidence are evident and explicit.

ESTJs’ leadership strength may be a help for MI12. He does not allow a lack of education to be a hindrance to his ministry. ESTJs’ “have serious no-nonsense approach to life inspires confidence and trust in the people with whom they live and work” and they “are highly competitive and have strong need to be in control.”<sup>297</sup> It is possible that the strengths of ESTJ, ENTJ and ENFP can be learned by other types of Christians, through the power of the Holy Spirit, who is working for the growth of the Kingdom of God. This learning can be planned as an important part of leadership training.

Low education level was not an issue when the scripture was written. It is a modern day issue, especially in China. Nonetheless, the challenge should not be

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<sup>296</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the “Inner being and nature”.

<sup>297</sup> Column of ESTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the “leadership”

overlooked. However, in the cases of MG1 and MG11, Bible knowledge and spiritual maturity can trump the lack of education. The Apostle Paul taught Timothy, “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work.”<sup>298</sup> He suggests that the Bible has the essential answers for Christians’ lives. MG11’s experience is a good model for all pastors with a low education level. This experience can be learned by others through proper training.

Compared to the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus’ and the apostles’ education levels were low. In God’s kingdom, the Holy Spirit is the true hero who does all the effective works. Challenge may be handled in different ways effectively.

#### Lacking shepherding and leadership skill

The two pastors who reported this challenge are INTJ and ISTJ type personalities. FI2 received a lot of troubling criticism for her preaching. Her church coworkers blamed her when people left the church claiming that it was because of her poor preaching and teaching. They also criticized her worship style as too rigid and static. Under such pressure, her strategy was to tell her coworker straightforwardly, “Everyone has different way of life. I will not impose mine on you, and you cannot force yours on me. We all have relation with God. My relationship with God reached a certain level, and your relationship reached a certain level. Each level reflects a way of life respectively.” Most of her coworkers are senior. When reflecting upon her strategy, she reflected, “I did not think about it afterward. After I told them my opinion, I did not think about it anymore.” She said there is always criticism in every place, in every country anyway.

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<sup>298</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16-17



Her response is a typical INTJ's response. F12's strategy did not work well. She constantly faces similar challenges in her church. Regarding INTJs,

They often have trouble communicating clearly with people who are not as technically oriented, and they may not be very patient in working to find common ground. They may be insensitive or neglectful of those close to them. They are especially reluctant to take the time and energy to explain themselves or their ideas to people they perceive to be less competent.<sup>299</sup>

FG9's (ISTJ) challenge is how to lead people effectively. When she hurt her coworker by saying some words that sounded logical and reasonable, FG9 did not discover the hurt until several weeks later. She admitted, "I learned a lesson in this incident. I handled it poorly. Similar kinds of incidents have happened several times after that incident." As a result, she spoke more sensitively with her subordinate coworkers, but she grew fearful of making a mistake in speaking. For ISTJs, "They are happiest living with a familiar routine and may become uncomfortable or anxious when faced with new challenges."<sup>300</sup>

For both F12 and FG9, effective leadership, people skills, and pastoral skills can be learned and trained.

### **Conflict of priorities between church ministry and family**

MG1 (ENTJ) said his rational temperament caused this challenge between his priority towards ministry versus family. He could not sense his family's needs until his daughter and wife complained. MG1 realized that his family and church must be put in proper perspective so that he can effectively lead in the church. ENTJ's tend to be "so preoccupied with furthering their careers that they neglect their personal or family lives

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<sup>299</sup> Column of ENFJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4 about the "relational".

<sup>300</sup> Column of ISTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

in the process.”<sup>301</sup> MG1 is a successful church planter. He realized his weakness and took appropriate action before the problem became a big issue. MG1 set aside a fixed time every week for his family, and he made them a priority, even though doing so was a risk. Chinese church tradition places a very low priority on family, believing that if pastors give their family a high priority, they are not spiritual. One day, MG1 cancelled a meeting because his wife was sick, and he was very worried about the consequences. The church members instead regarded his action as good, which surprised him. Since MG1 planted his church from scratch, his church has not been influenced by his church group’s tradition.

MG7 (ISTJ) also experienced challenges with his daughter. ISTJs, “...are not likely to be significantly influenced by how people will feel about their decisions, so they may at times seem aloof or uncaring.”<sup>302</sup> Even worse, Chinese church tradition deeply influenced MG7, teaching that if people love Jesus, they must put their family as a low priority. MG7 learned the biblical truth about family in an overseas seminary, and he came to understand that he has a responsibility for his family. When MG7 returned home, his daughter had been in a state of rebellion for a long time. MG7 took a drastic move to stay with his daughter and help her. This move was against his church tradition. He endured a lot of mistreatment from his church group leadership for his decision. Eventually MG7’s effort paid off. His daughter responded to his loving actions. MG7 rejoiced at the outcome, despite the fact that his church still treats him unfairly. His ISTJ temperament helped him to persevere through the hardship, because “ISTJs have a strong

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<sup>301</sup> Column of ENTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

<sup>302</sup> Column of ISTJ, Table 4.3(a) of chapter 4.

