Welcoming the 1.5 Generation who speak Mandarin and English

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6/1/2010
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INTRODUCTION

“\text{I was a stranger and you welcomed me}”

\[\text{Matthew 25: 35 English Standard Version}\]

The 2010 “State of the Auckland Region” report published by the Auckland Regional Council refers to Auckland as the fastest growing region in Australasia. Between 2001 and 2006 Auckland absorbed half of New Zealand’s total population increase of 144,000 people. This means that by 2006, one-third of Auckland’s population were born overseas.\(^1\) The reason for this dramatic increase can be directly attributed to changes to the New Zealand immigration policy that were made in 1996. The old system of applicants from preferred countries such as England and Canada being given priority was changed to points being awarded for preferred skills. Subsequent to, and as a direct outcome of these revisions, there have been dramatic changes to the composition of the Auckland population. According to a recent article in \textit{The Aucklander}, the 2006 census recorded the Chinese population of Auckland as 97,425 residents which is double the number recorded in the 2001 census.\(^2\) According to a 2010 analysis of the census statistics conducted by \textit{Spasifik Mag}, a new significant contributor to Auckland’s population growth is “‘natural increase’, defined as births minus deaths”.\(^3\) Many of the adult immigrants who arrived in the preceding decades were accompanied by their children. It is these immigrant children who are usually referred to as the “1.5 generation”\(^4\) and who are the central focus of this research. Their arrival not only dramatically dropped the


\(3\) \textit{Spasifik Mag} \(<http://www.spasifikmag.com/29mar10aucklandsrisingpopulation/>\) (01 May 2010).

\(4\) A definition of the term “1.5 generation” is provided on Page 7.
average age of Auckland residents but many are now entering their child bearing years and contributing significantly to the population growth by natural increase. The census does not detail the number of residents who would belong to a category like the 1.5 generation and given that they are a highly mobile segment of the population, data will never be exact. However if one takes as a guide the number of people living in New Zealand between 10 and 29 years of age, this portion of the population has increased by more than a third, from 605 061 in the 1996 census to 879 543 in 2006 census.\(^5\) It is clear that Auckland has experienced dramatic changes to its demographic age range and cultural composition. Such information is vital if the Church\(^6\) is to take seriously the Biblical challenge to welcome strangers. How to welcome the sub-group identified as members of the 1.5 generation who speak Mandarin and English is the special focus of this research.

If the Church is serious about welcoming new people, it needs to be acutely aware of trends in immigrant arrivals and changes to immigration policy, as immigrants constitute the bulk of new people. Each generation of immigrants and each cultural group have their own unique set of characteristics and needs. Thus for the church to be successful at welcoming new residents in Auckland, it will require a very flexible approach to church life. In fact it would not be an exaggeration to state that welcoming new immigrants is one of the biggest challenges facing the Church in Auckland in 2010. Ugly scenes of racial tension and violence overseas should be sufficient proof for Aucklanders that racial harmony cannot be taken for granted and requires constant monitoring, promotion and education. Possibly the most widely publicised Australian example occurred in 2005 when crowds of angry Sydneysiders of European


\(^6\) In order to differentiate, when referring in a generalised way to the Church at large, the word will be capitalised. When referring to the local church in Auckland, the word church will not be capitalised.
descent attacked any person who appeared to be of Middle Eastern descent. Auckland has not been spared racially motivated violence. In a raw and hard hitting report, the on-line news service Topix leaves little doubt that a significant proportion of reported gang violence is race based. Sadly gang violence does not seem to attract much coverage in the main-stream media as if it is almost expected and tolerated. One of the intended outcomes of this research is to challenge the Church to take seriously the need to actively participate in community building. The starting point of this work is the promotion and facilitation of a more informed understanding of other cultural and religious groups living in Auckland. The fact that Sunday morning continues to be New Zealand’s “most segregated hour” just as in the United States needs to be challenged and the benefits of multi-cultural congregations highlighted.

The title “Welcoming the 1.5 generation who speak English and Mandarin” specifies three criteria that will focus the areas of inquiry. The first is contained in the carefully chosen word “welcoming”. The intention is to specifically exclude activities such as “disciple making” and “proselytising” from the discussion and focus on the space preceding such activities. The use of the word “welcoming” stresses the desire to try and identify what needs to be done to make the 1.5 generation feel included and appreciated. This may occur within the usual weekly activities of the church but it is equally as likely that it must begin and possibly remain outside the usual weekly programmes. Thus one of the central questions of this thesis is to ask how to develop a theology of welcoming and hospitality to energise the church to focus on the needs

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9 Originally the words of Rev Martin Luther King uttered in an interview at the University of Western Michigan in 1963 in response to the question, “Don't you feel that integration can only be started and realized in the Christian church, not in schools or by other means?” <http://www.wmich.edu/library/archives/mlk/q-a.html> and used again by (then) Senator Barack Obama in a speech on 18 March 2008 at the Constitution Center in Philadelphia <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88878467> (19 May 2010).
of strangers. Christina Pohl is the Professor of Church in Society at Asbury Theological Seminary. She describes the requirements of such a theology most eloquently when she describes how,

“Jesus challenges narrow definitions and dimensions of hospitality and presses them outward to include those with whom one least desires to have connections…with their inconvenient needs and condition, with their incapacity to reciprocate”.10

Debates about solutions to slow the rapid decline in Church membership are common within the courts of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Presbytery of Auckland. However it is rare to hear a strong emphasis being placed on the need for local congregations to welcome and minister to strangers and immigrants.11 One of the principle reasons is the ongoing primacy given to providing for the needs of the congregants who already exist. It is usually the rapidly aging European congregation who are considered to be the owners and therefore control access to the church facilities. Any programme that does not have numerical growth and/or increased revenue as its primary objective is not likely to receive much support from congregants. A theology of welcoming has giving as its central purpose, and giving not until it hurts but giving that hurts. Pohl continues, “‘I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ resounds throughout the ancient texts, and contemporary practitioners of hospitality refer to this text more often than any other text”.12 Most local churches are just not prepared for ministry that involves showing hospitality to strangers.

11 I have been an ordained member of the Presbytery of Auckland since June 1996. I have served on the Mission & Education Committee, Uniting Churches Committee and the Presbytery Executive. The Presbytery of Auckland is the biggest Presbytery within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCANZ). The North Shore Presbytery and South Auckland Presbytery are the other Presbyteries covering the Auckland region. However observations and comments are restricted to the work of the Presbytery of Auckland alone.
12 Pohl, Making Room, 22.
The second focal point of this research is the members of the 1.5 generation who are also referred to as the “1.5G” or “1.5ers”. The 1.5 generation specifically excludes New Zealand born young people and the target group for this research will be between 18 and 30 years of age. An important characteristic of the 1.5G is that they were brought by their parents to New Zealand. Therefore it is highly unlikely that they participated in the decision-making process to relocate to Auckland. They were between 6 and 15 years of age when they arrived in New Zealand and so had received some formative education in their country of origin. They were enrolled in a New Zealand school immediately upon arrival and stayed until they had completed their formative school education. This is critical to understanding the 1.5G, even those from English speaking countries. It is this immersion into the education system and amongst their New Zealand peers that ensures that their integration into New Zealand is so markedly different from that of their parents. They are compelled to learn English, both formal and colloquial, understand the cultural signs and symbols of the local culture, adapt to a new education system and survive the playground and sports field on a daily basis. Significantly the children of migrants and migrant young people are all educated in a homogenous way within the New Zealand school and tertiary systems. English is the only language used for instruction; the context is dominated by European New Zealand cultural norms with only minor references to Māori language and cultural norms. Some schools take the cultural variety

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13 I could not find a definitive origin of the term 1.5 generation. The most likely is by staff within the United States Immigration Service to identify children who immigrated with their parents before the age of 12 years. “1.5G” is one of the generally accepted abbreviations and the G is capitalised. When the word “generation” is written in full, it is not capitalised. The abbreviation “1.5er” and the term “Generation 1.5” are also used in some literature. All are used here interchangeably as appropriate.

14 My original intention was to interview younger respondents but the Ethics Approval that I received limited me to people 18 years and older. This severely limited my ability to gain access to interviewees as by early adulthood the experience is often not as intense and they seemed less willing to participate.

15 There seems to be no generally accepted consensus on the specific age.

16 It is of course likely that New Zealand born children of immigrant parents could also experience discrimination based solely on appearance and other inherited traits such as accent, cultural nuances and familial habits. It is common for Asian immigrants to use an English name. My children learnt to speak English in New Zealand, are mono-lingual and have strong Kiwi accents. Yet they are often identified as South African immigrants at school because of their inflection when saying the word “off”.

in their midst seriously, publically acknowledging cultural differences, establishing cultural
groups and altering their school uniform policy to meet special religious needs. Some even
employ a staff member to provide support for international students however these services are
often not available to students who have immigrated permanently. The challenge of living and
being educated in such a foreign environment can create a multiplicity of unrecognised and
under-estimated challenges for the 1.5G. However despite all the difficulties, it is still highly
likely that they will complete their tertiary studies at a New Zealand institution rather than
return to their country of origin.

The third focal point being applied to the study is that the respondents must be fluent in
English and Mandarin. This enables the research to focus upon one sub-set of the 1.5
generation living in Auckland. Mandarin speakers originate in one of six very distinctive
regions namely Northern China, Southern China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan and
Malaysia. However despite this, for the purposes of this study, Mandarin is a significant
unifying theme. The introduction will present a brief historical analysis of Auckland and
immigration. Chapter One will provide an over-view of the meta-themes of mission and an
explanation of why the term “welcoming” is so important for the Church to fully understand.
Chapter Two will investigate the history of Chinese immigration, the change from settler
immigration patterns to transnationalism and the rise of the 1.5 generation phenomenon.
Chapter Three will contain the insights gleaned from the interviews with academic experts and
members of the 1.5 generation. Finally, Chapter Four will investigate the options that multi-
directional mission models offer to the local church. The conclusion will provide a summary of
how the church can respond to the opportunities and challenges that the 1.5 generation presents
and the sort of changes local churches can make in order to successfully welcome the 1.5 generation who speak Mandarin and English.

**Tāmaki Makaurau**

Tāmaki Makaurau, the region of New Zealand referred to as Auckland is the physical context of the research. The Auckland region is currently governed by five separate city councils; however plans are well advanced for them to be amalgamated into one “super-city” by the end of 2010.\(^\text{17}\) Despite having a population of only 1.4 million residents across the whole region, many Aucklanders fear the impact of living in what is often referred to as a mega-city.\(^\text{18}\) By comparison, Hong Kong boasts over 7 million residents and Taipei is home to 2.6 million people, both wedged into far smaller geographic areas than Auckland. The region is best described as an isthmus as it covers the narrow piece of land between the Manukau and Waitemata harbours. The isthmus is a dormant volcanic field with 12 distinct volcanic cones and numerous islands scattered throughout the Hauraki Gulf. From a New Zealand perspective it is important to identify Ngati Whatua of Orakei as the Tāngata Whenua of Tāmaki Makaurau.\(^\text{19}\)

It is difficult to identify the dynamic nature and constant change of the population in census data. It is more likely that local school rolls are a more accurate record of ethnographic data than the census. The rich cultural and linguistic mosaic that fills all the suburbs of Auckland is

\(^\text{17}\) Interestingly at the time of writing, the Presbyteries of South Auckland, Auckland, North Shore and the two Presbyterian Churches that are part of the ecumenical body Churches Together in Northland are in negotiation about forming a “mega-Presbytery” by the end of 2010.


reflected in most schools identifying 65 or more different nationalities on their rolls. According to the 2006 New Zealand Census the proportion of people of non-European origins including Maori has reached 46% of the total population of Auckland.\textsuperscript{20} The median age of Auckland’s total population is 33 years and just over 22% of the population are under 15 years of age. The Auckland City website summarises the rich language resource as “English is the main written and spoken language. Maori, Polynesian and Asian languages are also spoken by ethnic communities”.\textsuperscript{21} Manukau City Council claims to be more culturally sensitive than any other city council but seems to be no better at providing details about the origins of the residents of the city. Their website provides a ward-based demographic analysis of the 2006 census data which includes such peculiar details as “primary heating sources in homes” and “the percentage of the population that smokes”. However all language groups outside of English, Maori, Samoan and Sign are gathered up into a singular category of “other”. This effectively combines 83 000 people or 25% of the city’s population, representing well over 100 nationalities and languages into a single group, second only to English in size.\textsuperscript{22}

The popular notion of describing Auckland as a vast cultural melting pot of over 165 nationalities and cultures is misleading.\textsuperscript{23} The metaphor of a menagerie, “mixing together without losing their individual identity” is far more accurate.\textsuperscript{24} Immigration has dramatically changed the demographic landscape of Auckland but this does not necessarily equate to amalgamation or assimilation into a New Zealand way of life with its obvious European origins. Whilst the commitment of individual immigrants to permanent long term residence in

\textsuperscript{22}Manukau City Council website <http://www.manukau.govt.nz/EN/Yourcommunity/statistics/Pages/Population.aspx>  (27 October 2009).
\textsuperscript{23} Ibid.
Auckland varies widely, most immigrants arrive with a positive attitude, seeking their fortune and a better future for their children. The willingness of the local community to accept otherness, the desire of the immigrant to integrate, religious affiliation and English language skills are all complicating factors. Generally speaking, integration is more difficult in small rural towns that tend to be more mono-cultural than urban suburbs. Immigrants from the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada and English speaking South Africans often have sufficient cultural commonality with New Zealanders to assimilate almost seamlessly and exploit all the rights and privileges of those who are New Zealand born with considerable ease. Quality tertiary qualifications that ensure well remunerated employment increase the likelihood of successful integration especially as the immigrant can choose to reside in a more affluent suburb and enrol their children at more desirable schools.

