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THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MISSIONARY METHODS FOR
BRITISH CHINESE CHURCHES IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

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INTRODUCTION

The United Kingdom is a country that carries precious histories. Many Christians, especially Chinese Christians, would respect the country. There have been numerous British missionaries who gave their lives for the spread of the gospel in China. Moving in the third decade of the twenty-first century, it is amazing that there are many Chinese churches and Chinese Christians living in the land of the UK. A fast-increasing number of Chinese are coming to the UK. Should British Chinese churches receive the same calling, burden and responsibility that the British missionaries once received for evangelism of the Chinese? What are the biblical ways that contemporary Chinese Christians can follow to preach the gospel and establish churches with effectiveness?

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul was a great example of establishing churches cross-culturally. In about a little more than ten years, Paul established churches in four provinces of the Roman Empire – Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia.¹ While a growing number of Chinese Christians migrate to the UK, there has not been an academic

¹ Roland Allen, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours* (Eastford: Martino Fine Books, 2011), 3.

and dedicated study on how Paul's missionary methods may shed lights on Chinese Christian migrant communities.

There are four reasons to explore connections between Paul's missionary methods and British Chinese churches' possible approaches of doing mission today. Theologically, there are rare written theological works concerning Paul's missionary methods and the context of overseas Chinese churches, including British Chinese churches. The Apostle Paul's missionary methods have been widely discussed by scholars. Works on Paul's missionary methods have borne great fruits for both the academy and the Church. However, most works have focused on thinking from the missionary's perspective. Few discussions have been done on how it may look like when Christian migrants, including the Chinese, migrate and live in the missionary's homeland. Even among the few, their foci have been on issues such as ethnicity, intercultural engagement, and evangelism.² In

² Some examples include:

Alexander Chow, "British Immigration Policies and British Chinese Christianity," in *Ecclesial Diversity in Chinese Christianity*, ed. Alexander Chow and Easten Law (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

Yun Yu and Gijbert Stoet, "Encountering non-Christian Chinese International Students: Cross-Cultural Adaptive Practices of Local Christian Organisations in the UK," *Journal of Beliefs and Values* 41, no. 3 (2020): 305-21.

Yun Yu and Marta Moskal, "Why do Christian Churches, and not Universities, Facilitate Intercultural Engagement for Chinese International Students?" *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 68, (2019): 1-12.

view of this, a study on the relevance and implications of Paul's missionary methods to British Chinese churches may contribute theologically and practically to the needs of Chinese churches' development in the UK.

Biblically, there is a need of contextualisation of Paul's missionary methods for British Chinese churches. Contextualisation is one of the most necessary and underlying approaches for the growth of the church. The Chinese Overseas Christian Mission (COCM), which has the longest mission experience with British Chinese churches, describes that "many Chinese churches in the UK and Europe are still in early development stage."³ Paul's letters along with his missionary methods have been among the main biblical resources for all missions and churches through the centuries, and they should always be so for all churches moving into the future. Hence, a study on the connections between Paul's missionary methods and British Chinese churches will build up the latter biblically.

In terms of evangelism, it is apparent that British Chinese churches undertake a significant role of preaching the gospel to the Chinese population in the UK. There has

³ Henry Lu, "From COCM General Director," Chinese Overseas Christian Mission, accessed 22 March 2021, <https://www.cocm.org.uk/publications-link>.

been an increasing trend of global migration, and that has also been the case in the UK.

More Chinese are migrating to the UK to study and work, and some of them may come due to a political concern for China or Hong Kong. Chinese immigrants have been one of the fastest growing migration groups in the UK in the twenty-first century. It is recorded that Chinese is the fifth largest group in the UK with 0.7 per cent of the total UK population reported by official census data in 2011.⁴ Globally speaking, despite the growth of Chinese Christianity, a huge portion of Chinese people is still unreached.

Before coming to the UK, many Chinese people have not encountered the Christian faith, or have very little exposure to Christianity. Thus, the growing number of overseas Chinese has certainly presented British Chinese churches the chance as well as challenges for evangelism. In view of this, Paul's approaches of doing evangelism would be instructive in various ways.

Culturally, despite only around one century of British Chinese church history, ethnic Chinese groups have made up a multicultural context with cultures and languages.

Generally speaking, the Chinese population in the UK consists of three main groups: the

⁴ "Chinese Ethnic Group: Facts and Figures," GOV.UK, published 27 January 2020, <https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/summaries/chinese-ethnic-group#population>.

old immigrants, the new immigrants, and the British born Chinese (BBC). The old immigrants came from three main backgrounds: seaman, labours, and refugees. The new immigrants are made up with students, professionals, workers, and businessmen, mainly from mainland China and Hong Kong. The BBCs are second and third generations of Chinese who were born in the UK by their immigrant Chinese parents.⁵ Even within a main group, such as Chinese from mainland China, there is diversity to a great extent. Alexander Chow, who did research on Chinese Christianity in the UK, notes that “cultural and linguistic differences exist among new mainland Chinese immigrants—given that China is by no means a monocultural country—and between them and the historic British Chinese Christian populations.”⁶ The multicultural Chinese groups thus present a practical challenge of ethnic diversity. This research intends to find out Paul’s cross-cultural approaches with a particular relation to Chinese multicultural immigrant churches.

The present study will focus on discussing and assessing Roland Allen’s view on Paul’s missionary methods. Firstly, Allen’s work *Missionary Methods: St Paul’s or Ours*

⁵ Chow, 102-15.

⁶ Ibid, 114-15.

has been a classic and widely influential among Pauline scholars. Secondly, as a missionary to China for eight years, Allen's understanding of mission would be influenced by his experiences in China, therefore, much relevant to this study. Thirdly, both the present study and Allen's work have a focus on missionary methods for building up a firm church and an interest in the practical needs of the church. While Allen's work will be the focus, some of the relevant scholars' views will also be included in discussions in order to have a broader view.

The present study intends to explore Paul's relevant missionary methods and discuss their implications for Chinese churches in the UK. It aims to find out how to contextualise Paul's missionary methods in the British Chinese church context. This study will therefore be carried out from a church perspective rather than a missionary perspective. In other words, it will discuss what the church can learn from Paul's missionary methods, instead of what missionaries can learn from.

With the present study, I will argue that Paul's missionary methods are integral methods rather than his individual methods. This means that Paul's methods are guided by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit, participated by his co-workers through the church, and

centred at his missionary task—proclamation of the gospel. Although Paul is considered as a founder of churches, his missionary methods were integrated by other elements such as the Holy Spirit, his co-workers and churches, and the gospel. Whereas the gospel itself contains the power of the Word, the proclamation of the gospel depends on the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit, and it requires Christian unity and cooperation among churches. In other words, Paul's proclamation of the gospel was integrated with the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit and the unity of the church. Thus, this study will present an integral view on Paul's methods. Accordingly, I will argue that Paul's integral methods are applicable to the present British Chinese church context.

For the present study, the primary research question is: which aspects of the Apostle Paul's missionary methods have particular relevance for Chinese churches in the UK in the twenty-first century? Under the primary question, there are three secondary research questions: 1) What is meant by missionary methods with respect to the Apostle Paul? 2) What were Paul's missionary methods, as also particularly discussed by scholars including Roland Allen? 3) Which methods have the most relevance for Chinese churches in the UK?

Bearing in mind these research questions, this study will include three major parts.

The first part intends to take an overview on Paul's missionary methods. The second part will discuss Paul's missionary methods primarily with an assessment on Roland Allen's work. The third part, which also is the heart of this study, hopes to construct biblical and theological suggestions, as being enlightened through discussions from previous parts, for the development of British Chinese churches in the UK.

Methodology and Limitation

The present study will engage theologically with biblical scriptures and scholarly written resources on Paul's missionary methods. Paul's letters will be the primary resource for approaching his methods. In terms of scholarly written resources, the study will focus on assessing Roland Allen's work *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours*, while taking into discussion other scholars' relevant works.

There are certain limitations in the present study in terms of the resources on the history and current situations of Chinese churches in the UK. There are not many primary resources or scholarly works to build a thorough understanding of the issues and problems that Chinese churches may have. Besides, the absence of interviews and

questionnaires may leave certain limitations in terms of the information of Chinese immigrants and churches in the UK. Nevertheless, since the project's focus is on theological implications of Paul's missionary methods, interviews and questionnaires will not be conducted. At the same time, the current available resources on the Chinese population and Chinese Christianity in the UK do provide important information for the purposes of this study, especially in terms of the relevance and implications of Paul's missionary methods in the British Chinese church context.

I. EXPOSITION OF PAUL'S MISSIONARY METHODS

The focus of this research project is to explore the particular connections between Paul's missionary methods and British Chinese churches. This chapter will explain what I mean by Paul's missionary methods and their essential aspects. Paul's missionary journeys and his missionary activities are displayed in the book of Acts and his epistles. Burke and Rosner correctly note that "Paul's letters are not considered as literature per se, each letter was crafted within the cut and thrust of his missionary activity and travels."⁷ In other words, Paul's letters contain crafted descriptions of his missionary work. Schnabel states that there are three parts as important to understand Paul's missionary activities: 1) the Apostle's missionary work in the book of Acts; 2) Paul's understanding of his missionary task as revealed in his letters; 3) Paul's proclamation of the message.⁸ Hence, there are sufficient biblical scriptures from which Paul's missionary methods can be observed and learned from. The present study reckons these three parts of Schnabel as primary and significant sources for exploring Paul's missionary methods and related aspects.

⁷ Trevor J. Burke and Brian S. Rosner, eds., *Paul as Missionary: Identity, Activity, Theology, and Practice* (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), 1.

⁸ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2010), 29.

1.1 Exposition of Paul's Missionary Methods

As there are different views of mission and methods relating to Paul's missions, it is necessary to define some understandings of mission and methods to discern what is meant by "missionary methods" with respect to the Apostle Paul. After that, this chapter will present an integral view of Paul's missionary methods, which I believe to be significant when applying Paul's missionary methods to British Chinese churches, and possibly to other churches as well.

1.1.1 Definition of Mission in Paul's Missionary Methods

To the early church, disciples were commanded by Jesus to "go and make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:18-20). The early church might not talk about or develop a concept of mission. However, the so-called Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20, was taken by later generations of Christians who then develop and evolve various understandings of mission/missions up to contemporary Christianity.⁹ Some believe that mission is the task based only on evangelism and relevant activities. Yet, others view mission as including any aspects that may affect the gospel. For example,

⁹ Ibid, 21.

mission may include the church's social responsibilities and activities. Scholars such as David Bosch urge not to limit mission to evangelism. He claims that many other activities beside evangelism could be related to mission.¹⁰ Scott Moreau asserts that missions refer to "the specific work" undertaken by churches and agencies with the task of "reaching people for Christ by crossing cultural boundaries."¹¹ Schnabel also argues that mission can include foreign countries and crossing cultures, and the term is certainly not restricted to that.¹² He demonstrates that intentionality and geographical movement are legitimate elements of mission.¹³ When "crossing cultures," or "crossing cultural boundaries" is required, vast areas such as culture, anthropology, and ethnography may just get involved.

Alistair Wilson indicates that the term "mission" (or sometimes "missions") has been used by people in various ways.¹⁴ Similarly, Schnabel points out that nowadays "it is no longer self-evident what the term 'mission' should imply."¹⁵ Before Schnabel gave

¹⁰ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shift in Theology of Mission* (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 409-20.

¹¹ A. Scott Moreau, Gary B. Corwin, and Gary B. McGee, *Introducing World Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 17. Quoted in Alistair I. Wilson, "An Ideal Missionary Prayer Letter: Reflections on Paul's Mission Theology as Expressed in Philippians," in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church's Mission: Essays in Honor of I. Howard Marshall*, ed. Jon C., Laansma, Grant Osborne, and Ray van Neste (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 247.

¹² Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 23.

¹³ *Ibid*, 27.

¹⁴ Wilson, 247.

¹⁵ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 21.

his standpoint of mission, he provided a thorough summary of a general view of mission/missions in the setting of “historical and sociological studies of Christianity and other religions,”

The term “mission” or “missions” refers to activity of a community of faith that distinguishes itself from its environment in terms of both religious belief (theology) and social behavior (ethics), that is convinced of the truth claims of its faith, and that actively works to win other people to content of faith and the way of life whose truth and necessity the members of that community are convinced.¹⁶

Based on this basic and general grasp of mission mentioned above, I would further build a biblical understanding of mission for the purposes of the present study.

The word “mission” as an English term derives from the Latin word *missio*, which is a translation of the Greek word *apostolē*, meaning “to send” or “a sending.”¹⁷ Schnabel discusses that the argument of the absence of the word mission in the New Testament is incorrect.¹⁸ The Greek verb *apostellein* corresponds to Latin verb *mittere*, which occurs 136 times in the New Testament.¹⁹ This implies that there is certainly a biblical concept of mission, and its basic perspective relates to “send.” In reality, there are many different ways of using “to send,” according to the Old Testament and the New Testament. One of

¹⁶ Ibid, 22.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid, 27.

¹⁹ Ibid.

the most well-known verses is John 3:17, “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”²⁰ The word “send” here clearly presents that God is the One who actively sends and sovereigns his mission for the world. Based on the notion of the Latin phrase *missio dei*, which may be translated as “mission of God,” Christopher Wright highlights that mission is God’s.²¹ Similarly, Beverly Roberts Gaventa claims, “mission is nothing less than God’s own action of rescuing the world from Sin and Death.”²²

Moreover, God has been revealing ongoing calling to his chosen people. In Romans 10:14-15, it says, “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can they preach unless they are sent.” God did not only send his Son Jesus for the world, but he is also continually calling and sending his disciples to preach the good news of Jesus to the world. Indeed, William J. Larkin Jr declares that Christian mission is the mission of God, and God is on mission by

²⁰ All the scriptures quoted in this thesis are from the New International Version (NIV) unless otherwise noticed.

²¹ Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God: Unlocking the Bible's Grand Narrative* (Leicester: IVP Academic, 2006), 67.

²² Beverly Roberts Gaventa, “The Mission of God in Paul’s letter to the Romans,” in Burke and Rosner, 75.

calling and sending his servants on mission.²³ Mission is not primarily a matter of our activity or our initiative, but “the committed participation of God’s people in the purposes of God for the redemption of the whole creation.”²⁴ That is to say, while God’s people are committed in their participation of mission, it is God’s mission with God’s purposes.

Therefore, I believe that the biblical perception of mission should essentially include two characters relating to “sending”: “the divine Sender” (God) who has been sovereignly sending for the mission of God, and “people,” or “the church,” who are sent by God. I reckon these two characters as central features in the biblical term of mission, and they will be used in this thesis.

Furthermore, being aware of the essential features of a biblical term of mission, this research will describe a biblical view of mission, which was received by the apostles, such as Paul, in the first place. In the following paragraphs, I will offer a brief description of Paul’s fundamental convictions in his mission, and from which I will suggest a biblical definition of mission from a Pauline perspective. First of all, Paul’s mission was the task of testifying to the gospel, which was called, assigned and sent by

²³ William J. Larkin Jr., “Mission in Acts,” in *Mission in the New Testament: An Evangelical Approach*, ed. William J. Larkin Jr. and Joel F. Williams (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 186.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

God/Jesus. Paul highlighted that his conversion and call were the result of the sovereign grace and will of God (Gal 1:15-16).²⁵ In Acts 20:24, Paul says, “I consider my life worth nothing to me, if only I may finish the race and complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me--the task of testifying to the gospel of God’s grace.” In order to fulfil his calling and task, Paul proclaimed the gospel orally, moved from city to city geographically, and went to any locale where people might listen to the gospel.²⁶ Furthermore, Paul recognised that the propagating of the gospel was always traced to “the activity of God, Christ or the Spirit” (Philippians 1:6; 1:13-15; 1:19-20; 1:28-29; 2:13).²⁷

Paul’s mission did not simply end with preaching the gospel, but also with building up the church through teaching and encouragement. Thus, as P. T. O’Brien describes, “proclaiming the gospel meant for Paul not simply an initial preaching or with it the reaping of converts; it included also a whole range of nurturing and strengthening activities which led to the firm establishment of congregations.”²⁸ For a biblical

²⁵ Eckhard J. Schnabel, “Paul the Missionary,” in *Paul’s Missionary Methods: In His Time and Ours*, ed. Robert L. Plummer and John Mark Terry (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 30.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

²⁷ James P. Ware, *Paul and the Mission of the Church: Philippians in Ancient Jewish Context* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2011), 292.

²⁸ P. T. O’Brien, *Gospel and Mission in the Writings of Paul: An Exegetical and Theological Analysis* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: BakerBooks, 1995), 43.

reference, in Acts 20:31-32a, Paul says, “So be on your guard! Remember that for three years I never stopped warning each of you night and day with tears. Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up.” Paul has constantly warned and built up those disciples who had accepted the gospel. He “illustrated the necessity and significance of follow up and continued training for new believers.”²⁹

Furthermore, Paul’s mission was continually carried out through other leaders’ shepherding in churches, including elders appointed to the church (Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:1-7; 5:17-25; Titus 1:5-9). Paul appealed to the leaders who continued the work of his established churches to be shepherds of the flock (Acts 20:28). He provided for “ongoing transformation” of the churches through the guidance of local leaders.³⁰ Through the study of Paul’s letters, Don N. Howell Jr claims,

It is uniformly recognized by Pauline scholars as well as by missiologist-practitioners that the apostle was more than a soul-winning evangelist. His letters, which are pastoral communications that address the particular needs of churches, confirm that his aim was to establish self-governing congregations that would carry on the Christian mission after his departure.³¹

Howell Jr’s “uniformly recognized” may seem to be a sweeping statement, given that

²⁹ Chuck Lawless, “Paul and Leadership Development,” in Plummer and Terry, 224.

³⁰ James W. Thompson, “Paul as Missionary Pastor,” in Burke and Rosner, 36.

³¹ Don N. Howell Jr, “Mission in Paul’s Epistles: Genesis, Pattern, and Dynamics,” in Larkin Jr. and Williams, 73.

few scholars, on occasions, may be more interested in emphasising Paul's role as primarily a soul-winning evangelist. Nevertheless, it is safe to believe that Howell's above description of Paul represent a vast majority of Pauline scholars.

Apart from the convictions mentioned above, Paul's mission was dependent on the work of the Holy Spirit and committed by prayers (Acts 14:23). "Paul's mission was carried out at every level in conscious dependence on the Spirit."³² His dependence on the work of the Holy Spirit will be discussed further in the context of his integral missionary methods. Probably it is the same mindset of relying on the Holy Spirit, Paul at the same time acknowledged the indispensable process of prayer. He believed that without the offering of prayers, "his work could not continue fruitfully."³³ Fee comments that Paul was a "pray-er" before he was a "missioner" or a thinker.³⁴ Paul's life "was devoted to prayer; and his relationship with his converts was primarily sustained by way of thanksgiving and prayer."³⁵ Paul thus requested prayers from his converts concerning his proclamation of the gospel, "Pray also for me, that whenever I open my mouth, words

³² Ibid, 77.

³³ I. Howard Marshall, *New Testament Theology: Many Witnesses, One Gospel* (Nottingham: Apollos, 2004), 360.

³⁴ Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence: The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1994), 866.

³⁵ Ibid.

may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should” (Eph. 6:19-20; cf. 1 Cor. 16:9).

All in all, Paul’s mission, the task of testifying to the gospel assigned by God, on the one hand was about the good news to be heard, and on the other hand, emphasising how the gospel to be built up in the church through the teaching of the Word, shepherding, and prayers by the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in this thesis, since I intentionally focus on the mission that Paul received and performed, I would confine a biblical definition of mission as a gospel-based task entrusted by God for those he has called and sent to share the good news, and it continues with the work of building up people’s lives in the body of Christ/ the Church by the power of the Word and the Holy Spirit.

Focusing on the term “mission,” which is Paul’s gospel-based mission receiving from Jesus, will be beneficial for two main reasons for this research. On the one hand, it provides a basic connected theological context for applying Paul’s missionary methods to Chinese churches in the UK today. As David Hesselgrave points out, “the broad parameters of Paul’s missionary work have not changed: missionaries go where people

live, they preach the gospel, they gain converts, they gather new believers into churches, they instruct new believers in the faith, and they appoint leaders.”³⁶ Although in one sense the calling of Paul’s mission was personal and individual, it is in accordance with Jesus’ Great Commission for all his disciples (Matt 28:18-20). As the Great Commission has been an ongoing call that Jesus has for all Christians and churches, it is probably only meaningful when people understand Paul’s missionary work as a part of Jesus’ continuous call for all his churches to the present time. In this sense, Paul’s missionary calling and his gospel-based missionary task are also true for Chinese churches in the UK. In addition, for this reason, the present research makes no distinction between Paul’s missionary methods and Jesus’ methods. It should be very reasonable that there are some common missionary approaches and principles shared by Paul and Jesus, for Paul must be Jesus’ follower in all the ways he could (1 Corinthians 11:1).

On the other hand, since Paul was an expert builder of the church, there is value in learning a view of mission directly through his missionary calling and work. In 1

Corinthians 3:10, Paul describes, “By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as

³⁶ Dave J. Hesselgrave, *Planting Churches Cross-Culturally* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), 44-46. Quoted in Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 37-38.

an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds.” Paul considered himself as a pioneer missionary who was called by God to plant and to lay the foundation.³⁷ Besides, in 1 Corinthians 4:16 and 11:1, Paul encouraged the Corinthians to imitate him and to follow his example as he followed the example of Christ. Although the “example” here might not be the reason for Christians to copy his missionary approaches, it at least implies that Paul’s life and ways of serving God and people in the mission field could be instructive for Christians to follow. Allen observes that some people may tend to think that Paul was “an exceptional man living in exceptional times, preaching under exceptional circumstances,” and he had advantages in his birth, his education, his call, his mission, his relationship to his hearers.³⁸ Yet, Allen insists that no matter how many peculiar advantages Paul may have, they cannot be so great as to rob his example of all value for us.³⁹ Indeed, Paul did want people to follow his example “at least in regard to paying attention to the mission implications.”⁴⁰ Paul would not ask people to follow him if there was not much to follow, or impossible to

³⁷ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 132.

³⁸ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 5.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Brian S. Rosner, “The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians,” in *New Testament Theology in Light of the Church’s Mission: Essays in Honor of I. Howard Marshall*, ed. Jon C. Laansma, Grant Osborne, and Ray van Neste (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2011), 185.

follow. People certainly do not need to follow Paul in every way in every circumstance.

Nevertheless, there will always be something of Paul, whether his words or deeds, in his life or in his mission, that people can learn from.

