From Tradition to Contextualization:  
Worship Music in the Cantonese Congregation  
of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church  

by  

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Abstract

This thesis explores how the worship music in the Cantonese Congregation of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church (RHCCC), the largest Protestant Chinese Church in North America, evolved from a traditional approach to one of increasing contextualization over the past thirty-three years (1985-2018). This contextualization of worship music entailed not only changes in style, but also significant socio-cultural transformation, renewed theological vision, and increased levels of congregational participation. To analyze this paradigm shift in music, the study explores the historical development of the church, analyzes the characteristics of various styles of worship music, and explores related socio-cultural and theological influences during this period.
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Abbreviations

TCEMF  Toronto Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship

RHCCC  Richmond Hill Christian Community Church 城北華人基督教會,
        9670 Bayview Ave., Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

ACEM   Association of Chinese Evangelical Ministries Inc.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

There is currently a vibrant scene of Chinese Protestant churches in Toronto and surrounding areas. According to the Toronto Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship (TCEMF) directory, there are over two hundred Chinese Protestant churches in the Greater Toronto area, including all denominations. Some are small in terms of space and attendance, and some are very large, and qualify as “megachurches.”¹ Richmond Hill Christian Community Church (RHCCC) is considered a megachurch and is the largest Chinese Protestant church in North America.² The congregation of less than one hundred has grown to over four thousand over a period of thirty-three years (1985-2018). Not only has the size of the congregation changed, but there has been a fundamental shift in the style of worship, especially the worship music. This change has contributed to the growth of the church.

According to W. Nichols, “Worship is the supreme and only indispensable activity of the Christian church. It alone will endure, like the love of God which it expresses, into heaven, when all other activities of the Church will have passed away.”³ Worship ministry is similarly understood as central to RHCCC, for its “highest calling is to worship the Creator in spirit and truth.”⁴ The church has engaged in a specific form of renewal of its worship. This thesis investigates the nature of this renewal to determine the extent to which it reflects

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² Hartford Institute for Religion Research, “Megachurches of Canada.”


⁴ Sam Chan, Richmond Hill Community Church Grand Opening Special Journal (June 1, 1991): 8.
a general paradigm shift from traditionalism to contextualization, as discussed by David Bosch and Wenh-In Ng.\(^5\)

Contextualization can be understood as the effort to express the Christian faith in such a way that it is understandable and meaningful to people within a particular context, taking into account historical, social, political, economic and cultural factors.\(^6\)

Five hundred years before the time of Christ, Heraclitus inspired the following words about change: “You cannot step twice into the same river, for the waters are continually flowing on.”\(^7\) Such words could well have been written for the twenty-first century. Changes in Christianity resulting from contextualization have not only been evident in theology and Christian education, but also in the music of church worship. In this thesis, the changes in worship music in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC are investigated as a reflection of this paradigm shift.

The church was established in 1985. Today, there are over four thousand people in eleven worship services every Sunday, featuring two different languages (English and Chinese, including both Cantonese and Mandarin dialects) and three different worship styles. Each of the eleven services are unique, reflecting the context of their congregations. For the purposes of this study, the Cantonese congregation will be the focus, because, as the oldest congregation, it has undergone the most significant changes in its worship music.


In addition, one of the driving forces of the change in worship music in the Cantonese congregation has been the Senior Pastor, Sam Chan, who has a Doctor of Ministry degree in church growth from Fuller Theological Seminary.\textsuperscript{8} He has also been heavily influenced by the work and writings of Rick Warren and Robert Webber and their ideas about the contextualization of Christian evangelism and Christian worship, respectively.\textsuperscript{9}

Christopher Small’s “musicking” theory also provides a framework for investigating the music-making process that speaks to many features of the paradigm shift under investigation here, including the focus on contextual processes, socio-cultural relationships and audience participation, all of which result in a celebratory atmosphere.\textsuperscript{10} These features are evident also in Pastor Sam’s vision of evangelism and church growth. Therefore, the concept of “musicking” will be used in this study to examine the effectiveness of the paradigm shift in RHCCC worship music.

**Thesis and Purpose**

In summary, the thesis of this study is as follows: Over thirty-three years the worship music in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC has evolved from a traditional

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\textsuperscript{8} Sam Chan has been the founder and senior pastor of RHCCC since 1985.

\textsuperscript{9} Rick Warren is an American Evangelical Christian pastor, author, and the founder and senior pastor of Saddleback Church, a globally influential evangelical megachurch in Lake Forest, California. He is the author of several books including: *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here for?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002) and *The Purpose Driven Church: Growth without Compromising your Message and Mission* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995). Robert Webber (1933-2007) was the President of the Institute for Worship Studies and Professor of Theology at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. He wrote extensively in the area of worship, advocated a model of “blended worship” and was editor of *The Complete Library of Christian Worship*, 8 Vols. (Nashville, TN: Star Song Publishing, 1994-5), as well as such books as *Blended Worship: Achieving Substance and Relevance in Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996) and many others.

approach to one that reflects the importance of contextualization and performative
music-making.

Two related purposes also underlie this study:

1. **Historical Development**: To examine and document the historical and liturgical
development of worship music in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC, the
largest Protestant Chinese Protestant church in North America, in order to
determine the extent to which it reflects a paradigm shift from tradition to
contextualization.

2. **Analysis**: To describe and analyze the particular characteristics of the styles of
worship music that have been used in the Cantonese service in RHCCC.

To this end, several influences on the changes in worship music styles will be
considered, including: the changing socio-cultural context of Chinese Canadians, the
Vineyard praise and worship model, Rick Warren’s perspectives on evangelism and church
growth, Robert Webber’s proposals for blended worship, and the leadership of Senior Pastor
Sam Chan. Small’s musicking theory will be used to help explain the effectiveness of this
paradigm shift in worship music.

**Procedure**

This thesis consists of five chapters. This introductory chapter describes the purpose,
scope and structure of the thesis. As noted, the focus is on the development of worship music
in the Cantonese congregation in RHCCC over the past thirty-two years, its shift in musical
styles and context. This work will examine congregational hymnody and songs, leaving
music such as choral anthems, organ music and instrumental music for future studies.
Chapter two looks briefly at the historical background and context of the study, including Chinese Canadian history, Chinese Canadian culture and Chinese church development in Canada. This is followed by a brief overview of the development of Chinese Protestant Churches in Toronto, focusing on RHCCC and its worship music. Even this cursory treatment of Chinese Canadian church history, and its brief case study of RHCCC, makes a valuable contribution to the emerging shape of church history in Canada.

Chapter three outlines the various methodological approaches employed and the primary sources used (mainly archival documents, supplemented by informal oral histories and interviews). A comparative method is used to investigate the changes in worship music in RHCCC, focusing on dimensions of contextualization and employing the approaches of Lim, Chow, Small and Webber.

The fourth chapter continues the analysis, employing categories of worship music from *Century Praise Hymnal* and *Hymns of Universal Praise*. The extent to which the changes reflect a paradigm shift from traditionalism to contextualization will be investigated. The history and musical characteristics of worship music will be described. Small’s musicking theory will be used to explore and critique the effectiveness of the changes.

The final chapter concludes with observations on worship music in RHCCC, including the relevance of contextualization and performative music-making, church growth and evangelism, and future implications.
Chapter 2: Background

This study examines the worship music of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church (RHCCC), a non-denominational Protestant Christian Community Church in the town of Richmond Hill, north of the Greater Toronto Area. In order to place the work in its proper historical, socio-cultural and ecclesial context, the chapter offers a brief overview of Chinese Canadian history, Chinese Protestant Church development in Canada and the Toronto area, and a general history of RHCCC.

Chinese Canadian History

The history of the Chinese in Canada begins in the 1850s. During this time, Chinese immigrants from San Francisco came to the Fraser Valley of British Columbia as gold prospectors. Between 1855 and 1880, more Chinese immigrant laborers from rural southern China came over to help build the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and Chinese communities developed across Canada. Many Chinese people suffered from racial discrimination, and laws were passed to restrict their immigration to Canada.\(^1\) By the twentieth century, many Chinese Canadians had made their home in Vancouver and Toronto. With further immigration and growth, the Chinese Canadian communities have grown every year. They have contributed to every aspect of Canadian society, from politics to civil rights, from the arts and humanities to the physical and social sciences, from education to sports, from film to music, and from education to religion.

Due to their fear of the return of Hong Kong to China in 1997, over 100,000 Hong Kong immigrants settled in Canada between 1988 and 1993. According to the 2016 census, there

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are about 1.56 million people of Chinese descent in Canada, many of them residing in the Toronto and Vancouver areas. Chinese Canadians include immigrants from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Macau, overseas Chinese who have immigrated from South East Asia and South America, and also Canadian-born Chinese and those of partial Chinese origin. Today, in the twenty-first century, Chinese Canadians can be found in almost all industries and occupations, including in the roles of police officers, teachers, artists, scientists, politicians, soldiers and entrepreneurs.

**Religious and Cultural Life**

According to the 2001 census, 56 percent of Chinese Canadians are of no religious affiliation. For those Chinese Canadians who self-identify as religious, 14 percent are Buddhist, 14 percent are Catholic, and 9 percent belong to Protestant denominations. The rest are Islamic, Taoist, or of other faiths.

Many Chinese Communities still celebrate the major Chinese festivals, such as the Lunar New Year (February or late January) with dragon dancers in major Chinese areas and shopping malls. Other important festivals are Clear and Bright Festival (the cleaning and sweeping of the graves of ancestors) and the Mid-Autumn or Moon Festival (with family reunions and celebration of harvests).

Chinese Canadian culture has been thriving since the mid-1980s, reflecting practices from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Asian Chinese communities, as well as the experience of Chinese communities in Canada. Many Chinese or Canadian writers have

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3 Colin Lindsay, *The Chinese Community in Canada, 2001* (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2007), 12. There are no further updates to these figures.
commented on the evolution of this fresh and dynamic culture; and a few filmmakers and television producers have produced films and drama reflecting the experience of Chinese Canadian communities.4

Most Canadians of Chinese origin can speak at least one official language as well as their mother tongue, such as Cantonese or Mandarin. Many Chinese Canadians speak English or French at work or in school. While many are able to listen to and speak their parents’ mother tongue at home, they often cannot write in Chinese.

Greer Ng, Professor Emerita at Emmanuel College, University of Toronto, argues that “a stronger cultural identity for Chinese Christians will make them stronger, not weaker, Christians.”5 She believes that cultural identity can be enhanced by celebrating Chinese festivals, which are expressions of folk religions. She suggests creating new Christian education programs and leadership training to help them retain their Chinese identity.

There is no recorded evidence of specific musical practices among the first Chinese Canadians. In the nineteenth to twentieth centuries, most early Canadian Chinese spoke Cantonese. They probably sang folk songs or popular arias from Chinese traditional opera, predominantly in Cantonese. With the arrival of substantial numbers of immigrants from mainland China in the twenty-first century, the Chinese art scene in Canada expanded to include not only popular songs, traditional Chinese opera, Chinese instrumental orchestra, and traditional folk dance, but also Mandarin repertoires.

Chinese Canadian Christians sang translated hymns and gospel songs in many Chinese Christian church worship services. Most of those hymnals were compiled by groups

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of Chinese and western Christian leaders in Hong Kong and Taiwan, with the assistance of missionaries and issued by various denominational publishing houses. *Hymns of Life* (*生命聖詩*) was a widely used bilingual hymnal among the Chinese churches in the United States and Canada.  

### The Chinese Protestant Church in Canada and Toronto

From approximately 1965 to the end of the twentieth century, many ethnic Chinese international students, often from Hong Kong, came to Canada to study in high school and university because the opportunities were much better than in their own country. In the early 1970s, some churches from Hong Kong were inspired to send their Chinese pastors to Canada to start a ministry for the students in Vancouver and Toronto. They established the CCF (Canadian Chinese Fellowship) in the main universities and created small churches with students making up most of the congregation. These churches had no buildings, but rented other churches for services in the afternoons. Borrowing the space from other churches was the beginning of the Chinese Protestant church in Canada.

