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Leading the Multi-Congregation Church:

Frameworks for Ministry and Renewal



In Toronto, many Chinese churches founded by immigrants from Hong Kong in the 1980s and 1990s have gradually developed into three-congregation models consisting of Cantonese, Mandarin, and English ministries. In the early years, the Cantonese congregation functioned as the primary congregation, providing most of the pastoral leadership and shaping the overall direction of the church. While the English and Mandarin congregations were typically formed later, they often functioned in a more dependent manner, following the leadership and ministry patterns established by the Cantonese congregation, with contextual adaptations for their respective linguistic and cultural groups.

Since the first generation of senior pastors began stepping down in the 2010s, the dynamics among the three congregations have evolved. The relationship can no longer be described simply as a parent–child structure. While the Cantonese congregation continues to hold significant historical influence, the English and Mandarin congregations have increasingly developed their own leadership voices and ministry perspectives. Consequently, decision-making processes have become more complex, requiring greater collaboration across congregations.

Furthermore, leadership succession has gradually produced a structure that is both multicultural and multigenerational. This shift reflects the changing demographic realities of Chinese churches and highlights the need for governance models that can effectively integrate diverse linguistic, cultural, and generational perspectives within a single church body.

It is important to note that this is only a general description; every local church is unique, with its own denominational traditions, governance structures, demographic composition, and varying strengths among the congregations. Therefore, no single model fits all circumstances for moving forward. Some churches have concluded that they may function better without a senior pastor, allowing the three congregations to operate under the same roof with minimal collaboration. Other churches continue to strive to minister together as a visible expression of unity. Still others emphasize collaboration among the congregations without necessarily requiring them to conduct all ministries jointly.

Over the past four years as the Senior Pastor of Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church (SCBC)—a three-congregation church of more than 1,600 members, with the Cantonese congregation being the largest, followed by the English and Mandarin congregations—I have sought to lead through two key guiding principles: the Ministry Perspective Model and the Priorities of Renewal. These frameworks help provide clarity in leadership, alignment in ministry direction, and focus in spiritual renewal.

The Ministry Perspective Model offers a framework for understanding ministry through various leadership and participation perspectives. It helps identify who the leaders, decision-makers, and influencers are, as well as those who faithfully support and sustain the ministry. By recognizing these roles, the church can effectively coordinate its efforts and steward its people and resources toward God's mission.

Ministry Perspective Model

Vision – What does God want our church to be?
The Senior Pastor gathers the pastoral staff and deacon leadership to discern the church's vision through prayerful listening and dialogue with leaders, ministry teams, and congregational members.

At SCBC, our vision is to be an **intergenerational, missional, disciple-making church**. A healthy vision is scripturally-grounded, broadly affirmed, and describes the desired future of the church. It provides direction rather than specific actions.

Mission – What must each congregation do to fulfill the vision?
The Senior Pastor collaborates with each congregation to discern how it can uniquely contribute to the church's overall vision. Through this process, we seek unity in purpose, identify opportunities for collaboration, and pursue contextualization for each ministry context.

Strategy – What long-term direction will guide each congregation?
Each congregation, with the guidance and support of the Senior Pastor, develops a five-year strategic roadmap that aligns with the church's mission and vision.

Plan – How will the strategy be implemented?
Congregational leaders partner with their ministry teams to develop actionable ministry plans that advance the strategic focus.

Execution – Implementing the plans
Ministry teams lead and carry out the plans and make necessary adjustments as challenges arise. Operational insights may refine ministry plans or strategies, but the church's core vision and mission remain steadfast.