1.1.2 Definition of Method in Paul's Missionary Methods

After giving a definition and understanding of mission for the purposes of this research, the next term that should be clarified is "method." "Method" and "strategy" are two words probably used most frequently or in some cases are used interchangeably in the recent research field concerning Paul's missionary approaches. In Schnabel's influential work, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, he adopts both terms by distinguishing strategy as "action plans" or "the missionary goals" and method as "a procedure for attaining an object," giving both "strategy" and "method" a whole chapter discussion respectively in his book.⁴¹ In Allen's classic book, *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours*, he sometimes uses the term "strategy" and "method" interchangeably.⁴² In other words, Allen does not make a clear distinction between them.

⁴¹ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 29.

⁴² Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 15-27.

Since Chinese churches are the target in this research, in order to give a proper Chinese view, it might be helpful to check the definition through some English-Chinese dictionaries. In the *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, “strategy” is defined as “(art of) planning and directing an operation in a war or campaign,” or “(skill in) planning or managing any affair well,” or “plan or policy designed for a particular purpose,”⁴³ while “method” is generally understood as a way of doing something, which is basically the same with the *Oxford English Dictionary*.⁴⁴ The *Collins Chinese Dictionary* mainly defines “strategy” as a plan,⁴⁵ while it defines “method” as a way.⁴⁶ These dictionaries suggest that the Chinese term “strategy” particularly puts stress on actions and plans, whereas the Chinese term “method” has more focus on approaches and ways.

In view of the above statements, I consider that “method” is probably a more suitable term than “strategy” for the purposes of this study. Firstly, while exploring Paul’s

⁴³ *Oxford Advanced Learner's English-Chinese Dictionary*, fourth ed., s.v. “Strategy.” (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press [Hong Kong], 1994), 1509.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 928. According to Schnabel, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines method as a “procedure for attaining an object,” and “a way of doing anything, especially according to a defined and regular plan, a mode of procedure in any activity, business, etc.” *Oxford English Dictionary*. Quoted in Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 29.

⁴⁵ *Collins Chinese Dictionary*, first ed., s.v. “Strategy.” (Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers, 2004), 518.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 334.

missionary approaches, this study will indicate God's divine ways in Paul's mission as a significant aspect. Paul's ways of doing mission under God's divine ways will be explained further in the next section as an integral way in Paul's mission. For this reason, I believe that the term "method" is probably more appropriate since it is including and highlighting God's ways instead of men's subjective strategies or plans. In other words, the concept of "method" suits better if Paul's integral ways with God, rather than his personal plans, is to be emphasised. Secondly, in a Chinese language context, the term "method" (*fang fa*) tends to give a broader view of learning Paul's missionary approaches (*fang shi; tu jing*) since "method" is not limited or focused on "plans" (*ji hua*) but open to a broader concept of "ways" (*fang fa; fang shi*). Thus, I consider the term "method" would give enough capacity for relating different aspects of Paul's missionary approaches, including God's divine work, Paul's ways, and his fellow workers' ways. Lastly, for a practical reason, comparing to "strategy," "method" is simply a more common word used by Chinese people. The *Essential Chinese Dictionary* lists only

“method” but not “strategy.”⁴⁷ It indicates that “method” could be more daily and wide-ranging for Chinese people.

With regard to the broader Chinese view of “method,” I believe that it has naturally answered a further question: whether or not there are Paul’s missionary methods. Since the understanding of “method” in this thesis broadly includes the meaning of “ways,” which generally include “approaches,” and sometimes might include “strategies” or “plans,” it is not difficult to define that there are Paul’s missionary methods. It is true that “irrespective of the details of definitions of strategy and method, it is obvious that Paul planned his missionary initiatives in the context of a general strategy that shaped specific decisions.”⁴⁸ Nevertheless, I would explain an integral view to further demonstrate Paul’s missionary methods.

1.2 An Integral View on Paul’s Missionary Methods

Although it is no exaggeration to state that Paul has the major part in the book of Acts,⁴⁹ the book of Acts is about the acts of the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Apostles, and

⁴⁷ *Hanyu Ba Bai Zi [Essential Chinese Dictionary]*, first ed., s.v. “Fang” (Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 2007), 75.

⁴⁸ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 257.

⁴⁹ I. Howard Marshall, “Luke’s Portrait of the Pauline Mission,” in *The Gospel to Nations: Perspectives on Paul’s Mission*, ed. Peter Bolt and Mark Thompson (Leicester: Apollos, 2000), 99.

all God's called workers. Accordingly, although Paul was a founder of the established churches through his whole missionary work, his missionary methods were still closely interlinked by agencies that took part in his mission. Thus, as mentioned earlier, I purposely focus on integral ways in Paul's mission rather than his personal ways and plans. Although Paul's "missionary methods" has been a commonly known term, I propose to emphasise Paul's methods as integral methods, which are guided by the Holy Spirit, participated by Paul's co-workers, and centred at the proclamation of the gospel.

1.2.1 The Integral Method guided by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit

Trevor J. Burke indicates that "little attention has been given to the indispensable role of the Spirit" in recent studies on Paul's mission and his role as missionary. In Burke's view, the Holy Spirit had been the controlling dynamic in Paul's role as a missionary.⁵⁰ I would agree that the Holy Spirit indeed played an indispensable and dynamic role in Paul's mission, including his missionary activities and approaches. Looking at Paul's missionary work, his activities and approaches were significantly guided by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit had been directing Paul's minds

⁵⁰ Trevor J. Burke, "The Holy Spirit as the Controlling Dynamic in Paul's Role as Missionary to the Thessalonians," in Burke and Rosner, 156.

and actions in his mission. On Paul's side, he always had a priority of following the Holy Spirit's guidance and plans. The Holy Spirit acted and guided Paul with sovereignty. Yet for Paul, recognising and following the Holy Spirit's guidance was his deliberate way of doing mission.

The "initiator, guide, and empowerer" role of the Holy Spirit in mission that highlighted in the book of Acts are certainly manifested in Paul's mission as well.⁵¹ In Antioch, Paul's very first missionary journey started with the Holy Spirit's clear appointing to the places together with Barnaba (Acts 13:1-4). In Paul's journey to Macedonian, the Holy Spirit had purposely kept Paul and his co-workers to the region of Phrygia and Galatia, later Bithynia, then to Macedonia through visions (Acts 16: 6-10). It is also explicit that the mission to Macedonian was not Paul's or his companions' plan but God's. When they arrived in Macedonia, they realised that God had given them "an open door" in the city of Philippi (Acts 16: 6-12).⁵² In Corinth, God spoke to Paul in a vision to keep on speaking because he had many people in the city, so Paul stayed for a year and half to preach the gospel and teach the word of God (Acts 18:9-11). In Ephesus, Paul

⁵¹ Larkin Jr., "Mission in Acts," 181.

⁵² Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission* (Leicester: Apollos, 2004), 515.

appealed to the elders by reminding them that it was the Holy Spirit who had made them overseers (Acts 20:28). It was the Holy Spirit whom Paul sought in choosing overseers.

Besides the book of Acts, the work of the Holy Spirit in Paul's mission is also manifested in Paul's letters. In the letter to the Thessalonians, we can see that the Holy Spirit is at work in various strategic ways: "empowering his proclamation (1.5b), saving his converts (1.6), working through the Word (2.13)."⁵³ Paul's ministry is due to God's grace, and that "grace provides the impetus for his work."⁵⁴ In the epistles 1 and 2 Corinthians, Paul commends his ministry by rehearsing the evidence of God's work in him as he recounts the many difficulties he experienced in the course of his ministry (1 Cor 4:11-13; 2 Cor 6:3-10; 11:22-29). These are express examples that the Holy Spirit is the controlling dynamic in Paul's role and mission. Taking everything into account, Paul's mission was clearly conducted under divine guidance with a variety of divine agents: the Lord (Acts 18:9-10; 22:17-21; 23:11), the Spirit (13:2,4; 16:6-7; 20:22), and an angel (27:23).⁵⁵

⁵³ Burke and Rosner, 4.

⁵⁴ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: a Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2020), 31.

⁵⁵ Marshall, "Luke's Portrait of the Pauline Mission," 101.

From the above description of Paul and his mission, it is distinct that Paul's approaches/methods had been guided by God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit throughout his missionary work. The Holy Spirit actively directed Paul's mission, and Paul intentionally sought and followed the Holy Spirit's guidance. Thus, it is reasonable to reckon following the guidance of the Holy Spirit as a firm approach/method in Paul's mission. In fact, this approach of Paul could be a turning point to decide if he had a method/strategy.

Schnabel's initial answer concerning whether Paul had a missionary strategy shows an agreement with J. Herbert Kane, who explains:

If by strategy is meant a deliberate, well-formulated, duly executed plan of action based on human observation and experience, then Paul had little or no strategy; but if we take the word to mean a flexible *modus operandi* developed under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and subject to His direction and control, then Paul did have a strategy.⁵⁶

Paul's no planned strategy but following the guidance of the Holy Spirit can thus be considered as his significant strategy. In other words, to Paul, following the Holy Spirit is a vital method of doing mission.

Rosner suggests that 1 Corinthians in the most general sense reflects a chapter in

Paul's missionary career, including his own story as one being sent to preach the gospel,

⁵⁶ J. Herbert Kane, *Christian Missions in Biblical Perspective* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1976), 73. Quoted in Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 30.

founding the church, spending eighteen months there. Based on this formal sense, Rosner asserts that this letter is a mission document, which includes primary evidence of Paul carrying out his calling as an apostle/missionary to plant and establish churches.⁵⁷

Schnabel also explains that Paul expounds “his understanding of missionary work” in 1 Corinthians 3:5-15.⁵⁸ As in 1 Corinthians 3:5-11, Paul says,

What, after all, is Apollos? And what is Paul? Only servants, through whom you came to believe—as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God, who makes things grow. The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor. For we are God’s fellow workers; you are God’s field, God’s building. By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Paul’s statement here conveys that in spite of the one planting and watering, God is the One who can make it grow (1 Cor. 3:6-7). As Schnabel states, the “positive outcome of missionary work is due only to the power of God: only God gives growth.”⁵⁹

Correspondently, the methods which Paul employed were all dependent on God who

⁵⁷ Rosner, “The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians,” 183.

⁵⁸ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 130.

⁵⁹ Schnabel, “Paul the Missionary,” 34.

made it workable and successful. “The effectiveness of missionary work and the effectiveness of pastoral ministry depend neither on individual persons and their gifts nor on programs or rhetorical techniques, but on God’s agency.”⁶⁰

Moreover, Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of God’s work, and all missions of God are laid on this foundation of the foundation (1 Cor. 3:11). The foundation Paul laid was Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). Schnabel made a metaphor that “if a builder wants to finish the building that has been started on foundations that were laid by another architect, he has to adhere carefully to the benchmarks provided by the architect.”⁶¹ Likewise, all God’s assigned builders with their related “architecture” methods are supported by their architect, and it is no exception for Paul’s methods. Besides, the passage here also indicates that although Paul made his role of “an expert builder” public, he did not promote people focusing on their “own” ministry, “which could very easily led to self-promotion.”⁶² In the same consideration, it is not difficult to reason that one should not follow Paul and his methods as an individual’s. One may question that in this case if it is still necessary for people to follow Paul’s missionary methods. Therefore, it is necessary

⁶⁰ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 132.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 134.

⁶² *Ibid*, 132.

to have an emphasis on an integral method rather than Paul's personal method. When Christians think about how to apply Paul's missionary methods in their contexts, they should always relate Paul's methods as being closely guided and participated by the guidance and work of the Holy Spirit. With essential participation of the Holy Spirit, when Christians learn the methods from Paul's time, they also need to discern the work of the Holy Spirit in the present time.

Additionally, an integral view with God's divine work in fact displays the power and authority behind Paul's missionary methods. John D. Harvey states that,

the one sent on mission exercises the same authority as the sender. Just as the Father conferred his authority on the Son, so Jesus conferred his authority on the disciples. The continuity of authority is simply the most prominent example of the close identity between sender and sent one.⁶³

Bearing in mind God's authority behind his mission, Paul could confidently say to the Colossians, "to which purpose also I labor, contending in keeping with God's working, which is at work in me with power" (Col. 1: 29). Paul here seems to indicate the connection between God's working (authority) and God's power. Regarding this power of God in Paul's mission, Trevor J. Burke declares that "Paul could not have sustained

⁶³ John D. Harvey, "Mission in Jesus' Teaching," in Larkin Jr. and Williams, 48.

such a long and arduous missionary campaign over many years on his own strength, unless he was empowered by something greater, the Holy Spirit who was at work in all that he did.”⁶⁴ The authority that God has given to Paul for the work of his mission naturally includes the power behind Paul’s missionary work. It is therefore sensible to always keep in mind that the Holy Spirit gives the authority and power for all the methods that Christians practice, and all the methods should be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit while applying in the contemporary time.

Recognising the authority behind the methods, prayer can naturally be another related element to missionary methods. Paul emphasises prayer and he wrests with prayer for churches (Col. 4). Prayer is one key of methods for growing and protecting churches. “Prayer is essential to the church’s mission.”⁶⁵ Wilson states, “if we share Paul’s theological understanding, then prayer will not simply be a psychological encouragement for churches and workers, but will be true requests for the Lord’s action in the circumstances to bring about events which are not within the power of the human being involved.”⁶⁶ Hence, while the authority was already given, Paul still needed to pray for

⁶⁴ Burke, “The Holy Spirit as the Controlling Dynamic in Paul’s Role as Missionary to the Thessalonians,” 156.

⁶⁵ Wilson, 261.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 261-62.

God's power in mission. Fee points out that for Paul, the coming of the Spirit has radically transformed his view and practice concerning prayer. Accordingly, "Paul did not simply believe in prayer, or talk about prayer. He prayed, regularly and continuously, and urged the same on his churches (1 Thes. 5:16-18)."⁶⁷ When Paul argues elsewhere, "on all occasions pray in/by the Spirit," it includes every form of prayer (Eph. 6:18), "including prayer for the enabling of evangelism."⁶⁸ In short, Paul prayed and asked the Holy Spirit for power in his mission.

Besides, the Holy Spirit was in fact the One who made Paul's missionary methods mature according to his big plan. In one sense, only God can make men's thoughts and methods mature to fulfil God's plans. God's way of doing and completing his mission are higher than men's plans, wisdom, and understandings. For men, God's followers, hoped and pleaded Paul not to go to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4, 13-14; 22:40). But the will of God, which Paul had received, was for Paul to go to Jerusalem, and indeed God opened further doors for him to accomplish mission later.⁶⁹ God's methods and ways differ from the flesh's ways. In Philippians 1:12-14, Paul writes,

⁶⁷ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 866.

⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 867.

⁶⁹ Ware, 290.

Now I want you to know, brothers, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. Because of my chains, most of brothers in the Lord have been encouraged to speak the word of God more courageously and fearlessly.

In these verses, “Paul traces both his own missionary proclamation, and the mission activity of the Christian community, to the power of Christ at work in the spread of the message.”⁷⁰ For men, the opponents of the gospel, tried to stop the spread of the gospel by putting Paul in chains. But as a result, God’s gospel had reached broader areas even to the “corner” of the prisons (Acts 16). Paul’s chains for Christ had also strengthened most of the followers in the Lord to speak the gospel without fear. When ones seek the methods in mission, particularly in spreading the gospel, with an integral view of Paul’s methods, they should first depend on the guidance, the power, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

1.2.2 The Integral Method Participated by Co-workers/churches

As the Holy Spirit provided guidance in Paul’s mission and sent him with his co-workers together for mission, Paul’s missionary methods did not merely represent his

⁷⁰ Ibid, 198.

individual work but also the work of the church and his co-workers. There were nearly one hundred persons who worked alongside the Apostle Paul as recorded in the New Testament.⁷¹ In Paul's missionary journeys, he "regularly reported back to Antioch after his journeys and gave an account of his labors to his 'sending church'."⁷² In Acts 13:2, it says, "while they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, 'set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.'" This text explicitly shows that the Holy Spirit sent Paul and his co-worker Barnaba from the Antioch church to do the mission that God had called them. It is not known what Paul had exactly completed before serving the church in Antioch, but it is reasonable to conclude that a turning point of Paul's mission started with the Antioch church. Therefore, the calling to take up the first mission recorded in Acts was addressed not to Barnabas and Paul "as free individuals," but rather to the church at Antioch, which sent them out on God's work.⁷³

Looking at both the book of Acts and his extant letters, Paul's mission was "embedded in several early Christians, supported by these churches in various ways and extended

⁷¹ E. Earle Ellis, "Coworkers, Paul and His" in DPL, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne, Ralph P. Martin, and Daniel G. Reid (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1993), 183. Quoted in Robert L. Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission: Did the Apostle Paul Expect the Early Christian Communities to Evangelize?* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), 69.

⁷² Robert L. Reymond, *Paul: Missionary Theologian: A Survey of His Missionary Labours and Theology* (Fearn: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 575.

⁷³ Marshall, "Luke's Portrait of the Pauline Mission," 101.

through the ministry of churches.”⁷⁴ Hence, it is clear that Paul’s mission was significantly involved in cooperation with his fellow workers and various churches.

Allen states that Paul’s work in three areas probably were the only work that Paul and his fellow workers conducted with a definite plan. These are: a) the work that the Holy Spirit has set apart for them (Acts 13:2); b) the work that Paul and his fellow workers had been committed and reported to the church (Acts 14:26-27); c) the work that Paul thought Mark had withdrawn from them (Acts 15:38).⁷⁵ Putting the dispute of a definite plan aside, the work here is one evidence showing that Paul’s missionary journeys and his related methods were particularly connected with the church and his co-workers. Regarding Paul’s letter to Philippians, Wilson explains that several colleagues in the missionary task indicate that “Paul truly regards his mission as an activity carried out in partnership.”⁷⁶ Paul’s mission had been rightly called a “co-worker mission.”⁷⁷ Thus, it is impossible to maintain Paul’s methods in his mission as merely his individual or personal methods.

⁷⁴ Christoph W. Stenschke, “Paul’s Mission as the Mission of the Church,” in Plummer and Terry, 74.

⁷⁵ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 15.

⁷⁶ Wilson, 256.

⁷⁷ Karl Olav Sandnes, “A Missionary Strategy in 1 Corinthians 9.19-23,” in Burke and Rosner, 128.

Douglas A. Campbell, in *Pauline dogmatics*, points out that people are drawn magnetically to think about the Apostle Paul by himself.⁷⁸ However, Campbell states,

We envisage Paul walking the dusty roads of the ancient Mediterranean coastline, writing letters, founding communities in small hot workshops. But Paul never thinks of either himself or community leadership in these terms. He is *individuated*, with personal gifts and roles, and at times he is clearly dominant, but he is never an *individual*. Paul's own communities were always founded by more than one person. For the son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by us--by me and Silas and Timothy—was not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in him it has always been 'Yes' (2 Cor 1:19). He invariably travelled with friends and coworkers and was supported by a veritable cloud of the same.⁷⁹

Campbell's statement fairly describes both Paul's personal role and his teamwork.

Although Paul might play a leading even dominant role in certain mission, the mission was yet not his individual mission, but the mission of God participated by fellow workers and churches. It seems to Campbell that Paul clearly understood and emphasised his mission as teamwork. Even at the early founding stage of the churches, it was always a teamwork participated by Paul and his co-workers. Reading from Paul's own statement in 2 Cor 1:19, it is clear that such teamwork was not just a fact but also Paul's explicit

⁷⁸ Douglas A. Campbell, *Pauline Dogmatics: The Triumph of God's love* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020), 245.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

understanding. As Campbell states, it was always a team effort no matter at a community's founding or during its ongoing nurturance in Paul's community leadership.⁸⁰ In other words, even during Paul's travel and absence from the churches, the ongoing nurturance was still a kind of teamwork carried on by Paul and his co-workers.

While the mission that Paul led even dominated was a team mission, some people may tend to emphasise how dominant Paul was, or how less significant his fellow workers might be. I. Howard Marshall seems to highlight Paul's dominant role when he points out that the people involved in certain mission were "helpers" rather than "a colleague" of Paul. Marshall states, "Paul's third missionary campaign is apparently the work of Paul with helpers rather than with a colleague."⁸¹ For the purposes of the present study, I will not distinguish between "helpers" and "colleagues." As Paul describes that people who have different tasks are "God's fellow workers" in 1 Corinthians 3:9, helpers and colleagues would be equally considered as Paul's fellow workers in his missionary work. In view of this, despite different roles and diverse extents of involvement among

⁸⁰ Campbell, 245.

⁸¹ Marshall, "Luke's Portrait of the Pauline Mission," 106.

Paul's helpers and colleagues, they all demonstrated that Paul's missions were participated and integrated by his fellow workers.

1.2.3 The Integral Method Centred at the Proclamation of the Gospel

Paul's missions were centred at the proclamation of the gospel, which turned out to be a vital missionary method of Paul. "The directive to proclaim the news of God's redemptive intervention in the person and work of Jesus the crucified and risen Messiah and Savior results quite naturally in a basic method" of Paul's missionary work.⁸² Don N. Howell Jr states that the essential core of the Pauline mission is "not found in its genesis, strategic pattern, or underlying dynamics;" rather, it is the message concerning the gospel of God that defines and determines his mission.⁸³ Namely, Paul's mission is essentially about the message of the gospel. Howell explains further, "One of the most consistent and pervasive themes of Paul's letters is that the person and work of Jesus Christ, particularly his death and resurrection, are the content of the proclamation."⁸⁴ While Jesus Christ is the essential core and the content of proclamation, proclamation has been the central task of mission. John D. Harvey states,

⁸² Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 257.

⁸³ Howell Jr, 91.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 70-71.

preaching/teaching is the primary activity expected of the one sent on mission. Jesus was sent to preach. The disciples' pre-resurrection mission included preaching, and their post resurrection mission emphasized preaching and teaching. Proclamation must remain central to the mission enterprise.⁸⁵

Preaching is thus the primary activity in mission. This was true to Jesus, to the disciples, and to all Christians in the church history. Importantly, it remains true to Christians in the present time. Likewise, Benjamin L. Merkle illustrates that Paul did not have a complex strategy in the mission of the church, but he did have a gospel-centred one.⁸⁶ It was not necessary for Paul to develop a complex strategy of mission. What matters was that he had the message of the gospel at the centre of his mission. In view of this, while the gospel was all that Paul had to share, preaching the gospel was what Paul's mission about. With understandings from the above statements, proclamation of the gospel can be considered as a central method as well as the primary activity of doing mission throughout Paul's mission.

Like the Holy Spirit's giving authority to Paul's missionary methods, the proclamation of the gospel comes with the authority and the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit. When the "importance of the proclaimed word (e.g. 1 Thess. 1.5a; 1 Cor. 2.4a) has

⁸⁵ Harvey, "Mission in Jesus' Teaching," 48-49.

