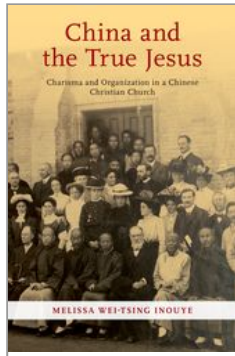


University Press Scholarship Online
Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and
Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Title Pages

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

(p.i) China and the True Jesus **(p.ii)**

(p.iii) China and the True Jesus

(p.iv) Copyright Page

(p.xix) China and the True Jesus **(p.xx)**

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers
the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and
education
by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford
University
Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of
America.

© Oxford University Press 2018

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press, or as expressly permitted by law, by license, or under terms agreed with the appropriate reproduction rights organization. Inquiries concerning reproduction outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department, Oxford University Press, at the address above.

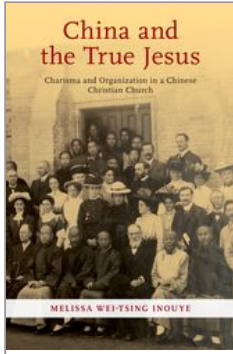
You must not circulate this work in any other form and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer.

CIP data is on file at the Library of Congress
ISBN 978-0-19-092346-4

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

University Press Scholarship Online
Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

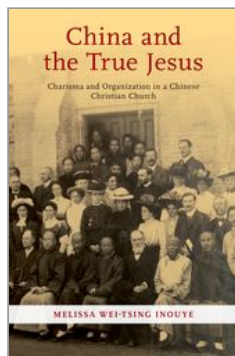
(p.v) Dedication

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

To my parents **(p.vi)**

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

(p.ix) Acknowledgments

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

In the course of researching and writing this book I have incurred many debts beyond my ability ever to repay. From an academic perspective, the earliest of these debts goes back to the time when I was an undergraduate in East Asian Studies at Harvard College. My senior thesis advisor, Philip Kuhn, gave up much of his valuable time to advise and mentor me. As I sat in his office on one occasion, books crowding around in all three dimensions, Professor Kuhn said, “You and I are similar. We’re both interested in truth.” Up until that point I had thought that history was about sources, voices, and narratives, but that “truth” was somehow beyond the reach of scholarly research. As I continued to learn from Professor Kuhn in graduate school, however, I came to understand a bit more about what he meant, from his meticulous readings of primary sources and his engagement with the authors of the texts as if they were living, breathing human beings—which, of course, they were.

This book began as my doctoral dissertation, supervised by Henrietta Harrison. Professor Harrison not only taught me in two graduate courses but also mentored me throughout several years out of residence as I juggled the care of four young children (two born before the dissertation was completed and two within the following two years). Her advising-by-email must have been so inconvenient and tedious. I so appreciate her unfailing encouragement and thoughtful insights—not just about research, but about being an academic and a human being. Throughout the years I have been honored to have such a brilliant, generous, and lively teacher. Michael Szonyi introduced me to the history of Chinese popular religion and offered rigorous feedback on dissertation drafts. David D. Hall, who taught me about American religious history as an undergraduate, also gave wonderful advice as a member of my dissertation committee. During graduate study, I learned a great deal from Nancy Cott, who took the time to read and comment extensively on early essays in which I was still learning to speak Scholarese and who directed my general examination field in American history.

(p.x) A year of dissertation research during which I acquired the bulk of the material for this book was supported by the Harvard Graduate Society Dissertation Completion Fellowship, the Harvard-China Fellowship, and the Foreign Language and Area Studies grants of the US Department of Education. I also received generous support for research in other sites by the Religious Research Association Constant R. Jacquet Award and the Association for Asian Studies China and Inner Asia Council Small Grant Award. Writing and further research was supported by the University of Auckland and in particular the very generous University of Auckland Faculty Research Development Fund New Staff Grant. I received kind administrative and logistical assistance from the Shanghai Municipal Library and the New Zealand Centre at Peking University.

During my research in China I was hosted generously by Chinese academic institutions, including Fudan University, which administered the Harvard-China Fellowship. Li Tiangang at Fudan was a warm and helpful mentor. At the headquarters of the True Jesus Church in Taiwan, I was received very kindly by the staff, with special assistance from Hou Shufang, the headquarters librarian. Kar C. Tsai, a leader of the True Jesus Church, was extremely kind in helping me make needed connections within the church. I received tremendously helpful advice from Chinese scholars of religion such as Zhang Xianqing. Jan Kiely was gracious and generous in helping me to make contacts with local scholars and archives. Paul Katz gave candid and thoughtful advice about professional correspondence and grant applications. During my years working in the archives at Hong Kong Baptist University, sometimes with a kid in tow, Irene Wong and her colleagues combined competence with humor and collegiality.

In the midst of my fieldwork, I benefited from a productive exchange of ideas about the True Jesus Church and Chinese Christianity with David Reed, Chen Bin, Chen-Yang Kao, Gordon Melton, Jiexia Elisa Zhai, Daniel Bays, Tsai Yen-zen, and Chris White. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee's generous and savvy advice on how to access Chinese archives and his broad insights into the significance of Chinese Christian institutions have shaped my development as a scholar. Li Ji gave a thoughtful and helpful review of the dissertation manuscript and was a wonderful colleague during my time in Hong Kong. Benjamin Liao Inouye read sections of the dissertation manuscript and pointed out places where it was unreadable, with comments such as "Is this really what academic writing is supposed to be like? This sentence is about five times too long."

In the process of revising the manuscript for publication, I received support and encouragement from my colleagues in Asian Studies and History at the University of Auckland, including Mark Mullins, Ellen Nakamura, Paul Clark, Stephen Noakes, Richard Phillips, Jennifer Frost, Karen Huang, and Nora Yao. Mark, Ellen, Paul, Stephen, and Richard all read and commented helpfully **(p.xi)** on large chunks of the manuscript, pointing out errors and posing productive questions. Student research assistants Kayla Grant, Jessica Palairret, Charles Timo Toebes, and Zhijun Yang helped with research and commented on drafts. Departmental heads Robert Sanders and Rumi Sakamoto supported my research. In addition, Henrietta Harrison, Michael Ing, Yang Fenggang, Haiying Hou, Amy O'Keefe, Steven Pieragastini, Paul Mariani, Thomas Dubois, Laurie Maffly-Kipp, Stuart Vogel, Charity Shumway, Mei Li Inouye, and Charles Shirō Inouye read and commented on sections of the manuscript. Jason Steorts read and commented on the entire manuscript. I am so grateful that these brilliant and busy people made the sacrifice of time and energy to mull over my homely paragraphs and clunky sentences. I also received helpful feedback at a March 2017 Association for Asian Studies panel organized by Ryan Dunch, with comments by Xi Lian.

Material from two of the chapters in this book has been published previously. A narrative of transnational relationship between Wei Enbo and Bernt Berntsen in Chapter 2 appeared in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), edited by Yang Fenggang, Allan Anderson, and Joy K. C. Tong. The discussion on the True Jesus Church's accommodation with the Maoist state in Chapter 6 appeared in the journal *Modern China* (March 2018). I thank these two publishers for allowing me to include these materials in this book.

Acknowledgments

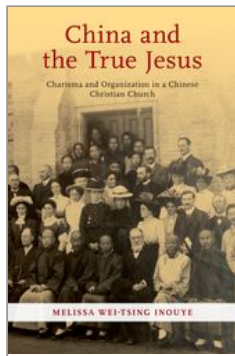
Two anonymous peer reviewers for Oxford University Press provided astute feedback on the manuscript as a whole, and the editorial and production team, including Cynthia Read, Drew Anderla, Rajakumari Ganessin, Sangeetha Vishwanathan, Victoria Danahy, and others made invaluable corrections and suggestions. I am indebted to all of these thoughtful and critical readers for their time and insight. I would like to emphasize that any remaining errors in this manuscript are mine alone.

I am thankful to people who have mentored me more generally throughout the years: Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, a brilliant and caring advisor who graciously declined when in our first email interaction I mistook her for a Harvard undergraduate and invited her to a sleepover, Claudia Bushman, my first postgraduate teacher and a perennial source of inspiration, and Terryl and Fiona Givens, who have supported and encouraged me through numerous projects, including this one. As I look back on my life as a student, I am thankful for the time and talents of people who taught me even when I was not very teachable, including Dillon K. Inouye, Paul Fitzgerald, Linda Williams, Charlie Appell, and Eileen Chow. I learned so much from fellow graduate students at Harvard including Jie Li, Allison Miller Wang, and Michael Ing. I am especially grateful to Tanya Samu, Sharyn Wada Inouye, Amy Hoyt, and Sherrie Morreall Gavin, who went out of **(p.xii)** their way (a really long way) to support me as I worked to complete this manuscript in the midst of a significant health challenge.

Finally, I am indebted to my family. My deepest debt is to my parents, Susan Lew Inouye and Warren Sanji Inouye, who loved learning, supported my study, and taught me to value the beauty of the world, including the beauty of my fellow beings. This book is dedicated to them. My mother passed away several years ago, but I like to think that somewhere—though who knows where—she is aware of my deep, abiding gratitude and respect. I am thankful to my father and Catherine A. Tibbitts for being such awesome grandparents to my children and caring advisors to me. I am grateful for my grandparents, Marjorie Ju Lew and Hall Ti Lew, Charles Ichirō Inouye and Bessie Murakami Inouye, who have always loved me unconditionally and who admonished me to be humble and work hard. I am grateful for Gor Shee Ju, Gin Gor Ju, Mikano Inouye, Sashichi Inouye, Kume Uchida Murakami, Denji Murakami, and all those ancestors whose trials, triumphs, and growth created the basis for my life. I am thankful to my aunt and uncle, Elizabeth Ann Inouye Takasaki and Roman Y. Takasaki, for giving me and my family another home away from home, and to my cousins Stephen, Aimee, and David, for sharing their home with my siblings and me. I am grateful to my brothers, Abe, Ben, Isaac, and Peter, and to all of my aunties, uncles, and cousins who have supported my family and me with especial fierceness in my mother's absence. I am thankful to my parents-in-law, Joy Anne Cahoon McMullin and Phillip Wayne McMullin, for their unfailing support for me and kindness to my children. I am thankful to my four children (nicknamed Bean, Sprout, Leaf, and Burger 豆芽菜汉堡) for their cheerful spirits, bright minds, kind actions, and helping hands. Last of all, I am grateful to my husband, Joseph Phillip McMullin, for being so very amazing all these years, and for being such an incredible partner in the projects of international itineration, home renovation, and getting the Bean, Sprout, Leaf, and Burger potty-trained, literate, and civilized.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

(p.xiii) Chronology

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

[**Bold font** identifies significant characters in this book's narrative]

1583	Matteo Ricci founds first permanent Christian mission in Zhaoqing
1644	Qing dynasty invades China; Ming court flees southward
1807	Robert Morrison , first Protestant missionary, arrives in Guangzhou
1838	Zeng Guofan passes the highest level of the civil service examination
1839-1842	First Opium War between Great Britain and China; Treaty of Nanjing
1850-1864	Hong Xiuquan leads the Taiping Rebellion
1872	Samuel Meech and Edith Prankard marry in Beijing
1879	Birth of Wei Enbo
1885	Birth of Yang Zhendao
1894-1895	First Sino-Japanese War
1897	Lillie Saville runs a dispensary in Beijing

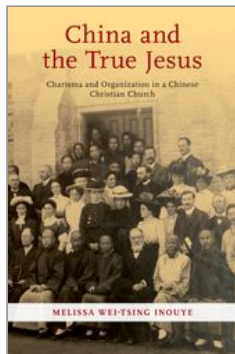
1898	Hundred Days' Reform; Empress Dowager Cixi places Emperor Guangxu under house arrest
1899-1900	Boxer Uprising; Lillie Saville receives Royal Red Cross for work during siege
1904	Samuel Meech baptizes Wei Enbo and Wei's mother in Beijing
1905	Civil service examination abolished; Wei Enbo opens permanent shop; Edith Murray reports on Cangzhou London Missionary Society revival
1907	Bernt Berntsen receives Holy Spirit at Azusa Street revival
1911	Chinese Revolution; end of the Qing dynasty
1912	Republic of China established
1914	World War I begins in Europe; China supports the Allies with laborers
1915	Wei Enbo meets Bernt Berntsen and speaks in tongues for the first time
1917	Wei Enbo's baptism and vision; True Jesus Church established
1919	World War I ends; May Fourth Movement; Wei Enbo's death; Wei's wife Liu Ai "is a bishopess" of the True Jesus Church
1921	Mao Zedong attends Founding Congress of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai
1922	National Christian Conference in Shanghai (Gao Daling , Zhang Barnabas , and Wei Isaac in attendance); Wei Enbo's end-of-the-world deadline
1925	May Thirtieth Incident
1926	Zhang Barnabas provokes split between northern and southern churches, organizes General Headquarters
1927	Northern Expedition of Communists and Nationalists; United Front falls apart
1930	True Jesus Church General Assembly excommunicates Zhang Barnabas
1931	Japan invades northern China and creates puppet regime
1932	Japanese attack on Shanghai destroys True Jesus Church General Headquarters; northern and southern True Jesus Churches reunify

1934-1936	Communist troops complete Long March to new base in northwest China
1935	Death of Yang Zhendao
1937-1945	Second Sino-Japanese War; True Jesus Church Headquarters moves to Chongqing
1947	Thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the True Jesus Church; Wei Isaac heads the church
1949	Communists establish new government; Nationalists decamp to Taiwan
1950-1953	Korean War heightens antiforeign sentiment; foreign missionaries expelled
1951	Three-Self Patriotic Movement organized; Christian Denunciation Movement launched
1952	Wei Isaac's "confession" appears in <i>Tianfeng</i> (organ of Three-Self Patriotic Movement); Jiang John and Li Zhengcheng lead True Jesus Church
1956	Jiang John speaks at Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Wuhan
1957	Anti-Rightist Campaign targets intellectuals; Li Zhengcheng arrested and sentenced to labor camp
1958	Jiang John and other True Jesus Church leaders arrested
1958-1961	Great Leap Forward
1964	<i>The Red Detachment of Women</i> comes to the stage
1966-1976	Cultural Revolution
Mid-to-late 1960s, early 1970s	Deaconess Fu grows up singing from a handwritten hymnbook and praying with her mother and grandmother, behind drawn curtains
1974	Wang Dequan's vision sparks revival of True Jesus Church activity in China
1976	Death of Mao Zedong ; fall of the Gang of Four ends Cultural Revolution
1980	Deng Xiaoping's "reform and opening up" policies create Special Economic Zones to encourage foreign investment
1982	Document 19 expresses official toleration for "normal religious activity" including Christianity

Mid-1980s	Deaconess Fu (pseudonym) and her True Jesus Church colleagues minister to the woman who committed suicide
1989	Tiananmen Square student demonstrations; True Jesus Church International Assembly is officially registered in California, United States
1995	Mother of seven-year-old Zhang Pin (pseudonym) prays for his miraculous resuscitation after he falls into a shrimp pond
2001	China joins the World Trade Organization
2007	Ninetieth anniversary of True Jesus Church's founding; churches established in a record four new countries including Lesotho, Zambia, United Arab Emirates, and Rwanda
2008	Mr. Chen (pseudonym) and other True Jesus Church preachers in Beijing touring the 2008 Olympics venue exorcise their colleague
2012	Xi Jinping elected General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party
2017	12th World Delegates Conference, 1st Session, held in Taiwan, on 100th anniversary of True Jesus Church founding; number of churches established outside China reaches fifty-seven
2018	National People's Congress votes to remove term limits for Xi Jinping and enshrine "Xi Jinping Thought" alongside "Mao Zedong Thought" in the Constitution

(p.xiv) (p.xv) (p.xvi)

University Press Scholarship Online
Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

(p.xvii) Maps

Vijaya Nagarajan

(p.xviii)



Map 1. Contemporary map of China's provinces, municipalities, and special administrative regions.

Credit: Base map from d-maps, http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=11572&lang=en

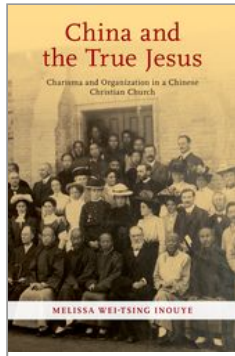


Map 2. Important cities, rivers, and places mentioned in this book.

Credit: Base map from d-maps, http://d-maps.com/carte.php?num_car=17512&lang=en

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Introduction

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0001

Abstract and Keywords

The context for the rise of the True Jesus Church in China includes not only continuities with native sectarian religion and conditions of deprivation that have been noted in existing scholarship, but also crucially global Christian restoration traditions, transnational cultural exchange, and the relationship between charismatic experience and moral discipline. Religious individuals' experience of the extraordinary is significant not merely for what it may reflect (such as the native religious milieu or participants' marginality) but also for what such charismatic experience produces, namely, distinctive worldviews and the energy and focus necessary to build and maintain community over time. The history of the True Jesus Church in China provides a framework for understanding the mutually dependent yet mutually corrosive relationship between charisma and organization in institutions with a strong ideological ethos.

Keywords: charisma, charismata, restoration, transnational, institution, organization, deprivation, continuity

Extra-Ordinary

Deaconess Fu told me about the woman she helped raise from the dead.¹ The two of us sat on a faux-leather couch in the small living room of a ground-floor apartment in a city in South China. The area just outside was undergoing construction. One by one, the old apartment blocks would be razed, and modern high-rises would be built in their place. It was late in the afternoon, and the backhoes were still and silent. The happy shouts of children rang out as they climbed, chased, and leaped among a stack of massive concrete pipes piled on the bare red earth.

This incident, Deaconess Fu said, had taken place in the mid-1980s, early years of the “reform and opening up” period after the death of Mao Zedong in 1976. These early years saw the beginning of the revival in China of both capitalism (i.e., “socialism with Chinese characteristics”) and organized religion aboveground. Deaconess Fu described the woman: a member of the True Jesus Church, in her mid-thirties, with four young children and a troubled marriage. One day after an argument, her husband left the house in a temper. Shortly thereafter a stranger, whom Deaconess Fu believed was the Devil in disguise, arrived at the house.²

“Your life is so terrible,” the stranger told her. “You would be better off dead.” The stranger pointed to the cords for raising and lowering the window shades. When the stranger left, the woman hanged herself from the cords. Her husband returned and found her, apparently lifeless. Three doctors examined her and pronounced her dead. Three women from the True Jesus Church came to the house, including Deaconess Fu, who was at the time a young seminary student, and an elderly sister “who was full of faith.” Because the woman was in her prime and had four young children, they decided to pray for a miracle—although Deaconess Fu was afraid. “The face was all dark,” she recalled, “and the tongue was very long. It was very ghastly.” The elderly sister cried, “Don’t be afraid. Just pray!” She went to **(p.2)** the woman’s body and placed hands on her head. The second church sister took hold of the woman’s hands. Deaconess Fu gingerly took hold of the woman’s feet, which were cold. They began a cycle of hymns of exorcism—because the elderly sister suspected the Devil’s work—followed by thirty minutes of prayer.

After two hours, the woman’s feet suddenly moved. Deaconess Fu shrieked and let go. The elderly sister urged them to redouble their efforts. They prayed harder. Soon the woman’s whole body began to move, and she revived. One of the doctors was a relative of the family and so was still present at the house. Impressed, the doctor mused: “Her ancestors must have done something very meritorious.” “It wasn’t her ancestors who did this,” Deaconess Fu snapped, wanting proper attribution. “It was Jesus!”³

In 2010, when Deaconess Fu told me this story, she wanted me to understand that this story was not about her or about underdeveloped conditions in China in the early 1980s (healthcare lacking, economy sluggish, social fabric torn by the Cultural Revolution), or even about a mother who suffered from depression. It was about a struggle between the Devil and Jesus, about the divine hand suspending natural laws in response to a collective petition made in faith.

Around the same time, I interviewed another True Jesus Church leader named Deacon An. He was a kindly older man, his manner formal but hospitable as he poured just-boiled water into a thin plastic cup that sagged with the heat and set it before me on the wooden table. Like Deaconess Fu, he took the same tack in pointing to divine influence in human events, but he was even more explicit in how he thought I should interpret his account. “If you are not clear about a few things, you cannot possibly understand our church,” he told me. “You must acknowledge the hand of God in creating the True Jesus Church. It is part of God’s saving work, part of God’s plan of salvation The True Jesus Church was established in China in 1917. This was part of God’s plan from the beginning. Even [the ancient Chinese philosopher] Laozi 老子 and the *Dao De Jing* 道德经 [a book attributed to Laozi] were intended by God to lay a foundation for the True Jesus Church.” He paused and looked at me searchingly across the wooden table between us. “Without this understanding, you cannot possibly write the history of the True Jesus Church.”⁴

The True Jesus Church was founded in 1917 in Beijing by a rags-to-riches silk merchant named Wei Enbo 魏恩波 (surname Wei, personal name Enbo). Wei—who later took the Christian name Baoluo 保羅 [Paul]—claimed to have seen a vision in which Jesus appeared to him, personally baptized him, and commanded him to “correct the Church,” restoring Christianity to its original purity. Although Wei died in 1919, just two years after establishing his movement, the True Jesus Church continued to flourish under the leadership of Wei’s **(p.3)** associates and his son, Wei Yisa 魏以撒 [Isaac]. By 1947 the True Jesus Church had become one of the largest independent Protestant denominations in China.⁵ Today it is one of the most distinctive strains of Protestant Christianity within the state-sanctioned churches of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and also has congregations in places such as Taiwan, the United States, and South Africa.

The claims of both Deaconess Fu and Deacon An are charismatic in nature. In everyday conversation, the word charismatic most usually describes an individual's magnetic or forceful appeal, such as in the case of Jesus, Joan of Arc, and Adolf Hitler. Sociologist Max Weber pointed out the significance of this kind of personal charisma. It is a source of authority that generates political legitimacy. According to Weber, this kind of authority rests on "devotion to the exceptional sanctity, heroism, or exemplary character of an individual person, and of the normative patterns or order revealed or ordained by him."⁶ This sort of authority extends beyond secular political loyalties and into the sacred polities created within religious and moral-philosophical movements. Joseph Smith, Jr., founder of the Mormon tradition, for instance, was described by many of his followers as a magnetic personality who stood out in a crowd. Kong Qiu (Latinized as "Confucius"), the ancient philosopher, inspired such personal loyalty that his disciples wrote down his words and living example in the *Analects* 論語, which became one of the foundational texts for Chinese moral and political discourse for thousands of years.

In contrast to this personality-based definition, in an academic religious studies context the word charismatic describes something manifesting power that is extraordinary or divine. "Charismatic" is the adjectival form of the noun "charisma," from the Greek *χάρις/charis* [grace]. In the study of Christianity, "charismatic Christianity" is a type of Christianity emphasizing the gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues, prophesying, and healing. A particular strain of charismatic Christianity in the twentieth century followed on the heels of the early twentieth-century Pentecostal movement and is commonly known as the charismatic movement.⁷ Charisma is also an important concept for scholarship on religions other than Christianity. For example, Stephen Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming recently offered a broad definition of charismatic religious movements.⁸ In their interpretation, charisma goes beyond the personality of an individual leader and includes "a message which . . . resonates with and gives authority to followers' expectations and assumptions."⁹ Historically, after leaders with charismatic personalities have died, their movement has survived or expired, partly depending on whether the message or worldview they have inspired is sufficiently charismatic. Altogether, charismatic beliefs and practices create an ethos, a shared "expectation of the extraordinary," that provides a community's authoritative center.¹⁰ To put it simply, in a world full of compelling distractions, in order **(p.4)** to attract and retain a large group of people to a new cause, what one has to offer must be perceived as truly remarkable.

Depending on one's perspective, there are different explanations for why Wei Enbo's vision was so attractive to others of his time and place. The True Jesus Church provides interesting subject material for religious studies, Chinese social history, Chinese popular religious history, and global Pentecostal and charismatic history. Also critical is the perspective of members of the True Jesus Church themselves. These various points of view are grounded in different assumptions, values, texts, and experiences that often overlap but also diverge widely. For example, the question of "Did Wei actually hear God's voice, or was he just making it up?" is very important to a True Jesus Church practitioner, but not necessarily on the table in terms of the major arguments a religious studies scholar would make. Numerous historians have pointed to the significance of Chinese nationalism in the rise of the True Jesus Church, but church members would of course say their church's rise was due to the divine revelation of its founding events and the correctness of its claims about truth.

This study is an attempt to illuminate the substance of charismatic ideology and experience within the True Jesus Church. The more interesting and fruitful question to ask about someone's charismatic experience is not "Did it really happen?" but "What did people do with it?" To acknowledge the significance of the divine elements in the history of the True Jesus Church, and also to simplify the prose, in my account I will not constantly flag religious claims with language such as "Wei *claimed* to have heard a voice" or "Wei *alleged* he battled with evil spirits." As I have done in the opening of this introduction, the prose recounting claims made in primary source texts will adhere to those texts as closely as possible. In the accompanying discussion, I will apply additional analytical perspectives. My overall project is to understand how charismatic claims inspire human organization and hold communities together.

Existing Scholarship on Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity
Existing scholarly analyses of the True Jesus Church and independent Chinese Christian movements more generally have chronicled the truly dismal parade of social crises that shaped many converts' daily reality: foreign imperialism, floods, droughts, famines, warlordism, and banditry. Many studies have acknowledged the circumstances of socioeconomic, political, or psychological deprivation in which many early converts lived and suggested that the True Jesus Church's charismatic healing practices and ecstatic worship were attractive because **(p.5)** they compensated for or responded to this deprivation.¹¹ A related interpretation found within a number of studies has emphasized continuity between the early True Jesus Church and the native popular religious tradition because of similarities in their charismatic practices and, more generally, their embrace of a world animated by the extraordinary.¹²

More broadly, scholars of global Pentecostal and charismatic movements have sought to explain why the tongues-speaking mode of charismatic religiosity found within the True Jesus Church also appeared in so many places around the world around the early twentieth century, including China. Again, a common explanation is deprivation: Pentecostal movements grew among poor and marginalized people who suffered “traumatic cultural changes” and “double-barreled disillusionment” with both traditional and scientific ideologies in the wake of the spread of global modernity.¹³

Others have countered this emphasis on deprivation by showing that in America, at least, most early Pentecostals “lived comfortably by the standards of their own age.” Instead, they have pointed to Pentecostal converts’ strong desire for personal autonomy in their religious practice.¹⁴ Another growing approach to early twentieth-century Pentecostalism emphasizes its geographic diversity, pointing out that multiple Pentecostals emerged around the world in centers such as Pyongyang, Korea; Beijing, China; Pune, India; Wakkerstroom, South Africa; Lagos, Nigeria; Valparaíso, Chile; Belém, Brazil; Oslo, Norway; and Sunderland, England. These Pentecostal movements were not isolated from each other but were linked by networks of print and personnel.¹⁵ The fact that these numerous Pentecostal movements sprang up around the world around the same time suggests that explanations for the rise of Chinese Pentecostal movements such as the True Jesus Church may go beyond local or national socioeconomic conditions.

I have found the emerging emphasis on transregional analysis very thought-provoking in framing my approach to the True Jesus Church. Existing studies have made an invaluable contribution by laying out so clearly the local context of the True Jesus Church (and, more generally, independent Chinese Christian movements). However, as is the case with any study of human experience, including this study, a focus on one set of questions or variables will necessarily leave gaps. By contributing a variety of perspectives, a community of scholars works together to paint a broader picture. In what follows, I lay out my reasoning for exploring other dimensions of charismatic experience within the True Jesus Church in addition to deprivation and continuity explanations. Although this study is primarily a study of the True Jesus Church, my discussion of the limitations of these two approaches also has application for other religious studies **(p.6)** subjects, from independent churches in China to new religious movements more generally.

Deprivation approaches emphasize the significance of people's marginal status, lack of education, and economic vulnerability as fuel for the growth of charismatic movements such as the True Jesus Church. Without a doubt, social seismic shocks can shake people free of existing social structures, including religious traditions, and set them on a search for a new foundation. However, one limitation of seeing the church as an expression of socioeconomic crisis is that—as can be observed throughout Christian history and certainly in the present—charismatic and apocalyptic thinking do not flourish exclusively among people who are marginalized or living in a time of catastrophe, but among all demographics, including economically stable, socially privileged individuals in wealthy modern societies.

Furthermore, no matter how deprived people are, no matter what circumstances “push” them out of their preexisting paradigms, they do not automatically or indiscriminately affiliate with Christian churches (as opposed to Buddhist vegetarian groups, Daoist spirit-writing networks, or a host of secular options).¹⁶ One Pentecostal studies scholar has concluded that social-deprivation theories disregard religious beliefs as a means to explain religious movements: “The yearning for spiritual depth was interpreted as a personal weakness rather than a serious faith claim. In other words, their religious beliefs or their native exegesis was taken as a less than accurate explanation of why they were attracted to the movement.”¹⁷ Although socioeconomic instability may “push” individuals out of existing religious structures, there must also be a “pull” factor to draw people into creating a new religious tradition.