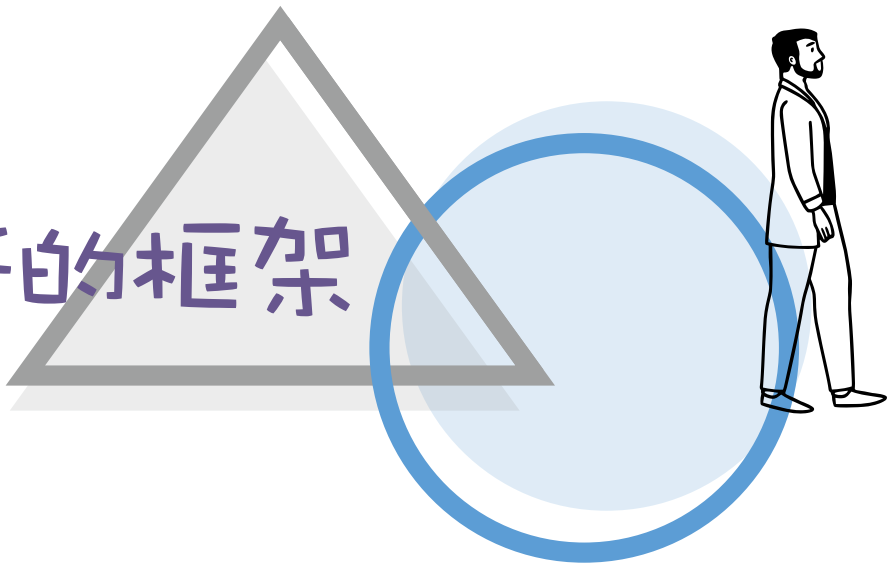
Priorities of Renewal

In addition to the **Ministry Perspective Model**, I emphasize the **Priorities of Renewal: personal, relational, missional, structural, and cultural renewal.** Missional renewal must be grounded in **personal renewal**—our restored relationship with God—and **relational renewal**—our renewed relationships with one another. I often remind our team that regardless of how clear the mission, how robust the strategy, or how well-developed the ministry plans may be, the church is the **body of Christ**, called to build up people rather than merely accomplish tasks.

For this reason, r**elational renewal is essential** for any church seeking to respond faithfully to God's vision. A common mistake many churches make is implementing **structural change too quickly**. Structural changes without a strong foundation of healthy relationships with God and with one another often cause harm rather than advancing the vision. **Cultural renewal**, therefore, cannot be manufactured; it emerges naturally through the work of the Holy Spirit as personal, relational, missional, and structural renewal take place.

May my leadership experience serve your church as it seeks to faithfully respond to God's vision.

帶領多堂會教會：事工與更新的框架



黃志文牧師
士嘉堡華人浸信會主任牧師
兼過渡期國語事工主任

在多倫多，許多在1980至1990年代由香港移民建立的華人教會，現已逐漸發展成由粵語堂、國語堂和英語堂組成的三堂會模式。早期的粵語堂作為主要堂會，提供了大部分的牧養領導並塑造教會的整體方向；英語堂和國語堂則多在較後期才成立，它們通常依賴粵語堂所建立的領導和事工模式，並按各自的語言及文化群體的處境作出調整。

及至2010年代，第一代主任牧師開始逐步退任後，三個堂會之間的互動關係也出現轉變，不能再如從前簡單形容為「家長—子女」結構。雖然粵語堂仍然保有重要的歷史影響力，但英語堂和國語堂亦逐漸發展出各自的領導意見與事工觀點。教會的決策過程因而變得更為複雜，堂會之間亦需要更多協作。

此外，新一代教會領袖接棒，領導層結構逐漸呈現出多元文化和跨世代的現象。這種轉變反映了華人教會人口結構的變化，也突顯了教會需要有效的管理模式，讓不同的語言、文化和世代的觀點能在教會整合為一。

注意，以上僅為概括性描述；每一間教會都是獨特的，具有各自的宗派傳統、管理架構、會眾結構，各堂會亦有不同的強項，並沒有單一發展模式能適用於所有教會。有些教會主張沒有主任牧師的情況下會運作得更好，三個堂會在同一屋簷下各自運作，並只需維持最基本的合作；有些教會則致力繼續一同事奉，以彰顯教會的合一；還有一些教會強調堂會之間的協作，但不要求所有事工都必須聯合進行。

過去四年，我作為士嘉堡華人浸信會（SCBC）的主任牧師，在一間有超過1,600名會友、以粵語堂人數最多、其次為英語堂和國語堂的三堂會教會，我嘗試以兩個關鍵的指導原則帶領教會前行：事工視角模式（Ministry Perspective Model）以及更新的優先次序（Priorities of Renewal）。這兩個框架為我們的領導提供清晰方向，使事工方向一致，並專注於屬靈更新。

事工視角模式提供一個框架，讓我們從領導和參與的角度來理解教會事工，幫助我們分辨誰是領袖、決策者，誰具有影響力，以及誰在忠心支持和維繫事工。當這些角色分明起來，教會就能更有效地協調各方面的努力，並善用神所託付的人力與資源，實現祂的使命。

事工視角模式

異象（Vision）—— 神希望我們成為怎樣的教會？
主任牧師召集牧者團隊與執事領袖，在禱告中聆聽神的帶領，並透過與領袖、事工團隊及會眾的對話，一同辨識教會的異象。

在SCBC，我們的異象是成為一間**跨世代、以宣教為導向，並致力於門徒培育**的教會。一個健康的異象應札根於聖經、受廣泛認同，並描繪出教會的理想未來。異象提供的是方向，而非具體行動。

使命（Mission）——
各堂會需要做甚麼來實現異象？
主任牧師與各堂會合作，辨識如何獨特地參與實現教會的整體異象。過程中，我們尋求使命上的合一，發掘堂會之間的協作機會，並就各事工需要作處境化發展。

策略（Strategy）—— 有甚麼長遠方向能引領各堂會的事工？
各堂會在主任牧師的引導與支持下，制定一個為期五年，與教會的異象和使命一致的的策略路線圖（strategic roadmap）。

計劃（Plan）—— 如何落實策略？
堂會領袖與各事工團隊合作，制定具體可行的事工計劃，以推動策略重點。

執行（Execution）—— 推行計劃
各事工團隊負責帶領並執行相關計劃，並在面對挑戰時作出必要調整。實際運作的經驗或許能完善事工計劃或策略，但教會的核心異象與使命應保持不變。