On the other end of the scale, the 750 refugees that fill the New Zealand’s UNHCR quota each year have few choices. They are resettled in one of five main settlement areas, one of which is Auckland, after an initial six week assessment and orientation at the Mangere Refugee Centre. By world standards the population for Auckland enjoys a relatively high standard of living with easy internet and mobile phone connectivity. Whilst this provides immigrants with easy contact with family and friends overseas, it can also emphasise their disadvantages especially if neither parent can find quality employment with remuneration commensurate with their experience and qualifications. Immigrants always experience feelings of vulnerability and dislocation which can last for years if integration with unique Kiwi norms

\[\text{However like countless others, my own children will tell you that you can never achieve full assimilation even though they were toddlers when we arrived and so are “technically” first generation New Zealanders with English as their mother tongue.}\]

\[\text{The New Zealand government has agreed to take 750 refugees per annum under the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees resettlement programme. \quad \langle http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home\rangle (9 November 2009).}\]
is slow and their English language skills are weak. Integration will be slowed still further if family, religious and/or cultural groups congregate in certain suburban areas. For example Auckland has experienced a dramatic increase in the number of mosques catering for Muslims who have originated in different parts of the Muslim world. The relatively recent establishment of two Muslim schools in Auckland, one co-educational and the other for girls, with tuition in Arabic, as well as an Arabic newspaper and television broadcasts points to significant independence as a group and possibly increasing isolationist tendencies. This is particularly pertinent to this research as many of the students in these schools will belong to the 1.5G or may even be New Zealand born.

This thesis will argue that the large number of immigrants relocating to Auckland on a weekly basis presents the Church with a significant challenge as well as a wonderful opportunity to fulfil God’s call to mission. This specific focus is on how and what the Church can do to welcome 1.5 generation young people who speak English and Mandarin - not recruit or convert them, disciple or train them but welcome them as strangers and befriend them. What can the Church in general and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand [PCANZ] in particular provide in terms of structures and/or services that would support and be of value to the 1.5 generation?

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27 One of the most celebrated unique features in New Zealand is the unique turn right road rule.
CHAPTER ONE

A Theology of Mission

Whilst the centrality of mission in the Biblical narrative is widely accepted, there is considerable debate about how and what constitutes mission in the life of the Church. The First and Second Testaments are bursting with encounters between humanity and a missionary God who stops at nothing in order to have koinonia with humanity. The Rev Dr Christopher Wright is a leading First Testament scholar and missiologist who is currently serving as the International Director of Langham Partnership International. He suggests that we should move away from seeking “The Biblical Basis of Mission” to “The Missional Basis of the Bible… the whole Bible is itself a ‘missional’ phenomenon” [emphasis his].

Christians delight in the description in Genesis 3:9 of a compassionate, missionary God who searches through the garden for the humans in the cool of the evening calling out “Where are you?” It seems that God was in a hurry to find the humans who were hiding due to their sin and did not even wait until the next day. John 3:16 is probably the best known Biblical passage to sustain the view that God loves all humanity. It was this ever-lasting love that drove the incarnate God to be murdered on a Roman cross just outside the city of Jerusalem. The Gospel centres upon this sacrificial act by God as the means by which every individual human can know the joy of the forgiveness of their sins and have an eternal relationship with God. The Church worships the grotesque image of the crucified Christ and even uses the murderous Roman cross as its all-uniting symbol because both epitomise the reality of a missionary God. Few

28 Koinonia is a Greek word that is often used in theological writing to illustrate the Christian fellowship or communion with God or with fellow Christians usually including intimate participation by God and humans. <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=koinonia> (1 June 2010).

would argue that there is no evidence of evil and sin in the world when it is so weighed down by war, starvation, injustice, cruelty and curable disease. As Isaiah 59 states so graphically, it is sin that separates us from God and leaves humanity without hope of redemption or rescue. Humanity cannot escape the fact that how we behave has a dramatic impact upon ourselves, others and our environment and our actions are judged by God.

Wright explains that the Latin term *missio Dei* translates as “the mission of God” and was first used to describe the essence of God’s mission by Karl Hartenstein in 1928. Hartenstein used the phrase in an attempt to capture Karl Barth’s assertion that mission is Trinitarian in nature. The use of the Latin word *missio* – “a sending” captures the emphasis of John 17:18 and John 20:21-22 that just as the Son and Holy Spirit were sent, so too is the Church. The Greek equivalent would have be *apostolos* which translates as “to send away”. Thus the *missio Dei* gives rise to the *missiones ecclesiae*. Retired Professor J. Andrew Kirk illuminates this still further when he states that “mission is so much at the heart of the Church’s life that, rather than think of it as one aspect of its existence, it is better to think of it as defining its essence…if [the church] fails to be missionary…it has ceased being Church”. Or as Wright summarises, “It is not so much a case that God has a mission for His Church in the world but that God has a Church for His mission in the world. Mission was not made for the Church but the Church for mission”. Bevans and Schroeder explain that a similar understanding exists in Roman Catholicism especially since the declarations of the Second Vatican Council were published. Pope John Paul II taught that “missionary activity belongs to

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30 Ibid., 62.
the very nature of Christian life”. They reiterate Emil Brunner’s famous statement as perhaps the best summary of all: “The church exists by mission, just as a fire exists by burning. Where there is no mission there is no church”. 35 Kirk states that “mission is quite simply, though profoundly, what the Christian community is sent to do, beginning right where it is located”. 36 Kirk laments that the Church has failed to reach consensus on what constitutes mission despite the clarity found in its definition. He continues:

In other words the mission of God flows directly from the nature of who God is. It is impossible to be more basic than that. God’s intention for the world is that in every respect it should show forth the way he [sic] is – love, community, equality, diversity, mercy, compassion and justice. 37

Whilst there is clearly a shift away from the narrow understanding of mission as solely the work of the Church overseas, this broadening of the definition has also created confusion over what actually constitutes mission. The real danger associated with these changes in usage is that the term can become compromised through over-use and misuse. For example the popularity of the term “missional church” seems to suggest that it is but one of a number of valid forms of church. Wright emphasises that missional is only an adjective to denote association with the *missio Dei* and not a new category of mission. 38 Likewise the word “missions” seems to suggest that the definition is very loose and that almost anything can be included as mission. Thus it is common to find local churches listing a multiplicity of activities under the banner of “missions”. There are many other good examples of the growing

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37 Ibid., 28.
general confusion about what activities constitute participation in the *missio Dei* which Kirk emphasises must have as their ultimate aim ushering in the Kingdom and reign of God.\(^{39}\)

**Why does Welcoming Matter?**

In her excellent book on the topic of Christian hospitality, Pohl suggests that the reason Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan was to redefine the concept of “neighbour” for his listeners. Highlighting the teaching of Wesley and Calvin, she explains how both theologians understood social isolation within communities, particularly between rich and poor, as one of the greatest challenges facing us all.\(^{40}\) In our modern, highly mobile world, the greatest stranger is often our neighbour and because we have so many neighbours, our relationships with strangers and even acquaintances rarely progress beyond superficial and temporal. Pohl points out that Wesley left little doubt about the breadth of his definition of neighbour when he included “our enemies… the evil and unthankful… every soul that God has made”.\(^{41}\) One of the great ironies is that the rise of modern professionalism particularly in the medical field has created some of the greatest distance in our communities. House calls by the doctor are a rarity and even pastoral visitation by clergy has become a complex and difficult business. Institutions such as hospitals and hospices that draw their name from the same Latin root word *hospitare* which translates as “to receive as a guest”\(^{42}\) are now the domain of such advanced medical practice that there is no room for anything else.\(^{43}\) Pohl emphasises that the act of welcoming strangers and showing hospitality involves the host occupying a space with which she/he is closely connected and very familiar. The stranger must be embraced by warm

\(^{40}\) Pohl, *Making Room*, 75.
\(^{41}\) Ibid., 76.
\(^{43}\) Pohl, *Making Room*, 78.
and comfortable surroundings where they are respected and offered an opportunity to share their story too. Pohl illuminates the parable of the Sheep and Goats in Matthew 25:31ff by stressing that “the connection between the particular needy persons and Jesus comes as a total surprise” for the care-giver. The fact that the needy person may well be Jesus “powerfully intensifies and broadens concerns about care and respect for those most likely to be overlooked”. She emphasises that throughout Christian history genuine hospitality went beyond “alms and physical assistance …true hospitality involved face-to-face, gracious relationships of encouragement and respect”. Canham puts a different emphasis on hospitality when she describes a typical airport scene filled with weary travellers. She reminds us that the Celtic Christians used to welcome the need to go on a journey as it always afforded opportunities to share their faith with other travellers in a face-to-face way. For the Celts it was usually only done after they had taken a weary fellow traveller to a place of safety and provided warmth and sustenance. Imagine what could be achieved if Christian travellers paid attention to the struggles of those around them on crowded public transport or even offered their reservation to a desperate air traveller who has just been “bumped”.

Morris defines xenophilia as “being fascinated with people of foreign cultures” and suggests that it is an exciting possible outcome of genuine hospitality shown to strangers particularly those from other cultures. However he points out that many churches struggle to fulfil the challenge of verses such as Hebrews 13:2 “show hospitality to strangers” and Deuteronomy

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44 Ibid., 13.
46 Ibid., 70.
48 “Bumped” is a slang expression for when for one reason or another you have lost your reservation on a scheduled flight and have been wait-listed on the next available flight.
10:19 “you should also love the stranger, for you were strangers”. 50 Hebrews 13:2 teaches that Christians should not neglect hospitality, as we may well unknowingly be entertaining angels. Jesus removed any choice when he stated quite simply in Matthew 25:43, “I was a stranger but you would not welcome me”. Canham highlights that the most common objection to Jesus amongst the religious leaders of the day was that he welcomed the “disenfranchised – women, children, lepers, tax collectors” 51 One could [almost] excuse the church if we struggled to welcome a near naked person or with being hospitable to a rapist recently released from prison. However the reality is that the church often struggles to welcome “easy strangers” from their own local cultural and language group. Doctrinal opinion is often sufficient to divide church communities and so it is little wonder that the church has no capacity to welcome the sudden influx of immigrants from other cultures. Canham also suggests that the reason why we struggle so with welcoming strangers is that we often live our daily lives within the confines and comfort of our culture and traditions. 52 The dramatic increase in immigration to Auckland has brought with it the presence of other religions with their associated buildings, dietary requirements and dress codes about which local Christians often know very little. 53 Unfortunately the most common response is usually more xenophobic in nature, what Morris refers to as people exercising an “instinctive wisdom in the fear of strangers”. Canham reminds us that “fear makes us strangers to each other and causes amnesia about the pilgrim journey on which we are all embarked”. 54 What is being suggested is not a foolhardy, laissez-faire approach to hospitality without any identifiable outcomes. Laird

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50 Ibid., 18.
51 Canham, Strangers and Pilgrims, 25.
52 Ibid., 21.
53 Many Auckland schools have had to add head scarves to their school uniform to accommodate Muslim female students and turbans to accommodate make Sikh students. This has caused some debate but not at the intensity in Europe. I was part of a conversation recently where a Muslim was asked to justify why many Muslim women still wore a head scarf and some even a full burqa in New Zealand. His answer was as simple as it was profound, “We Muslims wear our religion on the outside whereas you Christians carry it on the inside”.
54 Morris, Fear or Fascination?, 17.
details the tragic results of a carefree approach to hospitality and gives a timely reminder that showing hospitality must be a disciplined form of ministry.\textsuperscript{55} Morris emphasises the same point saying “uncritical trust of the new and strange can be foolish credulity”.\textsuperscript{56} Laird urges all who practise hospitality to strangers to make sure that they ensure their own safety and discourage dependency on their care by those they welcome.\textsuperscript{57} Our model of local church is usually so language and culture specific that it would prove to be hopelessly inadequate if the majority of Christians were to commit themselves to engaging in face-to-face, grace-filled relationships with strangers across cultural and language barriers and invite them to attend their local church.