Alongside the deprivation approach, the other main theme of scholarly investigations on the True Jesus Church is an emphasis on continuity between the charismatic practices of the church (such as healing or exorcism) and those of the Chinese popular religious tradition. It is clear that native morality and religious culture contributed to the evolution of Christian church institutions in China, as they do around the world. However, one potential weakness of these continuity approaches is that emphasizing the “Chinese” character of the True Jesus Church's practices overlooks the long historical presence of identical practices within other Christian movements in numerous other countries.¹⁸

The search for “Chineseness” is valid and illuminating, but given the universal, translatable nature of Christianity around the world, I am interested in other questions.¹⁹ For example, the prolonged revival that Wei Enbo’s visions sparked in the village of Huangcun 黄村 in the 1910s has compelling similarities to a movement centered around apparitions of the Virgin Mary in the small town of Ezkioga, Spain, in the 1930s.²⁰ Continuity-focused explanations for the (p.7) popularity of native Chinese Christian churches often suggest that such churches are “indigenous” to the extent that they engage in charismatic or supernatural practices.²¹ And yet charismatic practices also constitute a global historical Christian norm. As Henrietta Harrison, a historian of Catholicism in China has recently put it, when we compare the European Christian and Chinese popular religious traditions, “we begin to see firstly that each of these great traditions contains an immense variety of different practices, beliefs, and ideas, and secondly that the two traditions sometimes overlap.”²² This overlap can be seen not only in China, but globally. A study of Christianity among the Yoruba populations in West Africa acknowledges that the Christian message “evoked a deep affinity with local materials” and that African prophet movements made an “explicit appeal to indigenous categories of religious life.”²³ Hence this overlap or affinity is to be expected generally in manifestations of Christianity around the world.

The language used to articulate deprivation and continuity explanations for the rise of the True Jesus Church and other Pentecostal, charismatic, and independent Christian movements around the world also suggests inherent biases within these approaches. Certain words employed to describe charismatic experience convey a sense of powerful compulsion, of already-vulnerable people suddenly overcome. This language evokes pathology (“The lightning spread of the Pentecostal movement was not like the dispersal of some new idea. It was more like the spread of a salubrious contagion”²⁴; “paroxysms of mass conversions”²⁵), magic (“Pentecostalism casts such a spell over many free-lance evangelists in China”²⁶), and the primitive (“primal”²⁷; “returned to the raw inner core of human spirituality”²⁸). As we will see in Chapter 2, the uncontrolled nature of charismatic experience was indeed cherished by people who had felt “the outpouring of the Holy Spirit” and who described this phenomenon in terms that emphasized its involuntary character. Yet in aggregate, the overall tone of such language suggests an understanding of charismatic religiosity as compulsive and primitive that makes it harder to see the agency and theological discrimination of the religious participants.

Clearly, drawing on the accounts of religious participants has its liabilities from a scholarly point of view. The “evidence” is in the minds and lived experiences of the True Jesus Church believers themselves and cannot be extracted to testify on the printed page unless in the form of hearsay: *Wei claimed. Deaconess Fu reported. Deacon An believed.* Such evidence of the miraculous, held in the minds of adherents, is directly contradicted by others’ beliefs and experiences in which the laws of the natural world always prevail and in which religious movements reflect social and not supernatural realities.

Yet these miraculous claims, articulated through a distinctly Christian idiom, are precisely what left their mark on history.²⁹ None of the early True Jesus **(p.8)** Church believers who followed Wei Enbo declared, “I feel uneducated and nationalistic. Perhaps I’ll join the True Jesus Church.” Deaconess Fu and her friends did not say, “We want to do as the Daoist ritual practitioners do. Let’s attempt to raise this woman from the dead.”³⁰ At particular times and places, people found that the wondrous or fearsome patterns set forth in the Bible spoke to their everyday aspirations and concerns. While acknowledging overlap between native religious practices and the healing, exorcism, and tongues-speaking of the True Jesus Church, we should also recognize that within the True Jesus Church such practices were framed by a distinctively Christian nexus of ideas, texts, and forms of collective religious life.

Perspectives from Japanese religious studies support the importance of recognizing the potential of new religious movements to actually do something new. Religious movements—and especially their founders—historically engage in proactive problem-solving, creative reinterpretation, and subversive innovation. Helen Hardacre, in her history of the Japanese new religious movement Reiyukai, argued, “To say of Reiyukai that it represents a reaction to crisis would ignore its positive attempts to address the problems of Japanese society and also its inheritance of concepts, beliefs, and rites of Japanese Buddhism.” Hardacre’s study emphasizes “the founders’ positive initiative in formulating a creed and their purposeful transformation of traditional elements to match new circumstances.”³¹ H. Byron Earhart, in his study of the native Japanese Christian movement Gedatsu-kai, has argued in this same vein. Social conditions did help precipitate new religious movements’ break with existing Buddhist and Shinto organizations, and the “permanent features of Japanese religion such as veneration of ancestors” did serve as potent resources. However, he concluded, “it seems inconceivable for anyone to demonstrate that social and religious factors ‘caused’ Okano to ‘produce’ such new elements as the amacha memorial mass and the gohō shugyō rite. Without this innovative actor of Okano and the subsequent organizers of the movement, one cannot account for the emergence of Gedatsu-kai.”³² Mark Mullins’s study, *Christianity Made in Japan*, has suggested a fourfold typology for sources of indigenous Christianity: first, religious experience and additional revelation; second, Judeo-Christian scriptures; third, transplanted missionary cultures; and fourth, native culture and religious traditions.³³ I would like to suggest that existing scholarship on Chinese Christianity has covered this fourth source very well, but the dimensions of religious experience and community enabled by the first three are ripe for additional exploration.

In addition to understanding the local socioeconomic and religious contexts within which new religious communities form, in a history of the True Jesus Church we must give sufficient weight to religious ideas, language, and motivations on their own terms. Extraordinary claims of resurrection from the dead cannot be **(p.9)** externally verified, but the natural attraction of such claims and the significance of the particular actions and expectations they inspire cannot be ignored.³⁴ As historian Robert Orsi observed, “The saints, gods, demons, ancestors, and so on are real in experience and practice, in relationships between heaven and earth, in the circumstances of people’s lives and histories, and in the stories people tell about them.”³⁵ Although I will disappoint Deacon An by failing to interpret the history of his church as a pure expression of God’s will, in this book I argue for the significance of the charismatic in creating communities, worlds, and moral meaning.

With this focus on community I acknowledge the influential perspective of sociologist Emile Durkheim, who defined religion as a unified system of beliefs and practices about sacred things that created a moral community legitimated through moments of “collective effervescence.”³⁶ In the True Jesus Church, charismatic practice is a major source of such collective effervescence. “Effervescence” is a word that describes vivacity and enthusiasm, but its meanings also include “bubbly” or “fizzy,” implying a sparkling appearance that belies a lack of substance. Miracle stories themselves are intangible, yet they are substantial in the collective action and restless journeying they produce, the social networks they justify, the worlds they describe, and the moral boundaries they define. Charisma within the True Jesus Church is far more than a manifestation of local deprivation, the prior strength of Chinese popular religion, or even the classical Pentecostal movement of the early twentieth century. The church’s teachings, rooted in the biblical text, embody recent innovations in a recurring restorationist mode in the great stream of religious history. Its church communities are collective testaments to humanity’s hunger to author, organize, govern, define, teach, and produce.

A Broader Framework for the True Jesus Church

Existing work on the history of the True Jesus Church has provided a substantial foundation upon which to build. As early as 1985, historian Daniel Bays began working in the archives of the True Jesus Church General Assembly in Taichung, Taiwan, as part of his pathbreaking work on independent churches in Chinese history. In his many studies touching on the True Jesus Church and other aspects of native Chinese Christianity, Professor Bays has shown the influence of various popular strains of Christian practice, such as Sabbatarianism and Pentecostalism, as well as a strong resonance between the True Jesus Church and the history of sectarian movements within Chinese popular religious tradition.³⁷ He recently pointed out that True Jesus Church worship overlapped not only with native Chinese millenarianism but also with American religious ideas and behaviors, which included “weeping, trance, screaming, howling, glossolalia, weightlessness, **(p.10)** shivering, numbness, miraculous healing, profuse sweating, rolling on the floor, frothing at the mouth, chattering of teeth, ecstatic singing and dancing, and extended fasting (in one case for 76 days).”³⁸

Murray Rubinstein researched the True Jesus Church in Taiwan, including the doctrines and practices that differentiated it from other Christian denominations, particularly the practice of glossolalia or tongues-speaking, and grappled with the church’s relationship to local culture.³⁹ Deng Zhaoming, another pioneer of studies of independent Christianity, has a long-standing familiarity with the True Jesus Church. As early as 1993 and 1994, Deng published a two-issue feature on the True Jesus Church, including valuable source materials from the Maoist era, in *Bridge*, a Chinese Christian magazine.⁴⁰

Xi Lian's work has illuminated the variegated landscape of independent Chinese Christian movements, including not only the True Jesus Church but also the Jesus Family 耶穌家庭 and movements centered around independent evangelists and revivalists such as Wang Mingdao and John Sung. The richness and texture of Lian's portraits bring to life the concerns and triumphs of entire Chinese Christian communities.⁴¹ Another recent study by Ke-hsien Huang has characterized the True Jesus Church's practices as "Confucian," pointing to the church's gender-segregated worship and text-oriented practices.⁴² Yen-zen Tsai's exploration of the role of the distinctive sound of the True Jesus Church's prayer in tongues is a cogent discussion of religious boundary maintenance.⁴³ These essential and insightful works prompt us to ask further questions about the significance of other influences, particularly from outside of China, in shaping the True Jesus Church and other Chinese Christian churches.

This book seeks to illuminate the transplanted and innovative aspects of charismatic practice within the True Jesus Church, including Christian restoration theology, transnational networks, modes of congregational governance, and claims about truth. The True Jesus Church's charismatic Christianity is simultaneously more ordinary and more extraordinary than has previously been suggested: more ordinary because it is not particularly crisis dependent nor uniquely Chinese, and more extraordinary because it gives us insights into striking feats of collective world-making.

Without a doubt, without charisma—the expectation of the extraordinary—we would not have a religious movement. And yet those who live with this expectation are not always overcome by heavenly ecstasy, even though they might like to be. Is it possible for life to be simultaneously miraculous and mundane? For centuries, within countless Christian churches, charismatic experience has been carefully cultivated, orchestrated, provided for. It has been rare enough that even in the context of a self-consciously charismatic church such as the True Jesus Church, miracle stories provoke awe, eager reporting, and a degree **(p.11)** of self-scrutiny. At the same time, the charismatic has been regular enough to be taken for granted, interwoven with life's chores and duties, and dissolved into the tissues of community culture. It is providential but also routinized. In emphasizing the agentive, organizational dimension of charismatic experience, therefore, I hope to balance the determinism inherent in deprivation and continuity explanations. Individuals may have been attracted to charismatic religiosity because it provided a tool with which to achieve morality, spiritual autonomy, or cohesive community.

Despite its birth in a tumultuous era and its clear resonance with Chinese religious culture, we can also frame the True Jesus Church within the tradition of global Christian restoration movements seeking to guarantee authenticity and divine access in Christian practice. Two nineteenth-century American restoration movements included early Mormonism and the Disciples of Christ, both of which were also outgrowths of a local religious environment nurturing folk magic and charismatic religiosity.⁴⁴ This multidimensional context prompts us to go beyond seeing the True Jesus Church as a particularly “Chinese” reflection of crisis or a specimen of cultural hybridity and to closely examine its texts, doctrines, and practices as a form of Christianity that was itself at war with both the Christian establishment and its native religious milieu. Church members’ energetic attempts to adhere to the biblical text and patterns with superior fidelity often led to creative doctrinal innovations that were indeed inflected by Chinese culture. And yet this innovations was driven by church members’ problem-solving engagement with the Bible.

Charisma and Organization

Charismatic practice in the True Jesus Church fueled numerous creative, dynamic processes, including organizational processes that not only reached back in time by means of the biblical text to restore primitive Christianity but also expanded outward to form transnational networks. The True Jesus Church itself was the successor to earlier Christian movements engaged in aggressive expansion, from the Taiping Rebellion in the 1850s to the international evangelism of early Pentecostal missionaries in the 1900s. Thirty years after its founding, the True Jesus Church had already established itself overseas in places such as Singapore, the Philippines, Japan, and the United States. The significance of charisma in generating such large-scale organizational processes cannot be overlooked. A compelling, unusual idea will find a wide audience—a community of people who work together to partake in, protect, and replicate the power of this idea (for example, the Christian prescription of faith in Christ for salvation from sin or the Buddhist claim that suffering stems from attachment).⁴⁵ At the same time that a **(p.12)** movement expands dynamically through missionary efforts, the stable bureaucratic center develops influence as a source of coordination and resources.

Without strong, centralized organization to hold everything together, charismatic religious movements spin themselves out with centrifugal abandon. Without strong internal organizational constraints, new prophets arise and declare their own revisionist revelations, drawing off groups of followers. Doctrines and practices diverge, blend, and lose their particular coherence. However, as essential as organization is for protecting charismatic ideas and experiences with stable structures and processes of propagation, it is also a threat to the charismatic religious project. Too much bureaucratization and regulation will cause it to lose that extraordinary quality that made it attractive to so many in the first place. The relationship between charisma and organization is thus mutually dependent, but also mutually corroding.

Max Weber developed an influential framework for understanding the relationship between authority stemming from charisma and authority stemming from rationalistic or legalistic institutions. He described how religious authority in society had been profoundly eroded by the processes of modernization. Industrialization, urbanization, education, the advancement of scientific understanding, and other developments driven by an ethos of rationality had brought about the “disenchantment of the world.”⁴⁶ Weber’s theory of religion also posited that charisma itself could be institutionalized, as in “routinized charisma,” the establishment of specified positions open to people with charismatic influence. Other scholars have since used Weber’s framework of charismatic versus institutional authority to characterize religious movements. For example, the institutionalization of charisma is often manifest in established religious traditions in which believers accept the “charisma of office.” Officeholders, by virtue of occupying a sacred office (e.g., the priesthood), acquire certain special powers or qualities.⁴⁷ Over time, the processes of charismatic institutionalization create a sacred bureaucracy with ample resources to defend and propagate claims to divine power while resisting the volatility of purely prophetic leadership.

“Sacred bureaucracy,” of course, sounds like a perfect oxymoron, and indeed achieving the proper balance between charisma and institutionalization is a difficult task. Sociologists of Christianity have sought to understand the process by which Christian churches regularly fizzle, splinter, or decline—the question of “organizational precariousness.”⁴⁸ One influential but controversial model is the cyclical model in which “sects” (exclusivist groups maintaining high levels of tension with surrounding society) regularly split off from churches in pursuit of charisma and authenticity. According to this cyclical model, with growing bureaucratic institutionalization and a new generation of adherents born in the faith, sects gradually evolve into more staid, stable versions of themselves. Eventually, **(p.13)** they assimilate back into society as churches, setting the stage for another charismatic spin-off down the road.⁴⁹ Subsequent discussions among sociologists critiqued and adjusted this framework, creating various models and typologies to articulate the relationship between sects and churches.⁵⁰ Ultimately, although people have used different models to describe them, the important thing to notice is that these two dimensions of religious movements clearly exist in a relationship. A recent study of house churches in Linyi, Shandong Province, showed that the leaders in a house church network saw their church culture as moving away from an intensely charismatic phase in the mid-1990s and beginning a process of “rationalization” and “institutionalization” (their words). Without any organizational structure, they said, the house church network was constantly threatened by internal splits.⁵¹

In this study of the True Jesus Church, I have chosen to discuss the relationship between charisma and *organization* instead of hewing more closely to the terms institution-building or institutionalization often used in the literature. This is for two reasons. First, because institutionalization by itself tends to imply formal organization of a single religious structure (i.e., institution), I have chosen the term organization, which can also accommodate people’s informal and spontaneous efforts to come together and form relationships, groups, and networks (religious or nonreligious).⁵² Second, the verb “organize” is more frequently used than “institutionalize,” again because of its broader application to informal, spontaneous, inaugural efforts. I want to emphasize that organization is not an end point, but a constantly unfolding process within religious movements. The relationship between charisma and organization is not a linear continuum (i.e., “As churches become more institutionalized or organized, they become less charismatic”) but dynamic and multidimensional. In the case of the True Jesus Church, charisma and organization create two different centers of gravity, like two similarly sized planets that regularly pull upon each other in a system of equilibrium.

“Organizational history” sounds dull, but in fact the basic premise of a group of people determined to come together and stay together with such thoroughness and energy that the organization takes on a life of its own is very exciting. In a sense, organization is the basis of civilization. Anybody who has ever tried to organize a substantial event, from a school governance meeting to an academic conference to a fund-raising drive, knows how difficult it is to get large groups of people to do things together even once, much less day after day and year after year. In different situations, organizers draw on different sets of organizational tools to unify people and focus their energies, such as group songs, flags, starting guns, cues for applause, discussion groups, and so on. The True Jesus Church was influential because it was a new form of Chinese community with an exciting but durable organizational model.

(p.14) Charisma is significant not simply in its inherent extraordinariness or the potential instrumental use of extraordinary power, but in its ability to validate a religious movement’s claims about truth and meaning. Both European Christian and Chinese popular religious traditions feature numerous examples of self-serving transactional charismatic practices, such as petitioning a deity for success in business or study or using malevolent spells to harm an enemy. But such transactional religious practices rarely become the foundation for large, organized movements, which require loftier imaginings. To motivate and unite large numbers of people, charismatic experience engages their capacity to envision and aspire to universal meaning and moral justification. In modern Chinese history, an expectation of the extraordinary has often depended on the correctness—*righteousness*—of a particular shared moral framework. This morally dependent expectation of the extraordinary has characterized not only Christian, Buddhist, and Daoist paradigms, but at times even Confucian and Communist worldviews.

A New Form of Chinese Community

In sum, charismatic practice throughout the history of the True Jesus Church does not necessarily signify socioeconomic crisis, nor something that is especially “Chinese,” nor even something that is dramatically unusual or otherworldly.⁵³ Charisma was a doctrinal, ritual, moral, and organizational resource holding together church communities with a diverse complement of wealthy, poor, intelligent, simple, accomplished, and unremarkable individuals.

The chapters in this book explore the dimensions of the True Jesus Church's charismatic community. As shown in Chapter 1, missionary churches introduced new models for community organization that native Christian movements then further adapted. This new community model drew flexibly on certain distinctive organizational technologies including the use of the Bible (and the auxiliary texts and literacy culture that accompanied it) to generate shared identity and norms. Chapter 2 demonstrates how, in addition to being a Chinese religious movement that emerged within a distinctive local context, the True Jesus Church was a transnational Christian restoration movement. In its expansion, it rode a wave of modern advances in telecommunication that allowed charismatic experience and charismatic individuals to circulate around the globe.

Chapter 3 tells the multiple stories of how True Jesus Church founder Wei Enbo saw Jesus in vision and received a call to be an apostle and prophet. It shows that the True Jesus Church's appeal was due in large part to native evangelists' mastery of Christian culture and language to beat Western missionaries at their own game. True Jesus Church evangelists pointed to the gap between the most direct interpretation of the text in a Chinese linguistic and cultural context on **(p.15)** the one hand and the historical accretion evident in the language and norms of Western denominations on the other. They cited this discrepancy as evidence that theirs was the only true Christian church. While acknowledging meaningful overlap with Chinese religious paradigms, the argument in Chapter 3 identifies a Christian milieu (including the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament, the healings and exorcisms of Jesus, the biblical pattern of the apostolic church, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and so on) as the most immediate context for the doctrines, practices, and collective life within the early True Jesus Church.

Chapter 4 explains how the True Jesus Church's charismatic worldview and hierarchical organization provided many Chinese women with new opportunities to direct their lives. As Xi Lian has astutely noted, women were central to the rise of native Christian movements such as the True Jesus Church.⁵⁴ Despite the double-barreled patriarchy of Chinese society and conservative Christianity, the records of the True Jesus Church reveal women's active participation and leadership at multiple levels. By studying women's roles within True Jesus Church organizations and networks, we can gain insight into how ordinary Chinese women participated in Chinese society in a time of transformation.⁵⁵ Chapter 5 shows the ways in which the church's centralized bureaucratic structure was a source of strength and stability during the turbulent 1930s and years of the Japanese invasion and occupation. In many ways, the efficiency of the church's self-governing structures contrasted unflatteringly with the corruption and incompetence of the ruling Nationalist government during this time.

Chapters 6 and 7 show two sides of the True Jesus Church community after the Communist victory in 1949. True Jesus Church leaders initially sought to avoid persecution by adopting Maoist discourse, but eventually in 1958 the public institutions of the church were dismantled. However, private worship, fueled by charismatic practice, continued throughout much of this era. Underground religious practice was part of a larger society-wide surge in clandestine culture that evaded and subverted state control. Chapter 8 explores the relationship between the True Jesus Church and contemporary Chinese society, and Chapter 9 discusses the presence of the church's charismatic, biblically oriented worldview in members' everyday experiences.

Christianity and Modern China

The charismatic mode of Christianity cultivated by the True Jesus Church since its founding in the early twentieth century is still relevant today. Although estimates of the number of Christians in China vary widely, between twenty and one-hundred million, a midrange estimate from 2011 is sixty-seven-million total Christians, fifty-eight-million Protestants and nine-million Catholics.⁵⁶ **(p.16)** This means that there are likely about as many Chinese Protestants as there are Italians.⁵⁷ Another scholar has recently estimated that 60–80 percent of Protestant churches in China are charismatic.⁵⁸ Hence understanding the charismatic history of the True Jesus Church, one of the earliest native Chinese Christian churches, helps us to understand the dominant mode of Christianity in China today.

The story of charismatic Christianity also happens to be highly useful as an introduction to modern Chinese history because it intersects with key events and processes that have shaped China's present-day reality. The historical context for Wei Enbo's visions of Jesus include the visions that inspired the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, a Chinese Christian rebellion from 1850 to 1864 now remembered as the most lethal civil conflict in recorded history and a costly drain on state coffers that critically weakened the ruling Qing dynasty. The human interactions and cultural exchanges that gave rise to the True Jesus Church at the beginning of the twentieth century were possible because of rapid expansion within China in opportunities for international transportation and communication—opportunities often arising in the context of foreign imperialism.

At the same time that the church was expanding throughout China in the early Republican era (1912–1949), the new nation was undergoing significant modern social and cultural transitions, especially in urban areas. Important studies have shown how Western missionary churches contributed actively to modern urban civic culture.⁵⁹ The True Jesus Church also actively engaged modern processes and discourses, and in ways that involve the kinds of historical subjects who have often eluded study, such as people living in rural areas, people who were not highly educated, and women.

Christian history could not help but intersect with multiple crises during the period of foreign invasion and civil war from 1931 to 1949. During this time the True Jesus Church's central administration, like other large organizations in Chinese society, struggled to adapt and survive. A different sort of, but no less challenging, adaptation was in store for the church and its members during the Maoist era (1949–1976), a time of mass political mobilizations of China's entire population. During the high tide of politically motivated repression of Christian churches, church members quietly maintained their charismatic practices at the grassroots long after the formal ecclesiastical bureaucracy had been co-opted or eliminated by the party-state. Today, the charismatic worldview within the True Jesus Church allows for a range of interpretations that simultaneously endorse and condemn the dramatic transformations underway in Chinese society since the decline of socialism and the rise of the market economy.

Not only is the church's history a convenient vehicle for traversing China's modern history, seeing the True Jesus Church as a kind of large Chinese **(p.17)** community held together by a set of ideological claims provides a fresh perspective on China's now-national community, governed in turn by the Qing imperial bureaucracy, the Nationalist Party, and the Chinese Communist Party. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, like the True Jesus Church, all three of these ruling groups have asserted with confidence that China was, or should be, exceptional. Like the True Jesus Church, these broadly constituted organizations staked their claim to legitimate governance on underlying claims about truth: the way the world was, the meaning of human life, and the distinction between good and evil. Yet the more extensively the leaders of these ruling groups expanded bureaucratic institutions and exercised power to transform society in the image of their lofty visions, the greater the difficulty they had in maintaining these high ideals.

At the time of its founding in 1917, the True Jesus Church was an innovative and cosmopolitan form of Chinese community that engaged ordinary people's capacities for collective life, mutual aid, moral regulation, and intellectual mastery. It gives us new appreciation for the potential significance of charismatic Christian churches in modern global history. They were not simply esoteric centers of religious indoctrination and ritual practice, but places where people from all stations in society gathered to form communities and make sense of life. Churches were transnationally networked organizations through which individuals could magnify their influence in society, share ideas, skills, and technologies, participate in self-government, and give mutual aid and support.⁶⁰

The story of the True Jesus Church is a story of the human impulse to organize in order to preserve and perpetuate what is extraordinary. Occasionally, a single bolt of lightning may set off a huge wildfire that rushes through the brush, leaving a swath of destruction before it finally burns out. Far more monumental, however, is the careful, tedious work of tending a flame for a long period of time: feeding it, protecting it from rain and gusts, stockpiling fuel. At times the collective effort to control and maintain charismatic power can threaten to extinguish the whole project by either suffocating the flames or wearing out the energy and attention of the fire-tenders with overmanagement. To withstand the test of time, a religious movement such as the True Jesus Church, which reached its one-hundredth year in 2017, requires both the charismatic spark and the sustained effort of human organization. In their way, both are miraculous.

Notes:

- (1.) To protect interviewees' privacy, throughout the book I use only pseudonyms.
- (2.) Here I have written "Devil" with a capital D to denote Satan as opposed to a more generic evil spirit, i.e., "a devil." The Chinese word *mogui* 魔鬼 can mean either, depending on the context.
- (3.) Interview with Ms. Fu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.
- (4.) Interview with Mr. An (pseudonym), November 2009, South China.
- (5.) Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 130; Xi Lian, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (October 2008): 407-441 (esp. 408).
- (6.) Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 215
- (7.) For a discussion of Pentecostal and charismatic terminology see Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13-29; for a discussion of Pentecostal and charismatic movements in an Asian context, see Allan H. Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011).
- (8.) Stephen Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming, *Grassroots Charisma: Four Local Leaders in China* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1-16
- (9.) Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, 16.
- (10.) Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, 16.

(11.) Donald Miller, "Contextualizing the Contemporary Pentecostal Movement in China," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 17–32 (26–27); Xi Lian, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 47–49, 64–65, 214, 230–232, 240–241; Chen-Yang Kao, "The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2 (May 2009): 171–188 (181–184); Xi Lian, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 407–441 (410, 432); Xi Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period (1912–1949)," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 2004): 851–898 (856, 864–865, 894–898); Deng Zhaoming, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 354–378 (355).

(12.) Daniel Bays, "Christianity and Chinese Sectarian Tradition," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4, no. 7 (1982): 33–35; Lian, *Redeemed*, 9, 230–239; Lian, "Messianic Deliverance," 432–433; Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period," 855–856, 892–895; Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 355; Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991).

(13.) Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 104–105; Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

(14.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 210–216

(15.) Allan Anderson, "Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 118–140 (126); Michael Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 143–173.

(16.) H. Byron Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and Religion in Contemporary Japan: Returning to the Center* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 226

(17.) Albert G. Miller, "Pentecostalism as a Social Movement: Beyond the Theory of Deprivation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 9 (1996): 97–114 (113). In the same vein, see Eva Keller, "Scripture Study as Normal Science: Seventh-Day Adventist Practice on the East Coast of Madagascar," in *The Anthropology of Christianity*, ed. Fenella Cannell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 273–294 (274, 289).

(18.) As Amanda Porterfield's work on the history of healing in Christianity has shown, healing and related charismatic practices have been central to Christian history since its inception. Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). On the widespread presence of practices that constitute a global Pentecostal and charismatic norm but often appear to researchers to be uniquely rooted in local culture, see Joel Robbins, "On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking," *Religion* 33, no. 3 (July 2003): 221–231.

(19.) For discussions of cross-cultural global Christianity, see Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998); Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

(20.) William A. Christian, Jr., *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996)

(21.) For example: "That Pentecostalism casts such a spell over many free-lance evangelists in China is because it fits well with traditional Chinese popular religion, which also stresses the miraculous and the supernatural." Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 438.

(22.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Stories From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 4

(23.) Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 221.

(24.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 71.

(25.) Lian, *Redeemed by Fire*, 10.

(26.) Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 355.

(27.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 83.

(28.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 105.

(29.) Joseph Smith, in *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), xxi

(30.) David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 43

(31.) Helen Hardacre, *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyukai Kyodan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 10

- (32.) Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and Religion*, 236.
- (33.) Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 39–42
- (34.) *Lived Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997)
- (35.) Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18
- (36.) Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Karen Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995)
- (37.) 楊約翰林榮杰 Daniel H. Bays, "Indigenous Protestant Churches in China, 1900–1937: A Pentecostal Case Study," in *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity*, ed. Steven Kaplan (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 124–143
- (38.) Here Bays is quoting Grant Wacker, "China's Homegrown Protestants," review of Xi Lian's *Redeemed by Fire*, in *Christian Century* (February 6, 2013): 32–34. Daniel H. Bays, "Chinese Ecstatic Millenarian Folk Religion With Pentecostal Christian Characteristics?" in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 33–42.
- (39.) Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan*, 138.
- (40.) Deng Zhaoming, ed., "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today, Part I," *Bridge* no. 62 (November–December 1993): 2–16; "The True Jesus Church, Part II," *Bridge* no. 63 (January–February 1994): 2–15; Deng Zhaoming, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 437–466.
- (41.) Xi Lian, "Messianic Deliverance"; "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period"; *Redeemed by Fire*.
- (42.) Ke-hsien Huang, "Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 118–136.
- (43.) Yen-zen Tsai, "Glossolalia and Church Identity: The Role of Sound in the Making of a Chinese Pentecostal-Charismatic Church," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 137–157.