There was also a significant influx of Chinese entrepreneurs from Hong Kong in the 1980s, before the handover of Hong Kong to the People’s Republic of China in 1997. Most of these individuals initially settled in Vancouver, although in the latter part of the twentieth century Toronto became a major destination. By the late 1990s and early 2000s, evangelical outreach programs resulted in congregations building their own churches.

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7 This section includes information based on informal communication with church members of RHCCC and other Chinese church members in Vancouver, 2014-2015.
From about 2005 onwards, more Chinese Churches were established in Toronto. There are now over eighty Chinese Protestant churches listed in the Toronto Chinese Evangelical Ministerial Fellowship 2015 directory. Some churches have enlarged their worship spaces, and some have added services to accommodate the increased numbers of churchgoers. This growth consists mostly of Mandarin-speaking Chinese immigrants from Mainland China, and has been spurred on by the evangelical practice of encouraging members to invite their current and new friends to church. Many Canadian-born Chinese people continue to belong to their churches and establish their families there. In most big cities, many Chinese Canadian people and their families worship in Chinese-speaking churches for reasons of language and the close connections with people from their own cultural background. Some Canadian Chinese Christians in smaller cities, and Canadian-born Chinese people in general, like to associate with Canadian multicultural congregations because they feel comfortable with their ethnic identity in the multicultural context or there is no Chinese language option.

Chinese Protestant churches trace their roots to Protestantism and include many denominations, such as Anglican, Lutheran, Baptist, Alliance, Methodist, Missionary Alliance, Presbyterian, and non-denominational churches. In all these churches, the style of worship has been passed down by missionaries. The function of music in such worship is understood to serve as a communal offering to God, to complement the preaching, and to bring honor and glory to God.
Richmond Hill Christian Community Church

Richmond Hill Christian Community Church is the largest Chinese Protestant non-denominational church in North America. It was originally established in January 1975 in mid-town Toronto by Rev. Dr. John Kao together with six other families.

Rev. Kao is a man of faith renowned in Chinese churches around the world. In addition to starting several churches in Toronto, he also became the chief leader of the Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelism, an organization recognized by Chinese churches world-wide.8

In the beginning, the church was called the Toronto Chinese Community Church 多倫多華人基督教會, and its main outreach was to university students. By 1979, the original congregation, consisting of both students and families, had grown to over 350 on Sundays, with one full-time minister. The church then began to branch out into communities populated with newly-immigrated Chinese families. An additional church location was started in Agincourt, a suburb of Toronto, keeping the same name as the original church, Toronto Chinese Community Church, while the old church remained in the original community at Lawrence Avenue, continuing to reach out to students.

The church in Agincourt quickly grew and embarked on a plan to plant six more congregations. However, the attendance of the church at Lawrence Avenue did not increase

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8 The RHCCC church monthly newsletter, October 2014.
because many students returned to their home countries after graduation. By 1985, the size of the congregation had decreased to eighty-eight. Soon after, under the leadership of the Rev. Sam Chan (ordained in January 1985), and the Executive Church Board, the congregation decided to move north, renting Lewis Beattie Secondary School (Yonge/Drewy) for worship services.

The church subsequently moved further north to Bayview Secondary School (at Bayview and Major Mackenzie avenues) due to the increase in the Chinese population in Richmond Hill and Markham (the town next to Richmond Hill). In 1987, a parcel of land in Richmond Hill was purchased and a building program began. The church was renamed Richmond Hill Chinese Community Church (RHCCC) in 1989, but takes its date of establishment as 1985. The first phase of the building project was completed on June 1, 1991.

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10 The “Design and Facilities” from Church Building Phase 1 article, June 1991.
After the first phase, the church continued to enjoy substantial growth until it reached a point where there were not enough seats, classrooms or parking spaces. The church even made use of the foyer for overflow and placed additional folding chairs along the aisles to accommodate more people. Classrooms were rented from a nearby secondary school for Sunday School and the parking lot was put to good use. A “Park & Church” program was established in which three school buses were rented to run continuously between the school and the church to pick up and drop off drivers, passengers and Sunday School goers.

The church continued to grow until it again reached its limit. In the summer of 1995, believing God had provided the opportunity, the church purchased two parcels of adjacent land to blend with the Phase I premises, and Phase II began in April 1996. The building work was completed in early 1998 with a 700-seat sanctuary and a gymnasium that can be used as seating for another 500. In addition, three mid-sized fellowship halls, which can seat 100 to 200 people, are located in various areas within the church, as well as thirty classrooms for other usage. The parking lot can hold 271 cars in addition to the school parking lot. In 2000,
an additional two acres of land were purchased to make room for even more parking and for a Phase III building project. This new phase was completed in 2008, providing even more rooms and worship space for present needs.

![Figure 2.4 Phase III of RHCCC, taken in 2013.](image)

In thirty-three years, RHCCC has grown from a congregation of two hundred to over four thousand members. There are eleven services every week: three in Cantonese; one in Mandarin; two English adult services; two new generation English youth worship services (grades 7-12); and three children’s worship services. The congregational ages range from three months to over ninety years. There are many programs and groups for different ages, such as line dancing, ping-pong, basketball, Chinese dance, and a variety of gatherings for families and young people. There are also special needs and single-mother fellowship groups. Because 90 percent of the congregation is Chinese, Chinese New Year is celebrated with a New Year’s sermon, for which congregational members wear traditional Chinese New Year clothing. Many fellowship groups celebrate Chinese New Year together, thanking God for His guidance and care for the whole year. As a non-denominational church, RHCCC does
The church does not follow a lectionary in worship, nor is there any traditionally structured liturgy. The major celebrations of the church calendar are Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Thanksgiving, Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, and the church anniversary.

The vision of RHCCC is to be a non-denominational, multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-generational (3M) purpose-driven missional church for the unchurched and the committed. The five God-given purposes of the church are “Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry and Evangelism.” Worship is placed first, as it has a highly significant status in the purpose of the church and worship music is the thread that ties the worship service together.

The church has followed the “Purpose Driven Church” model developed by Saddleback Community Church in Los Angeles, California. In 2003, the 40 Days Purpose Driven Life Campaign transformed many lives in the congregation, by providing a focus on a purpose-driven life for God. With some modification by the church leaders, the church vision was directed towards both the unchurched and the committed. The unchurched are those who are either non-Christians or those Christians who do not attend church regularly. Most of the Cantonese congregation has emigrated from Hong Kong. Some are Christians from various denominations of their motherland and many of them became Christians because of the outreach and evangelism of the Richmond Hill congregation.

According to the worship pastor, RHCCC seeks to meet the needs of the unchurched by first setting the goal of turning new believers into disciples of Jesus so that they can change both their own lives and those of others. ¹¹ In order to attract the unchurched, the church leaders believe the style of Sunday worship has to keep being renewed. Though the

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¹¹ This material was verified through informal conversation with the RHCCC Celebration Pastor, Pastor Calvin Lam (2000-2017), leader for the renewal of worship in all services (Cantonese, Mandarin and English), March 20, 2018.
content of the gospel remains the same, the method of presenting it effectively must be meaningful and relevant to the contemporary culture. The leaders believe that the worship style should not simply follow worldly trends; otherwise it could become a stumbling block for the gospel. Evangelistic worship services have driven the process of the congregations’ transformation in worship. In this understanding, making a service comfortable for the unchurched does not mean changing the theology; it means changing the environment of the service—for example, by becoming more hospitable, changing the way visitors are greeted, the style of worship music used, the appropriate Bible translation, or the kind of announcements made in the service. What is important is to make both the worship and the message meaningful, clear and relevant to the worshippers. The evidence is clear that as a result many people in the neighborhood encounter and come to believe in God, and become followers of Christ and members of the church through the various forms of evangelical meetings, church activities and programs.

In addition, in order to be more inclusive of the community and the surrounding area as a community church, the church board replaced the word “Chinese” with “Christian,” in an effort to affirm multiculturalism in the church. In 2009 the name was officially changed to Richmond Hill Christian Community Church.

The role of the RHCCC Celebration Department is to lead and enrich the corporate worship, to bring glory to God, to exalt Jesus as the Lord of all in liturgy, music and the arts by engaging everyone in worshipping the Triune God, and thus to experience the presence of God together. Since the vision of the church is one of being a “church of the twenty-first century and beyond” for the committed and the unchurched, the worship program, including the worship music, has shifted from its traditional heritage of Protestant church music to a
blended worship approach. As of 2018 it is also moving toward a hybrid contemporary worship style. Despite the change in music worship style, many multimedia tools, such as visual display, video recording, staging, drama and movies continue to be used.

Several authors have discussed important factors that relate music to culture. John Witvliet, Director of the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship and Associate Professor of Worship, Theology, and Music at Calvin College, identifies three factors that relate congregational singing to culture: the choice of hymns or songs; the localized worship production capabilities (technology); and the cross-cultural sharing of resources. In her PhD dissertation, “Awesome in this Space: Sound, Space, and Identity in Contemporary North American Evangelical Worship,” Monique Ingall develops a theoretical model to investigate and interpret how worship music forms a congregational identity that reflects the culture of the congregation. According to Ingall, one of the factors that many churchgoers consider when choosing a congregational home is the worship music style. The ethnomusicologist, Jeff Titon, observes that song choice and the most frequently sung hymns express the uniqueness of a congregation. These and other tools of analysis will be put to use in this analysis of worship music at RHCCC.

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14 Swee Hong Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians: An Appraisal of the Pioneering Work of I-to Loh in the Area of Congregational Song* (Saarbrucken, Germany: Verlag Dr. Muller 2008), 369.
Chapter 3: Methodology and Methods of Interpretation

Primary Sources

The primary sources of this study are the historical documents and worship archives of RHCCC. Archival research was conducted to locate and examine the following primary source documents: church bulletins from 1985 until 2018, including the orders of service/liturgies and hymns/songs used in the services (e.g., call to worship songs, praise songs, offering songs, response songs and doxology songs); 15th and 25th anniversary booklets; Association of Chinese Evangelical Ministries (ACEM) monthly newsletters and journals; the worship leadership training course from 2006; and conversations with Senior Pastor Sam Chan and the Worship Pastor, Calvin Lam.

Figure 3:1 Pastor Calvin Lam (林志輝牧師)

Methods of Interpretation

Two methods are used to examine the primary source documents, each method correlating with the two purposes described earlier—that is, historical development and analysis:

Purpose 1: Historical Development

A comparative method is used to interpret the changes in worship music in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC over the past thirty-three years using the following tools: 1) Lim and Chow’s work on contextualization in church music; 2) Small’s view on audience
participation, contextualization and music-making; and 3) Webber’s approach to blended worship.

**Lim and Chow’s Work on Contextualization**

American Catholic theologian, Stephen Bevans, argues that the necessity of contextualization has to do with “the attempt to understand the Christian faith in terms of a particular context.”¹ He emphasizes three main sources for contextualization: scripture, tradition, and socio-cultural context, including the historical context. His view of the socio-cultural context entails a combination of several factors, including life experience, communal experience, social location and the certainty of social change. Many other researchers, such as Bosch and Ng, also emphasize the socio-cultural factors of contextualization in theology and Christian education.²

Regarding worship music, Lim expands I-to-Loh’s paradigm of the contextualization of church music in congregational songs. I-to-Loh’s contextualization is focused on the development of contextualized compositions from the composer’s perspective. He later revised his paradigm to include the context of the congregation.³ Swee-Hong Lim builds on I-to-Loh’s approach to include the socio-cultural contexts of local people’s lives and global worldviews, as well as the past and present theological contexts of the church community.⁴ For Lim, any changes in these parameters not only provide opportunities for changes in

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⁴ Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 160.
musical styles, but also the worship music enables the congregation to share expressions that are meaningful and relevant to them in a specific time and place.\textsuperscript{5} In her paper, “Reflections on the Musical Diversity of Chinese Churches,” Maria Chow concludes that factors of social context play an important role in the music-making of American Chinese churches, including: the dialects of the Chinese languages (Cantonese or Mandarin), the geographical origin of the congregations, the original church denominations of the members, and their educational backgrounds.\textsuperscript{6} The socio-cultural changes in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC during the thirty-three years from 1985 to 2018 can be helpfully related and analyzed according to Lim and Chow’s categories.

