

**Transforming Leaders, Changing Society
Leadership Training Focused on Pasturing in Marketplace**

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“Urbanization” of Churches, “Commercialization” of Congregation

Everyone more or less has the impression that businesspeople in the mainland, including Christian entrepreneurs, are ostentatious with their wealth. But in reality, even though there are tycoons, most Christian business owners only run small or medium-sized businesses, or even micro-businesses. Many businesses have been affected by the recent economic



slowdown regardless their scale. Even if there is money to be made, businesses are troubled by numerous policies and taxation. Moreover, years of economic take-off has taken a toll on the environment, destroying natural resources, and endangering enterprises and the health of living things.

On the other hand, mainland churches cannot provide adequate pastoral care for people in the marketplace. Whether they are pastors or lay leaders, they all desperately need to be equipped for “urbanization” of the church, and the “commercialization” of congregation. Working with limited human resources, we established a pastoral platform on WeChat called “Proverbs of Marketplace”. Recently, I inadvertently discovered that these contents have been shared in various forums in the mainland. It can be seen that brothers and sisters in the mainland are in great need of teachings on this topic.

Do Not Stop Pasturing in Marketplace

According to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, the proportion of tertiary industry

value added to GDP has increased to 51.6% in 2016. Marketplace ministry is a matter that admits of no delay. There is a need for specific ministry focused on the spiritual lives of Christian workers in teaching them their responsibilities towards their role, towards their work, towards society and the nation.



Traditional seminaries lack “marketplace theology”. Even for those pastors who have a chance to come to Hong Kong for further education, they have little training in this aspect. Many pastors in the mainland dedicated himself/herself to full-time ministry at a young age, without much experience in the marketplace. Many part-time workers also lack formal theological training. More

importantly, the church seldom talks about “marketplace”. There is a strong concept of separation between “holy” and “secular”.

According to the report of National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2014, the total number of labor population at age 16-59 reached 915,830,000. This represented 67%¹ of the population. If churches do not minister to believers in the marketplace, the churches will be dissociated from the society. Churches cannot only care for the elderly, children, housewives, farmers and the illiterate, and this is even more so with urban churches. Conversely, the labor population is the main power of churches, including offerings, evangelism and influencing society. Churches need to provide appropriate pastoral care and teaching. Therefore, cultivating lay leaders in the marketplace is an urgent task.

Specific Training

Faced with the need and desire for teaching of marketplace pasturing, CCL helps marketplace leaders in the mainland expand their spiritual horizons through leadership training. CCL helps equip them to influence others and live out their calling in their enterprise/marketplace. We also challenge mainland pastors to think about how to lead the church and change the society.

In our leadership training, the content is tailored to fit the needs of different levels. In response to the need for marketplace pasturing, we chose the materials from The Global Leadership Summit (GLS), which is in its 21st year. This international leadership conference covers 125 countries, and has over 1,225 projection points, impacting over 300,000 participants deeply.² According to an independent research, over 61% of participants felt

that their organization had a clearer vision and was more efficient after attending GLS. 87% of participants felt that they had more self-satisfaction and affirmation. 83% of participants felt that their teamwork improved, job satisfaction and productivity increased as well. 81% of participants specifically pointed out that their supervisor became a better leader after attending GLS. ³

In March this year, CCL held two leadership training courses based on the materials of GLS. One was held for marketplace leaders in the mainland, with 23 participants from 6 provinces and 9 cities, whose backgrounds were in self-employment, professionals, administrative management, training and production. Another was held for pastors, with 37 participants from 8 provinces and 19 cities. In contrast to other leadership summits which focus on specific cities, not only did the participants of these two courses come from different provinces and cities, but they also came from different backgrounds. Therefore, it was a great opportunity for them to gather under one roof to learn together. In those few days, the pastors also lived together. It was such a wonderful picture.



Transforming Leaders, Deepening Knowledge

Marketplace leaders and pastors have different concerns. Therefore, our themes of training were set as “How can you bring change to your city through your enterprise/profession?” (Marketplace Leaders) and “How can you change the city through your serving?” (Pastors).

According to the report of National Bureau of Statistics of China in 2016, the urban populations has come to represent 57.35% of the total population.⁴ Last year, the Deputy Director of National Development and Reform Commission Planning Division, Chen Yajun, claimed that there were 645 cities in China, and that this number needs to keep on increasing. ⁵ Thus we hope that mainland leaders understand and respond to their mission in cities.

