

ABC Pastor Discouragement and Dropout:
A Study Based on the Responses of 64 Pastors

Justin Der
Stanford University
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AUTHOR'S NOTE:

I began this study in the summer of 1998 after my sophomore year at Stanford University. I chose the topic in response to a concern I heard expressed by several pastors regarding why so many ABC pastors were felt to be dropping out of ministry. Many pastors and laypeople were gracious in supporting my efforts by generously contributing their time and thoughts in a lengthy survey and interviews as well as personal advice.

It was challenging to assess and synthesize the abundance of information I had received. The desire to pass on a maximum amount of insights, aspirations to present a work of high quality, and the absence of an enforced deadline stretched this project for far too long.

At last I am presenting the findings of my research as promised. I have chosen to retain as many quotes from pastors in the surveys as was practical in the appendices, as I feel that these are the strongest contribution of this study. It is my hope that this work might be a source of some help for struggling ABC pastors and the ABCs whom they serve.

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INTRODUCTION

The shortage of American-born Chinese (ABC) pastors is a subject of concern for leaders of the American Chinese church. Pastors and lay leaders in these Chinese churches are alarmed by the number of ABC pastors they see around them who are leaving ministry in the Chinese church in a time when they are crucially needed.

BACKGROUND ON THE CHINESE CHURCH

Of the 644+ Chinese churches in America, 41% are Non-Denominational and 23% are Baptist. The remainder are Missionary Alliance, Presbyterian, Lutheran, Methodist, Evangelical Formosan Church, and others. Some churches have separate English and Chinese services, while others have a single translated service. But the characteristic that primarily distinguishes the Chinese church in America is the biculturalism that exists in even the churches with the smallest congregations.

Most Chinese churches in America are still immigrant churches, essentially transplants from Asia. They are very traditional in culture and language, and the congregation, leadership, and pastors are mainly OBCs, overseas-born Chinese. While these Chinese churches allow parents and children to worship together and enjoy unique advantages in reaching out to new immigrants, they also face significant challenges when it comes to incorporating the next generation that is born and raised in America, the ABCs (American-born Chinese).

The first language of the ABCs is English, and their culture is North American. This contrasts starkly with the culture of the parents and new immigrants that find their home in the Chinese church. A bicultural situation is formed that generally contains a conservative, older Chinese-speaking and more culturally Chinese group and a more progressive, younger English-speaking and more culturally American group. Tension exists when the distinctly Chinese way of doing things clashes with the American way. For example, American culture values openness and equality, so ABCs tend to approach conflict in a direct and confrontational manner and expect to be treated as equals. However, this manner can be deeply offensive to the OBCs, who are more familiar with a paternalistic hierarchy and strongly value the notion of saving face. Conflict created by differences such as these frequently results in high levels of frustration.

The second generation experiences particular frustration because of perceived ineffective ministry to ABCs and lack of power and voice to make changes. The older, more culturally Chinese group usually controls the

leadership and sets the rules for language, finances, programs, music, etc. It sets the goals of the church and determines who the church will focus its ministry on. Given the church's limited resources, the OBC desire to provide a safe haven for new immigrants, preserve Chinese culture, and govern the church as a whole often takes precedence over the wishes of the second generation for an autonomous ABC ministry. Not a few ABCs feel the Chinese church leaves much to be desired because ABC ministry is either not a priority or the OBCs simply can't run it well and don't let the younger ABCs run it.

Feeling unable to get their needs met, members of the second generation have responded by leaving the Chinese church. In a 1996 issue of *Christianity Today*, Helen Lee reported that recent times have seen a "silent exodus" of church-raised young people from the Chinese church, who "find their immigrant churches irrelevant, culturally stifling, and ill equipped to develop them spiritually for life in the multicultural 1990s" (Lee, 50). Such an exodus of the ABCs has two major drawbacks. First, families are divided when the parents go to a Chinese church and the ABCs don't. Secondly, those who leave their parent's ethnic churches rarely join other churches. In 1996, Samuel Ling, then director of the Institute for Chinese Studies at Wheaton (Ill.) College, estimated that only about 4 percent of ABCs—who constitute 40 percent of the U.S. Chinese population—were integrated into the Chinese church. Thus, retaining and effectively ministering to ABCs within the Chinese church may be the best means of reaching the ABCs.¹

If the Chinese church is to reach the ABCs, it will have to effectively minister to and incorporate them, and it is widely felt that ABC pastors are the key. As ABCs, they are in the unique position to address the needs of other ABCs and make the Chinese church a relevant place for spiritual growth. As leaders, they can help bridge the gap between the two cultures within the Chinese church.

Many Chinese churches have recognized the importance of ABC ministry and have sought ABC pastors to lead their efforts. However, there is a severe shortage of ABC pastors, and the number of churches seeking ABC pastors far exceeds the number of candidates. The problem is exacerbated by ABC pastoral dropout, which has been a subject of recent alarm for pastors and church leaders.

ABC pastors become discouraged in Chinese churches and drop out for a variety of reasons. In no way immune to cultural conflict, the more American mindset of ABC pastors clashes with the Chinese mindset of OBC pastors and OBC leadership. This adds to the struggles ABC pastors face that are common to all pastors, ranging

¹ Helen Lee, "Silent Exodus," *Christianity Today*, vol 40, num 9, 1996.

from personal struggles with sin to lack of support from the congregation. In 1999, Weymann Lee identified five general causes for ABC pastoral dropout. These included: 1) Lack of understanding of the problems and pressures of ministry 2) Lack of endurance in the ministry, 3) Lack of encouragement and support in the ministry, 4) Lack of a genuine call to ministry, 5) Disqualification from ministry.²

What is the relative significance of these causes, and what can be done to mitigate the outflow of ABC pastors from the Chinese church? These are some of the questions that this study hopes to answer.

This study contributes to current knowledge about the ABC pastor situation by drawing on the views of over 60 pastors and former pastors across America, thus providing a broader representation of voice than prior works. Pastors and former pastors are the most familiar with sources of ABC pastoral discouragement because they possess direct experience. In addition, many pastors and former pastors are familiar with the causes of stress of their colleagues in ministry. What pastors and former pastors perceive to be their primary causes of discouragement and dropout is probably an accurate measure of what actually occurred. While some degree of omniscience would be required to know if the pastor's perceptions are coherent with what is actually occurring, the findings of this research may be accurate, and the findings probably represent a greater number of individuals and cases of pastoral dropout than are explicitly cited.

This research also allows for some comparison of viewpoints of those involved in ABC ministry. The perspectives of OBC pastors, ABC senior, English/Associate, Youth, and Former pastors are all considered. Comparison of these perspectives reveals additional insights as to the reasons for ABC pastoral discouragement.

This study also brings to light to a number of practical recommendations that can help reduce ABC pastor dropout.

METHOD

Surveys

In August 1998 approximately 180 surveys were sent to subjects throughout the United States, with an attempt made to have every state represented. Subjects included pastors and leaders of churches listed in the 1995 Ambassadors for Christ directory as well as referrals from those who were interviewed. In regards to the Ambassadors for Christ directory, surveys were sent to the limited number of churches that had an English Pastor listed, and the letter was

² Weymann Lee, "ABC Pastors: An Endangered Species," About FACE, 1999.

addressed to the English Pastor. There were also many churches listed as having congregations of size 100 up to size 800, and surveys were sent to these churches if English was listed as a language used in the church, since there was a good chance that such churches had an ABC or English pastor. Additional surveys were sent to the churches if they had other English speaking pastors, notably senior pastors. These surveys were addressed to the names listed in the directory or simply “Senior Pastor.”

In addition, the survey was sent via email to the Chinese American Christians (CAC) discussion list. The CAC list includes around 200 Chinese American Christians, many of whom are actively involved in the Chinese American Christian community.

Survey Content

The survey consisted of a self-identification section in which the subject was asked to provide demographic information about his/her church and his/her experience with ABC ministry. The second part of the survey consisted of 14 possible explanations for ABC pastor discouragement and dropout from the Chinese church, and respondents were asked to assign each source a number between 1 and 10, with 10 representing an extremely significant source. Space was available for respondents to include additional reasons as well. The remainder of the survey consisted of free response questions that allowed respondents to comment on what was most striking for them. Respondents were asked to elaborate on the more significant sources from section two. Next, respondents were instructed to identify what they perceived OBC ministers, the church, ABC ministers, and prospective ABC ministers to alleviate ABC pastoral discouragement. Finally, respondents were given the opportunity to give advice, encouragement, and warnings to current and prospective ABC pastors.

Those respondents who identified themselves as ABC pastors were also asked to write about why they persisted in ABC ministry and what they would do differently if they could go back and do things differently. Lastly, these ministers were asked to answer multiple choice questions about how being in ministry has affected their health and family relations. Survey questions and answers are located in the Appendices.

Survey Response

76 surveys were received from across the United States comprised of:

- 37 ABC Non-senior pastors (29 English/Associate, 7 youth pastors/workers, 1 solo pastor)
- 8 ABC Senior pastors
- 7 ABC Former pastors
- 7 OBC Senior pastors
- 3 Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches

2 Pastors of multiethnic churches
 2 “Other” Ministry
 10 Lay persons
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 76 Respondents Total

Interviews

12 in-person interviews and 1 phone interview were conducted to gain deeper perspectives on the subject of ABC pastoral dropout. Subjects were obtained by referral and/or personal contact.

QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

The following table contains means of data from the quantitative part 2 of the survey. The fifth column, “All ABC pastors,” consists of the sum of the first four columns.

Table 1: Means of Respondant Importance Ratings (1-10, with 10 being highest)

Reason for ABC Pastor Discouragement/Dropout	ABC Senior n=8	ABC English n=27	ABC Youth n=6	ABC Former n=6	All ABC pastors n=47	OBC Senior n=5	Laypersons n=10
Conflicts with ABC non-pastoral church leadership	5.6	5.0	5.3	6.3	5.3	4.8	3.4
Conflicts with OBC non-pastoral church leadership	6.5	7.2	6.2	5.7	6.7	6.0	6.5
Conflicts with OBC senior pastor	6.9	7.2	6.2	7.8	7.1	6.0	7.4
Constrictive policies	5.9	6.3	5.0	7.3	6.2	4.3	6.6
Cultural differences and demands	7.8	6.9	6.0	7.3	7.0	7.6	6.6
Frustrations with lack of power/voice	6.5	6.8	7.3	7.2	6.8	7.0	5.8
Incorrect discernment of original calling to ministry	4.9	4.0	4.2	2.7	4.0	6.8	5.7
Insufficient compensation	5.0	4.2	4.8	5.2	4.5	5.6	4.7
Lack of opportunities for advancement	5.4	3.7	4.0	3.5	4.0	5.8	4.1
Lack of perseverance	5.8	5.8	4.7	4.8	5.5	7.0	5.0
Lack of support from spouse	4.0	3.9	2.8	3.3	3.7	4.0	3.2
Lack of quality family time due to ministry time	3.8	4.5	3.3	4.2	4.2	3.4	4.0
Excessive demands by church on spouse	3.0	3.8	3.0	3.0	3.5	4.2	4.5
Unresponsiveness of church	6.3	6.0	6.2	6.2	6.1	4.0	7.4

Note: Given the small sample size for some of the groups above, the reliability of generalizations to larger samples is limited.

Similarities

It may be significant to note that conflicts with OBC non-pastoral church leadership, conflicts with OBC senior pastor, cultural differences and demands, and frustrations with lack of power/voice were cited as the most significant sources of ABC discouragement/dropout by all categories of pastors examined.

Differences

One observation that may be made is the relatively high importance ranking that the laypersons gave to unresponsiveness of the church as a source of ABC minister’s discouragement/dropout. Pastors seem to place more emphasis on other factors, particularly factors inherent to the Chinese church.

Perhaps the most interesting finding may be most clearly seen in a comparison of what individual respondents in each category cited as the most and least important factors that contribute to ABC discouragement and dropout. This is reflected in the assignment of the highest number or lowest number to a particular factor. Inspection of these numbers may reveal more than averages alone because it emphasizes the proportion of individuals in a category who feel strongly about certain factors.