**Small’s View on Audience Participation and Musicking**

One of the most important factors in Small’s musicking theory is participation. According to Small, “to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing.”\textsuperscript{7} Small argues that music is not an object, but a verb, denoting the making of music together, thereby creating experience. It is thus a social event that entails people’s participation. For Small, music-making is not only about the meaning of the work itself, a specific performance of the work, or the composer; it is also about relationships such as those between listener and listener, and listeners and

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\textsuperscript{5} Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 176.
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performers, which enables him to ask, “What is really going on here?” The primary sources of this study are analyzed accordingly to determine the dimensions of music-making in RHCCC and how it has evolved over the past thirty-two years. Here congregational participation is an important part of contextualization insofar as it reveals the socio-cultural relationships of specific people at a specific time in a specific place.

Webber’s Blended Worship

Webber’s notion of blended worship entails a convergence of tradition and contemporary style. Blended worship follows the traditional fourfold biblical and historical pattern of worship (gathering, word, table or thanksgiving, and dismissal), as well as a worship style that reflects the contemporary context and identity of the community. In this sense, Webber’s blended worship approach also involves contextualization. The primary sources of this study are also analyzed to determine the extent to which changes in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC follow a contextualized approach in the spirit of Webber’s blended worship.

Purpose 2: Analysis

The second purpose of this study is to describe, analyze and critique the history and musical characteristics of the style of worship music that has been used in the Cantonese service in RHCCC. To this end, the work of Feng-Lan Hsieh, in *A History of Chinese Musicking*, 10.


Christian Hymnody,\textsuperscript{11} and her categorization of songs in the Century Praise Hymnal (世紀頌讚)\textsuperscript{12} and Hymns of Universal Praise (普天頌讚) will be employed in the analysis of the worship music of the Cantonese congregation.\textsuperscript{13} Some further examination of the foregoing summary of methodologies and methods of interpretation will help set the stage for the more specific findings and analysis to follow in chapter four.

**Lim on Contextualization**

Lim has created a broad paradigm for contextualization of Asian Church music that is relevant for the twenty-first century. His paradigm explains the praxis of Asian congregational songs, including the heavy evidence of western influence today.

Lim begins by analyzing and critiquing I-to Loh’s paradigm to determine what is missing.\textsuperscript{14} He then turns to the process of contextualization, as articulated by scholars such as Anscar Chupungco, Russell Yee, Stephen Bevans and Roberta King, to find their perspectives on the socio-cultural dimensions of contextualization. This allows him to


\textsuperscript{12} *Century Praise Hymnal* (世紀頌讚), ed. Richard Lin (Hong Kong: Chinese Baptist Press, 2001). This is the newest, most comprehensive and up-to-date collection of Chinese hymns, both in Chinese and Chinese-English versions. The collection includes hymns of western and Chinese origin, gospel songs, contemporary hymns, contemporary praise and worship songs, and responsive readings. In addition, newly translated and revised hymn texts as well as re-arranged and re-harmonized hymn tunes were added.

\textsuperscript{13} *Hymns of Universal Praise* (普天頌讚), ed. Angela Tam (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd, 2006).

\textsuperscript{14} I-to Loh (駱維道), an ethnomusicologist and hymnologist from Taiwan, has made a great contribution to the development of Taiwanese, Chinese and non-Western hymnody. He has composed many hymns and anthems in addition to compiling and editing several hymn collections, including the well-known *Hymns from the Four Winds* (1983) and *Sound the Bamboo* (1999-2000).
construct a paradigm of contextualization relevant to the twenty-first century, based on an
expansion of I-to Loh’s work along with that of other scholars’ work on contextualization.

Lim identifies three significant critiques of Loh’s paradigm. First, he argues that Loh focused mainly on the efforts of the producers (composers and text writers) and did not
include the performers and the congregation. Lim believes that the interactions and dialogue
between producers and congregations contributes significantly to contextualization.¹⁵ Second,
Lim criticizes Loh’s insistence on bringing the traditional native musical element into
musical compositions for the development of Asian Christian cultural identity. He argues that
Loh is reluctant to face the reality and impact of already established western musical praxis.
Further, Lim believes that identity can be formed differently. He holds that the interaction
between the producers and the congregation shapes the practice of contextualization and
forms Christian identity in a local church.¹⁶

Third, Lim points out that Loh’s categorization of the context of congregations
according to their education and preferred musical styles is inadequate and too narrow. In
addition, there are many kinds of congregations, not only rural- and urban-based, but also
those with various socio-economic statuses, ethnicities (multi or homogenous), and socio-
cultural backgrounds.¹⁷

Instead of following Loh’s paradigm by focusing solely on the native and folk
elements in the development of contextualized compositions, Lim has created a three-stage
cyclical approach to church music that involves phases of emulation, juxtaposition and

¹⁵ Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 143-44, 153-54.

¹⁶ Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 139, 154.

¹⁷ Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 145-48
innovation. More recently, Lim calls it “Adopted, Adapted and Contextual song forms” in his classification of post-colonial congregational songs.\textsuperscript{18}

Emulation is an imitation of a past style that is acceptable to the faith community, such as simply using the same worship musical style with a translated text. This is the “Adopted” or Transplanted-Translated song form (A-A1 form), where A is the western translated traditional hymns (received and used by the local community as inherited from the missionaries) and A1 is the translated western contemporary worship songs.

Juxtaposition is a creative effort by the performers to put the existing translated hymnal style and the Asian locally composed style together, side by side, as in a medley, reflecting a taste of both the past and present. This is also called the “Adapted” song form. An example would be a traditional translated hymn, such as “Holy, Holy, Holy,” or a translated praise and worship song such as “Majesty” placed next to a song composed by a local composer that reflects the taste in local or popular song styles. The locally-composed songs are typically supported by western musical harmonizations. This is the A1-B form, where A1 is the translated western traditional hymn or contemporary worship song and B is a praise and worship song composed by the local people in their own language, but with western harmonization. This form reflects both a desire and need to express local socio-cultural identity and context and an intention to also pass on the missional heritage.

Lastly, innovation is a blended form, reflecting local cultural expression through a combination of both traditional and contemporary styles. This is a hybrid expression, mixing both old and new to convey meaning and relevance to a specific community at a particular time. This is “Contextual” song form, or A-B-B1, where B1 is a song composed by local

musicians reflecting their local cultural identity. The result is a range of styles from imititational to incarnational. This hybrid composition is marked by a local popular cultural idiom with a supporting western musical style.\textsuperscript{19} Table 3.1 below summarizes these forms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase of contextualization</th>
<th>Distinctive Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emulation</td>
<td>Imitation of styles that are acceptable to the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minimal regard for socio-cultural context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopted Song Form: A-A1</td>
<td>A: Western translated traditional hymns (received and used by local community as inherited from missionaries)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A1: Translated western contemporary worship songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juxtaposition</td>
<td>Creative efforts, performance practices, and receptivity reflect growing awareness of local milieu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Socio-cultural consciousness dictates the need for meaning and relevance, giving rise to efforts of assimilation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted Song Form: A1-B</td>
<td>A1: Translated western contemporary worship songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B: Praise worship songs in local text language created and composed by local people for the local community. The initial efforts use western materials as template, e.g. composing hymns like western hymns with four-part harmony.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>The process of assimilation continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contextual Song Form: A-B-B1</td>
<td>Hybrid and heterogeneous expressions dominate as differentiation of intra-cultural exchanges becomes less significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1: A song composed by local musicians reflecting their local cultural identity (moving from imitational to incarnational)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{19} Lim, \textit{Giving Voice to Asian Christians}, 166.
However, these stages of contextualization are not simply linear, but exhibit a spiral and dynamic movement. The circular movement “repeats” to a certain extent, but its result is not identical to the previous form because of ongoing changes in context. There are many factors involved in this spiral movement, including the effects of a change of vision in church leadership, a change in the performance practices of worship leaders, and the choice of textual structures and style of worship music. According to Lim, since contextualization keeps on evolving, there is no final stage.\footnote{Conversation with Swee Hong Lim on February 20, 2018.}

In addition, from the work of Anscar Chupungco, Russell Yee, Roberta King and Stephen Bevans, Lim identifies the two most important factors to include in his paradigm of contextualization in church music: socio-cultural context and theological consciousness. For Lim, any change in either of these areas will lead to a shift in the trajectory of contextualization.\footnote{Lim, \textit{Giving Voice to Asian Christians}, 166-169.} By trajectory, he means the path toward a musical praxis in the process of the contextualization of church music.

For example, Chupungco, Yee, King and Bevans all view the socio-cultural context as important to contextualization. Lim focuses especially on Bevans’ categorization of local and global as relevant to the socio-cultural context and the trajectory of contextualization. The local is the “in situ, social cultural concerns,” the local social, cultural background and socio-economic status of people in the church.\footnote{Lim, \textit{Giving Voice to Asian Christians}, 157.} The global context refers to areas beyond the boundaries of the local towards the outside artistic world, and beyond local traditional features towards contemporary ones. This reorientation can involve a shift from the use of
heritage musical instruments, such as the organ, or native instruments, to today’s modern musical instruments, such as guitar and drums.

Theological consciousness is also an important factor in the trajectory of contextualization. This has to do with how theology influences people. Lim argues that the theological stance of a church, including the interpretative use of Scripture, tradition, history and experience, affects the process of contextualization. Any changes in the theological stance of a church will change the trajectory of the process of contextualization. A shift in theological consciousness will thus affect the function of music in worship.  

Bevans writes that “the time is past when we can speak of one right unchanging theology, a theologian perennis. We can only speak about theology that makes sense at a certain place and in a certain time.” The cultural context of place and time will affect the theological consciousness of the church. The interpretation of scripture, tradition, history and even the experience of the pastor-in-charge continually shapes the theological direction of the church, which in turn shapes the process of contextualization.

King also observes that it is important to understand the thought processes of a people when composing a new song with meaning and relevancy. Yee notes that the change in the theological consciousness of a church can bring a shift in the style of corporate worship music. For example, “praise music has become the ‘ethnic’ music of mainstream church culture . . . . However, praise music is a move towards forms that speak to this (un-churched) generation that enables them to speak to God.”

23 Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 171.

24 Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 159.

For Lim, theological consciousness plays a significant and direct role in shaping forms of worship music. For example, if the church values the past more than the present, the tendency might be for the church to maintain and preserve the western missional heritage of the nineteenth century (traditional worship). However, musical practices of most Chinese diaspora churches have trajectories with both traditional and contemporary worship styles (blended worship).

Lim concludes that both theological consciousness and socio-cultural context play an important role in influencing the effort of contextualization in church music. In order to provide meaningful and relevant worship for the congregation, the delivery of the message in congregational song has to be contextualized. It also needs to be culturally and linguistically appropriate for that particular congregation, and it must cohere with their collective theological perspective.26

**Chow on Chinese American Worship Music**

Maria Chow’s research on the worship music of 110 Chinese American congregations explores the factors that contribute to a congregation’s musical life. Using congregational visits, interviews with ministers, musicians and lay people, as well as detailed surveys, she studied the repertoires of congregational hymns, musical style and expression, choice of musical instruments used, and factors influencing congregants’ decisions to attend various worship services.27

She found that many Chinese churches have more than one Sunday service. About fifty percent of the churches have bilingual services (English and a Chinese dialect); some

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26 Lim, *Giving Voice to Asian Christians*, 175.

27 Chow, “Reflections on Musical Diversity,” 290-1. Chow’s twenty-two question survey in both Chinese and English received a 60 percent response rate.
also have a bidialectal or bilingual service. In addition, the Chinese services adopt the widely-used hymnal, *Hymns of Life* (1986), while the English services sing contemporary Christians songs drawn mainly from the services of Church Copyright License, Inc.⁴⁸

Regarding musical instruments, she found that the piano is the primary musical instrument used, followed by the organ and the guitar, to varying degrees. However, the guitar is widely used in the English services. With regard to hymns used in other church activities, such as fellowship and small group gatherings, only thirty percent of participants use worship hymns regularly.