(44.) Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*

(45.) *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010)

(46.) Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003)

(47.) Thomas Robbins, "Charisma," in William H. Swatos, Jr., ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1998), accessed April 25, 2018, <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/ency/charisma.htm>

(48.) John A. Coleman, S. J., "Church-Sect Typology and Organizational Precariousness," *Sociological Analysis* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 55–66

(49.) H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929)

(50.) William R. Swatos, Jr., in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William R. Swatos, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: Sage, 1996) "Church-Sect Theory,"

(51.) Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 75–76

(52.) Melissa Inouye, "Tale of Three Primaries: Critical Mass in Mormonism's Informal Institutions," in Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin, eds., *Decolonizing Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018): 229–262

(53.) Joel Robbins, "Secrecy and the Sense of an Ending: Narrative, Time, and Everyday Millenarianism in Papua New Guinea and in Christian Fundamentalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 3 (2001): 525–551

(54.) Lian, *Redeemed*, 239.

(55.) Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, Robert Hefner, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 149–175

(56.) Government statistics tend to be conservative, and estimates by believing Christians tend to be liberal. Nanlai Cao cites a conservative estimate of 23 million in “An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China,” in *Annual Report on China’s Religions* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), 190–212, referenced in Nanlai Cao, “Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China,” *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175 (173). The Pew Research Center’s Religion & Public Life Project’s moderate estimate in 2011 was 67 million. See <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-regions/#asia>. Accessed July 29, 2017. On the higher end, see David Aikman’s estimate of 80 to perhaps even 100 million in *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 7–8.

(57.) In 2010 and 2015 Italy’s population was around fifty-nine million. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2017): *Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision*, custom data acquired via website, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/>.

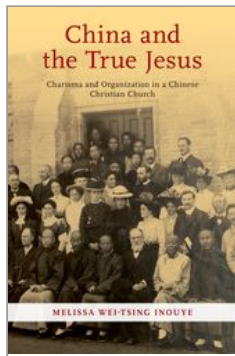
(58.) Nanlai Cao, “Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China,” 173.

(59.) Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857–1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001)

(60.) “Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Missionaries in the Manchu City (1864–1905)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0002

Abstract and Keywords

The large transnational flows of people, ideas, and resources that characterized twentieth-century global modernity had early expressions within the imperial institutions (and aspiring or quasi-imperial institutions) of the nineteenth century. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom rebellion, Qing imperial bureaucracy, and London Missionary Society all engaged in the same project of connecting individuals through national and transnational networks held together by charismatic ideas and institutional resources. For the five individuals whose lives intertwine in this chapter (Hong Xiuquan, Christian rebel; Zeng Guofan, Qing imperial official; Samuel Evans Meech, missionary; Lillie E. V. Saville, missionary doctor; and Wei Enbo, cloth merchant), these networks provided expanded opportunities to engage with the world and transform it to reflect a particular universalistic vision. As people sought to realize these distinctive visions and the charismatic worldviews they represented, they created and extended large organizational structures in which their ideals were embodied, but also attenuated.

Keywords: Taiping, Qing, London Missionary Society, charisma, charismatic, organization, institution

The Heavenly Kingdom

The year was 1864. For over a decade, the city of Nanjing 南京, former capital of the Ming dynasty, had been the center of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace 太平天國 [Taiping Tianguo]. Often known as the Taiping, the Heavenly Kingdom was a Christian rebellion that at one time seemed likely to topple the Qing dynasty and transform China into a Christian theocracy. Prayers had been held every Sunday in Tianjing 天京 [Heavenly Capital], as Nanjing was renamed. In Taiping worship services, hundreds of thousands of women, men, and children had gathered to sing hymns and listen to sermons. Now they crouched behind the city's massive brick walls, gathering weeds to eat. Built during the early Ming dynasty, the walls stood around fourteen meters thick at the bottom and five meters thick at the top. Cannonballs tore into the masonry and bullets peppered defenders behind the parapets. But the greatest peril was unseen. Under the earth, more than thirty tunnels, some dug over four meters below the ground and two meters high, crawled steadily toward the city walls.¹ When they reached their destination, troops of the Qing imperial armies would pack them with explosives to create a massive underground bomb.

While the tops of the hills around the city bristled with enemy cannons and tens of thousands of enemy troops, Hong Xiuquan 洪秀全 (1814-1864), the Heavenly King, lay on his deathbed. Born into a rural family in the southwestern backwater province of Guangxi 廣西, Hong was nearing the end of a prophetic career that had first begun in 1837 with his vision of God the Father and Christ the Son. In this vision, he had been given a sword and was told to destroy devils, whom he eventually recognized as the Manchu, members of a northern ethnic group that had ruled China as the Qing dynasty since 1644. In the early years **(p.19)** of Hong's rebellion, which began in 1850, his armies, numbering in the millions, had conquered large swathes of the southern and central regions of the empire, captured some of China's most populous and wealthy cities, and established a Heavenly Capital with a radically egalitarian society governed by the texts and doctrines of Christianity. At first Western missionaries thrilled to imagine China as a Christian empire, but eventually they dismissed Taiping Christianity as heterodox. They supported Qing efforts to suppress the rebel kingdom.² Slowly the imperial forces pushed back against the Taiping tide until finally in July 1864 Qing armies and Western mercenary troops had formed an impenetrable ring around Nanjing.

Hong Xiuquan was not the first person in human history to claim to see Jesus in a vision or to attempt to enshrine Christian ideals within society, and he would not be the last. But he was the first person in China to make this claim so convincingly that a major movement coalesced around him. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was China's first major Christian movement founded and led entirely by native Chinese, though the "Christianity" of the movement was often questioned by Western observers, who found its charismatic founding claims and radical egalitarianism heterodox. It was the predecessor of twentieth-century native Chinese Christian movements that were also branded as heterodox by Western missionaries despite their Christian genealogies, texts, and discourse. Nearly three-quarters of a century later in 1917, a man named Wei Enbo 魏恩波 would also see God, battle devils with a heavenly sword, and establish a new religious movement that would spread across all of China: the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會. The scale of the two Chinese Christian endeavors was very different, but their impulse to harness charismatic claims to efficient—and expanding—structures of human organization was one and the same.

In 2009, nearly a century and a half after the final Qing assault on the walls of the Heavenly Kingdom, this same charismatic collectivity hummed within a nondescript chapel of the True Jesus Church in a city in Central China once controlled by the Taipings. It was located on the second floor of an apartment block in a residential neighborhood, circumscribed within the city's imposing Ming-era brick walls, now overgrown with weeds and spring wildflowers. Inside the chapel, I sat with my elbows drawn in close amid scores of bodies packed into wooden pews. The song of a hymn, repeated over and over again, filled the room with a plaintive, searching sound:

*Today we come before the Lord,
Partake in holy rite,
And show respect for our Lord's words,
Remember the Lord's death. (p.20)*

*My heart cannot forget he gave
His body as this bread.
The testamental cup we take,
Remember the Lord's death.³*

Many wept as they sang. Most were women and men in their twenties, university students, and early career professionals. They eagerly anticipated a life within the church. Some confided that they had come to this conference not only because they sought spiritual edification, but because they hoped to meet someone who would become their life partner, someone with whom to raise faithful children and share their commitment to the True Jesus Church. To this end, younger church members sometimes asked older church leaders to help them make marriage matches with suitable partners. In the early twenty-first century, such a practice was highly countercultural and spoke to the significance of their Christian beliefs in shaping their values and life choices even though they were in tension with some—though not all—of the values and norms of mainstream twenty-first-century urban culture in China.

What was it that brought these young women and men to this place to sing, weep, and knit their lives together? What did they have in common with the women and men of the Heavenly Kingdom who sang hymns and recited prayers nearly a century and a half ago? For the followers of both the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the True Jesus Church, Christianity provided a potent marriage of charismatic ideology and organizational structures, a collective life informed by shared ideas about the nature of the world and the meaning of human existence. Both of these Christian movements had shared origins in a revolt against the establishment. At the same time, however, they both drew extensively on precedents and models from the powerful organizations against which they rebelled. In its structure, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom closely resembled the Qing imperial bureaucracy. The organization of the True Jesus Church drew on modes and methods developed within the London Missionary Society over one hundred years, and, further back, the congregations of the Protestant Reformation.

One thing that all four of these organizations had in common was their claim to be extraordinary. The ideological premise on which the Qing bureaucracy was founded was that the emperor was the Son of Heaven and that the very cosmos would be responsive to diligent or slack governance. The London Missionary Society was founded to be a light going forth into profound darkness, a beacon to help accomplish the spiritual rescue of all humanity. The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was a venture commissioned by God to engage in an epic battle against **(p.21)** the forces of hell. The True Jesus Church was established as the one true form of Christianity in all the world, the only church in possession of the complete set of rites whereby a person's soul could be saved. These four organizations were thus charismatic in the broad sense that their legitimacy was based not merely in politics or charity but in claims about the nature of reality and their alignment with cosmic or divine power.

Some of these organizations, particularly the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, unfolded on a scale many hundred times larger than that of the True Jesus Church and have been subjects of voluminous studies.⁴ And yet the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, Qing bureaucracy, and London Missionary Society shaped the historical context within which the True Jesus Church arose. Like the church, these three organizations were manifestations of the human impulse to create institutions to contain, harness, and regularize the extraordinary. This conviction of the exceptional nature of their collective project was what motivated the people who animated these three organizations to expand their networks and build institutions that took on a life of their own. To support their extraordinary causes, people within these organizations refined processes, structures, and regulations. They amassed silver, copper, and personnel. They supervised, disciplined, executed, and excommunicated. They managed property, business ventures, military expeditions, and preaching tours. They wrote letters and sent funds. During the years in the nineteenth and early twentieth century when exchange between people in China and people around the world intensified dramatically, these three charismatic organizations moved across each other's orbits. The pull that they exerted upon one another speaks to the real gravity created when large numbers of people form into one body, and also to the considerable momentum and inertia that build as they move along their course. The collective actions they inspired shaped China's peopled landscape and helped lead to the rise of the True Jesus Church.

This chapter explores the internal machinery of these charismatic organizations through the lives of five individuals who believed in and contributed to their projects: Hong Xiuquan, visionary founder of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom; Zeng Guofan, a scholar-official in the Qing imperial government; Samuel Evans Meech and Lillie E. V. Saville, missionaries of the London Missionary Society in Beijing; and Wei Enbo 魏恩波, a convert within a London Missionary Society church in Beijing who went on to found the True Jesus Church. All five of these individuals lived lives that were "large" because they unfolded within the context of organizations linking them to many others, expanding life's possibilities for good or ill.

(p.22) Hong Xiuquan, Son of God

Hong Xiuquan was born into a Hakka farming family of middling means in the frontier province of Guangxi. The Hakka, or “guest people,” were a Han Chinese subgroup in southern China, with distinctive language and customs which set them apart. Like all other Chinese boys whose families could afford it, from a tender age he had been educated in the Confucian classics with the hope that he would one day pass the civil service examination, which tested one’s knowledge of and—supposedly—moral internalization of Confucian philosophy. In theory only the very wisest, most hardworking, most sincere, and deserving would pass the exams and become government officials. For hundreds of years, passing the examinations at the prefectural, provincial, and eventually national level had been the traditional route to wealth and prestige in China. By 1837, however, Hong had failed the Guangzhou prefectural test three times. This was not surprising, given the terrible odds of actually passing all three levels of exams and eventually winning an official post—around 1 in 6,000—but after this setback, Hong Xiuquan fell into a delirium.⁵

In a vision, Hong saw himself caught up to heaven by angels.⁶ There his Heavenly Mother washed him and brought him before his Heavenly Father, the Supreme Lord and Great God. The Heavenly Father sat on a throne clothed in a black dragon robe, a high-brimmed hat on his head, and long golden whiskers falling to his navel. He told Hong sadly of the fallen state of human beings who had forgotten him, their Father, and who had been led astray by evil devils. The teachings of Confucius, said the Father sternly, had given the devils power and harmed the people. Confucius was summoned on the spot for a dressing-down by Hong’s Heavenly Elder Brother, who scolded, “You created books of this kind to teach the people, so that even my own blood brother, in reading your works, was harmed by them.”⁷ The Heavenly Father ordered the angels to whip Confucius in order to repay him for the evil that he had caused. He then gave Hong a golden seal and a sword and charged him to drive out the evil devils. Still in the heavenly realm, and with his Heavenly Father and Heavenly Elder Brother behind him, Hong then fought the hosts of devils led by a leader who was

full of evil tricks and capable of many transformations. Sometimes, when struck down, he would immediately transform himself into a great serpent, and if the great serpent were struck down, he could quickly transform himself into something else. He was capable of seventeen or eighteen transformations. He could even change himself into something as small as a flea on a dog.⁸

(p.23) With the aid of the Heavenly Father, Heavenly Mother, Heavenly Elder Brother, and numerous younger sisters, Hong defeated all of the devils. He was then dispatched back to earth with instructions to wait.⁹

Upon emerging from his vision, Hong declared to his family in Guangxi that he was the “Taiping Son of Heaven.” For several months they considered him to be mentally ill. Some years later, in 1843, having failed the examinations four times, Hong revisited a book that Edwin Stevens, a Western evangelist, had given to him outside the Guangzhou examination center in 1836.¹⁰ This book, titled *Good Words to Admonish an Age*, was printed by Liang Fa 梁發 (1789–1855), a Chinese Protestant evangelist, and contained excerpts from the Old and New Testaments with commentaries. Poring over the text, Hong realized that the supreme creator God described in the tract was none other than the Heavenly Father of his vision. In this case his Elder Brother was none other than Jesus Christ and he, Hong, was himself a son of God.

In 1844, at the age of thirty, Hong set out with some followers to “travel throughout the world, and teach to all people the doctrine of repentance.”¹¹ Between 1846 and 1850 Hong and his associates succeeded in establishing areas of influence for their “Society of God-Worshippers” in scattered villages in rural Guangxi.¹² As members of the Hakka ethnic group, Hong and his early associates already knew what it meant to practice a cultural identity in tension with existing norms. Their cultural understandings shaped their interpretation of Christianity. For instance, Hakka practices influenced the way in which they called on the Christian God for healing, and religionists contributed to a Hakka-style community chest from which disaster-relief funds were drawn.¹³ Hong’s group eventually began to clash with local government officials who saw their teachings and iconoclasm as an affront to Confucian morality, a social disturbance, and a threat to imperial control.¹⁴

Hong decided that the evil devils whom God had commissioned him to destroy were none other than the Manchu—the Qing rulers themselves. The Qing rulers were not ethnically Han Chinese but belonged to a minority group from what is now northeastern China. In 1644 they had swept down through a pass in the Great Wall and subjugated the majority Han Chinese population to the rule of their Qing 清 [Pure] dynasty. Between 1850 and 1851 tensions between Hong’s movement and the Qing government escalated. In 1851 he and his thousands of followers captured the city of Yong’an in Guangxi and launched a full-scale rebellion. From Yong’an the Taiping swept upward through the provinces of Hunan 湖南 and Hubei 湖北, reaching the Yangtze River. From there they moved eastward along the Yangtze through Anhui and into Jiangsu in the Yangtze River Delta, their armies swelling to over a million men and women.¹⁵

(p.24) By 1854, the Taiping-controlled territories included the city of Wuchang in Central China and numerous important urban hubs in the Yangtze River Delta.¹⁶ After capturing the city of Nanjing, the former Ming imperial capital and major river port, the Taipings renamed it “Heavenly Capital” and began the work of administering the Heavenly Kingdom.¹⁷ One set of figures based on Nanjing household registrations listed 245,300 city residents hailing from the provinces of Guangxi, Guangdong 廣東, Hunan, Hubei, Anhui 安徽, and Jiangsu 江蘇. These diverse regional origins of citizens of the Heavenly Capital suggest that the movement had so much appeal that devoted new followers were willing to leave their homes to help implement the Taiping ideals.¹⁸ For a decade, in areas of Taiping control, millions of Chinese gathered for worship and preaching on Sundays, taught their children prayers to the Heavenly Father, and recited the Ten Commandments.¹⁹

High-Functioning Bureaucrat: Zeng Guofan and Qing Institutions

Two of those who grimly sought bloody entrance into the Heavenly Capital and other Taiping cities were Zeng Guofan 曾國藩 (1811-1872) and his younger brother, Zeng Guoquan 曾國荃 (1824-1890), natives of the southern province of Hunan. Zeng Guofan was among the privileged few who had traveled to the capital of the great Qing empire and had been allowed to pass not only through Yongdingmen, the southern gate of the city, but northward into the heart of the city and into the imperial palace itself. He did so for the first time when he sat the very highest level of the civil service examination, known as the palace examination.²⁰ At the tender age of twenty-seven, Guofan aced the test that had driven Hong Xiuquan into a delirium. The Zengs were a rural landowning family of middling means in central Hunan. Guofan and his brothers had been preparing for the exam since they were toddlers, receiving rigorous tutoring in poetry, philosophy, essay-writing, calligraphy, and principles of moral governance.

Guofan was talented, but also lucky. The population of China had tripled over the course of the first two centuries of the Qing dynasty, creating intense competition for candidates and enormous challenges for a government bureaucracy that was becoming critically overstretched.²¹ As Hong Xiuquan knew all too well, the odds of winning an official degree and getting a job in the early nineteenth century were dismal. Talented, ambitious men from the gentry class (the social elite composed of current degreeholders or the families of current or former degreeholders and prominent merchants whose wealth allowed them to aspire for their sons to be degreeholders) unable to find jobs in the imperial bureaucracy **(p.25)** began to find ways to increase their influence locally, filling the vacuum of power and influence created by increased pressure on the dynasty’s resources.²²

For centuries, the Chinese imperial bureaucracy had been one of the political wonders of the premodern and early modern world. Its rationality and finely tuned mechanisms were impressive. Instead of selecting government functionaries through circumstances of birth or marriage, since the Tang dynasty the Chinese bureaucracy had winnowed its candidates through an impartial examination. Like Zeng Guofan, all educated Chinese men (and some educated Chinese women) had spent their youth and a good deal of their adult life memorizing, interpreting, and quoting the same texts. The moral values and overall political orientation of Confucianism was shared in common not only among national officeholders but also among those who had never won a high degree but spent a lifetime studying. This common education created a shared elite culture that helped to unify the bureaucracy across China's vast distances and to reinforce the legitimacy of the imperial system in the eyes of local powerholders. When the young Guofan arrived at the imperial palace for the final examination, he sat among dozens of other candidates from far-flung regions who spoke mutually unintelligible dialects but who brushed the same elegant classical phrases onto their examination papers. Guofan passed the exam in 1838 with such a high ranking that he was awarded a first posting at the prestigious Hanlin Academy, a gateway position that led to careers at high levels in central government.

The extent of the imperial bureaucracy in Qing times was tremendous, given the addition of new territories in the north and northwest through military campaigns in what is now Mongolia, East Turkestan (Xinjiang 新疆 Province), and Tibet. Writing in a classical form of Chinese that transcended regional linguistic differences just as Latin had connected scholars across early modern Europe, Qing scholar-officials communicated with the government nerve center in Beijing through a system of memorials (public or private messages).

The administrative and legal machinery involved in sending a single communication between officials in the provinces and the emperor in Beijing gives us a glimpse of complexity of the Qing bureaucracy. The entire empire was held together by paper. Express communications were sent via a post relay of couriers who were supposed to travel at an official maximum speed of 320 kilometers a day—timestamped at each way station so that the relevant local official in charge of supervising and provisioning couriers could be fined in case of a delay—but who in urgent situations frequently traveled much faster. Documents were regularly transmitted by mounted couriers between Guangzhou in the far southeast and Beijing (about 3,600 kilometers) in fifteen days, and between Nanjing in the Yangtze River Delta and Beijing (about 1,500 kilometers) in five **(p.26)** days.²³ Routine documents traveled much more slowly, often by foot and using waterways, but with the same regularity as to their rate of transmission.

Routine (nonsecret) memorials regarding matters such as tax collection and legal cases went to the Transmission Office in Beijing, where they were examined as to form before being sent on to the Grand Secretariat, the top organ of everyday government. The regulations governing the form of a memorial were strict, including specifications for the number of lines and characters per page and the honorary elevation of certain characters.²⁴

Nonroutine (secret) memorials such as urgent reports on rebellion, malfeasance, and the like, were simpler in form. Instead of formulaic reports, they were confidential messages from official client to imperial patron sent in a sealed box that was to be opened only by the emperor himself, bypassing bureaucratic impedimenta. Memorials were delivered directly to the emperor by the Chancery of Memorials shortly after dawn. The emperor's response might range from writing a simple endorsement to be returned to the originating official, to passing the memorial along to his closest advisors, the members of the Grand Council, with a request that they discuss the matter with him or perhaps draft an edict.²⁵

Therefore, in theory at least, intelligence was gathered from each county of the empire and passed up the chain of command until it reached the emperor's eyes. The imperial will was then transmitted downward, radiating out to the far reaches of the Chinese empire. Intrabureaucratic flows included not only messages, but also tax contributions of silver collected from every Chinese household, foreign tribute goods and diplomatic personnel, accused or convicted criminals moving between levels of jurisdiction, and officials and petty government functionaries themselves.

So carefully were bureaucratic communications preserved that to this day any university library with a half-decent Chinese collection contains dozens of volumes containing the memorials and personal correspondence of Zeng Guofan and other notable scholar-officials. What was the power that archived all of these communications and kept so many people in the harness to keep the wheels of the state moving forward? All of these institutional processes occurred with the shared assumption that the dynasty had the right to rule under the mandate of Heaven 天命. If this assumption held, then from the emperor to the officials to the postal couriers to the peasant women who watched the post horses gallop by, the role that each individual in the empire should play was clear.

Confucian morality was often succinctly summarized as a set of dyadic relationships between ruler and minister, parent and child, elder sibling and younger sibling, elder friend and younger friend, and husband and wife. These relationships were hierarchical but reciprocal. Even the emperor was bound by them. As the Son of Heaven, only he could make the necessary annual sacrifices **(p.27)** to Heaven and Earth that would allow China's people to prosper. If his personal conduct in discharging his duties was not moral and upright, it might incur Heaven's wrath. Withdrawal of Heaven's mandate would be manifest through natural disasters, popular unrest, and, in the worst-case scenario, a change of dynasty.

In other words, like those of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the regularized mechanisms of the Qing imperial bureaucracy were kept in motion by a powerful idea with a significance as vast as the cosmos and as intricate as the human heart. This idea, elaborated through the Confucian classical texts and propagated through the civil service examination education culture, was the notion that if everyone did their part, including the emperor and the officials who helped to extend imperial rule to every province and prefecture, Heaven would bless the empire with prosperity. Immoral conduct would have cosmic repercussions manifest in the heavens and in the natural world as well as within human society.

Hence the Chinese imperial project was, like the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, charismatic. The emperor was not only the ruler of the empire but also its chief high priest. The performance of various rituals designed to propitiate Heaven's blessings of prosperity for the entire empire, such as annual worship at the Temple of Heaven south of the imperial palace, was an essential aspect of the emperor's duties. Officials and functionaries of the Qing state also regularly sought to harness charismatic power. Sometimes this occurred in the context of monitoring local religious activities, such as the dynasty's system of regulating temples throughout the empire by prescribing which deities could be worshipped and subjecting deities to mechanisms of official promotion and demotion, like officials. At other times, however, officials of the Qing state themselves employed religious rituals to demonstrate legitimacy and care for the people.

As one scholar has shown, imperial officials regularly engaged in charismatic rainmaking techniques often associated with popular religion.²⁶ For example, when in 1856 an area under his jurisdiction of Tongxi 桐溪 in Zhejiang suffered from a severe drought, the official Dai Pan 戴槃 traveled throughout the area, visiting local temples and praying for rain. He claimed that whenever it rained during this period of drought it was always a result of his having prayed for three days without stopping.²⁷ Official rainmaking activities allowed the imperial state to publicly demonstrate its legitimacy, the officials' concern for the people, and the high position that allowed them to advocate on the people's behalf.²⁸ Rainmaking rituals often involved fasts, exposure to the elements, and various other forms of self-sacrifice. Through these rituals, people believed, imperial officials who properly embodied and enacted moral virtue could call upon the powers of Heaven to support the people. Imperial officials authored various manuals of rainmaking technologies, and these manuals circulated widely.

(p.28) We get a sense of the perceived link between human morality and natural order in a proclamation Zeng Guofan drafted and distributed widely in Central China to rally local officials and militias to subdue the Taiping rebels. In this proclamation Zeng reiterates the sanctity of the hierarchical relationships at the heart of the Confucian ideology and decries what he perceives as the Christian rebels' disruption of the very order of reality:

Ever since the times of Yao, Shun, and the Three Dynasties, sages, generation after generation, have upheld the Confucian teachings, stressing proper human relationships, between ruler and minister, father and son, superiors and subordinates, the high and the low, all in their proper place, just as hats and shoes are not interchangeable. The Yüeh bandits have stolen a few scraps from the foreign barbarians and worship the Christian religion Scholars may not read the Confucian classics, for they have their so-called teachings of Jesus and the New Testament. In a single day several thousand years of Chinese ethical principles and proper human relationships, classical books, social institutions and statutes have all been completely swept away. This is not just a crisis for our Ch'ing dynasty, but the most extraordinary crisis of all time . . .²⁹

Just as hats and shoes could not be interchanged at a whim, Zeng reasoned, the Taiping ethos of egalitarianism violated the moral laws that defined humanity and threatened the equilibrium of the natural universe. And yet in one way the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Qing imperial dynasty were fundamentally alike. They were large-scale collaborative projects held together by a volatile synergy between charismatic ideas on the one hand and institutions on the other.

Without organized channels and structures of hierarchical authority, powerful ideas could not find expression in people's lives. Without charisma (extraordinary power), there would be no impetus to drive the collective, exhaustive projects of governing and being governed, of living together in a state of mutual understanding. Hence the relationship between institutions and charisma was codependent, mutually generative, and mutually corroding. The institutions of the Chinese imperial bureaucracy worked to maintain this delicate balance, establishing the civil service examination to channel the most worthy and upright men into government and creating rituals to appease Heaven after demonstrated moral failure.

And yet any complex machine will develop a cascade of problems if not rigorously maintained and adapted to changing conditions. The Qing state's budget and personnel were extremely small relative to the size of the country, society's total economic product, and governed population. This "governance (p. 29) on the cheap" had been effective in the past, but now in the nineteenth century, Qing civil administration struggled to respond to increasing population pressure, social complexity, geographic mobility, and foreign incursions.³⁰ Furthermore, by the time of the death of the Qianlong emperor in 1799, corruption had penetrated deeply throughout the bureaucracy. This decline in moral vigor gave rise to the kinds of government abuses and ineffectiveness that fed the fires of rebellion. Suppressing the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom drained the Qing imperial treasury with outlays for ammunition, supplies, billeting, and salaries.³¹ The Taiping civil war cost twenty million lives, making it the most devastating civil conflict in human history.³² It wasted and depopulated China's most fertile and prosperous region, the Yangtze River Delta, a major source of tax revenue and a center of commercial activity. A rival government's control of large sections of Central China for over a decade advertised the Qing's weakness both to international observers and to ambitious Chinese elites who did not hesitate to increase their local influence at the dynasty's expense.³³

For example, after imperial troops under the emperor's appointed commanders had failed to stem the rebel tide for several years, local officials and other cultural elites such as Zeng Guofan, assisted by his younger brother Zeng Guoquan, took matters into their own hands. They raised money and trained local militias. Their energetic initiative in this project eventually prevailed against the Taiping, but also infringed on the Manchu regime's monopoly on power.³⁴

Taiping Governing Institutions

A key reason the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom was able to hold out as long as it did was that it successfully created institutions and protocols to consolidate control over a wide territory encompassing diverse peoples. One reason this bureaucratic project was successful was that it built on the tried-and-tested institutions of the imperial bureaucracy. For instance, in Nanjing the Taiping leaders established the same six ministries that existed in the Qing capital of Beijing: Personnel, Revenue, Rites, War, Justice, and Works. They also set up a civil service examination system throughout the provinces to select candidates for public office. What was different about the Taiping civil service examination, of course, is that the body of knowledge tested was centered on the Bible instead of on the Confucian classics that had so vexed Hong Xiuquan.³⁵ Even Taiping interoffice memos paralleled the Qing format. For instance, in official Qing correspondence, certain characters, such as those composing the name of the reigning emperor, were taboo; in the Taiping administration, characters used in the names of God (**p.30**) or Taiping leaders were taboo. Even commonly used characters such as *shang* 上 [on top of; up] or *lao* 老 [old] had to be substituted with other characters.³⁶

Despite numerous parallels with the secular “devil” bureaucracy, however, Taiping institutions also organized people in novel ways that reflected the leaders’ determination to enact Christian values. For instance, in Nanjing men and women lived in separate quarters to prevent any impropriety.³⁷ Women were organized into their own all-female army units.³⁸ Gender separations were so strict that regulations stated that any official or soldier who even hired a civilian woman to wash or sew clothes was to be decapitated without exception.³⁹ Taiping soldiers’ duties included memorizing the Ten Commandments, attending Sunday worship with their military units, and destroying Buddhist and Daoist images and the temples that housed them.⁴⁰

Many of the Taiping reforms were radically egalitarian, attacking existing norms of privilege and propriety. A Taiping hymn read: “[If] there is land, it should be farmed by all; if there is food, it should be eaten by all; if there are clothes and money, they should be worn and used by all. There should be no inequality. Everyone should be equally well fed and clothed.”⁴¹ Within Nanjing and within the army, a “sacred treasury” system was implemented to pool and redistribute individual wealth.⁴² Within Taiping-controlled territories, footbinding (the beauty-oriented practice of binding the feet of young girls very tightly so that even in adulthood they would be around four inches long), dowries, arranged marriages, the purchase of wives, widow suicide, prostitution, concubinage, and other forms of female servitude were abolished. Taiping law mandated women’s equal access to manual labor, education, civil service examinations, government and military service, and court nobility.⁴³

Despite these lofty public pronouncements, however, after internecine struggles that resulted in the assassination of one of the major commanders in September 1856 and an ensuing purge of thousands of his retainers, the Taiping movement began to lose its cohesion and vitality. Taiping commanders focused on regional power bases. Strict codes of moral and economic discipline proved hard to enforce, including among the Taiping leaders themselves, who accumulated concubines and wealth as their reign in the Heavenly Capital continued. As the years wore on and the work of governing was taken on by other leaders, Hong Xiuquan spent less time issuing religious proclamations and more time composing poems such as those admonishing his female attendants to pay special attention to the feet when fanning away flying insects.⁴⁴ Westerners in China who had initially been enthusiastic about the prospect of the Christian rebellion overthrowing the “heathen” Manchu dynasty became disillusioned, especially after Taiping armies in 1860 attacked the port of Shanghai, where many foreigners lived.

