

Diaspora Youth Ministry is a Mission

We often think of missions as something that happens in distant lands, defined by how far we travel across a map. But today, the world has come to us, and our understanding of missions is changing. Scholar in "Diaspora Missiology" remind us that the heart of missions isn't about how far we travel but about engaging with people across cultures and sharing the Gospel.[1] Looking at the Bible, we see that the Gospel has always spread through "diaspora"—through people being scattered. In the Old Testament, though the Israelites faced the pain of exile, they kept their identity as God's people, shining His light even in foreign lands. In the New Testament, when the early church faced persecution, they were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. What looked like a tragedy actually became the catalyst that took the Gospel from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

This is why we believe that our youth ministry is not just a program—it is a mission field. Another scholar suggests that youth workers are essentially missionaries in a foreign land [2]. Culture is not just about the language we speak; it is about our shared experiences, our values, and our feelings. For our Cantonese-speaking youth who have recently moved here with their families, they are navigating a complex world. They are not only dealing with the typical challenges of adolescence but are also adjusting to a new society with huge cultural differences. Research shows that 89.7% of Hong Kong parents who have moved to the UK want their children to hold onto their mother tongue and native culture to maintain a sense of who they are. Because of the internet, these youth often live in a "third culture"—a unique space that is not quite their old home and not quite their new one. To reach them, we must lay aside our

desire for them to "just fit in" and instead approach them with the humility of a missionary, seeking to understand their world and bridge the gap caused by their history.

In our ministry, sharing the Gospel is not just about teaching facts. It is about seeing lives transformed. Many of our youth grew up in the church in Hong Kong and know the stories, but now they are facing the deep questions of "Who am I?" and "What is my purpose?" as they navigate a new country. At this critical time, our role is not to give them rigid rules or cold dogmas. Instead, we want to walk with them through the brokenness of this move. We want to help them see that while their location has changed, their identity as citizens of Heaven and disciples of Christ remains solid. When our youth can experience God's comfort, healing, and guidance through the pain of this transition, their faith becomes something truly their own. This deep, life-changing encounter with the Lord is the most beautiful fruit of our mission together.

- [1] Wan, Enoch. *Diaspora Missiology: Theory, Methodology, and Practice*. 2014.
- [2] Tony Jones, "Postmodern Youth Ministry" , 2004 .
- [3] Lau, Chun-kwok, and Yuk-ha Law. "The Future of Cantonese and Traditional Chinese Among Newly Arrived Hong Kong Immigrant Children in the United Kingdom—A Study on Parents' Attitudes, Challenges Faced and Support Needed." . 2024.