⁸⁶ Benjamin L. Merkle, "Paul's Ecclesiology," in Plummer and Terry, 71-72.

rightly been viewed as central in Paul's role as missionary," the Holy Spirit is also powerfully at work in the proclamation of the gospel (e.g. 1 Thess. 1.5b, 6b; 1 Cor. 2.4b).⁸⁷ Referring to 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6, P. T. O'Brien interprets that the gospel is fulfilled not simply when it is preached in the world, but when it is dynamically and effectively proclaimed in the power of the Spirit.⁸⁸ In other words, the gospel may be preached by missionaries, but it is fulfilled when it is proclaimed in the power of the Spirit. In Romans 1:16, Paul emphasises the power of God, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for salvation of everyone who believe." Likewise, in 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Paul writes, "because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction." It is apparent that Paul acknowledged the dynamic power in the gospel, which was integrally related to his missionary work. With regard to 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6, Schnabel explains, "the reason for the effectiveness of the proclamation of the gospel was not the method of Paul's preaching but God's Spirit who convinced citizens of Thessalonica of the truth of the gospel."⁸⁹ Meanwhile, considering Paul's use of rhetorical statements, Graham N.

⁸⁷ Burke and Rosner, *Paul as Missionary*, 6.

⁸⁸ O'Brien, 41.

⁸⁹ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 129.

Stanton explains that it is an irony here that Paul is using rhetoric to stress that “the gospel did not make its impact on the basis of his own powers of rhetorical persuasion, but through the power and conviction of God’s Spirit.”⁹⁰ Here Stanton seems to suggest that although Paul might use sensible rhetoric to address his audience, he clearly understood that it was the Spirit who was at work with power. As in 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Paul writes,

When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, so that your faith might not rest on men’s wisdom, but on God’s power.

Paul here indicates preaching the gospel as by God’s power and by the demonstration of the Spirit’s power. From these passages, it is abundantly clear that Paul understood “Christian conversion to begin with Spirit-empowered proclamation, which by the same Spirit found its lodging in the heart of the hearer so as to bring conviction of sin (as 1 Cor. 14:24-25 make clear), as well as of the truth of the gospel.”⁹¹ In other words, the

⁹⁰ Graham N. Stanton, “Paul’s Gospel,” in *The Cambridge Companion to St Paul*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 182.

⁹¹ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 849.

Spirit is at work with power in both the proclamation of the preacher and the heart of the hearers. Likewise, Anthony C. Thiselton explains 1 Corinthians 2:3-5,

Paul conveys the principle that proclaiming the gospel does not depend on self-confident rhetorical assertion, of the kind which many today mistakenly think of as “speaking with authority.” Paul’s “authority” lay not in smooth, competent, impressive, powers of articulation, but in a faithful and sensitive proclaiming rendered operative not by the applause of the audience, but by the activity of God. Self-promotion, too, is alien to proclaiming the gospel.⁹²

Indeed, Paul introduced the gospel at Corinth “not humanly and self-confidently” but in “an effacement of himself that allowed the Spirit to indicate His presence and power effectively.”⁹³ Therefore, in 1 Corinthians 2:3-5, Paul could appeal simultaneously to the reality of “his own weaknesses and the Spirit’s manifest power in his preaching and the Corinthians’ conversion.”⁹⁴ For Paul, preaching the gospel of the crucified One is the fulcrum of God’s power at work in the world (1 Cor. 1:18-25), and “Paul’s own preaching in a context of weakness and fear and trembling certified that the power that brought about the Corinthians’ conversion lay in the work of the Spirit, not in the wisdom

⁹² Anthony C. Thiselton, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Carlisle: The Paternoster Press, 2000), 214.

⁹³ C. Clare Oke, “Paul’s Method Not a Demonstration but an Exhibition of the Spirit,” *The Expository Times* 67, (1955): 85. Quoted in Thiselton, 204.

⁹⁴ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 825.

or eloquence of the preacher.”⁹⁵ Thus, it is certain that in Paul’s mission, the proclamation of the gospel cannot be considered as a simple definable message. Rather, it goes together with the authority and dynamic power of the Holy Spirit.

Furthermore, in Paul’s time, there was a method of commending the gospel to hearers used by intelligent and thoughtful men (1 Cor. 1:17-2:16). Paul describes it as “wisdom of words,” “the wisdom of the wise,” “the wisdom of this world,” “excellency of speech” and “the wisdom of men.” He states that this method of propagating the gospel is attractive to many, open to him, but he deliberately declines to use it.⁹⁶ Paul is convinced that the use of this method would have made the cross of Christ with no effect. This method may lead men to their intelligent apprehension rather than the understanding of the power of the cross, the power of God and the wisdom of God.⁹⁷ He stresses that his preaching and proclamation does not depend on his eloquent words and wisdom. He even points out that the gospel is “the antithesis of human wisdom and power” (1 Cor. 1:8; 2:1-5).⁹⁸ Paul’s conduct was very different from “the demeanor of itinerant orators,” and it

⁹⁵ Ibid, 824-25.

⁹⁶ Roland Allen, “Mission Activities Considered in Relation to the Manifestation of the Spirit,” in *The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen*, ed. David M. Paton (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2006), 107-08.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 108.

⁹⁸ Rosner, “The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians,” 182.

was “controlled by the nature of the gospel, not by considerations of expediency.”⁹⁹ In other words, the gospel itself has the power of God, and Paul relied on the power of God in preaching. Apart from the power of God, using human wisdom and power may just render the proclamation of the gospel with no effect. He made it clear in his mission that the focus was not on him or his methods but on God and his message.

Similarly, Schnabel explains from 1 Thessalonians 2:3-8 that Paul disassociates himself from cunning as methods and from seeking praise as motivations in his missionary proclamation. Thus, ones should also beware that Paul’s missionary methods do not guarantee effectiveness to certain groups of people. The success of Paul’s method of preaching the gospel, on the one hand, does not depend on how ones proclaim it, but “on the demonstration of the Spirit.”¹⁰⁰ On the other hand, it depends on the electing activity of God because the gospel does not constitute God’s saving power to all people, but only to those who are called/chosen (1 Thess. 1:4; 2:12. Rom. 8:29-30; 10:14-17). Paul declares clearly that the message of the crucified Jesus is “a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles” (1 Cor. 1:23). Only God who can render the proclamation of

⁹⁹ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 130.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Hodge, *An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1980), 33.

the gospel effective.¹⁰¹ As Plummer rightly concludes, “the gospel is ‘power’ because of its source (God), its content (Christ’s salvific death and resurrection), and its role in God’s plan to save all who he has predestined.”¹⁰² Hence, in all these aspects, namely, its source, content, and role, the gospel itself is power.

As the proclamation of the gospel was a fundamental method in Paul’s missionary work, the goal of evangelism also leads Paul’s further method of how to reach people with the gospel. In other words, in the process of proclaiming the gospel, Paul’s particular ways of reaching people were also his missionary methods. Schnabel indicates that because people need to hear the message of Jesus Christ, Paul needs to reach both the Jews and the Gentiles in a fashion that the gospel could be shared, whether in “public speeches or sermons and/or in private conversations.”¹⁰³ Hence, since Paul’s passion was to preach the gospel to both the Gentiles and the Jews, his custom was always going to synagogues first when he reached a new place (Acts 17:2, 17; 13:5, 14; 14:1; 18:7). In Acts 17:1-4, we can see that Paul was ministering in the synagogue in Thessalonica. Apparently, he was ministering to both the Jews and the Gentiles, for some of the Jews

¹⁰¹ Schnabel, “Paul the Missionary,” 34.

¹⁰² Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 55.

¹⁰³ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 257.

and many God-fearing Greeks became believers of Jesus. Paul's missionary outreach to the Jews continued in the diaspora synagogues without limitation in Jerusalem and Judea.¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile, for synagogues were not always in the places where Paul was able to share the good news, and for his calling to the Gentiles, he tried to preach in as many places as possible, including central squares, marketplaces, in front of pagan temples, forums, lecture halls, workshops, private homes, even prisons (Acts 21:27-22:21; 14:13-18; 17:17; 18:3; 19:9; 20:20). In Acts 14:8-18, we can see that Paul was preaching the gospel of Christ in a pagan setting. When a lame man came and listened to Paul, Paul looked at him and felt his faith. Paul then took the initiative and called him to stand up on his feet. Then he was able to jump up and walk. Amazed by the miracle, the pagans thought that Paul and Barnabas were gods, and they wanted to worship them. Yet, Paul tried to correct them and pointed them to the living God. In Acts 17:16-31, when Paul was in Athens, a city full of idols, he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, and in marketplace with random people, including some philosophers. With people like the philosophers in mind, Paul wisely used the religious context in

¹⁰⁴ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 515.

Athens to explain the message of the gospel. Thus, it is observed that in his mission, Paul chose to preach the gospel to both the Jews and the Gentiles in diverse places with flexible methods. The methods were flexible simply because Paul needed to use them to target different kinds of audience.

With a larger geographical range, Paul and his co-workers had to travel to where people lived, including cities, towns, and villages. Schnabel points out that “Paul did not expect people to come to him: he went to places where people lived.”¹⁰⁵ At the same time, “as the cities and the towns of the Mediterranean world were part of the political structure of the Roman Empire,” Paul and his fellow workers had to travel in Roman provinces.¹⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the way for the Jews to hear the good news was through synagogues in the cities, while the ways for pagans to be accustomed to hear the speech in early church was the city centres.¹⁰⁷ “In Greek cities this took place in the *agora* or ‘marketplace’ in the city center, in Roman cities in the *forum*, the civic center of the city.”¹⁰⁸ Besides, not only Paul’s flexibility in reaching both the Jews and the Gentiles led

¹⁰⁵ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 257.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

him to proclaim the gospel in different cities/regions, but sometimes his missionary work was also influenced by “external circumstances.”¹⁰⁹ For instances, Paul went to Galatia, where he engaged in missionary work “because of a physical infirmity” (Gal. 4:13). In another case, his desire and plans for visiting Rome had to be postponed repeatedly (Rom 1:10-11, 13).¹¹⁰ Therefore, while the proclamation of the gospel remained as Paul’s central task, he demonstrated flexibility in choosing various ways of reaching people with the gospel.

With different groups of people in mind, Paul and his co-workers preached the good news to all peoples with various ethnic and cultural backgrounds according to God’s universal salvation plan. Paul’s being “a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and the foolish” (Rom. 1:14) shows his view toward different people backgrounds. The terms of “whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free” express “the two basic distinctions that separated people in that culture---race/religion and social status.”¹¹¹ Nevertheless, “Paul’s missionary method was not predicated on the question of who

¹⁰⁹ Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, 520.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Fee also explains, “In 7:17-24 the same four groups are mentioned in the same order. Cf. Gal. 3:28, where Paul adds the final separation between people, ‘male and female.’ For different expression of this kind of list, see Cor. 3:11.” Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 2014), 606.

would respond more readily to the gospel. Since Paul wanted to reach all people in a given location, matters of ethnic identity, class, culture or gender did not control his missionary focus.¹¹² He asserted that he had been commissioned to be Jesus' witness to the world, which includes "all people, wherever they live, irrespective of ethnic identity or social status."¹¹³ In fact, with the proclamation of the gospel among his established churches, Paul united all believers into one body in Christ, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, men or women, rich or poor, educated or illiterate (1 Cor. 9:20-21; 12:13). He encouraged the churches to stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the good news (Phil. 1:27).

Overall, instead of looking only at Paul's individual methods, this study proposes an integral view on Paul's missionary methods. His integral methods came along with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the involvement of the church and co-workers, and the proclamation of the gospel as the central task. With an integral view on Paul's missionary methods, three methods can be concluded: 1) following the guidance of the Holy Spirit; 2) cooperating with co-workers; 3) preaching the gospel.

¹¹² Schnabel, "Paul the Missionary," 36.

¹¹³ Ibid, 31.

In Paul's mission of establishing and expanding churches, the essential aspects are not his personal methods, but the work of the Holy Spirit and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Whereas it is certainly worth and instructive to learn from Paul's missionary methods, it is also necessary to have an integral view on his methods. I believe that an integral view can do better justice to Paul's methods, and it will be helpful for understanding and applying his methods in a more holistic and realistic way.

II. PAUL'S MISSIONARY METHODS WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF ROLLAND

ALLEN'S IDEAS

With both limited scope and focus, this study will not discuss all possible methods concerning building up churches in Paul's missionary work. However, it will discuss Rolland Allen's ground-breaking missiological work *Missionary Methods: St Paul's or Ours*, especially regarding the mission of the church and inspirations from Paul's most relevant methods for British Chinese churches.

2.1 The Value of Allen's Work

I reckon three reasons to consider Rolland Allen's work as a guidance of reviewing Paul's missionary methods. Firstly, Allen's presentative work *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours* has been considered as a missiological classic for a century since its publication.¹¹⁴ His work has caught on among churches and missionaries across the globe.¹¹⁵ His study on Paul's missionary methods has been considered influential and classic contemporarily. Lamin Sanneh states that Allen composes a fluent work on

¹¹⁴ Plummer and Terry, 9.

¹¹⁵ J.D. Payne, "Rolland Allen's Missionary Methods at One Hundred," in Plummer and Terry, 235.

“missionary methods and principles as well as on the philosophy of cross-cultural mission.”¹¹⁶ Allen’s developed Pauline missiology has been well recognised and researched. Robert L. Plummer, who did a survey of his book, comments that Allen’s text exhibits familiarity with scholarly works and exegetical issues despite it is practical in orientation.¹¹⁷ Steven Richard Rutt, who recently completed a biography of Roland Allen and a study of his missionary theology, comments,

His earlier interpretation of Pauline ministry was seen through the lens of Ramsay’s examination of Paul’s missionary travels and Harnack’s ecclesiological hermeneutic. After extensive archival analysis of Allen’s outlined comments on Paul’s letters, epistolary sermons and periodic translations from the Greek text, the evidence discloses that his research reflection and engagement with Pauline missiology is well thought through.¹¹⁸

The above statements suggest that Allen’s work was thoughtfully written and widely recognised by both the academy and the church.

Meanwhile, Allen’s work has been approved by time. “Even fifteen years after the publication of *Missionary Methods*, Allen was still convinced of both the challenges of his day and the necessity of the apostolic paradigm.”¹¹⁹ Allen is viewed as a forerunner of

¹¹⁶ Lamin Sanneh, “Introductory Essay,” in Paton, iii.

¹¹⁷ Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 8.

¹¹⁸ Steven Richard Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2018),

¹¹⁹ Payne, 235-36.

something that has been lasting to the present day. “Some of the things he says seem commonplace today, but they were hardly talked about in any serious way at the time when he first set himself to produce this book.”¹²⁰ In fact, Allen’s one essential concern was about the resubmission in each generation of the traditions of men to the Word and the Spirit of God.¹²¹ Likewise, his work has been put to the test and maintaining an enduring validity. Kenneth G. Grubb explains, “it is because he combined both insight and foresight, and not only perceived tendencies but was able to lay his finger on their meaning, that his work retains a lasting validity, and can be studied and restudied with profit.”¹²² Allen seemed to be humble and confident about his work at the same time. He “himself used to say that fifty years would pass before his views would win wide assent and influence policy and practice.”¹²³ As a result, it seems that not only Allen himself was confident with his writings but it has also been recognised by other scholars. Don N. Howell Jr commends that there should be a renewed interest in Allen’s writings for “churches and missions are being forced by circumstances to face the arguments which

¹²⁰ Roland Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), v.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, iii.

¹²² *Ibid.*, v.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

Allen so ably deployed nearly half a century ago.”¹²⁴ In other words, Allen’s views and arguments are still highly relevant and instructive for churches and missions to the present time.

Secondly, Rolland Allen’s experience as a missionary to China would render his understanding of Pauline missiology much relevant to the present study. Allen was a missionary to China, serving as an Anglican missionary for eight years from 1895 to 1903. His understanding of mission, including Paul’s mission, was inevitably influenced by his experiences in China. Steven Richard Rutt expounds that Allen’s missionary experiences had profoundly impacted his theological beliefs. He “experienced a paradigm shift in this missionary thinking after serving in China the five years prior to the Boxer Uprising (1900).”¹²⁵ Put it another way, Allen’s missionary thinking would not have been like what it was if he did not have missionary experiences in China. In a specific way, Allen “developed his ideas and opinions especially with China in mind, though the model of mission he put up for emulation was that of the Apostle Paul.”¹²⁶ In fact, Allen himself expresses that his experiences as a missionary to China have influenced “his

¹²⁴ Howell Jr, 77.

¹²⁵ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 27.

¹²⁶ Paton, xv.

psychological and exegetical conclusions.”¹²⁷ Particularly, “his missionary experience in China convinced him to the validity of planting the indigenous Church as self-supporting, self-governing, and self-extending.”¹²⁸ In addition to his missionary experiences in China, from which Allen obtained practical first-hand knowledge, Allen was also responsible for an English parish and spent forty years to write on missionary principles.¹²⁹ Thus, Allen reasonably had missionary experiences, practical knowledge and theological understanding in contexts of both Chinese and English churches. Hence, these advantages of Allen give an extra credit for looking at his instructive work on Paul’s missionary methods while applying them to Chinese churches in the UK.

Thirdly, Roland Allen’s work has the same focus and vision with the present study. Regarding focus, Allen’s work emphasises Paul’s missionary methods of building a firm church, which is also the focus of this study. Since this study aims to explore the connection between Paul’s missionary methods and Chinese churches in the UK, it intentionally limits the research scope within the need of benefitting churches from an ecclesiastical perspective: what the church can learn from Paul’s missionary work,

¹²⁷ Plummer, *Paul’s Understanding of the Church’s Mission*, 11.

¹²⁸ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 62.

¹²⁹ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*, iii.

instead of what missionaries can learn from. In Allen's view, the productive methods of Paul's missionary work are particularly about establishing churches. He states,

In a very few years, he built the church on so firm a basis that it could live and grow in faith and in practice, that it could work out its own problems, and overcome all dangers and hindrances both from within and without. I propose in this book to attempt to set forth the methods which he used to produce this amazing result.¹³⁰

In other words, Allen's research purpose was to set forth Pauline methods which he used to produce amazing results of established churches.¹³¹ Though it may be difficult to present all Pauline methods thoroughly, the present study, like Allen's work, will focus on exploring Pauline methods of establishing and building up churches.

Regarding Allen's work *Missionary Methods*, Christoph W. Stenschke argues that "Paul's mission was inextricably linked to churches and that it can and should be understood as the mission of the church(es)."¹³² Just as Allen himself comments that Paul "did not go about as a missionary preacher merely to convert individuals: he went to establish churches from which the light might radiate throughout the whole country

¹³⁰ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 8.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² Stenschke, 75.

round.”¹³³ In particular, Allen’s statement below, which is considered as his church-planting credo, has been discussed seriously by missiologists.¹³⁴

In little more than ten years St Paul established the Church in four provinces of the Empire – Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia. Before AD 47, there were no churches in these provinces; in AD 57 St Paul could speak as if his work there was done, and could plan extensive tours into the far west without anxiety lest the churches which he had founded might perish in his absence for want of his guidance and support.¹³⁵

From the above statement, Allen seems to understand Paul’s planting of churches as his major business and extensive missionary work. In terms of the quality of Paul’s work, F.F.

Bruce indicates that Allen’s confidence demonstrated in the above statement is justified, in which the established churches in the four provinces did not perish, but grew and prospered.¹³⁶ For Allen, God’s missional character itself inspires a close connection

between the Church and mission. He understands that because God is “One” and

“Missional,” it ought to be understood that the Church (the “one” body of Christ) is also

“missional.”¹³⁷ As in Robert L. Plummer words, the “apostolic church” must be

¹³³ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 109.

¹³⁴ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 38.

¹³⁵ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 3.

¹³⁶ F.F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 18. Quoted in Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 38.

¹³⁷ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 4.

missionary by its very nature.¹³⁸ Thus, given that an inherent connection between the Church and mission has always been present, contemporary endeavours of mission in the context of British Chinese Christianity are to be rightly studied from an ecclesiastical perspective. In view of this, while the present study aims to benefit building up churches in the British Chinese context, Allen's work on Paul's mission as "the mission of the Church" would be particularly helpful and it is in accordance with the focus of the present study.

In terms of vision, Allen's work has a motivation toward the facts, namely, the practices, instead of toward doctrines. This motivation is in accordance with the vision of the present study. The heart of this study is to hope that Paul's missionary methods can reveal implications particularly to the substantial needs of British Chinese churches.

Allen states that his attention toward Paul's methods "does not depend upon a true interpretation of the doctrine, but upon a true appreciation of the facts."¹³⁹ Believing that the facts, not the doctrines, could draw a general agreement, Allen seems to imply that a study on the facts will rather be more practical, applicable and manageable.¹⁴⁰ This

¹³⁸ Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 2.

¹³⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 8-9.

¹⁴⁰ Allen states, "about the facts there is very general agreement: about the doctrine there is very little agreement." *Ibid*, 9.

research has the same attitude, hoping that Paul's missionary methods would shed light practically rather than doctrinally while being applied for the needs of Chinese churches in the UK.

2.2 Evaluation of Allen's View

After exploring the value of studying Allen's work, the present study now moves on to discuss Allen's view on Paul's missionary methods of establishing churches. One may not agree with all of Allen's opinions regarding Paul's missionary methods, but it is not difficult to observe that Allen considers Paul's ways of building up churches as productive and effective. Allen points out that churches were really established during Paul's missionary work. He claims,

This is truly an astonishing fact. The Churches should be founded so rapidly, so securely, seems to us to-day, accustomed to the difficulties, the uncertainties, the failures, the disastrous relapses of our own missionary work, almost incredible. Many missionaries in later days have received a larger number of converts than St. Paul; many have preached over a wider area than he; but none have so established Churches.¹⁴¹

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 3-4.

Meanwhile, Allen believes that playing a role of trans-local church planter, Paul would invest his time and energy mentoring and appointing indigenous leadership and then proactively carried out apostolic principles to build up self-extending churches.¹⁴² This indicates that Paul expected to continue his work and its principles, as guided by the Holy Spirit, for establishing churches. Some “modern missionary statesmen” had different attitude and they claimed that “the changing times and circumstances had made Paul’s methods inconsequential.”¹⁴³ However, Allen insists that principles do not change.¹⁴⁴ Schnabel agrees with J. Herbert Kane’s perception on the value of Paul’s missionary strategies:

We live in an anthropocentric age. We imagine that nothing of consequence can be accomplished in the Lord’s work without a good deal of ecclesiastical machinery ---committees, conferences, workshops, seminars; whereas the early Christians depended less on human wisdom and expertise, more on divine initiative and guidance. It is obvious that they didn’t do too badly. What the modern missionary movement needs above everything else is to get back to missionary methods of the early church.¹⁴⁵

This statement points out the modern Christian reliance on ecclesiastical machinery, which is based more on a kind of anthropocentric perspective. Modern Christians tend to

¹⁴² Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 29.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 28.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁴⁵ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 30.

rely more on human wisdom and expertise in their mission. Christians, missionaries, and scholars have produced many research and studies on mission. Yet, on the contrary, early Christians did not rely on research or studies when they started their mission. Instead, they depended more on divine initiative and guidance. Namely, they were depending on the work and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, modern Christians need to learn from the missionary methods of the early church. The statement also supports Allen's belief that the account of planting churches in the four provinces, given by the author of Acts, is certainly not for a mere interest in archaeology and history. Instead, "It was really intended to throw light on the path of those who should come after."¹⁴⁶ In other words, Allen believes that the author of Acts intended for Paul's account of planting churches to be observed and learned by Christians of following generations.