更新的優先次序

除了事工視角模式，我也特別強調「**更新的優先次序**」：先是個人、關係更新，再者是使命、結構和文化更新。使命更新必須建基於**個人更新**，就是我們自身與神復和，以及肢體間的**關係更新**。我常提醒團隊，無論使命多麼清晰、策略多麼完善、事工計劃多麼周全，教會始終是**基督的身體**，其呼召是建立生命，而不僅僅是完成任務。

因此，對任何渴望忠心回應神異象的教會而言，**關係更新是不可或缺的**。許多教會常犯的錯誤是**過急推行結構性變革**。如果缺乏與神及與肢體的健康關係作為根基，這樣的改變往往帶來傷害，並且無法實現異象。文化更新亦因此不能人為地刻意製造，而是通過聖靈的工作，隨著個人、關係、使命和結構更新，自然而生。

願我的領導經驗能幫助您的教會，忠實地回應神的異象。

News and Prayer Requests 消息及代禱

- **New Lay Theological Education Course Begins**
  Please pray for the upcoming course "The Ideals, Crises, and Turning Points of Faith in Western Democratic Politics", as well as the public lecture "Social Polarization in the Trump Era". We thank God for the enthusiastic response to registration. May God guide the participants not only to deepen their understanding at the political level, but also to engage in spiritual reflection and learn to respond to social issues from God's perspective.

- **信徒神學教育課程開課**
  請為即將舉行的信徒神學教育課程「强權亮劍下的你、我、祂——西方民主政治的理念、危機及信仰拐點」，以及公開講座「Trump時代的社會兩極化——信徒豈能置身事外？」代禱。感恩報名踴躍，願上主帶領學員不僅加深對政治的理解，更能激發屬靈反思，學習以神的眼光回應當下社會議題。

- **Course Enrollment in the Coming Season**
  Please pray for the enrollment of the upcoming Lay Theological Education course, "History of Evangelicalism." May God use the course to equip brothers and sisters in every aspect of their faith journey. From understanding history to personal growth, may they apply what they learn in their service and bear witness to the Lord among others.

- **Alumni Support Planning**
  We thank God for the positive response to the recent survey distributed to alumni in the Greater Toronto Area, which has helped the team gain a deeper understanding of their needs. Please pray for the planning of this year's retreat and alumni gatherings. May God guide the preparation, grant speakers wisdom, and enable the team to work well together. May these gatherings provide rest for alumni serving in ministry or the workplace, along with meaningful fellowship and mutual support, so that their spiritual lives and service may be empowered.

- **Prayer for Rev. Kin Yip Louie**
  Rev. Louie is returning to Toronto later this summer. To continue serving global Chinese churches, may the Lord provide for all his needs and grant him wisdom and strength to continue leading and advancing the development of CGST Toronto according to His will.

- **第三季度課程招生**
  請為下一季信徒神學教育課程「教會歷史——何謂福音派教會？」招生代禱。願上主使用課程，裝備弟兄姊妹在信仰生命各層面得以成長，從認識歷史到實踐事奉，都能在人群中作主的見證。

- **適切的校友支援**
  感謝主！早前向大多倫多地區校友發放的意向調查得到積極回應，讓同工更深入了解校友的需要。請為本年度退修營及校友聚會籌備代禱，求主引領整個預備過程，賜講員智慧分享，並讓同工彼此配搭，為牧職及職場校友提供歇息空間，並有深度交流與同行，使靈命更新，事奉得力。

- **為雷競業牧師禱告**
  總幹事雷競業牧師將於今年中再次返回多倫多。願上主供應一切所需，賜下智慧與力量，使雷牧師按上主的心意，繼續帶領並推動中神在多倫多的發展，服侍世界華人教會。

2026 Financial Needs 2026 財政需要

To respond to the pastoral needs of Chinese churches worldwide, CGST Toronto is fully committed to planning several key initiatives. These include a research project addressing the unique challenges faced by overseas Chinese churches, the development of a networking and support platform for pastors, the design of a Doctor of Ministry program tailored for overseas Chinese church leaders, and the launch of a series of accessible theological education courses (Lay Theological Education). The projected budget for 2026 is CAD 600,000. We warmly invite brothers and sisters to lift this financial need in prayer and to consider supporting the ministry through your offerings, partnering together to bless Chinese churches across the globe.

為回應普世華人教會在牧養上的需求，中神多倫多正全力規劃多項事工，具體包含針對海外華人教會獨特牧養挑戰的研究計畫、創建教牧人員互動交流的平台、設計專為海外華人牧者開設的教牧學博士課程，以及推廣一系列信徒神學教育課程。2026年預計經費為加幣60萬元，懇請各位弟兄姊妹在禱告中記念此項財務需要，並考慮以奉獻支持，共同祝福全球華人教會。

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