It is difficult to feel confident about the chances of successfully welcoming the 1.5G who speak English and Mandarin when the challenge seems so complex. It is not surprising that the prevailing solution to the Asian problem seems to be to stock up on instant noodles and/or possibly employ a part-time Mandarin speaking youth worker. An added complication is that to their New Zealand born peers, the behaviours and practices of newly arrived immigrants will seem strange, comical and even off-putting.\textsuperscript{58} Thus one cannot assume that the New Zealand young people will want to include strangers in their youth activities particularly as it is already an uphill struggle to attract New Zealand born young people. It is highly likely that the 1.5G will view the church as hostile even if they set aside an alternative space for their use.

The Barna Group commissioned extensive scientific research into the understanding and

\textsuperscript{55} Rebecca Laird “Dangerous Liaisons”, \textit{Weavings XVIII}: 5 (September / October 2003) , 39 - 44.
\textsuperscript{56} Morris, \textit{Fear or fascination?}, 17.
\textsuperscript{57} Laird, \textit{Dangerous Liaisons}, 25.
\textsuperscript{58} My daughter attended a birthday party of a Muslim Iraqi girl in her class. My daughter was envious of the motorised scooter she received as a gift. However she was even more surprised when the girls celebrated the party in the kitchen, separated from the men who gathered on the other side of a heavy curtain in the lounge.
attitude towards the Church held by “unChristian” people in the United States including immigrants. The emotive conclusion that Kinnaman and Lyons draw is a timely reminder for the church in New Zealand,

Are you starting to wrap your heart and mind around this? Millions of young outsiders are mentally and emotionally disengaging from Christianity. The nation’s population is increasingly resistant to Christianity, especially to the theologically conservative expressions of that faith. …A huge chunk of a new generation has concluded they want nothing to do with us. As Christians we are widely mistrusted by a sceptical generation.60

Commenting on the church in America, Gibbons61 states that “being part of the Western cultural machine, our American churches tend to gravitate towards the gods of pragmatism, materialism, and consumerism… The global village is longing for something deeper”. Unfortunately few English or Mandarin churches are tuned into the needs of the 1.5G. Scepticism about the Church is widespread amongst New Zealand born and immigrant young people in New Zealand. Thus the challenge is to welcome all young people and it is quite possible that the 1.5G may be more receptive and appreciative of the church’s efforts than their New Zealand born peers. It is important to emphasise again that this thesis is not advocating that English medium churches start to offer programmes in an attempt to grow their church membership by attracting disgruntled 1.5G away from the church of their parents. What is being identified is that the 1.5G has unique needs that can only be met through skilful, targeted, sacrificial programmes of the same genre as a soup kitchen to feed the homeless from whom we expect little in return. For example, English speaking churches may

59 They use the term “unChristian” rather than “non-Christian” to emphasise that these are people who have yet to have an opportunity to choose Christ.
61 Dave Gibbons “The Monkey and the Fish” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009), 22.
consider creating a neutral space off the church campus and outside the formal church structures. They could approach the local mandarin speaking congregation and ask them to be partners in such a venture. In so doing they would be working in the spaces between the two formal church structures.
CHAPTER TWO

Chinese Immigration to New Zealand

The first Chinese immigrant to New Zealand arrived in Nelson in 1842. By 1869 over 2000 were working on the Otago gold fields. Most were from South China and therefore the predominant, if not exclusive, language spoken was Cantonese. Professor Elsie Ho is a leading New Zealand academic expert on immigration to New Zealand and in particular Chinese. She points out that the first Chinese miners who came to New Zealand were definitely transnational immigrants being “families that are based in two or more countries and retain strong links with their homelands”. Early government policies segregated minorities from mainstream New Zealand society and confirm their status as “outsiders”. However this began to change after the Second World War when the government demanded that all immigrants must assimilate and become New Zealanders. Chinese men already domicile in New Zealand were even encouraged to completely relocate despite the fact that they were not being welcomed “as Chinese”. From the 1950’s there was significant pressure placed upon immigrants to relinquish their cultural origins and immigration policy from the 1950’s – 1980’s clearly states that the assimilation of immigrants is the most desirable outcome. However Ho explains that studies of Chinese immigrants have shown that they refused to comply and retained key features of identity, culture, food and family values. Not surprisingly New Zealand was one of the last Western countries to finally change and

64 Ibid., 149.
officially embrace multi-culturalism in 1986. The New Zealand Immigration policy introduced in 1986 took cognisance of research that high assimilation expectations could have adverse psychological affects upon immigrants who fear losing their distinctive cultures and lifestyles. By this time however there was a definite shift to a more settler orientated mind-set amongst Chinese immigrants with whole families immigrating becoming the norm. \textsuperscript{66} The Business Visa category so popular in the 1980’s and 1990’s amongst wealthy Asian immigrants is an example of settler immigration trends given the significant capital investment this category required. As a direct result of all these changes, “between 1986 and 1996, New Zealand’s Chinese population more than tripled to reach 81,000 people”. \textsuperscript{67}

Unfortunately, the New Zealand Census does not differentiate between Mandarin and Cantonese speaking people of Chinese origins. Anecdotally the belief is that there has been a significant shift over the last 15 years to the proportion of Chinese immigrants whose mother tongue is Mandarin as opposed to Cantonese. 2001 census figures show that in the decade 1991 – 2001 the number of overseas’ born Chinese increased by 50,118 making it the biggest immigrant group by almost 30,000 people. Thus Chinese immigrants have constituted the most concentrated and largest immigrant group that has populated Auckland since the early 1990s and significantly for this research it is highly likely that the majority are Mandarin speakers. A significant reason for this influx has been the growth of the “education business” aimed at attracting Asian school and tertiary students to study at New Zealand institutions. In contrast to the earlier Cantonese speaking Chinese immigrants, this Mandarin speaking Chinese cohort maintains close ties with family, community and business connections in

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Ho, \textit{Multi-local residence}, 149.
China in an obvious return to transnational, “multi-local residence” and/or cyclical immigration patterns\textsuperscript{68}. Despite these promising signs, it would seem that successive governments have not taken sufficient cognisance of international immigration trends despite the considerable academic research and public debate on the subject. Ho suggests that as a result immigrants often find themselves without any significant government or community support resulting in separation and marginalisation if they are not able to assimilate or integrate in to New Zealand society.\textsuperscript{69} This was exacerbated by the fact that the immigration process to attain permanent residence did not include registration by the relevant professional body in New Zealand. These prejudicial and protectionist attitudes within professional associations often forced at least one parent into an “astronaut” lifestyle in order to sustain the family financially.\textsuperscript{70} Reviewing the newly released book \textit{Longing and Belonging} by Associate Professor Edwina Pio, Heather McCracken points out that the Immigration New Zealand website goes to great length to suggest that New Zealanders do not discriminate and welcome all people to our shores. However the reality is that you may miss out on a job for which you are well qualified simply because “the boss can’t pronounce your name”. Provocatively titled “Land of the wrong white crowd” McCracken’s article suggests that Australia is far more popular as a destination for migrants because it is perceived to be less incestuous than New Zealand due to the larger population. Zhou’s research into Vietnamese immigrants to America emphasised that limited employment opportunities due to prejudicial attitudes caused economic hardship that is devastating for Asian immigrants due to the strong notion of a “loss of face” in most Asian cultures. Similarly Asian migrants are less likely to access state welfare assistance which can

\textsuperscript{68} Ho, \textit{Multi-local residence}, 146.

\textsuperscript{69} Ho, \textit{Chinese or New Zealander}, 29.

\textsuperscript{70} Ho, \textit{Multi-local residence}, 153-154.
lead to a concentration of poor families living in over-crowded conditions in sub-standard housing. This can even lead to further alienation as their plight confirms the prejudicial attitudes about the perceived “immigrant problem”.71 It can even create barriers within the immigrant subgroup if they are deemed to be embarrassing failures forcing them into “satellite” solutions to try and alleviate their economic hardship.72

The racist rhetoric of the leader of the Act Party, Winston Peters referring to a “lackadaisical approach to immigration” only serves to confirm the suspicions of immigrants that xenophobia is rife in New Zealand.73 The recently introduced “Silver Fern” visa category is intended to be a stream-lined application process to attract highly skilled young professionals to New Zealand. Immigration Minister, Dr Jonathan Coleman declared in the press release that "in the global competition for skills, we need to encourage young, career-minded people to choose New Zealand as a long term destination… I am confident that the Silver Fern visa will achieve that, because the young migrants eligible under this policy will need to prove their value to New Zealander employers”74. Successive governments have openly admitted that the New Zealand economy desperately needs skilled immigrants to settle in New Zealand, thus this newest policy is meant to facilitate “long term” settlement. The reality is quite the opposite with the immigrant required to endure the ignominy of validating their visa twice during the two year period and their employer being required to testify to their worth in order for it to be extended further. Thus the policy actually facilitates transnationalism despite this usually being a politically untenable position for any government as they are usually

accused of allowing immigrants to be disloyal and not committed to New Zealand’s long term well being. Ho argues that policy makers need to accept that various forms of “cyclical migration” have superseded settler migration for most Chinese immigrants and that policy needs to state this clearly to avoid ongoing confusion.\(^75\)

The 1.5 Generation

The 1.5 generation phenomenon is a direct outcome of immigration and immigration policy. Imogen Neale works as a freelance journalist and sociologist writing about issues relating to Asians living in New Zealand. She argues that it is unfortunate that New Zealand academics and social service agencies initially preferred the term “satellite kids” and only adopted 1.5 generation relatively recently. She contends that immigration is in fact a process rather than a category and so the term 1.5 generation is a far more accurate descriptor.\(^76\) The term “satellite kids” seems to have originated in Canada in the 1980s to describe Chinese children who immigrated with their families but whose father [and sometimes both parents] returned to their country of origin for economic reasons.\(^77\) Ho uses the term “astronaut” to refer to a parent who becomes almost permanently based in their country of origin.\(^78\) These developments and experiences for immigrant families who may have intended to settle but find themselves victims of immigration policy or economic hardship fuels the 1.5 generation experience for their children. Bartley debates whether this is actually a new, more intense form of transnationalism also referred to as transmigration. He details how some theorists do not accept transnationalism as a theoretical framework believing it is a variation of

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\(^{75}\) Ho, Multi-local Residence, 161.


\(^{78}\) Ho, Multi-local residence, 146.
assimilation. However Bartley asserts that transnationalism is clearly quite different from settler migration and therefore has a clear impact upon the family and particularly the 1.5G. He cites the well documented example of the impact of overseas mission service upon the lives of missionary children as a reference point to provide clarity. What is clear is that 1.5ers are children and adolescents who are thrust into a life experience where they:

sit: partly here (wherever here is) and partly there (wherever there is or was). Not first-generation, because they didn’t choose to come here, and not second-generation, because they weren’t born here (and yet) young, multicultural and committed to making diversity a powerful point of similarity.

It has become popular to use graduated numbers such 0.5, 1.3, 1.5 and 1.8 to indicate specific stages between first generation and second generation young people. Bartley and Spoonley suggest that agreement on a universal definition of who fits into the 1.5 generation has yet to be reached. They quote Min Zhou’s assertion that 1.5 generation is often used in a confused way when what is actually being referred to are “stages of socialisation”. Zhou suggests that genuine 1.5ers must arrive in the host country between the age of 6 and 13 years. Adolescents who arrive between the ages of 13 and 17 years of age are usually treated as first generation immigrants because they struggle to adapt and learn New Zealand accented English as quickly as younger migrants. Despite this, Bartley and Spoonley conclude that for Asian immigrants within the New Zealand context, 1.5 generation should refer to children aged between 6 and 18 years of age who have migrated as a family unit all of whom have experienced at least

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80 Neale, “1.5 & rhyming about it”, 3.
some formative socialisation in their country of origin. Ho’s definition of the 1.5 generation is the tightest I encountered. In the interview she was adamant that an accurate definition of the 1.5G must insist that the individual has lived for at least the first 10 – 12 years of their lives in their country of birth and then spent some years benefitting from the New Zealand education system.