(p.31) In the mid-1850s talented leaders such as Zeng Guofan came to the fore. Zeng had gotten his government job by writing poetry with perfect brushstrokes, but he was also no slouch at war. He recruited local militia from Hunan, his home province that was partially occupied by the Taiping, and molded these soldiers into a determined and formidable fighting force called the Hunan Army 湘軍. These Qing troops, aided by Western mercenary armies, began to push back against the insurgents. Guofan’s brother Zeng Guoquan personally led the siege on the Taiping Heavenly Capital, encamping at Nanjing on May 31, 1862.⁴⁵

Hong Xiuquan died on June 1, 1864. About a month later, on July 19, Zeng Guoquan’s troops pushed their tunnels under the Nanjing city wall and succeeded in blowing up a section of it (see Figure 1.1).

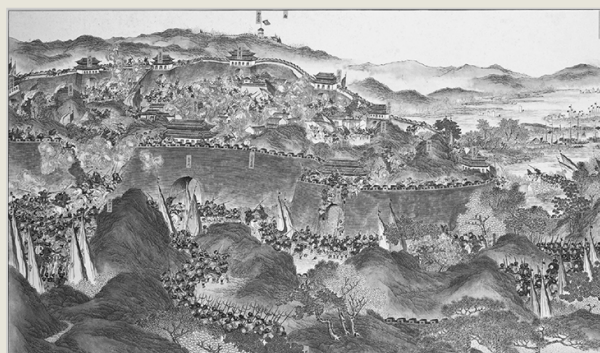


Figure 1.1 “Regaining Jinling,” Wu Youru, 1886. This painting depicts the Qing armies entering the city of Nanjing, the Taiping Heavenly Capital. An explosion has blown a large gap in the city wall (center left).

Zeng's army poured into the city, massacring inhabitants of the Heavenly Capital and

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

engaging in the activities of looting, burning, and raping that were unfortunately a recurring practice in the history of Chinese armies' (and perhaps most armies') interactions with civilians.⁴⁶ In the weeks and months that followed, around China the dynasty's armies mopped up the remaining Taiping holdouts. The flame of Hong's charismatic Christian vision flickered out. The institutions and cultural conventions that had woven this vision into the lives of millions of people for over a decade frayed and unraveled.

(p.32) Samuel Evans Meech, London Missionary Society Missionary
Around the time the Taipings' Christian kingdom of millions was crumbling, Western Protestant missionary organizations in China were struggling to win their 2,000th convert.⁴⁷ The missionary project was still unfolding only incrementally several years later when, in 1871, a young man of twenty-six years posted his first letter to his London Missionary Society superior from Shanghai. "My dear Dr Mullens," wrote Samuel Evans Meech (1845-1937), "I am thankful to be able to report myself safe thus far on my journey. 59 days from Liverpool brought us here on the morning of December 12th, a day before we were expected." Meech remarked that the voyage had been pleasant, from the Atlantic Ocean, across the Bay of Biscay, past the Straits of Gibraltar, through the newly opened Suez Canal, through the Straits of Malacca, and up through the China Sea, calling at Amoy (Xiamen 廈門).⁴⁸ When the inland water routes thawed out in the early spring, Meech traveled on to his assigned post in Beijing, arriving on March 27, 1872. Upon arriving, he immediately requested that his fiancée, Edith Prankard (d. 1903), be sent out to join him. Meech then dedicated himself to language study as he awaited Miss Prankard's arrival in November. Accompanied by a chaperon, Mr. Schereschewsky from the American Episcopal Mission, Samuel met Edith in Tianjin 天津. They all traveled back to Beijing, where Edith and Samuel were married in the British Legation (the official diplomatic headquarters of the British in China, only recently established in 1860). Edith also began to study Chinese.

The British Legation was a building amid a cluster of buildings with foreign architecture that stuck out like a sore thumb on the very doorstep of the Qing emperor's living and working quarters, ruining the symmetry and reverent separation built into the spaces of China's imperial capital hundreds of years earlier. When the Manchu rulers had consolidated their conquest and established their rule in China in 1644, they had converted the entire area within the Beijing city walls into the exclusive domain of dynastic soldiers, called bannermen (including mostly Manchu but also ethnic Han and Mongols who had joined the Manchu ranks prior to the conquest of China).⁴⁹ Han Chinese residents were forced out and set up residences and shops just outside of the city's Zhengyang Gate, creating a "Manchu city" inside the city walls (also known as the "inner city") and a new "Chinese city" to the south (also known as the "outer city"). Over time, because of a relaxing of rigid separations between Manchu and Han Chinese populations and the general erosion of Qing control, some Manchu moved to the outer city and some ethnic Han Chinese and even some foreigners moved into the Manchu city.⁵⁰

(p.33) As Susan Naquin has put it, Beijing was a city of several nested sets of walls.⁵¹ Within the Manchu city was the Imperial City, containing the private gardens, storehouses, and government offices of the dynasty, and within the Imperial City was the Forbidden City, the residence of the emperor and his family. Surrounded by vermilion walls, the Forbidden City lay at the very center of Beijing. It contained living quarters for the emperor, wives, concubines, and children, temples for worship, offices, libraries, and large ceremonial halls where the emperor held court. The emperor's carved dragon throne, the doorways of the ceremonial halls, and the heavily fortified gates of the Forbidden City aligned to form a north-south axis. The gates of the Imperial City, Manchu city, and Han Chinese city also aligned with this axis, reinforcing the emperor's cosmic centrality.⁵² Unlike Zeng Guofan, the vast majority of Beijing residents never had the opportunity to penetrate into the city's sacred center. For them, the city was a set of rings and high walls.⁵³

Upon arriving in China as young missionaries, newlyweds Samuel Evans Meech and Edith Prankard Meech were not able to enter the Forbidden City, but they did follow in Zeng Guofan's footsteps by buckling down to study Chinese, including some Chinese classical texts. Two years later, on May 29, 1874, Samuel passed his language exam with flying colors. His examiner, Dr. Blod, wrote to his missionary colleague J. Dudgeon, "I rejoice with you that our mutual friend gives much promise of becoming a very useful missionary to the Chinese." The exam consisted of reading the Doctrine of the Mean (a Chinese classical text) and the Gospel of Matthew, engaging in exercises in translation, Romanization, and tones (the four vocal pitches used in Mandarin Chinese). Meech was now a full-fledged missionary. In subsequent years he would become a language examiner himself.⁵⁴

In January 1876, Meech sent a report of the quarterly balance sheet to the secretary in London, along with an update on the recently completed chapel in the western section of the Manchu city. Finally, the London Missionary Society had an outpost—not just a place to live, but a purpose-built space where many converts could worship. Eventually the London Missionary Society built another chapel in the eastern part of the Manchu city, and maintained multiple houses as missionary residences. By ordinary Chinese standards, these houses were spacious and well appointed, with sitting rooms, study areas, verandas, and servants' rooms.⁵⁵

Lillie Saville, London Missionary Society Doctor

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom had been a Christian movement aspiring to implement Christian doctrines through military conquest in China, but conquest of the spiritual sort was on the minds of many Western missionaries. The scale of **(p.34)** their endeavor was not limited to China, but was global. The year after the fall of the Heavenly Kingdom, in 1865 in England a Yorkshire parish priest penned the lyrics for the hymn “Onward Christian Soldiers,” which over the next four decades steadily grew in popularity until it was regularly included in approximately 50 percent of English-language hymnals.⁵⁶ In the same year, a Methodist minister and his wife in London founded the militaristic Christian reform movement that evolved into the Salvation Army.⁵⁷

The Salvation Army was just one of many Catholic and Protestant societies established in Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century that set out to transform the world. Christian missionary societies were among the earliest contributors to the transnational organizational culture that underpins contemporary global modernity.⁵⁸ Compared with international Catholic societies such as the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) that had engaged in global mission since the Counter-Reformation, Protestant missionary organizations were late to the party, but became a major presence in China and around the world during the nineteenth century.

Like Zeng Guofan, a young British woman named Lillie E. V. Saville (1869-?) felt that the moral and cultural values of her country were not particular to her and her fellow citizens, but universal values that ought to be embraced by all. In 1890, explaining her desire to join the London Missionary Society, she wrote:

I do feel most strongly that God has called me and would have me devote my life and the powers He has given me to those in heathen lands, who are still without light and knowledge, and who need so intensely the help, teaching, and life-consecration of their English sisters.⁵⁹

Lillie's embrace of the notion of universal human kinship was not egalitarian; as an Englishwoman, she envisioned herself as the senior sibling, helping and teaching.

Founded in 1795, the London Missionary Society was one of the early international missionary societies organized in the United Kingdom and United States. Like Zeng Guofan's bureaucratic network, in the mid-nineteenth century the London Missionary Society was held together by a network of stations in places such as Asia, Africa, and the Pacific Islands.⁶⁰ Born to missionary parents on Huahine in the Society Islands, Saville had moved within this network her entire life. She had resided intermittently at her parents' missionary posts in the Southern Pacific and their native land of England. Her two middle names expressed this cosmopolitan identity: Emma Vahine-é-Fua.⁶¹

Growing up within a transnational missionary organization had made Saville aware of the vast dimensions of the world as well as the various technologies and **(p.35)** institutional mechanisms that could render it comprehensible and accessible. In England she had studied at Sevenoaks, a school founded specifically for the children of missionaries. After Sevenoaks, Saville had gone on to study Latin, German, and French at London University. In 1890, Saville was accepted to the London Missionary Society and to the multiyear, society-supported course of medical training. It would prepare her, a twenty-one-year-old woman in a time when English women of her age would not win the vote for another thirty-eight years, to become a doctor in China.⁶²

Like the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom and the Qing empire, the great collective endeavor that was the London Missionary Society was animated by a powerful shared moral ideology—in this case, evangelistic Protestantism. The military conquests of the British empire expanded around the same time that a flowering of popular religious enthusiasm called the Second Great Awakening swept through the United States and Europe, reviving religious zeal and fueling an extensive worldwide missionary movement. Christians in the United States or England who had experienced a transformative religious experience confirming their view of God felt convinced that everyone else in the world ought to share this view. They formed societies and boards and raised funds to convert the world.

Naturally, these nineteenth-century Anglophone missionaries tended to travel to places where the British government had already staked a claim to influence, for the sake of security and ease of interaction with local governments. In this case, imperialistic incursions paved the way for missionary efforts, although missionaries were never as successful in getting people to adopt their beliefs as characterizations of missionaries as “cultural imperialists” might suggest.⁶³ More often than not, the most visible fruits of the missionary presence in China had to do with the transfer of certain cultural technologies such as print culture, modes of community organization, and Western medical knowledge and techniques.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Protestant missionary activities in China often rode on the coattails of Western imperialistic ventures.

Robert Morrison (1782-1834), a native of Morpeth, England and a London Missionary Society member, began his career as the first Protestant missionary in China too early to benefit from British imperialism. When he arrived in 1807 the Qing bureaucracy strictly controlled foreigners' movements and trading activities. Foreigners were not allowed to reside on the Chinese mainland. Hence, throughout Morrison's years in China, he divided his time between tiny enclaves where foreigners were permitted: Shameen Island, a small island in Guangzhou's Pearl River, and the settlement of Macao, a tiny but bustling port situated on the tip of a peninsula in the Pearl River Delta that had been occupied by Portuguese **(p.36)** traders and missionaries since the sixteenth century. Morrison's sense of isolation from other Western Christian workers is palpable in a report sent back to London:

Malacca is twelve hundred miles from Canton [Guangzhou], and of course a long journey must be taken if we wish to see our brethren there. If the monsoons set in, we are six months before we can get letters from them. And if our friends here do not write to us before they hear of our arrival in China, it will be about two years before we hear from them.⁶⁵

Unable to proselytize freely among ordinary folk, Morrison spent most of his time learning Chinese from native tutors who later became his assistants in the work of translating a Chinese edition of the Bible. After 1813, he had assistance from William Milne (1785-1822), a Scottish missionary. Their joint translation, the first full Chinese language Bible produced in China, was published in 1823.⁶⁶ Morrison also worked for the British East India Company and the British diplomatic service as a translator. He died in Guangzhou of illness in 1834 and was buried in Macao in a small Protestant cemetery alongside various foreign seamen and traders whose adventures had ended far from home.

In the course of his missionary service Morrison confronted many significant obstacles that he never overcame. And yet, just a few years after his death, the position of British missionaries in China changed in a fundamental way as a result of the First Opium War between China and Great Britain from 1839 to 1842. In 1839 the Chinese scholar-official specially commissioned by the Qing emperor to put a stop to the illegal opium trade, Lin Zexu, angered British traders when he confiscated over 1,400 tons of the drug from their warehouses and flushed it out to sea.⁶⁷ British merchants sought redress, and war broke out. With the assistance of new military technology such as steam-powered gunboats that could maneuver easily in the shallow water of the Pearl River Delta, in 1842 the British won the war and extracted a victor's justice.

The Treaty of Nanjing ended the war and was the first of a series of “unequal treaties” through which foreign nations extracted certain concessions from China.⁶⁸ Its articles included a hefty indemnity in silver and the cession of the island of Hong Kong to Britain. A clause in a supplementary tariff treaty signed between Britain and China in 1843, later known as the “most favored nation” clause, stipulated that whatever concessions another foreign country might be able to win from the Chinese government would automatically be extended to Britain.⁶⁹ Other foreign powers integrated a version of this clause into their treaties with China, meaning that instead of China being able to play one power **(p.37)** off against another, Europeans and Japanese would all benefit from their individual incursions.

The Treaty of Nanjing also established five “treaty ports” in which British merchants could trade freely. In the treaty port cities of Guangzhou, Shanghai, Ningbo, Fuzhou, and Xiamen, foreigners, including missionaries, were now officially allowed to live and engage in their particular occupations. Treaty ports created an “extraterritorial” space in which foreigners were immune to Chinese laws and could do as they pleased. Most significant from the point of view of our story, foreigners were allowed to reside within treaty ports—including Western missionaries eager to preach Christianity.

Hong Xiuquan had encountered foreign missionaries in Guangzhou in 1836, when Edwin Stevens had given him Liang Fa’s Bible tract. Later, in the spring of 1847, after he had already received his vision of the Father, the Mother, and the Son, and had become the leader of a fledgling Christian movement in Guangxi, Hong returned to Guangzhou and studied the Bible for a few months under Issachar Roberts (1802-1871), an American Baptist missionary.⁷⁰

In 1851, Hong’s religious movement evolved into a full-blown political rebellion. Communities of missionaries now living in the newly established treaty ports and especially the boomtown port of Shanghai reported on his movement with intense interest and produced numerous eyewitness accounts. Missionaries’ opinions on the Taiping Rebellion vacillated, especially during the early 1850s when it seemed very likely that the rebellion would overthrow the Qing. During this early period, the appeal of the egalitarian Taiping ideology enforced in Nanjing had not yet been marred by authoritarian violence and internecine strife. The earliest Western reports on the Taiping come largely from British consular officials in Guangzhou and Hong Kong and note the dynasty’s vigorous but ineffective attempts to suppress the uprising through military campaigns and imperial edicts warning the populace against the “strange” and “vicious” doctrines of the movement.⁷¹ A certain wary regard comes through in these reports, which remark not only on the alarming success of the rebellion in terms of numbers of adherents, imperial soldiers killed, and cities taken, but also on other aspects of the movement such as its disciplined organization.

A February 1853 report in the London-based missionary publication, *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, emphasized the potential of the Taiping Rebellion to bring Christianity to China on a scale several orders of magnitude larger than the Protestant missionary efforts that had been underway since the arrival of the first missionaries in the early 1800s. The Baptist missionary Issachar Roberts described Hong as a person of “blameless deportment . . . about five feet **(p.38)** four or five inches high; well built, round faced, regular featured, rather handsome, about middle age, and gentlemanly in his manners.”⁷²

In this letter, Roberts recommended against Western military support of the embattled Qing establishment. “The idolatry of this nation must come to an end, and who knows but this is the Lord’s set time?” he asked. Perhaps a Taiping victory held the key to China’s salvation. “Behold, what God hath wrought!” he wrote,

[God had n]ot only opened China externally for the reception of the teachers of the gospel, but now one has risen up among themselves, who presents the true God for their adoration, and casts down idols with a mighty hand, to whom thousands and tens of thousands of the people are collecting! . . . May we not therefore humbly trust, though with fear and trembling, that this struggle is going on under the wisdom and guidance of the deep counsels of Almighty God, and designed by Him to bring about His own purposes and glory in the renovation and salvation of this numerous people.⁷³

Although Issachar Roberts eventually denounced the Taipings, at this point his willingness to place China’s national struggles within a larger framework of the divine orchestrations of his Christian God mirrored Zeng Guofan’s claim that the Taiping Rebellion was a calamity of cosmic proportions. Both perspectives were universalistic in scope, fitting a variety of events into a single structure of moral interpretation.

The Taiping Rebellion drained the dynasty's coffers, sapping its ability to respond effectively to foreign incursions. A second war between China and Britain and the subsequent treaties (and the enforcement of these treaties) that followed in 1858 and 1860 resulted in the razing of the emperor's private palace complex, the Yuanmingyuan 圓明園, the opening of eleven new treaty ports (including four inland ports along the Yangtze River), an additional 2.5 percent tariff levied at the treaty port that would exempt a vendor from having to make numerous additional customs payments in the interior, installation of foreign diplomatic legations in the capital of Beijing, the cession of the Kowloon Peninsula (the land opposite Hong Kong island) to Britain, permission for foreigners to travel freely within China's interior, protection for the open preaching of Christianity, and an indemnity payment in silver.⁷⁴ Samuel Meech's landing and extended stay at the treaty port of Xiamen, travel along inland water routes, marriage at the British Legation just outside the Imperial City, and residence in Beijing in 1872 all reflect the new privileges foreigners in China enjoyed under the unequal treaties.

(p.39) Chinese Students to America, British Missionaries to China
In response to this alarming combination of domestic uprisings and the penetration of foreign influence, moderate reform-minded officials like Zeng Guofan and his protégé Li Hongzhang 李鴻章 (1823–1901) sought to promote “self-strengthening” across China by adopting Western military technologies to fortify existing Chinese institutions and build up arsenals and armies.⁷⁵

Zeng and Li argued that it was not enough to carry out only the material and domestic manifestations of self-strengthening, such as arsenals that had recently been established in Tianjin, Shanghai, and Fuzhou for shipbuilding and the manufacture of guns and ammunition, and language schools that were established in Beijing and Shanghai. “To go to distant lands for study, to gather ideas for more advantageous use, can produce far-reaching and great results,” they argued in an 1871 joint letter to the Zongli Yamen, a new but minor government office to oversee some aspects of foreign affairs.⁷⁶ Zeng and Li advocated carefully selecting the best young men, sending them to foreign countries under the control of educational commissioners, and having them specialize in different technical fields. These young men would also remain connected to the grand moral principles that held the Confucian system together so that they would “learn the great principles for the establishment of character, in the hope of becoming men with abilities of use to us.”⁷⁷ Even this proposal for the carefully controlled dispatch of Chinese students overseas was vigorously opposed before it was finally put into effect on a small scale in 1872. Between 1872 and 1875, the Qing government sent 120 Chinese boys across the Pacific to the United States to study. They stayed with host families, enrolled in primary and secondary schools, and eventually attended colleges.⁷⁸

For its part, the London Missionary Society was also recruiting and dispatching young British men and women to China and other countries around the world. Throughout the nineteenth century, the London Missionary Society grew into a major Protestant missionary-sending organization. In 1895, one hundred years after its founding, the London Missionary Society commanded an annual income of more than 155,000 British pounds, nearly 116,000 of which were spent on missionaries and missions, and about 16,000 of which were spent on administration.⁷⁹ This amount spent on administration was a relatively small percentage (13.7 percent) of the amount spent on missionaries and missions, but nonetheless indicated the significant resources required to coordinate and communicate with personnel on so many different journeys.

A real institutional investment was necessary not just to fund missionary stipends and purchase buildings for use as chapels, but also to fund training, **(p. 40)** publications, internal reports, archival storage, and various campaigns for soliciting donations from the public. London Missionary Society personnel in the field submitted annual reports as well as more informal letters back to administrative officers of the society in London. Just as the Qing emperor relied on reports sent from the field to formulate central policy that was then transmitted back out, the secretaries of the London Missionary Society received individual missionaries' reports and used them to shape the society's overall approach in a given region or country, or worldwide. This centralized communications network also allowed morale-boosting news or inspirational stories from one location to be widely rebroadcast through media, including marketing communications intended for the general public.

London Missionary Society institutions for missionary training were also essential to the society's success overseas because, like the imperial civil service examination, they rationalized and fine-tuned the processes by which effective personnel could be recruited and dispatched. To apply to be a missionary in the society in the late nineteenth century, for example, candidates had to submit detailed reports of their educational history, provide several letters of reference, and give the results of a medical exam that assessed their physical fitness and "constitution."⁸⁰ Once admitted to the society, a missionary might undergo further training, such as multiple years of medical school, before being dispatched to the mission field overseas. In the China mission field, new missionaries were expected to devote themselves immediately to language study and to pass a succession of tests that measured their progress.

Life and Death

Despite the considerable institutional support provided by the London Missionary Society, including a regular salary and access to Western medical care provided by missionary doctors, the specter of death brought insecurity to missionaries' daily lives. In December of 1875, Samuel and Edith Meech's six-month-old daughter died. Samuel recorded that she was "taken from us by the hand of a loving God. She had been ailing for two months with [w]hooping cough and the coming of her teeth. But we thought nothing serious of it, until, just a case of lapse Her death was very quiet so quiet that we hardly knew when it went."⁸¹ About ten years later, in 1888, Edith and Samuel suffered another loss when Edith gave birth to twins: one healthy girl, whom they named Gladys, and one boy who was stillborn.⁸²

The letters of other London Missionary Society missionaries based in Beijing around this time also give evidence for the regularity of death, especially the deaths of children. In a letter dated October 21, 1879, Meech informed the **(p. 41)** London Missionary Society secretary with "pleasure" of the birth of his daughter on September 3 and the birth of a son to the Gilmour family on October 9, but also with "great sorrow" of the death of Isabel Edkins, the only surviving child of the Edkins family, and the death of Arthur, the younger son of the Owens family. In such a small community as the London Missionary Society mission in northern China, these deaths weighed heavily, although at the same time they were par for the course.

The close proximity in which the missionary families went about their living and their dying made for a poignant intimacy such as that found in the letter W. H. Rees penned to the society secretary in London at midnight on December 15, 1887, surrounded by the dark and chilly Beijing night:

Dear Mr Thompson, It is midnight and I am watching baby Gilmour slowly but surely approaching the end of his short career on earth, and the doctors say that in a few days he shall see his mother in heaven. He has to be watched day and night, and tonight it is my turn. So I fight with sleep by writing to you.⁸³

Baby Gilmour (Alexander) died the next day, December 16, at the age of three. His father, James Gilmour, reported to the London secretary that he had been away in Tianjin but had received a letter telling him that little Alex was dangerously ill. Gilmour made it back in time to see his son before he died, although by then the boy was already unconscious. Gilmour's wife, Emily (Edith Prankard Meech's sister), had already preceded her son in death.⁸⁴

Illness was not the only source of uncertainty in missionary life. Occasional outbreaks of violence, either from banditry or from antiforeign riots, were not unheard of. In 1891 in the Yangtze River Delta city of Yangzhou, for instance, the Jesuit mission was attacked because of rumors that the Catholic orphanage was abusing children and even boiling children in the bathtubs. That same year in Wuhu city in Anhui Province, crowds rioted to protest against two Chinese Christian women connected with the Jesuit mission who had allegedly used medicine to take away the speech and hearing of the children so that they could be easily kidnapped.⁸⁵ Perhaps these dangers factored into the Meeches' decision in 1890 to send their two girls Gladys (1888-1935) and Grace (accompanied by Edith) to England for a time. Samuel submitted applications to Sevenoaks, the school where Lillie Saville had been educated.⁸⁶

Lillie Saville likely would have heard of these incidents and others through mission networks. By the beginning of 1891 she had already completed courses in anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and minor surgery (possibly funded by a London Missionary Society scholarship) and had begun her first work in an outpatient **(p.42)** post.⁸⁷ Undeterred by cautionary tales, over the next few years she completed her medical training. In 1895 she arrived at her first mission station in Tianjin, and by 1897 she was running a mission dispensary in Beijing (see Figure 1.2). Mission colleagues, both women and men, addressed her deferentially as "Dr Saville."⁸⁸



Figure 1.2 Dr. Lillie E. V. Saville and medical assistants in front of the London Missionary Society Women's Dispensary in Beijing, February 1900.

Credit: Council for World Mission Archive, SOAS Library, CWM/LMS/Home/China/Photographs, Box 2, File 5.

As domestic uprisings and foreign imperialist incursions multiplied in China, uncertainty and volatility prevailed. The ratio of government personnel to population had always been low in the imperial system (one local magistrate to 100,000 persons in the mid-eighteenth century) but had shrunk even further to 1 to 300,000 in 1840.⁸⁹ Increased population pressure, corruption, indemnity payments for past wars with imperialist powers, and natural disasters contributed to an atmosphere of crisis. The Taiping Rebellion was just the most devastating of dozens of popular uprisings within China during the second half of the nineteenth century. Foreign corporations became increasingly brazen as they sought to exploit China's natural resources, occupy Chinese territory, and sell to Chinese markets.

In 1895 China suffered a humiliating defeat to Japan in the first Sino-Japanese War. In a decisive naval battle of this conflict, the Japanese army destroyed a third of China's brand-new modern warships in a matter of minutes. By 1895 **(p. 43)** Zeng Guofan's protégé Li Hongzhang, now an elderly statesman, was forced to sign the Treaty of Shimonoseki. In this treaty, China ceded the island of Taiwan to Japan, guaranteed the independence of Korea (which had previously been a Chinese tributary state), promised Japan an indemnity of 200 million taels of silver, and added four additional treaty ports including Chongqing, far up the Yangtze River in the southwestern interior.⁹⁰ The Chinese had always regarded Japanese as culturally inferior "dwarf bandits" who had borrowed superior aspects of Chinese civilization such as script, philosophy, and religions.⁹¹ Now, bewilderingly, Japan had modernized and transformed itself into an aggressive new imperialist power.

The Qing rulers and members of China's scholarly elite struggled with the problem of adapting their existing ideology and institutions to meet these multiplying challenges without making themselves obsolete. In the year 1898, reform-minded scholar-officials such as Kang Youwei 康有為 caught the attention of the Guangxu emperor and convinced him to enact a series of sweeping reforms intended to move the country along the path to modernization. The emperor issued a series of edicts: reforming the civil service exam to test more technical knowledge; creating a new ministry to oversee innovations in agriculture, industry, and commerce; streamlining the bureaucracy and simplifying government regulations; nationalizing Buddhist monasteries and converting them into public schools; and committing 6.7 million taels of silver to build twenty-one battleships for coastal defense. And yet this "Hundred Days' Reform" movement unsettled the bureaucracy and ultimately proved too radical for the conservative faction at court headed by his aunt, Empress Dowager Cixi. She placed the emperor under house arrest and reversed the reform policies.⁹²

London Missionary Society missionary John Allardyce was a firsthand observer of this short-lived reform movement. In his report for 1898, he gave an account to society superiors:

During the spring and summer months the “Peking Gazette,” the official organ, edited by the emperor himself, contained, day after day, edicts enforcing reforms in the government and educational systems of the country as radical as even to . . . exceed the most sanguine hopes of the friends of progress in China, reforms which they hardly dared to hope to see in their lifetimes But one morning the Empress Dowager appeared on the scene, tied the Emperor to her apron strings, revoked almost all the Edicts, as suddenly as they had been propounded, murdered all the prominent reformers who had not escaped, and China became her old self again.⁹³

(p.44) The lack of vigorous reform in response to the challenges of the new era deepened China’s internal crises. In the history of Chinese imperial government, well-funded and well-run administrations maintained various measures to widen the common people’s margin of survival, such as maintaining granaries that could be opened in times of famine, or improving an infrastructure of dikes, reservoirs, and canals that kept waterways connected while guarding against flooding.⁹⁴ These measures, however, required attentive bureaucratic management and financial resources, both of which were severely lacking.

In 1900 these narrow margins of survival, a backlash against increased foreign presence throughout the country, and the conservatism of Empress Dowager Cixi and her advisors all came together into a perfect storm of anti-Christian violence later known as the Boxer Uprising. In the spring of this year, while the tender crops were in the ground, areas in northern China were stricken with drought. The threat of famine loomed. In a place like North China, long home to “marginal zones” of chronic rebelliousness and violence, the anxiety threatened to erupt into bloodshed.⁹⁵

At this time Samuel Evans Meech, Edith Prankard Meech, and their two daughters Gladys and Grace were living in Xiaozhang 肖張, a rural town nearly 300 kilometers south of Beijing.⁹⁶ Rumors began to spread that the drought had arisen because Heaven was angry at the foreign missionaries and the Chinese Christians who refused to worship traditional Chinese deities. Local martial arts groups vowed to cleanse their land of the heterodox foreign religion whose evil presence had incurred Heaven’s wrath. These martial arts (often translated as “boxing”) were not simply physical exercises, but religious practices believed to have spiritual efficacy, such as providing protection from bullets. As the drought deepened, bands of “Boxers” with their martial antiforeign message multiplied.