Table 2: Percentage of Respondents Who Assigned Given Factor Greatest Importance

Reason for ABC Pastor Discouragement/Dropout	ABC Senior n=8	ABC English n=27	ABC Youth n=6	ABC Former n=6	All ABC n=47	OBC Senior n=5
Conflicts with ABC non-pastoral church leadership	25%	11%	17%	17%	15%	
Conflicts with OBC non-pastoral church leadership	25%	26%		33%	23%	20%
Conflicts with OBC senior pastor	25%	41%	17%	50%	36%	
Constrictive policies		4%		33%	6%	
Cultural differences and demands	50%	22%	33%	17%	28%	40%
Frustrations with lack of power/voice	13%	11%	33%	17%	15%	40%
Incorrect discernment of original calling to ministry	25%	4%	17%		9%	40%
Insufficient compensation	13%	7%			6%	20%
Lack of opportunities for advancement	13%		17%		4%	20%
Lack of perseverance	13%	4%	33%		9%	40%
Lack of support from spouse						
Lack of quality family time due to ministry time		7%			4%	
Excessive demands by church on spouse		7%			4%	
Unresponsiveness of church		11%	33%	17%	13%	

Table 3: Percentage of Respondents Who Assigned Given Factor Least Importance

Reason for ABC Pastor Discouragement/Dropout	ABC Senior n=8	ABC English n=27	ABC Youth n=6	ABC Former n=6	All ABC n=47	OBC Senior n=5
Conflicts with ABC non-pastoral church leadership	25%	15%		17%	15%	20%
Conflicts with OBC non-pastoral church leadership	13%	7%		33%	11%	
Conflicts with OBC senior pastor		11%	17%	17%	11%	
Constrictive policies				17%	2%	20%
Cultural differences and demands			17%	17%	4%	
Frustrations with lack of power/voice	13%				2%	
Incorrect discernment of original calling to ministry	38%	30%	50%	83%	40%	20%
Insufficient compensation	25%	19%			15%	20%
Lack of opportunities for advancement	13%	33%	33%	50%	32%	20%
Lack of perseverance	38%	15%	17%	33%	21%	
Lack of support from spouse	25%	19%		50%	21%	20%
Lack of quality family time due to ministry time	13%	7%		17%	9%	40%
Excessive demands by church on spouse	25%	15%	17%	67%	23%	40%
Unresponsiveness of church		7%	17%	17%	9%	40%

Note: Categories do not add up to 100% because respondents were permitted to assign multiple factors the same importance ranking

ABC senior, English, youth, and former pastors gave “conflicts with OBC senior ministers” high ratings of importance. Notably, forty-one percent of the ABC English pastors and fifty percent of ABC former pastors

identified gave this factor their highest ratings. By contrast, none of the five OBC senior pastors gave this factor their highest rating.

This observation gives light to a source of tension. If ABC ministers feel that conflict with OBC ministers is one of the primary causes of discouragement for themselves and their peers, while OBC ministers feel that ABC discouragement and dropout is a result of lack of power/voice and more notably lack of perseverance or incorrect discernment of the ABC's original call to ministry, then it may be unlikely that issues and conflict between OBC and ABC pastors will be resolved without extra initiative. These differences in beliefs may cause and exacerbate frustration between OBC and ABC pastors if both groups are essentially ascribing the causes of ABC pastoral difficulty to the other. Realization of this discrepancy in beliefs may give both ABC and OBC pastors more understanding of the other and may provide greater incentive for more open communication and resolution.

Another interesting observation concerns the "Incorrect discernment of original calling to ministry" factor. It may be significant to note that five out of the six former ABC pastors gave "Incorrect discernment of original calling to ministry" the least important ranking, indicating some strength of feeling that this was not much of a factor in ABC pastoral discouragement and dropout. Their average rating for this category was a low 2.7. The average rating of ABC English pastors was somewhat higher at 4.0. ABC senior pastors gave an average response of 4.9. As a group, ABC pastors cited this factor most frequently as the factor of least importance. OBC senior pastors gave this factor an average rating of 6.8.

Once again, some differences in understanding are revealed that might contribute to ABC pastor discouragement and dropout. A struggling ABC English pastor who perceives he is discouraged by circumstances might receive less support from a senior pastor who questions his calling. But many ABC English and former pastors believe that they are accurate in their perceptions of their calling. A common attitude toward calling could be helpful.

FREE RESPONSE ANALYSIS

Why are ABC pastors discouraged/dropping out of the ministry?

Ministers and church leaders gave a variety of answers to this question. A general assessment of their responses reveals that responsibility for ABC pastoral dropout is essentially attributed to persons and circumstances. The emphasis that respondents placed on the responsibility of specific persons and specific circumstances varied

significantly according to the respondents' perspective. For example, discouragement as a result of inability for an ABC English minister and an OBC Senior minister to work together was labeled by some as the result of poor people skills for the ABC English minister. Others emphasized the dominant and unyielding manner of the OBC minister. Still others attributed the problem to inevitable cultural conflict. It also must be noted that in this example, as with many others, the reasons for the lack of cooperation are linked and the final result is most likely some combination of all three factors which varies from church to church.

In the following assessment of the data, I present the analysis with the ABC pastor as the point of reference. I have several reasons for doing this. It provides a useful framework to describe the situation. As described above, many causes of discouragement could be attributed to the pastor, the other people, or the difficult circumstances, depending on one's perspective. It would be redundant to describe the same situations three times, assigning "blame" to different parties. So instead I have chosen to select one. Putting the "blame" on the ABC pastor seems logical because he has the most impact on whether he will drop out or not. He is the one who prepares himself, accepts the position at the particular church before God, and determines how he will respond to discouraging circumstances. Ultimately, it is almost always the ABC pastor who decides to leave (except in some circumstances, where the church asks the pastor to leave). Additionally, current ABC pastors have noted that they have seen ABC pastors persist in extremely adverse circumstances, and that it was God's call for them and the need they observed that kept them in ministry amidst difficult times.

I realize that a drawback to this approach is the possibility for a "blame the victim" mentality. I hope that this can be avoided. This is merely a framework for approaching the situation. Rather than "What has this ABC pastor done wrong?" the more helpful question that should be asked is "How can I support/encourage my ABC pastor?" In many cases, patience and support by sensitive people (like OBC pastor or church) can help an ABC pastor overcome past and present shortcomings.

In the following analysis I summarize the more poignant points gleaned from the wealth of knowledge from the free response questions. For a fuller perspective and actual quotes from the pastors, please refer to the Appendices.

Table 3: Summary of Free Response Analysis

Not Called	Not Prepared	Dynamic Situation
<p>Pastor Doesn't Have Non-Acquirable Gifts -can't teach, lead or train</p> <p>Pastor isn't sure of own calling ≈ pastor doubts calling when facing discouragement and may drop out</p> <p>Others aren't sure of pastor's calling ≈ others could write off pastor's discouragement as not called</p> <p>Complication: How do you know if they aren't called? Could be writing off called pastors and not dealing with problems</p> <p><u>Recommendations:</u> Pastor needs to be sure of own calling</p> <p>Others can evaluate pastor's calling ≈ harder to write off then. Can be more committed to encouraging and helping him fulfill his calling</p> <p>Others can dissuade misguided prospective pastor</p> <p>Drawback: Differences in views on calling. Communal discernment of calling might not be possible or affordable.</p>	<p>Lack of humility, people skills, leadership, understanding of difficulties of situation, freedom to lead,</p> <p>Understanding of what the church is looking for, what to expect from the OBC pastor and congregation, personal support (group and wife), idealistic, problems with how the church handles conflict, pay, importance of language</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u> Ministry experience in Chinese church Develop people skills Education. Learn about what it will be like from experienced people, and papers like this</p> <p>Candidating- need to ask tough questions and get promises The church and other pastors can help compensate for past/present shortcomings</p> <p>Drawback: Sometimes you can only find these things out by doing it</p>	<p>Only so much that can be done ahead of time, and things change -church doesn't provide expected support</p> <p>-pastor's vision changes (e.g. goes multiethnic). Church doesn't want to follow</p> <p>-sin may cause distrust, conflict, and may affect calling</p> <p>-church is spiritually unresponsive</p> <p><u>Recommendations</u> Grace, freedom to fail, spiritually dynamic church and pastors</p>

The problem of ABC pastoral discouragement and dropout can be analyzed in a calling, preparation, dynamic situation framework. With the calling explanation, the pastor drops out because he hasn't been called to the ministry, although he might think he has been. If he's not called, then he doesn't have the innate gifts to be a pastor. The preparation explanation ascribes dropout of pastors who possess these innate gifts but lack adequate preparation for ministry. Adequate preparation can include unrealistic expectations about the specific church

situation and lack of sufficient skill development. Even with calling and adequate preparation, the ABC pastor might still become discouraged and leave due to the dynamic nature of the situation. This includes the situations of sin occurring or the pastor being called to a different type of ministry.

1. Calling

The data present these trends: Former pastors cited incorrect discernment of calling as the least significant reason for dropout. Current ABC pastors questioned the callings of dropouts, but cited other difficulties such as conflict with OBC pastors as more significant. OBC pastors spoke mostly of incorrect discernment of calling and lack of perseverance. Also, most ABC pastors cited calling from God as the reason they remained in ministry.

The following situation can explain these findings: ABC pastors might have struggles and become frustrated, and may seek to change the situation that is causing their discouragement. Frustration might result from lack of voice or freedom to lead, or lack of personal or ministry support. The situation doesn't change. This might be due to the way the church does things, lack of support from OBC minister to change leadership style, or conflict with persons in the church. The ABC pastor doesn't get the results he wanted and becomes more discouraged. But the OBC pastor might not be very understanding, because he feels that his style of leadership is right, and in difficult circumstances, his culture is more accustomed to sticking things out and persevering. Clear communication between the OBC pastor and ABC pastor about the causes of ABC pastor's discouragement may break down, if there was any at all. The OBC pastor and others in the church may doubt the ABC pastor's calling and take a wait and see approach to see if he will persevere. If he doesn't, then he must not be called. In addition, the struggling ABC pastor may doubt his calling, which may also cause him to leave.

If the ABC pastor has not actually been called and is misguided about his sense of calling, then there isn't much that can be done to keep him at that pastorate. But the big drawback occurs when an ABC pastor who actually is called to the situation might not receive help from others, particularly the OBC pastor and other leaders. The church leadership might not take steps to improve a discouraging situation for the ABC pastor if they think the problem is that he has not been called. So the ABC pastor may abandon his call because it was too difficult to carry out, when the church could have done something to help his situation. Also, the church leadership may miss out on making important changes if they have made the assumption that the ABC pastor was not called prematurely.

A common discernment on the ABC pastor's calling could improve this situation. The prospective ABC pastor needs to be sure of his call from God to be a pastor, as many current ABC pastors cited the call as reason for

why they remained in ministry. It would especially help if he and the church were agreed on his call to be at that church. This can ward off the situation where a prospective ABC pastor who has misread his calling becomes a pastor, and much long term grief might be spared on all sides. This has additional benefits for situations where there is agreement on the pastor's calling. Then when difficulties arise, the OBC pastor and church (and other ABC pastors) would not be able to so easily dismiss the ABC pastor's problems as a matter of call, and would have more motivation to try to understand what the problem is. Of course, keeping the communication open between OBC and ABC pastors helps too. If there is a difference in view of the ABC pastor's calling, then it would help if he knew about it. Then he could try to convince the OBC pastor and church of his calling to remedy the situation, or at least know why he wasn't getting the support he wanted.

There are drawbacks to these recommendations. They assume that a call is clear and undisputable, and that it can be discerned by a community and not just an individual. There is some evidence to support this assumption. Many would say that a call from God to be a minister is clear, and that it can be discerned in community. One pastor remarked to me that Chinese culture (including ABC) ministers tends to have a more mystic and internal sense of calling, whereas discernment of call for more Western ministers involves a more objective and methodological approach. If such an approach were added to the ABC's perception of calling, then it would be easier to have agreement on whether or not the pastor is called to ministry. Another drawback to these recommendations is the feasibility of communal discernment of a prospective pastor's call to a particular church at a particular time. Potential questions are whether or not God does this, and whether or not others can discern it, given the constraints of knowledge about calling and time and effort to evaluate candidates. Still, such costs of communal discernment could be outweighed by the benefits of not having the question of calling be an issue in the future.

2. Preparation/Expectations

Another group of reasons that pastors drop out can be grouped under the category of inadequate preparation. The assumption here is that the pastor has the calling and God given abilities but is very discouraged because he does not have realistic expectations or has not developed his other skills well enough. This category is important, as it describes sources of discouragement that an ABC pastor can prepare for and prevent. Also, for the pastor already struggling with these discouragements, these are areas where other pastors and the church can provide extra support for the struggling pastor and help him remain faithful to his calling.

The primary symptomatic discouragements in this category are interpersonal conflict with the OBC pastor and leadership, lack of freedom to lead and support for ABC ministry, frustration with the way the church works, and lack of personal support. These frustrations lead to significant discouragement and may cause the pastor to question his calling and/or give up.

Many pastors suggested underlying reasons for the problems described above. Lack of humility and people skills, along with inadequate understanding of the church situation, can cause a pastor to lose support. For example, some ABC pastors have gone in trying to make too much change and failed to respect the senior pastor and church's way of doing things. In doing so, they offend others and lose support for future leading. Other reasons for frustration stem from unclear expectations on and by the OBC pastor and church. The ABC pastor might be expecting mentoring and a team approach to ministry, but the OBC pastor might not have that in mind. An ABC associate or youth pastor might be frustrated because he feels he can never be the senior pastor because he is younger or not an OBC, but this might be the unspoken intention of the church from the beginning. An ABC pastor might also be very discouraged with the cultural differences, but these too could be known about. In sum, many of ABC pastor's difficulties would be less discouraging if they were better anticipated and prepared for. For a more complete description of such sources of ABC pastor discouragement, see Appendix 1.