Because the 1.5ers in the family achieve fluency in English far quicker than their parents they often have to undertake high level tasks such as bank transactions and translating legal documents on behalf of their parents. These are tasks that their New Zealand born peers would never encounter until much later in life. Such experiences can build resiliency and further develop cultural fluidity as they move from one to the other seamlessly giving them a distinct advantage over their often mono-cultural, mono-lingual New Zealand born peers. Despite this fluidity they soon realise that complete assimilation as New Zealanders is impossible and will be comfortable with an increasingly Asian identity. It is likely that they will begin to adopt cultural influences from their country of origin during adolescence such as fashion and accessory trends. It is even possible that they will introduce trends to their New Zealand born peers. Thus they form a third cultural grouping accommodating a complex mix of influences and world-views which is a similar process that gives rise to youth gangs which provide identity and strength. It is likely that their cultural origins will provide a strong cultural bond along with music, sport and academic pursuits. One of Neale’s respondents

82 Elsie Ho, interview by author, in person, University of Auckland, 22 September 2009.
84 In my ministry in Otahuhu I have encountered the Tongan Youth Gang who uses the colour blue and are known as the “Crips”, thus aligning themselves with the African American gang by the same name in Los Angeles. The Samoan Youth Gang is known as the “Bloods” (or Red Army), who use the colour red to mimic the multi-cultural Los Angeles gang by the same name. In both cities they are arch-enemies.
suggested that New Zealand has a very clearly identifiable form of the Asian 1.5 generation because of the sudden growth in immigration in such a relatively short space of time and the easy access to Asia through the internet and cheap air travel.85

Thus despite often intense feelings of dislocation, the 1.5G have managed to find their tūrangawaewae86 and have begun to make a significant contribution to New Zealand society. In a paper presented by Manying Ip to a conference convened by Elections New Zealand in 2005 she stated that,

Contributions of 1.5 generation of Asian New Zealanders play crucial roles in the shift of power relationship and political landscape. For example, a study of the link between age and English language skills among recent Chinese migrants shows that younger Asians are mostly proficient in English, and therefore much more au fait with New Zealand political developments. With language proficiency (in their heritage Chinese language as well as English), political acumen, local knowledge and support from their own community network, the 1.5 generation of Asian New Zealanders have the advantages in positioning themselves as quality leaders in the mainstream society to articulate the aspirations of both old settlers and new immigrants.87

In February 2009 the Future DragoNZ Conference in Auckland gathered together 40 young Asians with leadership potential for a week to unpack their Kiwi-Asian lifestyle. Stereotypes were challenged by a host of top Asian presenters and the delegates were taught the “difference between Western and Eastern leadership styles”. One participant is quoted as

85 Neale, 1.5 & rhyming about it, 3.
86 Tūrangawaewae is a significant Maori concept that means ‘a place to stand’ where people feel empowered and connected <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/papatuanuku-the-land/5> (2 May 2009).
saying, “I need to know the different leadership styles if I am going to succeed in the Chinese and Kiwi worlds”. Mr Kai Luey, the Chairman of the New Zealand Chinese Association Auckland Inc. described the aim of the conference as to provide “a solid framework and toolkit for aspiring young leaders of Chinese descent to recognise their role in shaping a future New Zealand; one that is confident, proud and inclusive of New Zealand Chinese voices, stories and communities.”

Transnationalism

It is my experience that the majority of New Zealanders pay very little attention to the detail about changes to immigration trends. Most New Zealand born residents have little understanding about transnationalism and believe that all immigrants are settlers who are deeply appreciative of the opportunity to enjoy a long term future in New Zealand. However Pacific Island immigrants have always been transnational immigrants with significant funds sent to support family members still living in the islands. Ho suggests that Pacific Islanders have “for many years, used a collective strategy of building multi-local, multi-national communities of kin to maximise opportunities for education and employment” even for future generations. Many New Zealand families adopt a transnational lifestyle with family living and working on both sides of the Tasman. New Zealanders guard tenaciously their right to have a “Big OE” experience as a right-of-passage for young New Zealanders who live overseas “as New Zealanders”. However contradictory expectations prevail as immigrants

88 Jackie Russell “Young Asians aim high” Howick and Pakuranga Times, 23 February 2009, 10.
91 Ho, Multi-local Residence, 148.
92 This phrase is in common usage to denote Australia and New Zealand.
93 “Big OE” is a colloquial New Zealand abbreviation for “Overseas Experience”.

moving on to Australia after a short period are often viewed as disloyal. The expectation is that all immigrants will become "Kiwi" as quickly as they can, summed up in the oft heard statement: “If they want to live in this country they must learn to do things our way”. Parents who had been “astronauting” for many years retire in New Zealand or move with their children to a third country to take advantage of better employment opportunities. Some parents retire and choose not to follow their children even if they are returning to their country of origin and like so many New Zealand young people, many return to raise their children in New Zealand.

This chapter has provided a brief analysis of Chinese immigration to New Zealand over more than 100 years. It has illustrated the change from transnational to settler migration patterns and the subsequent return to transnationalism and the impact of immigration policy. It has also provided insight into the phenomenon identified as the 1.5 generation. It is clear that the settler model of immigration adhered to by the vast majority of New Zealanders of European descent is completely out of step with modern transnationalism and the multi-local communities that families occupy and hold in a creative tension. Whilst many 1.5ers have experienced discrimination that has deeply affected their ability to function as an equal amongst peers within New Zealand society, this has not prevented them from making a significant contribution. It would seem self explanatory that the Church would respond to this great missiological opportunity with some urgency based on careful research and thought. Immigration offers the Church an opportunity to serve the most vulnerable in our community in a fresh and creative way. No longer do missionaries have to travel to distant lands to

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94 I can remember meeting a young, highly qualified Chinese couple in 1997. Jason was completing a two year Compliance Diploma at Unitec to upgrade his Chinese degrees and professional qualifications. He told me [with a wry smile] that the average height of the buildings on which he had been the senior construction engineer in China were 20 storeys, “but my lecturer has only ever built one high-rise of 5 storeys”.
95 Ho, Multi-local Residence, 156-157.
undertake cross-cultural ministry, they simply need to go next door. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand enjoyed a “golden era” of mission in China up to the end of 1949 when the incoming Communist rule forced all Western missionaries to leave mainland China. This arrival of Chinese immigrants in large numbers could re-ignite mission to the Chinese with the opportunity for a new international ecumenism where ministers from international partner churches are invited to work amongst us rather than the “one way traffic” that has so characterised mission in the past. The aim of this research is to try and discover what has been done, if it has been successful what could work in the future to welcome the 1.5G who speak Mandarin and English.

**Research Methods**

I attempted to employ a phenomenological approach to research which is described by Denscombe as being ideal when seeking to discern ‘perceptions and meanings, attitudes and beliefs; feelings and emotions … [and] understand the thinking’. Thus this approach allows for there to be more than one way of viewing reality and that people can even live with ‘multiple realities’ [emphasis his]. Interviews were a critical source of information. My original intention was for the interviewee cohort to be drawn from adolescent 1.5ers. However, I received ethics approval only for people over 18 years of age. This severely limited my access to 1.5ers especially those outside the Church. I developed a questionnaire and I eventually noticed that it was when I mentioned the questionnaire that my request for an interview seemed to be turned down. On numerous occasions I had an interview with a small group arranged only to have them cancel at the last minute. So I changed my approach by

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abandoning the questionnaire and any recording devices and started to invite people to meet me at a café for an informal conversation. I asked a church elder for assistance and she was eventually able to persuade the first two candidates who in turn persuaded others to meet me. This approach finally met with success and I was able to formally interview two male and three females between 21 and 30 years of age. Each interview lasted for about an hour and a half and for safety reasons four took place in a café. One of the male responders preferred to meet in my office. I found that I did not have to give much explanation as to what I was trying to achieve as each readily identified with the experience of being 1.5G and they spoke freely to answer my questions. What I found particularly helpful was that given the delays I completed the interviews with the experts first. This meant that I had developed good insight into the 1.5G experience and was able to ask far more insightful questions. The more I revealed my insights, the more freely they spoke. One commented at the close that he had never had anybody acknowledge the depth of his experience and feelings. He thanked me for undertaking the research and had found participating cathartic. By contrast one was suspicious to begin with believing that I was a Presbytery official conducting some clandestine investigation. For all the responders anonymity seemed to be highly valued. Thus my conclusion was that given the intensity of their experiences and feelings, 1.5ers from the Mandarin and English speaking cohort have established protective mechanisms which are difficult to overcome particularly if one represents New Zealand culture.

I was delighted at the enthusiastic response I received from academic experts who I approached for an interview. I was excited when an internet search uncovered the Integration of Immigrants Programme, a five year research programme led by a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from Massey University and the University of Waikato, funded by the Foundation
for Research, Science and Technology.\footnote{Integration of Immigrants Programme <http://newsettlers.massey.ac.nz> (28 March 2009).} Professor Paul Spoonley and Associate Professor Elsie Ho have both completed leading research as part of this programme to interpret immigration issues in New Zealand and I was fortunate that both were willing to be interviewed. Spoonley is the Regional Director [Auckland] of the programme and Research Director for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Massey University. In 2009 he was awarded a Royal Society of New Zealand Science and Technology medal for his scholarship on race relations in New Zealand.\footnote{Paul Spoonley, interview by author, in person at Massey University, North Shore, Auckland, 12 October 2009.} Ho is the Director of Population Mental Health at the School of Population Health at the University of Auckland.\footnote{Elsie Ho, interview by author, in person, University of Auckland, 22 September 2009.} They were both very generous with their time and interest in my research. Dr Allen Bartley was very willing to help me understand the more technical aspects of the 1.5 generation and transnationalism. He also provided significant guidance with interpreting the census data and other demographic information. Bartley has recently completed his doctoral research on the subject of the 1.5 generation and is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Counselling, Human Services and Social Work at the University of Auckland.\footnote{Allen Bartley, interviewed by author, in person at the University of Auckland, 03 November 2009.}

My colleagues the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel and the Rev Nathaniel Lai were both extremely helpful as resource people with regards what the Church has done and could do to welcome the 1.5G. Vogel is an ordained Presbyterian minister who is a New Zealand church expert on Taiwanese and Chinese affairs having lived in Taiwan as a missionary. He is fluent in Mandarin and German and at the time of the interview was the Interim Moderator of the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church [ACPC].\footnote{Stuart Vogel, interview by author, in person at the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church, 16 September 2009.} Lai is a Hong Kong national who was called to New Zealand...
by the PCANZ because of his experience of working amongst Chinese and immigrant communities. Being my first interview Lai was particularly helpful expanding my understanding of Chinese history and the differences between the Cantonese South and Mandarin North. I also kept a close watch on the print media for articles on the subject.

102 Nathaniel Lai, interviewed by author in person at St Andrew’s Community Presbyterian Church, Otahuhu, 23 April 2009.
CHAPTER THREE

Interviews with Academic Experts and the 1.5 Generation

Believing that immigrants are a vital and inescapable part of New Zealand’s future, the Integration of Immigrants Programme is seeking to provide New Zealand institutions with world class research addressing the challenges and opportunities that immigration presents. The Church is fortunate to have such a highly credible, locally developed resource to help it respond in appropriate ways. Ho, Spoonley and Bartley seemed surprised to be approached by a member of the clergy and had assumed that the Church was at the forefront of dealing with the daily challenges being faced by Asian immigrants and in particular, the 1.5G, living in Auckland. The general consensus seemed to be that a 1.5er must have spent “about six years” living and studying in New Zealand prior to turning 18 years of age. As stated above Ho’s definition was the most precise that I encountered. She expressed the very strong view that a 1.5er is a young person who has received significant socialisation and education in their country of origin before emigrating and enrolling in formal education programmes in their destination country. Therefore they will have experienced adolescence in New Zealand and it is likely that they genuinely consider New Zealand to be their home. I was fascinated by how freely Ho used terms like “1.3” and “1.6” to describe variations in the time individuals have spent in each context. Vogel also used similar terms to be more specific about the experience of a particular individual or group of young people. However Spoonley did not seem to think that such nuances advanced the debate. All agreed that an international student who had
arrived in New Zealand on a student visa at age 18 or older did not fit the definition of a 1.5er as they are here without their parents and their sense of belonging is considerably reduced.

Ho suggested that Mandarin and English speaking 1.5G are usually fully bi-lingual if not multi-lingual and they would be expected to converse in their mother tongue at home. They would have embraced a new way of thinking but not enough to have lost their original identity and so they may support a rugby team and go to a karaoke bar after the match. These choices will depend largely on the nationality of their dominant friend at any one time. The majority of Mandarin speaking young people originated in Mainland China as New Zealand was considered a “preferred destination” until 2000. But sudden changes to the exchange rate made New Zealand very expensive and word spread that it is not possible for most people to become fluent in English in six months as many immigration agents claim. Horror stories began to circulate of parents being trapped by a lack of English and students being unable to meet the expectation of family members who had sacrificed much to invest in their academic future.