2.2.1 Two Decisive Aspects of Paul's Missionary Methods

It is generally considered that there are six areas in Allen's work that manifest Paul's missionary methods: (1) Paul did not have "preconceived" plans of campaign, but he followed where the Spirit led and sought opportunities. (2) He targeted suitable centres

¹⁴⁶ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 4.

for preaching the gospel. (3) He planted churches and guided them to be self-supporting and self-governing by the power of the Holy Spirit and the teaching foundation. (4) Paul tended to lay simple and strong foundations in his teaching. (5) In terms of discipline, Paul did not compel them to obey a law. Instead, he led them to follow the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit. (6) Paul's "ideal of unity was essentially spiritual." He made attempt to bind disciples into one not by "any centralized organization or by obedience to a common authority," but by the power of one Spirit in the body of Christ.¹⁴⁷

Viewing through Allen's work, I can observe two major decisive approaches of Paul that lead all his other specific methods. These two leading approaches can be described as following the Holy Spirit on the one hand: 1) the plans of mission, 2) the growth of the church, 3) the discipline of the disciples, 4) the unity of the assembly; and on the other hand, focusing on proclamation of the gospel: 1) seeking for the opening of doors, 2) choosing centres for propagating the faith, 3) teaching the most fundamental message based on the gospel of Jesus Christ.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, viii.

Allen's study on the six areas seems to suggest that the two decisive approaches, which are following the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the message of Christ, are essential methods in Paul's missionary work. These two essential ways, which consist of principles and produce effective results of growing churches in Paul's mission, are in fact partially related to the aspects of an integral view of Paul's missionary work highlighted in the previous chapter. In other words, the two essential methods in Allen's work perfectly meet the two aspects of the integral view in this study. However, though Allen does recognise the importance of the Holy Spirit and the gospel, he seems to focus more on Paul's individual methods than on the function and cooperation of his co-workers. When considering Paul's ten-year established churches, Allen describes, "whatever assistance he may have received from the preaching of others, it is unquestioned that the establishment of the churches in these provinces was really his work."¹⁴⁸ Allen demonstrates that Paul's work in the New Testament made him a founder for others. This point is challenged by the integral view highlighted earlier in the first chapter, which explains that Paul's mission is affected and co-worked by other elements.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 3.

Nevertheless, Allen's literature studies concerning the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in Paul's mission have been widely recognised. He is considered as pre-eminently the missionary thinker of the Spirit.¹⁴⁹ Steven Richard Rutt observes that, in Allen's book *Missionary Methods*, his understanding of mission, with a particular view of the *missio Dei* that given the Holy Spirit emphasis, resonates throughout the book.¹⁵⁰

Lesslie Newbigin, who wrote the foreword for Allen's another influential work *the Spontaneous Expansion of the Church*, points out Allen's very heart and life of his message, "the mission of the Church is the work of the Spirit."¹⁵¹ Recognising Allen's view on the role of the Holy Spirit in mission, the missiologist Harry R. Boer also says, "no review of the place which the Spirit as power occupies in missionary literature may fail to mention the name of Roland Allen."¹⁵² Bearing in mind the contemporary application of the work of the Holy Spirit, Schnabel asserts that because Allen connects the missionary impetus with pneumatological experience, his work deserves to be read in the twenty-first century.¹⁵³ From the above statements of various scholars, it is clear that

¹⁴⁹ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 165.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁵¹ Allen, *The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church and the Causes Which Hinder It*, iii.

¹⁵² Harry R. Boer, *Pentecost and Missions* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1961), 63. Quoted in Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 61.

¹⁵³ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 33.

Allen's understanding and emphasis on the prominent role of the Holy Spirit in church mission have been significantly valued.

While Allen might acquire practical knowledge from his own missionary experiences, his emphasis on pneumatology and ecclesiology apparently stemmed from his devotion to Pauline thought and shaped by Paul's missionary principles, methods and practices.¹⁵⁴ To Allen, Pauline missiology is a better way to do mission by trusting the Holy Spirit to direct the churches.¹⁵⁵ He argues that "the main emphasis in Acts is that Pentecost marked the turning point in the Church's emergent juncture in 'that they were the recipients of a gift of the Holy Spirit sent upon them by Christ, and that all the labours and successes of their lives were due to the influence of that Spirit'."¹⁵⁶ He further suggests that if ones believe in the gift of the Holy Spirit when reading Acts, "it is plain that in the acts of the apostles we shall find a revelation of the Holy Ghost."¹⁵⁷ Thus, Allen has been constantly reminding the readers that the book of Acts is not merely the

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 64, 172-73.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 62.

¹⁵⁶ Roland Allen, *Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Oxford University Press, 1917). Repr. in David Paton, ed., *The Ministry of the Spirit: Selected Writings of Roland Allen* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 1-61. Quoted in Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 61.

¹⁵⁷ Roland Allen, "Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the 'Acts of the Apostles'," in Paton, 12.

story of Paul or any other apostles. Rather, it is the story, the work, and the revelation of the Holy Spirit. Allen's view of the Holy Spirit's role in Pauline theology would find resonance among more contemporary scholars, such as Gordon Fee, who explains that "Paul frequently refers to his own effective ministry as a direct result of the work of the Spirit. This work included not only conviction concerning the truth of the gospel, but also signs and wonders, all of which resulted in changed lives."¹⁵⁸ In addition to such resonance, Pauline scholars such as Robert L. Plummer recognises Allen's view, "the Spirit is the source of mission," and it is "the inevitable prompting of the indwelling Spirit results in the early church's evangelistic zeal."¹⁵⁹ Hence, in his study on the missionary activities in Acts, particularly in Paul's missionary work, Allen highlights Paul's indispensable approach of following the Holy Spirit and being aware of his revelations. In view of this, following the Holy Spirit, who is dynamically at work in church life and mission, would be a decisive way of providing guidance and confidence for the church's missionary endeavour in the contemporary time.

¹⁵⁸ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 824.

¹⁵⁹ Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 9.

In addition to following the Holy Spirit, Allen understands that propagating the gospel is another key approach in Paul's mission. To Allen, "one of the main principles undergirding the apostle Paul's entire ministry was his focus on the gospel."¹⁶⁰ He explains that in Paul's epistles, Paul demonstrates that he was a preacher of the gospel, not of the law. Paul's method as a method of the gospel "is the most distinctive mark of Pauline Christianity."¹⁶¹ Allen also believes that Luke's attention was wholly fixed on the preaching of the gospel in ever wider fields in Paul's mission. He interprets,

St Paul was a great organizer, a great reader and thinker and writer; but on these matters St Luke is absolutely silent. He does not mention the writing of any epistle. St Paul stayed at different times for comparatively long periods in certain cities, and there were intervals between his missionary journeys. St Luke passes over these periods in a brief sentence. He tells us scarcely anything of the work of St Paul at these times.¹⁶²

Luke thus seems to have a specific focus in his narrative of Paul's story. Allen explains further,

St Luke is concerned almost entirely with the spreading of the gospel; when he has told us how the first converts were won, how they faced persecution and were established, he passes rapidly on. Even when he does stay to describe some important event, or to sketch the internal condition of a church, he nearly always adds a note to point out its influence on evangelization of the world.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰ Robert L. Plummer, "Paul's Gospel," in Plummer and Terry, 44.

¹⁶¹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 196.

¹⁶² Allen, "Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the 'Acts of the Apostles'," 15.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 16.

To describe Allen's explanation in short, he is arguing that the gospel is the only focus and main approach in Paul's mission and in Acts. Regarding Allen's bold assertion on Paul's focus on preaching the gospel, Robert L. Plummer presents supportive statistics, explaining that Paul uses some form of the word "gospel" seventy-seven times in his thirteen canonical letters.¹⁶⁴ Indeed, in Paul's mission, his divine task was nothing other than proclamation of the gospel, and his missionary work was all centred at proclaiming the gospel.

2.2.2 Maintaining Unity as A Significant Approach in Paul's Mission

After reviewing the two decisive methods that Allen has discussed, I will discuss a Pauline approach of maintaining unity, which is also emphasised in Allen's work. In Allen's discussion on unity, he primarily gives emphasis on unity among churches. He stresses Paul's asserted ecclesiology as having only one Church.¹⁶⁵ He insists on the prevailing ecclesiology as "there is only one Church which contains all particular or local Christian churches - *e pluribus unum*."¹⁶⁶ Namely, the Church expresses "true catholicity from the essence of *e pluribus unum* - out of many, one."¹⁶⁷ Thus, to Allen, "Christianity

¹⁶⁴ Plummer, "Paul's Gospel," 45.

¹⁶⁵ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 34.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 4.

and the Church were imported into countries and are essentially not local but universal.”¹⁶⁸ In view of this, “the Church (universal) is one and that local churches (particular) are spiritually united to the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church by the Holy Trinity.”¹⁶⁹ Allen here understands the Church as being spiritually united. He clarifies that unity does not consist in outward conformity, but in incorporation into the body of Christ.¹⁷⁰ In this sense, even when there may not be outward connection or cooperation of some kind, churches all over the world are still spiritually united as one Church.

Allen criticises the idea of a national church as it would lead to an impression of that church not being part of a united universal Church. Since the Church is one, Christian and church unity is thus inescapable. Accordingly, when embracing a concept of Christian/church unity, sectarianism is to be rejected. Allen argues against “ethnic identities that asserted patronizing characteristics and hegemonic customs.”¹⁷¹ With

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 29.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 4.

¹⁷⁰ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 174.

¹⁷¹ Rutt, 111.

regard to Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia, Allen based his argument on the evidence in Paul's refutation of the Judaizers' practices.¹⁷² Allen states,

We have seen that St Paul did not set out on his missionary journeys as a solitary prophet, the teacher of a solitary individualistic religion. He was sent forth as the messenger of a Church, to bring men into fellowship with that body. His converts were not simply united one to another by bonds of convenience arising from the fact that they lived in the same place, believed the same doctrine, and thought it would be a mutual assistance to form a society. They were members one of another in virtue of their baptism. Each was united to every other Christians everywhere, by the closest of spiritual ties, communion in the one Spirit...He constantly spoke of the churches of Macedonia, of Achaia, of Galatia, of Syria and Cilicia, of Asia as unities.¹⁷³

Apparently, Allen's picture of one worldwide Church in Christ is rooted in Paul's teaching on the body of Christ. Paul uses the image or metaphor of the body of Christ to describe the Church and its united feature (Rom. 12:5; 1 Cor. 12:12-17, 27; Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4-6, 15-16; Col. 1:18, 2:19). In particular, the analogy of the body in 1 Corinthians 12 provides a richer insight into community life in church than any other passage in the New Testament.¹⁷⁴ Paul highlighted the analogy of the body in this passage with two

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 166. Allen footnotes this statement by citing the text: Macedonia: 2 Cor. 8:1; Achaia: Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 1:1; 9:2; Galatia: Gal. 1:2; 1 Cor. 16:2; Syria and Cilicia: Gal. 1:21; Acts 15:23, 41; Asia: 1 Cor. 16:19; Judaea: 1 Thess. 2:14.

¹⁷⁴ Hans Conzelmann, *1 Corinthians: A Commentary on the First Epistle of the Corinthians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 204.

essentials: unity and diversity. He thus emphasised a need of diversity within unity.¹⁷⁵ In fact, Paul made a clear point that diversity is essential for a healthy church, but not uniformity.¹⁷⁶ In view of this, diversity in the church is not an issue or a problem. Instead, it reveals one side of the true nature of the church, with unity as another side of a healthy church.

In addition, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 indicates an “ultimate theological context--diversity within unity belongs to the character of God himself.”¹⁷⁷ It is the “one God who is himself characterised by diversity within unity has decreed the same for his church.”¹⁷⁸ In other words, diversity within unity as a character of God is the basis for the unity and diversity of the Church.

Gordon D. Fee’s literal translation of 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 by means of a structural display of the whole passage has given a clearer view to understand that “diversity has its roots in God himself.”¹⁷⁹ He demonstrates that both the need for unity and for diversity in the believing community are the work of “the one and the same

¹⁷⁵ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 582.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 583.

¹⁷⁷ Fee.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 584-85.

Spirit.”¹⁸⁰ Below is his structural display (the emphasis on “diversity” is capitalised; the emphasis on “the same” Spirit is italicised):

4 DIVERSITIES of gifts there are, but *the same* Spirit
 5 DIVERSITIES of service there are, but *the same* Spirit
 6 DIVERSITIES of workings there are, but *the same* Spirit
 who works ALL THINGS IN ALL PEOPLE.
 7 TO EACH is given the manifestation of the Spirit
 for the common good.
 for
 8 TO ONE is given a message of wisdom, through the Spirit;
 TO ANOTHER a message of knowledge, by *the same* Spirit;
 9 TO ANOTHER faith, by *the same* Spirit;
 TO ANOTHER gifts of healings, by *the same* Spirit;
 10 TO ANOTHER workings of miracles;
 TO ANOTHER prophecy;
 TO ANOTHER discernments of spirits;
 TO ANOTHER kinds of tongues;
 TO ANOTHER interpretation of tongues;
 11 ALL THESE THINGS works the one and *the same* Spirit,
 DISTRIBUTING TO EACH ONE,
 even as he wills.¹⁸¹

The emphasis and flow of this structural display expressly show that God himself is the root of diversity (vv. 4-6). God has given “diverse manifestations (gifts) to different people for the common good of the community (v.7), which point is illustrated in vv.8-

¹⁸⁰ Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 874.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

10.”¹⁸² The last verse (v. 11) repeats and reinforces all the prior themes.¹⁸³ Hence, the key to unity is to connect the Christian life in the Spirit. “Our desperate need is for a sovereign work of the Spirit to do among us what all our ‘programmed unity’ cannot.”¹⁸⁴ The church needs diversity of the body to bloom, and the church needs unity of the body to build up one another to bloom. Believers should then stop “being singular in their own emphasis,”¹⁸⁵ and acknowledge that unity is “the result of our common life in the Spirit, not of our human machinations.”¹⁸⁶ That is to say, instead of striving for unity by human ways, Christians should be totally committed to the Spirit for church unity. In David E. Garland’s words, “Whatever the specifics of Paul’s analogy, the point is that the Spirit saturates the church body and that all Christians are imbued with the same Spirit.”¹⁸⁷ To sum up the statements of various scholars, it has been understood that maintaining unity in the Spirit is a key approach in Paul’s mission for the church’s establishment and growth. As a scholar and missionary living in a time earlier than current scholars like Gordon Fee and David Garland, Allen rightly grasped this key approach of the Apostle

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 584-85.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 607.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 585.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 607.

¹⁸⁷ David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003), 591.

Paul and elaborated an understanding relevant to the contemporary Church and its mission.

2.2.3 Paul's Missionary Method concerning Urban Centres

Allen considers that Paul distinctly recognised the unity of the Church in provinces so he made the evangelisation of provinces, rather than cities, as his aim of establishing churches.¹⁸⁸ In fact, Paul's approach to urban centres within certain provinces can be considered as another method in his missionary work. Allen believes that Paul did not deliberately plan his missionary journeys and tours.¹⁸⁹ However, Paul tended to focus his mission on urban centres, which were "the most conducive to promoting the gospel in its wider environs."¹⁹⁰ Allen believes that "St. Paul did deliberately consider the strategic value of the provinces and places in which he preached."¹⁹¹ Paul seemed to have been guided "by some very definite principles in his selection of his mission stations."¹⁹² One of the principles is when establishing churches, Paul had a big picture and object in the provinces rather than in a city, a town or a village which he preached. Namely, the unit in Paul's view was the province rather than the

¹⁸⁸ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 166.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁹⁰ Michael F. Bird, "Paul's Religious and Historical Milieu," in Plummer and Terry, 17.

¹⁹¹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 18.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 17.

city.¹⁹³ Paul's missionary work on certain provinces contained "a Roman administration, Greek culture, and Jewish influence" and bustled with commercial activity.¹⁹⁴ Thus, Paul's preaching activity had been confined to a few significant urban centres along the major highways of the empire.¹⁹⁵ Another principle, which Allen suggests, is that Paul established churches in a few important urban places in order to spread the gospel into the country around as "he intended his congregation to become at once a centre of light."¹⁹⁶ Allen states that there is "no particular virtue in attacking a centre or establishing a Church in an important place unless the Church established in the important place is a Church possessed of sufficient life to be a source of light to the whole country round."¹⁹⁷ When Paul occupied two or three centres, "he had really and effectually occupied the province."¹⁹⁸ Therefore, to Allen, Paul started his mission without a definite plan to establish churches in particular cities, but "wherever he was led he always found a centre, and seizing upon that centre he made it a centre of Christian life."¹⁹⁹ As showed in the above statements, Allen believes that Paul intended to establish

¹⁹³ Ibid, 17-18.

¹⁹⁴ Garland, 591. Also see Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 19-23.

¹⁹⁵ Ware, 285.

¹⁹⁶ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 19.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 27.

churches in urban centres. To Allen, Paul understood the strategic value of centres and conducted missionary work accordingly: establishing churches in urban centres, making them centres of light, spreading the gospel to further areas in the provinces.

Regarding Paul's method of selecting centres, there are different views among scholars. Considering the focus and limited scope of this study, I will especially discuss Schnabel's and Allen's ideas as I find them having both similar and contrastive points. Schnabel considers Paul's metropolis mission through different angles of view. He argues that neither Luke nor Paul has explicitly commented on this matter. He contends that "it is significant overstatement to say that Paul's passion was the planting of churches in metropolitan centers or in the strategic cites of the Roman empire."²⁰⁰ He explains a thorough geographical scope of Paul's missionary journeys and claims that Paul didn't really make a "grand strategy" with decisions on which cities to be a new missionary initiative. As a result, he insists, Paul focused on cities since "he was concerned for the salvation of the Jewish people, and since Jews lived in the cities of the Roman provinces."²⁰¹ Paul engaged his missionary activities in cities also because they

²⁰⁰ Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 281.

²⁰¹ Schnabel, "Paul the Missionary," 43.

were major population centres of his particular target--the Gentiles.²⁰² Thus, through these different angles of view, Schnabel explains that it was Paul's burning desire for winning as many people as possible to Christ that motivated him to concentrate his missionary work in city centres (1 Cor. 9:19-21).²⁰³ As in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, Paul says,

Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

This statement of Paul expresses his desire of winning as many people as possible for Christ. For the sake of the gospel, Paul was willing to sacrificially become different kinds of people in order to win them for Christ. Furthermore, what he wanted to win was not just all kinds of people, but all peoples. The dualism of "Jews and Greeks/Gentiles" in this passage usually refers to all peoples according to Jewish and Christian writings.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Ibid.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Rosner, "The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians," 185.

Thus, in this passage, Paul showed that he preached the gospel to anyone who was willing to listen, “whether they were Jews or Gentiles, men or women, free or slaves, members of the local elite or the disenfranchised.”²⁰⁵ Schnabel’s point is shared by scholars such as Brian S. Rosner, who explains that Paul was determined to connect culturally with a wide range of people with an aim, “I have become all things to all men so that by possible means I might save some” (9:22).²⁰⁶ Paul’s holding of a broad and overall missionary target is also recognised by Jehu J. Hanciles, who states that Paul’s strategic missionary necessity included the vulnerability and marginalised status of the outsiders.²⁰⁷ Therefore, Schnabel’s view is not uncommon, in which he considers Paul’s motivation of winning as many people as possible as the driving force behind his concentration of missionary work in city centres.

This view of Schnabel is apparently shared by Allen. Both Allen and Schnabel believe that Paul was determined to reach all groups of people in provinces and city centres. However, whereas Allen insists that Paul deliberately considered the strategic value of the provinces and places, Schnabel argues that it was only Paul’s desire and goal

²⁰⁵ Schnabel, “Paul the Missionary,” 43.

²⁰⁶ Rosner, “The Missionary Character of 1 Corinthians,” 185.

²⁰⁷ Jehu J. Hanciles, *Migration and the Making of Global Christianity* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2021), 136.

of reaching all peoples that led him to places like provinces and urban centres. To

Schnabel, Paul did not intentionally consider provinces and urban centres as having

strategic value for the proclamation of the gospel, or deliberately took any advantages of

provinces and centres for spreading the gospel to vast regions. For the purposes of the

present study, Paul's determination of preaching the gospel to as many people as

possible, as agreed by both Allen and Schnabel, bears great implications such as

spreading the gospel to city surroundings and rural areas in the UK as the Chinese

population has been expanding. Regarding Paul's deliberation of choosing urban centres

as having strategic value, I would think it is hard to make a definite judgement on the

matter since 1) it was a subjective matter in Paul's thoughts; 2) neither Paul nor other

biblical authors explicitly indicate Paul's deliberation of choosing urban centres as

having strategic value. Nevertheless, the absence of explicit indication in the scriptures

does not necessarily mean that the deliberation did not exist in Paul's mind. Paul might

just do it without saying it out. When the saying may be absent, it is still justifiable to

observe Paul's missionary methods from his consistent pattern of action. Given Paul's

consistent pattern of choosing urban centres for evangelism and for the spread of the

gospel to the provinces, it seems that Paul understood the strategic value of urban centres and he deliberately chose to establish churches in urban centres. I appreciate that Paul's proclamation of the gospel in urban centres objectively caused the effect of making urban centres with strategic value of spreading the gospel to further areas in the provinces. In this sense, considering the strategic value of urban centres and making them centres of light, therefore spreading the gospel to surrounding areas can also be a missionary method of Paul that Chinese churches can learn from.

This chapter has discussed Allen's view on Paul's missionary methods in four areas:

1) following the Holy Spirit, 2) proclaiming the gospel, 3) maintaining unity, 4)

preaching in urban centres. Concerning the two major leading approaches in Paul's mission, on the one hand, Allen observes both the significant role of the Holy Spirit in mission and the importance of following the Holy Spirit in Paul's missionary work.

Missionary activities do not rely on human endeavours, wisdoms, and methods but on the dynamic work of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Allen recognises proclamation of the gospel as a central approach in Paul's mission of establishing churches. This central approach was linked to other methods of Paul in his devotion to missionary work. Paul

devoted to proclamation of the gospel as assigned by the Holy Spirit, so he acknowledged and followed the guidance and dynamic work of the Holy Spirit in his missionary work.