work ethic and always choose to get their tasks done before they take time to relax. They know what they have to do and how to do it and seldom need or want any supervision or input from others. Their single-minded determination is one of their greatest assets.”<sup>303</sup>

MI8’s (ISTJ) challenge involves his parents. His monthly salary is so low that his parents need to work to support his family. His father recently decided to be an overseas missionary. Suddenly, the financial burden fell on his mother. His mother asked either him or his father to work as full-time ministers, but not both. He is seriously considering giving up his full-time pastoral job and let his wife pastor his church. MI8 plans to find a job to support his family. However, Chinese church tradition does not approve such a move because tradition teaches that a full time minister should never return to another job. He talked about his concern, “If I find a job, and in the mean time I serve in my spare time, the church will criticize me of becoming corruptive. My struggle is that I cannot take care of my family and church at the same time. Working in secular world is not the thing I want to do.”

Finding a job and serving in a church is not easy in MI8’s situation. Chinese tradition considers a pastor who quits his pastor job to be a Christian who loves the world instead Jesus. Leading others as a lay leader will be difficult for MI8, which makes his decision very difficult. MI8 has no better solution for his family-ministry priority conflict. He and MG7 are both ISTJs, but MG7’s wife has a full-time job. MG8’s wife is a full-time minister, having a salary as low as his.

The Bible teaches that family is part of a Christian’s witness. Paul taught Timothy about the quality of a church overseer, “He must manage his own household well, with

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<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church?"<sup>304</sup> The qualifications for elders and deacons require that their families have been governed with order and holiness. Chinese church tradition needs to comply with the biblical truth in this regard.

These three pastors are either ENTJ or ISTJ, and all are responsible, hardworking people in church. They are all task-oriented people. There is no surprise that they got involved in a ministry-family priority challenge. MG7's experience provides a good example. During his overseas theological training, he learned the truth about family. Good biblical theology and biblical worldview training can help Chinese Christians to see the problems that can be easily overlooked in their culture. Pastoral theological training can be designed for the need of Chinese church accordingly.

### **Full-time ministers' lack of salary**

Most of the pastors reported this challenge of a low salary impacting the family and the ministry negatively. Two of the pastors are from independent church, and five out of the total seven are from church groups.<sup>305</sup>

For MI2 (INTJ), her six hundred Chinese dollars per month salary is far from enough. MI2 needs to receive more income for her ministry. Her husband has a full-time job and generously provides money to allow her to do her work. Church coworkers considered her family income and believe that six hundred dollars is enough, however, she disagrees. She is a full-time pastor, and she should receive fair pay according to her work. MI2 did not confront her coworkers, but her emotion and anger have lasted for a

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<sup>304</sup> 1 Timothy 3:4-5

<sup>305</sup> MI12 were considered as a church group member because when this challenge happened to him, he was still a church group member.

long time. However, MI2 treated this matter in accordance with church and Chinese cultural tradition. She told coworkers years ago that she does not need a salary because her husband is working, and MI2 receives a small amount of retirement pay. The church took her at her word. MI2 thinks even she did not ask for an adequate salary, but that her coworkers should know that they need to pay her because she is a full-time pastor. She is right; the church should pay her. MI2 said she does not need a salary because asking for a salary is not considered spiritual in Chinese church culture. Giving pastors little pay or no pay is also common in Chinese church culture. These two factors lead to an unfortunate result. MI2 has no good solution for it. She reflects, “Because of the love of Christ, we continue to serve.”

MG5’s church group provides food and housing to full-time ministers. These ministers are given monthly allowance to buy daily living supplies. When his son asked money from him he felt very bad because he could not meet the need of his son. MG5 has no better strategy for it except trusting God and praying.

MG6’s salary is not enough, even though he owns his house. Because MG6 has resided in his city since he was young, he automatically has a house in which to live, just like others similar to his situation across China. Despite having a house, MG6 does not pay house rent, and still his current salary falls short. The salary covers daily routine expenses, but any non-routine situations that arise, such as the children’s education or attending a wedding where giving a wedding cash gift is required, cause him trouble. MG6 is five thousand dollars in debt because of his child’s college education. His church group cannot help with his need. However, his church group requires his church to give monthly offerings to headquarters, and part of that money goes to his salary. MG6

complained about this unreasonable but common system. Chinese church groups grow poorer and poorer as the nation grows richer and richer. Pastors' financial situations are worsening. The aging problem poses a second challenge for the house churches. House churches are losing young people. A third difficulty is evangelism. The root problems are complex. Aging is one of them, and fear of reaching out to the world is another. Drastic measures are needed to solve the fundamental problems.

MG7 (ISTJ) complained about serving in his church full time, but he was paid only for those hours he served that satisfied church regulation and rules. Most of his services did not qualify for payment. Fortunately, his wife has an income from a job. MG7 knew he should be paid, but he would not do anything about it. He told researcher that he did not have time to reflect on this issue because his daughter's problem occupied all his attention. Like FI2, despite the lacking salary, they continue serving the Lord faithfully. For MG7, despite his family's opposition to his three-year theological studies away from home, he decided to pursue the training anyway. He believed that serving the Lord is more important than his family's need. This kind of thinking is part of the Chinese church tradition. There is no wonder why he, and FI2, would continue serving the Lord without getting paid.