Liu Mengyang, a member of the elite class in Tianjin, a northern treaty port city east of Beijing, recorded that in February and March of 1900 there was no rain. “Epidemic disease spread and the calamity began,” he wrote. “The Boxer bandits, taking advantage of the situation, fabricated a formula which went: ‘Drive out the foreigner and, in due course, the rains will fall and dispel our misfortune.’”⁹⁷

In the North China provinces of Shandong 山東 and Zhili 直隸 [Zhili is a defunct administrative region once spread over what is today Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei 河北, Liaoning 遼寧, Henan 河南, and Inner Mongolia 內蒙古], Boxer groups began to attack local groups of foreign and Chinese Christians. In a letter to her family written in June, Edith Prankard Meech described a desperate situation:

. . . . [T]he rain does not fall, all round us is as bare—almost as December—people are praying for rain, and cutting themselves with knives and whips **(p.45)** As no one has anything to do—rumours are rife, and the most extraordinary stories go round—if holy, holy God would send the rain what a mercy it would be. And starvation is staring the people in the face—and fear of the future is in every heart, even now people are eating chaff mixed with the millet.⁹⁸

The Qing bureaucrats simply let the first incidents (e.g., murder of Chinese Christians and attacks on Christian villages by Boxers) go unchecked. Then on June 21, 1900, the empress dowager issued a proclamation siding with the Boxers and declaring war on the countries of the West.⁹⁹

During the Boxer Uprising, Christian communities in North China, both Catholic and Protestant, suffered heavy loss of life. In Beijing, the legations where foreign diplomatic personnel resided and where foreign missionaries took shelter were besieged for weeks. Large numbers of Chinese Christians in Beijing also took refuge in the legations and worked to fortify the walls with defenses of sandbags, bricks, and mounted cannons. Dr. Lillie Saville worked frantically with other missionary doctors to attend to the wounded (work for which she was eventually awarded the Royal Red Cross).¹⁰⁰ The London Missionary Society chapels in the East City and West City were reduced to piles of rubble. The Meeches fled their country station in Xiaozhang. They traveled by cart until they reached the port of Tianjin and then booked tickets for England, crossing the Pacific, taking trains across Canada, and then crossing the Atlantic.

Expeditionary troops from eight different countries (Britain, Russia, Japan, France, the United States, Germany, Italy, and Austria-Hungary) cooperated to quell the uprising. It was the first joint international military action in history.¹⁰¹ The success of the Expeditionary Force was mixed. On the one hand, the uprising was put down and the besieged foreign legations in Beijing were relieved. On the other hand, the foreign troops quickly gave up any moral high ground by looting, raping, and murdering Chinese civilians. During the occupation of Tianjin, foreign soldiers constantly humiliated and harassed the local population, frequently raping the women, especially in the Hedong section (east of the river), which was occupied by Russian and German troops. In August a foreign force went to Dulu, another northern city, and burned down more than half the town. Many inhabitants, including law-abiding subjects, were killed or injured, and many women raped.¹⁰²

The Boxer Uprising was an unmitigated disaster for the Qing. The most obvious blow was the Boxer Protocol, a treaty signed in 1901 that committed the Qing state to pay a staggering indemnity of 450 million taels of silver and to punish local magistrates, provincial governors, and other officials who had taken the Boxers' side. But beyond the international relations dimension of the **(p.46)** problem was the further loss of local control that the uprising had imposed on the Qing government. During the course of the uprising, Boxer groups' demands for recognition from local magistrates had threatened the government's prestige and monopoly on violence. For example, in Taiyuan County in Shanxi, the Boxer leader (a laborer by trade) strode into the county administrative office with followers holding drawn swords, occupied the magistrate's seat, compelled the magistrate and other gentry to kneel before him, and left with a large quantity of grain from the county granary.¹⁰³ The monumental external and internal failures of the Qing's handling of the Boxer affair spurred the court into an accelerated process of reform. Policies that just a few years ago had been unthinkable came to be seriously considered. The Qing leaders had no choice but to attempt to enact sweeping reforms without sweeping themselves permanently out of the picture.

In the meantime, Samuel and Edith Meech had returned to Beijing once again, only to be visited once again by death. In June of 1903, after a bout of pneumonia, Edith was laid to rest in Beijing's foreign cemetery near the graves of her two children who had died in infancy and her sister Emily Prankard Gilmour. Meech's tone in his year-end report for 1903, often the source for "inspiring stories" to be shared with society members and potential donors, was stoic:

When last year's report was written I was rejoicing in the presence of my dear wife, who had then but recently arrived. Now she has long since left me for home and peace and God. The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. The love and devotion of so many friends, Chinese and foreign, has been a revelation to me of the place she held in their hearts. I will close as I began with praise and thanksgiving.¹⁰⁴

In a private letter to the society secretary written just after Edith's death, Meech's letter showed a candid mixture of emotional regret and practical attention to detail. "Dear Mr Cousins," he wrote, "Just a line to say that my dear wife passed away on May 30th after eight days suffering from pneumonia. Nothing that the skilled hand of Dr Cochrane could devise, nor that the skillful nursing of a trained nurse, could accomplish, sufficed to ward off the [illness]. Since her [arrival] a little over 7 months, she has been ailing more or less for the last five Kindly have the notice inserted in the Chronicle."¹⁰⁵

Three months later, Meech was struggling to fall back into a pattern that would carry him forward. "Life is much changed since those last days of May," he wrote from the sweltering heat of August:

(p.47)

The house still proclaims its vacancy. The table shows its empty place which tells me day by day of her who has gone! But I think most of all I put her loss in relation to the Chinese. She loved them so much and understood them so well that her opinion and judgment were most valuable. I feel my need of her counsel every day.¹⁰⁶

To occupy himself, Meech applied himself to the task of developing a new mission station in the Chinese city, built partially with funds from the Boxer Indemnity. It was here, in the London Missionary Society chapel at a place called Ciqikou 磁器口 [Pottery Market], that Samuel Evans Meech met Wei Enbo 魏恩波 (1879–1919).

Wei Enbo: Orphaned Peasant to Pentecostal Prophet

The circumstances of Wei Enbo's birth and upbringing made him a prime candidate for leaving behind no trace of his life but the bare hardness of the footpath between the fields in the cracked North China earth. Wei was born in 1879 in the rural village of Wufang 午方, Rongcheng County 容城, in what is now Hebei Province, about 130 kilometers south of Beijing.¹⁰⁷ Because his family was poor, he received no substantive education.¹⁰⁸ His father died when Wei was thirteen, prompting Wei to hire himself out as a farm laborer, cultivating the millet, cotton, corn, sesame, and peanut crops of the local agricultural economy.¹⁰⁹ From ages fourteen to fifteen he peddled combs and trinkets.¹¹⁰ At the age of sixteen he traveled to the great city, Beijing, for a three-year apprenticeship in a papermaker's shop.¹¹¹

Coming from a rural village, the teenage Wei must have been impressed by the sight of Beijing's city walls, rising up out of the plain. One contemporary traveler observed that these walls "dominated the approach to Peking. They rose straight out of the flat countryside, and only when their limits had been breached did the city itself come into plain view."¹¹² The city's wealth and diversity also would have made an impression. "The lavishness of the city's markets, shops, and decoration is matchless," one visitor from Henan Province who was in the capital to sit the civil service examination had written. "Shining, rich colors bedizen the ridgepoles and beams of banks, silk stores, tea, and shoe shops at Dazhalar, Zhubaoshi, Xiheyang and Liulichang, enchanting one's eyes. Lanterns and candles brighten the meat markets, wine houses, and restaurants."¹¹³ The shops described here were located in the busy commercial area in the southern part of the city, just outside the imposing inner-city walls of the Manchu city.

(p.48) At the end of his apprenticeship, Wei returned home to Rongcheng, intending to start a paper business, but eventually he gave up for lack of capital and low expected profits. At the age of twenty he married a girl from the Li family in his home village and thereafter they had a son, Wenxiang 文祥.¹¹⁴ Still desperately poor, in 1902 Wei returned to Beijing to try his luck selling cloth, bringing his mother, wife, and son with him.¹¹⁵ He eventually set up a cloth stall at the side of a major street.¹¹⁶ He was now a grown man, with a family to support (see Figure 1.3).



As a rural migrant in the big city, Wei's economic future was not promising. Given that he had no history of financial success, it is possible that this latest venture into cotton cloth

Figure 1.3 Wei Enbo, circa 1917.

Credit: True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume, 1948

would have fizzled as well. And yet, while he was in Beijing, Wei encountered someone who connected him to a vast network of social, economic, and ideological resources: a Christian, Wang Deshun 王得順. Were it not for Wei's notoriously volcanic temper, Wei and Wang might never have met. One day on the street in Beijing, Wei got into a fight. He had been trained in his local village's style of martial arts, but apparently he was not doing as well as he would have liked because Wang felt the need to come to his aid.¹¹⁷ Later on, Wei paid Wang a visit to express thanks. Thereafter, Wang introduced Wei to Meech's London Missionary Society (p.49) congregation at Ciqikou.¹¹⁸ Opened in July 1903, the church at Ciqikou was "a commodious building of pleasing appearance inside, bright and cheerful." It was built on the site of a former temple. The resident priest had been a Christian enquirer who was then killed by the Boxers in 1900. The priest's brother had donated the chapel to the London Missionary Society. This building in the southern (i.e., Han Chinese) section of the city had a large chapel and a small hall adjacent to the chapel. The small hall was used for the daily morning service, for the weekday prayer meeting, and for other small gatherings.¹¹⁹ Meech noted that on one Sunday in August 1903, more than 110 were gathered for worship.¹²⁰

In 1904 Meech personally baptized Wei, and Wei became an active participant in church activities.¹²¹ Meech reserved valuable space in his year-end report for 1904 to give an account of Wei's family:

Of those belonging to the station in the Chinese city . . . [t]wo others, mother and son, were baptised together. The son is a cloth seller, who has a stall on the principal street in the Chinese City. He could not read, but by the aid of an assistant he has been able to read and to commit to memory his catechism, and is now reading the New Testament. He does not set up his stall on Sundays, but attends all the services with great regularity. His examination revealed that he had acquired a very thorough knowledge of Christian truth.¹²²

In putting Wei through his paces as a new convert, Meech was following well-established mission protocols: first the catechism through memory, then an examination prior to baptism, and finally acclimatization to the New Testament as a text for reading and an object of long-term study.

Although Wei's mother, like most Chinese women, was unable to read Chinese characters, Meech reported that she "knew her catechism very well."¹²³ Western missionary women and trained Chinese Christian women called "Biblewomen" worked with female enquirers and converts to instruct them in Christian doctrines and gradually familiarize them with core Christian texts. Because Chinese morality called for strict separation between women and men—some early Christian churches in China had a long curtain in the center of the chapel to hide them from each other's view—these female mission workers were in high demand (and also in short supply). Without competent, trained mission women, half of China's vast population could not be saved.

Neither could they be healed. In 1904 Lillie Saville, now running the London Mission Women's Hospital in Beijing and an influential member of a small but **(p.50)** growing circle of woman missionary doctors in China, complained about the lack of institutional support and social isolation.

She charged for drugs and dressings "to all who can pay" but still struggled to cover the hospital's expenses. Her busy day included not only treating a long list of patients, but training medical assistants (see Figure 1.4). She wrote to society superiors in London to express her disappointment that the North China missionaries had voted against her plans for the improving the women's hospital and had instead elected to build a huge new men's hospital in which just the heating plant cost nearly as much as the women's hospital.¹²⁴ Being a single woman, she was not as easily integrated into the social networks of missionary families, who tended each other's children and hosted school parties.¹²⁵ Over the summer of 1904, she wrote, she had felt "more isolated than ever."¹²⁶



Figure 1.4 Dr. Lillie E.V. Saville, assistants, and patients in the Consulting Room of the London Missionary Society Women's Hospital, Beijing, circa 1900-1906.

Credit: Council for World Mission Archive, SOAS Library, CWM/LMS/Home/China/Photographs, Box 2, File 5.

Saville had been on the brink of leaving the mission until she heard the news that another woman missionary doctor, Dr. Norah Lenwood, had been appointed to come and assist her. Saville eagerly looked forward to having a partner in her work as a “busy general practitioner” who handled a high volume of cases from the lower- to middle-class women who came to the hospital. The popularity and accessibility of the hospital made it less ideal for “the high-class ladies” who (p. 51) had previously sought the medical missionaries’ services, but it gave her work a greater reach. She also hoped that Dr. Lenwood would absorb enough Chinese language for the both of them. “I tell Dr Lenwood she will have to be the scholar,” Saville wrote. “She shall have all the time she wants for study, I can never catch up now in [Chinese] character[s], never having had adequate time for reading.” While Dr. Lenwood learned Chinese, Dr. Saville would teach medicine. “If all come who have made application, I shall have nine students in the New Year,” she wrote. “I shall have to do the bulk of the teaching for two or three years.” And yet she was beginning to take courage. “Personally,” she wrote, “apart from the work, the thought of Dr Lenwood’s companionship, and fellowship, is a great joy in prospect.”¹²⁷

The serene statements of faith that Saville gave when she first applied for missionary service in 1890 did not seem to fully anticipate this hectic, breathless state of too many patients and not enough money or time. At the time of making her application, for instance, Saville had emphasized the work of the Holy Spirit, “sent to keep men conscious of God’s omnipotence by its active agency in the world.”¹²⁸ Her words indicated that she felt the actions of the Holy Spirit could be noticed and discerned.

In Beijing, the missionaries looked anxiously for evidence of the Holy Spirit at work in the behavior of their converts. In this vein, Meech in 1904 reported that, according to other Chinese Christians who were familiar with Wei’s mother in her home environment, after she became Christian, her character changed substantially. She was less likely to curse and mistreat her daughter-in-law; these tendencies “had given place to a new order of things . . . showing that she was ruled by a totally different spirit—the Spirit of Christ.”¹²⁹ The detail with which Meech recorded Mother Wei’s conduct shows his desire to demonstrate that the “Spirit of Christ” was a real and distinctive influence, manifest in the Christian community.

Meech’s longing to see clear manifestations of charismatic power is evident in his report for 1905, when he regretfully noted a drop in attendance owing to a shift to hotter weather that was “indicative of a wave of indifference which seems to have come over the church as a whole.” He saw this “indifference” as affecting not only the London Missionary Society churches, but the entire Sino-foreign Christian establishment in Beijing in 1905:

Were this the only church in the city in this condition there could be reason for much despondency. Alas! It does not stand alone. This would indicate some cause other than one from within. But what it is may be impossible to say. It is manifest that a serious lack of devotion to the Lord, an unwillingness to separate from the world, an unhappy spirit . . . leave little **(p.52)** strength to resist any influence from without. Meanwhile there is much prayer for the coming of the Holy Spirit, and for a true revival in the life and activity of the Church.¹³⁰

Meech's expressed longing for the Holy Spirit and "revival" in 1905 is telling. The mission was strong and secure, flush with silver from the Boxer Indemnity. The chapel was commodious; the worship meeting schedule was regular. But he felt that the institutions of the church were too comfortably synchronized with the rhythms of surrounding society.

Where was the radical break from the world, the gate marking the way into the realm of the sacred, the visions and prophecies such as those that electrified Hong Xiuquan and his followers? Where was the single-minded devotion that gave people courage to rally to a great, daunting task, as in the case of Zeng Guofan's Confucian call to arms against the Taiping? This sort of charismatic power came in vastly different forms, but its effect on people was the same: to provide an experience or moral inclination so powerful as to create new pathways for collective action. It motivated people sufficiently to organize themselves. It moved them to jointly resist the natural human tendency to fly apart.

In that same year, the Qing dynasty was facing a similar but much more complicated problem. After many years of enduring a creeping culture of corruption and a stifling conservatism that had prevented an energetic and innovative response to domestic crises and foreign incursions, how were the Manchu rulers to reinvigorate their dynasty and reinspire faith in the institutions of state? Following on the heels of a series of "New Policies" to broaden educational opportunities, strengthen the army, and encourage patriotic feeling, in 1905 the empress dowager and her Manchu and Han Chinese councilors took the most drastic step of all: They abolished the civil service examination system. Along with the examination itself, centuries-old traditions, cultural conventions, and governmental institutions came crashing down, shaking the very foundations of Chinese society.

One man in rural Shanxi 山西, Liu Dapeng 劉大鵬 (1857-1942), had devoted his life to study of the Confucian classics and to earnest cultivation of the virtues of a Confucian gentleman. Nearly every day since 1891, Liu had written in his diary to reflect on his behavior. He had begun this habit after reading a published set of instructions Zeng Guofan had given to his son. Zeng had admonished his son “to be respectful and serious in all his dealings, to sit in meditation for a while every day, to rise early, never to start reading one book before he had finished reading another, to read ten pages of the dynastic histories daily, to keep a diary, to jot down what he had learned that day, to write several poems and essays each month to preserve his literary skills, not to talk too much, not to **(p.53)** get angry, not to exhaust himself, to practice his calligraphy every day after breakfast, and absolutely never to go out at night.”¹³¹

As a young man and a young scholar who aspired to achieve the same greatness in government posts as Zeng, Liu Dapeng had taken these instructions to heart. He had spent his life becoming the kind of scholar of cultivated moral character whose worth was supposedly measured in the civil service examination. He had passed the prefectural and provincial exams, but by middle age still had not passed the highest-level exam that would qualify him for an official post. Now, following the announcement that the examination had been abolished, he woke up in the morning “with a heart like ashes” as he realized that his dream of an official career was over. In the village streets, people talked worriedly about the end of the examination system and its implications for social mobility and cultural values.¹³² From now on, China’s young, ambitious individuals would have to find their way through a new system of Western-style schools teaching subjects such as chemistry, geography, and foreign languages.

Liu and members of the well-to-do classes who had invested heavily in Confucian-style education as a route to success were among those who lost when the examination system was abolished. But there were also many winners. Doors of opportunity were opening for those who in the past would have had to enter the grueling near-lottery for examination success, who could now train for work in a rising new professional class. The Western-style education offered at Christian mission schools, often with subsidized or free tuition, now provided a clearer pathway to upward mobility.

These doors were opening for women as well as for men. Early in 1905, Dr. Lillie Saville called a meeting of women missionary doctors in Beijing to address the shortage of trained Chinese female medical personnel in the city. This group began to lay the groundwork to launch a School for the Medical Education of Chinese Women. Up until this point Saville had already trained a total of nine female assistants who had developed high levels of proficiency but who unfortunately had been hard to retain:

My best, and the one who has been my right hand for a long time is to be married tomorrow. I have always given my students a nurse's training as far as is possible here, and in addition they have been most efficient dispensers, we always use the Latin nomenclature for our work, and they have also been my anaesthetists, and assistants at operations.¹³³

Saville complained that her assistants left the mission for marriage and other pursuits because of a lack of responsibility and a lack of "indebtedness to the Mission." At the same time, their medical skills and mobility into and out of **(p. 54)** mission medical training suggests an expansion of opportunities and experiences available to women of the rising generation (see Figure 1.5).

Fresh Air

China's long-standing institutions were swept away, but what would replace them? The end of the civil service examination represented not only the end of an integrated system of education and government but also a blow to Confucian values. For centuries the Confucian ideology had held the Chinese together in the bonds of clearly defined relationships: a ruler's concern, a subject's loyalty, a teacher's responsibility, a student's deference, a parent's sacrifice, a child's obedience, and so on. Now all over China these relationships had blurred and

new sets of values were emerging. The calamities of the preceding decades had discredited not only the Qing dynasty's claim to rule with Heaven's mandate but also the larger charismatic system on which imperial rule was based and the intricate bureaucracy dedicated to preserving this system. Yet a robust set of ideas and institutions with sufficient gravity to replace the old order and draw the classes and interests of Chinese society into a new orbit had not yet arrived.



Figure 1.5 Female medical assistants in the London Missionary Society Women's Hospital Dispensary, Beijing, circa 1900-1906.

Credit: Council for World Mission Archive, SOAS Library, CWM/LMS/Home/China/Photographs, Box 2, File 5.

(p.55) In the second half of the nineteenth century, the worlds of Hong Xiuquan, Zeng Guofan, Lillie E. V. Saville, Samuel Evans Meech, and Wei Enbo intersected. The paths of Saville, Meech, and Wei, who all lived in Beijing in 1905 and traveled the same great thoroughfares, literally crossed. Although these individuals did not all meet one another personally, their worldviews overlapped in significant ways. By virtue of their participation in large, organized institutions and their embrace of the charismatic, universalistic ideas these institutions existed to perpetuate, their influence and identity reached out beyond their individual spheres.

Hong and Zeng never met each other in person, but the armies they inspired and organized met on the battlefield as sword clashed on sword and trigger fingers loosed bullets that tore into flesh. Separated by more than a generation, Zeng and Saville never made each other's acquaintance, but both of them had been trained from their youth to identify with the empires to which they belonged and to fervently believe in the all-encompassing superiority of their civilizations' morals and culture. In the struggle for influence between the Qing and the British empires, Zeng and Saville both had a stake. As members of a British missionary society, both Saville and Meech benefited from the unequal treaties that turned Chinese cities such as Shanghai and Tianjin into treaty ports where foreigners could come and go freely, enjoy immunity from Chinese laws, and preach Christianity at fairs and street corners. The London Missionary Society churches in the Manchu city—an area of Beijing originally intended to be the exclusive preserve of the Qing ruling class—were physical symbols of the new plurality of large transnational institutions competing for influence in China around the turn of the twentieth century.

The new openness of Chinese society after the end of the civil service examination system was a boon to self-made men such as Wei Enbo, the Christian cloth merchant. Before, to enter the social elite one had to be either an examination degreeholder, a relative of a degreeholder, a member of a family with a current or past degreeholder, or a family wealthy enough to aspire to produce a degreeholder—or even purchase a degree, an option that became more and more widespread as the Qing government became more and more strapped for cash. Under the old order, ambitious men who aspired to influence the world around them had been subject to the gravitational pull of the examination system and its Confucian mores. Now this pull was gone. There were now many more pathways to elite status and an atmosphere of greater freedom of association that was due to the decline in the Qing bureaucracy's monopoly on power. Even for Chinese women, who for centuries had been expected to stay within the inner quarters of residences and not go out in public, new opportunities were opening up for education and participation in the wider world.

(p.56) Poor and illiterate, Wei Enbo would never have been a candidate for a classical Confucian education. Now, at church, he was learning how to read Chinese characters, mastering a thick religious text, benefiting from valuable social and business connections through the network of transnational Christian organizations in Beijing, and developing leadership skills through lay preaching and worship activities. Wei's affiliation with Meech's mission congregation exposed him to new kinds of institutional resources—new technologies for uniting people and mobilizing their efforts. Like Hong Xiuquan, Zeng Guofan, Lillie E. V. Saville, and Samuel Evans Meech, Wei Enbo had by now established himself as a member of a large, hierarchical, universally inclined, ideologically motivated organization. The boundaries of his world were expanding.

Notes:

- (1.) Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: Norton, 1996), 323–325
- (2.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 192–209.
- (3.) True Jesus Church meeting in April 2009, Nanjing. Hymn #296, 纪念主死 “Remembering the Lord's Death,” 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise* (printed by the True Jesus Church, most recent edition, date and location of publication unknown).
- (4.) Just to name a few points in the well-populated Taiping constellation, see also Carl Kilcourse, *Taiping Theology: The Localization of Christianity in China, 1843–64* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); P. Richard Bohr, “The Taipings in Chinese Sectarian Perspective,” in *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 393–430; P. Richard Bohr, “The Hakka and the Heavenly Kingdom: Ethnicity and Religion in the Rise of the Taiping Revolution,” *China Notes* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 133–136; Rudolph G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); Teng Ssu-yü, *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers: A Comprehensive Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
- (5.) P. Richard Bohr, “Taiping Religion and Its Legacy,” in *The Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume Two: 1800–Present*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010), 371–395 (372); Frederick Wakeman, *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 20–23. See also Henrietta Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams: One Man's Life in a North China Village, 1857–1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 24–50; Henrietta Harrison, *China (Inventing the Nation)* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 12–13.

- (6.) Franz Michael, ed., *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents, Volume II: Documents and Comments* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1971), 52-76
- (7.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 57.
- (8.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 58.
- (9.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 61-62.
- (10.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 63.
- (11.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 69.
- (12.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 112.
- (13.) P. Richard Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," in Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 371-395 (380).
- (14.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 381.
- (15.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 121.
- (16.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 147-148.
- (17.) C. A. Curwen, *Taiping Rebel: The Deposition of Li Hsiu-ch'eng* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- (18.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 122-123. Reilly points out that a very small number (1,500) came from Guangxi, where the movement began.
- (19.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 126-129.
- (20.) Naquin, *Peking*, 357-359.
- (21.) Chinese population growth over the centuries is succinctly summarized in "Issues and Trends in China's Demographic History," *Asia for Educators* website initiative of the Weatherhead East Asia Institute of Columbia University, accessed September 14, 2016, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_population.htm
- (22.) See Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 19-38.
- (23.) John King Fairbank and Ssu-yu Teng, *Ch'ing Administration: Three Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 1-45
- (24.) Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 40-55.
- (25.) Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 59-67.

- (26.) Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells: State Rainmaking and Local Governance in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center East Asian Monographs, 2009), 18
- (27.) Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells*, 165.
- (28.) Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells*, 192-193.
- (29.) Pei-Kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Norton, 1999), 146-149
- (30.) William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 31-33
- (31.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 249; Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 155-156.
- (32.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 3.
- (33.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 165-166.
- (34.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 34-35, 168-175.
- (35.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 558.
- (36.) *North China Herald, Western Reports on the Taiping*, ed. Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), 262-264
Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*
- (37.) E. G. Fishbourne, *Impressions of China and the Present Revolution: Its Progress and Prospects* (London, 1855)
Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*
Curwen, *Taiping Rebel*
- (38.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 548.
- (39.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 457.
- (40.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 11.
- (41.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 384-385.
- (42.) Vincent Yu-cheng Shih, *The Taiping Ideology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 481-491
- (43.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 384-385.
- (44.) Franz Michael, *Taiping Rebellion, Volume I: History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), 585-666

(45.) Teng Ssu-yü, "Ts'eng Kuo-ch'üan 曾國荃," in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1622-1912), Volume II*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1944), 749-751

(46.) Frederic Wakeman, Jr., "'Cleanup': The New Order in Shanghai," in *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic in China*, ed. Jeremy Brown, Paul G. Picowicz, and Frederic Wakeman, Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

(47.) Rudolf Löwenthal, "The Protestant Press in China," in *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940), 75

(48.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of March 30, 1872, Beijing, Council for World Mission [formerly London Missionary Society] archives, CWM/LMS/North China/Correspondence, accessed at the Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections and Archives, call number MFC 266.00951 L846CN, microfiche 41. Hereafter sources will be identified with "MF" for microfiche and the number of the fiche.

(49.) Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002)

(50.) Elliott, *The Manchu Way* Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 398-399

(51.) Naquin, *Peking*, 4.

(52.) Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 103; Naquin, *Peking*, 4-5.

(53.) Naquin, *Peking*, 4-8.

(54.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 27, 1904, Peitaiho, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 295. The Chinese language has five tones (itches).

(55.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of September 18, 1883, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 91C.

(56.) William Purcell, *Onward Christian Soldier: A Life of Sabine Baring-Gould, Parson, Squire, Novelist, Antiquary 1834-1924* (London: Longmans, Green, 1957), 74-75 http://www.hymnary.org/text/onward_christian_soldiers_marching_as

(57.) Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 42; Greg Cuthbertson, "God, Empire and War: The Nonconformist Conscience and Militarism in Britain 1850–1900," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 65 (1985): 35–48.

(58.) Henrietta Harrison, "'A Penny for the Little Chinese': The French Holy Childhood Association in China, 1843–1951," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 1 (2008):72–92

(59.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter to LMS Home Secretary of June 25, 1890, Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates Papers, Council for World Mission Archives, CWM/LMS/01/05/04/014, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(60.) Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1890–1945* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), 12–17

(61.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Application of July 1, 1890, Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates' Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(62.) Saville, Letter to LMS Home Secretary of June 25, 1890.

(63.) Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41 (October 2002): 301–325

(64.) Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, "Cultural Technologies: The Long and Unexpected Life of the Christian Mission Encounter, North China, 1900–1930," *Modern Asian Studies*, forthcoming 2019.

(65.) Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, 400.

(66.) Lauren Pfister, "Bible Translations and the Protestant 'Term Question,'" in *The Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume Two: 1800–Present*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010), 361–370

(67.) Mao Haijian, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War: The Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty*, Joseph Lawson, English text ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 89–99

(68.) Mao, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War*, 416–437.

(69.) Mao, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War*, 453.

(70.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 373–381.

(71.) "A Report by T T Meadows, FO 17/180, no. 116, enc. in Bonham to Palmerston, September 29, 1851, in Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*, 14.

(72.) "A Letter From the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I J Roberts," *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, vol. II.9 (February 1853) Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*,

(73.) "A Letter From the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I J Roberts," *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, vol. II.9 (February 1853) Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*

(74.) Douglas Hurd, *The Arrow War: An Anglo-Chinese Confusion 1856-1860* (London: Collins, 1967), 170-172

(75.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 175.