Paul devoted to the gospel, so he proclaimed fundamental and practical teaching with the truth of the gospel. He devoted to the gospel, so he acknowledged all peoples of different classes and cultures and endeavoured to maintain the unity of the body of Christ. He devoted to the gospel, so he reached out to people wherever he could, including provinces and urban centres.

This chapter has explored and assessed Allen's view on Paul's missionary methods. It has revealed the missiological background and structure of Pauline methods. Based on this background and structure, the relevance and implications of Paul's missionary methods to British Chinese churches will be explored and discussed in the next chapter.

III. PARTICULAR IMPLICATIONS OF PAUL’S MISSIONARY METHODS TO BRITISH CHINESE CHURCHES

The first chapter has defined what “mission” and “method” mean in this study, and it has also explained the idea of an integral method. The second chapter has discussed Paul’s two essential approaches and the other two methods as explained by Roland Allen in his writings. This chapter will focus on the practical value concerning how to apply Paul’s missionary methods. Particularly, what can be applied to British Chinese churches. Michael F. Bird states that “any contemporary practice of mission has to appropriate Paul’s missionary methods.”²⁰⁸ Thus, this chapter will discuss particularly the connections between Paul’s missionary methods and British Chinese churches. From an ecclesiastical standpoint, such a discussion is meant to be helpful for building up British Chinese churches biblically, practically and dynamically.

By looking at the specific connections between Paul and British Chinese churches, this study aims to provide an alert about how to apply appropriately Paul’s missionary methods in the British Chinese context. Firstly, applying Paul’s missionary methods will

²⁰⁸ Bird, 17.

not simply be imitating Paul. Allen observes that there was “missionary work made ridiculous or dangerous by the vagaries of illiterate or unbalanced imitators of the Apostle, that we have allowed ourselves to be carried to the opposite extreme, and to shut our eyes to the profound teaching and practical wisdom of the Pauline method.”²⁰⁹

Allen’s observation reminds that there is a fundamental step in applying Paul’s methods. Instead of simply applying Paul’s methods, Christians need to understand the profound teaching and practical wisdom in his methods. In fact, it is also for this reason that this study has spent the first and second chapter to explore the background, profound teaching, and practical wisdom of Pauline methods.

Moreover, it is not about simply adopting “fragments of St. Paul’s method” and trying to “incorporate them into alien systems.”²¹⁰ There are only partial primary sources of Paul’s missionary work recorded in his letters and the book of Acts. This fact indicates that Paul’s missionary approaches appear to be fragmental in the Bible. I. Howard Marshall explains that Luke, the author of Acts, had the difficult task of covering a complex period of Christian history. Luke has constructed “a storyline which leads from

²⁰⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 6.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

Jerusalem to Rome, and he has ignored other material.”²¹¹ Thus, it is certain that if one’s focus is to only find and imitate all of Paul’s missionary approaches in the book of Acts and his letters, he or she may fail to do it.

Secondly, there is a need of renewing practical ways and experience with respect to Paul’s missionary methods. Paul’s approaches might not remain constant as they might be constantly improved and renewed in his time. Schnabel questions that “wouldn’t Paul have used the experience during these twelve years in Arabia, Syria and Cilicia in order to modify his methods in view of new and specific circumstances?”²¹² It means that by the time we have more evidence of Paul’s missionary methods for the ten years from A.D. 45 to 55, there were already twelve years of missionary experience that Paul had gained.²¹³ Since there would not be fixed missionary methods cooperating through Paul’s whole missionary journeys, it would be reasonable to anticipate that there will not be constant missionary methods in the mission of the church now and in the future. Thus, in terms of missionary methods, it should always be an active process of renewing under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in view of the church’s growth and the people who are called

²¹¹ Marshall, “Luke’s Portrait of the Pauline Mission,” 100.

²¹² Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 31.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

to mission.²¹⁴ Namely, it would be sensible to always seek and rely on the Holy Spirit in his revealing will and renewing plan with appropriate ways of doing mission in every season and every journey.

Thirdly, this thesis does not intend to find out some specific methods that can fix problems in all circumstances of missionary work. Instead, it hopes to find some specific connections that can be especially instructive to the British Chinese church context. As Schnabel observes, “despite two thousand years of missions history, missionaries still do not operate on the basis of ‘a deliberate, well-formulated, duly executed plan of action based on human observation and experience’ which guarantees success in every instance.”²¹⁵ In other words, missionaries have not been able to invent a plan of action which always guarantees success. Although human observation and experience could be helpful in some way, missionaries cannot use them to make a plan of action that is workable in all circumstances. When the circumstances change, missionary methods will need to adjust or change accordingly. Moreover, Allen declares, “still we cannot but assume that his (Paul’s) principles have a permanent value for all time, even though their

²¹⁴ Ibid, 31-32.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

method of application may vary according to circumstances.”²¹⁶ Here Allen indicates that it is Paul’s principles that have a permanent value. In other words, Paul’s principles do not change over time. However, their application may need to adjust as circumstances change. Thus, Paul’s missionary methods are not for simply meeting all the needs in various circumstances. Instead, as circumstances change, Paul’s methods, which contain profound teaching and practical wisdom, should be applied with renewing insights under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If there is such one method or principle that is always applicable, it will be the approach of following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When following the Holy Spirit, the application of Paul’s methods may then adjust to meet the needs according to the changing circumstances. The method of application may change over time, but Paul’s principles will always have something to offer in a new circumstance. In this sense, although Paul’s methods may not always provide a direct solution to solve all problems straight away, his principles can always be instructive to the British Chinese context.

²¹⁶ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, vii.

Fourthly, Paul's missionary methods should be applied under the same foundation.

As Allen understands, building a healthy church is a start of the process.²¹⁷ It does not necessarily mean perfection without problems. There were indeed problems in Paul's churches as well. However, it means that there is a necessity for churches to be built on the firm foundation of Christ, which leads to a strong and firm condition as a house building on the rock (Matt. 7:24-27). The same foundation once made the established churches growing in Paul's time, and it will certainly flourish in the ministries of the church in the present time. Thus, the foundation and the ability of growth are essential for starting mission and building up churches.

To make a specific example, Paul's principle of self-governing does not automatically apply to churches that have foundation problems. For the early churches that Paul built, there were trusted leaders. When applying self-governing, it should be at the same level of having trusted leaders. It means that if a church is established by leaders who have wrong motivations and do not take Christ as the foundation of the church, this principle of Paul should not be mechanically applied. In other words, it is a precondition

²¹⁷ Ibid, 3-4.

for a church to have the right foundation as the same foundation as Paul's, before considering the church's growth and development. If a church wants to continue growing spiritually, it must come to a healthy level which has its foundation in Christ. Namely, only when the church reaches a certain healthy level, Paul's methods will be helpful and effective as it can be.

A church with the same foundation as Paul's requires the continuity of Paul's vision of proclaiming the gospel. The early churches "were to function in direct continuity with the apostles' mission," for both the churches established in the apostles' time and the early churches were determined by God's powerful gospel/word.²¹⁸ Likewise, as the same God's powerful word determines his work, there should also be a direct continuity between Paul's mission and the mission of the church in the present time. Thus, when a church is built on the firm foundation of Christ, while having fundamental teaching from the Word and enough leaders called by God, the church has the confidence to trust in the work of the Holy Spirit. It is God who builds and watches over, and it is certainly him who makes the church grow (Psalm 127:1).

²¹⁸ Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 42.

Fifthly, when applying Paul's missionary methods, Christians need to relate and distinguish between his context and the present context. This would be like a mechanic using a tool. How he understands a tool and when or where to use it will affect the result of his work. Situational elements have to be considered. For example, there was a disagreement between Paul and Barnaba concerning their plan and vision of going back to visit their established churches (Acts 15:36-41). In this context, it is hard to suggest if we should follow Paul not to take John, or we should follow Barnaba to take John for the ministry. Thus, when trying to apply Paul's missionary methods in the present time and context, it is always necessary to keep an integral view in mind to see how the Holy Spirit can work out Paul's missionary approaches in specific circumstances. Being aware of a sensible way of applying Paul's missionary methods, I would next explore some aspects of Paul's methods which would be most relevant to British Chinese churches.

3.1 Paul's Missionary Methods as A Biblical Guidance for the Development of British Chinese Churches

Paul's letters along with his missionary methods have been among the main biblical guidance for missions and churches through centuries. Meanwhile, Paul's

missionary methods for his ten-year established churches are mostly applicable and relevant to British Chinese churches in the sense that they both experience the same kind of developing stages. The Apostle Paul is considered as a founder who laid the foundation of many churches from around 47 A.D. to 57 A.D. Though these churches were really regarded as well established, a ten-year period naturally implies that there were a lot of developments in the process among these churches. It seems that some Chinese churches in the UK have a relatively short history.²¹⁹ Yet, some churches began as fellowships in the 1960s with the help of COCM.²²⁰ Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier in the introduction, many Chinese churches are still in their early stages of development. The reasons for being in the early stages of development, or bearing enduring weaknesses, could be vary. Wang Xin suggests that besides commonly known reasons such as relatively low education level of the pastors, lack of Chinese theological education, and a generally dull spiritual atmosphere, the unfavourable immigration policy and integration policy in the UK are also among the reasons for British Chinese churches' weaknesses. Wang explains that the British society in general tends to encourage immigrants'

²¹⁹ Hu Zhiwei, "Wo Dui Ying Guo Jiaohui de Guan Cha" [My Observation of British Churches], Faith 100, last modified 20 September 2021, <https://faith100.media/我對英國教會的觀察/72764>.

²²⁰ Chow, Alexander, *Ecclesial Diversity in Chinese Christianity*, 113.

integration into the British society, discourage the development of ethnic identity, and implement a high threshold of immigration policy.²²¹ With these unfavourable policies, it has been hard for the Chinese to build up and develop their confidence, community, and Chinese churches. This situation explains why after some decades, many Chinese churches are still in their early stages of development. Thus, relating to the need of developing British Chinese churches, Paul's missionary approaches would be helpful since they were used to also address a process of establishing and developing churches.

Based on discussions in the previous two chapters, I anticipate two most relevant Pauline methods for the developing stages of British Chinese churches. The first one is following and relying on the Holy Spirit and his guidance, submitting continuous prayers for his work. Kane encourages that modern missionary movements need to learn more from early church Christians who depended less on human wisdom and expertise, but more on the work of the Holy Spirit.²²² As it was mentioned in the first chapter, Paul's integral methods were guided by the Holy Spirit, and following the Holy Spirit's

²²¹ Wang Xin, "Yingguo Huaren Jiaohui Ji Ruo Zhi Yin" [Reasons for the Enduring Weakness of British Chinese Churches], *Christian Times*, issue 1519, 9 October 2016. https://christiantimes.org.hk/Common/Reader/News/ShowNews.jsp?Nid=96352&Pid=2&Version=1519&Cid=1038&Charset=big5_hkscs.

²²² Schnabel, *Paul the Missionary: Realities, Strategies and Methods*, 30.

guidance was a primary method in his mission. Through Thessalonian epistles, “Paul believes that the Spirit has been intimately involved on every level of the church-planting mission in Macedonian capital,” from initial evangelism to the gathering and nurturing of the congregation.²²³ Meanwhile, Paul’s effective church-planting work, which was accomplished in a short period of time with limited direct missionary involvement and follow up, also demonstrates “the apostle’s dependence on and confidence in the work of the Holy Spirit at every level of the church-building endeavour.”²²⁴ Trusting the Holy Spirit was the essential factor that determined Paul’s established churches with “dynamic staying power.”²²⁵ To state it in another way, Paul was confident that even in his forced and extended absence, the same Spirit will “preserve, strengthen, and perfect this young church.”²²⁶ Hence, since the same Spirit was working in young churches in Paul’s day, he will certainly be working in the present day. Similarly, Allen affirms that the Holy Spirit

²²³ Howell Jr, 83. Don N. Howell Jr summarises: “First, the power of the Holy Spirit, which accompanied the initial proclamation of the gospel by the apostolic team in Thessalonica, brought deep conviction (1 Thess. 1:5). Even though resistance was fierce, the Spirit made the apostolic visit result in a successful beginning (1 Thess. 2:1-2). Second, the conversion of these people was wrought by the same Spirit. He brought them first to deep conviction of sin, followed by a joyous response to the promise of forgiveness (1 Thess. 1:5-6). The Spirit set them apart as God’s holy people when they believed the truth (2 Thess. 2:13). Third, their ongoing Christian experience and growth is everywhere seen as Spirit-led: holiness in personal morality (1 Thess. 4:8); joy, prayer, and thanksgiving (1 Thess. 5:16-18); the desire to do God’s will and actions that spring from faith (2 Thess. 1:11). Fourth, the wise exercise of spiritual gifts in the assembly, especially prophecy, is a manifestation of the Spirit flaming among them and must not be quenched (1 Thess. 5:19-22; 2 Thess 2:1-2).”

²²⁴ *Ibid*, 78.

²²⁵ *Ibid*.

²²⁶ *Ibid*, 83.

is at work within younger churches at his time, just as the case in the early stages of the younger churches of Samaria, Lydda, Joppa, Phoenicia, Cyprus, Antioch, Galatia and Rome.²²⁷ In the same way, the Holy Spirit is for sure at work in the developing Chinese churches in the UK. Therefore, following and depending on the Holy Spirit should always be an essential method in the mission of British Chinese churches. While following the Holy Spirit is an important method, it is the church leadership that needs to set the example. As mentioned earlier, when applying Paul's methods, the church will need to have a trusted and healthy leadership. Trusted leaders will have Christ as the foundation of the church and rely on the Holy Spirit in their work. Whereas the method is clear, it is vital for the church leadership to lead the church in seeking and relying on the Holy Spirit in their work of mission and church growth. In addition, the church leadership will play an important role in maintaining church unity. As will be discussed later, the unity among church leaders, elders and co-workers is crucial in maintaining unity of the church.

In addition, as briefly mentioned in previous chapters, prayer is one way of following and trusting in the Holy Spirit for his way of doing his work through

²²⁷ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 173.

Christians. Paul writes in Ephesians 6:18, “And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.” Regarding this verse of Paul, Donald A. Carson states,

If praying for Paul along these lines is part and parcel of their praying “for all the saints” (6:18), it is difficult not to perceive that part of what believers should be praying for when they pray for all the saints is a certain holy boldness in their own witness. If even the apostle Paul, who can insist that he is not ashamed of the gospel (Rom. 1:16), discloses his need for God’s help in declaring the mystery of the gospel fearlessly, how much more do the rest of us need such help.²²⁸

Thus, while recognising following the Holy Spirit as a significant approach of doing mission, British Chinese churches will also need to acknowledge prayer as a part of the approach. As an important way of communication with God, by prayer Christians should seek the guidance and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. In seeking the Holy Spirit’s guidance, Christians should ask questions such as what to do, when to do, and how to do in terms of mission. When the guidance is given, they will still need to pray for the Holy Spirit’s power for the work. Prayer should be helpful for church members as individuals. Yet more importantly, as mission is the work of God entrusted to the church, they should come in one accord to pray together in various forms such as prayer meetings in a small

²²⁸ Donald A. Carson, “Paul’s Mission and Prayer,” in Bolt and Thompson, 181-82.

group, prayer meetings in the church, prayer meetings among churches, and prayer meetings with fasting. One such example of joint fellowship and prayer meeting took place in London in June 2015, and it was participated by pastors, church leaders, workers, missionaries, theological students from various Chinese churches in the region.²²⁹ Prayer should always be the essential for the development of Chinese churches in the UK.

The second most relevant method that Christians can apply from Paul's mission is proclaiming the gospel. Preaching the gospel is fundamentally important for the development of British Chinese churches. Schnabel states that "The focus on the crucified and risen Jesus is the content of the missionary proclamation, the foundation of the church and the standard for measuring the authenticity of the church's growth."²³⁰

Likewise, Plummer describes the gospel as the root for church development, "Christian leaders must constantly remind themselves and others of the gospel" because being firmly rooted in the understanding of the gospel is the centre for developing churches.²³¹

Plummer further presents an illustration from Paul's focus on the Corinthian church,

²²⁹ "London Jiaomu Tonggong Liandaohui" [Joint Prayer Meeting by Pastors and Church Leaders in London], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=17158.

²³⁰ Schnabel, "Paul the Missionary," 34.

²³¹ Plummer, "Paul's Gospel," 46.

[The] Corinthians are factional (1 Cor 3:3-4), immoral (1 Cor 5:1), inebriated (1 Cor 11:21), irreverent (1 Cor 11:21), jealous (1 Cor 15:12), unloving (1 Cor 13:1-3) and theologically misinformed (1 Cor 15:12). We might be tempted to think that the Corinthians needed a unity ministry, a sex and marriage ministry, an alcoholic recovery ministry and so on, but Paul knows that such fractured, superficial fixes would fail to deal with the root issue of the Corinthians' problems. All of the community's troubles flow from their failure to understand the gospel and live in light of it. The Corinthians do not need to move beyond the gospel; they need to be "reminded" of the gospel which Paul preached to them (1 Cor 15:1).²³²

He concludes that all ethics and practical matters of the Christian life must be rooted in the gospel of Christ.²³³ Plummer's view is a good reminder that the most crucial need for developing and for coping with issues and problems in the church is to help every believer to be rooted in the gospel of Christ.

Meanwhile, as "extensions of apostles' ministry, the churches are agents of God's word, which continues to work in and spread through them (e.g. Col 1:5-6; 3:16-17; 1 Thess 1:8; 2:13-16; 2 Thess 3:1)."²³⁴ Actually, when the Christian encounters the goodness of the gospel, such encounter will spontaneously stir up a passion of sharing the gospel with others. The level of freshness and the depth of the Christian's encounter

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Ibid, 47.

²³⁴ Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 2.

with the gospel will determine how natural and compelling that he or she will share the good news with other people. Just as Peter and John claimed, “we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

In addition, I would mention that the two of Paul’s most relevant missionary approaches, which are following the Holy Spirit and preaching the gospel, seem just to be parallel with two general Christian denominations in the world today: the Pentecostal and the Evangelical. There is no tendency and purpose in this study to discuss whether ones should follow the patterns of Pentecostal churches or Evangelical churches. However, it would hope to inspire ones to review the distinctive elements and merit in both the Pentecostal and the Evangelical while understanding that focusing on the Holy Spirit and preaching the gospel are two main approaches for the mission of growing churches. In one sense, these two main approaches in Paul’s mission exactly fit in the need and focus of both Pentecostal and Evangelical churches today. However, a commonly seen situation is that while both the Pentecostal and the Evangelical treasure their own strength and merit, they often fail to appreciate or learn from each other. Pentecostals tend to focus on the work of the Holy Spirit here and now, and they pay much less attention on developing

appropriate or sophisticated doctrinal teaching. On the contrary, Evangelicals tend to focus on developing sophisticated ways of presenting the gospel, while often neglect or downplay the power and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They have their respective strength, but they tend not to appreciate or learn from each other. Fee asserts that Paul “steers a path through the ‘radical middle’ that is often missed by both Evangelicals and Pentecostals, who traditionally misplace their emphasis on one side or the other.”²³⁵ In other words, while both the Pentecostal and the Evangelical have their respective strength, they should learn from each other’s strength. Thus, it is certainly necessary for Chinese churches in the UK to bear in mind that focusing on the Holy Spirit and preaching the gospel are primary missionary methods for the mission and growth of the church. These two methods are certainly essential in working together. In other words, they are integrated with each other. If churches are willing to be guided by the Holy Spirit, but not centred at the proclamation of the good news or rooted in the teaching of the gospel, they have not yet followed the Holy Spirit. If churches focus on propagating

²³⁵ Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 826.

the gospel, but do not depend on the work of the Holy spirit in every way, there would be a tendency of following men's wisdom and strategies.

The previous sections have explained following the Holy Spirit and preaching the gospel as two of Paul's most relevant methods for British Chinese churches, especially in their developing stages. On the one hand, the two methods fit the idea of an integral method. On the other hand, they also support Allen's focused methods concerning following the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the gospel. If ones consider Paul's missionary methods as integral methods, which should always be guided by the Holy Spirit and centred at preaching the gospel, it will be indispensable to take both the Holy Spirit and the gospel as priorities in all the journeys and seasons of doing the mission of the church. In the same way, if ones recognise following the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the gospel as the essential methods in Paul's mission, as explained by Allen, they will apply them throughout the growth of the church.

3.2 Paul's Missionary Method of Practicing Unity for the Multicultural Immigrant Chinese

Church Context

As mentioned earlier, the ethnic British Chinese groups have made up a multicultural context in particular with cultures and languages. Differences in cultures and languages exist among new mainland Chinese immigrants and between them and the historic British Chinese churches. The three main Chinese groups, which are the old immigrants, the new immigrants, and the British born Chinese, present a great diversity of culture and ethnicity. In addition, considering the pledge that the UK government has for Hong Kongers due to the clamp down following their prodemocracy demonstration, more than 7,000 Hong Kongers have moved to the UK since 2020.²³⁶ It is estimated that between 130,000 and 300,000 people from Hong Kong will be arriving in the UK in 2022.²³⁷ A lot of Hong Kongers will be coming to settle a new life in Britain. Therefore, the history and present growth of immigrant Chinese in the UK reveal a peculiar multicultural ethnic context. With this multicultural background, unity is a key issue that Chinese churches have to face. Allen states that people tend to treat unity mainly as a

²³⁶ Simon Goddard, "Is Your Church Hong Kong Ready," Baptist.Org, lasted modified 15 January 2021, https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/600405/Is_your_church.aspx.

²³⁷ Ibid.

question of organisation.²³⁸ They intend to maintain unity with practical uniformity of custom.²³⁹ Although uniformity of custom may appear to present outward adherence or just some kind of agreement, it certainly finds no grounds in scriptures for church unity. Therefore, it is always sensible for churches turning to biblical ways of keeping unity.

This multicultural ethnic context of overseas Chinese in the UK in fact presents a very similar background with the one in Paul's time. J. Daniel Hays, who studies the multi-ethnic world in Paul's time, concludes that it was a very ethnically diverse world in the first century that Paul had ministered.²⁴⁰ There were many different races and various cultures in the Roman empire in Paul's age. It was not surprising that there were various problems of cultural diversity in Paul's mission. Hays points out that missionaries "who plant churches in multi-cultural settings often face the daunting challenge of bringing diverse groups of Christians together into a unified church. Likewise, even in areas of established Christianity, the Church is often fractured along ethnic lines. This was a major challenge facing Paul as well."²⁴¹ Thus, Hays' statement leads to a thinking of

²³⁸ Allen, *Missionary Method*, 180.

²³⁹ *Ibid*, 182.

²⁴⁰ J. Daniel Hays, "Paul and the Multi-Ethnic First-Century World: Ethnicity and Christian Identity," in Burke and Rosner, 87.