In her conclusion, Chow points out that socio-cultural factors play a significant role in congregants’ decisions about which worship service they attend. First, linguistic factors, such as the use of English or Chinese dialects in worship, is crucial for the decision of choosing a worship service or joining a particular church. For example, a few Chinese churches have a Mandarin service, a Taiwanese service, and an English service, while others have only a Mandarin, or only a Cantonese, or perhaps a Mandarin and an English service. Such differences become very important for those who attend.

Second, the musical traditions and practices of the motherland affect the choices of those attending. With the westernization of countries like China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and other Asian countries, the Chinese who migrated to North America listen not only listen to their traditional music, but also to western classical music and multicultural pop music. This music is very much a part of their culture. Chow argues that understanding the culture of the congregation and knowing the relevant Chinese dialects allows the worship leader to choose the music that gives value, meaning, and relevance to those in attendance.

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⁴⁸ Chow, “Reflections on Musical Diversity,” 293.
Furthermore, and thirdly, Chow suggests that leaders should consider the musical aesthetic of a translated hymn, because in Cantonese dialect the tone (vocal pitch or inflection) of a word can change its meaning and the music of the song needs to correspond with this meaning. The musical aesthetic is the synchronization of music and the particular dialect and tones of the Chinese language.\textsuperscript{29}

There are other significant findings in Chow’s research that will be of interest to some ministers. For example, she considers the cultural diversity of different Chinese generations in the church. While first generation immigrants in a congregation tend to focus on the differences between their particular Chinese tradition compared to the rest of their church community, the second, third and fourth generations consider themselves Americans only and are less concerned about the tensions of cultural differences. Interestingly, Chow has also encountered some second and third generation members who are interested in incorporating Chinese indigenous hymns into their worship. In other words, the self-understanding of congregants as Chinese, American or Chinese American in a “Chinese” congregation can be a significant factor in choices and preferences concerning worship music.

Some of Chow’s findings connect with my own much more modest survey conducted in 2015. At that time, I undertook a preliminary ethnographic study, using a survey and follow up discussions in three Chinese Protestant churches in Toronto representing three different denominations.\textsuperscript{30} I explored the musical phenomena of Cantonese, Mandarin and English congregations in those churches, and investigated the relationship between their congregational songs, their socio-cultural context and their identity. Three questions drove

\textsuperscript{29} Chow, “Reflections on Musical Diversity,” 303.

my research: 1) How do the congregational songs reflect the particular theology, identity, culture and values of each church? 2) How are the songs approached in each denomination, for example in terms of style, structure and choice of instrumentation? 3) On what other bases are the song choices made, for example, are they to teach or to move people emotionally; is it their theology, their melody, or the taste of congregation?

After several months of analysis, with a response rate of 60 percent (twelve out of twenty surveys were returned), I concluded that socio-cultural factors play an important role in each congregation of the different denominations. Congregational members’ educational and religious backgrounds, their life experiences, and their exposure to their ethnic culture, contribute greatly to their selections of songs. Congregational participation in worship varies from church to church depending on the denomination and the teaching of the pastor-in-charge. Participation includes people singing together aloud, using gestures like standing to express joy, sitting for listening, raising hands for welcoming and praising God, and clapping and bodily movement in worship. The style of worship and the worship songs people sing directly reflect the denomination and culture of that particular congregation. For example, Anglican worshippers tend to be more reserved (sitting, observing and listening attentively throughout the whole service), while non-denominational worshippers, such as those of RHCCC, tend to sing loudly, raise their hands in praise and clap along with the worship leaders during the celebratory songs.

**Small on Musicking**

Small’s work helps us interpret the significance of participation in other ways. As noted earlier, Small holds that everybody involved in a musical performance is musicking, including the composer, performers, audience, ushers, AV technicians, stage workers and so
He proposes a framework for understanding all musicking as a human activity. Musicking is a social event that focuses on the people’s participation. These kinds of relationships between listener and listener and listener and performer are what music is all about.

Through this, Small offers a theory that is applicable to all music-making everywhere and that can be used to tackle the question of what is happening. In this way, he introduces the idea that music should not be considered a noun, because within music there is a created experience. That music is a verb represents a paradigm shift of particular relevance to the experience of worship music. To understand music as a merely a thing or object neglects the context, connections and interactions inherent in it. To put that theologically and liturgically, viewing music as an object does not describe the incarnational and communal experience of God’s presence in worship music. A church service typically demonstrates the ways in which music can become a collective and inclusive activity that blurs the lines between performers (presenters) and congregation. This is not only limited to the worship service itself; it also includes those preparing for it. Every human being preparing for and taking part in the service can be engaged in musicking.

Several dimensions of musicking are worth noting. Participants in music-making experience engagement with their own feelings, relating also to the performers and to the people around them. They explore these relationships and affirm and celebrate them without articulating them in words. They are relationally and emotionally involved. Consider, for example, the complexity of relationships involved in weddings, funerals, baptisms, and other

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32 Small, *Musicking*, 10
ceremonies. Small argues that musicking articulates human relationships in a multilayered and multi-ordered complex way that words cannot do.  

Moreover, in musicking, “our exploration, affirmation and celebration of relationship does not end with those of a single performance, but can expand to the relationships between one performance and another, to relationships between performances in different styles, genres, even whole musical traditions and culture.”  

Music-making is a profoundly relational and social activity.  

According to London School of Economics researchers, George MacKerron and Alex Bryson, Small’s psychological standpoint on the great pleasure derived from celebrating a concert, sports game or festival, may help highlight his theory. Small explains how members from different social groups can differ in their ways of music-making, but in the end, they still “come to understand and to enjoy, and perhaps creatively misunderstand, the musicking of others.” As we sing in worship, we affirm and celebrate the presence of God. This human connectedness to God is determined by experience of the socio-culture of the congregation and the power of music. The concept of musicking helps describe the complexity of musical experience.  

Small states that the “performance does not exist in order to present musical works, but rather, musical works exist in order to give performers something to perform.”

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34 Small, *Musicking*, 209  
performative nature of musicking helps describe its dynamic diversity. Music is not static, but continues to change in style, time and cultural location. In today’s churches, worship music includes hymns, praise and worship songs, pop and folk songs, sacred art songs, rock and operatic sacred songs. Each can be acceptable in its own congregational context and culture. Performers can choose any genre of music to perform, just as worship leaders can choose any form of worship music, depending of the nature of their congregation.

In short, as Small puts it, music works beyond “the work itself.” The act of presenting worship music, either in singing praise or in instrumental music for contemplation, fosters and enhances experience. It gives expression to feelings, thoughts and beliefs; it brings individuals together in a common human experience of God’s presence; it serves to enrich lives and to unite and inspire people through that enrichment. Leading church worship is a particular kind of “performance” sometimes called “presentation.” It is a presentation to God, to the audience (congregation/listeners) and to ourselves (performers). Musicking is performative, and therefore the performance of the music takes precedence over the performers themselves—and in the case of Christian worship, the performative nature of musicking serves the worship of God.

Small asserts that the act of musicking “establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies.”\textsuperscript{38} This act of musicking is a language that provides us with an understanding and articulation of those relationships, and through them we understand the relationships of our lives. For example, the event of a symphony concert performance may mean something different for

\textsuperscript{38} Small, \textit{Musicking}, 13.
the audience and for the musicians. Many in the audience may have a transcendental experience of communication, while the orchestra members may just be working.\(^\text{39}\)

When we gather for worship, we gather for many different reasons. We assemble to sing songs to or about God, to strengthen the bonds of the community, to hear a new perspective on Scripture, to contemplate our place in society, to affirm our beliefs, to celebrate our existence in the world, and to connect in some way to God. Worship is a prime example of the complexity of music-making: the interactions among worship leaders, singers, musicians, congregation, ushers, AV sound men, lighting controllers, stand-by medical team, security, pastors, and the music in worship is an event in which all are actively participating—and, as Small has put it, “it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies . . . . Musicking is an activity in which all those present are involved and for whose nature and quality, success or failure, everyone present bears some responsibility.”\(^\text{40}\) Small is not so much concerned about who has more or less responsibility, but rather that all those involved have a contribution to make to the act of musicking and the meaning of the event. Music-making entails that in worship, everyone who participates has a role to play; all are valued, cherished and engaged in holy meaning making.

**Webber on Blended Worship**

As noted earlier, Webber’s notion of blended worship is a convergence of traditional and contemporary styles. He also places a high value on participation in worship, as an act of

\(^{39}\) Small, *Musicking*, 74.

witness to the wider community, as well as a means to church growth, evangelism, mission and social justice.\(^{41}\)

Webber holds that the content and structure of traditional, contemporary and blended worship are essentially the same, but the style of worship can differ significantly. The fourfold pattern of worship is the external process of the order of salvation of humanity and the response of worshippers to Gods’ love: the Gathering (the ascent into God’s presence); the Word (hearing from God in Scripture and sermon); the Table (celebrating the Resurrection); and the Dismissal (going forth to love and serve the Lord). This content and structure provides a means of bringing people into God’s presence. The structure is the specific means by which the content is delivered. The content is the theology of God and the vision of the life of faith. However, the particular style of worship has to be determined appropriately by the worshipping community, depending on the culture and context of the congregation. As noted before, contextualization plays a significant role in the act of worship. It is the style of worship that communicates meaning and relevance to a particular congregation’s context and social-cultural location.

Webber’s model of blended worship seeks to provide creative ways to bring traditional and contemporary styles together in worship. In particular, he believes that music has a special role to play in blending the traditional word-driven approach to worship with the contemporary music-driven approach. For example, he provides a flow chart for the use of music in the Gathering in traditional, contemporary and blended worship settings.\(^{42}\) He develops three models of blended worship styles and two plans for formal and informal


\(^{42}\) Webber, \textit{Panning Blended Worship}, 63.
services of the Word. In general, he counsels that worship renewal takes time. The process of growth, development, experiment, renewal and change also depends upon the socio-cultural context and theological consciousness of the congregation. Renewal in worship requires the continuous engagement and participation of the congregation. He recommends that a worship ministry group be formed from church staff and the congregation for encouragement during the continuing renewal of worship. Through prayerful planning, thoughtful evaluation and attentive monitoring, worship can come alive and empower the mission of the Church through the celebration of Jesus Christ’s salvation, God’s healing power and presence.

Hsieh on Worship Music

The Hymnal, *Century Praise Hymnal* (世紀頌讚), 2001, and the ecumenical *Hymns of Universal Praise* (普天頌讚), 2006, are the two latest collections of bilingual hymnals, including both Chinese and western hymns and songs. Their categorization of songs can be usefully applied to the worship music of the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC. Feng-Lan Hsieh’s work, *A History of Chinese Christian Hymnody*, also provides helpful insights into the historical and musical characteristics of each category.

An examination of these Chinese hymnals makes it clear that Chinese churches have been continually influenced by both western churches and multicultural global movements in worship music style. Both hymnals cover a wide range of musical styles and textual forms, and their collections of songs are comprehensive and up-to-date as of 2006. Both contain

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43 Webber, *Panning Blended Worship*, 93.

over five hundred items, including traditional hymns of western and Chinese origin, gospel songs, contemporary hymns, contemporary praise and worship songs, Chinese and Asian hymns, global songs, Chinese Christian worship songs, and some responsive readings. Three categories help to describe the worship music in RHCCC.

Translated Traditional Hymns

Many of the traditional hymns have been translated from western hymnals. Western missionaries had a great influence on church music, introducing to Asian churches not only their hymns and gospel songs, but also contemporary Christian songs. Western hymns have become an important part of the Chinese church’s heritage, having been sung for almost two centuries. For example, the traditional hymns in the hymnal Hymns of Life were widely used among the churches in the United States, and “How Great Thou Art” (你真偉大) remains a favorite translated hymn in Chinese Protestant churches today. Contemporary hymns include those written by contemporary text writers, translated into Chinese and set to western tunes. For example, Carl Daw’s text “How lovely is Thy Dwelling Place” was translated and set to the hymn tune “Brother James’ Air.”

Translated Contemporary Christian Songs (Cantonese and Mandarin)

This is the most popular category of songs in the various worship services of Chinese Baptist and other non-denominational Chinese churches. These songs are translated into Cantonese and Mandarin, though some churches sing them both in Chinese and English.