Many of these problems could be prevented by better preparation before the pastor accepts the position at the church. The prospective pastor needs to be aware of the difficulties of ministering as an ABC pastor in a bicultural church so as not to be surprised when difficulties arise. He needs to develop people skills and know that he must act with humility and respect for older leaders, especially OBC pastors, so as not to lose their support. He needs to know in advance if he will need the support of peers or a mentor, and especially if he needs and has the full support of his spouse. Knowing ahead of time how conflicts are resolved in the church, and what forms of communication are more acceptable, can avoid future pain.

Personal preparation for difficulties of ministry and a clear candidating process are good ways to prevent future problems. Concerning personal preparation, the prospective ABC pastor needs to educate himself and know what to expect. This might take the form of interning at a Chinese church, talking to "successful" ABC pastors and reading about ABC ministry, and honing preaching skills. Concerning candidating, the prospective pastor needs to have answers for some key hard questions, such as: How is conflict resolved in this church? How much influence over the direction of the church can he expect, and how can he gain influence? What kind of support will the church

give him for his ministry and personal life? What is the senior pastor's attitude toward ABC ministry? Is an expectation for mentoring realistic? How open is the church going to be to change? Does the church just want him to keep the machine running as it is? What are the opportunities for "advancement? Only by extracting commitments can he justify those expectations of the other pastors and church later.

Many current ABC pastors could be discouraged because they weren't prepared like this, and this is where the OBC pastor and church can really come in to help the ABC pastor fulfill his call. They can better support and encourage the ABC pastor and give him more freedom to lead. More financial support could be provided. They can learn more about bicultural ministry in the Chinese church. For a more complete listing of practical suggestions of what OBC pastors and the church can do, see Appendix 3.

It would also help current ABC pastors to know the position of the OBC pastor and church on their expectations. There needs to be clear communication about what can be expected. When expectations differ is the time for the ABC pastor to reassess his expectations, and for the church to see if they can help meet those expectations.

One of the primary drawbacks to these recommendations is that they rely on open communication between the ABC pastor and OBC pastor and church. Open communication is precisely one of the most difficult aspects cited by ABC pastors. Cultural differences make open communication difficult. The ABC and OBC pastors especially need to both work toward open communication. This may require the ABC pastors to act with more humility and respect. And it may require the OBC ministers to try to be more straightforward and take offense less easily. Crossing cultural barriers takes time, effort, grace, and reconciliation and is a costly process. But the costs to open communication can have far reaching positive effects to not only prevent ABC pastoral dropout but also lead the church in exciting directions together.

3. Dynamic Situations

Even with accurate and communal discernment of calling, and extensive preparation by the ABC pastor, this is no guarantee for success. The situation can change while an ABC pastor is serving in ministry, and lead to discouragement and dropout. Despite a circumspect candidating process, sometimes one can only find out things by doing it. The situation may be different from anticipated. Expectations may change. People make choices and sin, causing distrust and conflict. Ministry goals change. The church could be unresponsive to the Word. ABC pastors

may feel the Chinese church is too restricting in its goal of catering primarily to ethnic Chinese, and may encounter discouragement if the church is unwilling to move in this direction. The pastor could genuinely be called elsewhere.

These dynamic spiritual situations need to be handled by a church and pastors that have a dynamic relationship with God. Pastoral discouragement and dropout may be inevitable in these dynamic situations, and the church and pastors need to respond with grace, reconciliation, and perseverance while giving freedom to fail and change.

BRIEF LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS:

For everyone

Have a better understanding of the cultural differences involved

Pursue godliness first; remember the common bond of Christ

Humility. Pride, sometimes disguised as "saving face" for self, keeps people divided and prevents reconciliation.

For all pastors and church leadership:

Clearer communication between pastors. Clearer expectations

For the ABC pastor:

Respect OBC pastor and be patient.

Have realistic expectations for ministry.

Develop personal support network.

For prospective ABC pastors:

Prepare, prepare, prepare!

Personal preparation with the Lord

Be sure of calling

Preparation to lead, including practical experience

For OBC pastors:

Consider mentoring and partnering with ABC pastor

Support ABC ministry

For the church:

Clearer expectations

Choose godly lay leadership

Be generous with pastor's salary.

Encourage and pray for pastor.

Support ABC ministry.

CONCLUSION

The question of why ABC pastors are becoming discouraged and dropping out of churches is a complex issue. In this study I have examined the views of pastors in the field and former pastors on this subject, and have presented my own analysis of the situation. Much can be done by all parties involved to alleviate ABC pastoral dropout.

For further study, it would be useful to compare responses from dropouts, their churches, and their former co-pastors to provide a more complete picture of the factors causing dropout. It would also be helpful to compare the findings from this study of Chinese churches with Japanese, Korean, and non-Asian American churches.

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Bold print indicates heading type, which may or may not be part of a quote
! indicates multiple responses with very similar sentiment
Italics indicates author's insert

APPENDIX I: DEMOGRAPHICS OF RESPONDANTS

Demographic information is listed as was provided by the respondents.

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

Locations: 6 California, 1 NYC

Ages: 40, 41, 42, 47, 49, 54, 59, 62, 64

Num. Female: 0

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 320/655, 800, 200, 100, 400, 350-450

ABC English/Associate Pastors (29)

Youth Pastors/Workers (7)

Only pastor of church: (1)

Locations (when provided): N Cal suburb, NC; West Houston, TX; near Houston, TX; Houston, TX; Torrance, CA; Wilmington, DE; Boston, MA; Chinatown; Rockville, MD; St. Louis, MO, San Gabriel Valley, CA; Western suburbs of Chicago, IL; N.E., NJ; Seattle, WA; Richmond, VA; Chicago Suburb, IL; L. A., CA; Chicago Chinatown; Long Island, NY; Northern NJ; Washington D.C.; Houston, TX; Dallas, TX; Phoenix, AZ; L.A. Suburb, CA

Ages: 30, 34, 33, 39, 61, 35, 36, 43, 35, 36, 40, 34, 35, 48, 26, 50, 37, 36, 43, 32, 35, 37, 34, 37, 43, 43, 38, 38, 39, 49

Youth Pastor/Worker Ages: 34, 30, 37, 36, 20, 30, 23

Num. Female: 2

Num. Youth Female: 2

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 60/300, 110/250, 200/500, 246/600, 370/550, 200/500-700, 230/650-700, 40, 1000, 700-800, 100/300, 50/400, 200, 50-60, 170/1000, 20/130, 200, 85/220, 170/500, 45/165, 70/150, 300/?, 250/?, 180Y/700, 320, 180/580, 350, 230/500, 25/80, 120/260, 150, 120/360, 180/600, 15/?

Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches (3)

Locations: Chicago suburb, IL; Pittsburgh, PA; Wheaton, IL

Ages: 39, 43, 49

Num. Female: 0

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 120-135

ABC Former Pastors (7)

(1 former ABC youth director)

Locations (of most recent ministry): Tarzana, CA; LA, CA; Oak Park, IL; Oakland, CA; San Francisco, CA;

Chicago, IL; San Francisco, CA

Ages: 42, 34, 31, 44, 68, 44, 42

Num. Female: 1

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 80,300/1000, 75/200, 225, <100

Formal involvement in ministry now:

1- left ministry 1 yr ago, not currently involved

2- not currently involved

3- pastor for Asian American church

4- retired (?)

5- parachurch ministry

6- seeking another Chinese church to pastor

7- parachurch ministry

ABC Pastors in Asian American/Multiethnic Churches(3)

Ages: 34, 43, 35

Num. Female: 0

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 75, 500

Locations: Los Angeles area, CA; Los Angeles area, CA; Los Angeles area, CA

OBC Senior Pastors (6)

Ages: 47, 47, 54, 57, 62

Num. Female: 0

Church Size (English/Total) or (Total): 15-20/?, 130-150, 700, 180/760, 70/150

Locations: suburban, suburban, suburban New Jersey, suburban

APPENDIX II. HOW HAVE YOU PERSONALLY EXPERIENCED DISCOURAGEMENT OR SEEN ABC PASTORS DISCOURAGED?

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

They face ministry and realize the great challenges and pressures . . . and they give up for something easier. Their callings are suspect, and they lack staying power.

Culturally informed expectations of pastoral leadership and lack of understanding and communication about them. Personal issues- relational and intra-psychic/personality e.g. unhealed emotional wounds, shame, projected into present performance orientation

Spiritual issues- discerning God's voice/will

Church issues- past sin not dealt with; need for repentance, revival, reconciliation is cumulative and effects each new pastor

The issue of pastor frustration is primarily between God and the individual pastor. While I have known of and seen ABC pastors leave the ministry, I have also known and seen ABC pastors faithfully serve in less than ideal conditions for 10-20 years! If a pastor's calling from God to the ministry is as serious as a marriage commitment, then the call to God's ministry should be irrevocable (of course, God can revoke it for disobedience/sin)

Some members will love you when you haven't done anything to deserve it. Most tolerate you. But there is almost always a small group who will make life hell for you no matter how hard you try to please them. They will try to drive you out. Other reasons: mean members who just don't like minister period. Difficulty in getting white pastorate. Not being able to speak Chinese.

Conflicts with OBC senior pastors – differences in work style, vision, philosophy of ministry

Cultural differences and demands. OBC pastor not seeing ABC pastor as an equal partner. OBC pastor not knowing how to work with ABC pastor and therefore not providing the support the ABC pastor needs.

ABC pastor lacking leadership skills; not knowing how to delegate. Thinking he has to do it all himself. Inability to recruit lay workers to help him. Not enough lay workers available.

Also noted: failure to delegate, lack of leadership skills

Conflicts with ABC senior pastors (*medium*). Seminary training did not prepare well, graduates think that success is due only to church growth principles. Lack of good people skills.

I see many ABC minister who think they have "the method" for growing a church. They are excited, but lack the wisdom and heart. I believe that God can make any ministry successful, but that success in God's eye is usually not success in man's. We want the "mega-church-Willow Creek" goal, but success can be defined by less spectacular goals.

ABC's can be a major source of the problem: too proud and arrogant. Must be humble to work with Chinese speaking leadership.

Must see OBC leadership as partners, not adversaries, but part of God's family. Not competing with OBC, but working in parallel. Needs patience and perseverance.

Idealistic nature about the ministry when coming to the church. Philosophy of ministry which is different and difficult. Some ABC have tried to work in a bi-cultural system, but found the dominate cultural system to be the Chinese (overseas). Attempts to bring change was slow (too slow). Also, the leadership style was hard to merge together among the pastoral staff. Finally, the philosophy of ministry was diverse or not clear. In some Chinese churches, they have gone to a two or three separate and autonomous congregation. This has allowed for greater freedom and flexibility. Others have tried to keep everything together.

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

It is not enough to want to be a pastor. A clearer understanding of the cost and readiness to accept them is needed. Many seem to reflect a self-concerned, rather than a church-concerned attitude and understanding in being a pastor.

There is a need of conviction that Jesus is our Employer and not the church. The members must be the ones we serve, and the Lord is the One who serves our needs (usually through His saints).

Being a pastor is already a high pressure, lonely, stressful job. The issues are amplified when you get no support from an OBC pastor. . . If you lose the ABC leadership or you don't have any ABC leadership then you are in trouble.

Many ABCs are “gunshine” about OBC/ABC conflict. They are afraid of the apparent conflict, so they avoid Chinese churches. I don't think it's that hard.

A. INTERNAL FACTORS

1. Incorrect Discernment of Call

I am a firm believer that most ABC ministers are dropping out not by fault of their congregations or the job; most do not have the skills to be in the ministry—i.e. patience with people, priorities of what is important to get into an argument about, love for people with differing opinions. There are discouragements, for sure, but that's part and parcel of the calling. We have too many engineers, disgruntled with their secular vocation, who read that lack of purpose as a call to ministry. When they get to ministry, they find that it's even harder to get all your chicks in a row when working with people than it is to be an engineer. Don't blame your own disillusionment on the church or OBCs—that's a cop out. Too many who feel “called” to ministry are quick to be the victim of their circumstances.

To me, a pastor's calling is everything . . . nothing stops a pastor convinced about his calling to be a pastor. . . assignments changes, circumstances changes, but he is a pastor everywhere and any time. ABC pastors whose personal theology allows them to approach ABC ministry as a vocation or profession in the sense every other person approach their career choices is practically doomed in my opinion unless he “lucks” out into a good situation. Even then, they can survive but make minimum impact for the kingdom of God.

People dropout of medicine, engineering, and other fields to go into ministry. This just causes a spiral of [defeat].