MI8 (ISTJ) did not complain to his church for giving him a four hundred dollar monthly salary. It is far below the amount his family actually needs, but MI8 understands that this is all his church can do. There are two factors that make this situation very difficult. First, he believes that serving this aging church is God's calling. Second, he needs to have an income so his mother does not need to do hard labor work to support his

family. MI8's church would never accept him switching status from a full-time pastor to working in the secular world. He has no good way to resolve this financial challenge.

For MG11 (ENTJ), his church group's tradition for full-time ministers is, "The poorer, the more glorious." This Chinese church tradition may be one of the main reasons that pastors shy away from forthrightly dealing with salary problems. Church lay-coworkers are excused from giving pastors a proper salary. Chinese churches tend to shun any promotion of tithing, and very few pastors have the courage to preach and teach on the subject. No one likes to be criticized as a greedy pastor.

When MG11's salary could not support his child's high school tuition, he had to send his child to a province one thousand miles away from home to attend a much cheaper public school. He saw his child only three times last year. However, MG11 could not tell his church he needs more money because they would criticize him for not being spiritual. MG11 said the church congregations' average income is much higher than the pastors' salaries<sup>306</sup>, but congregants may not think that they should provide their pastors with salaries comparable to their own. MG11 is the founding pastor of his church. The church was developed through his church planting work. The issue is not as simple as providing biblical teaching to the congregation. The issue is deeper than that because the basic Bible knowledge, discipleship training, biblical theology, the Great Commission, and Christian worldview are necessary teaching and training in China. Chinese churches are well known for their intensive Bible training over the past decades. However, the training focused on theology rather than daily living. The teaching about tithing has basically disappeared in the Chinese church. MI12 (ESTJ), a church planter sent by his

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<sup>306</sup> The average income of MG11's church members is about 3,000 RMB per month. MG11's salary is 600 RMB per month.

church group, had a financial shortage from the very beginning. His wife, who studied for years at a theological school, had to work as a janitor in order to have an income. His long-time financial struggle came to an end when the poor college students in his planted church provided him with financial support.

All seven pastors have analytical personality types, and they are task-oriented people. This suggests that pastors with stronger explicit leadership may sense the pressure of salary shortage more than other types.

Yongtao Chen's analysis of the Chinese Christian's view of money is still valid for today. Chen points out that many Chinese Christians believe that being a Christian means living a life of poverty. The poorer one is materially, the richer one is spiritually, and many Christians are unwilling to discuss anything having to do with money, regarding it as an expression of worldliness. In this study, participants' responses to their financial challenges reflect Chen's view.

The Bible has clear teachings about supporting full-time ministers. In the book of Numbers, God commanded the Israelites to give a tithe to the Levites, "To the Levites I have given every tithe in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service that they do, their service in the tent of meeting."<sup>307</sup> Israel has twelve tribes, and eleven of the tribes tithe to the Levites. That means that the Levites' salary will average more than that of the rest of the Israelites. The Apostle Paul taught the Galatians that they should provide for the needs of those who teach them. He said, "One who is taught the word must share all

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<sup>307</sup> Leviticus 18:21



good things with the one who teaches.”<sup>308</sup> This suggests that pastors’ income should not be less than congregations’ average income.

### **Commonality between church/ministry and personal/family challenges**

These two groups of challenges demonstrate wide diversities. However commonalities are also realized in this study. The first is suffering. Regardless of their personalities, ministry styles, church position rankings, and church style (group or independent church), they all suffer in church and personal lives. Some of their sufferings are beyond comprehension from the standpoint of the western world. The second commonality is their faithful servanthood to church and the Lord. Suffering and servanthood are often co-existed. Jesus taught his disciples that they will be persecuted, but they should stand firm to be saved.<sup>309</sup> Jesus’ leadership shed light on the pastor’s suffering and servanthood. Jesus said “when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself”<sup>310</sup> and “if anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”<sup>311</sup> These twelve pastors are followers of Jesus. Suffering for their faith reflects their Christian identity.

Paul told Timothy, referring to his suffering in Antioch, that “we must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom.”<sup>312</sup> Paul taught Timothy the hardship and servanthood. The twelve pastors’ experiences of suffering and their faithful servanthood

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<sup>308</sup> Galatians 6:6

<sup>309</sup> Matthew 10:16-22

<sup>310</sup> John 12:32

<sup>311</sup> Matthew 16:24-25

<sup>312</sup> Acts 14:22

may be led by God's eternal plan and wisdom. Hutchison rightly said "true servant leaders give up their rights for the sake of others."<sup>313</sup>

However, the divine guidance in the past does not suggest that pastors' challenges shall not be dealt with today. Almost all of the challenges unveiled in this study can be resolved or improved significantly through proper training and teaching designed for Chinese pastors in contextualization. This is the purpose of this study.