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Some of them have newly-translated Chinese texts that can be easily understood and that resonate with people today.

Table 3.2 Examples of Translated Contemporary Christians Songs in *Century Praise*:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Song Title</th>
<th>Text/Tune writers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“As the Deer” 如鹿切慕溪水</td>
<td>Martin Nystrom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Give Thanks” 數欣</td>
<td>Henry Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“He Is Exalted” 祂已被尊崇</td>
<td>Twila Paris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I Love You, Lord” 主我愛你</td>
<td>Laurie Klein</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majesty” 敬拜主</td>
<td>Jack Hayford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“My Tribute” 我心獻曲</td>
<td>Andre Crouch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Contemporary Christian Songs (Cantonese and Mandarin)

Contemporary Chinese Christian songs are songs written by Chinese Christian composers. In the early twentieth century, *Come and Sing Hymnals* (齊唱新歌), 48 small volumes of Cantonese Contemporary Christians songs composed by Hong Kong Christian musicians, became popular songs in small group gatherings in Hong Kong and Cantonese North American churches. Their songs differ from the traditional four-part harmonic style. Composed in folk-hymn style, they are characterized by pleasing arrangements and simple western harmonic chord progressions for accompaniment by piano and guitar, with easily memorized choruses. The content of the songs address personal spiritual experience and tend to be more emotional than the hymns of traditional hymnals about the attributes and activities of God. Examples of popular songs include, “Heart Song” (心曲) and “Offering Today” (獻上今天).

48 *Come and Sing Hymnal* (齊唱新歌), (Hong Kong: Hong Kong Association of Christian Music Ministry, 1982). *Come and Sing Hymnal* was also a movement of the Hong Kong Association of Christian Music Ministry (ACM) initiated in the 1980s to promote the singing and composition of Christian music in local languages and contemporary styles, in contrast to the imported Chinese hymnody. Their songs, only in Cantonese, were intended to evangelize the Cantonese-speaking Chinese communities.
The Stream of Praise Music Ministries (SOP Music Ministries 贊美之泉音樂事工) also produced many Chinese Contemporary Christian songs, mostly in Mandarin, which are widely used in Chinese North American worship services, especially among Chinese youth.\(^4^9\) This material is contemporary praise and worship songs embracing both American and Chinese popular musical styles. Some resemble pop songs with syncopation, unusual melodic progressions, a low tessitura (range of melody), and several repeated notes. Most of them feature short, repetitive choruses, simple, memorable melodies and easily memorized phrases for congregational participation. Through their yearly world-wide tour their music has become very popular with many Chinese North American churches, especially those with an explicit vision of expanding their worship service through a more contemporary worship style. Examples of popular Mandarin Christian worship music include “Precious Cross” (寶貴十架), “Open Heaven” (將天敞開) and “The Path of Grace” (恩典之路).

Together, all of the above methods of interpretation provide useful tools for this present analysis of the primary sources in question—that is, the history and development of the worship music in the Cantonese Congregation of Richmond Hill Christian Community Church.

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\(^{4^9}\) The Stream of Praise Music Ministry, based in California, was formed to evangelize Chinese through contemporary Christian songs at concerts and worship seminars. Since 1995, the team has released several CDs and has traveled worldwide, including in the United States, Canada, Panama, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Malaysia (Stream of Praise Music Ministries, accessed Sept.7,2017. http://www.sop.org/home/home/asp). See also Hsieh, *A History of Chinese Christian Hymnody*, 191.
Chapter 4: Findings and Analysis

This chapter examines data to determine if there has been a paradigm shift in contextualization in the worship music of RHCCC. First, as a case study, a January 2018 experience of the worship music of Richmond Hill Christian Community church is presented. Then, different stages of RHCCC worship music are analyzed, including the musical style(s), musical repertoire, social organization, and concept of sound, including multilingual singing and its associated sociolinguistic identities. Lim’s paradigm, Chow’s contextualization of church music and Webber’s notion of blended worship are then used for purposes of comparison and analysis. Small’s musicking theory functions as an analytical tool for examining the effectiveness of the contextualization. Finally, the resulting paradigm shift is related to the RHCCC’s church growth and evangelism ministry.

Introduction

I have attended RHCCC since 1985 and have walked with my congregation through all the changes in the church from the beginning until now. I have witnessed not only the physical expansion and growth of the church, but also have experienced God’s guidance in making our church a church of the twenty-first century through contextualization. The shift in worship music is indeed one of the central features of the congregation’s transformation. An analysis of worship music in church bulletins from 1985 to 2018 reveals a number of findings that elucidate the shift in worship music at RHCCC.
An 8:45 a.m. Cantonese Worship Service

It is a January Sunday morning. As I drive into the parking lot at RHCCC, I see many traffic controllers directing cars and a few people shoveling and placing salt on the walkway. After parking my car and entering the church foyer at 8:30am, I am greeted and welcomed by a smiling, friendly deacon in a space with subdued lighting and a slight smell of coffee. I am led by the usher to sit in the middle section of the sanctuary as I requested, so I can view the whole stage area.

After the organ prelude, an opening prayer prepares the hearts of the congregation for worship. A forty-five person choir begins the worship by offering a celebratory song. Then a worship team of five vocalists—three men and two women—accompanied by guitar, bass,
synthesizer, piano and drums, join in to lead the congregation in worship for about fifteen to twenty minutes. As this worship music begins, everyone stares at a sixty-foot wide screen with lyrics, displayed on both the right and left sides of the sanctuary, with a beautifully designed background. The worship leader and singers invite everyone to sing praises to God.

The voices of the singers and the sounds of the musical instruments are amplified to fill the whole space of the sanctuary, and all the attention is focused on the actions and sounds on the stage. One can barely hear the voices of the other worshippers, sometimes not even one’s own voice. Every Sunday worship service, more than a thousand people—men and women—are singing, standing, sitting, praying and worshiping God in the sanctuary. Many worshippers sing along, even following the worship leaders in clapping and raising hands; a few of them quite emphatically follow the lyrics; but some also watch the event silently. There are always Chinese translations underneath the text of English worship songs, so that non-English speaking congregation members will be able to understand.

In the congregation, there are students, business people, teachers, artists, retirees, wealthy and poor, Canadian citizens and immigrants. Some are friends, some are acquaintances, and a few are strangers. They are all making music together to glorify God. Everyone is engaging with the music: the congregation, the worship leaders, and the singers on the stage; the ushers, the technical and AV volunteers, who are putting the lyrics on screen and adjusting the sound; even the greeters at the front and side doors. They are all participating in the worship service. An outline of the worship service can be seen in Table 4.1 below, with a full bulletin in Appendix 1.
## Table 4.1 Worship Program of RHCCC Cantonese Service January 2018 in (see bulletin, Appendix 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Structure</th>
<th>Worship Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organ Prelude</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call to Worship</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Choir presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture readings: 1 Samuel 16:1-13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The first two songs (very celebratory, praising songs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holy, Holy, Holy “聖哉三一” Sing in Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dance like David Danced Sing in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scripture reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The third song (a slower favorite), “耶和華為我預備” Sing in Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The ending song (inspiring, Thanksgiving) “寶架大能” (The power of the Cross) Sing in Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering</td>
<td>Offering song ”傾倒” Give you all a contemporary praise and worship song Sing in Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregational Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Word</td>
<td>“An anointed King David”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response songs</td>
<td>“Follow God’s Will” Hymn of Life #360 Sing in Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregational Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Praising ending song</td>
<td>“Dance like David Danced” Sing in English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Congregational Singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doxology (accompanied by organ)</td>
<td>三一頌 Sing in Cantonese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benediction</td>
<td>Congregational Singing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The current style of music worship can be understood as progressing through three stages of development. The leaders of the church saw the necessity for changing worship
music from a traditional style to a blended contemporary style, not only to attract newcomers, but more importantly, to renew and refresh the congregation’s worship experience. An interview with the worship pastor confirms that a worship team of three singers was formed around the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. At that time, they began by introducing only two praise and worship songs (in English or translated Chinese) into the worship service once a month. To the traditional accompaniment of piano, they added electric and bass guitars to enrich the sound and carry the rhythm of the songs. Since the congregation was mostly students and young families, there was little resistance to these additions of Praise and Worship music. After the move to Richmond Hill and the Phase I building expansion, the leadership wanted to further renew the worship music style towards more contemporary praise in keeping with the church’s stated vision to be a “Church for the Unchurched and the Committed.” The majority of the congregation continues to be made up of families: most members are middle class, have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, and have a middle to higher income.

In 2004, a worship pastor was hired to administer the liturgy and worship music for the church, including for Cantonese, Mandarin and English worship services. Subsequently, an English-speaking worship pastor was hired to facilitate the worship for the English congregation. Analysis of church bulletins, confirmed by conversation with the worship Pastor, shows that the development of worship music can be classified into three stages. Table 4.2 is an outline of the worship services of the Cantonese congregation in their three stages of development from 1985 to 2018 (see sample bulletins in Appendix 2), and is followed by an analysis based on Lim and Chow’s contextualization of church music.

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1 Table 4.2 is based on the primary sources of church bulletins for the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC from 1985 to 2018, as in Appendix 2.
Table 4:2 Three Stages of Worship in the RHCCC Cantonese Services, 1985-2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Traditional</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transitional</strong></td>
<td><strong>Blended</strong> (fourfold pattern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invocation Hymn</td>
<td>Call to worship hymn</td>
<td>Opening Prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td>Call to worship by Choir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Prayer</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>(twice monthly)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opening Hymn</td>
<td>Praise and worship 2-3 songs</td>
<td>Praise and worship 4-5 songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scripture Reading</td>
<td>Scripture reading</td>
<td>Intercession prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercession Prayer</td>
<td>Intercession prayer</td>
<td>Scripture reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering Hymn</td>
<td>Offering song (choir)</td>
<td>Offering song (congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song offering (choir)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sermon</td>
<td>Sermon</td>
<td>Word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response Hymn</td>
<td>Response Hymn</td>
<td>Sermon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>Announcements</td>
<td>Ending praise song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Welcome new comers</td>
<td></td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dismissal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Doxology 三一頌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Benediction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(congregational singing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Benediction song 頌主天天賜福</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Announcements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postlude (organ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathering</td>
<td>Prelude</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Stage 1 (1985-1994): Traditional

Since most of the congregation and the church leaders in this early stage of worship were Christian immigrants from Hong Kong and the southern part of China, the worship music in this period consisted mainly of translated and transplanted western traditional hymns. These hymns have been part of the Chinese church’s heritage for almost two centuries. ² It was mostly hymns from the hymnbook Hymns of Life that were used in their worship service and copies of this book are still in the pews of the church’s sanctuary. ³ The piano was the only instrument accompanying the congregation’s singing during this time. The most popular translated hymns were: “To God Be the Glory,” “Crown Him with Many Crowns,” “How Great Thou Art,” “Holy, Holy, Holy” and others. In addition, popular examples of translated western contemporary songs from the hymnbook are “Give Thanks” and “In Moments Like These.” This corresponds well to Lim’s emulation phase of church music contextualization—the A-A1 adoption song form where “A” are the western translated traditional hymns and “A1” are the translated western contemporary worship songs (see Appendix 3).

The music director’s task in this period was somewhat one-dimensional—to match music to the Scripture of the day or the pastor’s message, and to prepare a whole package of music including prelude, liturgical responses, hymn, choral anthems, solo and postlude. The choice of worship music was mainly from the traditional hymnbook. The worship style and structure of the service was clearly defined, as outlined in Table 4.2 above.

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³ Hymns of Life (生命聖詩), ed. Richard Ho (Hong Kong: China Alliance Press, 1986).

When the church moved from an urban to a suburban area it grew not only in physical space, but also in membership, as a result of the influx of Hong Kong immigrants. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the celebration committee decided to renew the Sunday service by embarking on a more vibrant worship style, incorporating music, drama, testimonials and practical preaching focused on real life circumstances, and using a combination of both old and new worship forms. The aim was for the style of the worship to more closely reflect the culture of the congregation. With this, celebration and worship became central to the ministry at RHCCC.