“Small class teaching” was the characteristic of these two training courses, as there were only 20 and 30 participants of each event respectively. In general, there are hundreds or even thousands of participants in each GLS event. Small classes were conducted in order to integrate the theories and experience of world-class speakers with the situation in China. These types of leadership training are “down-to-earth”.

The training contained five elements:

1. **Passing on Knowledge:** knowledge and experience were transferred to inspire the participants through the sharing of many world-class speakers and the explanation from Chinese teachers.
2. **Personal Reflection, Internalizing Knowledge:** there was a self-reflection session during the training. Participants who formerly could not sit still for even 10 minutes learned to let go of trivial matters and improve their concentration.
3. **Team Based Learning:** we encouraged the whole team to come to Hong Kong and study together. Not only did team members spur each other on, but being released from their regular duties at church, they were able to focus on team building and collective leadership better.
4. **Exchanging Experience:** participants could listen to the experience of Christian businesspeople face to face through visiting different enterprises and organizations. This is what sets CCL's leadership training apart from others.
5. **Action Plan:** We made a special request that the participants deepen their knowledge, and develop an action plan from personal to organizational structures in order to transform their city/church.

Conclusion



Many marketplace leaders were participating in this kind of training for the first time. Many of them came to Hong Kong for the first time too. They paid a higher price than pastors to attend. On the one hand, they had to arrange their own accommodation. On the other hand, the content of this training was different from traditional business training courses. They had to make special arrangements of time and payment, though CCL

only charged them a nominal fee. Hence, we admired their willingness to learn how to bless their city through their enterprise/profession.

Finally, please continue to pray for the needs of follow-up work of the previous leadership

training. We received good responses to the training for marketplace leaders, and we plan to organize another training this year. Due to the difficulties of coming to Hong Kong, the training for pastors will not be held again this year, but it is scheduled to be held in March 2018.

CCL organizes necessary follow-up work gradually, including discipleship training and coaching for those in the marketplace, as well as follow-up on action plans of pastors. May the Lord give us wisdom and resources to arrange the follow-up work!

Please support “Grants for Future Leaders of Church”

Apart from marketplace pasturing, leadership trainings include:

- Equipping teachers to nurture children, influencing the future of the church
- Promote “Living Word” training courses, cultivating pastoral leaders with solid biblical foundations
- Training lay leaders in building healthy churches, equipping workers to spread the Gospel

In 2017, we hope to provide the following quotas for experienced teachers in the mainland, in order to support their coming to Hong Kong for learning. The fundraising target is US\$130,000.

- Professional Diploma in Christian Education course 40 people
- Living Word Bible Camp 60 people
- Lay Leaders 40 people



If you are touched to make an offering, please contact us for details, thank you.

Footnotes:

- 1 Sina Finance, “A Scholar claimed that Chinese labor has been overestimated by 100 million, the crises are out of expectation”, URL: <http://finance.sina.com.cn/china/20150209/114821508557.shtml>
- 2 2016 Global Leadership Summit Taiwan. URL: <http://www.leaderfocus.org.tw/>
- 3 Global Leadership Summit. URL: <http://glshk.org/indexC.html#about>
- 4 National Bureau of Statistics of China, “2016 National Economic and Social Development Statistics Report of the People’s Republic of China”, URL: http://wap.stats.gov.cn/fb/201702/t20170228_1467496.html
- 5 Li Xiuzhong, 2016, “Too few cities in China--accelerating urbanization in the 13th five-year-plan”, URL: <http://www.yicai.com/news/5019956.html>

From Transforming a Business to Transforming the Marketplace Compiled by: Xi He

Brother Lin came to Hong Kong from Chengdu in March this year to join our leadership training. He was a businessman engaged in traditional businesses and had more than 20 years of experience in the field. While his wife served in the church, he focused on running his business and worked for the Lord in other posts. He



highlighted a number of constraints in running business in the mainland, such as various regulations imposed by the government, the “hidden rules” in the business field, everything being dependent on relationships...

He began changing his business model in 2014, where his traditional businesses were turned into a direct marketing platform for health products. He built his own team, selling around 200 kinds of health foods and consumer goods. Over 200 people have joined the platform as members, 70% of whom are non-Christians and only the remaining 30% are Christians. He supported the notion of “business as mission”, and understood that spiritual values should be incorporated into one’s business, such as contributing to social development and environmental protection. Hopefully, more brothers and sisters can join his platform.