### **Summary of the adaptive leadership challenges for Chinese pastors**

Kouzes and Posner said that the single most common source of leadership failure is that leaders treat adaptive challenges like technical problems. This will result in short-term rewards. MG5's strategy of resolving the financial shortages in his church group is an example. His strategy is to encourage the church leaders who do not have the gift of preaching to find a job and then give their tithe to the church.

Church conflict is the top challenge of the Chinese pastor. Nine out of the twelve participants experienced various levels antagonisms against them. This is alarming. Several had experienced being forcing out of their churches and one lost his top leadership position.

Charles Chandler reported a profound issue in American churches concerning congregations forcing pastors out of their positions. He pointed out that a survey shows 22.8 percent of the responding readers have been forced out of their church at least once during their careers. Christianity Today reported in 2012 that more than one out of four pastors say they have been forced out of a church due to personal attacks and criticism from small congregational factions. The Chinese pastors' experiences with this challenge

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<sup>313</sup> John C. Hutchison "Servanthood: Jesus' Countercultural Call to Christian Leaders" *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 166 no 661 (January-March 2009): 69.

is not unusual. Marlin Thomas points out that church members often have little understanding of the internal dynamics of the conflict. He said that churches are collages of people with different systems of internal wiring. Church leaders and congregations must recognize those differences if they want to be whole and at peace with themselves, each other, and with God. Regarding conflict levels I and II, as proposed by Kenneth Haugk first, Thomas' advice describes the relationship of conflict and the pastors' leadership. He said that disordered people can serve God, even if they can't get along very well with each other or even with the pastor. But in such cases the pastor must be more than just a pastor; he must be skilled in the taming of hearts.

Thomas' four-step strategy is useful for Chinese pastors. The first step is to teach their people a new way of behavior and communication. The second is to help people learn how to clarify perceptions and avoid assumptions. The third step is to teach people how better to relate to each other. The fourth step is the process of empowering weaker members of the group to act and to speak forth. Thomas' strategy is viable, but Chinese pastors need training to prepare themselves to be a good teacher, leader, and problem solver.

Thomas advises people who handle the conflict, "Whatever role one plays in encountering conflict in the church, it must be undertaken with a great degree of sanctified professionalism and human dignity. For the conflicts reported in this study, both in Church group tradition challenge and in the church's coworkers' conflict, sanctified professionalism and human dignity are lacking. Their hearts and minds need to be changed in order to resolve this adaptive challenge.

Ronald Heifetz and Marty Linsky have good insights in the connection of hardship and effective leadership. They said leaders, through their leadership, uncover meaning in life. A leader appears dangerous to people when they question others' lifetime values, beliefs, or habits. This explains the reason why the seven pastors<sup>314</sup> suffered in their church groups in regard to the challenge of patriarchalism and the rigidity of church tradition. However, only three<sup>315</sup> of the seven pastors overcame their challenges. Leadership training should be an indispensable part of pastoral training in China.

Regarding the question of how Chinese pastors do reflection when they encountered their challenges, almost none of the twelve pastors exercised consistent and effective reflection. However, Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow, and Marty Linsky say the single most important skill and most undervalued capacity for exercising adaptive leadership is diagnosis. This powerful tool should be included in the pastors' training.

All twelve pastors suffered in their challenges. The causes of their suffering are diverse. The causes include Chinese culture and church tradition, temperament, spiritual maturity, finance, family, education, ministry views, power struggles, and fulfilling the Great Commission, etc. However, pastors' faithfulness to the church and to the Lord is manifested through their responses to the challenges. Their faithfulness was manifested in different ways depending on their temperament, the church's structure, the spiritual maturity of themselves and their coworkers, leadership style and strength, family, financial difficulties, and church culture.

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<sup>314</sup> MG1, FG4, MG6, MG7, FG9, MG11, and MI12.

<sup>315</sup> MG1, MG11, and MI12.

In order to train and equip Chinese pastors to be effective leaders and to resolve their challenges and to lead their congregations effectively in the twenty-first century, the quality of their trainers is crucial. The “best leader” as defined by Christopher Marshall provides good ideas about the qualification of a trainer. He said that the best leaders are ones who model or embody in their own persons and practices the values and goals they want others to espouse. Developing future pastors’ trainers is a strategic vision and movement when the pastor’s training is planned. Forward-looking is essential in this regard.

Chinese pastors are facing various adaptive challenges in the modern China today. The results of this study reveal the urgent need of visionary leadership development. Jin Herrington, Robert Creech, and Taylor Trisha said that a change in the leader’s behavior brings about change in the system; and forming a visionary community committed to personal transformation increases the likelihood of a leader’s success in bringing about personal transformation. Their study illustrates the importance and urgency of leadership training for Chinese pastors so that they can develop healthy churches and lead churches to carry out the Great Commission in this sweepingly changing and modern country in the twenty one century.

