

Baptist Union of Great Britain

Hong Kong Response Project

Newsletter 13 – November 2023



Sharon Shek writes:

What's after Welcoming?

Recently there was a survey (by Dr Yinxuan Huang, donated from British and Foreign Bible Society) about the growth of the Hong Kong community in the UK Church (see: www.baptist.org.uk/chinesechurch). The survey has shown that a quarter of Hong Kong Christians who immigrated in the UK, have been in local churches. The welcome by local churches in this wave of immigration has been brilliant. The local churches, including Baptist churches, have done a good job in welcoming them. I asked some Hong Kongers from the local Baptist churches why they chose to attend the local churches but not Chinese churches. Their answers are quite similar - that they received practical help from the pastors and felt the love from the church and Jesus.

Thank you for the effort churches and pastors have made. It's time now to think about the long-term goals and needs together. We always said we have some gaps in the different language and cultures. The question is how we can live together harmony and grow in faith.

We don't have an answer yet! However, from the Alpha course and the Welcome course, we learned something.



During the Welcome course and Alpha course, the main and important part is the platform of chatting. We learned that chatting is one of the ways to find out answers and a process of thinking. It's a process of listening and understanding. Why is understanding important?

We want to do something which has benefit.

Only when we understand the needs can we do things which are of benefit. For Hong Kongers, going to a local church is not usual - normally, 'birds of feather flock together', so there are many Chinese Churches around the country. But, for this wave of immigration of Hong Kongers, some of them have chosen a different way. We are walking on the new way; how do we make a road? We don't have an answer yet. We need to listen and learn in the uncertain situation. We encourage churches to create a platform to listen and pray. We are crossing the river by feeling the stones. In Numbers chapter 13, Moses sent twelve spies to scout the land of Canaan. Most of the spies reported back negatively. Only Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to the trust in God's promises. It seems like we are on the way to the promised land. It's uncertain, there may be some anxieties, some problems ahead and we have no solution yet. However, by faith, we can walk along together.

Last month we gathered some brothers and sisters in Derby, to get together and pray. It's moving and we felt support when we worshipped and prayed together. When we pray, we know that we walk forward with God, not only us. Please listen and pray for the faith for the churches and Hong Kongers. Let's walk to the future.



Walter Wong (Sharing Faith in the Workplace: Perspectives from a Volunteer Minister, who founded the Hong Kong Fellowship in Broadmead Baptist Church in February 2022)



Bristol Broadmead Baptist Church's Hong Kong Fellowship invited me to design and lead a workshop for our monthly gathering of the rapidly growing Hong Kong congregation. This community has grown from a small group to nearly a hundred members, integrating into both the multinational church and the UK. As a member of the church since October 2021, I found this opportunity not only exciting but also challenging.

During our singing session, approximately 60 adults and 30 children participated in the event. My objective was to introduce a theme from Hong Kong to the UK, titled 'Sharing Faith in the Workplace'. It quickly became apparent that the dynamics of our community here – situations, personalities, languages, and cultures – were distinct from what one might anticipate. I aimed to share insights and communicate the wisdom we've gathered over the past two years.

I had the privilege of inviting and engaging with three other Christians from Hong Kong. It felt like assembling a puzzle with four perspectives of sharing Faith (1) by serving one on one wholeheartedly, (2) through connecting with volunteers and local authorities, (3) by engaging with the public through a profession and (4) with vulnerable groups through working in charity.

In the process, I recognised the significance of deepening the pastoral practice of shepherding within the Hong Kong community in the UK. It's not just about reusing old ideas as something new; instead, it's about renewing our hearts and transforming our approach.

I recalled a message two years ago during the inauguration of this fellowship from Jeremiah 29:4-7, emphasising that we should 'Live Well' in our current circumstances.

Towards the end, I delivered a short sermon on Romans 12:2, which states, 'Do not conform to the pattern of this world but be TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect WILL.'



Finally, please join me to express gratitude to Broadmead for the ongoing support to the Hong Kong believers, and please keep in prayer 'the challenges when laying down roots in another land', as Pastor Mark responded to this sharing.

Prayer

What can I pray for you and your ministry? You are welcome to get in touch at SShek@baptist.org.uk