On the challenges of running a business, Brother Lin said, “Some brothers and sisters have not fully accepted the concept of business as mission, and believe that holy and secular matters should be separated. They think that believers cannot serve God and mammon at the same time. Their idea is that ‘no one can serve two masters’. They have disregarded the fact that money is also a blessing from God and running businesses can glorify God. When you are in a business, you still have to bear witness for the Lord. For example, you must have integrity, honor your promises and refrain from illegal practices, and bear witness to Christ among non-believers.”

Despite facing misunderstanding from brothers and sisters, Brother Lin still hoped to establish a businessmen fellowship as soon as possible so that Christian businessmen can

support each other in the Lord. He said, “We have not yet built a network and businessmen fellowship. We are still exploring the idea. I yearn for more opportunities to have exchanges with other Christian businessmen.”

In the training programme, Brother Lin learned to stop and reflect on the meaning of his work and how to bear witness to the Lord. He was renewed. He already made friends with some



Brother Lin (on the right)

CCL teachers in 2016. Therefore, when he came to the training this year, he met some of them individually. A teacher offered him practical guidance and walked with him in the form of mentoring. The teacher encouraged him to reflect on how he managed his time and aim to use it more effectively. Advice was also provided to him on how to establish a businessmen fellowship.

May the Lord raise up more Christian businessmen to serve as His servants in the marketplace, who would care about people’s spiritual needs and aim to glorify the Lord.

Visiting an Enterprise

In the training programme, in addition to conducting class teaching, CCL also arranged for participants to visit enterprises and organizations for them to listen to other people’s first-hand experience. Dr. Boaz Yeung led mainland business leaders on a visit to the headquarters of an enterprise dealing in health foods and health products, where they talked to the enterprise’s chairman, Brother Choy Chi Fai.



During the visit, Brother Choy said that there were three tips on leading and building his sales team: encouragement, reward, and motivation. In leading the team, he stressed the importance of practical experience and promoting a caring environment for the frontline staff. When asked about how to handle unscrupulous business practices in the mainland, Brother Choy said that he considered God as his highest decision maker and would in no way make any compromise. He shared his encounter with a mainland official who demanded a bribe when he was trying to expand his business in the mainland. Many people resorted to illicit

means to gain benefits. Brother Choy said he categorically rejected the demand despite the huge economic loss which might be incurred, because he knew that his real boss (God) would forbid one such decision.

Participants were encouraged by Brother Choy's perseverance in his faith in spite of the complex situation in the business field and the mainland itself, and his great accomplishments nevertheless. In fact, many people know what they should do, yet do not have the courage to do it. Brother Choy's testimony served as a role model for them.

Prayers

1. Christians in the Marketplace

Influenced by the concept of separation between holy and secular matters, quite a lot of mainland churches are unfamiliar with or seldom address marketplace issues. However, churches cannot ignore a population of more than 900 million who are at their working age. May the Lord help churches see the urgency of marketplace



ministry, send leaders off for training to understand the needs of working Christians, and help believers see their responsibilities for their enterprises, society and nation, as well as witnessing for God in their marketplace, leading colleagues to Christ and spreading Christian values.

2. Care for Disabled Kids



A survey on basic national services for the disabled found that 84% of the disabled children who are not in school are from rural areas, and 79% are from the west central area. The reasons they are out of school include shortage of professional teachers, severity of their disability, financial difficulties, etc. In China, there are around 600 counties with a population under 300,000 not having any special schools. The educational needs of disabled children

are neglected in a society emphasizing economic gains. May the Lord move churches,

especially those in the west central area, to care for disabled children and their families with compassion, and to speak out for their needs.

3. Companion for Would-be Pastors

Recently, churches in some provinces have installed CCTV at the request of the authorities. Under tightened political control, despite Christians' strong demand for spiritual resources, it has become increasingly difficult to publish Christian literature. Continuing the "Mainland Seminary Graduates Book-giving Plan" is not easy either, but thank the Lord, CCL has received replies from 45 seminaries, provincial Bible schools and training centres.



May the Lord bless the graduates so they can receive the pastoral packs in time, numbering 4,500 in total, containing materials on hermeneutic, discipleship training, Bible studies and leadership, etc. Please kindly support the funding of US\$260,000 for producing the packs, to provide the graduates with a good companion.

4. Acceptance of Addicts



New types of psychotropic drugs have emerged, in the form of spices, petals or tobacco to evade detection of the authorities. With newly added chemical ingredients, these drugs have a stronger hallucination effect. Last year, the police found 22 such drugs that can be directly inhaled in entertainment venues in Yunnan, Hubei, Liaoning, etc. May the Lord alert mainland churches to social issues, help them be a light for the captives

by understanding their needs, praying and helping them feel accepted.

~ THE END ~