2. Idealism

not expecting the demands, conflicts, misunderstandings inevitable to ministry—takes lots of character and work

3. Lack of skills

Unprepared to serve

Not gifted to preach and teach

4. Poor people skills—how well pastors relate with staff and board

5. Unhealthy expectations for leadership

Many ABC pastors need to learn more submission to authority and think teamwork second.

I am trying to further the vision of the church, not my own vision.

6. Lack of perseverance.

Things take time; developing people and making an impact in people's life

Recent grads giving up too quickly on Chinese churches

B. EXTERNAL FACTORS

1. !!!Lack of freedom to lead and support for ministry.

There is a lot of stereotyping on both sides and little dialogue and transparency.

!English Pastors (ABCs) need to be empowered to lead the English ministry as they believe God desires. I have seen ABCs looked to as servants to do what the OBC Sr. or deacons or leaders want him to do instead of allowing him to lead.

Many colleagues have shared stories, both ABC and ABKoreans. Some examples:

- 1) needing to get permission to pick what songs to use at worship service—every single Sunday
- 2) being told you can do something and then when it goes against first generation congregation, the support is removed
- 3) use of Chinese in Board meetings even with presence of English only deacons and elders

The conflicts with OBC senior pastor were often over styles of ministry or ways of doing things that I felt were more cultural and personal preference. But they became demands upon me when ordered to be carried out, which is highly discouraging.

Lack of respect and support for ABC pastor in a predominately Mandarin speaking church receiving information through second hand or meetings spoken in Chinese.

Lack of support for ABC ministry with Boards planning for Chinese ministry but not ABC ministry, using the English congregational members as workers for children's and youth ministry.

OBC Pastor lack of vision and leadership for the whole church, concern only for OBC ministry

Salary of staff members less than adequate for cost of living in NE, housing, expenses

Not getting trust from the deacon board and those in leadership

I've mainly observed and experienced OBC pastors/leaders expect the English ministry to grow and develop the same way as the Chinese with little understanding or willingness to accommodate. This causes significant frustration for an ABC pastor trying to grow his ministry.

The freedom to fail is not an option. Nothing will fail in startup because we dare not start anything new.

Conflicts of vision and purpose of the church. Lack of trust of members to the staff.

2. Unresponsiveness of the church is extremely frustrating. The cause of apathy towards the church among ABC's is because they've not been well lead in the past. Hurts and lack of trust in the church leadership build up. When ABC pastors come to Chinese churches, they don't start at ground zero, but in the negative. They have to spend much time, in the beginning of ministry, to bring emotional, relational and spiritual healing. The church cannot move ahead in outreach until this healing takes place.

English Adult congregation has high expectations but limited commitment/participation in the ministry.

When no results, minister starts to question the "fit"

The unyielding character of members of the church to change.

Chinese congregation members see themselves as Chinese who happen to be Christians. The English Congregation members see themselves as Christians who happen to be Chinese.

3. !!!Cultural Differences

OBC perceive the ABC pastor as cultural, insensitive, disrespectful, impatient, and spiritual/emotionally immature—like a young child who doesn't get his way. Therefore when an ABC pastor leaves a Chinese Church it is not the fault of the church or OBC dominated leadership, but the "lack of commitment" and immaturity of the ABC pastor.

I have been aware of many conflicts between OBC and ABC pastors. It is mainly cultural and some linguistic. But the ABC's come across as being disrespectful, too pushy, insensitive. The OBCs have come across as too traditional, inflexible. This causes interpersonal conflicts, which leads to mistrust and lack of further communication. I have also seen ABC pastors wanting a larger voice or greater authority, but usually since he is in his 20's and the leadership in their 40's, this causes some resentment and frustration. The ABC pastor feels he is not respected or given enough listening ears in spite of his masters degree education.

Cultural differences and communication problems are huge. Expectations and desires for the church are quite varied. Sometimes the desires are the same but communication and how it is to be lived out are in conflict. Some of the discouragement is in old family, cultural buttons that get pushed on how decision are made.”

4. Not meeting expectations

Not meeting expectations (both OBC and ABC youth) in areas such as preaching (*this respondent indicated readiness to quit*)

Another source of discouragement is the sense of not meeting expectations and the feeling of abandonment or lack of help from the OBCs (more bricks less hay syndrome)

5. Unsupportive spouse.

If spouse is not supportive of ministry, it is very difficult to be totally committed. The feeling of divided allegiance translates to conflict over time spent, over attendance at various church activities, etc

6. Loneliness

Loneliness in ABC ministry can be very discouraging. With no one who can relate and understand and is empathetic enough to encourage and uphold you in ministry.

Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches (3)

Without same age fellowship and leadership you are always the father figure, the oldest among many without adult supervision or meaningful relationships. Cultural differences play a big part as culture at times is placed over Scripture. Problems from the bigger congregation always influence the smaller in reference to time and energy. Young people are young people thus must be careful of expectations put on them.

2 basic problems:

- 1- Dominating cultural rule—confuse ministry and culture
- 2- Bad politics among elders; power control brings extra conflict

ABC Former Pastors (7)

Cultural differences. OBCs and ABCs simply view church ministry and leadership and have world views that are different despite a common faith and love of Jesus. Both simply cannot escape their “mother” cultures, and therefore their “mother” cultures are higher influence the ways and mans of their pastoral style . . . which leads to frustration on both sides.

Many times it seemed that the need to save face superceded the importance of maintaining/upholding doctrinal purity or the need to exercise church discipline. Sinful behaviors were not dealt with or were glossed over in order to “preserve the unity.”

OBC pastor was very non-confrontational and used passive-aggressive approaches to deal with problems or conflicts, which only served to exacerbate the problem not solve it.

Conflict and tension seem common between ABC pastor and usually just one ABC lay leader (deacon and elder) who may act like they “own” the church. I have personally experienced this and have seen many similar cases with other ABC pastor friends. This lay leader is usually successful in his career, has a lot of Bible knowledge, is verbally intimidating, and lacks any constructive accountability.

I’ve experienced some of these personally such as having disagreements over policies, vision, and implementation with usually board members and sometimes members of the English congregation. There have been frustration over feeling like you’re treated as though you’re a junior (not peer or equal) partner in the ministry. I’ve seen other ABC pastors leave or get discouraged by the ministry; some of them have felt that their calling has changed or they need a career change or possibly even their original calling was mistaken.

- 3 reasons-
- 1) because they’re asked to leave due to unmet expectations are no longer needed
 - 2) lack of opportunities for advancement
 - 3) church has expectations for pastor’s spouse (want 2-for-1) that ABC pastor doesn’t agree with
- Also because they feel dissatisfied and that nobody follows them (tough time getting things moving).

Also because they consider other options (OBC pastors are more used to hardship and view pastorship as a very high calling. They also have fewer options.)

Feel inadequate. Calling mistaken or change of calling. Tired of dealing with people problems: church board, senior pastor, problem people in English ministry. Preaching not strong point.

Multiethnic Pastors (3)

top reasons:

1- frustration with lack of power/voice

2- conflicts with OBC senior pastors, constrictive policies, cultural differences and demands, frustration with lack of power/voice, anticipating that this model has no future relevance for ABC/AA work

3- conflicts with OBC pastors

OBC Senior Pastors (6)

Calling from God is the most important factor to keep any pastor in the ministry regardless of the background he comes from. Whosoever God calls, He will enable. I believe ABC pastors' dropout rate is so high because of the lack of the sense of calling from God. That may explain why perseverance is also a factor for this phenomenon.

I have personally seen how a big conflict erupted between an ABC pastor and OBC senior pastor which resulted in the split of the church. Cultural difference is a big issue. I have seen cases of conflicts between OBC lay people and an ABC pastor over cultural differences.

The position of pastor has not been highly regarded by the church esp. the lay leaders. It causes low esteem to the pastor.

One of my ABC pastors went to a bigger church after received his Th.D. degree. [Another was just not equipped enough emotionally and also lacked preaching skills.]

Many ABC pastors are afraid of facing difficulties. 3 reasons why ABC pastors don't last: calling might not be clear, lack of persistence, lack of will to suffer. ABC ministers compare with their secular schoolmates (e.g. materials and salary) and are discouraged. Also, ABC ministers quit because they have so many options in the US. They feel ok to go to serve as a layman with a normal job. OBCs think that once you give yourself to the Lord, that's permanent. And sometimes it takes time to develop a good ministry.

ABC ministry is tougher than OBC ministry because the ABC congregation tends to have higher expectations of their pastor while providing less service in the church than their OBC counterparts. ABCs often judge the pastor's teaching and preaching and they can compare to preachers such as Swindoll. The OBC congregations are more lenient with their pastor because of culture (respect elders).

Some ABC pastors just want ordination and then they leave.

APPENDIX III. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ALLEVIATE THIS DISCOURAGEMENT?

I. ON THE PART OF OBC MINISTERS:

II. ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH:

III. ON THE PART OF ABC MINISTERS AND PROSPECTIVE ABC MINISTERS:

I. ON THE PART OF OBC MINISTERS:

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

Be more sensitive and patient

Include all pastors in pastoral team

Spend more time ministering to their associates and try to be less jealous of their achievements.

Be sensitive to the needs and personal struggles of the AB pastor. Be a friend to him and keep a close relationship. Give freedom.

Understanding of cultural differences.

Greater acceptance of younger brother

Greater sensitivity to their needs

Understand their thinking and mind set. Realize they operate with a different mind-set. Sometimes it isn't an issue of right or wrong, but the way things are viewed.

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

All need to examine assumptions about faith and culture- what serves the gospel and what gets in the way. There is often a lot of personal ego that gets in the way of hearing and seeing clearly (each other and God).

1. EQUIP SELF

Training—most OBC ministers received training overseas, they are often unskilled in working with the often better-equipped ABC ministers coming from a foreign culture. Training in mentorship, communication skills, ABC-mentality are needed for effective teamwork. Must learn to protect and develop the ABC minister.

!!Understand why ABC is important

Understand the ministry of ABC—stress the importance of this ministry. Encourage OBC ministers to come together to share in this vision.

Need a “preparing for future” mentality.

Understand ABC culture

Study a profile of ABC's and ABC ministers

More cross-cultural education, attend to the generation gaps.

Understand and accept cultural differences better.

They may not be biblical.

2. !!!BE MORE SUPPORTIVE WITH A “TEAMMATE” ATTITUDE.

ABC pastors want to be seen as a teammate and asset, not an adversary or babysitter.

Greater support for ABC ministries and recognition that it is complementary, not secondary. Realize the differences, celebrate the fact that ABCs can reach a particular group and give them the respect, support, and authority accordingly.

Dictate less, be less authoritarian in style of leadership.

Listen and look at what it means to lead and use that power according to the gospel.

Be open minded and don't see the ABC pastors as a threat. Remember both are working for the LORD!

!Listen to your ABC colleague, seek to work together, not against one another

Respect and trust ABC leadership.

Don't be so worried, we are not planning to take over the church.

To not feel threatened by the aggressive nature of ABCs. Often they feel that ABCs seek the authority even in the little things like negotiating a contract with a janitorial service or placing an order over the telephone.

Take initiative to communicate clearly.

More openness, flexibility, allowance for some experimentation.

Humility to receive criticism and willing to improve

!!Demonstrate support of ABC ministry to church

Speak about the importance of the ABC ministry.

Invite ABC pastor to speak/minister in the Chinese congregation.

But once hired, they should ALWAYS show complete confidence in the ABC minister particularly in public. They should promote the ABC ministry to the OBC congregation, stand in defense of the ABC regardless of the issue as long as he is in their employ. Short-comings should be handled by the senior pastor on a "eye-to-eye" level as much as possible.

Pray.

Keep praying for the ABC pastor

!Communication.

Work at communicating better and more. More open communication regarding expectations.

Encouragement and support.

More positive and encouraging words rather than negative criticism which is typical for Chinese pastors (OBC).

!Spend **time** with ABC pastor: listening, supporting, and praying together”

!Learn to be more personable. It does not matter what cultural background from which one comes as long as people know that you sincerely/genuinely care for them.

Humility

Pastors need some more humility to learn about the American culture and bicultural lifestyles.

!!Be gracious.

Be gracious to over-enthusiastic ABC pastors

!!!Mentor

Be a better mentor—train with the thought of passing on baton.

OBC pastors need to be committed to mentorship. This means having

- 1) Awareness (Senior pastors don't see this need)
- 2) Ability/Experience
- 3) Desire

Screen ABC candidates better.

There is such a short supply of ABC candidates that any “half-way” decent person looks god-sent. To me, spiritual discernment in screening candidates is important but most ministers, ABC or OBC, do not subscribe to this section of theology.

Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches (3)

Separate leadership meetings so each congregation can take care of it's own challenges. Two deacon boards with pastors and chairman of both alone meeting. Have an elder lead church instead of deacon led.