Vogel stressed that the Church must not allow their Kiwi accented English to mislead them into under-estimating how strong their connection with their country of origin continues to be. He argued that the 1.5G need to be understood as people who have had an immersion Kiwi experience but that in no way dilutes their memory of their homeland and in fact could enhance it for some and so could not be treated as first generation New Zealanders. Ho suggested that the Church needed to ask “what sort of place or venue would suit a group of largely Chinese friends rather than thinking about them as kiwi-ised Chinese. The sort of anchor points the Church could seek to utilise should include intellectual discussion;
discussing identity, adolescent counselling, teaching resiliency and of course music. Spoonley added English language tuition to this list, without which he believes the Church would be severely hamstrung in its efforts. He also emphasised the importance of the Church adjusting to be more user friendly rather than expecting the 1.5er to adapt. He asked how much up-skilling the Church had undertaken to promote being a good host and was surprised when I could not cite extensive examples. He suggested initiatives which for some may seem like elementary considerations but he was convinced that ensuring that Chinese names are learnt and pronounced would be an invaluable starting point. It was immediately apparent to me that this is an obvious and inexcusable deficiency in the life of many local churches despite everyone knowing how offensive and off putting it is to be called by the wrong or mispronounced name. More elaborate efforts are evidence in some larger congregations with multi-lingual sign boards and interpretation provided in services but this is rare and often proves unreliable.

Spoonley emphasised the significant role that technology plays, repeatedly referring to a “culture of technology” and a “networked neighbourhood”. He pointed out obvious signs, such as the large satellite dishes in gardens, that enable the reception of Asian television broadcasts. He questioned why the Church did not have a multi-lingual website using RSS feeds, multi-lingual FaceBook video streaming or distribute DVD based multi-media presentations. He finally chastised me by suggesting that I had “not got my head around how important technology was to Asian immigrants”. My response was to suggest that neither had

103 My own congregation is a prime example of the struggle to learn foreign language names. With Pacific Island tendencies to use multiple names and titles, it became a significant exercise for me in name retention and learnt pronunciation when I became the minister. However I was amazed to find that when I started referring to people by name in conversation, it was often met by a blank look simply because people (particularly those of European descent) didn’t know who I was talking about. This had transpired despite the fact that many of the members have been attending for over 20 years.
the Church. He explained the use of the colloquial term, “digital bananas” and showed me the programme from the recent “Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas” International Conference. One plenary presentation titled “Digitally Chinese” explained the Chinese Online Communities project and another called “Visually Chinese” with the remarkable descriptor of a “stream of slides with madness, dexterity and speed, communicating to an audience thirsty for the ultimate visual rush”. ¹⁰⁴

Dr Allen Bartley also emphasised the dynamic nature of Asian communities and the international inter-connectedness that they have achieved through the internet. He dispelled the mistaken perception that all Korean and Chinese immigrants were extremely wealthy and confirmed that it was highly unlikely that members of either country’s elite immigrated to New Zealand. The decision to immigrate is always taken by the parents in wealthy Asian families believing that despite their wealth, their children will miss out on places in the top schools and/or universities in their country of origin. The education business flourishing in New Zealand enables them to guarantee access to world class education and proficiency in English. Thus it is Bartley’s view that these factors only amplify the likelihood of transnationalism since the goal is finite. The families are often wealthy enough to maintain homes and businesses in both countries and travel frequently. As most did not leave to escape political or other turmoil, there is a significant likelihood that they will return permanently to their country of origin once the children have been educated. This will dramatically influence their desire to assimilate and this ongoing relationship with their home country influences their actions far more than New Zealand immigration policy.

¹⁰⁴ Rising Dragons, Soaring Bananas International Conference website <http://www.goingbananas.org.nz> (27 October 2009). Interestingly Asians seem to have adopted what was originally a derogatory term used by Europeans as a badge of identity. The word “banana” was used to identify a westernised Asian as being “yellow on the outside and white on the inside”. The use of the term “coconut” to describe Pacific Islanders is still generally considered to be racist and offensive but this too is changing.
In fact Bartley stated it as strongly as to say that a 1.5er is “always a transnational and is never a settler or second generation”. Therefore they will never lose their 1.5er orientation and will generally be far more internationally aware than their New Zealand born peers. The battle against discrimination within any selection process from school leadership positions through to employment opportunities, political aspirations and even general participation in community based events will be a constant companion. Bartley suggested that some believe that they cannot overcome prejudicial attitudes and cannot succeed in New Zealand no matter how successfully they assimilate. As these stories of impossible odds begin to circulate through family and wider networks they begin to doubt that New Zealand can ever be their permanent home and again this fuels feelings that life in New Zealand as temporary. Interestingly most 1.5ers seem to treasure their New Zealand citizenship even if they return to their country of origin. Their proficiency in English usually gives them a distinct advantage in the employment market amongst international companies which in turn opens up employment opportunities in the United States and United Kingdom. Bartley says that despite all the setbacks when they leave New Zealand, 1.5ers will often declare their intention to return to live when their children are old enough for formal schooling.

So the question challenging the Church is simply this: How can we welcome the 1.5G, so significantly moulded by living in New Zealand that they are different from their peers in their country of origin and yet feel so alienated that they do not consider New Zealand to be home? Surely this is a remarkable set of circumstances that just lends itself to a religion guided by the new commandment of Jesus recorded in John 13: 34b – 35: “love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are
my disciples, if you love one another”. According to Vogel, the intense nature of church attendance for 1.5ers from Asian Christian families is easiest to understand if compared to international students at Auckland University. Exact statistical data is not available, but accepted estimates are that there are 7000 international students from China living in inner Auckland as part of at least 15 000 people of Chinese descent in total. They are distinct from the 1.5G as they are alone, highly transient and have no intention of settling New Zealand long term. Vogel explained that historically the “Overseas Christian Fellowship” at Auckland University was started with the singular objective of welcoming and meeting the needs of international students. It was dominated by Singaporean and Malay students who spoke English as a common language. Today it is almost exclusively for Mandarin speaking students. The Tertiary Students’ Christian Fellowship caters for New Zealand born students and others who want to fellowship in English. Thus the Mandarin speaking student cohort is large enough to have annexed a functioning university club to provide for their social needs in isolation from their English speaking peers. However Vogel stressed that even examples such as this are not sufficient evidence for the Church to conclude that all Mandarin speakers will be willing to worship together. They approach church participation as they would gym membership with no connectedness to buildings and permanence but rather seeking convenience and meeting a felt need.

By contrast despite having been immersed in New Zealand culture by their parents in a formal way from the moment they arrived, the 1.5G is faced with having to be Chinese at church. Church attendance is often viewed as a solution to any perceived lack of Mandarin language and cultural skills. So even though it is Vogel’s view that they form a distinctive Chinese 1.5G sub- culture they are expected to be wholly Chinese at Church and wholly New
Zealander at school. He suggests that these are the features that hold the greatest opportunities for the church. Firstly the 1.5ers have grown up together and have experienced similar struggles for their entire schooling and so they constitute a significant group of young people. They hold very educated views on a multitude of subjects from politics to music and sport and are quite capable of exercising leadership. They have all experienced the typical playground jesting by New Zealand born peers about their lunch choices, dress sense and sporting prowess. This cohort provides a significant opportunity for the church to provide tailor made programmes for the 1.5G. However Vogel says that even ACPC is simply not equipped or staffed to begin to meet the challenge of Chinese 1.5G who speak Mandarin and English. Like most churches, ACPC understand their raison d'etre to be the building up of their members but they do not understand that each generation deserves special attention. Vogel suggests that when Chinese people seek church membership of Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church (ACPC) they are actually being expected to pass through “three conversions”. The first is to Christianity, the second is to New Zealand Presbyterianism and the third is to ACPC’s “way of doing things”.

Bartley challenged the idea that the church had to make sweeping changes to “bridge the gap”. He was convinced that 1.5ers were so well connected with their culture of origin that the church need not go to great lengths to provide further links. Vogel suggested that one of the biggest challenges was the reconciling an Asian world view with its roots in Confucianism which are not necessarily superseded by conversion to Christianity. What concerned Bartley

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105 Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church was established in 1923 and as such is the oldest Chinese Presbyterian congregation in Auckland.
106 Presbyterianism is not homogenous around the world and so it is possible that immigrants will not recognise much of what takes place even if they are from the Reformed tradition. Vogel commented that anecdotally ACPC members have found the PCANZ regulations to be “hilariously bureaucratic and designed to keep people out or confused”.
most was that a 1.5er may have a disproportionately negative experience when attending a Mandarin congregation because it will amplify their perennial question of “Where do I fit in?” A church structure that allows 1.5ers to bounce about and experience a multitude of activities and worship styles would be ideal. Vogel emphasised that onerous parental expectations means that church youth activities are usually one of the few that are allowed and so highly prized. As an accredited venue the church has a distinct advantage and one which allows the 1.5ers to design the activities will enjoy the most success. The challenge for the host congregation is to amend their expectations of 1.5ers and allow some fluidity regarding participation and programme design and allowing simply meeting up with friends to be a satisfactory outcome.107

**Meeting the 1.5 Generation**

The over-whelming impression I was left with after each interview with a 1.5 generation young adult who spoke Mandarin and English was of an impressive, highly gifted and energetic person. Whilst by no means an adequate sample to claim this to be an indelible characteristic, one could not help but notice that each happily listed an impressive academic record and then dismissed it with a shrug of their shoulders. One was a medical doctor training as a specialist. Another enjoyed a growing reputation as an outstanding orchestral flautist. A third was working in an allied industry to gain experience in order to prepare herself further for her career of choice. On top of very active working lives, most detailed significant engagement with their local church. Two were being remunerated by the church as they held part-time employment positions. Their attitude towards their church was one of a

107 Anecdotally my research suggests that 1.5ers rarely marry cross-culturally and usually choose another 1.5er as a life partner, presuming they will better understand each other’s life experience.
place in which it was a privilege to serve and offer their skills sacrificially. However they did admit that it was not always easy going. Most of the tension seemed to arise at the interface between their desire to build an energetic, modern congregation that catered for their 1.5G and first generation peers against the desire of their parents’ generation to preserve the ecclesiastical and cultural traditions of old. Even to speak about these difficulties was hard for the respondents who repeatedly apologised about what they perceived to be a bad attitude and disloyalty on their part. As noted previously one was initially cautious wondering if I could possibly be a Presbytery official in disguise digging for evidence. They seemed convinced to some degree when I commiserated with them about the struggle they were experiencing within the church and assured them that the difficulties they were experiencing were not of their own making. It was obvious that many of the clashes and difficulties identified elsewhere in this thesis were all too real in their daily lives. Thus they truly relaxed as I was able to offer insights into their very personal experiences. For some the intensity had lessened as they had got older and been able to overcome many of the hurdles, whereas for one in particular, they were still very much front and centre. What struck me however was their tenacity and commitment to find a solution even if that meant conforming to their parent’s and Elders wishes to a greater degree than was comfortable for them. As leaders a number of them went out of their way to participate in the activities arranged for the older generation as an act of appeasement on behalf of their peers. The over-arching motivation for the two in paid church employment was a genuine commitment to spreading the Gospel and longed to see their peers experience conversion to faith in Jesus Christ as they had experienced. I was left with the profound impression that the church was completely foolish to ignore this extraordinary pool of vibrant and talented young people. Worse still, to expect them to conform to an outdated church structure strongly influenced by the cultural norms brought by
their parents from their country of origin was destined to fail as a strategy for church growth. It seemed ludicrous that they were experiencing multiple obstacles instead of enjoying the full support of their church eldership when especially for the two church workers their genuine desire was to provide a legitimate space for the 1.5G and other young people. It was only due to their disciplined tenacity and respectful attitude that all of them remained in their local church at all. However they all lamented that some of their peers had already left to find fulfilment in Pentecostal churches where they could worship in a modern way and shed some of the baggage associated with their cultural heritage. For some, however, they could not break away completely and so they held another dualism in tension, attending the church of their parents’ on Sunday morning and another church in the evening. When I questioned the impact this had on their lives, the immediate response was that it was a small price to pay for peace at home and permission to attend. It would not surprise me if, just like their New Zealand born peers, this exodus from the historic denominations to attend modern, Pentecostal churches did not become the norm quite quickly. An added consideration was the fact that there is a vast choice of English speaking congregations in every suburb in Auckland whereas they had to travel considerable distances to participate in Mandarin church activities. In my interview with a ministry colleague he cited travelling distances as the greatest hindrance to church growth.