Christopher Marshall emphasizes the vitality of Christian leadership for the church. He said that good leadership is vitally important for most groups or communities, including the community of faith. Without competent leadership, groups tend to limp along, struggling for a sense of direction or motivation and easily distracted by trivial concerns. James Kouzes and Barry Posner have performed an impressive long-term leadership study which echoes Marshall’s viewpoint and provides deeper insight. Their

study shows that the top four characteristics which an admirable leader should possess are honest, forward-looking, inspiring, and competence. This finding is invaluable for equipping pastors. The Chinese church culture may put loyalty over honesty, seniority over forward-looking, authority over being inspiring, and tradition over competence. This tendency was realized throughout this study. The training in this regard falls into the wide areas of applied theology. Besides the proper training program, the urgency of developing effective teachers to train pastors is obvious. The rethinking of Christian seminary education becomes critical in this era. The paradigm shift of Christian education may be inevitable in the near future.

The great portion in the literature review in Chapter two is based on the challenges found in the Western churches. The results of this study prove that the western-based literature review is valuable and meaningful for the study of the Chinese pastors' challenges.

### **Summary of Findings**

In attempting to identify the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors and how they have responded to their challenges in ministries and daily lives, four patterns emerged.

#### **Pattern One:** Applied theology was overlooked

All the challenges that the pastors identified involved applied theology. The theological training of the past several decades in China focused on classic theology, such as systematic theology and studying the Bible's sixty-six books. Many pastors have repeatedly pursued classic theological training. However, the thirteen major challenges identified in this study are all related to applied theology. All of the pastors interviewed

in this study are teaching and preaching in their churches, and it is obvious that they have difficulty teaching applied theology. More classical theology courses than the applied theology courses were offered in China during the past thirty years. Many teachers of pastor's training did not have adequate pastoral experiences. Today, providing needed and proper training to Chinese pastors is essential but is a great challenge. The researcher believes that sound applied theology training will significantly promote the understanding and insight of the classic theology. Classic theology is indispensable in the leadership training also. Duplicating western theological training curriculum and applying them in China directly does not meet the needs well. Heart, mind, and teaching strategies need to be changed for both students and teachers.

Pattern Two: Inter-personal conflict prevails

A broader conflict pattern emerged. The great majority of Chinese pastoral leadership challenges are inter-personal conflicts. Diverse factors such as ministry vision, personality, culture, and personal and spiritual maturity triggered these conflicts. The top six challenges are listed the follows. First, conflict arose between coworkers, including ministers (church/ministry related challenge). Second, church group tradition conflicted with modern day challenges (church/ministry related challenge). Third, pastors faced the challenge of inner being (personal/family related challenge). Fourth, ministry needs often conflicted with family needs (personal/family related challenge). Fifth, pastors struggled to fulfill the great commission and plant churches (church/ministry related challenge). Sixth, full-time ministers lack a sufficient salary (personal/family related challenge).

The majority of the participants' leadership challenges in this study are church/ministry related, especially in regards to interpersonal conflict. For the other challenges, most contain elements of interpersonal conflict as well.

These findings suggest a problem with the fundamental understanding of Bible knowledge and its applications in the real lives. Thus, spiritual maturity and spiritual formation issues emerged.

Pattern Three: Personality affects responses

Two types of challenge-response patterns can be observed. Personalities of different Myers-Briggs types appear to have certain connections to them. These two patterns are as follows.

First, certain Myers-Briggs personality types were challenged and responded passively, not responding in a way that was effective. These Myers-Briggs types include: ISTJ (MG5, MG6, MG7, MI8, FG9), INTJ (FI2), ISFP (MI3), INFJ (FG4). Eight pastors responded this way.

Second, certain Myers-Briggs personality types were challenged and responded proactively, responding in a way that was active/proactive but confined (responses happened within their own churches which they planted, not within their church groups). These Myers-Briggs types include: ESTJ (MI12), ENTJ (MG1, MG11), ENFJ (MI10). Four pastors responded this way.

In this study, the pastors who responded passively are all introverts. They could be any type (see those pastors marked in blue in the Figure 5.3). Introverts are orientated toward their inner world; they are energized by their inner ideas and concepts. They may feel drained by events and people around them. They prefer to reflect on a situation rather



than to act on it<sup>316</sup>. The pastors who responded actively or proactively are all extroverts. Extraverts are orientated toward the outside world; they are energized by the events and people around them. They enjoy communicating and thrive in stimulating and exciting environments.<sup>317</sup> Organizer, strategizer, and inspirational person with extrovert personality appear to be more likely to respond in this pattern (see the pastors marked in red in the Figure 5.3).

In addition to the energy source differences (introvert vs. extrovert), persons with both N (more future oriented) and J (more black and white viewpoint) may be more likely to respond in a proactive manner.<sup>318</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> See Appendix

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> See the explanation of J and N in the Table 4.2 in chapter 4. More information can be found in the Appendix.