In this transitional stage the church faced challenges in the choice of the genre of worship songs, including contemporary songs and traditional hymns, and had to deal with the lack of training of its worship leaders and musicians. As a result, the church adopted a convergence music worship style, in which both translated praise and worship music and traditional hymns were sung next to each other in the regular worship service, thus allowing the congregation to become accustomed to a creative way of singing both traditional hymns and contemporary songs. The worship leader also integrated traditional hymn texts into the mixed repertoire and led the congregation to sing traditional hymn lyrics in a contemporary way. This approach was called “Old Song New Sing”—a new way to sing old hymns. Guitars, synthesizer and piano were used frequently during this time. This corresponds with Lim’s second phase of church music contextualization, “juxtaposition,” with an A1-B song form of “adaptation.” Again, “A1” is the translated western contemporary songs and “B” is the praise worship songs composed in their own language by the local people of the community, with the support of western harmony and instrumentation. Examples are “Sound
of Praise” (頌讚主之聲), “Heart Song” (心曲)” and “Offering Today” (獻上今天) (see Appendix 4).

In order for the church to refresh its worship style towards this new form, the worship pastor developed a worship training manual and conducted a training course for those who were willing to be part of leading worship in 2005. This course was not only aimed at equipping worship leaders with leadership skills, but also at strengthening their spiritual growth, enriching their personal relationship with God and the church, and therein enhancing the kind of worship evangelism that leads to church growth.\(^4\)

During this stage, leaders realized that there were often some awkward textual and musical results due to the synchronization of Cantonese dialects. Worship leaders began to look for songs composed by Cantonese Christian composers from Hong Kong and other similar music ministries. This conforms with Chow’s comment on musical aesthetics insofar as it has to do with attention to the union of music and a particular linguistic dialectics.

**Stage 3 (2005-2018): Blended**

The worship music of this blended stage integrates translated traditional hymns, translated contemporary songs, Cantonese contemporary songs and Mandarin contemporary songs composed by Cantonese and Mandarin Christian composers from Canada, the United States, Hong Kong, China and Taiwan. In addition, some songs are composed by musicians or composers from within RHCCC church and its sister churches. Almost all the songs—including the translated hymns in contemporary form—are supported with western musical

style accompaniment of drums, synthesizers and guitars. Examples are “Emmanuel,” “Worry Free (一無掛慮) and “The Path of Grace” (恩典之路) (see Appendix 5).

In order to encourage the new composition of contemporary Christian congregational songs in Canada, RHCCC and its sister churches, which belong to the Association of Chinese Evangelical Ministries, Canada (ACEM), have organized annual Contemporary Chinese Christian Song Writing Competitions. The composition can be in either Cantonese or Mandarin. The worship leader sometimes uses the winning songs in the Sunday worship service. This corresponds to Lim’s third phase of contextualization, “innovation.”

One feature is notable in the case of RHCCC Cantonese worship music: not only is the worship music sung in Cantonese and Mandarin, but occasionally English Christian songs are also part of the congregation’s regular worship. Popular English songs are “Above All,” “Majesty” (敬拜主) and “Shine Jesus, Shine.” Meanwhile, most of the Mandarin Christian songs are written and originally recorded by a group from the Stream of Praise Music ministry (讚美之泉), while some also come from mainland China or other global Mandarin-speaking Chinese Christian communities (see Appendix 6).

The worship music of this stage has a distinctive feature in that it is all accompanied by a live music band similar to the line-up of typical pop music bands. The emphases is on live performance and audience participation, borrowing stylistic elements from various types of popular music. The instrumentation includes piano, bass guitar, electric guitar, synthesizer (for different sounds such as trumpet, orchestral strings, brass, flute, etc.) and drums. The worship pastor encourages dedicated worship leaders to plan and prepare the worship services in such a way as to feed the spiritual hunger of the congregation while providing

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5 Stream of Praise Music Ministry (讚美之泉), sometimes abbreviated SOP.
solid teaching about God. He promotes a more participatory and multi-sensory style of worship to engage the whole congregation.

In addition, some contemporary songs are composed by RHCCC musicians for special events, for example: a theme song “Mission Journey” (使命旅程) by Larry Hung was composed for a 2008 congregational campaign; “40 Days of Prayer” (願你的國降臨) was written by another musician for the “40 Days to a Powerful Prayer Life” congregational campaign in 2018 (see Appendix 7). Composed for the needs of particular events, these songs also reflect the cultural and the spiritual identity of the congregation at that particular stage.

This practice corresponds to Lim’s B1 type in the innovative phase of church music contextualization—songs that not only express and reflect the congregation’s cultural identity, but also its spiritual life and status. The contextual song form, A-B-B1 is evident here, where “A” is the translated hymn, “B” is contemporary song composed by Chinese Christian composers and “B1” is original song composed by local musicians reflecting their cultural identity. In addition to those already mentioned, RHCCC musicians have also composed song such as “Neighbors” (天涯自比鄰) in 2005 (see Appendix 7).

Changes in the socio-cultural context of RHCCC also correspond to changes in the three stages of worship music. Table 4.3 below outlines how changes in socio-cultural context conform to changes in worship music contextualization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students, young families</td>
<td>Young professionals, young immigrant families</td>
<td>Professionals, families, retirees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic standing/ Education</td>
<td>Middle income/educated</td>
<td>Middle income/educated</td>
<td>Middle income/educated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflected identity</td>
<td>Chinese identity</td>
<td>Beginning Canadian identity with Chinese culture</td>
<td>Well-developed Canadian identity but also retaining their Chinese culture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The socio-cultural trajectory of RHCCC has shifted from an immigrant-influenced local cultural context to one that is more global as the church has deepened and developed its Canadian identity of multiculturalism, while nevertheless retaining its own Chinese culture. This can also be seen in the congregation’s acceptance of styles of worship music—from the use of heritage musical instruments (piano alone) to modern musical instruments (guitars, drums, synthesizers) and even new forms of communication (drama, video interviews) in the church worship service. This corresponds to Lim and Chow’s findings that socio-cultural context plays a significant role in church music contextualization. As Webber once stated, “[T]here is no one style of worship that is suitable for all people always and everywhere. It will differ according to time and place relative to the changing patterns of culture.”

Since there has been no change in the leadership of RHCCC for the past thirty-three years, the theological stance of the church has remained the same. This includes the interpretative use of scripture, tradition, and history according to the interpretation and experience of the senior pastor. Pastor Sam grew up with a traditional church background and family, was educated in a Canadian University and North American Seminary, and remains open to new and contemporary approaches to worship. He plays an important role in the oversight of worship and understands the ultimate purpose of his ministry to be that of

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leading the congregation to experience the presence of God through meaningful and relevant worship. However, it was under the specific leadership of the worship pastor, Calvin, that the church worship committee decided to follow Webber’s blended worship approach in worship renewal. Pastor Calvin’s particular conviction was that the content of the gospel remains the same despite changes in the structure and style of the worship service.

**Webber’s Blended Worship**

According to Webber, worship is a celebration of God’s plan of salvation through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It tells the story of God’s victory over the power of the devil through Jesus Christ. Worship is the response of praise and thanksgiving of the people through their inspiration and transformation by the Holy Spirit.\(^7\)

Webber suggests fourteen signs of worship that point to the need for worship renewal, and also provide some objective and subjective characteristics of renewed worship that correlate with the desired results (see Appendix 8).\(^8\) An analysis of church bulletins and the Senior Pastor’s inspiration for worship renewal are a few signs that the renewal of worship at RHCCC was needed at the end of the first stage of expansion and development (1985-1994). For example, worship music in the service had become very routine. Four traditional hymns had been sung in the service for many years: the Invocation hymn, Opening/adoration hymn, Offering hymn, and Response hymn (in addition to a Doxology). The congregation remained largely in a passive, listening and receiving mode. All the sung hymns were translated from the hymnal *Hymns of Life* (e.g., “Holy, Holy, Holy” [聖哉三一] and “Blessed Assurance”...
Often, the singing lacked enthusiasm and a spirit of joy. The range of music was limited. The worship music only involved one worship leader and piano was the only accompaniment.

When the church moved to the Richmond Hill location, these signs of a need for worship renewal prompted the church leadership to refresh the worship music to reflect a more contemporary Chinese Canadian church culture. The new worship style not only involved contemporary English praise and worship songs set to western music (e.g. “Lord, I Lift your Name on High,” “Song for the Nation” and “People Need the Lord”), but the church also explored more Cantonese contemporary Christians songs such as “Give Us Vision” (新的異像，新的方向) to reflect the culture of the church (see Appendix 9). This corresponds to Webber’s characteristics of renewed worship that feature “the use of a wide range of music drawn from the history of the church and from various contemporary cultures.”

By the end of 1994, three to four Cantonese contemporary Christian songs were sung in the worship service, beginning with once or twice a month, then weekly, indicative of Stage II (1995-2004) of the worship renewal at RHCCC. With the influx of Hong Kong immigrants to Toronto and the surrounding area in the early twenty-first century, the congregation grew rapidly, and consisted of Christians from different denominations. The church expanded its offering of more worship services to accommodate this increase and more worship leaders were needed to cover all worship services. As noted earlier, a Worship Pastor was hired to look after the celebration ministry, including everything related to worship—e.g., traffic controllers, ushers, AV technicians, choirs, worship teams, worship

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programs. In order to enhance the growth of the church, make the most use of the new facilities (including the incorporation of new technology in the sanctuary) and to resolve the struggle between the use of contemporary songs and traditional hymns, a training project and related manual were developed by the Worship Pastor in order to train more “purpose driven” worship leaders for RHCCC.\textsuperscript{10} The training is mandatory for all those who want to serve in the celebration worship ministry. The goals of worship renewal within this training were and remain: a) to strengthen the spiritual growth of worship leaders; b) to improve their personal relationship with God and the church community; c) to understand the vision and direction of the church; d) to equip the worship leaders with leadership skills and enable them to find their serving gifts; and e) to enhance worship evangelism that will lead to church growth. These objectives support Webber’s related goal for renewing worship: “Heightened communication skills in both preaching and leading of worship.”\textsuperscript{11}

In the face of a struggle and “worship war” between contemporary and traditional music, the celebration ministry at RHCCC adopted Webber’s blended worship approach to integrating traditional and contemporary music. As a result of a special donation, an organ was purchased and trained organists appeared from within the congregation who were willing to serve. The worship music was enriched by an organ prelude and postlude at each service. As a result, the worship songs in Stage 3 (2005-2018) are richer in sound with the addition of organ, synthesizers, guitars, piano and drums. Furthermore, the selection of worship songs includes a mixture of traditional hymns, contemporary folk hymns, contemporary Cantonese and Mandarin songs, and a medley of all genres with the support of western accompaniment

\textsuperscript{10} Calvin Lam, \textit{A Training Manual for Purpose Driven Worship Leaders at Richmond Hill Chinese Community Church}, 2006.

(e.g., “Medley of Praise” and “Praise the Lord /Jesus Shall Reign”; see Appendix 10). The Stage 3 expression of Webber’s blended worship at RHCCC is a hybrid model combining blended evangelistic worship with a teaching sermon. According to Pastor Calvin, it seems best suited to the congregation. It also follows the shape of liturgical renewal “in the direction of recovering a worship characterized by biblical content and the fourfold structure of gathering together, hearing the Word, responding with thanksgiving, and being commissioned forth into the world.” Furthermore, the revolution of worship music in Stage 3 is continuing to move forward as musicians are encouraged to compose original songs to be incorporated in the church’s worship and programming (e.g., the 40 Days of Prayer theme song “願你的國降臨;” see Appendix 7). The celebration committee continues to work closely with the worship teams and choir ministry in worship music to create an atmosphere of celebration for this Chinese Canadian congregation.