**An Archetypal Example**

One respondent fitted the descriptions in the literature is an archetypal way. He spoke of the experience of having New Zealand as home “but there has always been a home in Taiwan too”. He spoke of the loss of cultural capital in both contexts and the struggle to maintain his Taiwanese culture while trying “to become more Kiwi-ised just to survive”. He said that he
had used offensive and derogatory terms like “banana” and “ching chong” to describe himself and other Chinese in the hopes that it would help him to be accepted by his peers. In a poignant moment during the interview he stated “all my life I have been trying to fit in”. He pointed out that for Taiwanese young people it is often worse as they are expected to distinguish between being Taiwanese and Chinese too. Living away from his parents influence for the first time at University he had decided to go “completely European”, but still ended up serving as the “Taiwanese Student President”. He summed up all his experiences in one question: “What am I?” Despite having completed all his school and tertiary education in New Zealand and holding impressive academic qualifications, he lamented at length about discrimination in the work place and the glass ceiling that he perceived was permanently in place. He said it was a daily occurrence for senior managers to favour New Zealand born staff of European descent often because they knew “Chinese culture would prevent him from complaining”. He knew that some 1.5G colleagues would study the rugby results and purposefully listen to pop music they hated just so that they could converse with confidence. Of course these experiences only further intensified his inability to answer the question about his identity and said that “it is hard to believe that at 30 years of age I can still be so confused about me”. When I asked him for a solution he immediately answered that 1.5ers must be encouraged to go “completely Kiwi” as soon as possible upon arrival. Otherwise he said that “you are forever 1.5”, so you might as well not put off the inevitable. In answer to the question: “what can the church do for the 1.5G?” he immediately blurted out “Nothing!” However after some prompting he conceded that he did have something to contribute and that if a gathering for adolescent 1.5ers was started he would be willing to help. As we discussed different options, he agreed that an activity such as a sleep over which gave more time for interaction and explanation of cultural signs and symbols would be of great assistance. He
reminisced about having a “sleep out” in a tent for the first time in the back garden of a New Zealand friend’s home. He believed that even such experiences would be of great assistance to uninitiated 1.5ers. He conceded that he had benefitted from numerous advantages and so it would be good to have an opportunity to “give back”. Despite the onerous expectations, he conceded that the church had provided him with roots. But he remained apprehensive about “making a fuss about the 1.5G and identifying and labelling them as such”. Like my other respondents he liked the idea of the Presbytery arranging regional events for 1.5ers. He suggested an Auckland wide inter-church basketball competition would be ideal. He was quick to add that the usual Kiwi idea of a camp was not a winning solution.

The Challenge of Adolescence

The fact that most 1.5ers reach puberty so soon after their arrival in New Zealand is so significant that it deserves special mention. All adolescents regardless of culture are seeking a secured identity of how to define “self”. 1.5ers have to discover self, integrate with their peers from their culture of origin and find an identity in the dominant culture. For immigrant adolescents the prominence of their ethnicity as a contributing factor to their individual and group identity is amplified because they are experiencing puberty in a foreign culture. Therefore the desire to mix with other young people who have a shared experience is significantly heightened. Whilst the over-arching impression of adolescent Chinese being highly achieving academics is largely true, there are also a significant number languishing on the other end of the spectrum. Whilst assimilation is occurring, their personal integrity requires that they discover their tūrangawaewae in both cultures with strength in the former ideally enabling healthy engagement in the latter. However this is an extremely complex process for an insecure adolescent to navigate, especially if they feel isolated and alone.
Negative experiences can be made more acute for many 1.5ers by the fact that New Zealand culture is not viewed as a secured identity even by New Zealanders. Dr Avril Bell, a Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Massey University suggests that New Zealanders are essentially uncomfortable in our skin. She comments that we have not matured sufficiently as a nation to shake the mongrel immigrant and settler nation identity and so “we can’t stop thinking about it. It’s why we always ask tourists if they like New Zealand five minutes after they touch down at the airport”. She suggests that being anti-Asian may be part of this colonial past and “ironically, globalisation may also be curbing our compassion”. Bell cites the previously very liberal Denmark as a current example of a new hard line approach to immigration. She goes on to question “what’s the big deal … [about] putting in a couple of squat toilets at Auckland University?”

Again it is worth highlighting the hypocrisy of New Zealanders who love to travel and work abroad as proud Kiwi’s and yet expect immigrants to immediately blend into New Zealand communities by jettisoning their culture, identity and traditional clothing. Just imagine the outcry if New Zealanders were told they could not wear an All Black jersey in London or Dubai.

Some Interim Conclusions

The first and most obvious realisation for the Church is that any response to meet the needs of 1.5ers must be quite different to anything that has gone before. The second is that the parental expectations cannot be ignored and they can often hold an idealised notion of what New Zealand can provide for their children. To do so would be to court disaster as they will only

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allow their children to attend what they perceive to be quality, well supervised programmes with a beneficial outcome. They want their children to become proficient in English and to be comfortable in the company of New Zealanders without forgetting that they are Chinese. The parents will allow them to have good New Zealand friends but there will always be a sense of some distance, otherness or qualified relationship. This experience bears a strong resemblance to the experience of New Zealanders of Māori descent who have tried to find success in the pākehā\textsuperscript{109} world while remaining true to the expectations of their Whānau.\textsuperscript{110} Again the whole phenomenon of living as a person from two worlds that characterises the 1.5G experience should not be new or foreign to New Zealanders as it is not unique to Chinese immigrants.

An obvious engagement point for the church would be to provide space for immigrants to give expression to their experience of uprooting and settling in. This space could be for both 1.5ers and their parents as in this way the parents would be able to hear about the difficult experiences their children encounter. Some will need coaxing as it is not likely that a family dominated by the negative experiences of struggling parents will be willing to participate. A general loss of confidence through feeling strange all the time will be exacerbated if high parental expectations for them to excel in their academic pursuits are not achieved. As with many immigrants, cultural obligations particularly around family for Chinese young people are non-negotiable. Chinese is essentially a collective culture which does not prize individualism at the expense of their family’s interests with the opinions and approval of both mother and father being highly regarded by the children. It is likely immigrant parents will also be influenced by living in New Zealand and may have become more relaxed in their

\begin{footnote}{\textsuperscript{109} Pākehā is the Māori would used to describe a New Zealander of European descent. \textless http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/index.cfm\textgreater (04 May 2010).}
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\begin{footnote}{\textsuperscript{110} Whānau is the Māori word used to include one’s entire extended family. \textless http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/index.cfm\textgreater (04 May 2010).}
\end{footnote}
views over time. However it is just as likely that the perceived excesses of a liberal democracy may make them more suspicious of the perceived dangers of Western influences. It is this complex labyrinth of new and strange experiences and expectations that the 1.5er is expected to navigate just as they enter adolescence and puberty. This is the time when one usually starts to relinquish ties with family in favour of one’s peers. However for the 1.5er it is likely that they do not have the proficiency in English or close friendships where they can share their often confused feelings with any confidence. Thus it is important that any programme understands the added complexity and challenge of dealing with adolescent young people. This further emphasises the great diversity of factors that must be given consideration by the church and eliminates any prospect of one programme meeting the needs of all immigrant and age groups that attend. Instead of feeling overwhelmed, the Church should see this as being spoilt for choice by the multiplicity of opportunities for engagement. The local church can start in a limited way and expand their programme as their confidence and capacity grows.

The interviews with experts and members of the 1.5 generation demonstrated that the 1.5 generation experience is a real and identifiable phenomenon that dramatically impacts upon the well-being of those who fall within its parameters. Whilst in some instances the experiences can build resiliency and give the 1.5G distinct advantages in life, it is just as likely to create deep feelings of alienation and inadequacy. Whilst world leading research into the issues of immigration is being conducted in New Zealand, the findings are clearly not being taken seriously enough by governmental policy makers, governmental agencies, school boards, the Churches and other community organisations. This could be partly due to the fact that immigration has increased dramatically over the last two decades resulting in a delay in
institutional response. It is also just as likely that it is a result of racist and prejudicial attitudes towards immigrants and other cultures by the dominant population of European descent. The next chapter will seek to investigate some alternatives to the current state of affairs by investigating what the Church can do to welcome the 1.5G who speak Mandarin and English.
CHAPTER FOUR

The Church and the 1.5 Generation

As with every generational group, the unique features and needs of the 1.5 generation must be understood if they are to be welcomed successfully by the Church. For Chinese 1.5ers who already attend a church, it is likely to be the culturally homogeneous church that their parents attend where the worship is of a traditional style and conducted in Mandarin, Taiwanese or Cantonese. Often the 1.5er will attend out of a sense of family loyalty and this can convince the Church leadership to conclude that they are active participants. On the contrary according to Vogel many of these young people are “in conflict as they don’t actually fit in anywhere”. They are expected to straddle two cultures, use two different languages and regularly subjugate their own personal preferences in favour of the wishes of their parents. They understand that they need to comply with family requirements especially if, for example, their grand-parents are visiting from China. Generally speaking, Chinese 1.5ers do perform well academically as expected by their parents and display the strong work ethic that has characterised generations of Asian immigrants. However Vogel says that they will also have an MP3 at the ready in case the service goes on for too long and they need a distraction.

Terms such as ‘liquid’, ‘third culture’, ‘emergent’ and ‘missional’ are all used frequently in the literature to describe the style of church that is needed to meet the needs of a variety of sub-groups within society. Within the definitions and explanations of what these terms mean for the Church today, one finds the singular constant of the principle of the “great
commandment” already mentioned above from John 13 which is to do whatever it takes to love God and one’s neighbour. Minatrea summarises this very succinctly when he states that any church “sent into an ever-changing environment must be fluid in its capacity to adapt while maintaining a clear commitment to its unchanging purpose and God’s eternal truth”. Spoonley was amazed that I did not know of a single English speaking Presbyterian Church that offered interpretation of the message via head-phones. He dismissed my objection that this was not a satisfactory solution as making people wear unflattering head-phones identified the non-English speakers unnecessarily and caused embarrassment. Spoonley suggested that the actual message the immigrant receives is one of welcome, competency and attention to detail. He continued that it is vital that congregants are well trained in how to react when cultural or other misunderstandings arise. Vogel told the story of how the women of an English congregation expressed such outrage when a new member from Taiwan started to make tea by boiling the water in the tea pot on the stove top that the new comer never returned.

The word “welcoming” was carefully chosen for this thesis to encapsulate concepts such as ‘unconditional welcome’, ‘generous hospitality’, ‘warmth and acceptance’. Riddell suggests that a community that reflects Jesus will stand out and be characterised by “generosity and sharing, of friendship and belonging, of mission and identity, of freedom and risk-taking..., passion (and) partnership.”[emphasis his]. If Bartley and one of my respondents are correct, sweeping changes are not required to cater for the 1.5G. Programmes conducted only in English are adequate as all 1.5ers speak English fluently. Spoonley emphasised that 1.5ers

are already very adept at living a culturally fluid life-style so the church can focus on providing high calibre programmes that fulfil parental expectations. The word ‘welcoming’ is seeking to define what occurs before any attempt to disciple a person is made and so activities may even occur at a neutral venue away from the church. Whilst the impression is true that such activities are well within the capability of the local church, a cautionary note with regards the complexity of this work must be sounded. Further the need for fluidity not only in expectations but in terms of programme style and format will make this a difficult cross-cultural challenge. Thirdly the context is the ever changing, pluralistic, usually urban, post modern and post Christian society that is New Zealand today. The only certainty is that everything can change.

Minatrea suggests that examples from the life of the early church may still be instructional for the post Christian era and deserve renewed consideration. He emphasises that “at its core, all mission is incarnational… [which] means leaving our place of security, to travel to the place where others are… Mission is always in the direction of the other; and away from ourselves”.

Sadly there is also little doubt from the literature that, generally speaking, the church is not well positioned or ordered for incarnational ministry particularly in the historic denominations. Riddell makes his views quite clear in one sentence, “the greatest barrier to the gospel in the Western culture is the church”. He continues that the prevailing attitude of conservation at all costs “is precisely the approach which will guarantee the demise of the Western church”.

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113 Minatrea “Shaped by God’s Heart, 10.
Homogenous Unit Principle

McGavran popularised the notion of the homogenous unit principle within church growth theory in 1950 when he offered a model that included cultural homogeneity as a valid model and measure of church growth. McGavran defined the homogenous unit as “an elastic principle” that described a section of society in which all the members have some characteristics in common such as “clans or lineages, language or dialect groups, or political or geographical. … within a modern city subunits appear – usually castes, tribes, or vocational or language groups.”¹¹⁵ He believed that this was a societal reality that the church would be foolish to ignore or challenge. He cites several examples from around the world of how people group along cultural lines despite there being several indigenous people groups present. McGavran developed the concept of a “Christian mosaic” in which each piece was an integral part of the whole, but unique in its own right because “people like to become Christians without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers”.¹¹⁶ However McGavran also emphasised that,

> in all churches, young and old, bridging growth or cross-cultural evangelism needs to be emphasized. Homogenous unit churches that are only evangelising their homogenous unit are not pleasing to God. Disciples must be made of panta ta ethne, all the peoples [emphasis his].¹¹⁷

McGavran was fiercely criticised, principally by Latin American and African liberation theologians for trying to justify ecclesiastical racism even though Wagner states that McGavran did “not have a racist bone in his body”.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Donald McGavran Understanding Church Growth 3ed (Michigan: Eerdmans) 70.
¹¹⁶ Ibid., 46.
¹¹⁷ Ibid., 73.
¹¹⁸ Ibid., x.
Apartheid in South Africa, the country of my birth, the existence of homogenous units characterising the church was deemed to be a direct result of the Group Area Act, one of the foundational statutes of Apartheid rule and certainly not part of any rich mosaic. The belief was that if Apartheid had not existed, South Africans would have worshipped in a non-segregated way. There is substantial Biblical support for a non-racial church mosaic such as the Pauline assertion in Galatians 3:28 that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus”.