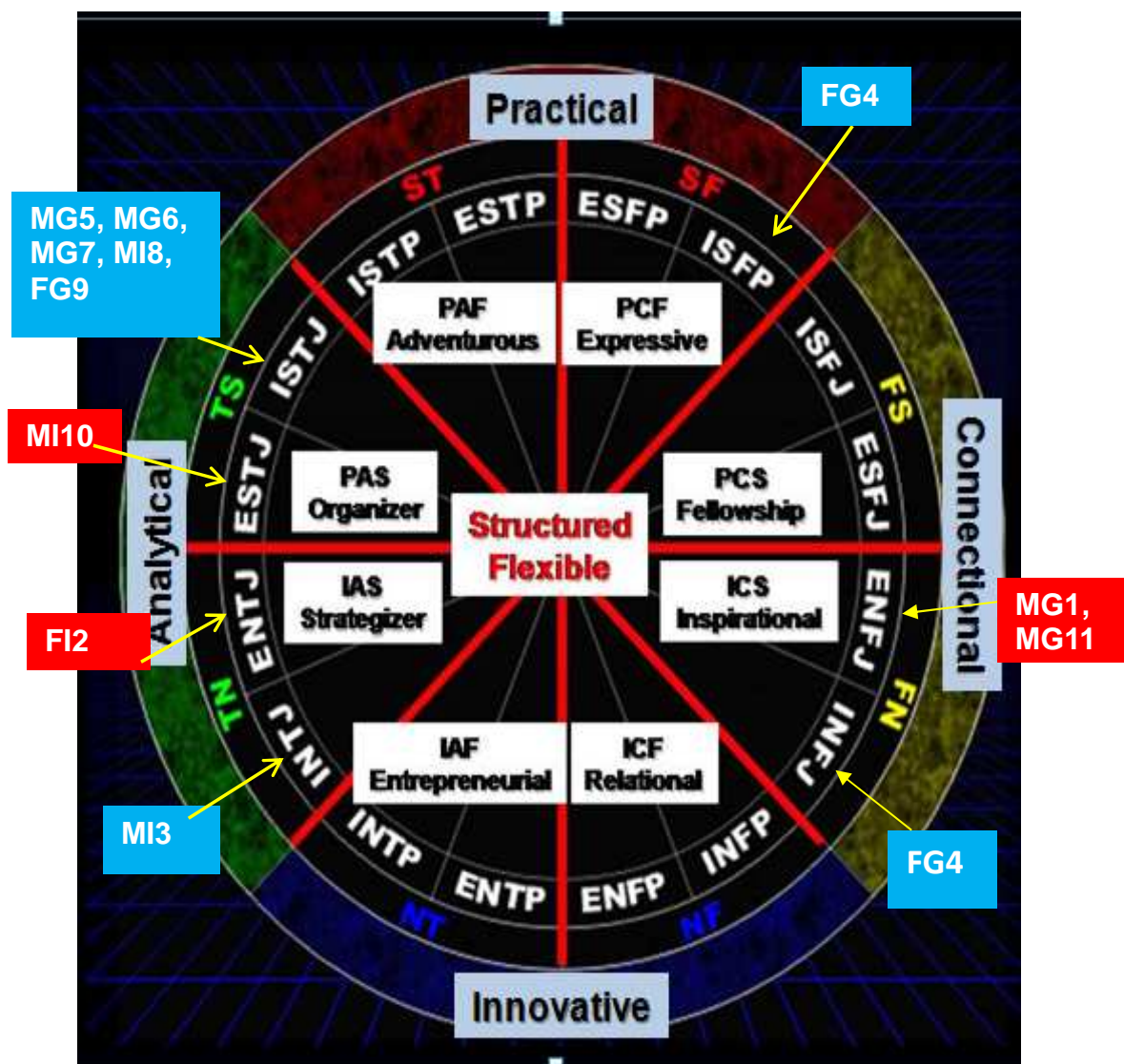


Figure 5.3 Extroverts (in red) and Introverts (in blue) of the twelve participants.

Pattern Four: Church planting is a good solution for the church group tradition challenge

Eight pastors belong to church groups.<sup>319</sup> Among them, three pastors (MG1, MG11, and MI12) took proactive actions to respond to the (1) church group tradition challenges, and they eventually saw good results. From these three pastors, a common pattern emerged:

<sup>319</sup> MI12 was in a church group when challenge occurred. He is counted as the one from a church group in this regard.

Challenges emerged >> to which they responded and tried to make changes >> Pastors then got hurt and failed >> At that point, they changed their strategy and started implementing their ideas in the churches that they planted >> made progress in the churches they planted.

These three pastors are church planters. Their Myers-Briggs types are ESTJ (MI12) and ENTJ (MG1, MG11). Several points can be addressed here. First, these three pastors are part of the pattern three, namely they are extrovert and responded proactively. Second, church group's tradition is usually difficult to change. However, starting a new church to by-pass church group tradition may be the most effective way to build a healthy church. These three pastors' experiences can be one of the viable methods for church group's reformation in the future.

The twelve pastors experienced diverse leadership challenges and demonstrated various temperament strengths and weaknesses. It is possible that all of these can be resolved, improved, and enhanced through the works of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There are abundant promises in the Bible. The Apostle Paul pointed out that Christians were given great power to make changes. He taught, "But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us."<sup>320</sup> He also said, "But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.'"<sup>321</sup> Jesus warned, "You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."<sup>322</sup> He continued, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be

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<sup>320</sup> 2 Corinthians 4:7

<sup>321</sup> Ephesians 4:7-8

<sup>322</sup> Matthew 5:48

opened to you.”<sup>323</sup> The triune God is building his kingdom. Christians are called to participate. God equips the saints to do this work for him and with him<sup>324</sup>.