Small’s Theory of Musicking and the Effectiveness of Contextualization

LaMar Boschman, author of Future Worship, has found that in most worship renewal situations, the congregation must be actively involved in the worship process. He uses theatre terminology to show that God should be the ultimate audience in worship. This concept can be traced to Danish theologian, Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855). The pastors and worship leaders are the directors or stage managers. The singers, the worship team, the instrumentalists, the AV helpers, the ushers, the choir and the congregation are the performers in that they are the human players in worship. They all participate in celebrating

and worshipping the Lord. Too often the directors and stage managers become the main contributors, playing all the major roles, and the people end up feeling as if they are the audience. The unintended and unfortunate result is that the people become simply the spectators.

During the process of worship renewal at RHCCC, the training course, “Make Me a Blessing: Living a Purpose Driven Worship Life,” gave worship leaders new insight, not only into the historical development of worship in the Bible, but also how to stimulate the participation of people in the active worship of God.\(^{13}\) Swee Hong Lim notes the following about congregational participation: “In the North American context, the participation concept is often perceived through a cultural lens that sees active participation as visible and at times exuberant expressions such as lifting hands, or other outwardly physical acts.”\(^{14}\) However, Lim disagrees with this concept of participation and notes that reverent silence is also a valid form participation in keeping with the concept of “full conscious and active participation” in the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (Sacro sanctum Concilium): “The people should be encouraged to take part by means of acclamations, responses, psalmody, antiphons, and songs, as well as by actions, gestures, and bodily attitudes. And at the proper times all should observe a reverent silence.”\(^{15}\) Lim’s concept of participation is to be “attentively present and engaged in the liturgy - being purposefully and corporately present.”\(^{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) Lim, Lex Orandi, Lex Vivendi et Via Media: Revitalizing Worship in Our Context, 5.
Lim’s approach emphasizes the primacy of participation and the fact that the experience can be expressed overtly or in more subtle ways. As noted in chapter 3, Small’s notion of music as “musicking,” is about relationship, experience and participation. Musicking (making music), as a participatory social activity, is applicable to all musical traditions and cultures. Participation in musicking involves emotion and creates a relationship with those involved and those around us.

In Stage 1 (1985-1994) of RHCCC, the worship service followed a traditional missionary heritage worship style. The service often had one song presented by the choir and a few other congregational songs in segments sandwiched around the welcome, prayers, Bible reading, sermon and announcements. The congregation sat in a quietly listening mood. Not everybody participated in singing, but they all participated in listening to God’s Word and in the atmosphere of worship.

In Stage 2 (1995-2003) of RHCCC, a group of praise team members was formed to lead the congregation in singing a few praise and worship songs in place of one hymn after the intercessory prayer. The congregation started to participate more in singing through the invitation of the praise team worship leader. Since the praise songs were in a more colloquial language with Cantopop style—the popular musical style of the time—with a simple, memorable melody, more people began to engage in singing in worship. Many praise and worship songs were selected from the *Come and Sing* hymnals, translated western Praise and Worship songs and contemporary hymns based on traditional western hymns (Old Hymn,

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17 Cantopop style or Cantonese popular musical style, 語流行音樂, is a version of western pop sung in the Cantonese language. Songs tend to be sweeping love ballads with Cantonese cultural content.
New Sing, 舊詩新唱) in terms of words and rhythm.\textsuperscript{18} For example, “The Lily of the Valley” (谷中百合花) has the same traditional melody with different lyrics (see Appendix 11).

At the beginning of Stage 3 (2004-2018), the congregation not only participated in singing the Praise and Worship songs, but they began to participate by raising their hands and with rhythmic clapping at the invitation of the worship leader. For example, in his community-based case study of the music culture of RHCCC from 2006 to 2011, Eric Chong observed the congregation’s participation in one song with the lyrics, “Let us open our mouths, raise our hands, to praise the Lord of everlasting life” (see Appendix 12). The worship leader not only asked the congregation to stand up and sing, but the singers on stage also put up their hands when they sang “raise our hands.” A few congregational members put their hands up and sang, but many chose to clap—a more conservative movement—in either case, to engage and participate in the heightened mood.\textsuperscript{19}

To encourage participation, Sam, the Senior Pastor, sometimes asks the congregation to participate in call and response. When he says “Hallelujah,” the congregation responds with “Amen,” and vice versa. Calvin, the Worship Pastor, similarly teaches the congregation to understand worship according to Isaiah 6 (see Appendix 13). He uses simple words with hand movements to guide the congregation to express their love and adoration to the Lord as follows: 1) reach up to God, by lifting both hands towards the sky; 2) reach in to self, by putting both hands close to the heart; and 3) reach out to the world, by stretching both hands

\textsuperscript{18} “Old Hymns New Sing 舊詩新唱” is a movement of “The Channel” in 1996. The Channel is a Christian band established in 1975, based in Toronto, with seven male musicians as of 2018. One of the members, Jones Chiu, has written many Cantonese Praise and Worship songs, retranslated the text, and refreshed the rhythm of the traditional hymns into contemporary style.

\textsuperscript{19} Eric Chong, \textit{More than Praises: Cantonese Christian Worship Music and Hong Kong Immigrants in the Greater Toronto Area} (MA Diss., York University, Toronto, Ontario, 2011), 48.
As of 2018, the congregational participation level is continuously rising as the congregants grow accustomed to expressing themselves physically and emotionally in response to God’s blessing. Cupped hands for communion, to receive wine and bread, outstretched or raised hands to receive blessings, and rhythmic clapping can now be seen in every service.

Overall, the worship leaders are without doubt the catalyst for the growth in more diverse forms of participation, insofar as they not only teach but model it. Expression through participation is contagious; by modelling more often, gradual emulation of participation takes place. Timely encouragement is given to facilitate participation. Clapping and lifting hands for expressive purposes is intentionally planned, sometimes at the beginning, and sometimes during or at the end of the song. At RHCCC it is understood that one of the responsibilities of the Worship Leader is to lead the congregation to experience and participate in the worship of the one, true God, in spirit and in truth (John 4:23).

I am reminded again that, according to Small, musicking is a verb. At RHCCC participation is an increasingly active way of showing full engagement with God, a response that demonstrates praise and thanks to Him for what he has done on our behalf.

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21 John 4:23, “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks” (NIV).
In accord with Small’s emphasis on the importance of participation, the paradigm shift from traditional to contextualized worship is evident in the increased participation.

Worship Music, Church Growth and Evangelism

It is more important to use music that unchurched people understand and are interested in in order to spread the Gospel than it is to teach people to appreciate “good”
music. A new church should design worship so it is sensitive to the needs of the unchurched.\textsuperscript{22}

In this chapter, I have identified the content and dynamics of a paradigm shift in worship music, from traditional to transitional and then to blended worship. The result not only encourages genuine worship by the congregation through the use of their native language, and active and interactive participation during the musical portions of the church service, but also has been one of the key elements in the increased level of participation in worship services, church growth and successful evangelism.

Pastor Sam has reported that his first encounter with the contemporary song “I Love You, Lord” was in Ohio in 1986. In 1987 he was encouraged to attend the Vineyard church during his study at Fuller Seminary in California. During this visit, he was inspired by John Wimber, the founding leader of the Vineyard churches, and his teaching on church growth and worship music. Wimber not only focuses on theology, but also on the experience and feeling of worship. His treatment of worship music is to modify the words of a song and incorporate a rock-n-roll musical style to promote emotional expression in worship. Rock-n-roll music was the popular music of the time and the Vineyard churches have been at the forefront of spreading rock music in worship in the churches of the world.\textsuperscript{23} Pastor Sam was inspired to bring the rock songs, “You are the Vine and We are the Branches,” “Change My Heart, O God,” and “Majesty” back to his own church and form a worship team there.


\textsuperscript{23} John Wimber (1934-1997), the founding director of the department of Church Growth at Fuller Theological Seminary in California, taught courses such as “Signs, Wonders, and Church Growth” at Fuller in the early 1980s. Vineyard USA, “John Wimber: Leaving a Legacy in the 21st Century Church-still Felt Round the World,” accessed October 14, 2017, www.vineyardchurches.org.uk/about/john-wimber
notes that RHCCC was the first Chinese Protestant church in Toronto to introduce rock or other contemporary songs into a traditional worship service.

Since the identification of the vision of RHCCC—to serve both the churched and unchurched—was set in its early years, the strategy of reaching out and meeting the needs of unbelievers or unchurched Christians has been intentional. Pastor Sam believes that the size of the congregation should be determined by the number of unchurched in our community, and the culture of the unchurched should determine the style of the church ministry. This new perspective includes reaching out to the unchurched and exploring their culture, lifestyle and interests. His strategy has resulted in the gradual incorporation of contemporary worship music into the worship service.

Pastor Sam was also influenced by Warren’s approach to music and worship: “Create a service that is intentionally designed for your members to bring their friends to. Make the service so attractive, appealing, and relevant to the unchurched that your members are eager to share it with the lost people they care about.”24 For the past fifteen years, the RHCCC worship ministry has been striving to present a celebratory and appealing worship to accommodate both the churched and the unchurched. Warren agrees with Wimber that the worship music and message delivery should be related strongly to people’s culture or subculture.25 Inspired by the Vineyard’s worship music model, Sam realized that using the local Chinese culture of folk music or soft rock music with guitars as an accompaniment in church helps people see the church as relevant and makes the unchurched feel more comfortable.

Moreover, in The Purpose Driven Church, Warren’s strategies of church growth are to grow

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stronger through worship and larger through evangelism. Warren further notes that in order to grow a church he would focus on a first-class music ministry.\textsuperscript{26} Influenced by Warren, Sam hired a worship pastor to take care of all aspects of the music ministry.

In \textit{Ancient-Future Faith: Rethinking Evangelicalism for a Postmodern World}, Webber challenges church leaders and experts on church growth to re-evaluate matters concerning all areas of worship. He affirms that there is a “need to break out of our conventional ways” of doing ministry and adapt cultural accommodation for evangelism.\textsuperscript{27} Richmond Hill Christian Community Church has been renewing its music to accommodate the interests and needs of its people, as seen in the paradigm shift of worship music from traditional to Cantopop worship songs, to the inclusion of original songs in the congregation’s native language. According to Pastor Sam, the contextualization of worship music is one of reasons for RHCCC’s growth and successful evangelism, as reflected in the attendance chart in Appendix 14.

Jeffrey Patton states that “music is a vital and communicative bridge to the unchurched in worship; however, it is also a fundamental bridge in worship to our very creator.”\textsuperscript{28} For this reason, the paradigm shift in worship music at RHCCC is best seen as both a practical and faith strategy.

Arguably, the continuing question in thriving churches of contemporary worship and music remains the impact on the lives of believers, and the same could be said of “traditional” contexts as well. Shall we assess faithfulness and integrity on the basis of

\textsuperscript{26} Warren, \textit{The Purpose Driven Church}, 295.

\textsuperscript{27} Robert Webber, \textit{Ancient-Future Evangelism: Making Your Church a Faith-Forming Community} (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2003), 165.

attendance, more visible forms of participation and support alone? Other qualitative or quantitative indicators of impacts could be examined such as sociological impact, community engagement, social transformation, political activism, cultural contribution, interfaith harmony. “Success” remains at a debatable category.
Chapter 5: Conclusions, Implications and Future Research

Conclusions

This thesis has examined the evolution and development of worship music at Richmond Hill Christian Community Church’s Cantonese congregation. The church is a non-denominational Chinese Protestant church that experienced a high rate of growth between 1985 and 2018 and is now considered a megachurch. This growth has taken place in tandem with changes in worship, specifically the worship music.

To examine this change, primary sources consisting of church bulletins from 1985 until 2018, anniversary booklets, church monthly newsletters and journals, and a worship leadership training manual were analyzed, with confirmation through informal conversation with key worship staff of the congregation. The results of this analysis were viewed in light of Lim’s framework for the contextualization of congregational songs in Asia, Chow’s work on the contextualization of congregational songs in the United States, Small’s understanding of musicking, Webber’s approach to blended worship, and Hsieh’s categorization of hymnology and worship music.

