

Consultation for Chinese Churches

South Bay

Saturday, April 26, 2008

Summary of Consultation

Introduction

The consultation was held at the Overseas Theological Seminary, 2116 Newport Ave., San Jose, CA 95126.

Participants

Over 60 participants representing about 22 churches and 3 religious organizations were present. A list is available.

Purpose of the Storyboard Session

To identify Challenges & Issues facing Chinese Congregations Today

Non-Purpose of this Session

To show off, compete with other churches

Storyboard Session

Working in 6 small groups (Two groups comprised of members from the same church), we identify ideas under the following headers.

Opportunities & Strengths

- *Ministries that are successful
- *Things that are going well
- *What we are thankful for

Challenges & Issues

- *Ministries that need attention
- *Things we want to see change
- *What we are praying for

After each group shared their cards, we took a break. During the break time, the cards were merged together into general topics. Each person had 3 dots to identify priorities from his/her perspective. There was a limit to only placing 1 dot on any single topic.

Spiritual Development (14) [24 dots]

- *Good worship spirit-choir
- *Lack of spiritual revival (2)
- *Spiritual leaders (2)
- *Always improving prayer ministry
- *Faithful prayer warriors (2)
- *Lack of maturity of Christian life
- *Low prayer meeting attendance
- *Discipleship training (2)
- *Choir music

- *Beginning teachable spirit
- *Potential leadership burn-out
- *Committed co-workers (1)
- *Long hours at work, less energy for church
- *Silicon Valley stress
- *Burn out

Leader Development (19) [21 dots]

- *Leadership stays the same, no new blood (1)
- *Unable to find English pastor
- *Hard to recruit across congregations
- *Lack of leadership training
- *Decline in serving brothers and sisters
- *Dedicated core leadership
- *Need more ministry co-workers
- *Mandarin only, need English-speaking teacher for children ministry
- *Faithful, supportive board
- *Aging leadership
- *Need younger people (1)
- *Lack of youth leader
- *Need leadership training
- *Leadership going the right direction
- *40 days—Purpose-Driven Church
- *Discipleship training program
- *Lack of training in leader development

Mission/Outreach (8) [12 dots]

- *Mission local & global (2)
- *Participating in short-term missions
- *Missions giving healthy
- *Mission
- *English outreach programs are promising
- *Reaching out to Mainland Chinese
- *Lack of outreach opportunities due to location
- *Local outreach
- *Mission-minded involvement (1)
- *Community service (Beautiful Day)
- *Effective outreach better
- *More evangelism program
- *Need marketplace ministry
- *Multi-cultural

Christian Education (8) [12 dots]

- *Christian education
- *Faithful Sunday school teachers
- *Mandarin adult Sunday school

- *Small groups
- *Campus ministry
- *College students & 2nd generation
- *More young adult (18-35) ministry
- *Youth ministry (1)
- *Lack of youth pastor (1)
- *Youth program (1)
- *Good number of youth
- *More youth leaders and programs
- *Aging congregation
- *Care for the elderly
- *Strong senior fellowship
- *Adult education growing
- *College graduates missing in action (1)
- *2nd generation lost—not back to our church
- *2nd generation leaving the Chinese church
- *Young generation going into ministry
- *Mothers of preschooler ministry growing
- *Lack of family counseling (2)
- *Marital breakdowns—family concerns
- *Children ministry
- *Good children ministry
- *AWANA children ministry
- *AWANA children ministry
- *More children's workers

Church Life ((6) [10 dots]

- *Chinese patriarchy (1)
- *Change in church structure
- *Inflexible structure of governance
- *English congregation shrinking
- *Lack of agreement between Chinese and English congregations
- *Honesty in communication (good & bad)
- *Newcomers every week
- *Communication between 1st and 2nd generations (1)
- *Good food
- *Members become more active in serving (volunteering)
- *Courage to admit and learn from mistakes
- *Honesty in communication
- *Stable fellowship
- *Multi-cultural English ministry
- *Easily affected by rumor
- *Growing membership
- *Unclear direction for English ministry
- *Caring congregation (1)
- *Brothers and sisters care

- *Still exist after 19 years
- *Eager to learn the Word of God (1)

Facilities & Finances [0]

- *Lack of better location
- *Expensive living in Silicon Valley
- *Lack of financial resources
- *Lack of finances
- *No church building debt
- *Need money for church building
- *Lack of space to use
- *Not strategic location for church
- *Facility can accommodate future growth
- *South Bay strategic location
- *Convenient church location

Comparing Results

As the fourth and last consultation, we were able to compare the priorities of the South Bay with the previous events. The top priorities in the South Bay are: Spiritual Development and Leader Development. The second tier priorities are: Mission Outreach and Christian Education followed by Church Life.

Spiritual Development and Christian Education appeared also in the San Francisco and East Bay churches. Leader Development and Mission Outreach/Evangelism appeared in all four groups.

The concern for Church Life or Church Health only appeared in the South Bay and Alameda suggesting that in many of the newer churches, there are concerns about generational issues, communication, and church unity.

The churches perhaps older and historic in SF Chinatown and San Francisco expressed the priority of Retention of Members and Replenishment of Members. This may be the concern from declining members.

The next step on the results of the storyboard sessions is to draft an article analyzing the priorities and needs of Bay Area Chinese churches.

- Rev. Donald Ng, First Chinese Baptist Church of San Francisco