²⁴¹ *Ibid*, 76.

another way around. As Paul's cross-cultural missionary approach concerning unity of the church fitted the multicultural backgrounds in Paul's time, it could also work well in the Chinese multicultural immigrant church context in the UK. Before looking into Paul's particular approach concerning unity, his statement in 1 Cor 9:19-23, as mentioned earlier, sets a great example of his desire of winning as many people as possible for Christ. Paul was willing to become like people of different cultures, languages, and backgrounds so that he might win them for Christ. Likewise, Chinese Christians in the UK, with a heart of winning Chinese people with diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds, should also be willing to become like Chinese people of diverse backgrounds. It would require some kinds of sacrifice when trying to become like someone else with different backgrounds. However, in this way, they would come to know them, share the gospel with them, and win them for Christ. By anticipating the connection between Paul's approach of maintaining unity and the British Chinese church context, there are two main aspects that I find helpful to relate and discuss.

3.2.1 Paul's Method of Maintaining Unity and the New Identity in Christ

The first point that I would like to highlight is Paul's approach of maintaining unity, which is rooted in the new identity in Christ, is fundamentally important for British Chinese churches. Acknowledging the new identity in Christ is the key for the church to unify Christians in the body of Christ. J. Daniel Hays suggests that the one major unifying concept that Christians can learn from Paul today is their membership in the body of Christ.²⁴² He points out that this new identity is what Paul emphasised for many diverse people uniting together into one new *ehonos*.²⁴³ He at the same time highlights that the new identity in the body of Christ is a primary identity that each member of the church must lie. Hays claims,

As long as believers see themselves first of all as belonging to some ethnic group (Korean, Chinese, African American, Caucasian, Hutu, Tutsi, Kachin, Kayin, etc.), thus relegating their identity in Christ to a secondary and subservient identity, there will be disunity and ethnic division in the Church. If, however, believers can embrace the teaching of Paul and grasp that the most important identifying parameters in their life are those that define and result from their membership in the 'body of Christ', likewise recognizing that others in the 'body' are their own kinfolk, then ethnic differences in the Church will become secondary issues.²⁴⁴

²⁴² Ibid, 87.

²⁴³ Ibid, 84

²⁴⁴ Ibid, 87.

With the above statement, Hays has made an important reminder that the new identity in Christ will naturally solve the issue of ethnic differences in the church. Therefore, all believers should be encouraged to take their membership in the “body of Christ” as their primary “ethnic identity.”²⁴⁵

In addition, Hays also explains that the new “ethnic identity” shows both a common identity from God’s chosen nation through Abraham as a common ancestor, and a member of the family of God as sons and daughters.²⁴⁶ On the one hand, it is a common identity of being descendants of Abraham that determines a new ethnicity and group identity in churches.²⁴⁷ In Romans 4:17, Paul recalls that “as it is written, I have made you a father of many nations (*ethnē*).” Likewise, in Galatians 3:29, Paul writes, “if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” On the other hand, it is the role of kinship in Christ that unites believers with “ethnic” terms as members of the body of Christ.²⁴⁸ Paul frequently used the phrases “in Christ” as the new ethnic identity both for himself and for his readers (“83 times in the wider Pauline

²⁴⁵ Ibid, 86.

²⁴⁶ Ibid, 84.

²⁴⁷ Ibid, 84-85.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, 85.

corpus; 61 if Ephesians and the Pastorals are excluded”).²⁴⁹ For instance, in Galatians 3:26-28, Paul declares, “you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Embracing the new identity in Christ also means to give up an old identity. Paul has called upon “the communities to whom he writes to embrace a new self-identity (ethnicity) ‘in Christ’ which replaces their old ethnic identity (Phrygian, Galatian, Lycaonian, Judean/Jew), thus uniting them together as one church body.”²⁵⁰ Paul exhorts the Philippians to cast off their old identity and be part of Christ just as he cast off his old identity of Hebrew and Pharisee as a rubbish in order to be part of Christ (Philippians 3:17; 3:4-8).²⁵¹ When the old identity is discarded, there should then be no ethnic issues or problems that would prevent Christians from being united in the body of Christ.

The new identity in Christ, which requires to give up an old identity, also indicates that there should be no more boundaries among people or among churches. In the book of Acts, “the movement from a Judean-Jewish society to a Hellenistic-Jewish

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Burke and Rosner, 2-3.

²⁵¹ Hays, 86.

society and then to a Gentile world provided evidence and explanation that the previously held understanding of the boundaries of God's redemptive work was outmoded."²⁵² In fact, Paul's gospel, which came directly from Christ himself, destroyed the Jew-Gentile boundary.²⁵³ Therefore, it is biblical for churches to free the boundaries for all diverse ethnic peoples. It is God's grace to extend his chosen ones in his kingdom.

Looking at the stories of the faithful centurion (Matt. 8:5-13), the Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30) and the Samaritan (Luke 10:33), ones can see Jesus himself breaking up the boundaries and assumptions that the early church probably had. Apart from Jesus, Paul also was a prime biblical example of the major role that transnational leaders played in the spread of the early Christian movement.²⁵⁴ Paul had a strong capacity for boundary crossing over multiple identities.²⁵⁵ "He was a deeply religious Hellenistic Jew with dual citizenship (Roman and Tarsian) who was fluent in at least three languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek)."²⁵⁶ These multiple identities had been Paul's rights in his personal life. Yet, Paul showed that he gave up his rights and used all

²⁵² David P. Seemuth, "Mission in Early Church," in Larkin Jr. and Williams, 56-57.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁴ Hanciles, 136.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

relevant capacities to cross boundaries. “Paul is determined there should be ‘no schism in the body’ (1 Cor. 12: 25) based on wealth, status or education.”²⁵⁷ He therefore became a servant of others and accepted the lifestyle of others (1 Cor. 9:1-23). Thus, through God’s chosen ones and the good news for all peoples, both Jews and Gentiles, all boundaries are gone. Any mission “must likewise cut across all such boundaries.”²⁵⁸ God has revealed that he does not show any favouritism (Acts 10:34). God has not favoured any people, groups, class, or sex under any circumstances.

In the Great Commission, there is a vision and goal of preaching the good news that leads Christians to cross boundaries. According to 1 Corinthians 9:12, 15, Paul abandoned his rights for the sake of the gospel. Regarding boundaries and rights, Karl Olav Sandnes observes,

The church today, as those who are responding to the message of the gospel and following the Lord Jesus, must also, like the earliest believers, confront issues of boundaries, justice, and the future of mission. Each believer has specific boundary issues ingrained from family, society, and other experiences. A unity won only if the strong willingly renounce their rights.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ Paul W. Barnett, *1 Corinthians: Holiness and Hope of a Rescued People* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2000), 234.

²⁵⁸ Seemuth, 56-57.

²⁵⁹ Sandnes, 129.

Here Sandnes seems to indicate that holding back ones' own rights may just hinder people from crossing boundaries. As the gospel means to cross boundaries and bring unity, Christians will then, just like Paul, need to abandon their rights for the sake of the gospel. Despite the church at Philippi encountering persecution and the Christians facing suffering and risk, Paul still firmly called them to hold forth the word. This reveals that he understood spreading the gospel as at the core of their identity as followers of Christ.²⁶⁰

As a matter of fact, the gospel itself can meet expectations and break down boundaries.

David P. Seemuth notices that there was “a remarkable confluence of expectations and anticipations among both Gentiles and Jews in the apostolic era, which were met by the gospel message.”²⁶¹ In other words, when people lay down their rights, break down boundaries, and come to accept the gospel, they will rather find that their expectations and anticipations are met in the gospel of Christ. When all Christ's followers consider spreading the gospel as at the core of their identity, no matter what it may cost, they will be willing to share the good news across any boundaries that they may encounter.

²⁶⁰ Ware, 290.

²⁶¹ Seemuth, 57.

Along with breaking down of boundaries within the church, I can further observe that the new identity in Christ also means accepting outsiders and strangers. Jesus himself came as an outsider/a stranger for the world (Matt. 25:35). “Jesus constantly crossed boundaries (ethnic, social, cultural), eschewed the exclusive claims of any particular social group, and gave much attention to those who were outsiders or on the margins.”²⁶² Jehu J. Hanciles explains that Jesus is not only depicted as an itinerant who constantly crosses borders but also as the embodiment of stranger.²⁶³ Hanciles comments further,

Matthew 25 parable presents less a call to evangelism than an acknowledgement that fellow believers were often unknown outsiders. The exhortation explicitly invokes solidarity and mutual strengthening within the believing community (“these brothers and sisters of mine”). Nonbelievers are not in view. Rather, the parable assails any effort to incorporate or replicate the sociopolitical divisions of the wider society within the community of faith. Within the Jesus movement no faithful individual or group should be mistreated simply because they were stranger-outsiders.²⁶⁴

Hanciles’ statement indicates that the Christian community has a wide-open door to any strangers and outsiders. Despite of how strange or how alien they were, they are always

²⁶² Hanciles, 126.

²⁶³ Ibid, 127.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

welcome into the church community as they come to faith in Christ. In Matthew 25:40, Jesus says, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Jesus is not only showing that Christians should accept strangers/outside, but also exhorting that a believer’s treatment toward a stranger or outsider is a demonstration of his or her love for God (Matt. 25:40, 45).

Based on the above discussions, Paul’s approach of maintaining unity with the new identity in Christ means: 1) acknowledging the new identity in the body of Christ; 2) representing an identity of God’s chosen nation through Abraham and a membership in God’s family; 3) giving up an old identity; 4) no more boundaries; 5) accepting outsiders. The above five aspects of maintaining unity in Paul’s mission would benefit the needs of British Chinese churches in many ways. Remaining unity with the new identity in Christ, Christians are one family no matter by the nation through Abraham or by the citizenship in the kingdom of God in heaven. Christians accept this new identity, give up their old identity, and do not hold fences to any new members that God will constantly add. This would be greatly helpful for Chinese churches that face practical issues in their multi-ethnic and multi-cultural context.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the development of Chinese organisations in the UK based on “country of origin.”²⁶⁵ Mandarin and Cantonese speaking organisations are among the most prominent. British born Chinese people also see themselves as a distinct group. Although they seem to have no established community organisation yet, they have websites and other forums for sharing “ideas and thoughts.”²⁶⁶ Nevertheless, there has been very little communication between these Chinese groups, and “this has substantially weakened the solidarity of the UK Chinese community as a whole.”²⁶⁷ Under this condition, different ethnic Chinese groups may tend to form their own communities. Thus, it seems reasonable for Christians to gather based on different sub-ethnic groups such as Cantonese speaking Chinese, Mandarin speaking Chinese, and British born Chinese. This may continue to be the case as more and more Chinese with different ethnic backgrounds are coming and joining churches in the UK.

Many Chinese churches in the UK were established or exist by different ethnic Chinese groups. Some churches have their services dominated by Cantonese language

²⁶⁵ Chak Kwan Chan, Bankole Cole, and Graham Bowpitt, “‘Beyond Silent Organizations’: A Reflection of the UK Chinese People and Their Community Organizations,” *Critical Social Policy* 27, no. 4 (2007): 522.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

with added Mandarin translation, sometimes plus English language for some BBCs.

Some churches conduct services entirely in Mandarin. It is undeniable that there are cultural and linguistic differences among Chinese people in the present Chinese churches in Britain.²⁶⁸ Meanwhile, new waves of immigrants “from mainland China and Hong Kong have and will continue to add new complexities to the demographics of Chinese in the United Kingdom.”²⁶⁹ However, despite differences in cultural and linguistic elements, Paul’s teaching on unity indicates a fundamental necessity for Chinese churches to move towards unity. There may be different chances and ways of having different people groups in different churches, sometimes due to the convenience of speaking the same language or dialect. However, it is necessary for Chinese Christians of different churches to be mindful of treating one another like members of one big group, one family, and one body. Considering the new identity in Christ, Hays offers a thorough explanation,

Paul is not just breaking down social barriers between Jews and gentiles; he is telling the new followers of Christ that they are a new ethnicity/people/group (*ethnē; laos*). He is not just declaring unity in Christ and the creation of a community that accepts all people. He is declaring that the followers of Christ are a new and different ethnicity

²⁶⁸ Chow, 114.

²⁶⁹ Ibid, 115.

and that their primary identity and group association must change from their old self-identity to their new one. Just as a gentile might become a Jewish proselyte or a Phrygian might become a “Greek,” so the new believers in Christ are to take on an entirely new ethnic identity.²⁷⁰

Given the salvation by God’s grace through faith in Christ, Christians should thus cherish their entirely new ethnic identity in Christ. In one sense, when British Chinese Christians truly embrace the identity of God’s chosen nation through Abraham and being a member of sons and daughters in God’s family, any groups belong to the same one family. Paul’s biblical teaching is thus for British Chinese Christians to keep for maintaining unity in the body of Christ.

3.2.2 Paul’s Four Relationships in the Method of Maintaining Unity

The second point with regard to Paul’s approach of maintaining unity is related to Paul’s four relationships in his mission. These four relationships include: 1) his relationship with God; 2) his relationship with the flocks; 3) his relationship with co-workers; 4) his relationship with churches. I reckon that Paul’s four relationships in his mission could be a great model and ways of maintaining unity among congregations and churches.

²⁷⁰ Hays, 84.

The first relationship is the close relationship that Paul had with God/Jesus/the Holy Spirit throughout his missionary journeys. Paul declares that “who shall separate us from the love of Christ” (Rom 8:35). He claims that “I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:18-19). The letter of 2 Timothy also mentions how Paul relied only on God even when others abandoned him. No matter what situation Paul faced while doing God’s work, he was constantly loving, trusting, listening and relying on God in an intimate relationship with God.

I have described in the first chapter that in this thesis “methods” can be used interchangeably with “ways,” “approaches,” and “strategies.” Because maintaining unity is one main way that I have highlighted in Paul’s missionary work, having an intimate relationship with God is one of the ways to maintain unity. Christians are united as one just because Jesus Christ’s body is one. Unless Christians are closely united to Jesus and have a close relationship with God, they could not maintain unity in the body of Christ. Just as described in John 15:5, “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in

me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” Christians are one because they remain in Christ and keep a close relationship with him. If ones are apart from God and without a relationship with God, they are not in that one “vine.”

Thus, having a close relationship with God relates to every Christian, including every Christian in British Chinese churches. It is necessary to always keep in mind that having a close relationship with God is an essential way of keeping unity with God and with other Christians in the one body of Christ.

The second relationship is the special relationship that Paul had with his flocks throughout his mission. Paul’s bond with the flocks in churches is clearly demonstrated in his writings in the New Testament. Paul shepherded people and admonished them with tears (Acts 21:31). He assumed the responsibilities of a father (1 Thess. 2:12), father of bride (2 Cor. 11:3), and expectant mother (Gal. 4:9) to his converts in order to bring his pastoral work to completion.²⁷¹ In 1 Corinthians 4:14-15, Paul says, “I am not writing this to shame you but to warn you, as my dear children. Even though you have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers, for in Christ Jesus I became your

²⁷¹ Burke and Rosner, 3.

father through the gospel.” These verses show that Paul considered himself as a father or a mother. It indicates that the relationship Paul had with his flocks in churches was like a relationship within a family. Meanwhile, Paul’s pastoral work and relationship with his flocks did not end when he left and continued his travels. “He continues to play the role of father and builder. He continues his ministry through letters, visits and the participation of co-workers.”²⁷² Paul expressly showed a role and responsibility of a family member who kept other family members in his heart. Indeed, a church is a family in Christ, and all are members in this one family. This is a great reminder that the mission of God’s church is the mission of his family. It is not about having effective methods to build up a best-example organisation, but about building up a united body in the family of God. Allen insists that Christianity is not an institution but a relationship. To Allen, all who receive the Spirit are in reality one in Christ. “They are united by the strongest and most intimate of all ties. They are united to Christ by His Spirit, and therefore they are all united to one another.”²⁷³ Such unity indicates a relationship rather than an institution in the body of Christ.

²⁷² Thompson, “Paul as Missionary Pastor,” 25.

²⁷³ Allen, “Pentecost and the World: The Revelation of the Holy Spirit in the ‘Acts of the Apostles’,” 57.

In fact, tracing the meaning of “church,” the word in modern English Bibles is a translation of the Greek term *ekklēsia*. “This term does not describe a place, a building or denomination but rather an assembly of people.”²⁷⁴ Paul viewed the church as the gathered people of God who trust in Christ and meet together with a clear purpose of worshipping God and edifying one another.²⁷⁵ “Because the church is the people of God and not an organization,” this reality greatly affects what the church is seeking to focus: people or organization.²⁷⁶ As Christians are not seeking an outward organisation, they confidently know that relationship is more important than organisation. Also, when Christians know that the relationship in the church family is the primary element and focus, they treasure more the diversity within the unity of the family.

That being said, British Chinese churches face various challenges posted by the fact of multi-cultural backgrounds of church members. Chinese people in the UK are not a homogeneous group. They are peoples with diverse origins and cultural backgrounds.²⁷⁷ Accordingly, this diversity of peoples also has been existing in the majority of British Chinese churches. There are also particular challenges of speaking in different languages:

²⁷⁴ Merkle, 56-57.

²⁷⁵ Ibid, 60.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, 58.

²⁷⁷ Chan, Cole and Bowpitt, 520.

mainly Cantonese and Mandarin. The exclusive use of Cantonese in existing Chinese organisations can be seen as problematic by Chinese people from mainland China who speak Mandarin and write simplified Chinese. Mainland Chinese Christians encounter difficulties in participating with Cantonese.²⁷⁸ A respondent from Cardiff explained:

People from the Cardiff Chinese Christian Church asked me to join their activities several times. Because they are Hong Kong people, we found it difficult to talk with them. Another respondent in the same city was disappointed that Cantonese was the only medium of instruction at the local Chinese school: Unfortunately, Chinese people here are mainly from Guangdong and Hong Kong. It is difficult for me to understand them. People from Cardiff Chinese Christian Church are mainly Hong Kong people. The church has set up a Chinese school where Cantonese is taught. Our children don't go there because they can't understand.²⁷⁹

The above case reveals that while Christians from the Cantonese speaking church may wish to contact and welcome Mandarin speaking Chinese into their church, the difficulty due to language difference hinders such contact and relationship. As we can see, such difficulty is present not only among Chinese Christians but also among the wide Chinese population.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, 521.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

In addition to language, there are also educational and occupational differences between mainland Chinese people and their Hong Kong counterparts. In the past, the older generation Hong Kong Chinese immigrants had a catering background, while mainland Chinese people mainly worked as employees or studied as international students. In the current situation, more Hongkongers have been coming to the UK, starting their new lives with various backgrounds, including students and workers in public services. Yet, another Chinese person from mainland China expressed that there was a social gap between Hong Kong and mainland Chinese people due to different backgrounds.²⁸⁰ The different backgrounds could be in any areas. For example, students from Hong Kong and students from mainland China still have differences in their respective social and political backgrounds.

Thus, the diversity within the church can seriously challenge “those prevailing models of church growth that stress homogeneous grouping principles.”²⁸¹ Some people may suggest that at certain foundational levels, “outreach and fellowship occur best among those most like ourselves.”²⁸² On occasions, and to some extent, this may be true.

²⁸⁰ Ibid, 521-22.

²⁸¹ Craig Blomberg, *1 Corinthians: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 255.

²⁸² Ibid.

However, people with certain similarities will still have other differences. Diversity has been the normal case within the church. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 especially points out the nature of diversity in the body of Christ. The multibackground challenges were not less in Paul's established churches. Yet, they certainly did not limit Paul to do mission or hinder him from establishing churches. Whereas diversity might bring challenges, Paul was able to address them and emphasise unity in the body of Christ. This can be a great encouragement for today's churches despite the challenges of diversity in the church.

While unity indicates a harmonious relationship between members of the church, love is a sign of unity with one another in the family of Christ. Besides love, suffering and rejoicing together (Corin. 13:5-6) are also "a sign of unity in which each one truly seeks the advantage of the other."²⁸³ Paul's sufferings and hardships in his ministry were "for the cause of Christ and, particularly for the communities he had founded as missionary and among whom he labored."²⁸⁴ One way of expressing love in unity is loving the poor in mission. Paul had the poor as his missionary target throughout his

²⁸³ Garland, 598.

²⁸⁴ Burke and Rosner, 3.

missionary journeys. He even put himself to risk in reaching and helping the poor. Paul declared that remembering the poor was the very thing he was eager to do (Gal. 2:10).

Mission to the poor can be considered as a way and a sign of practicing unity in Paul's mission because he cared for their needs in the family. At the start of Jesus' ministry,

Jesus also announced that "the Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18). Thus, caring for the poor should also be an

important point for today's churches, including Chinese churches in the UK. The poor can be found everywhere in the world. A study by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation in

2011 found out that "the British Chinese adult poverty rate was 20% and the child

poverty rate stood at 30%."²⁸⁵ Though it is a relatively lower rate among different ethnic

groups, it is certain that there are poor Chinese in the UK and in churches as well. They

are the people that churches need to pay especial attention to take care of. It is a

responsibility of the church to show the real unity in the family of Christ. To put it into

practice, Chinese churches could come together to share the burden and responsibility.

For example, they may raise funds for tackling poverty issues among the poor Chinese.

²⁸⁵ "British Chinese," Wikipedia, accessed 17 January 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Chinese.

They may use their church buildings or properties as temporary shelters for the needed.

They may also provide advice in helping the poor Chinese to solve their problems of debt and poverty.

The third relationship is the relationship that Paul had with his co-workers, church leaders, and church elders. As mentioned earlier, Allen did not emphasise the role of co-workers in Paul's mission. Thus, he did not include the aspect of the unity among co-workers and leaders. However, I believe that unity among co-workers is an indispensable aspect that needs to be emphasised.

There were a number of Paul's co-workers throughout his mission. For example, from the province of Asia Paul had several co-workers: right from the beginning Aquila, Priscilla and Timothy who were part of Paul's team in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:10). Besides, Paul worked with Epaphras and Philemon from Ephesus (Col 1:3-8; 4:13; Philem 1-2). Later, Stephanas, Fortunatus and Archaicus visited Paul in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:17). Also, Paul worked with Aristarchus from Macedonia (Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2; Philem 23), Tychicus, and Trophimus (Acts 20:4; Col 4:7). Meanwhile, Paul's co-workers seemed to play various roles. Barnaba was in a sense Paul's mentor in a certain period. Timothy and

Titus were not only fellow workers but also spiritual sons who received Paul's mentoring in many areas. Barnaba, Silas, Aquila, and Priscilla were Paul's peers and helpers throughout his missionary journeys. Stephanas was a "fellow-worker" and "laborer" with Paul (1 Cor. 16:15-16).²⁸⁶ The Spirit has gifted him accordingly as a "coworker and colaborer" with Paul in God's work.²⁸⁷ Therefore, it is noticeable that in Paul's missionary work, there was always one indispensable part in his missionary work—his co-workers.