The results of this study show that pastors’ challenges are not unique. The causes of their challenges and the common obstacles are unveiled in this study. Pastors have a better idea now how to resolve their future leadership adaptive challenges.

These results of this study provide Chinese seminaries and theological schools insight to reflect and design a better curriculum for spiritual formation and problem solving skills.

These results of this study may also help overseas teachers, trainers, churches, denominations, and seminaries to have a better preparation in training subjects and strategies. Teachers and training institutions can work more effectively with Chinese pastors and leaders in future training opportunities and ministries in contextualization.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

Chinese pastors’ adaptive leadership challenges are complex issues. The issues are rooted in Chinese culture, Chinese church culture, pastoral temperament, spiritual maturity, different views of ministry, struggle of inner beings, the Great Commission, and family priority issues. However, these are all human-caused factors. The Bible has solutions and principles for Christian lives and churches. All these factors mentioned above can be enhanced, changed, improved, and learned. This can be accomplished through proper training designed for Chinese pastors.

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<sup>323</sup> Matthew 7:7.

<sup>324</sup> Matthew 28:20.

Future theological training needs to be balanced between classic and applied theologies. In recent years, many well-known western seminaries established on-line training programs for Chinese Christians in China, but the curriculum essentially duplicates the curriculum used on their main campus. This study provides viable ideas to review and re-think the Chinese training program. For the Chinese students, especially for those who are experienced pastors, the training may need to shift from a focus on classical theology to a focus on applied theology. This implies that teachers with pastoral hearts and various ministry skills are needed. For the seminaries' training, the curriculum need classic and applied theology in balance, specifically designed for Chinese churches.

### **Proposed future pastor training**

Chinese pastors are busy all year round. It is not practical to provide full-time seminary-like on-site training. Therefore, the western cohort-type training can be considered a viable training program for Chinese pastors. The following proposal is designed according to the results of this study. This proposal is intended to provide a framework for training. Modification can be made according to need and varying situations.

#### Two-year, eight-semester pastor training plan

##### **A. Student qualification:**

1. Church group's top leadership
2. Independent church's senior and associate pastors, at least 5-years, full-time pastoral experiences.
3. Half of students come from church groups, half come from independent churches. They can learn from each other.

**B.** Each semester has two weeks of training. There are four semesters each year.

### First year

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test<sup>325</sup> – (done before class begins)

#### First semester

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – introduction and basic understanding (post class reading and homework assignments will be given)

Systematic theology – Bible (one week)

Biblical theology- Jesus, covenant, kingdom of God (one week)

#### Second semester

Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – application, discussion, and spiritual formation (one day)

Hermeneutics (two weeks)

#### Third semester

Spiritual formation and maturity – through Myers-Briggs to learn from different types (1 day)

Homiletics – Christ centered preaching (two weeks)

#### Fourth semester

Leadership introduction – biblical perspective and Christian worldview (one week)

Pastoral care - marriage, family and pastoral self-care (one week)

### Second year

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<sup>325</sup> There are several good temperaments tests available today. DISC assessment and Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis (T-JTA) are the two of them. MBTI and these two have their own strengths. Designers of the pastor training can select proper tests for their training. Integration of these three into the training program could be a comprehensive approach.

#### Fifth semester

Practical evangelism (two weeks)

#### Sixth semester

Biblical perspectives of the Chinese culture and the traditional Chinese church culture (I) (half a week)

Practical discipleship training (one and a half weeks)

#### Seventh semester

Biblical perspectives of the Chinese culture and the traditional Chinese church culture (II) (half a week)

The great commission and church planting (one and a half weeks)

#### Eighth semester

Healthy church- coworker conflict management, church governing, mission of church, pastor financial support (one week)

Spiritual leadership formation- personal conflict management, Christian ethics, visionary leadership from the biblical perspective (one week)

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

This study has achieved its goal of identifying the adaptive leadership challenges of Chinese pastors, and how they responded to those challenges in their ministries and their daily lives. However, there is inherent bias in this study. In order to establish a robust insight and conclusion for the future study of Chinese pastors' challenges, the researcher recommends the following steps.

First, participants should be selected to represent adequately the sixteen Myers-Briggs types as shown in Figure 5.3. In this study, only seven types were interviewed.

Five out of the seven types have only one participant. This introduced a certain bias into the study.

Second, none of the top leaders from church groups participated in this study<sup>326</sup>. Church group tradition is a big issue. Top church group leaders shall be included in the future study.

Third, the criteria used in this study for the pastors' selection: "the pastor must have demonstrated significant leadership in his ministry" may be removed in the future. This first round of study focusing on explicit strong leadership revealed Chinese pastors' challenges quickly. But some Myers-Briggs types have implicit leadership styles which may not be observed from the outside. The future selection can reduce human bias and also help to identify all the sixteen types' of pastors for a future study. Fourth, most of the participants' ministry locations are on the east side of China (See Figure 4.1 (a) of Chapter 4). More pastors from other locations should also be included. Pastors' challenges may be different in places away from coastal regions. Coastal regions' Christianity has a longer history and better development. Future research can be performed for China East and China West to get more objective analysis and to properly train future pastors.