Plan as a whole church (for older church, let ABCs have subcommittee. Don't equate different plans as unauthoritative.

Adapt to the host (American) culture and allow the ABC pastors to do so.

ABC Former Pastors (7)

Perhaps to not view ABC ministers as “immoral, Americanized, doesn't speak Chinese and therefore inferior,” but rather as brothers in the Lord who really want to do the will of God too.

My impression is that OBC ministers/pastors don't take the time to truly listen to the thoughts, ideas, and/or concerns of their ABC counterparts. Often, the OBC pastors are older and seem to look down on the younger pastor.

Need to be open minded to the ABC passions and Holy Spirit. Need to be proactive in empowering.

When OBC ministers get together, it might be helpful if they can discuss ways to relate to ABC associate pastors in more helpful ways. Senior pastors in the vast majority of Chinese churches are OBCs, and I believe that they are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that unless they can work cooperatively with ABC pastors on their staff, they may have a difficult time keeping their second generation constituency actively involved in congregational life and ministry.

See the crucial need to have and develop the ABC ministry; support the ministry and the ABC pastor; not to treat that ministry (and the pastor) as inferior.

Regarding respect: don't take things personally. Let go of the ministry a bit. This stifles growth.
Regarding change: ask self "why to we do what we do? Is it tradition or effectiveness"?
Be consistent: Do what you say and say what you do.

Multiethnic Pastors (3)

They need to wake up and see that the power of acculturation is like gravity, constantly pulling succeeding generations away from the center of Chinese ethnocentrism.

"Listen" to your ABC colleague, seek to work together, not against one another.

OBC Senior Pastors (6)

Emphasize the importance of God's calling to the ministry before recommend anyone to attend seminary.
Spend time mentoring ABC minister
OBC pastor may want to learn how to treat ABC pastors with some respect by understanding their culture
Show more caring and maintain openness and communication
Understand the ABC and OBC differences. Willing to learn from each other.
Be more open minded and willing to learn and listen, instead of having an "I've eaten more salt than you've eaten rice" attitude.
Set the norm by being generous so that the congregation will be more generous and helpful, and the ABC pastors will get more support and be encouraged.

II. ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH:

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

Be more sensitive and patient
Find out how God views shame and respond to His gracious ways
Commit to God's ways for reconciliation
Provide care for pastors via ministerial relations team, continuing ed.
Encourage/care for all pastors and respect them
Realize the young ABC minister isn't perfect. Still have lot to learn and need their nurture.
Have a lay care committee to meet regularly with the ABC pastor to find out how he feels about his work, what needs he and his family might have, and to communicate with him how the laity feel about his work.
Give them a salary to live on.
Better communication
Needs an advocate for the ABC pastor
Look at the history of the church, Determine where she is headed, and see what she has going for her. Then look at her weaknesses, areas which needs attending.

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

Be more obedient to what Bible says church should be (caring and giving)
Love their pastor

Be involved.

There seems to be a perception that the hired-professionals should and can do it all

!!!!!!Encourage.

-Be nurture minded.

Pastoral care team—providing a sounding board, source of support for the staff

Provide better financial support.

Validate and value the pastor, significant commitment in terms of compensation, family support

Give pastor more time for planning and vacation

!Be gracious.

"Be supportive and allow room for mistakes."

"Be accepting/forgiving of their differences and ways of doing things."

"Start taking sin seriously- especially apathy, gossip, racism, greed"

!!!Pray. A praying church to pray for the Pastors. This is the best way to support the church by the congregation.

Be Mentor minded and always pray for the young minister.

Be Patient.

Don't demand results and don't judge by increase population or offering.

Show kindness and respect.

Be concerned.

Be concerned for their needs

Don't make it a power struggle. Encourage the senior pastor to work as a team instead of an ego-centric approach. Church needs to understand what Jesus' intent was for His church; understanding what REAL ministry is rather than running church like a business and storing funds up rather than using the money for ministry. Also, need to realize that principle is more important than politics."

Understand the role of the pastor

Be educated on the role of the pastor and where faith and culture intersect in healthy and unhealthy ways.

!Understand importance of ABC ministry. Greater desire to minister to English speaking and willingness to acknowledge differences.

It always helps to have someone in the Chinese side to champion the ABCs in the meetings and in the leadership.

Understand the bicultural church.

Bicultural mediators.

Think through the bicultural ministry model to make the necessary adjustments facing the Chinese-American church.

Keep an open mind. OBC or ABC are mere instruments of God. If the minister is a good vessel, he will work out.

Christian faith is a matter of practicing the right relationship first with God and then with others. The Pastor and the church mutually have this responsibility.

Be more integrated

Shift to new paradigms in church leadership – congregational representation in Boards

Subdivide budgets for congregational needs

Plan for joint activities for the whole church

Integrate some classes for all groups

!Be open to change

Flexibility to meet needs in best way, especially if 'it hasn't been done before'

Consider gifts of the pastor

Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches (3)

More personal support for the ABC pastor within the context of better understanding him and his ministry.

Speak positively of the ABC. Give them responsibility.

Compensate adequately, generously; show respect to ABC pastors.

ABC Former Pastors (7)

Realize that an equal structure of power, authority, accountability and resources is necessary for effective ministry to both OBCs and ABCs.

Get out of maintenance mode. Have effective internships to train seminarians, esp. in leadership. New seminarians need support and supportive staff, not storms of solo ministry. Loneliness can really set in and make those lows low. Celebrate those going into ministry.

Use terms for lay leaders. Require votes of affirmation.

Some churches have pastoral relations committee to provide support and encouragement, but so much of the effectiveness of these committees is dependent on the quality and maturity of the members of the committee. A mature, sensitive and caring senior pastor is probably a key factor.

See the crucial need to have and develop the ABC ministry; support the ministry and the ABC pastor; not to treat that ministry (and the pastor) as inferior. Also encourage more ABCs to be key leaders, esp. on the board.

Be careful in appointing leaders. Since many churches vote for leaders, popular doctors, lawyers, etc. get on the board who are successful in the world but not necessarily good for leading the church. Need to look at where gifts are at.

Multiethnic Pastors (3)

Realize that the typical bilingual, mono-ethnic church, in the long run, will never be able to capture the attention of the succeeding generations.

Validate and value the pastor. significant commitment in terms of compensation, family support.

Think long and hard before accepting an appointment at an OBC-predominant church.

Develop a support system, identify potential mentors, set reasonable and appropriate personal/ministry goals, see faith and ministry as a long-term process.

OBC Senior Pastors (6)

Let ABC seminarians to serve in the church after their graduation so that they can spend a short period of time in a familiar setting to confirm God's calling for full time ministry.

Allow ABC ministers to make mistakes

The church will do well by understanding that there is a gap between OBC and ABC. Be generous.

They must always give recommendation to the pastor. Show them high respect.

Show respect to the young pastor. Give more freedom to develop English ministry according to their need and preference.

Give sufficient compensation if possible. Full support the ABC ministry.

III. ON THE PART OF ABC MINISTERS AND PROSPECTIVE ABC MINISTERS:

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

Be committed to Lord's calling for them

Pray about calling commitment

Study lives of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Paul, etc. who had to endure much discouragement and opposition in their ministry.

Realize you are going to have to take a lot of guff from members.

Learn leadership skills. Be persevering. Be humble. Strengthen prayer life. Learn OBC cultural skills for relating with OBC leadership.

Willingness to learn to fit in.

Let go of pride.

Network together to get support. Find a mentor or older ABC pastor and request that he oversee you.

Need to enter ministry for the Lord, and Him alone

!Understand "calling"

Undergo more experience as lay leader in church

Be ready to count the cost

Spend a lot of time learning to relate to OBC by learning OBC cultural relational skills

Learn patience and how to suffer through trials.

Get more cross-cultural understanding and experience. Have more realistic picture of the Chinese church

Network together to get support. Find a mentor or older ABC pastor and request that he oversee you. Have hope and optimism that God is doing a work in the Chinese church. Enter in with less idealistic eyes. Gain some exposure before stepping in (through intern program).

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

1. EQUIP YOURSELF AND DEVELOP SKILLS

!!!!Discover yourself Find out your passion and spiritual gifts

Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses

Get to know yourself, your temperament, spiritual gift, style of leadership and preferences in working relationships.

Know what is flexible and what are your "hot buttons". Knowing the difference can be half the battle in conflicts.

!Be sure of your calling and remember that faithfulness to God is primary importance.

Be sure of your calling . . . "are you convinced God called you to be a pastor?" if you are, from here on out, the issue of discouragement becomes an issue of faith. if you are not sure, it is a matter of time before you throw in the towel or at best, mediocrity and ministry in the flesh will characterize your ministry.

It's important to understand your weaknesses, and to compensate for them.

Know the field

Cultural preparation

Talk to many "successful" ABC pastors to glean their insights.

Know that it's not going to be easy. The only thing that will keep you steady is knowing that God's hand is on your heart and He isn't going to let go.

Maintain balance of educational and practical ministry training

Take mission classes, become aware of cross cultural issues because ABC ministers are working cross culturally when they step into a Chinese church with first generation and second generation Chinese. Know yourself and prospective church leaders before committing to work there.

Develop leadership skills.

Continue to develop their own leadership so that OBCs and others trust them more

Seek to serve, not to rule.

To listen and look at what it means to lead and use that power according to the gospel. Also what it means to be in submission to Christ in that setting.

!!Develop interpersonal skills.

Conflict resolution

Develop a sense of humor; take yourself less seriously, value people

Don't take yourself too seriously.

Equip yourself better.

church growth principles- so you know for sure what vision to take the church in

Attend leadership, church growth seminars in addition to seminary theological training

learn some Mandarin language skills

learn Chinese and be willing to make mistakes.

skills on confrontation that is palatable to those older

Understand the situation.

Understanding the politics.

Internship experience under OBC pastor or in a more culturally tolerant church.

Avoid "us" vs. "them" mentality

!!! Be involved in a ministry (church). Intern at a Chinese Church and maybe Anglo church too.

Find a church with an ABC pastor who can support you and train you. Be cautious.

Try, communicate well, love people. Be involved in Chinese churches before going to seminary

Meaningful involvement in bicultural ministries connecting with staff members both ABC and OBC

Get involved in Church ministry early, can't wait until you are out of seminary. Develop a strong vision and

recognize ABC ministry as a difficult missions field, develop network and support for a life time of ministry.

Find every opportunity to minister to ABCs, teaching them, playing with them, living with them before making a

final decision to pursue an ABC pastorship, and "the crême should rise to the top" . . . the decision should be

obvious . . . you will know it by your fruit.

If possible, be a "tentmaker" minister in the Pauline tradition to avoid being an "employee" of the Chinese

congregation, to maximize your "freedom" or independence, and be closer to where your people are at in terms of understanding better their lifestyle, pressures, and problems.

Learn Chinese and work in a few different Chinese churches to get a feel for what it means to work in an

environment. I would suggest spending a couple of years (while in seminary) in a very Chinese/OBC type of church

and then spend a year or two in a more "ABC" setting

2. PLAN FOR YOUR SUPPORT

!!!!Develop a support system.

share vision and burden with ABC/OBC members

invite key workers: ABC/OBC to home for fun and business

network with other ABC pastors, or even with Caucasian pastors

join support group (not a gripe group)

Make sure you have deep friends inside and outside of your church who will pray for you, listen to you, not tell you how you should think and feel but trust God's work in you. When you struggle, you will probably be more helped

by some compassion than by condemnation which says, "You SHOULDN'T be struggling." When you are discouraged, these friends can help you experience God's love, which must be the source of your strength. You will

probably need times of refreshing and people of refreshing—Jonathan's and Barnabas'."

Find a spiritual friend/colleague/confidant, you must have someone to whom you can pour out your heart, hold you accountable, and accepts you unconditionally without judgment . . .someone other than a wife.

!!!Find a mentor- but be careful about who mentor should be—be clear on expectations.

!!!Set reasonable and appropriate personal/ministry goals,

"see faith and ministry as a long-term process"

Prioritize. The Bible says a pastor's primary responsibilities are preaching, leading, and training (equipping others).

3. SUPPORT OTHERS

Understand OBC minister

Study and discuss profile of Chinese church and OBC mindset

Take cross cultural missions classes and understanding the Chinese mindset

Stop bellyaching about OBC's and churches and start really encouraging the church by affirming that God wants to use us all together and use us because of our differences.

!!!Support the OBC Pastor—build up and affirm the OBC pastor often!!

Call him “pastor” to reassure him that you know your place

Take active steps to build relationship with your OBC pastor. Don't be too smart about your opinions, and be humble because there is much to learn. Be prepared to serve long term for lasting impact; a 2-3 year stint is nothing.

Respect, credibility are earned in perseverance and faithfulness.