The changes in worship music at RHCCC fit well into Lim’s framework of contextualization. The developments can be helpfully viewed as progressing through three stages: traditional, transitional and blended, corresponding to Lim’s stages of emulation, juxtaposition and innovation. Both Lim and Chow highlight the importance of socio-cultural change in the contextualization of worship music. In RHCCC, the changes in socio-cultural context similarly correspond to the three stages of contextualization of worship music.
Worship music in the Cantonese congregation of RHCCC has undergone a major renewal from 1985 to 2018. The worship music has moved from a traditional form through a transitional phase to arrive at a unique style of blended worship fitting the cultural context. This paradigm shift not only reflects the importance of contextualization and performative music-making, but has also been a major factor—indeed, perhaps the cause—of the resulting church growth and successful evangelism. Small’s musicking theory suggests the effectiveness of this paradigm shift. Participation is a key element in music-making, and a significant force in worship renewal. At RHCCC both active and interactive participation in worship practices have greatly increased.

A related purpose of this thesis has been to note and analyze the musical style of the worship music used in the Cantonese congregation at RHCCC over the same time period from 1985 to 2018. Hsieh’s categorization of Chinese Christian hymnody describes well most of the music used at RHCCC: translated traditional hymns, translated contemporary Christian songs and contemporary Christians songs (composed by local musicians in their native language).

Together these analytical and interpretive approaches helped to name and describe the paradigm shift from traditionalism to contextualization in the worship music of the Cantonese Congregation of RHCCC, the largest Chinese Protestant Church in North America.

**Implications**

There are at least four implications resulting from this study. First, it begins to fill a research gap in the study of worship music in Chinese Protestant Churches in Canada by presenting a case study of the largest Chinese Protestant Church in North America. Second, it helps lay some of the groundwork for the future study of Chinese Protestant Church worship
music in Canada by suggesting appropriate methods for study and analysis. Third, it sparks a potential dialogue on methods for church growth and evangelism by placing the academic study of worship music at the center of the discussion. Clearly, the paradigm shift in worship music at RHCCC plays an important role in church growth. Finally, it offers a study of Chinese Protestant worship for consideration by other Chinese churches, as well as for churches from other cultures and denominations. All four implications are offered not only for this study, but for the benefit of future research.

**Future Research**

There is a wide range of related topics for future research. In closing, I offer five for consideration. First, it would be interesting to investigate other Chinese Protestant Christian Churches in Toronto for evidence of contextualization in their worship music. Indeed, this study could extend to a wider geographical area, including all of Canada, as well as to other denominations, or other ethnic groups. A second possibility would be to compare the music of churches with no or low growth to the music of those with high growth, and to further investigate the relationship between music and church growth—e.g., to what extent does contextualization play a role and to what extent do social and demographic factors such as immigration and settlement patterns affect growth?

A third would be to conduct a deeper, more critical and value laden theological reflection of the effects of contextualization on congregational worship life. This could include an ethnographical study of a congregation or congregations, their worship teams, musicians, ministers and members, in order to explore their experiences and responses to the changes in worship music. How do they experience the contextualization of worship music?
A fourth would be to consider whether knowledge of contextualization can help musicians and worship leaders know and appreciate the implications of this kind of evolutionary and developmental model of worship music? How might they plan worship more intentionally and sensitively as a result of this knowledge and insight into what is going on. In other words, can this descriptive work lead to prescriptive planning? It would be worth considering what is at stake theologically or educationally on the level of Christian formation.

Finally, future research could also extend the study of the contextualization of church music to other forms, such as instrumental, choral and liturgical music. Much remains to be done to understand the forms, content and implications of our praise of God in worship.
Appendices
Appendix 1: Cantonese Worship Program  Jan. 20/21, 2018

城北華人基督教會
粵語崇拜

1月20日 1月21日
5:00PM 8:45AM | 11:00AM
週六崇拜程序

宣召敬拜
Grace Alone (主日獻詩)
聖哉三一
Dance Like David Danced
耶和華為我預備，寶架大能

奉獻
唱詩：頹倒

證道
大衛被膏為王
撒母耳記上16:1-13
鲍維均博士

回應詩
願遵主旨意
祈禱

結束讚美
Dance Like David Danced
祝福
三一頌

報告

附：城北華人基督教會

地址: 9670 Bayview Ave
Richmond Hill, ON
L4C 8X9
電話: 905-884-3399
傳真: 905-884-3465
網站: www.hgcc.ca
電郵: c.conned@rhcc.ca
Appendix 1: An Original Song

傾倒
(Give You All)

曲詞：張恩言 Celine Cheung
譯詞：劉素鳴
Last modified: October 23, 2017

Copyright 2015 Stream of Praise Music / BMI. CCLI #2351995
Appendix 2: Sample of Church Bulletins

Stage 1: Jan. 5, 1986; Oct. 8, 1989
March 4, 1990

73

Dec. 18, 1994
午堂主日崇拜程序

1997.11.23 11:15 am

1. 序商：常有心
2. 唱诗：主啊，我仰望你
3. 讲道：讓祢的名
4. 欢唱：主啊，我们感谢你
5. 代祷：没有做不到的事


c

5. 代祷：没有做不到的事

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下主日

星期日主日崇拜程序

2006.11.10

-- 主日崇拜

敬拜赞美：

1. 跟唱：主啊，我仰望你
2. 唱诗：主啊，我们感谢你
3. 讲道：讓祢的名
4. 欢唱：主啊，我们感谢你

代祷：没有做不到的事

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下主日

星期日主日崇拜程序

2005.12.04

-- 主日崇拜

敬拜赞美：

1. 跟唱：主啊，我仰望你
2. 唱诗：主啊，我们感谢你
3. 讲道：讓祢的名
4. 欢唱：主啊，我们感谢你

代祷：没有做不到的事

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1. 序商：常有心
2. 唱诗：主啊，我仰望你
3. 讲道：讓祢的名
4. 欢唱：主啊，我们感谢你
5. 代祷：没有做不到的事

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下主日

Stage 2: Nov. 11, 1997; Stage 3: Nov. 5, 2006 / Dec. 4, 2005
Appendix 3: Worship Songs in Stage 1  
a) Translated Hymns

1. Crown Him with Many Crowns
2. Holy, Holy, Holy

[Sheet music images]
Worship Songs in Stage 1  b) Translated Contemporary Songs
Appendix 4: Cantonese Worship Songs in Stage 2
AB/Scripture/AB/B/B2 (A cappella)/Coda x3
“composed by one of RHCCC musicians ”
F / A
Gm7 C7 F C7 Chorus

鍾聲美，普天之下來作見證！頌讚

F Dm7 Bb

主之聲，遍地極，榮耀主名，以

C Am7

愛故遠，願呈奉身心，主恩

Dm7 Gm7 C C7

光帶領，打開心靈去應答！頌讚

Gm7 C7 F Gm7 C7 F F9 Gm7

心靈去和應！心靈去和應！打開心靈

C7 F Bm F C#97 F

去和應！
Appendix 5: Cantonese Worship Songs in Stage 3

Emmanuel
Song Composed in Chinese with English Translation
Appendix 6: Worship Song in Stage 3 (Translated Contemporary Song-
Sung in English and Cantonese)
Appendix 7: Cantonese Worship Songs Composed for Special Church Events
Composed by Pastor Jon Chu
English translation of lyrics:

(A1) Emboldened by the stability, the goal is to become inseparable from the Lord.

(A2) The Lord's hand will lead us right through the process.

(B1) Go forward together, make every effort living free in the identity of being the Lord's child.

(B2) Go forward, ask for the Lord's companionship; fear not hardship, apprehension, and hatred.

Though this journey is long, God is looking after us; the kingdom of heaven is near. Follow the Lord's guidance moment by moment.

Figure 4.1: Lead sheet of "Mission Journey". Used by permission.

The first line of text below staff is the lyrics in Chinese characters.

The second line of text below staff is the transcription of the sound of "mi" characters.

Figure 4.2: Manuscript of backing vocal arrangement for "Mission Journey". Used by permission.
Appendix 8

Webber's Signs of a Worship in Need of Renewal and Signs of a Renewing Worship

The fourteen signs listed below are symptomatic of an apathetic worship ad a passive congregation.

1. The congregation is passive and lacking in enthusiasm and a spirit of joy.
2. Visitors do not feel welcome or drawn into the community and its worship
3. Worship is cerebral and oriented almost exclusively toward teaching
4. Worship is evangelistic an oriented almost exclusively toward conversion.
5. Communication skills in preaching and leading worship are weak.
6. Sermons tend to be long, didactic and lacking in application
7. Communion is celebrated infrequently and when celebrated seems to be tacked on to the end of the service, often bearing the characteristic of a funeral.
8. People sit in a typical classroom formation with the back of another person’s head as a major object of sight.
9. Singing lacks life, and the range of music is limited
10. There is no sense in which the order of worship moves the congregation in a pattern that rehearses their faith and thus establishes, maintains, or repairs a relationship with God.
11. The Christian year is not practiced, or if it is practiced it is not characterized by a sense of its gospel nature or used effectively as a means of ordering congregational spirituality.
12. The use of arts is shunned except on special occasions such as Christmas or Easter
13. The people are not involved in responses, antiphons, prayer, ministry to each other, or the passing of the peace
14. The senses are not adequately engaged in touch, smell, sight or hearing.

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Signs of Renewing Worship

The objective and subjective characteristics of a renewed worship, as well as the results, are clearly discernible. The following list details these features.

A. Objective Characteristic

1. Restoration of a Christ-centered focus (worship celebrates the living, dying and rising of Christ in which the powers of evil are overthrown, a sacrifice for sin is made, and an example for living is set forth.
2. Characterized by a good balance of order and freedom
3. Rediscovery of Christ’s active presence in both Word and Table
4. Appropriation of the arts as servants of the text
5. Use of. A wide range of music drawn from the history of the church and from various contemporary cultures
6. Heightened communication skills in both preaching and leading of worship
7. A space for worship that works for the participation of all the people
8. A worship that is intergenerational
9. A worship characterized by intimacy ad pageantry
10. A warm and hospitable environment
11. Rediscovery of the evangelical nature of the church year

B. Subjective Characteristics

12. Aliveness of the people through active participation
13. An experience of joy, celebration, love, victory and peace
14. A rehearsal of one’s relationship to God
15. The engagement of the whole person- mind, heart, will body, and senses
16. The experience of spontaneity
17. A feeling of personal involvement and corporate relatedness

C. Results

18. The ministry of people to one another in worship
19. A growing concern and commitment to evangelism and social outreach
20. A heightened spirituality, both personal and corporate
21. The experience of Christian community
Appendix 9: Cantonese Contemporary Worship Songs

新的異象，新的方向
Give Us Vision

English Translation: SOP, Tina Wu

Intro

Verse

There's a

Chorus

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譜美之家版權所有

（新的異象將要成就）
Medley: “Praise the Lord/Jesus Shall Reign”
Medley of Praise: Hallelujah/Praise the Lord
Appendix 11: “Old Hymn New Sing”
Appendix 12: Song to Encourage Congregational Participation

Action!
Lift up your hand and praise the Lord
The Dimension of Worship

From the study of Isaiah 6:1-8, three-fold vision is seen in the understanding of worship from Isaiah. They are: 1) a vision of God, 2) a vision of self and 3) a vision of the Lost which could be stated as reach up to God, reach in to self and reach out to the world.

1) Reach up to God (Leitourgia) A Vision of God-by lifting both hands stretching upward
   This is a vertical aspect of worship. It is an opportunities to confess sins, open our hearts to the Lord and receive cleansing and feel the presence of God.

2) Reach in to Self (Kerygma) A Vision of Self- by placing both hands toward our heart
   This is an inward aspect of worship. This is a time to reach and reinforce spiritual truth according to Colossian 3:16, a time of release into an inhibited expression of praise and worship and a birthing of a heart for holiness within the individual.

3) Reach out to the world (Koinonia) A vision of Lost- by stretching both hands forwards
   This is the horizontal aspect of worship. It is a time to enhance the believers unity, an opportunity to profess their faith before others and serve a declaration of the glory of God before unbelievers. As the congregation lift their voices singing praise and adoration to the Lord, their faith will be strengthened in witness to the unbelievers.

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1 Lam, Calvin. *A Training Manual for Purpose Driven Worship Leaders at RHCCC.* 2006, 91-92
Appendix 14: Attendance

Average Sunday Service Attendance (1985-2010)
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