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<sup>326</sup> An interview appointment was arranged with a top leader of a church group. The interview was cancelled when researcher arrived at meeting place because of unexpected situation occurred.



## **Appendix**

### **Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI)<sup>327</sup>**

MBTI distinguishes between two orientations (extraversion and introversion E&I), two perceiving functions (sensing and intuition S&N), two judging functions (thinking and feeling T&F), and two attitudes toward the outside world (judging and perceiving J&P).

#### **E and I relationship:**

##### **E**

Energy can be gathered from the outside world. Extraverts (E) are orientated toward the outside world; they are energized by the events and people around them. They enjoy communicating and thrive in stimulating and exciting environments. They prefer to act in a situation rather than to reflect on it. They may vocalize a problem or an idea, rather than thinking it through privately.

They may be bored and frustrated by silence and solitude. They tend to focus their attention upon what is happening outside of them and may be influenced by others opinions. They are usually open people, easy to get to know, and enjoy having many friends.

##### **I**

Energy can be gathered from the inner world. Introverts (I) are orientated toward their inner

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<sup>327</sup> Charlotte L. Craig, Leslie J. Francis, and Bruce Duncan, "Safeguarding tradition: psychological type preferences of male vergers in the Church of England," *Pastoral Psychology* 54, no. 5 (May 2006): 458-460.

world; they are energized by their inner ideas and concepts. They may feel drained by events and people around them. They prefer to reflect on a situation rather than to act on it. They enjoy solitude, silence, and contemplation, as they tend to focus their attention upon what is happening in their inner life. They may appear reserved and detached as they are difficult to get to know, and they may prefer to have a small circle of intimate friends rather than many acquaintances.

The perceiving functions are concerned with the way in which people receive and process information; this can be done through use of the senses or through use of intuition.

### **S & N relationship**

#### **S**

Sensing types (S) focus on the realities of a situation as perceived by the senses. They tend to focus on specific details, rather than the overall picture. They are concerned with the actual, the real, and the practical and tend to be down to earth and matter of fact. They may feel that particular details are more significant than general patterns. They are frequently fond of the traditional and conventional. They may be conservative and tend to prefer what is known and well-established.

#### **N**

Intuitive types (N) focus on the possibilities of a situation, perceiving meanings and relationships. They may feel that perception by the senses is not as valuable as information gained from the unconscious mind; indirect associations and concepts impact their perceptions. They focus on the overall picture, rather than specific facts and data. They follow their inspirations enthusiastically, but not always realistically! They can

appear to be up in the air and may be seen as idealistic dreamers. They often aspire to bring innovative change to established conventions. The judging functions are concerned with the way in which people make decisions and judgments; this can be done through use of objective impersonal logic or subjective interpersonal values.

### **T and F relationship**

#### **T**

Thinking types (T) make judgments based on objective, impersonal logic. They value integrity and justice. They are known for their truthfulness and for their desire for fairness. They consider conforming to principles to be of more importance than cultivating harmony. They are often good at making difficult decisions as they are able to analyze problems to reach an unbiased and reasonable solution. They are frequently referred to as ‘tough-minded.’ They may consider it to be more important to be honest and correct than to be tactful, when working with others.

#### **F**

Feeling types (F) make judgments based on subjective, personal values. They value compassion and mercy. They are known for their tactfulness and for their desire for peace. They are more concerned to promote harmony, than to adhere to abstract principles. They may be thought of as ‘people-persons,’ as they are able to take into account other people’s feelings and values in decision-making and problem-solving, ensuring they reach a solution that satisfies everyone. They are often thought of as ‘warm-hearted.’ They may find it difficult to criticize others, even when it is necessary. They find it easy to empathize with other people and tend to be trusting and encouraging of others. The attitudes towards the outside world are concerned with the way in which people respond

to the world around them, either by imposing structure and order on that world or remaining open and adaptable to the world around them.

### **J and P relationship**

#### **J**

Judging types (J) have a planned, orderly approach to life. They enjoy routine and established patterns. They prefer to follow schedules in order to reach an established goal and may make use of lists, timetables, or diaries. They tend to be punctual, organized, and tidy. They may find it difficult to deal with unexpected disruptions of their plans. Likewise, they are inclined to be resistant to changes to established methods. They prefer to make decisions quickly and to stick to their conclusions once made.

#### **P**

Perceiving types (P) have a flexible, open-ended approach to life. They enjoy change and spontaneity. They prefer to leave projects open in order to adapt and improve them. They may find plans and schedules restrictive and tend to be easygoing about issues such as punctuality, deadlines, and tidiness. Indeed, they may consider last minute pressure to be a necessary motivation in order to complete projects. They are often good at dealing with the unexpected. Indeed, they may welcome change and variety as routine bores them. Their behavior may often seem impulsive and unplanned.

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