Apart from co-workers, the unity of the church certainly includes the unity among leaders. Hence, one indispensable way of maintaining unity is to be able to work with other leaders and being united with them. Chuck Lawless, who studies Paul and leadership development, concludes that "only through the healthy development of new generations of leaders will the church fulfil the Great Commission that so motivated the apostle."²⁸⁸ Since healthy leaders are significant for the church's development, the unity among leaders is also an indispensable part of keeping unity in the church.

²⁸⁶ Campbell, 239.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ Lawless, 234.

Along with this point, I consider the model of leadership in Paul's time would particularly present challenges to British Chinese churches today. In the early church, there were twelve apostles chosen by Jesus to lead the church. In Acts 6, it also mentions that there were seven men appointed as deacons to assist the apostles. In Paul's missionary work, there continued to be a few leaders in each church that Paul planted. From a number of scriptural passages, we can observe that Paul instructed Titus to appoint "elders" (Tit 1:5; Acts 11:30; 15:2; 20:17; Jam 5:14; 1 Pet 5:1-2). Merkle explains that the evidence can be seen by a pattern of plurality:

- Paul and Barnabas planted churches in the cities of Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe and "appointed *elders* for them in every church" (Acts 14:23).
- At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul summoned "the *elders* of the church to come to him" (Acts 20:17).
- When Paul writes to the church at Philippi, he specifically greets the "*overseers* and deacons" (Phil 1:1).
- Paul writes to Timothy, "Let the *elders* who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim 5:17).²⁸⁹

These verses indicate that having a plurality of elders was the norm for every church. In fact, the "concept of shared leadership is a common theme in the Bible," and there is no

²⁸⁹ Merkle, 66.

example in the New Testament concerning one elder or pastor “leading a congregation as the sole or primary leader.”²⁹⁰ Merkle illustrates a wide picture:

There were a plurality of elders at the churches in Jerusalem (Acts 14:23), Ephesus (Acts 20:17; 1 Tim 5:17), Philippi (Phil 1:1), the cities of Crete (Tit 1:5), the churches in the dispersion to which James wrote (James 1:1), the Roman provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia (1 Peter 1:1), and possibly the church(es) to which Hebrews was written (Heb 13:7, 17, 24).²⁹¹

This picture presents a convincing reality of having plural leaders in every church in Paul’s time. Based on a pattern of multiple elders/overseers, Merkle explains, “it is best for church planters not to find one, strong, visionary leader and give that person all the leadership responsibility. Instead, from the very beginning if possible, leadership should be given to a number of qualified disciples who can lead together.”²⁹² Merkle insists that there will be many benefits when having a plurality of elders to share equal authority as God’s design. He expounds,

Although having a plurality of elders does not guarantee the church leadership will not encounter problems or conflict, it does at least provide several safeguards against some problems and difficulties that a single-pastor church often faces---especially in the area of biblical accountability. Biblical accountability is needed for at least two reasons. First, it helps protect a pastor from error. Pastors often

²⁹⁰ Ibid, 66-67.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid, 69-70.

possess a lot of authority in their churches---too much authority with too little accountability. Such authority can cause one to believe that he is more important than others and thus become proud. Other pastors given autocratic authority may act in ways that are insensitive or unscriptural but be blinded to their faults. Second, biblical accountability is needed to help foster maturity and godliness among elders. The author of Hebrews highlights the need for accountability when he writes, “Exhort one another every day... that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” (Heb 3:13). The more mature elders can help train the younger ones in how to be an effective shepherd.²⁹³

As the benefits are actually necessary for building up a healthy leadership, there is no reason not to insist on the principle of plural leadership. In terms of the benefits of having plural leaders, Allen considers that “Paul’s ecclesiology blended the good qualities of episcopal shepherding, presbyterial governance and congregational democracy to form churches that were networked together by the pastoral bishop, directed locally by the elders and facilitated by all members mutually responding to local needs.”²⁹⁴ Here Allen seems to suggest that as part of wider Christian and church networks, plural leadership in local churches can help to foster synthetic and overall development of the church.

Whereas the benefits can be obvious, the unity among church leaders is yet vital for the whole church. When the church leadership contains several pastors/elders/overseers,

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 39.

unity among leaders should then be maintained accordingly, and their unity will be helpful for fostering unity in the body of Christ.

Perhaps the term “elder” may not be widely used among some Christian denominations in modern times. Merkle explains that the term “elder” (*presbyteros*) and “overseer” (*episkopos*) are “two different titles that refer to the same office.”²⁹⁵

Meanwhile, the term “pastor” in the modern church context also represents the same office with “elders or overseers.” In this sense, elders and overseers are given the same tasks as pastors: shepherding (Acts 20:17, 28; Eph 4:11; 1 Pet 5:1-3) and teaching (1 Tim 3:2; 5:17; Tit 1:9).²⁹⁶

Given the biblical narrative and clarity of benefits of plural leadership, obtaining a model of plural leadership may yet be very challenging to British Chinese churches.

Contrary to the leadership pattern of the early church, it seems not common for Chinese churches to have several pastors/elders/overseers. According to the various websites of Chinese churches on a list, it appears that many Chinese churches in the UK have a single pastor.²⁹⁷ There may have been challenges for churches if they wish to have more

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 65.

²⁹⁶ Ibid. 65-66.

²⁹⁷ “List of Chinese Churches in the United Kingdom,” Chinese Overseas Christian Mission, accessed 15 April 2021, https://www.cocm.org.uk/files/ugd/76492a_ac79d51701354bfc941a6005bd4a202f.pdf.

than one elder or pastor. While most Chinese churches are made up of immigrants, there are vacancies of pastors in quite a number of Chinese churches in the UK. The lack of equipped and suitable overseas pastors seems to have been an enduring issue for Chinese churches. Besides, a low level of church financial income probably has been another practical issue for some churches. Although finance has been a challenge, it could be overcome by having both paid and unpaid leaders, and other possible ways of divine provision. For instance, Paul, as a dedicated leader, was self-supported in the sense that he drew a salary from outside the church.²⁹⁸ Nonetheless, as practical as they are, these two issues seem to continue existing for some time. If churches have a vision and desire of following a health model of plural leadership, would they trust the Holy Spirit and endeavour to raise more elders/pastors?

The fourth relationship is the relationship that Paul had with the churches. Paul highly valued the unity among the churches. He himself on the one hand kept a good relationship with both the churches that he established and those established by others. This was revealed expressly from his missionary journeys by itinerating and visiting the

²⁹⁸ Merkle, 71.

established churches, and reporting his ministry to the churches in Antioch and Jerusalem. On the other hand, he also helped building up a good relationship among churches. As an obvious evidence, Paul undertook a lot of effort for the collection from different churches to help the church in Jerusalem which was in need.

As mentioned in chapter two, Allen primarily emphasises unity among churches. He stresses Paul's asserted ecclesiology as having only one Church.²⁹⁹ Allen also suggests that growing intercourse between the churches abroad and the churches at home will help each other to understand the unity of the Church.³⁰⁰ He gives an example that

Paul

constantly spoke of the Churches of Macedonia, of Achaia, of Galatia, of Syria and Cilicia, of Asia as unities. For the purpose of the collection which he made for the poor saints at Jerusalem, the Churches of Macedonia, Achaia, and Galatia were each treated as a separate group, and officers were appointed by each group to act on behalf of the province which they represented in the administration of the collection. In each province the Churches were probably bound together by some form of external organization and government.³⁰¹

Allen explains further that this unity is not like the convenient grouping of societies for mutual assistance, but it is the same spiritual bonds which united individual Christians

²⁹⁹ Rutt, *Roland Allen: A Theology of Mission*, 34.

³⁰⁰ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 180.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 167.

one to another and united the churches in the provinces.³⁰² And it is also the same bonds which united the churches in the provinces that united the churches everywhere.³⁰³ Allen reckons that the churches are all alike the members of a body which existed before they were brought into it, and thus they could not act as if they were responsible to themselves alone.³⁰⁴ This is to say that how Christians try to maintain unity in a church in the body of Christ, in the same way, churches should maintain unity among all other churches in the body of Christ.

Paul practiced unity in his mission, but in his view “the unity of the Church was not something to be created, but something which already existed and was to be maintained.”³⁰⁵ Allen points out that Paul wrote much to his churches about unity, “but he never spoke of it as of something which they had created.”³⁰⁶ In like manner, the unity of the body of Christ is also the unity among churches. Since there is unity among churches as the body of Christ, each present and future church does not have a kind of independent unity of its own.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid, 169.

³⁰⁴ Ibid, 167.

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 170.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 171.

Like the concept of diversity and unity among members in the body, the unity of the body of Christ does not necessarily mean for a church to be dependent. There was evidence that each congregation was independently led in the early Church. Many decisions such as “selecting leaders (Acts 1:23; 6:2-3), sending missionaries (Acts 13:3; 14:27), determining theological positions (Acts 15:22), deciding church discipline (Mt 18:17) and performing excommunication (1 Cor 5:2)” were the responsibilities of the local church.³⁰⁷ “There is not a hint from beginning to end the Acts and Epistles of any one church depending upon another, with the single exception of the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem.”³⁰⁸ Thus, whereas churches should be united in the body of Christ, they should also function and flourish independently with diversity.

In Paul’s mission, there are at least two ways of maintaining unity among churches. One way is, as Paul addressed, for churches to avoid schism. To preserve unity under circumstances of the danger of schism in the churches of the provinces and Judea, Paul “refused to transplant the law and the customs of the Church in Judea into the four provinces.”³⁰⁹ Apparently, Paul thought that the law and customs of the church in Judea

³⁰⁷ Merkle, 59.

³⁰⁸ Ibid.

³⁰⁹ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 173-175.

would appear like alien elements to the churches in the four provinces. From another angle, Allen indicates that spiritual unity will be expressed in terms of observable unity. “There was no such thing as spiritual unity expressed in outward separation. Outward opposition is a certain sign that spiritual unity does not exist.”³¹⁰ In other words, the existence of outward opposition indicates the occurring of schism in the church. Yet, Paul took schism as a serious matter. If unity was broken as schism occurred, Paul regarded that as a sin.³¹¹ Therefore, to Paul, churches should avoid schism when they try to maintain unity in the body of Christ.

Paul’s another way of maintaining unity is by “initiating and encouraging mutual acts of charity.”³¹² Paul motivated the sustained movement of communication among different churches. The collection for the saints in Jerusalem was a proof and pledge of unity. It “was not a series of separate collections made in Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia and Asia, it was a collection made by all these Churches together.”³¹³ Paul’s letters reveal that the third journey to Jerusalem was undertaken to deliver the collection (Gal.

³¹⁰ Ibid, 171.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid, 178-79.

³¹³ Ibid, 179.

2:10, 1 Cor. 16:1-4, 2 Cor. 8, 9 and Rom. 15:25-33).³¹⁴ Despite the warning of danger that waited him in Jerusalem and “a major delay in Paul’s plans to begin a new mission in Spain,”³¹⁵ Paul pursued to gather this collection for the Christians in Jerusalem from the Gentile churches that he had established in Asia and in Greece.³¹⁶ Regarding the charity action, John B. Polhill asserts that the reason for Paul’s determination for this collection was the Christian unity.³¹⁷ He insists, in any event, “Paul’s collection was a symbol of Christian unity--of Paul’s uncircumcised Gentile converts sacrificing for the needs of their Jewish sisters and brothers in Christ.”³¹⁸ Paul’s action of undertaking charity was thus a great sign of practicing unity among churches.

Paul’s ways of building up relationship and maintaining unity among churches cast inspirations and indicate some practical aspects for Chinese churches to practice unity among Chinese churches, and among Chinese churches and other local churches in the UK. Regarding unity among Chinese churches, the most known examples may be fund raising, evangelistic concert, and ministry conference. The Chinese Christian Herald

³¹⁴ John B. Polhill, *Paul and His Letters* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1999), 306.

³¹⁵ *Ibid*, 311.

³¹⁶ *Ibid*, 306.

³¹⁷ *Ibid*, 306-07.

³¹⁸ *Ibid*, 312.

Crusades (UK), being part of the international Chinese Christian Herald Crusades, which focuses on social service, evangelism, and church cooperation among the Chinese, has made their work well known and received supports from Chinese churches in the UK. It is reported that in 2019, the Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK) conducted successful fund-raising events among Chinese Christians in Manchester and Belfast.³¹⁹

Among Chinese churches, evangelistic concert also take place from time to time.

Although more often evangelistic concert may happen within one church, some concerts could draw the participation of multiple churches. One notable example was a cluster of evangelistic concerts that took place in five Chinese churches in Manchester, Reading, Swindon, Birmingham, and Colwyn Bay in October 2018.³²⁰ Such events clearly indicate the cooperation and unity among these Chinese churches. Regarding ministry conference, the Marriage Enrichment Retreat, organised by the Chinese Family for Christ, a Christian organisation found by a Chinese couple in the United States, has been an example of

³¹⁹ “Mancheng de Haojiao Choukuan Wanyan Baodao” [Report on the Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK)’s Fund-Raising Dinner Party in Manchester], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=36226. See also “Yingguo Haojiao Bei Er Fa Si Te Yixiang Fenxiang Choukuan Wanhui Jianbao” [Report on the Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK)’s Vision-Sharing and Fund-Raising Dinner Party in Belfast], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=36216.

³²⁰ “Canfu Yinyue Budaohui Ziliao” [Information of Catering Evangelistic Concerts], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=33947.

serving Chinese Christian couples from many churches in the UK since 2002.³²¹ Another example is the European pastors and church leaders conference that keeps taking place for many years and drawing pastors and church leaders from many Chinese churches across Europe.³²² The conference has been an occasion for many Chinese pastors and church leaders in Europe to share and discuss on various topics such as mission, ministry, and church growth. Another form of ministry conference would be student ministry conference. In 2013, a London student ministry conference took place at the mission centre of the COCM. The conference was organised and lead by the COCM. It was participated by more than 50 pastors, church leaders and workers who discussed on topics such as models of student fellowship, models of student mission, and models of mission cooperation.³²³

While some examples of unity among some Chinese churches have been explained, they would encourage more Chinese churches to continue working on unity. Meanwhile,

³²¹ “Jiaohui Jieshao: Yingguo Jiating Gengxin Xiehui” [Church Introduction: Chinese Family for Christ UK], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=13251.

³²² “Yu Shen Tongxing de Kelv: Di Shiyi Jie Quan Ou Jiaomu he Jiaohui Lingxiu Yantaohui” [Sojourners Traveling with God: The Eleventh European Pastors and Church Leaders Conference], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=10124.

³²³ “Xiaoyuan Fuyin Gongzuo Zhankai, Luoshi Guanhuai Daxue Xuesheng” [Unfolding of Campus Ministry, Carrying Out Care for University Students], Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK), accessed 20 June 2022, https://old.herald-uk.org/?page_id=13333.

there are both necessity and benefit for Chinese churches to practice unity with English speaking churches. However, before getting into a discussion on unity between Chinese churches and English churches, it is necessary to explain the existence and independence of Chinese churches. I reckon that there are several reasons for the existence and development of Chinese churches. Firstly, it is a matter of historical consistency. Many Chinese churches started as just Chinese Christian fellowships. Yet, over several decades, many of them have developed into formal Chinese Christian churches. Although they may have areas that need to be improved, they have been making progress over time. In view of this, it is natural to encourage the further development of Chinese churches, rather than leaving them to merge into local English churches. Secondly, Chinese churches are irreplaceable in the sense that they can offer something to Chinese people that local English churches cannot offer. Although there are diversities among Chinese people groups, their differences are minor when compared to other ethnic groups. Chinese people groups still share an overall Chinese ethnicity. They share either the same or similar languages and cultures. In this sense, Chinese churches can meet their needs in many areas such as language, culture, psychology, mentality, and lifestyle. Thus, Chinese

churches play an irreplaceable role in serving and evangelising Chinese people. Thirdly, Chinese churches can make their contributions to other churches in the UK. Being part of the universal Church and located in the UK, Chinese churches can contribute their experiences, perspectives, and resources that would not be found from churches of other backgrounds. As both diversity and unity are needed and healthy for the universal Church, Chinese churches should be encouraged to develop and play their part in the big family of God.

Whereas Chinese churches should be encouraged to exist and develop, it is also necessary for them to be united with local English churches. In the past, especially during the starting stages of Chinese churches, there seemed to be little connection between Chinese churches and English churches:

The expansion of Chinese Christian communities in the UK was mainly the result of the efforts of Chinese evangelists (Huang & Hsiao 2015, 381–382) who possessed extremely limited contacts with local British Christians and targeted Chinese immigrants. Consequently, the British gender context scarcely affected the worldview of Chinese Christian communities.³²⁴

³²⁴ Yuqin Huang, “Becoming Missionaries: Gender, Space and Subjectivities in Chinese Christian Communities in the UK,” *The Asia Pacific Journal of Anthropology* 18, no. 3 (2017): 215.

For a more recent situation, Chinese churches seem to be more open for making connections with local English churches, especially in a form of renting or sharing church buildings with the latter. With sharing buildings or offices, both the Chinese and the native British, or other ethnic groups, come to have more chances of interactions, and probably helping each other at some points. It has been the case that many Methodist churches in England support the development a Chinese church in their buildings. One of such examples is Norwich Chinese church. After receiving major funding support from Methodist churches in the region, Norwich Chinese church moved into their new church building in 2018.³²⁵ Likewise, since 1986, Wycliffe Baptist Church has lent their church building for Reading Chinese Christian fellowship, which later developed into Reading Chinese Christian Church.³²⁶ In addition to such cooperation between Chinese churches and local English churches, there have been reports of English churches providing help for Chinese immigrants. A Facebook group “Hong Kong Christians Seeking Churches in the UK” has reported an example of the Community Church (Bristol) providing their

³²⁵ “Norwich Chinese Church Grows into New Building,” Network Norwich, published 28 November 2018, https://www.networknorwich.co.uk/Articles/534990/Network_Norwich_and_Norfolk/Regional_News/Norwich/Norwich_News_2015_2018/Norwich_Chinese_church_grows_into_new_building.aspx.

³²⁶ “About Us,” Reading Chinese Christian Church, accessed 20 June 2022, <http://www.rccf.org.uk>.

church building for hosting Cantonese church service for new immigrants from Hong Kong.³²⁷

In addition to examples of cooperation between Chinese churches and local churches, some examples regarding Chinese international students also provide useful information for reflection on the need of building a relationship between Chinese churches and local churches. A survey shows that, for Chinese international students, the most popular event among all the activities provided for international students is the Student Café.³²⁸ The Student Café is also called the International Café, which is a social event in which international students can spend one evening with people from various churches chatting and playing games. The International Café often has special activities, including celebratory festivals such as ceilidh (i.e. traditionally Scottish) dance evenings, to share British cultural knowledge.³²⁹ Sometimes, certain church members even attempted to add some Chinese related activities such as Chinese Spring Festival celebration in order to make students feel more at home.³³⁰ For Chinese international

³²⁷ “Hong Kong Christians Seeking Churches in the UK,” Facebook, accessed 20 June 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/hkseekingchurchinUK/>.

³²⁸ Yu and Stoet, 314.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ Ibid.

students who attend the Café, they will have opportunities to spend time with Christians from local churches and international students from other countries. At the same time, they will have a chance to get to know more about diverse cultures. The fact that Chinese students are attracted most to the International Café gives a good hint. Chinese international students, like strangers/outsideers, may intend even desire to have a good fellowship with the native and get to know more about their culture. As the Café is open to students of all nationalities, Chinese students will also have the chance to learn and understand the diversity of peoples and cultures from other parts of the world. This can help them to be more open-minded, understanding better how the Christian faith is embraced by different peoples across the world. Chinese students' intension or desire would also be true for constantly increasing new immigrants who would come to live and work in the UK. A similar kind of event that is open for new immigrants would also be welcomed and helpful for them to settle in a new context.

In addition to the International Café, the Friends International is another example of co-operation among churches. The Friends International has its strength in mobilising Christians and churches to serve international students of all faiths and none. They

operate in 40 university towns and cities across the UK. In addition to recruiting volunteers, they employ staff workers who would need to raise funds and supports from individuals and churches. They connect churches and preach the gospel to international students. They also provide social events and activities for interested international students. For those who would like to learn more, they even provide leadership courses and Christian courses for international students.³³¹ With the Friends International, Christians from different churches communicate regularly and often organise outdoor activities together. “With such measures, the churches can learn from each other how to improve their services for international students.”³³² With experiences and practices of inter-church cooperation, Friends International can provide great opportunities for Chinese churches to cooperate with both other Chinese churches and English churches. It seems that many Chinese churches have the burden to reach out to Chinese students and have student fellowship in their own churches. While Chinese students would enjoy a Chinese fellowship, many of them may also like to explore a more international student environment. As the Friends International has the strength to mobilise church

³³¹ For more information about the Friends International, see <https://www.friendsinternational.uk>.

³³² Yu and Stoet, 313.

cooperation, it is certainly a great opportunity for Chinese churches to participate in cooperation among multiple churches.

In addition to the International Café and the Friends International, a study shows that some Chinese international students visit native churches due to curiosity and a desire for cultural contact.³³³ Schweisfurth and Gu explains,

Most often, international students are believed to have their primary form of intercultural communication in the classroom or around the university campus. However, our previous research indicated that, due to the overwhelming numbers of Chinese students - particularly within the School of Business - Chinese students lacked essential intercultural contact within the mono-cultural (Chinese) context, even though universities are - at least superficially - internationalising or becoming more multicultural.³³⁴

Similarly, one student states in an interview:

I never expected there to be so many Chinese students here [at the university] ...I don't have much social life in my free time, to be honest. And I don't want to limit my whole life to the university, or, in other words, confine myself to the Chinese society of the School. I do need parts of my life that are not focused on my studies, classmates or campus. So church is a supplement. Church is an opportunity to experience a different cultural life; so why not explore and try it? I tried it several times and it has become a habit now.³³⁵

³³³ Yu and Moskal, 6.

³³⁴ Ibid.

³³⁵ Ibid.

The statements above indicate that there are actually not many opportunities for Chinese international students to have multi-cultural contact in their school environment. Over to another continent, a similar situation seems to be true. “For decades, research studies have shown common problems facing Chinese international students in the United States, such as difficulty in making American friends, English incompetence, cultural differences, emotional distress, and social isolation.”³³⁶ To be more specific, “Chinese international students often deal with high levels of psychological and acculturative stress symptoms, including depression and anxiety.”³³⁷ There is no difficulty to see that this is the case for Chinese international students in many places in the world. With a kind of confinement within the Chinese student community, some may venture to explore something new to them outside the Chinese community.