Whilst all would concede that language and worship style preferences will always triumph and deny the realisation of “one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church”, divisions solely for the sake of cultural sensitivity are deemed heretical by many. Wagner appeals for some understanding given that McGavran was writing before cultural anthropological theory had been applied to mission theory. He points out that McGavran developed much of his thinking from his experiences in India and was commenting on “people movement theory” as much as anything else. What McGavran had also identified is that much of mission theory and practice was very euro-centric and individualistic in orientation and excluded culturally developed and communal expressions of the Christian faith. Thus Wagner suggests McGavran was arguing for acceptance of new developments in Christian worship within non-Western cultures where decision-making is often a community based phenomena including conversion to Christianity. Despite this an analysis of most cities including Auckland will show that the homogenous unit principle is the dominant form that shapes the church especially when immigration figures are high with little acceptance of other forms of worship. However it cannot be assumed this is the best or only valid form the church should take.

119 The four marks of the church as defined by the First Council of Constantinople in 381AD and added to the original Nicene Creed of 325AD. <http://www.creeds.net/ancient/Nicene_Intro.htm> (28 May 2010).
120 McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, x.
1.5G respondents for this research certainly seemed committed to their language specific congregations but wanted something else as well and an increasing number were seeking fulfilment elsewhere at other times or leaving the church of their parents permanently.

Possibly one of the greatest challenges facing the whole Church is the need to transform its structures to meet the challenges of a post Christian, post modern, highly mobile “global village”. Bevans and Schroeder quote Berger’s analysis of African mission history through the lens of the sociology of religious language. He suggests that as active social beings all people are “constantly constructing and reconstructing their world view”. They also quote Sanneh on the same subject who said that “armed with a written vernacular Scripture, converts to Christianity invariably called into question the legitimacy of all schemes of foreign domination – cultural, political and religious”\(^1\). There is little doubt that immigrants to Auckland will be analysing New Zealand society and Church structures in much the same way as new converts do. It is clear that the historic denominations continue to struggle to adapt and show little evidence of being willing to accommodate the new immigrants. In 1992 the governance structures of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia were changed to what is commonly termed the “three tikanga” model.\(^2\) Their website defines this as providing “for three partners to order their affairs within their own cultural context”. The problem is that of the three, one Tikanga is for those of European descent [identified by using the Maori word “Pakeha”] and the second is for Maori. The third is identified as “Tikanga Pasefika [which] encompasses Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Cook Islands, and also known as the Diocese of Polynesia”. Therefore one Tikanga provides for four immigrant groups despite the huge differences between them and is the only one with direct responsibilities for ministry

\(^{121}\) Bevans and Schroeder, *Constants in Context*, 237.

\(^{122}\) “Tikanga” is a Maori word that translates as “correct procedure, custom, habit”. <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz/> (03 May 2010).
within New Zealand and in the island nations. No mention or acknowledgement is made of people from Asia or other parts of the Pacific. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has had a Maori Synod known as Te Aka Puaho for several decades. More recently the Pacific Island Synod and an Asian Advisory Council have been recognised and given a voice but they do not have the same rights and privileges of autonomous governance as Te Aka Puaho. Interestingly, none of these sub-groupings has individual web space on the Church’s website under the heading of “National Ministries”. They only receive oblique mention within the description of the “General Assembly”. A fair assessment is that any adjustment the historic denominations are making is minimalist at best and the bulk of the resources, both cash and land, are still invested in the European expression and form of the local church and controlled by the same at a national level.

Multi-Directional Mission

In the light of this glacial change within the Church despite the rapid change within society, what can be done to better meet the needs of the 1.5G? Wright provides an excellent analysis of the concluding verses of Matthew 28 commonly referred to as “The Great Commission”. Wright suggests we need to move beyond finding a simple Biblical mandate for mission such as emphasising the singular word “Go” and begin to truly understand the implication of Jesus’ command to “disciple” as this is a far more dynamic concept. To be effective each new generation needs to be discipled in a sensitive and appropriate way that begins with making people feel welcome. Wright points out that we live in an age of a “multinational church and multidirectional mission … [and] multicultural hermeneutics”. A modern mission hermeneutic

must include a multiplicity of insights to ensure we enjoy a richness that can only be gained from listening to numerous global church perspectives. Thus the church needs to view the act of welcoming new immigrants as being a theological gift as much as it is an opportunity to share with other humans. Wright points out that there is no single valid meta-narrative in a postmodern world but rather a celebration of the multitude of “local, contextual and the particular … [as] this is all we’ve got”. This has been a central feature of missiological debate since Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson started to articulate what has become commonly referred to as the “3 self formula” for mission in the early part of the 19th century. Bevans and Schroeder define this theory as holding a deep respect and trust for indigenous peoples and once Christianity has a foot hold in the community, the local church must be encouraged to be “self supporting, self governing, and self propagating”. In their efforts to “civilise” the new converts, the missionaries often saddled the fledging church with totally inappropriate requirements such as the building of basilicas, the wearing of expensive vestments and a denominational hierarchy that had been evolving in Europe for centuries. This immediately conferred status on the clergy rather than emphasising the egalitarian values of the Kingdom of God. We still make the same mistake in New Zealand when denominations require immigrants fit into our predominantly mono-cultural, euro-centric worship style and church governance system. The idea that a local theology could be developed for different immigrant groups establishing themselves in Auckland is rarely discussed in any depth. This is despite the fact that giving local churches autonomy to thrive has a long and honourable missiological heritage dating back to the Apostle Paul and there are many examples of it happening spontaneously. Kitchens warns that possibly the most difficult and significant conceptual shifts that the Church must make is to view these activities as mission. It seems that if one speaks of mission

126 Ibid., 45.
127 Bevans and Schroeder, Constants in Context , 213-214.
rather than church governance, it is possible that it will be afforded the same flexibility as overseas activities.\textsuperscript{128}

Dave Gibbons’ contribution to this debate is very interesting since as the son of an American father and Korean mother, he has experienced first-hand the difficulties caused for 1.5ers by a single-ethnic approach to life and church. He tells of how the theological college he attended did not allow inter-racial dating and he was told to choose if he wanted to date a Caucasian or Korean woman and his decision was officially part of his college record. Gibbons suggests that “ethnic churches have their own forms of prejudice” which is not openly discussed but is most easily identified in the unspoken rules about marriage.\textsuperscript{129} His wife whom he met at college is of Caucasian and American Indian descent and together they planted a multi-ethnic congregation in Irvine, California known as Newsong which has experienced phenomenal growth over several years. However on a visit to Thailand, Gibbons was deeply challenged that they were entrapped by their wealth and upon his return he challenged the congregation to rediscover their original mission goal of reaching out to the marginalised in neighbouring suburbs. As a result of this renewed focus, his congregation reduced by 25 percent. Essentially he defines third culture thinking as spirituality that takes on liquid form so that it can mix with any culture or indeed take a new form.\textsuperscript{130} Gibbons has developed what he terms a “rhythms model” for ministry which needs three essential components: “Christ, cause and community…this approach really makes sense in the global culture…because it is more consistent with how people make decisions and live their lives, it seems to have more traction with the next generation”.\textsuperscript{131}

\textsuperscript{128} Jim Kitchens \textit{The Postmodern Parish: New Ministry for a New Era} (Bethesda, MD: The Alban Institute 2006), 76.
\textsuperscript{129} Gibbons, \textit{The Monkey and the Fish}, 205 - 208.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 41
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 106
Here lies the very crux of the challenge for me. The rhetoric of the church found not only in public and policy statements but in the liturgy and song lyrics on Sundays, is often about how the church exists for others. How can it be anything else when the church is the human manifestation of the incarnate God who came and died for the sins of humanity? However identifying the concrete actions that fulfil the rhetoric is much harder. Gibbons experienced an emptying of his church when he suggested that they put their words into action. Anderson uses a well known analogy to emphasise that the church’s purpose is “about mission, not just ministry”132. He draws the distinction between mission that extends God kingdom and reinvigorates the spiritual life of the church in a “centrifugal” way and ministry that absorbs the energy of the church in a “centripetal” way.133 Anderson suggests that the distinction should simply be between what the church is and does. He suggests that terms such as “the nature and mission of the church [are]…somewhat artificial”. Anderson argues that the church is only becomes the church when it engages in, and because of, its missionary endeavour.134 The promise of power at Pentecost seems to be contingent upon obeying the instruction to go and make disciples found in Mathew 28: 19. Without an incarnational demonstration of the Gospel, a congregation of Christian believers ceases to be the church or possibility has never achieved this incarnational standard to be considered part of the worldwide Church from the outset.

Anderson quotes McLaren who identifies “the need for emerging churches to be a community driven by a sense of mission to the world in order to avoid becoming a community seeking to

133 Ibid., 186.
134 Ibid., 187.
gratify its own self-interest at the expense of the world”. He concludes by suggesting that “the church will always be tempted to make itself and its confession of faith the agenda and content of theological reflection. If it does this, it loses its apostolic witness and authority… An apostolic church clearly understands the gospel as the mission of God”. Anderson argues that the mission of God is not to be misunderstood as the narrow task of evangelism and the forgiveness of sins alone. Rather because estrangement from God affects every part of human existence, mission tackles the plight of humans who are in need. Regardless of the cause and especially if they are victims of injustice, the church starts by listening to the people and to the Spirit. Anderson concludes “what marks emerging churches as different is that they let go of what the church has been in order to become the church that will be”. This is a vitally important piece of the jigsaw in trying to piece together how to welcome the 1.5 generation. The church must be prepared to change. The church needs to be the one that is “being put out” rather than the young people being expected to “fit in”. Not only because we are trying to be hospitable but because it is the very nature of the mission of God.

As detailed above, Pohl suggests that “hospitality is a way of life fundamental to Christian identity” She suggests that the word “hospitality” is used to describe what we offer friends rather than strangers and certainly only if we have sufficient resources. The result is that we do not practise hospitality in a “sufficiently intense and effective way to surface the issues as effectively as do communities which provide hospitality full time”. Unless we are victims of some awful natural disaster or similar event, most Christians in the developed world will

136 Anderson, Emergent Theology for Emerging Churches, 189-190.
137 Ibid., 199.
138 Pohl, Making Room, x.
139 Ibid., 9.
never experience what it is like to be totally reliant on the care and generosity of a stranger. The First Testament is dominated by the stories of a pilgrim people wandering as aliens; yet the church is a settled community. The church is far more likely to exude exclusivity than offer a sanctuary to outcasts and sinners despite at one time or another having experienced being a stranger and receiving an unexpected welcome. Morris makes this point by emphasising the second part of Deuteronomy 10:19 “You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers”.[emphasis his].¹⁴⁰

In his excellent book on how to live missionally in a post-Christian culture, Michael Frost, Professor of Evangelism and Missions at Morling College, introduces the reader to some ideas that are well worth considering. He highlights the concept of communitas and suggests it differs from community in that participants feel a deep “interconnectedness … [and] intense feelings of social togetherness and belonging”.¹⁴¹ Using examples such as working amongst the marginalised and poor, he develops the theme of the “liquid church … [which] exists in networks of relationships…based on people’s spiritual activity”.¹⁴² In order to achieve this with or amongst a group of people, especially not-yet Christians, he suggests that Christians must “free themselves from the busyness of church activity precisely so that they can share… in a more mutual fashion”.¹⁴³ If the church is to effectively welcome the 1.5G, it needs to realise that its current structures are probably to stiff. It also needs to realise that the 1.5G are not an objectified mission target but people with hopes, dreams and feelings. Building a communitas in which the 1.5G can find fellowship with people who understand or even share their immigration experiences, develop a secured identity as a 1.5er and thus are able to

¹⁴⁰ Morris, Fear or fascination?, 19.
¹⁴² Ibid., 134.
¹⁴³ Ibid., 168.
proceed in life with confidence, would be a significant contribution that the church can make to their well being. In addition they can be given opportunity to participate in and contribute to the life of the local congregation, not as Kiwi-ised Chinese but as a group of New Zealanders with a unique life experience. Such a ministry is well within the capacity of the local church in New Zealand. What is needed is not a grand, expensive, exclusive plan but a deep commitment to achieve *communitas* by changing institutionally and attitudinally in order to make a space for the 1.5G.
CONCLUSION

The growing body of research and thinking of post modern theologians is the most likely source of practical guidance for any local church committed to welcoming the 1.5G. One of the central theses of Frost’s argument is that even when we do invite non-Christians to our table, often it’s on our terms. The clear message from respondents and academics alike is that dramatic changes and special withdrawal type programmes are not what will make the 1.5G feel welcome. A programmatic response led by a part-time staff member is a common response to challenges faced by local churches. The warning being sounded is that 1.5ers have sufficient connection with their Chinese origins, and are so immersed in New Zealand life that they do not require any help with cultural understanding. In fact they are usually so conversant in both that they are able to move easily from one to the other. They do not need help as much as space. They need to be welcomed, embraced and understood rather than targeted for special attention. The first step to achieving this goal is for the impact of immigration to receive the attention and understanding it desperately deserves from the Church at national, regional and local level.