Accept OBC ways too. Accept the fact that the ministry is uphill struggle, but realizing that the future is in your hands for the Asian American church

Support Staff

Give full support and encouragement to staff

Believe in your members. See them, not as they are, but as they can become.

But you can't push people farther than they want to go.

Invest time in people- OBCs too! Build relationships with the OBC. Remember that we are ONE church—not a few churches in one building.

Know what's important

Things will never be exactly the way you want it. You have to decide way before hand those things that are very important to you, and those things that are not as important. Ministry is about sacrifice and suffering. It's never easy, but if you know where you draw the line and you make it clear to the OBC leadership, you can avoid some problems.

4. DEVELOP THESE CHRIST-LIKE ATTRIBUTES

!!!!!!Be humble and persevere.

Seek to serve, not to rule.

Humility to receive criticism and willing to improve

Sometimes one needs to be patient and supportive before getting own way

In all things “see others as better than you are” “don't think yourself more highly than you ought” (Rom 12:3)

Learn to serve, not just to lead.

Be more respectful of OBC ministers. Be willing to bend on issues that are not crucial. Learn to pick your battles.

Stick it out for the long run. Put focus not on differences, but on our Lord.

Teach them proper respect of those older.

Learn to submit now!

The most important quality you need to have is humility and teachability. Recognize that you don't have all the answers and that you can learn from anyone, including a twelve year old, if you're open to it. Be vulnerable and have make friends within the congregation. Share openly your struggles and allow others to carry the burden for you. Be flexible and give your leaders authority to carry out their ministry. Your job is to help enable them. Lead by example. Be real.

!!!!!!Be patient ministry grows slowly- be patient

Be very, very patient and understand the Chinese culture as much as possible.

Work with OBC's. Support them and build trust before seeking to get “own way”.

Earn the right to be heard and to act.

Time is on your side

Being patient to allow the Spirit of God to work in the hearts of the OBC pastors. Pray for them and support them in their ministries.

!!!!!!Be humble

learn proper respect yet be friendly and courteous

More agreeable attitude

Be more accommodating, less assertive-argumentative

Respect is key!

Change mindset that this is a job. Be sensitive to what the Lord is teaching in your life.

Ministry is a two way street. It's a give and take. It is patient. It is a labor of love. Study Rom 12-15. Church is not an organization or a business. It is the body of Christ!"

Know that it is not an easy or glamorous life; better mentorship and training.

Know God's opinion of you is what counts, not what others think

Being faithful to God's calling is most important and not always the easiest.

You can't please everyone. Jesus didn't. You have to learn to say "no".

!!!Learn to pray more. Be a man of prayers

Pray for those who persecute and not curse

Remember that you not just an ABC minister, but a Pastor to all in the church.

Willingness to change the way things currently are in the churches.

Stand Firm in the truth- always honor God with the decisions you make. Don't allow politics to keep you from doing the right thing.

Understand and commit to the vision God has given them to serve. Compromising on the vision will quickly disillusion a pastor.

Need to have confidence in yourself (e.g. Timothy). God has something for you to offer—even to those older.

Love those you like the least.

!!Walk with God

Be spiritually prepared for spiritual battle within yourself, grounded in the Word, prayer life, find a mentor, grow in your character and attitudes, and trust in the Sovereignty of God.

Focus on mission and Jesus, not self

Need to earn respect so people will listen

See not your restrictions but everything you can do for Christ.

Communicate

Unity of the staff is so important. Common understanding of the vision and mission.

Important as ABC to establish identity and what your role is.

5. MISC

I'm not sure how much can be done to change the "ethnocentricity" of Chinese "immigrant" churches in N. America.

Non-Chinese English Pastors in Chinese Churches (3)

- Know God's calling. Have a focused ministry on a few things instead of many, have limitations as to involvement in whole church issues. A willingness to serve in light of God's voice, guidance and confirmations.

- Humble heart. Walk as a servant. Forgive. Peace (Matt 5:9) more important than plans.

- Try not to see present ministry as a "stepping stone" to advancement. But as a ministry pure and simple.

For prospective ABC pastors:

- Be kind but firm knowing you answer to God not man and communicate areas of commitment and involvement.

Seek out wisdom from experienced pastors.

- Study on peacemaking, culture, plans.

ABC Former Pastors (7)

- Be lovingly submissive to the (usually) elder, senior OBC pastors in spite of disagreements, and to reassure the OBC through words and actions that they (the ABC) is not a threat to the position of the OBC and divide the church fatally.

- Learn to be more diplomatic and sensitive in presenting ideas, etc. Being confrontational or disrespectful will get you nowhere. Cultivate relationship with the church leadership so that your ideas will be more readily received.

- Greater vision for outreach. Grow our hearts and not just our heads.

- Make an attempt to learn to work within the "culture" of the church, rather than attempt to change it. Seek out mature mentors. Recognize that the senior pastor has been called to the *leader* of the church, and that the proper role of associate pastors is that of a *support role*. Don't do things to widen the gap that already exists between the young people and their parents, but be a bridge between the different generations and cultures. Take time to find out about, and appreciate, the cultural background of OBCs, and if possible, take the time to acquire a working knowledge of the Chinese language, and learn to feel comfortable in the variety of settings that is the congregation.

Don't try to design your ministry around your particular interests and inclinations, but try to acquire the skills necessary for the ministry which congregations require from you. See yourself in an interdependent relationship with the other leaders of the church. Without compromising your convictions, show proper respect to older people.

- Perseverance: develop, refine, and constantly, courageously cast your vision to the church, OBC pastor, and the English congregation. ABC pastors can't afford to be naïve, insensitive, and weak (esp. in personality)
- Know where your gifts are at and try to articulate this to the board so you can work where your gifts are at. It's so important to articulate what you want to do.
- Communication tip: report to OBC pastor what you're doing (not necessarily for approval)
- Learn to go on visitation with OBC pastors and elders, acknowledge that they have the people experience. Learn and watch how they care for people.

On how prospective ABC ministers can prepare:

- I hesitate to highly recommend any ABC to pastoral ministry in an OBC leadership context
- In seminary, take some cross-cultural studies/mission type courses to learn how to be more sensitive to people of various levels of acculturation.
- In seminary, get exposed to as much of the ministry as you can.
- Review candidating process more carefully, learn about common struggles for ABC pastors via classes, seminars, informal fellowship with older ABC pastors, etc.
- Even if you intend to minister primarily to English speaking persons, it is still very helpful to know the contexts from which they come. Hang around overseas born people and get a sense of their values and ways of doing things. Acquire a working knowledge of Chinese (you may be called to mediate a dispute between a young person and their Chinese speaking parents, or you may have to do a funeral in Chinese for you English speaking constituents). The more we learn to be comfortable in a variety of settings, the more ministry opportunities we will have.
- Not be so naïve, idealistic; get more experience in leadership roles in the church (esp. the board); need more personal discipleship from older pastors (esp. ABCs).
- Don't be idealistic. Need to know how to deal with personalities and culture, esp. in leadership.
- Actively find mentor who has the heart to mentor others and years of experience. Develop servant spirit. Be observant of needs around you and ask self how can I meet the needs of others. Develop guiding values and learn to follow them. Don't feel guilty in terms of what God wants you to do.
- After seminary, you need to take time to get to know the church people, to know where they're at and where their hearts are. Need to build familiarity. When interviewing with a church, be very blunt and forthright, and also have an "I want to serve and give everything I have" attitude. See if your gifts match the church's needs. Ask, "How are you going to protect me? What promises can you make me so I can be sure you're committed that I have a balanced life, especially in regards to my family? After all, I'm only a man." Need to have these safeguards in place. Also, it may be good to check out their relationships with other Chinese churches in the area. Why aren't they one body? Be careful of the sin of "big fish has created small ponds." I don't believe God blesses that.
- Have a vision; check if your vision and the church are compatible.

Multiethnic Pastors (3)

Check their vision of where things are heading plus evaluate how comfortable they will be in a predominantly OBC setting. If not, look for alternate routes to establishing ministry among people more like themselves.

OBC Senior Pastors (6)

Re-evaluate their own calling from God and understand that serving in a church is not a job, rather it is a ministry
Clearer sense of calling and perseverance

Learn to speak the language -- at least enough to speak with the no-English speaking people.

Must learn Chinese culture and able to communicate with the parents well.

Sensitive to cultural difference and traditional value.

With an open mind and learn the OBC culture and try to earn their respect, but not demanding.

Cooperate instead of confront. Read *Walk with the Giants*. Get together with other pastors.

The ABC pastor needs to develop relationships with OBC leaders and other congregations [besides ABC]..

Prayerfully seek God's will before enter into the ministry. Ask themselves, why they want to go into the ministry.

Involvement in local church as lay leader before entering seminary

Attend seminaries that offer cross cultural courses

Must learn Chinese culture and able to communicate with the parents well.

Encourage youth leaders (of local church) to attend Urbana convention or send them to short term missions.

APPENDIX IV. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO CURRENT ABC PASTORS AND/OR PROSPECTIVE PASTORS?

FROM ABC SENIOR PASTORS:

It's a great harvest field, get in it.

Be faithful (Luke 19:17)

No matter how tough it gets, don't give up. Trust God to work things out. But if you don't have what it takes, no shame in letting go.

Learn relational skills. This will be the most important skills you ever use in the ministry.

Be respectful toward OBCs who are older than you.

Develop personal spiritual life—your most important source of wisdom and power.

Learn to persevere.

It's very much like pioneer working. Too few models and success stories. Don't be a lone ranger or you can't survive. Need to belong to a small group.

Don't give up because there have been changes taking place. Realize that different areas of the country (USA) has different change scales (example: East coast is slower, while the West coast is quite progressive).

If people could accurately assess themselves, they wouldn't fail. Look at people who succeeded in Scripture and church history. True spirituality exists in adverse situations. What it takes to succeed: develop perseverance, fight the good fight, develop through trials, don't think too highly of own skills. Other answers people give to why pastors quit are just obstacles. You can remove obstacles or jump them, but this is not the main issue. Remove what you can; live with the rest. Express sorrow, but don't let it turn into hopelessness. Sometimes the pastor has to rebuke or bury the church. Some churches are already dead: God's working to bury them, so don't try to stop that. It's against God's will. Choose a turnaround place to serve in.

There are two reasons why one goes into the ministry.

- 1) The Call. I believe a call is when God speaks to you audibly or visually or in a vision. But this can also fail (e.g. Saul or Solomon).
- 2) You want to do it; you aspire; you like it. Then you don't know if you'll make it.

Why are you a pastor? I'm a pastor because I like doing it; I'm at peace and have joy.

Why the church? The church is real life. The parachurch (e.g. InterVarsity) has turnaround, like seminary.

Why the Chinese church? Glass ceiling in other churches.

I don't believe mentoring is the answer. Most people who come don't listen to what you say anyway, maybe 20% success.

Churches die because Jesus wants them to die.

Love and care, but don't just try to please.

Better to start a new church than try to save dying ones.

Chinese community center "churches" aren't even churches. They're dead.

Encouragement

Look at the lives you touch and the Lord's desires

Be strong and courageous (Joshua 1:6,7,9)

If I can survive 35 years of ministry which saves a lot of souls along the way, so can you.

Persevere in the beginning. It gets better.

We all suffer and learn.

It can be done! You are the key for the next generation.

Get some good ABC mentors, or other pastors.

Warnings

Don't react so easily to pain and suffering

Fulfill your ministry (2 Tim 4:5)

Sex and pride are your biggest worries

Be patient. Don't be a quitter. Hang in there

Many openings are destined for disaster. Choose your first ministry wisely.

Satan's working over-time to keep ABCs from ministry. Need to really stay close to the Lord. Be sure of calling.

Check things out thoroughly, not just with the pastoral leadership, but the lay leadership too. Determine who holds the authority in a church (lay leaders or pastoral?)

General Advice

(for all ministers) Focus on own relationship with the Father. First return to the Lord if you've departed. Seek to listen to and discern His voice with confidence. Cultivate passion for Jesus. In general, what matters most is what God wants and thinks. Learn how God heals and follow His ways for personal healing from past sin- one's own and that of others. Cultivate and maintain support for personal growth and for ministry development. Seek discernment regarding how Christ transforms culture and teach 'Christian counterculture'. Be humble, gentle, kind when teaching and dealing with people.

ABC's want to live the "American Dream", even in the pastorate. But the pastorate is for servants (Matthew 20:28), not for lords. The pastorate is for pursuit of God's interests and God's kingdom, [not] for pursuit of our personal agendas.

I spent 16 years on mission field. Excellent prep to work in Chinese church. A few years overseas is a great asset.

FROM ABC NON-SENIOR PASTORS:

A. ENCOURAGEMENT

God will be with you always through the good times and the bad times. Continue to honor Him in all that you do- He will know and see a pure heart that is in full submission to Him.

You must be passionate about the Lord to give your life up like this. Do people see that you are passionate and do they know why? Do you know what the other pastors in your church are passionate about, what the people of your church are passionate about?