A recent study on Chinese international students in Edinburgh of Scotland suggests that some Chinese students prefer attending local English churches instead of Chinese churches. Their reasons mainly include: (1) previous or recent experience of dissatisfaction with a Chinese church; (2) preference to Pentecostal-charismatic church

³³⁶ Anke Li, Chi Nguyen, and Jinhee Choi, “Because of the Christian Fellowship, I Decided to Stay: How Participating in a Christian Community Shapes the Social Experiences of Chinese International Students,” *Social Science* 8, (2019): 2.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*

style found in local English churches; (3) satisfaction with a local English church community; (4) close proximity to their residence; (5) English as their heart language; (6) appreciation of the teaching in local English churches.³³⁸ The study reveals that the reasons for attending a local English church are various. In other words, local English churches can welcome and help Chinese international students in many ways.

The advantages of local English churches are also true to non-student immigrants. For newly arrived immigrants, they tend to look for “a type of authority through which they can gain a greater sense of certainty and security and find guidance and protection in their new lives.”³³⁹ “In the process of achieving this sense of security and protection, ethnic religious community institutions are believed to play a crucial role.”³⁴⁰ It is no surprise that church communities can provide a kind of special environment that immigrants can hardly find somewhere else. “Almost none of the existing non-religious organizations could provide the same level of spiritual connection, collective support, and family-like atmosphere as the church does.”³⁴¹ This is consistent

³³⁸ Chao Ma, “Conceptions of Christianity amongst Chinese International Students at the University of Edinburgh,” Master’s Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2019, 21, 26, 38, 45-56.

³³⁹ Yu and Stoet, 306.

³⁴⁰ Ibid.

³⁴¹ Li, Nguyen, and Choi, 13.

with another study on Christian students' experiences in church communities. "They found that by providing a context for students to make new friends or lifelong partnerships, church communities may act as a 'surrogate family' and facilitate connections between and among individuals."³⁴² Local churches are thus great communities that can benefit international students and immigrants in areas such as adapting local culture, making friends, and receiving peer supports, etc.

Regarding ministry to both international students and new immigrants, the OMF (UK) is an example of British Christian organisation trying to reach East Asians with the gospel in the UK. The OMF International was formally known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship. Before 1964, it was known as the China Inland Mission. In the case of OMF (UK), it has expanded its mission target to East Asians, including the Chinese. The OMF (UK)'s ministry approaches mainly include: (1) Christians welcoming visitors to their homes and let them experience British way of life; (2) churches setting up international cafes or putting on English classes; (3) Christians or churches giving practical help.³⁴³

These approaches seem to present hospitality to East Asians. However, they are meant for

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ "Reaching East Asians in the UK," OMF United Kingdom, accessed 25 June 2022, <https://omf.org/en/web/uk/get-involved/reaching-east-asians-in-the-uk>.

building up friendship and sharing the gospel of Christ. Having a burden for East Asian countries, the OMF (UK) also has a Diaspora Returnee Ministry, which provides training, retreats, and conferences for East Asian Christians who are returning to their home countries. In addition, it also provides training for churches and organisations which are interested in reaching out to East Asians in the UK.³⁴⁴ Being international in nature and having East Asians as its target, the OMF (UK) has been serving East Asians in the UK for decades. This certainly presents great opportunities for British Chinese churches to partner with the OMF and other involved local churches.

However, it has been observed that among some Chinese churches, “there also exists certain implicit competition between the churches, since each is striving to attract as many international students as possible.”³⁴⁵ There is also a tendency of keeping existing students in order to maintain the continuity of international events in their own churches.³⁴⁶ This kind of implicit competition has not been helpful for church cooperation and unity, and it reveals a possible self-centred mind-set that each church may need to deal with. Having the new identity in Christ, it is certain that each church belongs to the

³⁴⁴ “Diaspora: What We Do,” OMF United Kingdom, accessed 25 June 2022, <https://omf.org/en/web/uk/east-asia/diaspora/what-we-do>.

³⁴⁵ Yu and Stoet, 313.

³⁴⁶ Ibid.

body of Christ. When churches recognise this new identity in Christ, they may at least rejoice seeing more members added to any churches.

Based on the discussions above, I would suggest that if Chinese churches work together with English churches, their cooperation could lead to more effective ways of sharing the gospel and reaching Chinese students and immigrants. Generally speaking, Chinese churches and English churches have their respective advantages to bless the Chinese. By working together, they could be able to offer a better adjustment for Chinese students and immigrants. A wide social contact with the host culture is also believed to “be an effective and beneficial acculturation strategy.”³⁴⁷ When Chinese churches and English churches work together, they would improve their ability of helping new migrating adults as well as international students to feel a sense of a big family in Christ and adjust better in terms of cultural and social adaptation.

³⁴⁷ Yu and Moskal, 6.

3.3 Paul's Missionary Method of Choosing Centres and the Evangelism of British Chinese

Churches

One of Paul's missionary methods, as discussed in chapter two, is choosing centres for activities of mission. Through Paul's missionary journeys and letters, ones can observe that Paul undertook much effort to reach out to people in provinces and urban centres. I have also briefly mentioned that regarding Paul's approach of propagating in urban centres, different scholars have different views. Whereas Allen believes that Paul deliberately put strategic value on provinces and urban centres, Schnabel insists that it was more of Paul's desire and goal of reaching all people that led him to provinces and urban centres. Nevertheless, I have explained in chapter two that Chinese churches can observe Paul's methods from his consistent pattern of action. Therefore, they can take urban centres as having strategic value for evangelism and try to reach as many people as possible with the gospel. With this in view, I will discuss further two related ways in Paul's mission that may benefit British Chinese churches today: 1) reaching people wherever they can; 2) urban churches are expected to become a centre of light to spread the gospel.

Firstly, Paul's way of reaching people wherever he could is highly relevant to the development of British Chinese churches. The Chinese population has come to the UK for more than 100 years. At the early stages, most of them settled in big cities. Correspondingly, many Chinese churches are settled in urban cities in the UK. "After nearly sixty years of development, Chinese Christian communities in the UK have grown significantly. In 2012, 126 Chinese Christian churches or fellowships had been established in 66 cities and towns across the UK."³⁴⁸ For a more up-to-date information, the COCM website has a list of current Chinese churches in the UK.³⁴⁹ These information presents a clear picture that British Chinese churches are mainly centred in urban cities. In this sense, Paul's approach of choosing urban centres as major mission fields is applicable for established Chinese churches. In fact, it also shows an advantage of applying it since current British Chinese churches are already settled in urban centres.

However, as there are many already established Chinese urban churches, it would be more significant and relevant to look back the reason why Paul built up churches in urban centres. As I have discussed previously, most scholars agree that the reason behind Paul's

³⁴⁸ Yuqin Huang, "Becoming Missionaries: Gender, Space and Subjectivities in Chinese Christian Communities in the UK," 212.

³⁴⁹ "List of Chinese Churches in the United Kingdom," Chinese Overseas Christian Mission, accessed 15 April 2021, https://www.cocm.org.uk/files/ugd/76492a_ac79d51701354bfc941a6005bd4a202f.pdf.

focus on established urban churches was his goal of reaching people whoever, whatever and wherever he could. It is noted that Jesus did not come to the world in one of the notable cities or centres of the empire but in the obscurity of Nazareth.³⁵⁰ Looking back to the mission that Jesus did, there is no biblical evidence of Jesus' practicing a missionary method of focusing propagation in urban cities. Paul's missionary goal was definitely consistent with Jesus' and he followed after Jesus. Even though Paul practiced a method of choosing centres in the very early years of the church, he practiced this method with a purpose of spreading the gospel and expanding the church to as many people as possible in his lifetime. It is generally believed that Paul spent most of his time in and around coastal cities in the eastern Mediterranean sea because there were major population centres bustling with people and commerce, as well as for the convenience of travelling.³⁵¹ At the same time, by preaching the gospel to the Jews, no matter what rejection might cost, Paul inspires Christians that the difficulty of preaching the gospel to a certain people group cannot be a reason to refrain from the target. Allen explains that by preaching in the synagogue, Paul "bought the difficulty at once to a head in its acutest

³⁵⁰ Hanciles, 125-26.

³⁵¹ Bird, 20.

form.”³⁵² In other words, if Paul did not include Jewish people in his gospel task, and if he had not started his preaching in synagogues, the difficulty would have been largely avoided, though no doubt the difficulty was necessarily there and could not have been completely avoided.³⁵³ Nonetheless, Paul did not deliberately aim at the conversion of the Jews as a class either.³⁵⁴ Meanwhile, outside the synagogue, Paul seemed neither to address himself to any particular class nor particularly seek to attract “the scholars, the officials, the philosophers.”³⁵⁵ Allen insists that “the majority of St. Paul’s converts were of the lower commercial and working classes, laborers, freed men, and slaves; but that he himself did not deliberately aim at any class.”³⁵⁶ Paul made no attempt to look for any particular class of hearers; instead, he proclaimed the gospel to all who would listen.³⁵⁷ Thus, it is not exaggerating to say that Paul had an attitude and a goal of preaching the gospel wherever, whenever, whoever, whatever he could, according to God’s guidance and work.

³⁵² Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 31.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 32.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 35.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 36.

Hence, I believe that with the same attitude and goal, British Chinese churches can follow Paul's approach of reaching people with the good news today. Since the Chinese population has been expanding in the UK, it is meaningful for Chinese churches to take the opportunity to expand the work of evangelism. Chinese churches should not stop at Paul's method of focusing on centres for evangelism. Instead, there seems to be increasing needs for establishing Chinese churches and working with English churches to reach the Chinese in towns and villages.

Secondly, with the need of reaching Chinese population beyond urban centres and big cities, urban churches will need to consider how they may spread the gospel to the surrounding areas. Allen reminds that "there has been happened to a mission that though it has been established in an important city, the surrounding country has been left untouched because the native convert who himself received the gospel did not understand how to spread it, nor realize that it was entrusted to him for that purpose."³⁵⁸ This seems to be a similar issue that Chinese churches in the UK have been facing. Chinese churches have been mostly established in significant urban centres, and there have been few reports

³⁵⁸ Ibid, 19.

of these city churches continually propagating the gospel to the surrounding country areas. Yet, in 2004, the Chinese Evangelical Church in Edinburgh (CECE) supported the forming of the Fife Christian fellowship, which then met every Monday for Bible studies and fellowship.³⁵⁹ As Edinburgh is a major city, that was the CECE's effort of reaching out to Christians in a less developed area. Given that most Chinese churches are still settled in urban centres, such effort of outreach should be encouraged. Allen reminds that people sometimes are so enamoured with the strategic beauty of a place that they "spend their time in fortifying it whilst the opportunity for a great campaign passes by unheeded and neglected."³⁶⁰ He also points out the difference between Paul's and their strategic points,

We have often heard in modern days of concentrated missions at great centres. We have often heard of the importance of seizing strategic points. But there is a difference between our seizing of strategic centres and St. Paul's. To seize a strategic centre, we need not only a man capable of recognizing it, but a man capable of seizing it. Most of the people into London are lost in the crowd. A great centre may be a swamp which absorbs, as well as a source from which flows life-giving power to all the country round.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ "About Our Church," Chinese Evangelical Church in Edinburgh, accessed 20 June 2022, https://mail.cece.org.uk/English/about_our_church.html.

³⁶⁰ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 27.

³⁶¹ *Ibid*, 26.

Indeed, it is not difficult to see that the established churches in Paul's day were able to grow and expand. From Thessalonica the word of the Lord sounded out in Macedonia and Achaia (1 Thess 1:8). From Ephesus the gospel spread throughout all the neighbouring country so that many churches sprang up. Paul wrote to them that "there is no more place" for him to work in those regions (Rom 15:23). It is a general affirmation that the early churches were "active evangelistic entities."³⁶² Paul expected "his churches to engage in centrifugal (out-ward-directed) missionary work that was in continuity with his own missionary labors."³⁶³ Allen further argues that there is no evidence that "the missions to the civilized people of the East are established more quickly or surely than those amongst the uncivilized."³⁶⁴ He indicates that unless ones try Paul's method of reaching all people classes everywhere, they could not tell "what may be the power of the Holy Spirit in such cases."³⁶⁵ Knowing that the Holy Spirit can be at work in any places, churches are meant to spread the gospel to all people in their surrounding areas and beyond.

³⁶² Plummer, *Paul's Understanding of the Church's Mission*, 2-3.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*

³⁶⁴ Allen, *Missionary Methods*, 37.

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

Allen's view on the need of spreading the gospel not only to cities but also to countries is a practical reminder for British Chinese churches. It is apparent that there is an increasingly global migration trend, and that has also been the case in the UK. Chinese immigrants have been one of the fastest growing migration groups in the UK in the twenty first century. As mentioned earlier, ethnic Chinese is the fifth largest group in the UK with 0.7 per cent of the total UK population. Currently, many Chinese are migrating to the UK to study or work. As more Chinese immigrants come and wish to settle down, they need to find a job and acquire financial security. Some Chinese might prefer to settle in suburban or rural areas in order to save money. Apart from urban areas, there are also needs of evangelism concerning Chinese people living in suburban and rural places.

Thus, dedicated prayer and endeavour of evangelism to suburban and rural areas will be required from existing British Chinese urban churches. In addition to examples such as forming Bible study groups and Christian fellowships, urban churches can also help in other ways such as training local Christian leaders, evangelising local Chinese people, and organising interactions and activities between Christians in urban centres and Christians in suburban and rural areas.

There may be various practical challenges when spreading the gospel further to city surroundings and rural areas. Especially, there may not be enough resources, pastors, co-workers in established urban-centred churches. Thus, it will be sensible for Chinese churches to relate Paul's big picture of unity in one body, which is not only about unity in a church, but also about unity among all churches as the body of Christ. When Christians truly see churches as a big family, they will be open to working together. In this way, each church may contribute its resources to the big family. Churches can then come together in prayer, in learning, in support and in cooperation for wherever, however and whatever they are called to do.

This chapter has explored implications of Paul's missionary methods for Chinese churches in the UK. It has generally discussed how to apply Paul's missionary methods in the British Chinese context before getting into specific connections between Paul's methods and British Chinese churches. Applying Paul's missionary methods does not simply mean imitating Paul but understanding and practicing the profound teaching and practical wisdom in his methods. This is one of the important reasons that the present thesis has spent the first two chapters exploring the background, profound teaching, and

practical wisdom in Pauline methods. Moreover, this chapter has pointed out that establishing a healthy church with the same foundation from Paul's time is a starting point of applying Paul's approaches in the mission of today's British Chinese churches.

At last, it is necessary for Christians to consider situational elements while relating Paul's missionary methods to theirs. In other words, it is necessary to renew practical ways and insights from Paul's time to the present time.

After discussing appropriate views and attitudes in applying Paul's missionary methods, this chapter discusses three areas that may inspire current British Chinese churches. The first area is about the two most relevant Pauline methods for British Chinese churches in their developing stages. The first one is following and relying on the Holy Spirit and his guidance, submitting continuous prayers for his work. The second one is that Christians need to apply Paul's approach of proclaiming the gospel. These two points have also been discussed in chapter one as two main aspects of Paul's integral missionary methods. They are also two main methods in Allen's discussion of Pauline missiology. For the second area, this chapter has explained that because of the multicultural and multi-ethnic overseas Chinese context in the UK, Paul's missionary

method of practicing unity is especially necessary and helpful for British Chinese churches. Paul's approach of maintaining unity with the new identity in Christ is fundamentally important for British Chinese churches. Acknowledging the new identity in Christ is the key for the church to unify Christians in the body of Christ. This chapter has also explained that Paul's approach of maintaining unity is related to his four relationships in mission. His relationship with God, with the flocks, with co-workers and with churches can be a great model and ways of maintaining unity among churches. The third area is an explanation of the advantage of applying Paul's method of choosing urban centres for evangelism in the British Chinese church context, especially in terms of reaching people wherever they can and making urban churches a centre of light to spread the gospel to city surroundings and rural areas.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored Paul's missionary methods and discussed relevant aspects and their implications to the British Chinese church context. In the thesis, I have made an overall argument of understanding Paul's missionary methods as integral methods.

Namely, Paul's missionary methods are guided by the Holy Spirit, cooperated by co-workers, and centred at the proclamation of the gospel. These three aspects/methods are essential and integrated in Paul's methods. The thesis has also revealed that Paul's methods of following the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the gospel are understood as two major decisive approaches in Roland Allen's classic work. Meanwhile, Allen's view on Paul's methods of maintaining unity and choosing urban centres are also integrated respectively in Paul's methods of working with co-workers and proclaiming the gospel.

I have elaborated that Paul's integral missionary methods are essential and applicable in the British Chinese church context. I consider Paul's methods of following the Holy Spirit and proclaiming the gospel as two most relevant and integrated Pauline methods for Chinese churches in the UK. In addition, maintaining unity among Chinese churches, and among Chinese churches, English churches, and other ethnic churches is an

integrated part of the method of working with fellow workers and churches. As for choosing urban centres for evangelism, while it is an approach of proclaiming the gospel, it certainly needs to be guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit. Hence, all the aspects of Paul's integral methods are essential and integrated for Chinese churches' endeavour of church growth and mission in the UK.

I have made some general suggestions for British Chinese churches in the body of the thesis. In this concluding chapter, I would like to outline what future practice might look like for Chinese churches and provide some detailed plan of action for consideration.

Firstly, with new waves of immigrants coming from Hong Kong, it is expected that among them there are not just Christians but also some pastors, church leaders and church workers who used to serve in churches in Hong Kong. It would be ideal if they could continue to serve as pastors, church leaders and workers after they settle down in the UK. However, they will need some time to settle in a new context, and existing Chinese churches will also need some time to accommodate and make suitable positions for them to serve. With limited resources in many existing Chinese churches, it would be practical if these former pastors, leaders, and workers would volunteer or work part time in the

church for some time. This way could help them to adjust better in the new context, improve the church's staff team without causing much burden, and help existing churches to understand them better. Whereas some churches have only a single pastor or elder, these former pastors and church leaders would also provide the potential for developing a plural church leadership in the near future.

In the case that some of them may live in suburban areas, they can help with urban churches' outreach in suburban or rural areas. With experiences of church ministry in the past, they would be able to find some connections with existing churches. On the other way around, existing churches could also take the initiative to find connections with them. In either way, they could help with establishing Christian fellowships and spreading the gospel to suburban and rural areas.

Secondly, another option for some former pastors would be starting a new church. This will be a much challenging option as they just come to a new context, even though they may aim to serve Christians from Hong Kong. When some of the former pastors may have fewer financial needs, and they may know some Christians from Hong Kong who happen to live in the same city in the UK, it may be a possible option for them to

start a new church. However, given the fact of a new context and many uncertainties in people's lives, it would be helpful if some Chinese Christian organisations, such as the COCM, can set up some plans for helping pastors from Hong Kong who would like to start a new church. For example, the COCM may help to introduce various connections for raising funds. They could also provide whatever available information and resources for church planting. They may also help with liaison among existing Chinese churches which may in some way help with church planting.

Thirdly, existing Chinese churches, especially Cantonese speaking churches, will need to face new waves of immigrants coming from Hong Kong. New immigrants may positively contribute to the growth of the church, and they may also present new challenges to the church. In terms of pastoring, existing churches will need to be mindful of what new immigrants' needs are, and how they could help with meeting their needs. In addition to spiritual needs, churches may need to help new immigrants to better understand their life changing event of immigrating from Hong Kong to the UK and a series of relevant issues happening in their lives. This will require pastors and church leaders to acquire knowledge and understanding of new immigrants' daily life and current

situations in Hong Kong, China, and the UK. Acquiring such knowledge and understanding will require their dedicated research and day-to-day contact with new immigrants, including both Christians and non-Christians, who may face serious questions and challenges in their lives. Regarding non-Christian immigrants specifically, churches will need to adjust and share the message of the gospel in a way that is relevant to their life experiences.

Fourthly, there could be needs for more Mandarin speaking churches or Mandarin services. Historically, there have been many Cantonese speaking churches. As Mandarin speaking Christians increase in number, many churches adopt a way of having Mandarin interpretation for Cantonese services. However, as more Mandarin speaking Chinese moving to the UK, the demand for Mandarin services or Mandarin speaking churches has also been increasing. Cantonese dominant churches will need to decide whether or when they will have Mandarin services in their churches, and what would be the proper relationship between the Cantonese speaking congregation and the Mandarin speaking congregation. The church leadership will need to ensure to meet the increasing need for Mandarin services, and any changes will need to head towards a direction of healthy

development of the church. Whereas Mandarin speaking churches will be needed and established, the church leadership will need to be mindful of Christian unity and do their best in keeping a good relationship with other churches, including Cantonese speaking churches.

Like having Mandarin services in a Cantonese church, the need for English services may also increase for the group of British born Chinese. Born and raised in the UK, BBCs may just prefer to have English services while keeping their Christian worship in a Chinese church. In the case that some Chinese Christians, being BBCs or new immigrants, would like to attend local English churches, Chinese churches would also respect such choice and provide appropriate help for the Chinese Christians and the local churches. In this way, Christians of different backgrounds could understand and experience the unity of the Church. Wherever appropriate, Christian organisations such as the COCM and the Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (UK) may need to do their part in fostering unity and cooperation among Chinese churches and among Chinese churches and local churches of diverse backgrounds.

Fifthly, Chinese churches will need to have the burden and develop their ministry and mission beyond the Chinese population. Living in the land of the UK as a minority group, Chinese churches should have a heart of gratitude and do their part in contribution to the development of Christianity in the UK. They would need to develop more connections and cooperation with local churches of various denominations. They can learn from one another in the process of doing ministry and mission with other churches, especially churches of different denominations. This way could help to enrich their perspectives, expand their ministry areas, and stir up their passion for the kingdom of God. While connections and cooperation with local British churches should be encouraged, Chinese churches need to be mindful that God's ways are higher than men's ways (Isaiah 55:9). When they consider methods for mission and ministry with local churches, they should always seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and commit their work to God in prayers.

In addition to the already-mentioned ministries such as those of the International Café, the Friends International, and the OMF (UK), perhaps a practical start for Chinese churches could be participation in Christian charities operated by British churches. The

Christian charities would include such as British and Foreign Bible Society, Christian Vision, Christian Aid, Christians Against Poverty, Hope UK, etc. These Christian charities could open various areas of ministry and mission for Chinese churches, and they may also lead Chinese churches into a deeper level of cooperation and unity with local churches. By working with other churches through Christian charities, Chinese churches would be able to find out more about what and how they can serve the people and the church in the UK.

The present study has explored Paul's relevant methods and their implications mainly through biblical and theological discussions, with support from important information of the British Chinese church context as a practical dimension. Nevertheless, more studies and knowledge on the Chinese population and Chinese Christianity in the UK would provide a more comprehensive picture about the context in which Paul's methods could be applied. Therefore, it is expected that more studies on the practical dimension, namely, the British Chinese church context, will be helpful for applying further what has been discussed in this thesis.

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