Awareness about Immigrants

Possibly the most obvious first step is the need for the Church to catch up on the dramatic demographic and societal changes happening across Auckland, New Zealand and indeed the entire world. The unprecedented mass movement of people has forced government and educational institutions as well as most non-Governmental community agencies to adapt their policies and practice. But it seems that the Church has managed to hold much of the impact at
arm’s length. A dramatic attitudinal change needs to be brought about through education, particularly theological, to enable the church to see immigration as a gift and not problem and threat. The Jesus ideal of welcoming the stranger needs to become part of the church’s DNA. There needs to be a dramatic improvement in basic hospitality such as not taking offence to cultural differences and taking the time to learn people’s original names.

Church elders should be taking the time to analyse local demographic statistics with a particular interest in immigration trends. How is it possible for an eldership to pray effectively for their local community if they have no idea about who lives there? It is highly likely that congregations will continue with the same programme mix year after year and wonder why the community no longer responds as it did in the past, without realising that the community has changed dramatically. Churches should be petitioning local and central government and asking that census and other data to be more specific and accurate. Helpful information can be obtained by asking the local schools for a breakdown of the school roll based on ethnicity and also to enquire how they are managing the changes to the cultural composition of their school population. It may be possible for the church to offer practical support to the local schools.

Of particular concern is the almost complete lack of knowledge of the phenomenon encapsulated by the term 1.5 generation. The fact that all immigrant communities have 1.5G young people should have been sufficient to galvanise the church into action years ago.

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144 Schools in Otahuhu report a dramatic change to the cultural composition of their student body in recent years. 25% of the school population are now of Indian origins who are generally speaking wealthier than Pacific Island families. This resulted in the decile rating of the schools being raised in a recent review leading to a reduction in government funding.
Suggestions for Churches

So what can be done by local churches to accommodate immigrants better? All congregations can become more sensitive to the challenges facing immigrants and try to meet some of their needs. English Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] classes have provided significant help for many immigrants but they are of little value to the 1.5G who will learn English at school. Another obvious role that the church can play is as an advocate for immigrants who suffer discrimination especially from professional bodies with unduly harsh acceptance criteria. Seminars could be held to explain developments in immigration trends such as the move from settler immigration to transnationalism. One of the great areas of advocacy that is required is to change denominational structures that completely ignore immigrants. The use of over-arching terms such as Asian and Pacific Islanders that give the impression of homogeneity within these groups is a significant contributor to the on-going ignorance about unique cultural and linguistic characteristics. Many congregations across the denominations have experienced sudden and dramatic growth as a direct result of the arrival of immigrants but when they turn to their parent denomination for advice and support, there is very little on offer. More could be done to understand and harness the natural growth through the increased birth rate. Groups that aim to meet the needs of immigrant young mothers, parenting information evenings and even the establishment of a registered pre-school, are all projects that any local church can undertake.

The church can also become a repository of positive stories about the impact immigrants are having in communities to break down misconceptions and prejudicial attitudes. The Integration of Immigrants Programme is already publishing excellent research laden material
about the experiences of all immigrants including Chinese and the 1.5G. The church can play
an active role by helping to embed this information into the consciousness of local communities. Information evenings, cross-cultural pot luck dinners, cultural concerts, new immigrant support groups and the like will all make a significant contribution. At all such gatherings, information about the experiences of the children of immigrants could be shared so that knowledge about the 1.5 generation becomes more common. Again it needs to be emphasised that all these suggestions are well within the capacity of a local congregation. The life and vitality of the congregation will benefit greatly from any such activities. Another example of an initiative of which I have firsthand experience is to offer professional counselling services in languages other than English at a subsidised rate. The impact of immigration upon many people can create emotional and even psychological struggles for which there is almost no language specific counselling service available in Auckland. The Otahuhu congregation employed Rev Sunday Tsoi to establish a Mandarin and Cantonese Counselling Service. It included a pilot project in Otahuhu College providing a support group for students who were in the ESOL class. To our amazement the response from new students from the Pacific Islands was just as positive as those from Asian countries. Our intention had been to assist the Asian minorities believing incorrectly that the Pacific Island immigrants were coping well given that they were part of dominant cultural groupings within the school. However the 1.5 generation experience was just as intense for Pacific Island young people as it was for the Asian minorities.\textsuperscript{145}

\textsuperscript{145} Rev Tsoi worked part-time for 12 months before the seed funding the church had received was depleted. The service was completely oversubscribed drawing clients from as far away as the North Shore and Waitakere. Despite the fact that we could prove that the need was significant, we could not convince potential funders that it was worthy of their financial support. Even the work in Otahuhu College, which was conducted with the support of the highly regarded Diversity Trust, did not attract further funding. My attempts to get the Presbytery to adopt the service also fell on deaf ears. This experience is further proof of the general lack of appreciation of the impact of immigration upon our communities and the struggles experienced by immigrants and in particular, the 1.5G.
The church also needs to become aware of the differences between the views and needs of first and second generation young people and how both these groups differ to the 1.5G. Whilst the cultural capital is still firmly in the hands of the New Zealand born young people, and particularly those of European origin, it would seem logical for the church to create opportunities to welcome 1.5ers in a fair and equitable way. Bartley liked my suggestion of “friendship circles” where rather than an ESOL type class with one New Zealand tutor teaching a class of immigrants, groups made up of New Zealand born and 1.5G in equal proportions under the guidance of a facilitator meet regularly to discuss a wide range of topics. The aim would be for an exchange of cultural, world view, political and linguistic information for the enrichment of all. A further development of this concept would be to add a service component to the activities of the group. In this way they could work towards a common goal and learn about how differing world views, work ethic and problem solving styles impact upon how tasks are tackled. These were some of the needs identified by the DragoNZ Conference mentioned above. One of the respondents went to great lengths to emphasise that whilst 1.5ers were fluent in correct English, where they often struggled was in the common slang that fills adolescent conversation. Thus 1.5ers were likely to not participate as much in conversations about personal struggles such as feelings of infatuation or emotions associated with puberty because they are unsure about the appropriate language to use. So despite their significant ability in English, the confidence of 1.5ers would benefit greatly from opportunities to practice casual, conversational English as well as opportunities to discuss deeply personal issues in a safe environment. At the same time their New Zealand born peers would have an opportunity to gain a better understanding of why 1.5ers may often do things that seem strange and nerdy. Bartley suggested that this deeper understanding would go some
way to combat the endemic discrimination that exists in New Zealand business, politics and institutions in the future.

Caring about and for the 1.5 Generation

A repeated comment was that the Kiwi-accented English of the 1.5G fuels the assumptions people make about their abilities and well-being especially when they are mistaken for first generation New Zealanders. My general plea is for ministers, elders and youth leaders to become informed about the 1.5 generation and their unique experiences, challenges and place in our society. These often highly talented young people are looking for connectedness and stability and can become a significant asset to the church rather than a liability and drain on resources. As stated above, the call is not for radical programmes but an acknowledgement that they have some unique needs. The starting point is to loosen the cultural demands so the 1.5G young people can give expression to their life and faith experience as 1.5ers.\footnote{In 2007 the Cook Island Elders at Otahuhu agreed to have a service led by the youth, many of whom are 1.5ers at the 2.30pm Cook Island service. The youth put together a wonderful service using the data projector and included choral singing and modern multi-lingual choruses using guitars and drums. A powerful drama written by a member of the youth dealing with the issues associated with teenage pregnancy was presented. All these artistic and worship forms were regularly used in the 10.00am service which many of the Cook Island adults attend regularly. The next week and since then the service has reverted to the old liturgical format using unaccompanied hymns. It was literally a [singular] youth service and no amount of encouragement has been able to shift the attitude of the Elders and senior members. Very few of those young people attend the church today.} Thus churches can do a great deal to not only encourage the 1.5G to participate but to make use of their incredible talents in a variety of ways. As two respondents emphasised, activities at a regional level such as inter-church basketball leagues would be a success. Such activities are highly valued by their parents and allow the 1.5ers to escape the confines of their parents and expectations of the local church. The caution that must be heeded is that church leaders must not think of activities for Kiwi young people such as wilderness camps and ski trips. The church must understand that 1.5ers are attracted by different sorts of programmes and
particularly ones that have a significant educative or cultural value as this will guarantee parental support. As Frost emphases, eating a meal together is a wonderfully unifying, profoundly disarming activity and an easy way to show authentic hospitality. Showing interest and participating in significant cultural activities such as Chinese New Year and the Lantern Festival is going to build bridges and send authentic signals of genuine interest and care.

My suggestions for the ethnic and language specific congregations are three-fold. Firstly the parents and care-givers need to discard the assumption that they understand and know what is best for the 1.5 generation just as all parents of adolescent young people have to concede. They need to accept that the 1.5 generation have had a very different experience of immigration to New Zealand and this has altered their world view. The parents need to accept that implicit in their decision to immigrate to New Zealand, was the fact that their children would not grow up culturally pure. Whilst they are able to move freely between the two cultures, they will also be just as uncomfortable in some Mandarin contexts as they are in some New Zealand contexts. The cost of being bi-lingual could be less than perfect written and spoken Mandarin and/or Taiwanese. Thus allowance needs to be made in the church for worship in other languages and forms. A specific challenge to my colleagues in ministry in these congregations is that they need to take a strong lead in this regard. Many of them are immigrants themselves and may well have 1.5G children and grand-children, and thus are able to advocate for the 1.5G with genuine insight.

Secondly they need to celebrate the great success of their children who not only manage to integrate to some degree but often excel at school and in sport. The parents need to alter their expectations and revel in the successes of their children as Chinese Kiwi’s without fear that
they are becoming Kiwi-ised Chinese. Likewise the church needs to recognise that this phenomenon is real, accommodate them and model best practice. An important role for the church is to help parents to understand the impact of immigration on their children rather than adding a further burden for them to be obedient Chinese when at church. If the church is able to model how to engage the 1.5G successfully, it then has an authentic basis on which to advocate for them. The church can seek their opinion, offer to support them in new ways and generally be more accommodating and understanding of their own young people. The third challenge for the language specific churches is to forge links with English speaking congregations to form a bridge for the 1.5 generation to be able to access English worship services. Rather than risk losing their children because they prefer to attend a more flexible Pentecostal church, the adults should take the lead in providing alternatives. In this way they can offer them the best of both worlds. They need to also petition the Presbytery to arrange the city wide activities that seem to have resonated with the respondents so strongly. The beauty of all of these suggestions is that they are all well within the realm of possibility for any local congregation that commits itself to understand and welcome the 1.5 generation who speak Mandarin and English.

This research has sought to illuminate the needs of the 1.5 generation who reside in Auckland, New Zealand. Of particular interest was the sub-group of the 1.5 generation who speak Mandarin and English and how the church is able to welcome them and care for them. The research has examined the history of Chinese immigration, the changes to immigration trends and the rise and impact of transnationalism. In order to answer the question posed, the research has examined the Missiology that should guide the church’s practice and sought to find a theology of hospitality appropriate for the 1.5 generation. The interviews with academic
experts and members of the 1.5 generation have provided significant insight into their struggles and joys. This research has resulted in a challenge to all churches and denominations to take the time to analyse the immigration and census data of their local neighbourhoods and cities. It has sought to encourage and enable churches and their members to become more sensitised to the needs of immigrants, to advocate on their behalf and to host educative seminars and events dealing with transnationalism and other significant changes to immigration patterns. The ultimate aim of this thesis was to advocate for the 1.5 generation, specifically those who speak Mandarin and English, challenging churches to be sensitive to their unique needs and to welcome them warmly. Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me… I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these…you did for me”.


The Holy Bible, English Standard Version.