God wants to and will bless you and your church more than you can ask or imagine. Will you really believe it?

The Chinese church is a good place to learn and practice leadership. If you can lead successfully in a Chinese church through positive change God will open doors for you to lead in other ministries

The Lord is coming back soon. Do you long for His coming?

There's going to be more and more opportunities for ministry to English-speaking brothers and sisters.

Critical Ministry

It is a critical ministry. If you leave, who will minister to the second generation?

It is a privilege to be in the ministry"

You have a great impact on those around you. There is a great field for harvest that Jesus has entrusted you to!

There is a field out there and it is ready for reaping. God is doing something new and good. For Moses is dead and Joshua is going forward. The young people need God

Remember God has put you here for a purpose

ABC pastors are an extremely rare breed. We should be honored to hold such a position of influence. We have such a unique opportunity to minister. We must not give up. We must see our lives as nothing but to work and labor for Christ. Ambition and honor must not be our desire or goal; we won't get it.

Reach whole families for Christ. Having a Chinese & English ministry together opens the door for the whole family to come and each language department plays off of each other in terms of evangelism and leadership development.

Look at role models

Think of Jeremiah. If he can take the flak, so too should we

Look to God

God will not forget your love and good works, even in times when no one seems to care nor appreciate you.

Your help comes from the Lord (Psalm 20:7)

God loves you and people in the church care for you.

You need to be true to God and deliver the Word appropriately.

People want you to succeed

No one is praying for your failure. Everyone wants you to succeed in the ministry

It's an imperfect church

From a more systemic perspective, stereotypes and "traditions" are part of an imperfect church.

Instead of focusing on conflict with leaders, focus on those you can influence for God.

Remember

When you're discouraged, think of the things in your sphere of ministry that have been positive. i.e., the person who came to Christ, the woman growing in her faith, the couple whose marriage you helped save.

Look at the long range vision for your ministry instead of short term results.

OBCs are changing—have patience.

If you persevere, you will be rewarded with people coming to Christ.

If you are faithful in doing what God wants you to do, then you don't have to worry about results.

Ours is a huge harvest waiting to be collected. God is getting ready a whole generation of men and women for His service in the Chinese American church, be strong and a role model for our next generation.

Stick it out for the long haul. Don't give up, don't split the church or spread strife.

Remember why you entered ministry in the first place

Know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

You must love the Chinese people, both OBC and ABC, "Love covers over a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8)

The mission and vision of Jesus Christ is stronger than anything else. Be focused on God's saving grace on all people

Truth has to be heard and preached.

Look at the fruit

Hang in there—every ministry is tough.

There is an exciting mission field for those that can see it and be in it!

Your problems are not unique—other immigrant churches face the same issues

You are a pioneer at your church—whatever you do at your church is likely the 1st time it's been done. New demands long term work and perspective to change.

Love, patience, and persistence will get you through.

There is no more wonderful thing on earth than to see God using you to touch the lives of others. If you honor God and serve him in faith no person or problem can stand in God's way. Good things are happening. It just takes a little while to find out where.

There is much to say. I just hope with all my heart that ABC ministers and prospective ministers don't lose hope or give up on the Chinese Church.

It can be done and the church will be blessed.

You will be doing a great service for traditional Chinese families who want to worship (across the generations) in the same church.

Let's keep each other in our prayers—especially by region, recognizing needs/opportunities in each part of N. America.

Don't give up. This is what Satan likes you to do.

Don't run a popularity campaign. Care for your flock.

B. WARNINGS

Pace yourself.

Go slow, although this can be relative and each person must determine for himself how slow too slow is.

Keep a balance. One pastor found himself becoming a workaholic and neglecting his wife and children. He received help from counseling. "I was adding my own fuel to the fire in addition to God's fuel, and burning myself up.

Learn to let go of results. "You can lead a horse to the water, but you can't force it to drink."

Don't ever forget your personal love relationship with Christ. Make sure you enjoy praying and reading the Word.

Must pursue Christlikeness especially through difficulties

Feelings come and go. Don't trust them too much. Don't act when you are discouraged.

!!!!Beware pride Guard against pride. Remember God doesn't need us, we need Him!

Always keep motives in check—be on your guard for against merely success in people's eyes and self-glorification it's easy for the sense of superiority and pride to seep into your heart as you deal with OBC leaders. Do not let this subtle form of pride take hold on your heart.

one of the most overlooked NEEDED attitude is a genuine, humble servant attitude. . . I've found that most ministers consider this fulfilled in the mere fact that they are full time ministers. . . but when a minister has BECOME a servant, criticism, offenses, hardship, difficulties will have nil adverse effect on the minister.

We must be examples of the Law of Christ. We must give the example of Christ that transcends Chinese tradition or custom or lifestyle.

Don't think of ministry as your own personal kingdom building. Be open to ministering to whomever and wherever God wants you or there is a need. Don't become narrowly focused on your own church.

Beware idealism Don't be too idealistic. Don't think that you are going to come in to save and change things. Watch out for arrogance and judgment.

A lot of ABC pastors come in not realizing the amount of housekeeping that first needs to be done. Before we can evangelize, we need to "clean house" so it's welcoming—God's love needs to be there.

Don't have too high expectations of seminary. Only about 30% is useful for ministry.

Beware critical/judgmentalism Guard against a critical /judgmental spirit

Don't judge others, but accept that both you and OBC's are sinners saved by grace

Do not be sarcastic or cynical especially about relations with OBC staff—it's not a good witness.

If you cannot lead effectively in a Chinese Church, don't think going elsewhere will change anything. People are the same wherever you go.

Don't give in to the temptation that the OBC is the adversary to whether you will be successful in the ministry of the Chinese church

Don't embarrass or differ with OBC in public over little issues that are not doctrinal in nature

Complaining only makes you and your church sick. Be a finder of solutions and a maker of peace.

Beware of overpowering the current OBC pastor, but use gentleness and patience with the OBC congregation

Beware of a results-oriented mentality. Remember that the Lord simply asks for faithfulness. Journal praises of what you see God doing in the church, in individuals, in yourself. Remember that God puts ministers where HE does for 2 reasons: 1) to bless the people. 2) to bless the minister!

Don't be ignorant of Chinese culture

Distinguish between the urgent and the necessary

Delegate to others to avoid burnout

Don't think you can do it on your own.

Communicate to leaders what you are doing.

Get other church leaders involved in what you are doing.

Know the field

Much of the work will be with youth

Beware the enemy

The enemy is real and it is genuine spiritual warfare you are involved in when you are involved with vying for souls . . . when you succeed, making an impact on behalf of the kingdom of God, expect trouble, prepare yourself . . . when you feel self-satisfied that all is going good with no resistance on the part of the evil one, be suspicious and suspect that the devil is okay with what you are doing . . . spiritual discernment is one gift to ask God for with earnestness.

Know why you're going in

You can't go into the ministry to seek fulfillment of insecurity. Regarding any impure motives, you must give each to God, because critics will see through our cover-ups, God doesn't bless it, and there may be damage that may never be built over.

ON CANDIDATING

Go into a Chinese Church with your eyes open. Know its history, mission and vision statement, what they expect the ABC pastor to do for the church, the philosophy of ministry of the church and OBC pastor, lines of authority, written and "unwritten" limitations, overall spiritual health of the congregation as a whole, especially the English group. Make a commitment to life at the church from the beginning (until the Lord leads elsewhere)

Some OBC pastors may be "impossible" to work with. Get to know the Sr. Pastor well before taking the job

Think big, think long term. Don't let your flesh, your pride, cheat you out of the fruit in your ministry. Endure

hardship, misunderstandings, for the sake of your flock. Don't make rash decisions in your anger and frustrations.

Handle conflicts with wisdom and humility, don't let Satan steal your fruit of labor.

Before taking a job anywhere, get a good sense of where the church is spiritually and what their priorities are. Only take the job if God is clearly calling you—even to a church that is spiritually bankrupt. Do not allow church members to "sweet talk" you into accepting the job. Be wise and ask God for guidance to understand the true hearts of the people in the church. Be in prayer continually.

Be wise and discerning about people—Usually the people who are really accepting in the beginning may later try to control and manipulate. Always keep the line of communication with Pastor, Board, Elders, members open otherwise they have some complaints to charge against you.

Since not all Chinese churches are alike so be careful to what you hear. What may apply in one church may not work in another. There is a difference between Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Mainland China, and the Philippines aside from the dialect they each speak. Taiwan churches tend to be more

politically minded, Cantonese more relaxed & relational. Mainlanders are apprehensive and are very curious so do not expect immediate conversion.

MISC

The possibility of independently starting churches that are English speaking only, therefore free of encumbrance from being attached to a Chinese congregation

FROM NON-CHINESE ENGLISH PASTORS:

Advice

Do not take responsibility where authority is withheld. Focus on a few things to go deep while training others to serve with you. Worship the Lord as a way to cast off burdens and sorrows.

God's call is to be faithful not "successful." Success can wait but obvious much room should be given for character training. We need to wait for years to put our learned plans into operation—if ever.

Encouragement

Know why you are where you are at (purpose, goal, vision) and do not move away unless the Lord's voice is vivid to you.

If faithful and enduring, God will in time use you. Dt. 8:16

Warnings

Be bold to say no, stand up for truth not self, get to know people as best to your ability in Christ, trust others knowing it could result in pain, consider the source in everything that is said about you. Be prepared to be alone, hurt, misunderstood, not appreciated, misunderstood, ignored, overlooked, challenged . . .

Must learn to submit to authority. Learn to make chief goal to make your authorities succeed. Never bad mouth. Praise them where you can.

FROM FORMER ABC PASTORS:

Advice

Learn as much as you can about the Chinese culture. Surround yourself with a solid Christian support base. Have an ABC mentor who has already been tried and survived. (Try to) communicate as often as possible with the OBC leadership. Have a servant heart in service and word.

Be on your knees in prayer for the church and the members of your church. Take the time to cultivate relationships with church members and demonstrate care and compassion. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Continue to dream, but meditate on what it is to be content.

Seek internship experiences, a mentor if available!

Ministry by ABC pastors is much needed, very difficult, but also can be very rewarding. Learn to work in interdependent relationships with others. Don't try to change OGC minister, but make changes within yourself for the sake of the ministry that God has called you. Find a mature, experienced mentor. Think long term. Ten or twenty years is not too long to stay in one place. Don't be afraid to ask for help and to learn from others.

Persevere. Have a thicker skin with a tender heart; be more thoughtful as to what kind of church you want to serve in.

You can be called to be in ministry or business. The calling to ministry should bring joy and satisfaction. ABC's with M. Div. Are not necessarily called to do ministry all the time, but feel obligated to and may become discouraged (feel like failure otherwise). Once these leave the church, they don't go back.

Hang onto vision and be patient. Regardless of your role, be accessible to the rest of the church.

I think the area of relationship is key to survive and understanding OBC church leadership. Most everything that is done and said, whether true or not, or effective or not, is to preserve a relationship in some way. The intentions are usually good. To be effective in an OBC leadership context, the ABC must show themselves to be even more hard working than the OBC, and able to relate with the whole family, even if they do not speak the language. The ABC must at least show themselves to be “Chinese” in respecting elders and submitting to authority. Knowing how to speak Chinese and liking Chinese food is a plus!

Ministry in a church can be stressful, and in that sense can affect one’s health. A dedicated worker can often become *too emotionally and personally involved in some church issue* and lose all sense of perspective. Keeping a proper balance between work, family, or personal communion with God, and rest is therefore an essential and continuing task.

Encouragement

Remember that the OBC pastor and leadership is usually really trying to promote the kingdom of God too,. The OBC is probably as frustrated with you as you are with hi. God loves the OBC too! You’re on the same team!

Hang in there; persevere. Surround yourself with other ABC pastors from other area churches and develop a support group.,

Even with the struggles and frustrations, God has greatly blessed and used many ABCs in ministry to impact the lives of many ABC Christians for all eternity. Blessing still outweigh the hassles!

There are many opportunities to serve and you can afford to be picky; some OBCs (esp. pastors) are starting to understand the ABC situation and ministry.

Warnings

What OBCS often say to your face is not necessarily what they say to others. They are culturally “bound” by being polite and saving face, rather than being honest and forthright.

Chinese cultural values and the concepts of filial piety (e.g., respect of elders) run deep even in the church – need to be very aware of this process going on. Develop a tough outer skin and a soft heart, not the other way around.

Before accepting a church position, talk with former pastors (ABC and OBC), ask them for major positive and negative of the church – Go slow on the candidating process!

Some ABCs (esp. the younger ones) are beginning to feel that Chinese churches are irrelevant to them personally; some ABCs have become consumers—as a result, you may have a transitory congregation.

Pastors get discouraged when they don’t have vision or don’t walk with confidence.