(76.) Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, "Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang: On Sending Young Men Abroad to Study," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition vol. II*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, trans. Chester Tan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 240-241

(77.) Zeng and Li, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* vol. II, 240-241.

(78.) Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Stepping Forth Into the World: The Chinese Educational Mission to the United States, 1872-81* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)

(79.) Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Appendix III, 754-755.

(80.) See the "Form of Medical Report on the Health and Physical Eligibility of Candidates for Service in the London Missionary Society," Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates' Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(81.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of January 24, 1876, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 47B.

(82.) Gladys Evans Meech (1888-1935) was also a London Missionary Society missionary in North China from 1925 to 1935.

(83.) William Hopkyn Rees, Letter of December 15, 1887, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 118C.

(84.) James Gilmour, Letter of December 16, 1887, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 119C.

(85.) *The Anti-Foreign Riots in China in 1891* (Shanghai: *North China Herald*, 1892), 7-10, accessed September 16, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/antiforeignriot00heragoog>.

(86.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 22, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 142B.

(87.) Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates' Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(88.) The information here is taken from the detailed notes in the SOAS Archive Catalogue in a search for "Lillie Saville," including the following files: CWM/LMS/01/05/04/014, "Candidates' Papers (Rice-Sewell)" (Saville is listed as appointed in 1895); CWM/LMS/18/02, "North China Incoming Correspondence"; CWM/LMS/18/02/037, "North China, 1896"; CWM/LMS/18/02/038, "North China, 1897"; CWM/LMS/18/06/028/15, "Report by Lillie Saville, Peking [Beijing]" (dated January 22, 1897). Accessed April 25, 2018, <http://archives.soas.ac.uk/CalmView/Advanced.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog>.

(89.) E. N. Anderson, "Agriculture, Population, and Environment in Late Imperial China," in *Environment, Modernization and Development in East Asia: Perspectives From Environmental History*, ed. Cuirong Liu and James Beattie (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 42 Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*

(90.) S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

(91.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 191-192.

(92.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China* Luke S.K. Kwong, "Chinese Politics at the Crossroads: Reflections on the Hundred Days Reform of 1898, in *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no. 3 (July 2000): 663-695

(93.) J. M. Allardyce, Report for the Year Ending December 1898, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 670.

(94.) Micah S. Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23

(95.) Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann, eds., *Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 20

(96.) The Scottish missionary Eric Liddell, of Olympic track fame and featured in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*, was also a London Missionary Society missionary in North China from 1925 to 1943.

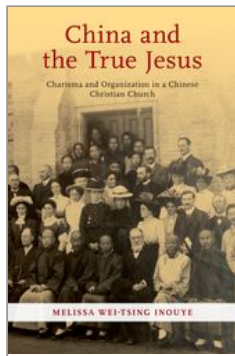
- (97.) Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 77-78
- (98.) Edith Prankard Meech, Letter of June 9, 1900, Xiaozhang, in "Meech, Samuel Evans," MS 380590/2, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.
- (99.) Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, 51-52.
- (100.) Mary Bryson, *Cross and Crown* (London: Selwood Printing Works, ca. 1904), 84-92. Accessed September 29, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/crosscrownstorie00brysiala>
- (101.) See Bickers and Tiedemann, *Boxers, China, and the World*.
- (102.) Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, 184.
- (103.) Henrietta Harrison, "Village Politics and National Politics: The Boxer Movement in Central Shanxi," in Bickers and Tiedemann, *Boxers, China, and the World*, 1-15 (11).
- (104.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 687.
- (105.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of June 5, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 288.
- (106.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 20, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 289.
- (107.) Wei Enbo's deposition from October 1918 states that he is forty years old (thirty-nine by Western reckoning). Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268.
- (108.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 2B.
- (109.) 唐红飙真耶稣教会历史史迹考 *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* Zhongguo gujindiming dacidian 中国古今地名大词典 [*Dictionary of China Place Names Past and Present*] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), 2558-2559
- (110.) Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.
- (111.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.
- (112.) Chris Elder, *Old Peking: City of the Ruler of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17

- (113.) Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 2003), 32
- (114.) Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.
- (115.) *True Testimony* Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 [True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume]* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M8 *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*
- (116.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B; Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690; Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 692.
- (117.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B; Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.
- (118.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.
- (119.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China Reports, MF 692.
- (120.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 20, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 289.
- (121.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.
- (122.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (123.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (124.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.
- (125.) Mary J. Bryson, Letter of December 1, ca. 1905, Tianjin, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 307.
- (126.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.
- (127.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.

- (128.) Lillie E. V. Saville, "Candidates' Papers (Rice-Sewell)," CWM/LMS/01/05/4/014, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.
- (129.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (130.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China Reports, MF 692.
- (131.) Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams*, 11.
- (132.) Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams*, 86-87.
- (133.) Lillie E.V. Saville, Letter of October 20, 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 305.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

A Smaller, Bigger World (1905–1917)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0003

Abstract and Keywords

The introduction of new printing, steamship, rail, and telegraph technologies to China increased global awareness and supported universalistic thinking. These new technologies facilitated both the spread of charismatic ideas and organizational processes to protect and propagate these ideas. The international Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century arose not only from the inherent popularity of charismatic practices and theologies but also from new logistical capabilities in popularizing these practices worldwide, such as mass mechanized printing, telegraph and rail lines, and transpacific steamship travel. This global openness that began with the great transnational missionary organizations of the nineteenth century became more accessible to ordinary people by the first decades of the twentieth century, allowing the Norwegian American Pentecostal missionary Bernt Berntsen to influence the religious worldview of Wei Enbo, who later founded the True Jesus Church.

Keywords: Bernt Berntsen, Wei Enbo, Pentecostal, charismatic, telegraph, steamship, transnational, transpacific

A Bumper Year

1905 was a good year for Wei Enbo 魏恩波 (1879–1919), Beijing cloth seller. Ever since his baptism as a Christian in 1904, Wei had been connected to a tightly knit Sino–foreign community in Beijing that was a hub for both domestic and international networks of persons engaged in religious, political, and economic activities. Networks of sojourners who, like Wei, had come to Beijing to do business, were an especially prominent feature of the congregation that Wei attended in the southern part of the city. Samuel Evans Meech (1845–1937), the missionary who superintended Wei’s London Missionary Society congregation near Ciqikou 磁器口, described the members as “all business men, or engaged in trade.”¹

Instead of being a day laborer or peddler in rural North China, as a Christian in Beijing, Wei was now connected to a network of Chinese and foreign people of means, influence, and entrepreneurial acumen. He also had a unique brand as a Christian merchant that differentiated him from other competitors and stimulated creative marketing. In 1905, his opportunity came. Street improvements forced him to remove from the place where he usually set up his stall for selling cotton cloth. This provided an opportunity to move up a rung on the ladder of commercial status in Beijing by renting a shop in the crowded commercial district outside the Chongwen Gate 崇文門, which pierced the inner wall between the Manchu and the Chinese cities (see Figure 2.1).²

There he fought for the attention of the sophisticated shoppers in China’s capital, which offered one of the most diverse ranges of goods and services in the Qing empire. There were markets for fish, flowers, mules, melons, hats. There were places to buy pet crickets, songbirds, dogs, and goldfish. Specialty shops offered fine items such as official apparel (new and used), handsome sets of books, furs of sable and ermine, and exotic fruits. Foreign goods such as medicines, clocks, kerosene lamps, and matches could also be purchased.³

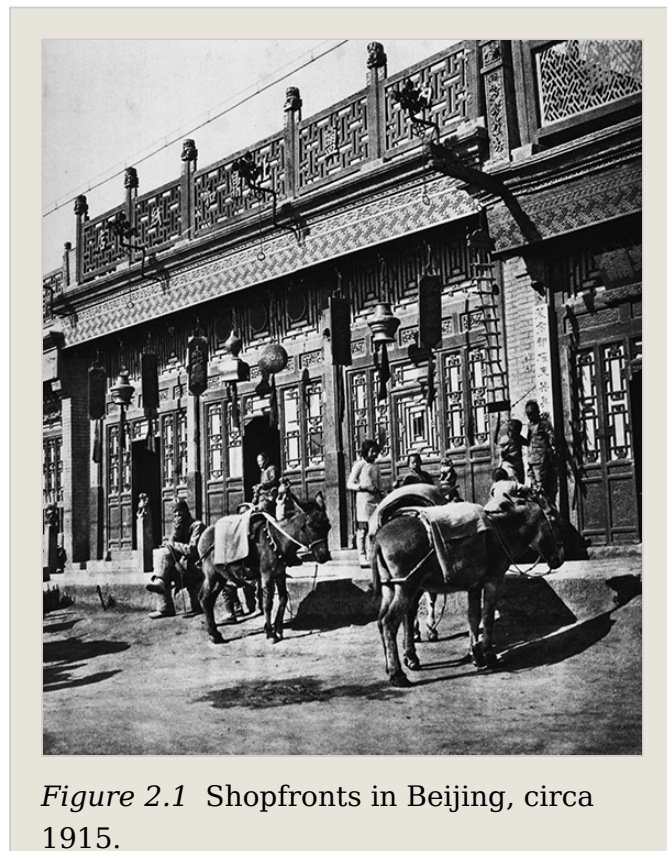


Figure 2.1 Shopfronts in Beijing, circa 1915.

(p.58) Wei named his shop En Xin Yong 恩信永 [Grace Faith Eternal], a name that would signal his Christianity to other believers. This Christian branding proved the key to his runaway success. According to Samuel Meech’s report, upon opening the shop, Wei

Credit: Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol.

posted up a notice announcing that he did no business on Sundays, but on Mondays he would sell all goods at a cheaper rate. The result is that he has **(p.59)** as many customers as he can deal with. Formerly on the street he had one assistant, now he has four. He owes all his success to the goodness of God.⁴

Although Meech’s language explicitly links Wei’s success in business to divine providence (“goodness”), he stops short of calling it a miracle or a manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. And yet the power of the Holy Spirit was something frequently on Meech’s mind and indeed a reality in the lives of the London Missionary Society missionaries and native Protestants in China. What was most significant was individuals’ mutual awareness as they eagerly wrote and published to report evidence of the Holy Spirit at work.

In 1905 and early 1906, several charismatic revivals swept through Protestant congregations in China, including those in the treaty ports of Xiamen, Ningbo, and Fuzhou. In these revivals, Christians gathered to “seek the gifts of the Holy Spirit” and to come to terms with their sins. *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer*, a nationally distributed Protestant publication, printed a report of a multiday revival in Fuzhou in which the gifted revivalist Zhang Youxin 張友信 had called Christians to repentance for having strayed from God’s commandments. His descriptions of sin “cut like a knife.” All of the audience were “pained in their hearts,” and as they listened, they wept tears of remorse, “breathlessly calling out for forgiveness.” The spirit of the revival touched all present regardless of gender or nationality. “Men and women from China and the West filled the seats,” the report read. “What else could have had this power but the Holy Spirit moving them?”⁵

In 1905, Meech’s London Missionary Society colleagues in Cangzhou 滄州, about 200 kilometers to the south of Beijing, emphatically used the language of divine power to describe a revival within the local congregation. “To tell the truth, I don’t know how to write about it, for it is too wonderful for expression, and I’ve never seen anything of the sort before,” wrote missionary Edith Murray in her annual report for 1905. She described the outpouring of cathartic emotions unleashed at the revival meetings:

But what shall we say of a crowded meeting of men and women, all weeping and wrestling in prayer together, confessing their sins, and calling out for the Holy Spirit to fill their hearts? Truly one can never forget such sights and sounds; surely the Lord was in that place!⁶

As she further explained this meeting in her report, Murray sought to make a distinction between “mere emotion” and a “real manifestation of the Spirit’s power.”⁷ Clearly, much was at stake in this distinction. If it was “mere emotion,” then it simply showed that the worshippers had gotten carried away. But if these **(p.60)** dramatic and physically arresting displays of collective emotion would not have occurred were it not for the presence of a divine influence, they confirmed the reality and the accessibility of God’s power. She recounted various examples that demonstrated the fact that divine power had worked in their midst, including a noticeable change in people’s attitudes and character. “Could this all be the product of emotion?” she asked, “No, we know it could not.” She testified:

It was the Holy Spirit Himself working in a marvelous way, and making His power known among us as we had never known it before. It was *He*, and *He* alone, for these things came not through the missionaries, though for some time past we had been praying earnestly for just such a blessing. Did we expect such an answer? I think we might truthfully say that we expected a revival but truly the Lord answered us far beyond our asking or even thinking.⁸

The revivals that flared up around China in 1905 and 1906 coincided with similar charismatic expressions around the world. A wave of revivals in Korea from 1903 to 1907 and in Wales from 1904 to 1905 attracted attention in Christian communities in China and elsewhere.⁹ Perhaps the best-known early twentieth-century revival began on April 9, 1906, when at a prayer meeting in Los Angeles the small flock of black domestic servants and custodial employees shepherded by William Joseph Seymour, a self-educated traveling preacher, began praising God in unknown tongues. They believed that this gift of tongues was evidence that they had received the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that was necessary for salvation.¹⁰

Word spread that the Holy Spirit had descended, as at the Feast of Pentecost, and people from far and wide flocked to the church to experience it for themselves. The revival moved to larger quarters in a whitewashed wooden frame building on Azusa Street. Soon people who had experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit in the form of glossolalia and other miraculous manifestations at Azusa Street found new callings as preachers and missionaries. Unlike missionaries such as Samuel Meech or Lillie Saville, whose large sending institutions had provided extensive formal training, financial support, medical care, and diplomatic representation, these “faith missionaries” were largely self-supported. Taking advantage of cheap printing technology and lower prices in steamship travel, in the course of six months the newsletter *The Apostolic Faith* went from 5,000 copies to 40,000 copies, and bands of self-funded missionaries were traveling across the sea.¹¹ The revival at Azusa Street was a major international center of what religious studies scholars now term the classical Pentecostal movement. One of these classical Pentecostal missionaries from Azusa Street, Bernt Berntsen, was **(p.61)** the person who shepherded True Jesus Church founder Wei Enbo in his first experience of speaking in tongues.

The multidimensional encounter between Bernt Berntsen and Wei Enbo shows how the advent of long-distance interconnectivity in communications and transportation was a critical precondition in the rise of charismatic movements like the True Jesus Church. One of the key factors enabling the eventual emergence and popularity of the True Jesus Church was the fact that new technologies finally made it possible for people to effectively share charismatic narratives and actual charismatic experiences. For centuries, natural impediments such as distance and human skepticism had limited the spread of charismatic culture, but the emergence of advanced scientific technologies in the early twentieth century substantially diminished this problem of distance. The other barrier still remained—and perhaps had become even more formidable—but was not insurmountable.

In other words, one of the primary reasons the ephemeral experiences of a handful of Chinese Christians in Beijing evolved into a durable True Jesus Church was that by the early twentieth century those Chinese Christians in Beijing had become connected to new transnational networks of communication and transportation that enabled critical masses of Christians to form charisma-centered communities. Initially, these networks were laid down by the nineteenth-century Western mission establishment. This chapter shows how these networks were further developed by missionaries and communities of the classical Pentecostal movement, with the aid of technological advances, creating a world in which charismatic experience became more visible and transmissible than ever before.

This theory about the fundamental role of communication and transportation technologies in reifying charismatic religious experience in the twentieth century helps us to better understand the origins of Pentecostal Christianity and other twentieth-century charismatic Christian movements. Although I do not have space to wade deeply into those waters here, suffice it to say that scholars in the field of Pentecostal studies have labored to define the chronological boundaries and doctrinal and ritual markers of Pentecostal Christianity.¹² In addition to establishing chronological boundaries, there is also the problem of explaining the precise combination of doctrines and practices that make a Christian movement “Pentecostal.” General definitions of “Pentecostalism” can be excruciatingly broad, usually centered on an emphasis on the Holy Spirit (i.e., on charismata) and would seem to include an extremely diverse array of Christian movements in the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.¹³ Scholars have acknowledged the problematic nature of such broad definitions.¹⁴ To give all Christian churches emphasizing charismata the labels of “Pentecostal” or “proto-Pentecostal” is a bit like calling every form of four-wheeled transportation a “Ford,” be it Model T, minivan, or oxcart (“proto-Ford”).¹⁵

(p.62) Because of the ubiquity in space and time of Christian charismata, including glossolalia, it seems reasonable to suggest that the international Pentecostal movement in the early twentieth century arose not only from the inherent appeal of charismatic practices and theologies, but also from new logistical capabilities in popularizing these practices worldwide. The links between the True Jesus Church and the classical Pentecostal revival at Azusa Street give credence to a recent theory of Pentecostalism as a global network, more than just a set of doctrines and practices, that grew out of already-existing missionary networks of publishing and personnel movement laid down in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ I further argue that what made early twentieth-century Pentecostalism distinctive was not its charismatic dimension per se, but the way in which advances in global communication and transportation allowed individuals all over the world to share and reproduce each other’s charismatic experiences in a time when a strengthening culture of scientific skepticism had made such experiences more valuable. Historically, numerous other Christian movements predating the classical Pentecostal movement had exhibited all of the doctrinal and ritual inclinations that are now broadly labeled Pentecostal, such as tongues-speaking, visions, and healing practices in 1830s Mormonism in the United States or the charismatic revivals in India at Tamil Nadu from 1860 to 1865 and Kerala (Travancore) from 1873 to 1881.¹⁷ However, reports on these charismatic manifestations had encountered various natural obstacles, including distance, so that they failed to link up globally to create a critical mass of visibility and transmissibility. If a tree is felled by the power of the Holy Spirit in the forest and no one is there to witness it and testify about it, is it a miracle?

Spreading the Word

This combination of thirst for the charismatic, transformative power of the Holy Spirit and desire that others experience it too had long been a feature of Christian experience around the world. Since the very beginning of Christian history, individuals who had experienced charismatic power had written or spoken about their experience to others. Shared in texts or by word of mouth, these impressive accounts testified to the accessibility of divine power and had prompted confession and conversion. As in the case of Hong Xiuquan in 1837, one person's powerful charismatic experience could fuel the founding of a new religious movement. This was a key impetus in the Jesuit movement founded by Ignatius of Loyola (1491–1556) in Spain in 1539 and the Mormon movement founded by Joseph Smith, Jr. (1805–1844) in America in 1830.¹⁸

Christian missionary movements in the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries had produced numerous printed texts, structures of organization, and missionary **(p. 63)** personnel intended to save all humanity, but ultimately their universalistic ambitions had been limited by the many months and physical uncertainty involved in sending a letter or booking passage on an oceangoing ship. The Jesuit Matteo Ricci was the first Christian missionary to successfully establish a permanent mission in China, taking up residence in the southern Chinese town of Zhaoqing 肇慶 in 1583.¹⁹ Isolated from his family, friends, and Jesuit superiors by the tyranny of distance, Ricci had to rely entirely on his own wits and initiative. When he wrote to his superiors in Rome, it took six to seven years to receive a reply.²⁰

Now written communications could travel across the seas in a matter of weeks. Bernt Berntsen 賁德新 (1863–1933), a Norwegian American destined to become Wei Enbo's religious mentor and ecclesiastical rival, first learned about the Pentecostal revival in December 1906 when an issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, a publication of the Azusa movement, reached his mission station in North China.²¹ Berntsen was a native of Larvik, Norway (see Figure 2.2). He had emigrated to the United States with his wife Magna Maria Hanson Berg Berntsen (ca. 1867–1935) in 1893. The Berntsens made their way to Chicago, where they worked as grocers. They had two American-born sons, Iver and Henry.²²

Berntsen was a devout Christian who longed to experience “the melting power of the Holy Ghost.”²³ He acquired an American passport in 1904 and **(p.64)** soon thereafter he and Magna moved to North China to join Horace William Houlding’s South Chihli [Zhili] Mission 南直隸福音會.²⁴ In 1906, Berntsen read an early dispatch from Azusa Street and recognized the experience of the Holy Ghost that he had long sought. “[A]s I read it through in the spirit of prayer,” he wrote, “I saw it was the thing that I had been looking for, and the first day of January [1907] I asked God as usual for a verse for that year and He spoke plainly these words, ‘They shall be endued with power from on high’. That gave me such a wonderful faith!”²⁵

Despite hearing a firsthand report at a national missionary meeting in Shanghai that the Los Angeles meetings were “of the devil,” Berntsen remained undeterred in his desire to receive this baptism of the Spirit. When Magna read him a firsthand account by a person in Chicago who had also “received her Pentecost,” he wrote, “this melting power that I had been praying for came upon me, and I fell down on the floor crying out ‘God’s wonderful mercy!’”²⁶ He booked passage and set sail for Los Angeles in the summer of 1907.



Figure 2.2 Photo of Bernt Berntsen in a 1919 US passport application.

Credit: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington DC; Volume 005.

Even today, it would be unusual for a person to read a newsletter and immediately decide to buy tickets for an international journey. Looking beyond the matter of Berntsen's tremendous receptivity to stories of Pentecostal manifestations on the other side of the Pacific, however, the fact that a man of his situation was able to make this journey was also a wonder, and one that had only recently become possible. By now developments in communications and transportation technology had made it possible for a charismatic story to travel around the entire world or for a whole coterie of missionaries to cross the ocean within a matter of one or two weeks. And these technological developments had furthermore progressed to the point where they were affordable not just to large and well-established religious institutions but also to ordinary individuals or small start-up organizations.

We can obtain a sense of this new mobility by comparing transpacific passages in the Gold Rush era with those in the first decade of the twentieth century. When Chinese gold miners and railroad workers crossed the Pacific in the 1850s, the 6,000-mile transpacific voyage between San Francisco and Hong Kong was fifty to sixty days on average, and could be much longer in the event of delays that were due to things such as bad weather.²⁷ Shipwreck, piracy, and sickness were common; on one ship, the *Libertad*, which set sail from Hong Kong in 1854 carrying 297 passengers plus the captain and crew, 90 people died at sea (including the captain) because of illness and 29 more died upon reaching San Francisco.²⁸ In 1852 the fare for steerage passage could be as much as US\$60 (about \$1765 today).²⁹

Beginning in 1867, the introduction of steam-powered ocean liners for transpacific passage cut time, expense, and risk.³⁰ Whereas in 1854 the ill-fated **(p.65)** *Libertad* had been a 490-ton ship, in 1867 the Pacific Mail Steamship Company's new steamship *Colorado* was 3,728 tons.³¹ In its maiden voyage, despite occasional rough seas and storms, the *Colorado* reached Yokohama in twenty-two days and Hong Kong in twenty-eight, consuming forty-five tons of coal per day.³² By the early 1900s, multiple steamship companies competed for transpacific business, resulting in larger ships, shorter journeys, more comfortable traveling conditions, and lower fares. In 1906 the *North China Herald* noted that eight steamship lines operated between American and Chinese ports, "whereas twelve years ago two lines found it insufficient to keep their ships busy."³³

One of these eight steamship lines was run by a Japanese company, the Toyo Kisen Kaisha, which had been operating transpacific services since 1899.³⁴ Japan had already proved its modern maritime capabilities with its naval victories over China in 1895. Naval warfare also played a decisive role in its victory over Russia in the 1904–1905 Russo-Japanese War, in which Japan wiped out two-thirds of Russia's capital warships and eclipsed Russia (previously the world's third largest naval power) in naval influence in the Pacific.³⁵

By 1908, there was weekly scheduled transpacific service between Shanghai and San Francisco on ships ranging from 9,750 to 28,000 tons that crossed the Pacific in around ten days.³⁶ Whereas the ships of the nineteenth century had been oriented toward carrying cargo, with the vast majority of passengers traveling below decks in steerage and a few allocated cramped cabins, the new ocean liners of the early twentieth century were purpose built for passengers, who were now the most lucrative source of income. They were designed for capacity and comfort, with long rows of cabins above deck and multiple classes of service.³⁷ Passage between Shanghai and San Francisco on top-of-the-line steamers in 1908 was likely no more than \$225 for first class (about \$6,100 today), around \$140 for second class (about \$3,800 today), and around \$45 for steerage (about \$1,200 today).³⁸ Even cheaper rates were available on older steamers such as *China*, *Nippon Maru*, and *Persia Maru*, some of which were had been in service for nearly three decades.³⁹

In contrast to the dangerous, difficult sea journeys of the nineteenth century, passage across the Pacific was becoming so safe and reliable that in 1921 the Toyo Kisen Kaisha introduced the *Taiyo Maru*, which set records for numbers of passengers (over 1,000 plus a crew of 371) and amenities (including an elevator, a swimming pool, and a children's nursery).⁴⁰ More goods were also making the transpacific trip. In the early 1900s increasingly massive ships brought to Shanghai consumer products such as Ruberoid roofing materials, Nestle's Condensed Milk, and the international post (including not only personal correspondence but also periodicals and books).⁴¹ Hence, around the turn of the twentieth century, as improvements in transportation and communication infrastructure (**p.66**) enabled people, goods, and ideas to travel rapidly around the world, Christians' experiences of the Holy Spirit suddenly became more transmissible than ever before.

Berntsen booked passage on a ship in Shanghai in the spring of 1907, determined to experience the Holy Spirit for himself.⁴² When he arrived at Azusa Street he was not disappointed. The experience was so arresting that he lay on the floor for two hours. But despite his high expectations for a divine manifestation, even in the midst of the experience Berntsen maintained a degree of skeptical self-scrutiny. It is clear that he lived in an age in which divine manifestations were not taken for granted but were considered rather suspect. Berntsen punctuated his narrative with frequent assertions of how he checked and verified the authenticity of his extraordinary experience:

I was under the power of God on the floor for more than two hours, and it seemed that every nerve in my body was charged and my jaws began to move, and I said to myself, “I could do that,” and I tried, but found out I could not do it mechanically, as it was done, and I was satisfied that it was of the Lord. Then my tongue began to move and a brother said to me, “Let the Holy Ghost have your voice.”⁴³ I said to myself, “I am not going to obey man.” A short time after, the Holy Ghost said, “Give me your voice,” and I said, “I do not know what you mean.” Then such a power from within came forcing up, and I began to say a sentence, “Ya! Ya!” I said, “This is my native language and I don’t want to fool the people, but it kept up for some time. So I began to praise God in English for the faithfulness of brothers and sisters around me, and they said, “Get your eyes on God.” I was fully convinced that it was all of God, and I shouted Glory! Then he began to speak through me in an unknown tongue, and I rose up under the power, going back and forth before the people preaching. I had no control of my body.⁴⁴

The rationalistic skepticism that increasingly characterized early-twentieth-century discourse on religion is visible in how Berntsen’s account carefully scrutinizes the mechanical and linguistic dimensions of his experience. To Berntsen, if this experience was indeed extraordinary (charismatic), then it meant that he had to radically redefine his understanding of the parameters of Christian salvation along the lines of the new Pentecostal doctrines.

According to a 1907 issue of *The Apostolic Faith*, “Berntsen went to the altar at Azusa Mission, and soon fell under the power, and arose drunk on the new wind of the kingdom, magnifying God in a new tongue. As soon as he could speak English, he said, ‘This means much for China.’”⁴⁵ He returned to China (p.67) in December 1907 and founded a new Pentecostal mission in Zhengding 正定, all the while maintaining a steady stream of communication with Pentecostals around the world.⁴⁶ He returned to his native Norway and the countries of Sweden and Denmark from April to November of 1910 to recruit more people to the Pentecostal cause.⁴⁷ In his absence, in August Magna Berntsen gave birth to their daughter, Ruth, in Zhengding. Upon returning to China he started a Chinese-language Pentecostal publication, *Popular Gospel Truth* 通傳真理福音報, which circulated nationally and quickly claimed a subscription of hundreds. A message in the masthead proclaimed, “Jesus is coming soon.” Various articles—some authored by Berntsen and his family members, some translated directly from the English of Pentecostal and other Christian publications—preached doctrines such as tongues-speaking as proof of salvation and the necessity of observing the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week (i.e., Saturday).

One of the central messages of what religious scholars now call the “classical” twentieth-century Pentecostalism of the Azusa Street revival and its direct outgrowths, including Berntsen’s China congregation and publication, was a message of restoration: the prophesied revival of the gift of tongues and other supernatural wonders in the Bible, and a church that acknowledged and gave place for the occurrence of the same miraculous expressions that marked the Biblical record. This is why it was so important to Berntsen to observe the Sabbath on the seventh day, as Jesus and his followers had done. In this sense the advent of the Pentecostal movement in the twentieth century was not a “new” idea, but a fresh surge of advocacy for the pressing relevance of certain “old” ideas contained within the Bible itself.

Taken individually, few elements of Pentecostal doctrine or practice were truly novel. Early twentieth-century Pentecostals were not the first Christians to speak in tongues. Numerous other groups including the Quakers, the Lutheran revivalist group The Awakened, the Irvingites, and the early Mormons also spoke in tongues.⁴⁸ Nor were Pentecostals the first Christians to advocate a return to primitive Christianity as described in the Bible. The Puritans in the seventeenth century and the Churches of Christ and again the early Mormons in the nineteenth century are just a few examples of other religious movements in America that similarly adopted primitivist and restorationist theological elements. Elsewhere in the world around the turn of the twentieth century, restorationist movements in places such as Africa were also arising and challenging Western mission denominations.⁴⁹ The key doctrinally distinctive innovation of early twentieth-century Pentecostalism was the centrality of the belief that the “baptism of the Spirit” that Jesus had prescribed in the Bible meant that a person had to speak in tongues in order to be saved.

(p.68) Why did this message of Christian restoration resonate around the world so strongly at this particular moment? The fluid, transnational transmission of charismatic ideas and narratives in China as seen in the reports of the *Intelligencer*, Edith Murray, and Bernt Berntsen point to the increased visibility and transmissibility of individual charismatic experience. Clearly, many Christians of an older generation, including those such as Samuel Meech and Edith Murray who never became Pentecostals and would have considered Pentecostals extreme, longed for charismatic experience but did not often receive it. When it did occur, it was cause for rejoicing and prominently featured in the annual report home. In the early twentieth century, the audience for charismatic reports swelled. Perhaps the uptick in charismatic movements, including the classical Pentecostal movement, was not due to an objective change in Christians’ susceptibility to the Holy Spirit, but rather to the fact that communications and transportation technology made it easier to report, recognize, and replicate this sort of experience.

The speed with which early US Pentecostal publications reached China and with which Western missionaries in China began to adopt and disseminate Pentecostal views is impressive. Simply after reading a newsletter published by an amateur religionist in Los Angeles, Bernt Berntsen had hopped onto a steamship and crossed the Pacific for a few months. He eventually became an amateur publisher himself, churning out copies of *Popular Gospel Truth*, featuring a hand-drawn masthead image of a man in a Western suit and bowler hat blowing a trumpet from one side of the globe and a man in a long Chinese gown reading a paper on the other side.

From *Popular Gospel Truth* it appears that Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church missionary work was expanding at a modest rate between 1912 and 1915. The mission had multiple stations in Beijing and in other North China locations such as Yuanshi 元氏, (near Shijiazhuang 石家莊), Hebei, and Tai'an 泰安, Shandong 山東 Province.⁵⁰ In 1915, the circulation of *Popular Gospel Truth* included over 1,000 addresses.⁵¹ Berntsen furthermore reported that a sizable proportion of these mailings had met with replies of appreciation and further inquiry, so many that he could not respond to them all.⁵²

The spread of mass mechanized print culture throughout China by this time also facilitated Berntsen's ability to launch his international Pentecostal mission on a shoestring. Around the turn of the twentieth century, as a group Christians might have had the most developed modern print culture of any segment within Chinese society, including not only elites but also ordinary people. Print culture had always been a feature of Christianity in China. In the early modern era, when the first Jesuit missionaries arrived, China had one of the most developed print cultures in the world. By the end of the seventeenth century, around 470 works dealing with Christian religious and moral issues circulated **(p.69)** among Catholic communities, such as devotional manuals, prayer books, and biographies of the saints.⁵³ These works were likely produced through xylography (woodblock printing).

Although China was an early modern pioneer of printing technology and print culture, including movable-type technology and the fostering of a culture in which books were cheap and widely read, it was Western missionaries who introduced mass-mechanized printing technologies in the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Printing operations helped foreign missionaries distribute copies of the Bible, present evangelical messages in fluent and grammatical Chinese, communicate with each other over China's vast distances, and drum up financial support from donors overseas.

This Chinese Christian print culture gave rise to an even more developed culture of commercial printing. In the first decades of the twentieth century, mission presses trained hundreds of printers who went on to staff commercial operations in Shanghai and other cultural centers in the Yangzi River Delta. In turn-of-the-century Beijing, as well, there were fifty to one hundred newspapers published, ranging from major dailies to “mosquito” papers oriented toward culture and entertainment. The most popular Beijing dailies had circulations as high as ten thousand copies.⁵⁵ Modern print culture also spread beyond Christianity into other religious traditions including Buddhism and Daoism.⁵⁶

The number of Chinese Christian periodicals was disproportionate to the relatively small number of Chinese Christians themselves. Between 1815 and 1890, the founding era of Protestant Christianity in China, thirty-eight Chinese-language Protestant periodicals were established (although many of these were short lived). Between 1890 and 1930, half the previous interval, forty-nine additional publications entered circulation. Between 1914 and 1937, again within half the time of the previous interval, 453 periodicals started up. Altogether, from 1815 to 1937, 540 Protestant periodicals existed in China. In 1907, the year that Berntsen received the Spirit at Azusa Street, thirteen Chinese-language Christian periodicals were in circulation, and in 1921 this number had more than quadrupled to fifty-seven.⁵⁷ These figures moreover encompass only those periodicals produced by the Christian establishment (i.e., large, well-funded, long-standing mission societies such as the Presbyterians, the Anglicans, the London Missionary Society, and the China Inland Mission). The inclusion of smaller publishing missions like *Popular Gospel Truth* would have increased the numbers substantially.

Even more significant than the actual number of missionary publications printed, distributed, or read were the many international networks of mobility, ideas, and identity created by both Chinese Christian and secular commercial publications.⁵⁸ *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer*, with a circulation of 3,700, one of the largest Chinese-language Protestant publications, was typical of many **(p.70)** Protestant periodicals in its inclusion of large “news” sections.⁵⁹ In addition to church news, Protestant periodicals printed the latest newswires and stories on scientific developments. For example, the *Intelligencer’s* report on a “Self-Supporting Congregation” in Shantou 汕頭 that had recently raised enough money to build a new church with a seating capacity of several hundred people and to support a pastor, was printed alongside stories about the use of bamboo filaments in electric lights, indigenous peoples in Madagascar who ate a certain kind of insect, and the kings of England and Spain.⁶⁰

The cosmopolitan vision promoted by Chinese Christian print culture is nicely illustrated in a 1909 issue of *Gospel Proclamation* 福音宣报, a publication of the Seventh-day Adventists. On the cover is an illustration in Chinese artistic style depicting a great balance scale. Standing on the scale on one side are all the people of the world (labeled “English,” “Russian,” “Japanese,” and so on, and wearing national dress), and on the scale on the other side there are ten weights representing each one of the Ten Commandments. This 1909 issue included church news, editorial essays, and international reports. On page five an article mentions the development of the Tripartite Alliance among Germany, Austria, and Italy, and improvements to “airships” in America, Germany, and France.⁶¹

At the center of these global textual communities was the text of the Bible itself. Since British missionaries Robert Morrison and William Milne’s earliest translation of the Protestant version of the Bible was published in 1823, numerous other translations had come into circulation, including translations in classical Chinese (the language of the scholarly elite) and in a number of vernacular languages such as Mandarin (1874), Fuzhou dialect (1884), Cantonese (1894), Ningbo dialect (1901), and many others. There were competing approaches to particular terms or phrases, such as the rendering of the word “God” in Chinese. Some Protestants favored the word 神 *shen* (the generic word for “god” or multiple “gods”), while others preferred the phrase 上帝 *shangdi* (meaning “Lord on High” or literally “Emperor on High,” a term also used for an actual Chinese deity).⁶² By the early twentieth century these Bibles circulated freely within the Protestant community in China, and new converts such as Wei were expected to learn to read them.

This emphasis on active engagement with religious texts such as the Bible and Christian periodicals placed Protestant Christians at the vanguard of popular literacy efforts in China. Other popular religions in China, including not only Buddhism and Daoism but Catholicism, did not place a comparable emphasis on literacy as an ideal standard for all believers.⁶³ Undoubtedly, literacy was so important to the Protestant missionaries because of the historical roots of Protestantism in a popular rebellion against centralized priestly authority that established new churches on the basis of a “priesthood of all believers” and **(p. 71)** that emphasized the authority of the word of God. In the first decades of the Reformation (in the early 1500s), Protestants had called for the translation of the scriptures from Latin into vernacular languages such as German or English.⁶⁴ The Protestant willingness to translate the Bible into the vernacular and to allow these vernacular versions to stand as authoritative sources of God’s truth created an ethos of Bible-reading and popular biblical exegesis that contributed to Chinese Christian print culture.

Chinese-language Protestant Bibles and publications were intended to be accessible to the widest possible audience. They were often subsidized by mission organizations so as to be affordable. In some cases, readers paid only for the cost of postage. This meant that church members of middling income could subscribe individually or the pastor or lay leader of a small rural church congregation could subscribe and pass the periodical around to others for reading.⁶⁵ Many Protestant publications could even be read by those who could not understand Chinese characters. For example, issues of the Seventh-day Adventist *Gospel Proclamation* often included Sabbath School lessons in phonetic script that could be read by older women who had never received a “proper” Chinese education.⁶⁶ Entire Bibles, periodicals, compilations of religious literature, and hymnbooks were produced in phonetic script.⁶⁷ These hymnbooks were often rendered in a simplified musical notation that used the numbers 1 through 7. Hence rural Chinese women who were illiterate and uncultured by the standards of traditional Chinese education were not only reading their Sabbath School lessons and singing congregational hymns together, but were part of a local church community that regularly discussed coreligionists in southeast Africa, the Amazon, and America. Chinese Christians—urban and rural, rich and poor, northern and southern—experienced modernity in the form of a new global consciousness facilitated by a robust print culture that bridged regional and national separations.

Economies of Charisma

International networks of Christian publications were especially important to Bernt Berntsen because, as a “faith missionary” with no major mission denomination to pay him a regular salary, modest contributions from individual readers of Pentecostal publications overseas were his bread and butter. He needed money to fund not only living expenses for himself and his family but the printing and distribution of *Popular Gospel Truth*, buildings for worship meetings, and various humanitarian projects such as running a home for orphans and a school for boys.⁶⁸ Between 1908 and 1920 Berntsen appeared in several American publications, usually as the recipient of a donation or perhaps in a report on missionary work in China, including *The Apostolic Faith* (Los Angeles), *Pentecostal (p.72) Testimony* (Chicago), *Pentecostal Evangel* (Springfield, Missouri), *Meat in Due Season* (Los Angeles), *Word and Witness* (Malvern, Arkansas), and *Bridegroom’s Messenger* (Atlanta, Georgia).⁶⁹

These networks of publishing and personnel formed an economy of charisma through which ideas, narratives, and resources were freely exchanged. Within a locality, across the country, or around the world, the transmission of charismatic experiences boosted faith and provided a basis for emulation. In the case of one congregation in the rural village of Wujingfu 五經富, Guangdong 廣東 Province, a revivalist exhorted a crowd of “tens of hundreds” to confess their sins freely. The revivalist further cited “other churches’ diligence as recorded in the *Intelligencer*” to remind them of dramatic church meetings reported from other provinces and nations. One of those present, Chen Yi 陳椅, eagerly reported the ensuing scene:

At first one person said to the audience that he had the sin of harboring contentious feelings against someone else. Then over ten people lifted up their voices to cry out mournfully, listing their sins. People cried out and wanted to weep. There was every sort of manifestation. All of it was sufficient evidence of the Holy Spirit’s great presence.⁷⁰

Clearly, awareness that people in other churches around China were experiencing dramatic manifestations of the Holy Spirit primed the crowd at Wujingfu to have a cathartic experience of the Holy Spirit’s presence. The use of the phrase “sufficient evidence” shows the author’s anticipation that the charismatic claims might be met with a degree of skepticism. Critics might want to dismiss this as emotionalism, but in the mind of the author, the abundance and intensity of charismatic expressions cleared the bar for authenticating the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Beyond China and abroad, these miracle stories could stimulate financial contributions from people hungry for faith-promoting accounts of God’s power to deliver from privation, danger, and superstitious ignorance. In this economy of charisma, the location of major missionary fields within less developed countries such as China and India made for an especially favorable spiritual exchange rate: Because of lower costs in less developed Eastern countries, Western missionaries argued, money invested overseas could save more souls. Berntsen put it this way in a message to the readers of *Bridegroom’s Messenger* in April 1909:

Thank God for the token of love you sent to us here. We can do ten times more with the money here than in the homeland, so your one talent will multiply many times, and you know you will get it back from the great bank in heaven, in the form of blessings, and in the end everlasting life **(p.73)**
. . . . Jesus is coming soon; I do not think it is of any use to lay aside for a rainy day Well, I do not mean to scold you in any way, beloved reader; but be diligent in business.⁷¹

In addition to these networks of financial support in the United States, Berntsen also maintained ties with Pentecostals in his homeland of Norway. His journey to Scandinavia in 1910 raised a group of twelve people to join his mission in North China. On the return journey he stopped in New York, various places on the eastern seaboard, and Chicago, then eventually continued on to China.⁷²

The international peregrinations of a single individual who was not independently wealthy show how improvements in the speed and price of transportation allowed a new sort of grassroots globalization to flourish in the early twentieth century.⁷³ For centuries, as merchants and explorers had voyaged back and forth across the world's oceans and emigrants had made a one-way journey to transplant their lives in a new land, they had made tremendous commitments of time, money, and the possible loss of life. Now, world travel as an occasional business, family, or religious activity was much more feasible for ordinary individuals.⁷⁴

Within China, systems of transport and communication were also in the midst of a transformation. Imperial bureaucratic communications had traveled by means of postal roads, courier networks, and materials furnished by the government, for the government. Now—thanks to a process of aggressive foreign investment very unwelcome to the Qing rulers because it facilitated the penetration of foreign ideas, economic influence, merchandise, and personnel—telegraph and railway lines crisscrossed China.⁷⁵ The telegraph lines were made of iron for landlines and copper for submarine cables. They were insulated with gutta percha, a rigid natural latex from the forests of Malaysia.⁷⁶ Establishing telegraph lines had been a controversial process because it brought together foreign business interests, the Qing desire to strengthen Chinese sovereignty, and local prejudices. For instance, in 1865, a British businessman, E. A. Reynolds, had attempted to establish a line between Shanghai and Wusong 吳淞. Before more than two-thirds of the telegraph poles for the line had been erected, a Qing official intervened to stop the construction. The poles were pulled down or stolen by the local population.⁷⁷

Cables on the seafloor that did not come onto land proved less controversial. The Danish Great Northern Telegraph Company in 1870 neglected to even request permission from the Qing government to lay cable between Shanghai and Hong Kong.⁷⁸ Once the cable was laid, Great Northern ran demonstrations and businessmen began to use the technology, although many had reservations. For a while, early adopters among the Hong Kong gambling community were able to use telegraph data to buy winning bets cheaply, making a killing.⁷⁹ Despite **(p. 74)** ongoing official and popular resistance, a network of telegraph lines gradually spread across the country and accessed other international lines such as the British Imperial Line, which linked Hong Kong to India and London.⁸⁰

Until the very end of the nineteenth century, railroad networks met with similar official and popular resistance, again because of not only the disruption of the landscape but also the technology's foreign origin. In 1877, Shen Baozhen 沈葆楨 (1820–1879), a local government leader who otherwise supported the “self-strengthening” movement of incorporating Western technology into a modern national infrastructure, purchased the Woosung [Wusong] Railway that a British company had recently built and destroyed it.⁸¹ At the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1894, China had a mere 320 miles of railroads. By comparison, around the same time there were 175,000 miles of mainline track in the United States network.⁸²

After the war demonstrated China's weakness, however, a frenzy of railroad-building activities ensued, spurred primarily by foreign companies looking to make the most of the various special privileges they had won through the unequal treaties. France built tracks through Indo-China and to Kunming.⁸³ Germany built a network through Shandong.⁸⁴ Russia built a “Chinese Eastern Railway” line linking the northern Chinese province of Heilongjiang 黑龍江 to Vladivostok in Russia. Following its seizure of Dalian 大連 (Port Arthur) in 1898, Russia also extracted permission to build a new line between these ports and the Chinese Eastern Railway.⁸⁵ After Japan's 1905 victory in the Russo-Japanese War, these lines came under Japanese control, along with two other rail links that the Japanese had hastily constructed during the war, giving Japan a substantial railroad empire in Southern Manchuria.⁸⁶ The British were the most successful at securing railway concessions from the Qing government. Track laid by British companies during this era included sections from Burma to the Yangtze River, Shanghai to Nanjing, Guangzhou to Kowloon (Hong Kong), and Suzhou 蘇州 to Ningbo 寧波.

In 1905 a key 753-mile line from Beijing in the north to Wuhan on the Yangzi River was completed by a group of French and Belgian banks. A couple of weeks after the *Intelligencer's* report on the Fuzhou revival, the paper printed a report that the line was set for further extension to Canton in the far south.⁸⁷ By the 1930s, railways formed a “vast communication and transportation network [which] covered half of Eastern China, a region inhabited by at least three quarters of the Chinese population.”⁸⁸ In Beijing, by 1916 multiple railway lines pierced the city walls and a ring line encircled the city. These new structures and flows disrupted the original spatial symmetry of the city's gates. To accommodate railroad lines into the capital, impressive gates were torn down and new doorways were opened in the walls.⁸⁹ Goods, people, and communications flowed along the rail system among Beijing, the nation, and the wider world.

(p.75) While Berntsen was funneling dozens of small donations into the budget of the Pentecostal mission in Zhengding, south of Beijing, in Beijing Wei's silk shop was booming and Wei was becoming a church donor himself. By 1906 his staff had doubled again, from four to eight, and his shop assistants were members of the church.⁹⁰ Wei's growing wealth gave him considerable stature within the church community, although it seems evident that Samuel Meech did not consider Wei the most ideal candidate for church leadership. When a London Missionary Society deacon was excommunicated for making immoral propositions to the pastor's wife, Meech was left with a staffing crisis. He reported:

After the exclusion of the deacon which has been mentioned, and it became necessary to elect a successor, it seemed to me inevitable that this man [Wei] must be elected, which was not altogether to be desired. To my great delight the church acted in an independent manner, and chose a worthy man, who is assistant to the shopkeeper just mentioned. His master does not seem to have taken any offence, but continues faithful and has contributed liberally to the church funds.⁹¹

Meech's worry that the church council would choose Wei as deacon and delight when they chose his "worthy" assistant reflects the ambiguity that he and other London Missionary Society missionaries in North China felt toward church government in the early years of the twentieth century. By now a regular system of church councils had been implemented in fits and starts across London Missionary Society missions in North China. Although not all church councils functioned in the way that missionaries expected, it seems evident that some church councils began to operate with a real degree of independence and that missionaries were no longer in complete control of local institutions. The way in which the church council in Wei's congregation rearranged the usual hierarchy between employer and employee (by elevating Wei's shop assistant above Wei, the boss) additionally points to ways in which Chinese Christian communities had developed an alternative organizational culture.

The independence of Wei's congregation at Ciqikou came to full fruition in 1911–1912, when he and other local Protestants of means and status contributed money to organize an independent Chinese congregation called the Chinese Christian Church 中華基督教會 on the property of this southern congregation, donated by the London Missionary Society.⁹² Wei claimed to have contributed 3,000 yuan in silver dollars to help found this church, a significant sum at that time because one silver dollar was roughly equivalent to a worker's wages for five days.⁹³ This congregation became part of a larger Chinese Christian Church federation of similar churches in Beijing and Tianjin. Around the same **(p.76)** time, a second London Missionary Society congregation in the eastern sector of Beijing became fully independent and self-supporting under the leadership of Cheng Jingyi 誠靜怡, the son of a Manchu pastor, who had been educated at the London Missionary Society Anglo-Chinese Institute in Beijing and the Bible Institute in Glasgow, Scotland (see Figure 2.3).⁹⁴

These urban churches were busy places. In 1917 the Gangwashi 缸瓦市 church in western Beijing had 137 names on its membership rolls, of whom 80 attended the Sunday service. The chapel hosted multiple weekday afternoon meetings and an evening meeting every night except for Saturday. On Sunday, in addition to the main service there were special afternoon women's meetings, Bible classes, Sunday School classes, children's meetings, and prayer meetings.⁹⁵



Figure 2.3 Foreign and Chinese Christians in Beijing on the occasion of the ordination of Cheng Jingyi (center, in spectacles) as a pastor of the London Missionary Society, October 1910. Samuel Evans Meech is three people to Cheng's right, an older man with a beard. His daughter Gladys Meech, wearing a white blouse and a dark hat, stands directly behind him. The front row includes local Chinese church leaders.

Credit: Council for World Mission archive, SOAS Library, CWM/LMS/China/ Photographs, Box 13, File 80

And yet in Meech's mind this steady institutional expansion could not compensate for what he saw as a lack of spiritual energy within the London Missionary Society or former-London Missionary Society congregations. In his report for (p.77) 1911 his tone was pessimistic as he conceded that although for the past two years "the business affairs of the Church have been . . . in the control of the Church Council" composed of six members, the pastor, and himself, "the tendency has been on the part of half the members to exploit, if possible, the Council to the furtherance of private ends." He lamented what he saw as apathy and cynicism, complaining that there was "absolutely no initiative," and expressed his hope for a future in which Chinese Christian churches were more independent, animated by manifestations of Christ's power:

What shall we say of the future? . . . Will it not be a church independent, conscious of its power and opportunity, and of its responsibility for the salvation of the kind in which it is founded? Will it not be a Church in which it is manifest that Christ reigns supreme, and therefore an abiding witness to Him? May this be so, and that speedily.⁹⁶

Revolution

At the close of 1911 Meech had good reason to be both anxious about the present and hopeful for the future. In 1905, while the fires of Christian revival were burning in Fuzhou, Ningbo, and Cangzhou, a Chinese Christian doctor named Sun Yat-sen and others fanned the flames of revolution in Tokyo. They founded an organization called the Revolutionary Alliance 同盟會 dedicated to overthrowing the Qing dynasty. The Revolutionary Alliance was an umbrella organization for many revolutionary groups operating within in China and also overseas in places such as Japan, Singapore, Hong Kong, the South China Sea communities, the United States, and Europe. The increasing connectedness of the world meant that these groups could access refuge, sympathy, expertise, and financial support in any number of places outside of China. Sun was living in Japan at the time because his involvement in earlier attempts to overthrow the dynasty had made him a wanted man in his native country.

The revolutionaries were united by their desire to "revive China." They were frustrated with the Qing regime's conservative reluctance to modernize and its inability to prevent foreign nations from carving China up into spheres of interest. Like Hong Xiuquan's Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, two of the Revolutionary Alliance's chief goals were expelling the Manchus and redistributing land among the people. Like the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, the glorious new world that they hoped to usher in with their revolutionary ideals would have to be brought about by force of arms. Around the country, the Revolutionary Alliance began to recruit supporters and stockpile weapons.

(p.78) In October 1911, munitions being secretly stored at a warehouse in the treaty port city of Wuhan exploded in an accident. The local revolutionary supporters knew that the subsequent official investigation would uncover their activities and mark them for death. Having nothing to lose, they launched a rebellion against the Qing state. In the next few weeks the rebellion spread around the country as one after another, cities and provinces declared their independence. In February 1912, shortly after Meech sealed his annual report for 1911 and sent it off to London and around the same time that Wei's congregation at Ciqikou became independent, six-year-old Qing Emperor Puyi abdicated and China became a republic.

Dynasties crumble and emperors fall, but church and business must go on. In Beijing, as his silk store doubled in square footage and his employee roll grew to more than thirty, Wei Enbo became a person of considerable influence within the local Protestant community.⁹⁷ He helped to organize preaching groups, including an evangelistic group that preached at temple fairs.⁹⁸ Temple fairs were a kind of multiday consumption opportunity in Beijing targeted at a lower- to middle-class audience. Beijing's Daoist, Buddhist, and Lama temples provided open spaces in which to enjoy performances such as opera, comic shows, and martial arts performances and to haggle for household articles such as chests, buckets, and kettles.⁹⁹

In this lively environment, Christian preaching was another form of entertainment. The Chinese Christians initiated this preaching project, erecting mat-sheds for women and children and a booth for men in order to achieve respectable separation of the sexes. They enlisted the help of foreign missionaries such as Frances Stuckey. In these mat-sheds Stuckey taught groups of children the same Bible story and hymn all day, day after day. She remarked that "[b]efore the fair was over, I heard children wandering about the booths singing 'Jesus Loves Me.'"¹⁰⁰ At the beginning of 1912 and 1913, two sacred sites that had formerly been reserved for imperial ceremonies, the Temple of Heaven and the Altar of Agriculture, were opened to the public for periods of time. "Hundreds of thousands crowded to see these places, which have been closed to the Chinese public for thousands of years," wrote Stuckey.

In the Temple of Heaven the scriptures were offered for sale, and on the open Altar itself, a place where in the past, the Chinese came nearest the conception of spiritual worship of the One True God, these Christians, both men and women, stood and proclaimed the wonderful truth that there is one God and Father of us all, and one Saviour, even Jesus Christ, His Son.¹⁰¹

(p.79) The public access to these sites that for centuries had been seen only by the emperor and his staff in the process of sacred rituals to achieve harmony between Heaven and Earth was a testament to the enormity of the transformations taking place in China at this time.¹⁰²

After hundreds of years of imperial rule, the fall of the Qing left a gaping hole in state power, the government's bureaucratic systems, and the whole structure of charismatic moral ideology that held China together. The revolutionaries scrambled to fill it with a viable government and a sense of national identity. Although Sun Yat-sen had been chosen as provisional president of the Republic in 1912, within a few months he stepped down to make way for Yuan Shikai, a prominent general and former imperial scholar-official who commanded the Qing's new, modernized army in the north, known as the Beiyang Army 北楊新軍. In return for using his influence to secure child-Emperor Puyi's abdication, Yuan had been promised the presidency. Thus Yuan was a person who had joined the cause of the revolution at a late date. He had not spent his life risking death for ideals such as suffrage and the rule of law and was not necessarily committed to building democratic institutions. When in the spring of 1912 China's first-ever parliamentary elections resulted in a clear victory for Sun Yat-sen's National Party, the Nationalist leader Song Jiaoren was assassinated. Many suspected that Yuan was behind the assassination.

The situation went from bad to worse when late in 1915 Yuan declared himself emperor. He apparently believed that China needed strong central leadership and that he was the person to provide it. But the people were not enthusiastic about a return to imperial rule. Province after province seceded. Yuan died of uremia in 1916, an angry and bitter man. In the wake of Yuan's tarnished legacy, regional strongmen began fighting among themselves for control. Corruption and gridlock became endemic.¹⁰³ The civil conflicts of this "warlord era" destabilized China's governing institutions and made it even easier for foreign powers to extract concessions.

Around this time Wei was just emerging from a period of spiritual turmoil that had begun when he had been excommunicated from the China Christian Church not long after its founding. His offense was "breaking the Seventh Commandment" by marrying a second wife, Liu Ai 劉愛 (1873-?), later known as 魏劉馬利亞 Wei Liu Maria, a widow six years his senior.¹⁰⁴ Concubinage was a fairly common and socially acceptable practice for wealthy Chinese men in the wider society but was considered adultery in the understandings of the Protestant community in Beijing. The practice had actually been forbidden to Chinese Christians as early as Matteo Ricci's Jesuit mission to China in the seventeenth century, with the exception of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom, in which **(p.80)** Hong Xiuquan and other top leaders had followed the Old Testament practice of polygamy.¹⁰⁵

In the wake of his excommunication, Wei spent the next few years feeling spiritually depressed, berating himself for his inability to leave behind sin. Then one day, probably in 1915, Wei heard a voice: “The Lord will still use you; they do not want you, but I want you, as with the prodigal son.” Thereupon, Wei said, “I rejoiced, and my heart began to warm. I went to the church and donated money and preached everywhere.”¹⁰⁶ This experience seems to have lifted Wei out of his spiritual funk and set him once more on the track of active participation in the Beijing Christian community. Wei was a valued patron of not one but many churches in Beijing, which were required by the government to demonstrate access to funds of over 70 percent of the total costs every time they acquired land or buildings for meetinghouses. Protestant institutions that relied on Wei for financial backing included the YMCA, the Salvation Army, the Methodist Church, and the Apostolic Faith Church.¹⁰⁷

Wei and Berntsen

The Apostolic Faith Church was where Wei and Berntsen met. Berntsen by now had moved from Zhengding 正定 in the south of Zhili 直隸 (now part of Hebei 河北) Province to Beijing. “Apostolic Faith Church” was the generic name often used by early Pentecostal missionaries who went to China backed by little or no institutional support, though once in China they loosely associated with each other. Other histories of the True Jesus Church have documented in passing the connection between Berntsen and Wei as the source of Wei’s Pentecostal teachings, but what is at least as significant as the two men’s theological connection is the closeness of their personal relationship, which encompassed shared religious experience, religious rivalry, family relationships, and money.

In 1915, one of his Christian businessman friends introduced Wei to Berntsen and his congregation. At this time, Berntsen had a chapel in the Jishikou 雞市口 [Chicken Market] area outside of the Chaoyang Gate 朝陽門 (then known as the Qihua Gate 齊化門) at the eastern side of the city.¹⁰⁸ “When Wei saw the pastor, Bernt Berntsen, and saw how poor he looked, he knew that even though Berntsen looked very poor, his morals were better than pastors of other churches,” recorded Wei’s biographical account. “Berntsen washed Wei’s feet, and Wei was extremely moved. From that time on they became intimate friends, and Berntsen helped Wei understand the truths of the Bible.”¹⁰⁹

The ritual of footwashing implies an intimacy and egalitarianism that were unlikely to exist between a Norwegian American and a Chinese in this era. In Western countries, anti-Chinese racial antipathy ran high. Just over a decade (p. 81) earlier, in 1904, the US Congress had voted to permanently exclude Chinese workers.¹¹⁰ Within China, foreign missionaries' interactions with Chinese Christians, though well meaning, were often characterized by an attitude of condescension and superiority.¹¹¹ Yet Berntsen had sidestepped the racial and cultural separations of the time by invoking a ritual instituted by Jesus in the biblical Last Supper. The symbolic import of this ritual on which Berntsen and other Pentecostal primitivists drew was Christ's humility in performing duties usually assigned to lowly servants. Hence Berntsen's trust in the patterns of primitive Christianity had led him not only across the sea but also across a significant racial divide.