FROM PASTORS OF MULTIETHNIC CHURCHES:

Advice

Just because you like studying the Bible or teaching it doesn't mean you're called to be a pastor. People today, more and more, expect their pastors to be God-inspired visionaries and excellent communicators, among other things. You may not be able to discover and develop these skills in an OBC setting. Look for mentors who are doing more what you can imagine yourself doing.

Develop a sense of humor; take yourself less seriously, value people, ministry grows slowly – be patient.

Encouragement

This is what a forward-looking OBC pastor told me when I wasn't getting the blessing of OBC pastors: Don't expect them to bless what they don't understand. If God has called you to be a ministry, then a ministry is out there for you. It may not exist now, but God wouldn't call you if there wasn't a ministry for you. If you are truly called and you find that ministry, over time, even the most stubborn OBC pastors will have to at least recognize your ministry. Don't wait for their blessing. Go out and see if you can find your ministry.

Learn as much about your personal strengths (weaknesses before/as you are in ministry)

Warnings

Before you jump to the conclusion that you must be called to be a church planter if you can't stomach serving in an OBC church, realize that church planting, especially if you are seriously underfunded, is HARD work. Guard against a critical/judgmental spirit.

FROM OBC SENIOR PASTORS:

Advice to current ABC pastors and prospective pastors:

Be submissive to God's guidance and observe the church's ley-law concerning their role in the church

If you have a clear calling from God, then hang in there.

Willing to accept the treatment offered by the church if they find the Lord lead them to serve in that church

Balance church ministry and family life. I think some AB too much emphasis on family life and sometime neglect the church ministry.

Be faithful to serve the Lord in your current position.

People will know if you have a heart for people. If the congregation doesn't support you, ask yourself if you love the people.

Servant's attitude and vision are key. Need clear vision.

If your desire is in financial success, please don't go into ministry.

Time priorities should be:

- 1) relationship with God
- 2) spouse
- 3) ministry:
 - a- preaching, studies
 - b- ministry—leaders, caring and evangelism

Encouragement

Don't give up: If God is calling you into the ministry, He will have a place for you to serve Him, it may be just a parachurch organization

ABC ministry is the most rewarding to spiritual growth if you can persevere.

Men may fail, but our Lord will not. So be faithful to Him. (Proverbs 3:-5-6)

Stay on and be perseverance. ABC ministry is the future of Chinese church in North America! The most important and needed ministry. Therefore ? ABC pastor will treasure their opportunity.

In God's ministry, there is no sunshine all the time. But in due time, He'll reward you.

Warnings

In any church that you serve, never classify yourself as ABC or others as OBC, always treat one another as brothers and sisters in the Lord

Beware of 4 things: power, money, sex, and pride

If you motive is to be like Swindoll, McArthur, or David Jeremiah or Bill Hybels, you better think twice before you going into the ministry.

If the pastors can't work together,, the congregation easily disagrees with each other.

APPENDIX V. ABC PASTORS: WHY DID YOU PERSIST IN ABC MINISTRY?

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

!Because people need to be saved, and few ABC's are

God called me to be a pastor- I need to obey Him out of love and do His will

The ministry is a calling, not a job, and the Lord hasn't "allowed" me to leave.

The need of the flock.

Calling.

Knew it wouldn't be easy.

I frequently reminded myself that I was serving the Lord and not the church people, therefore I did not have to please the people; I had to please the Lord.

I didn't let disappointment crush me, but moved on.

Prayer helped to give me the right perspective.

Tough to be called as pastor of a white church.

There's a lot to do.

I've experienced a relative degree of success in the ministry.

I have learned how to make OBC leaders my ally and how a church with different cultures can be at peace and grow together.

For the sake of the next generation, otherwise Chinese church will remain 1st generation

God's call; ministry situation which was young, receptive at the time when I first came. Having been here for 21 years, change is harder and people are more set. I am speaking of both English and Chinese. That is one reason why a church plant was started. Infusing of new opportunities, risks, and changes.

I grew up in a blue collar neighborhood in New York. Too many Christians, and pastors, are too soft.

I don't try to please everyone, but I'm honest, fair, straightforward, and not afraid to tell people off.

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

!!!!!! The need.

The church is the hope of the world. I feel called by God to offer my gifts and experience to assist change and growth on the bilingual church. I have a hope that an effective bilingual church model can be established one day that will serve as an example for all the bilingual churches of how each language ministry can reach its full potential for Christ

I have the responsibility to call ABC to full time ministry by challenging them with the Word and with the need.

I know that Eph 4:12 applies to me. I am called to train and build up leaders.

Because ABC are loved by God and matter to God.

Because I believe families need to be reached for Christ, not just youths or English-speaking couples. Some couples are of mixed marriages (one speaks English & the other Chinese) and need to be in a church where there are bona fide ministries in both languages.

!!!!!!!**The calling** keeps me hanging in there. It is a calling of God. I dare not take leave without permission.

Besides, I enjoy seeing the growth of young people.

!!Enjoyment of ministry and serving the Lord

I love the youth ministry.

A deep love and concern for the Youth; wanting them to grow and develop in the image of Jesus Christ as Godly men and women.

I'm a preacher of the gospel

Because I'm more comfortable with American culture than I am with the Chinese.

Love ministry, enjoy teaching/preaching, desire to reach Chinese

!Opportunity and the vision for the church motivates me to move ahead

The fruit born from ministry confirms to me that I'm on the right track

I have the opportunity to shape the ABC ministry and English speaking youth and adults for the future.

I seek to build a model within the Chinese church of how the ABC-OBC ministers can develop and grow concurrently unique role of Chinese church

Hope

I believe God is doing something great among the younger generations

Thinking about God's Kingdom and not just my particular church or personal issues/problems
very strong determination (*author's interpretation from interview*)

!!Understanding the church is imperfect and that fruit takes time.

In seminary, God spoke to me through the study of Jeremiah. He let me know that sometimes we are not called to the ideal church. What matters most is that we remain faithful to our call, even if it means facing opposition every day.

By God's grace, I have the privilege to serve in a very open and flexible church. Though there are difficulties, God can change the situation – and He has. I just need to wait on God's time.

I also believe that fruit/result comes from longer service at one location and church. I've accepted the fact that obstacles/discouragement are part of being a pastor, whether in ABC ministry or not, so I learn to deal with each discouragement as much as possible and move on rather than acting up on the discouraging feelings at the moment. I've learned through the hardship and my character is molded by working through problems.

I accepted a call to pain when I accepted my call to serve Christ.

I got into this ministry because I'm convinced that the rich blessings ABC's have received need to be channeled into service for our Lord. We are too self-serving as a people, and I minister because I want to raise up a new generation of ABC pastors with a vision for the Chinese church. I persist because I must set the example that it is possible to survive/bear fruit in the Chinese church. The stakes are too high for me to quit.

Results and titles don't affect my personal worth.

Unique situation

!Also, there is great encouragement from the OBC because we have the same vision—building godly families while building up the body.

My personality—more introverted and passive, and usually don't have a personal agenda to accomplish

Personal stubbornness; thick skin

Having good, honest mentors and partners in ministry; having a church that wants staff to succeed.

Good supportive and understanding friends

!Wife's encouragement

Non-Chinese English Pastors (3)

The Lord clearly led me here, has used the church to do a great work in me, he has not led me away, he longs to reflect himself in and through me, I am able to follow people through life (High school to young adults), he has given me endurance and hope and has been so good and faithful. He is my reward.

ABC Former Pastors (7)

Despite the abuse (verbal, emotional, etc) I persevered because I strongly felt the Lord had called me into pastoral ministry and that he would use whatever experiences that I had to become positive and for the good of his kingdom. So really, strictly out of obedience to God. I'm currently not officially in ABC ministry. I left an OBC led church at the end of last year.

Because of the people and my love for them, I was able to overlook the political stuff in the church.

Fruit was evident in changed lives.

When I first started working in the church, I was fortunate to a) have an older experienced Chinese speaking minister mentor me in the Chinese language, clue me in on Chinese funeral customs, give me weekly critiques on my preaching, etc. b) have the support of two mature and experienced missionaries who were responsible for the programs of the church, and c) have the support of the congregation, whom I have known through my long participation in the church as a member. When I began ministry in the early 50s, most Chinese seminarians did not have options for employment other than in Chinese churches. When in later years it was possible for Chinese clergy to work in other contexts, *I did not want to take myself out of the very small pool of ABC bilingual pastors.* But the main reason I persisted was because I felt I was doing something important, even while most Chinese parents would rather see us in medicine or one of the other professions.

I saw that there was still a place for ABCs in a Chinese church. The calling to that setting was still strong.

Why did you leave?

Chose Asian American church because of limitations on evangelism in Chinese church. Stayed with Asian American (not multiethnic) because [city] has so many unchurched Asian Americans.

First church—Caught in crossfire. Not personally prepared to be a pastor. Second church—not enough Asians. The ABC congregation lacks commitment to a group. People in English congregation left because they aren't loyal to Chinese church. ABCs expect more than a Chinese church can deliver. The church expects you to be a dynamic speaker. Unwritten job expectations.

APPENDIX VI. IF YOU COULD GO BACK AND DO THINGS DIFFERENTLY, WHAT WOULD YOU DO? (question directed to ABC pastors)

ABC Senior Pastors (8)

Nothing

Try to be more respectful of OBC pastors and OBC lay leadership.
Spend more energy on developing relationships.
Work harder at communication skills.
More time praying and developing personal spiritual life.
Undergird everything I did with more prayer.

Not much! Probably not take myself as seriously. I want our people to grow and be stretched in their faith, but I need to leave the Spirit to do that work. Meanwhile, I will invest my time and attention in the next generation of Christian laborers for Gods kingdom.

ABC Non-senior pastor (37)

Allocate time and resources better/ Chosen different strategy for ministry

Build stronger relationships with key influences in the church earlier on before I'd propose change
!Spend more time with the OBC congregation, parents, etc. I find that as we understand one another, many of the differences can be overcome. AS you care for them, they will care for you—most of the time.
Develop the spirituality and spiritual maturity of the lay leaders to impact others.
Develop deeper friendships with lay leaders of OBC side.
Invest more time with people, prayers, holiness, integrity instead of books, planning, agenda, the “vision” thing.
I would spend more time solidifying my marriage before entering pastoral ministry. I would be sure my spouse is 100% supportive of being in ministry together.
I would work harder at building relationship with my OBC senior pastor early on in my ministry. I was disappointed at a lack of mentorship and just got busy with ministry without taking the time to build relationship.
I would have built small groups around existing relationships and delegated more responsibility to leaders.

Candidating

I might have been more careful in candidating at different churches. I would ask more questions about expectations from the church leadership on my roles, responsibilities and time use. I would share my style, my preferences and giftedness and see if that is acceptable to them.
Be very, very patient in finding a good church. One bad one can ruin your life.

Better training

Develop my admin skills sooner, share my vision and burden with my key co-workers and the church leadership
Leadership training
!!!Mandarin development
I wish I knew Chinese
More local church involvement before seminary

Be somewhat more assertive in the leadership with the church

Be more submissive

Pray more

That God would send spirit not of timidity, but love; also for the message from God that allows you to act with boldness of God

Start with clear mission and vision- What is our business? How are we doing it?

Listened a lot more to what people (adults and youth) said, before planning and implementing any new programs.
Listen to early warning signs! When independent sources start saying the same thing, regarding marriage or whatever, you better listen!

Communication- Keep the lines of communication a lot more open. Spend more time with the parents of the youth so that we understand one another. Work on relationships between members of the church so that I would have more volunteers to help with the ministry.

I would not have entered the ministry

Start own congregation--

It is better to start your own congregation. The people are more loyal to the cause of doing ministry. Leave the dominance of the Chinese Senior Pastor quietly.

Non-Chinese English Pastors (3)

Same as I should do now . . . spend far, far, far more time in prayer, praise and true fellowship. Seek more to delight in God and to hear from Him.

ABC Former Pastors (7)

- Learn how to speak Chinese to be more effective. "One is not really considered Chinese if one does not speak the Chinese language" in OBC eyes.

- Nothing.

- Utilize candidating and honeymoon period to change system of lay leadership from life time deacons to 3-4 year terms.

- If I were doing ministry over again, I would pay even more attention to encouraging promising you men and women, or persons contemplating second careers, to enter ministry in the Chinese-American context. While it is true that there are many seminary graduates, the pool of those who have the maturity to function effectively over time is considerable less.

- Be more picky as far as choosing my first church after seminary. I could have re-entered the pastorate a little sooner. Maybe I could have persevered more in some of the churches.

Multiethnic Pastors (1)

I would have planted this daughter church earlier.

OBC Senior Pastors (1)

1- Show appreciation for those in ministry (e.g. calling them to see how they're doing, visitation, inviting them over, writing cards); love people more and get to know them better.

2- Have more communication with other leaders.

3- Have an attitude of more humility and respect. Give people freedom and trust.