It also helped that Wei was rich and Berntsen was poor. Berntsen's account demonstrates that on multiple occasions, Wei had hosted Berntsen and offered him various forms of assistance, which Berntsen had warmly received.¹¹² Eventually, Berntsen moved his Apostolic Faith Church chapel to a building on Xinglong Street 興隆街 near the Qianmen Gate 前門, about five minutes' walk from Wei's silk shop En Xin Yong 恩信永 (which was itself about five minutes' walk from Wei's old London Missionary Society congregation at Ciqikou), so they interacted frequently (see Figure 2.4).¹¹³ (p.82)

Most fundamentally, Wei and Berntsen participated in the life of the Apostolic Faith Church. Wei regularly offered quarters above En Xin Yong as a location for prayer meetings that often included his family members, "all the employees in the shop," and others. These meetings were charismatic in tone, including healing ministrations, exorcism, and tongues-speaking.¹¹⁴ It was at one of these meetings that Wei spoke in tongues for the first time on December 12, 1915.¹¹⁵

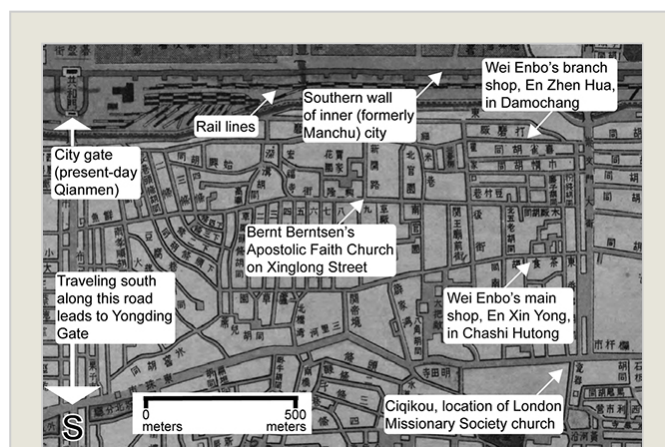


Figure 2.4 3.1914 map of the neighborhood outside the Qianmen and Chongwenmen Gates in southern Beijing, where Bernt Berntsen and Wei Enbo socialized, engaged in business, and worshipped.

Credit: Map of Peking, 1914, Wikimedia Commons

The charismatic enthusiasm of Wei's first year as a Pentecostal Christian contrasted with the perception of apathy that again dampened Meech's report of the London Missionary Society churches in Beijing in 1915. Meech reported that the renowned Canadian revivalist, Reverend Jonathan Goforth, had been his guest and had conducted "some special meetings in the West City" at the request of Mr. Pao, the Chinese preacher.¹¹⁶ Although Meech judged that the meetings had indeed generally encouraged the Chinese Christians to go about their church work with renewed earnestness, overall Meech and Pao were disappointed because Goforth was a *special* sort of meeting convener—a revivalist—who excelled at delivering a *special* sort of meeting—a revival—in which people did, said, heard, and felt extraordinary things, that is, manifestations of God's divine power. These manifestations had not come to pass. "[T]here is little to record," wrote Meech. "The general stirring up of the Church and the re-enlivenment of those who had grown cold did not take part, much to our disappointment."¹¹⁷

In the meantime, Wei was regularly experiencing the infilling of the Holy Spirit that Pentecostals believed accompanied the gift of tongues. His business was booming as well. He now had two shops, both of which closed on Saturday for Sabbath observances. Around April 1916 Wei contracted tuberculosis and did not improve for months, despite the efforts of Western and Chinese medicine. In September 1916, Wei came to the Apostolic Faith Church chapel seeking healing prayer. Zhang Zhirui 張之瑞, at the time a member of Berntsen's congregation and a temporary resident of the chapel, anointed Wei with oil and prayed for him, whereupon Wei's sickness was healed.¹¹⁸ When Wei's daughter Huiying 惠英 became deathly ill, Berntsen's teenage son Henry visited Wei's home. As Henry and Wei knelt and prayed, Wei "heard God's voice say, 'Your daughter is well,'" and she was cured.¹¹⁹

These stories of physical healing, particularly the interaction between Henry and Huiying, suggest the extent to which the Berntsens and the Weis were involved in each other's lives. Beyond friendship and faith, an additional way in which the two families were connected was through money. Berntsen was an independent missionary who cobbled together his income from donations sent from readers of Pentecostal papers in multiple countries. Wei was a wealthy silk merchant but had significant debts. These two factors drew Wei and Berntsen into a business relationship together.

(p.83) Each gave a slightly different account of how this relationship began. According to Wei's account, it was Berntsen's idea:

[Berntsen said:] "We have many funds in the Apostolic Faith Church's bank account in Tianjin. I will take this money out and give it to you at the En Xin Yong cloth shop at 20% interest—what do you say?"

At that time I, [Wei] Paul, had still not received the baptism of the Spirit. So I joined him in this money-making scheme. Because in this year, I had newly opened the En Zhen Hua satellite store, and there were many new goods So I used his two thousand-plus yuan, at 20% interest per month.¹²⁰

According to Berntsen's account, the loan was solicited by Wei, who had already borrowed \$380 from Berntsen previously:

. . . [C]ome the time of the New Year . . . he said he could use more money to buy cloth, because he would buy cheap then, as everybody was short of money, he even said he could make 40 Doll. [o]n 100 Doll. and I said if that is the case I can give you some more and you can give me good interest and he said yes, I also questioned him if he had any bills to pay, no he said, so I let him have all the money in the Bank of Tientsin 1620 Doll. So in all he had received 2000 Doll. and he give me the Document you have as you can see, I could get my money every month if I only notify him a month ahead.¹²¹

Unfortunately, the deal soured. Berntsen discovered that Wei had used the money not to buy cloth, but to settle with some creditors.¹²² Then in the spring of 1917, Wei defected from Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church and founded the True Jesus Church, leaving his wife Liu Ai to run the silk shop and ignoring Berntsen's repeated requests for repayment. According to his religious associate, Wang Peter, "as soon as he heard the call from God, Wei cut off [his business activities] like 'a quick blade through tangled hemp' [快刀斷麻, a Chinese expression similar to 'cutting the Gordian knot']."¹²³ Wei went so far as to sell his house and land from his rural home village in order to raise several thousand yuan for missionaries' traveling expenses and printing fees for publications such as a hymnbook, tracts, and the first volume of his autobiographical *True Testimony of the Holy Spirit* 聖靈真見證書 (上).¹²⁴

In January 1918, Berntsen sued Wei in the local Beijing court.¹²⁵ In a letter to the local court, Berntsen detailed his frustration in seeking payment:

(p.84)

He said he would sell the goods and return the money by March By March he said he had not sold much and could not return the money. I said he could delay, but I definitely needed the money in a month when Pastor Bao came to Beijing. In July when Pastor Bao came to Beijing to get the money, he was not even in the city. His shopworkers could not handle the matter. Afterwards I went with his wife to Huangcun. He said he was not dealing with money and that his wife should handle it. Up to this point his wife has not returned the capital, and the interest payment is one and a half months late.¹²⁶

The intimate but fraught relationship between Berntsen and Wei suggests the complex social, economic, and religious ties that bound native Chinese and Westerners alike within the Christian community in China. This dynamic transnational community was made up of close-knit personal networks in which a variety of spiritual, social, and economic ties all entwined.

Grassroots Globalization

The relationship between Berntsen and Wei stands as a symbol of the new global pathways that opened up in China in the early twentieth century for the entrepreneurial and visionary. These newly opened doors did not lead Chinese Christians or Western missionaries neatly from one world into the next, but instead linked to a tangle of new ways of being, thinking, and acting that branched from and merged back into old ways. Advances in transportation technology allowed Bernt Berntsen to leave home in Norway, take up residence in Chicago, move to China, read an Azusa Street newsletter only a few months old, travel to Los Angeles in time to catch the revival while it was still going strong, and return to China. Advances in communications technology created the flourishing Chinese Christian print culture within which Berntsen's *Popular Gospel Truth* could circulate, contributing to the formation of internationally connected groups of Chinese Pentecostals. In some instances, as in the case of the foreign-built railroad lines, manifestations of China's new interconnectedness were deeply resented by many. Indeed, this popular resentment against foreigners (which easily extended to the Manchu ethnic group) and the Qing government's inability to repel imperialist incursions contributed to the Chinese Revolution of 1911 and persisted for decades thereafter.

This new world in which Berntsen and Wei were able to find each other was not just the domain of people in China. Rather, it was an emerging reality sweeping through the global grassroots. Why did so many people around the world report charismatic experiences in 1905–1907, and why did charismatic **(p.85)** Christian movements grow so rapidly in the decades that followed? It would be hard to demonstrate that people around the world suddenly became constitutionally more susceptible to ecstatic religious experience. What is clear is that the development of global transportation and communications technology made these kinds of experiences more visible and easily shared. In other words, it allowed people to fulfill a perennial desire in a way that had not been possible at earlier junctures in world Christian history. Advances in communications technology enabled increased exposure for charismatic experiences around the very same time that advances in transportation technology were making it possible for ordinary people to consider more seriously than ever before what Christ might have meant by his charge to “go . . . and teach all nations.”¹²⁷

This global openness that began with the great transnational missionary organizations of the nineteenth century became more accessible to ordinary people by the first decades of the twentieth century, as Wei Enbo and Bernt Berntsen came into each other's lives. The appeal of the Holy Spirit's transcendental power cut through all divisions of language and status. Charismatic discourse spread from person to person, village to village, and country to country, sparking a new Christian culture of grassroots globalization that reached Beijing. Wei had already been part of an independent Chinese congregation that spun off from the London Missionary Society around the time of the Revolution. This organizational independence primed him for spiritual independence. Through Berntsen and Berntsen's congregation, Wei had been saved. He had been healed. He was now an important node within this transnational Pentecostal network. The world was growing smaller every day, and all humanity was within his reach. Heaven, too, could not be far away.

Notes:

- (1.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1906, Beijing, Council for World Mission [formerly London Missionary Society] Archives (hereafter CWM), CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, accessed at the Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections and Archives, 266.00951 L846CN microfiche 698. Hereafter sources from this collection with this call number will be identified with "MF" for microfiche and the number of the fiche.
- (2.) Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 624–625
- (3.) Naquin, *Peking*, 623–625.
- (4.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 692.
- (5.) Tongwenbao 通問報 *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer* (hereafter *Intelligencer*), no. 182, December 26, 1905–January 30, 1906, p. 4, Shanghai Municipal Library record no. J5030, MF 00017.
- (6.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905, Cangzhou, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 694.
- (7.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905.
- (8.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905. It is interesting that she refers to the Holy Spirit as having a gender (as "He").

(9.) Young-Hoon Lee, "The Korean Holy Spirit Movement in Relation to Pentecostalism," in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan H. Anderson and Edmond Tang (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 413–426

(10.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1–7

(11.) Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation," Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal* Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 45–65

(12.) Historians of classical Pentecostalism have long wrestled with "the problem of origins." First there was the "providential" view held by Pentecostals who assumed that God's power had touched down among humanity in an abrupt, universal, and unprecedented way. Then there were more focused, historically oriented narratives of how the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement originated with American revivals, the Azusa Street revival foremost among them, and were outgrowths of nineteenth-century holiness traditions and possibly black Christianity in the United States. Recently a new global turn has emphasized the multiplicity of Pentecostal centers, including some that predated the Azusa Street revival. Allan Anderson, "Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 118–140 (118–126); Allan H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–15; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*; Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); David Reed, *In Jesus' Name: The History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals* (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism," 143–173.

(13.) For example, see Robert Hefner's definition in "The Unexpected Modern—Gender, Piety, and Politics in the Global Pentecostal Surge," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1–36 (2): "first, an emphasis on the achievement of a personalized and self-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ . . . second, ritual performance that highlights the ever-present power of the Holy Spirit . . . and, third, religious enthusiasm centered on the experience of charismata ("gifts of the Holy Spirit"), including prophecy, exorcism, miraculous healing, and speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Put simply, Pentecostalism is an affectively expressive, effervescent Christianity that takes literally the wondrous miracles described in the New Testament's Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–4), and proclaims their availability and importance for believers today." See also Allan Anderson's definition in *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9–15.

(14.) Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Michael Bergunder, A. F. Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan, and Allan Anderson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–29

(15.) Melissa Inouye, "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories within Protestant Christianity," in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850–2015, Vol. 2*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 884–919

(16.) Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism," 143–173.

(17.) See John Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (New York: Belknap, 2012); Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage, 2007); Anderson, "Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 126–129; Roger E. Hedlund, "Indigenous Pentecostalism in India," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 174–197 (175); A. C. George, "Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 220; Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

(18.) John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits: A History From Ignatius to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) *Rough Stone Rolling*

(19.) Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 138

(20.) Spence, *Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci, The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (New York: Macmillan, 1967)

- (21.) Bernt Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 12 (Jan. 1908): 3
- (22.) Bernt Berntsen, 1908 Passport Application, US Department of State, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, US Passport Applications, 1795–1925, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Microfilm Publication M1490.
- (23.) Bernt Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."
- (24.) Bernt Berntsen's 1908R. G. Tiedemann, "Protestant Missionaries," in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II*, ed. Nicolas Standaert and R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 550
- (25.) Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."
- (26.) Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."
- (27.) Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 96–98; E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation From the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes, 1867–1941* (New York, London, and Toronto: Cornwall Books, 1986), 21–23.
- (28.) Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 72.
- (29.) Elizabeth Sinn notes that this \$60 fare for passage from Hong Kong to San Francisco on the *Sultana* in 1852 was a relatively high fare because in the middle of the Gold Rush, high passenger volume could result in fares as low as \$28. Sinn, *Pacific Crossings*, 62. 2017 price taken from the Consumer Price Index estimates of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>.
- (30.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 23–25.
- (31.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 24.
- (32.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 24–25.
- (33.) *North China Herald*, "Washington's Knowledge of Shanghai," February 9, 1906, 288, accessed April 25, 2018, <http://primarysources.brillonline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/browse/north-china-herald-online>
- (34.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 62.

(35.) Rotem Kowner, “The Impact of the War on Naval Warfare,” in *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, ed. Rotem Kowner (Abingdon, UK, and New York: Routledge, 2007), 269–289

(36.) *Intelligencer* no. 284, January 4–February 1, 1908, last page.

(37.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 62–65. The *Nippon Maru*, built in 1899, had accommodations in first class, second class, and steerage.

(38.) This advertisement does not list individual fares for classes but I have estimated these fares based on rates for steerage from Hong Kong to San Francisco in 1867 (\$40, in Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 125) and relatively low cabin fares of \$200 from San Francisco to Hong Kong in 1874 (Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 29). This gives us an idea of the ratios between cabin and steerage fares (5 to 1). Rates of \$225 (first class) for Pacific Mail Steamship Company passage between San Francisco, Shanghai, and Hong Kong in the first half of 1916 (just before a rate hike, suggesting that prices had been at this level for some time) suggests that the fare in the several years before could have been around \$225 or perhaps a bit less (Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 39). Tate (*Transpacific Steam*, 55–56) lists first- and second-class rates for round-the-world fares offered by the Oceanic Steamship Company in 1900 (\$600 and \$375, respectively), which gives us an idea of the ratio of first- to second-class fares (1.6 to 1). Prices estimated for 2017 with Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis CPI calculator, accessed April 25, 2018, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>.

(39.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 39.

(40.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 65.

(41.) *Intelligencer* no. 212 (August 20–September 17, 1906), last page, MF 0248; Nestle’s Milk advertisements appear regularly in the *Intelligencer* from at least as early as no. 201 (April 24–May 29, 1906), last page, MF 0163.

(42.) R. G. Tiedemann, “Protestant Missionaries,” in Standaert and Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009); Daniel Bays, “The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement,” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 53–54.

(43.) Here I edited out a typographical error, a double “your.”

(44.) Berntsen, “Came From China to America for Pentecost.”

(45.) “Everywhere Preaching the Word,” *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 10 (September 1907), 1

- (46.) Bernt Berntsen's 1908 *Handbook of Christianity in China Vol IIR*. G. Tiedemann, "Consequential Transatlantic Networks Shaped the Polyglot Nature of the Protestant Missionary Enterprise in China," *Ching Feng*, New Series, 16, no. 1-2 (2017): 23-51
- (47.) Bernt Berntsen June 20, 1919, Emergency Passport Application, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington DC; NARA Series: *Passport Applications for Travel to China, 1906-1925; Volume 18: Emergency Passport Applications: China*. Located from a search on Ancestry.com.: *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925* (database online).
- (48.) Stanley K. Burgess, ed., *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (Routledge, 2006)
- (49.) Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 51-65
- (50.) Tongchuan fuyin zhenli bao 通傳福音真理報 [*Popular Gospel Truth*] (hereafter *Popular Gospel Truth*), May 1916, 1; November 1916, 5.
- (51.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, September 1915, 8.
- (52.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, November 1915, 1.
- (53.) Gail King, "Christian Women of China in the Seventeenth Century," in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010), 59
- (54.) See Christopher A. Reed and Cynthia Brokaw, eds., *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008* (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010); Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, eds., *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015).
- (55.) David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 168
- (56.) Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2014)
- (57.) Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940)
- (58.) Melissa Inouye, "Charismatic Moderns: Pluralistic Discourse in Chinese Christian Communities, 1905-1926," *Twentieth-Century China* 42, no. 1 (2017): 26-51

(59.) Donald MacGillivray, ed., *A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807–1907): Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume* (New York: American Tract Society; Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907), 403.

These circulation numbers were surpassed by the circulation figures for the Seventh-Day Adventist monthly, *Signs of the Times* [Shizhao yuebao], which stood at 10,000 subscriptions in 1916 and 70,000 in 1937. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee and Christie Chui-Shan Chow, “Publishing Prophecy: A Century of Adventist Print Culture in China,” in *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China*, ed. Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 51–90 (56–57); Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 87.

(60.) *Intelligencer* no. 181, February 4–March 5 1905, MF 0010, p. 3B.

(61.) *Gospel Proclamation* 福音宣報, June 1909. Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-1.

(62.) Lauren Pfister, “Bible Translations and the Protestant ‘Term Question,’ ” in Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 361–370.

(63.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary’s Curse and Other Tales From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 50

(64.) Lori Ferrell, *The Bible and the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 60–62

(65.) Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 90.

(66.) *Gospel Proclamation* 福音宣報, June 1909. Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-1.

(67.) Löwenthal records that between 1815 and 1937 periodicals were produced in Mandarin, Fuzhou dialect, Shanghai dialect, Xiamen dialect, Romanized Mandarin, Romanized Fuzhou dialect, and Romanized versions of two other dialects. Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 81.

(68.) Bernt Berntsen, “From Brother Berntsen,” *Bridegroom’s Messenger*, December 1, 1908, p. 4; “From Brother Berntsen,” *Bridegroom’s Messenger*, April 15, 1909, p. 4.

(69.) To cite one example from each: an account of his tongues experience and return to China in *The Apostolic Faith*, January 1908; a report on China missionary work in *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 15, 1909; a paragraph in *Pentecostal Testimony*, July 1, 1910; a brief paragraph in *Word and Witness*, September 20, 1913, on how Berntsen's young son Henry has been called to preach the gospel; a note in *Meat in Due Season*, June 3, 1916, on \$25 disbursed to Berntsen; a bulletin item in *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 2, 1920, on the sale of Berntsen's old mission station to the Salvation Army (twenty-eight rooms), for \$1000. <https://pentecostalarchives.org/search/>.

(70.) *Intelligencer* no. 193, March 25–April 30, 1906, p. 4, MF 0107.

(71.) Berntsen, "From Brother Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 15, 1909, p. 4

(72.) Berntsen, "From Brother B. Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, August 1, 1910, p. 1

(73.) Gordon Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)

(74.) Technically, however, Chinese emigrants often requested that their bones be shipped back to their homeland, making it a round-trip journey. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 266–269.

(75.) Erik Baark, *Lightning Wires: The Telegraph and China's Technological Modernization, 1860–1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 42–45

(76.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 46.

(77.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 75.

(78.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 81.

(79.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 86.

(80.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 172.

(81.) David Pong, "Confucian Patriotism and the Destruction of the Woosung Railway, 1877," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 4 (1973): 652–655

(82.) Ralph William Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse: The Economics of Railroads in China, 1876–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University East Asia Center, 1984), 46–47

(83.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 49.

(84.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 51.

- (85.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 51.
- (86.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 66.
- (87.) *Intelligencer* no. 184, December 26, 1905–January 24, 1906, p. 5.
- (88.) Cho-yun Hsu, *China: A New Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 541
- (89.) Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 36–37
- (90.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1906, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports/Box 5/1904-1907.
- (91.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1906.
- (92.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 3A and 45A. Here Wei records that the land for the China Christian Church was given to them by Samuel Evans Meech (Mi Zhiwen) of the London Missionary Society. He claims to have made the application with the Qing government (“Prince Regent’s government”) but the church may have been completed in 1912. Daniel Bays discusses these earliest independent churches beginning with the Chinese Christian Union (基督徒會 *Jidutu hui*) in Shanghai in 1903 in *A New History of Christianity in China*. He dates the formation of the Beijing independent churches to 1912–1913 (Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 96, 102.
- (93.) *True Testimony* Robert C. Allen, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, Christine Moll-Murata, and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, “Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738–1925: In Comparison With Europe, Japan, and India,” *Economic History Review* 64 (2010):8–38. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00515.x/full>
- (94.) Scott Sunquist, *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) <http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/c/cheng-jingyi.php>
- (95.) J. D. Liddell, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1917, Kang Wa Shih Church in West City, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 740.
- (96.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1911, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 715.
- (97.) *True Testimony*, 3A.
- (98.) *True Testimony*, 3A.

- (99.) Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 164–165.
- (100.) Frances Stuckey, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1912, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 719.
- (101.) Frances Stuckey, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1912.
- (102.) Mingzheng Shi, “From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing,” *Modern China* 24, no.3 (July 1998), 219–254
- (103.) Dr. and Mrs. E. J. and Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1916, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 736.
- (104.) *True Testimony*, 3A; Zhang Barnabas, *Mission Record* 傳道記 (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, self-published, 1929), 23; in a November 19, 1917 deposition, Liu Maria gives her age as forty-six years old (forty-five years by Western reckoning), Beijing Municipal Archives, J181-031-02801, p. 15.
- (105.) David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 21–22
- (106.) *True Testimony*, 3A.
- (107.) Tang Hongbiao 唐红飙, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* 真耶穌教會历史史迹考 (self-published, 2006), 15. Here he seems to be quoting *Shitu Baoluo Luezhuan* (使徒保羅略傳 *A Short Biography of Apostle Paul*), a True Jesus Church publication to which I have not yet obtained access.
- (108.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan* 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 *True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M6張之瑞
- (109.) *True Testimony* 3B, 4A. This section of Wei’s diary is written in the third person, although the other sections are written in the first person.
- (110.) Hsu Chung-mao, Lee Chia-ta, Ho Pang-chieh, Chou Ching-hui, and Huang Pao-chin, *The Chinese as Seen by the Western Illustrators in the 19th Century* (Taipei: Nueva Vision, 2012), 55
- (111.) Ryan Dunch, “Mothers to Our Country: Conversion, Education, and Ideology Among Chinese Protestant Women, 1870–1930,” in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010) 324–325

(112.) Bernt Berntsen's letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801 直隶交涉公署关于魏恩波借贲德新银洋请传饬清还等情的函, p. 197.

(113.) A legal document dated November 10, 1917, gives Berntsen's address as "Apostolic Faith Church on Xinglong Street, outside of Qianmen" 前門外興隆街信心會. J181-031-02801, p. 2.

(114.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(115.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, August 1916, p. 6.

(116.) Peter Chen-main Wang, "Chinese Christians in Republican China," in Standaert and Tiedemann, eds., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 2*, 600-607 (600).

(117.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1915, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 731.

(118.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Section Seven.

(119.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(120.) *True Testimony*, 122B, 123A.

(121.) Bernt Berntsen's letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917.

(122.) Bernt Berntsen's letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917.

(123.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Section Nine (Wang Peter 王彼得).

(124.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Sections Six and Nine (Wang Peter 王彼得).

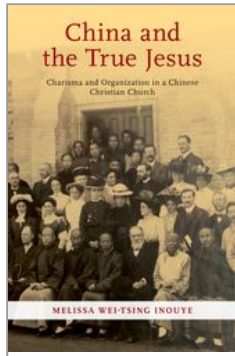
(125.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 3A, 4B, 8A.

(126.) Bernt Berntsen's letter to the local court, written January 1, 1918, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801 直隶交涉公署关于魏恩波借贲德新银洋請传饬清还等函, p. 166.

(127.) Matthew 28:19. KJV.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

The First and Last Day (1917–1922)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0004

Abstract and Keywords

Why do some big ideas catch on, spread, and endure while others fizzle? Analyzing Wei Enbo's vision of Jesus and the religious revival it sparked gives us insight into the attraction of the True Jesus Church in 1917. Wei's theophany was recounted in multiple stories revealing overlap but also significant variation. Over the course of retelling, these stories became more abstract and theologically focused, suggesting ways in which religious narratives emerge. This process generated a culturally fluent and linguistically discriminating message of biblical adherence. Chinese Christians seeking increased ecclesiastical purity and personal morality converted to the new movement. Wei's prediction that the world would end by 1922 reflected realities of social turmoil and Chinese millenarian traditions, but also was in keeping with the charismatic (extraordinary) tenor of the early True Jesus Church movement, which relied heavily on tropes, language, and expectations from the Bible.

Keywords: Wei Enbo, theophany, Jesus, vision, millenarian, True Jesus Church, Bible

Wei's Vision(s)

One afternoon in late May 1917, Wei Enbo 魏恩波 (1879–1919) heard a voice as he prayed in his home above the silk shop: “You must receive the baptism of Jesus.”¹ Wei, who had already begun what would end as a thirty-nine-day fast, was primed for divine guidance. Obediently, he went out and, “led by the Spirit,” proceeded down the great avenue that led out of Yongding Gate 永定門, the southernmost gate of the city (see Figure 3.1).²

Although reduced in number to facilitate increased traffic flows and to accommodate new stations of the ever-expanding railway lines, Beijing’s remaining city gates were still centers of bustling activity. The Beijing resident and novelist Lao She described the “medley of ear-piercing noises” and the “stench of the dry dust of the road” as a variety of people and vehicles pushed through this gate. “No one dared push on too fast, but everyone was in a hurry to get through. The cries, the cracking of whips, the cursing, the honking of horns, the tinkling of bells, the laughter, all mingled together to form a single medley of sound.”³

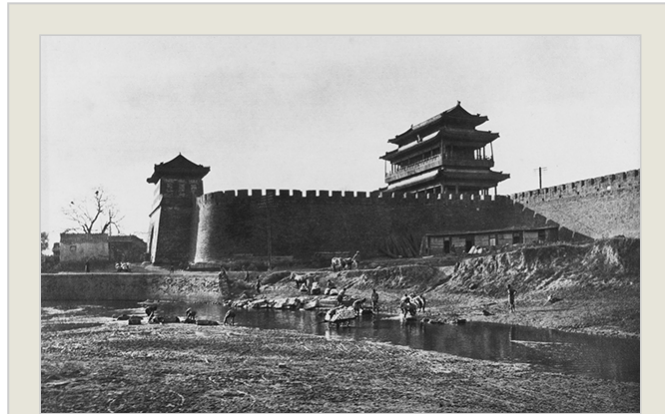


Figure 3.1 Yongding Gate, the southernmost gate of Beijing, circa 1915. From here, Wei Enbo traveled farther south to a river, the site of his baptism and vision experience.

Credit: Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol

Wei threaded through these crowds at the gate and walked about three kilometers farther south, to a place where a river flowed. He waded out into the water and knelt. Then he heard a voice from heaven: “You must be baptized facedown”:

I plunged into the water, raised my head, and clearly saw the glorious Savior Jesus appearing to me. Haliluya!

Coming up from the water I knew that my body and spirit had both become holy. I felt very powerful, and knew that I had received great authority.

From heaven, a voice said, “I give you full armor. Use the girdle of truth.” I felt in the darkness as if God were forcefully fastening it. The **(p.87)** voice told me that I must be an honest person and that I could never again speak untruth. Then the voice said, “I give you the breastplate of righteousness and the helmet of the grace of salvation.” In the dark the Lord’s messenger fastened them on securely. Then the voice said, “I give you the shoes of the gospel for your feet,” and I felt in the dark that there was God, putting them on for me. Then the voice said, “I give the shield of faith and virtue into your hand,” and again the voice said, “Take it and be strong.” Then the voice said, “I give the precious sword of the Spirit into your hands, and then a loud voice commanded me to do battle with the devil.”

I saw that suddenly there came a devil with a face shaped like a plow. I fought with him, and used the precious sword of the Spirit to defeat him. Then came another devil, more vicious than the first, and battled with me. I fought several bouts, and used the precious sword of the Spirit to drive him away. After a while then came again another devil of great power, even more awful to behold. But with the glorious armor that the true God had given me, the full soldier’s armor, I felt powerful, with surpassing spirit, as if I were engaged in an epic battle between nations. With the courage that the Lord gave me, I battled with the devil in the wilderness, and after several bouts one after another, I defeated the great devil.⁴

(p.88) Religious movements usually begin with a charismatic spark such as this remarkable narrative. Two eventual possibilities follow. More often than not, the new religious movement fizzles when its charismatic founder dies or when it becomes so large that it loses focus. Sometimes, however, the community of believers succeeds in perpetuating itself through institutions (some formal, such as governance structures, and some informal, such as shared cultural practices) that allow it to grow beyond the initial limits of the sound of the founder’s voice. In this process of expansion and institutionalization, it becomes intertwined with and deeply rooted in its local social and cultural contexts.

This chapter uses the founding of the True Jesus Church to explore the process through which religious movements form—how, in a particular context, one simple, individual, spontaneous experience expands into a complex, collective, organized experience. In the case of the True Jesus Church, charismatic experience both validated the True Jesus Church’s restorationist message and facilitated the creation of interpersonal ties to form a new community. Early True Jesus Church members took tried-and-true organizational models acquired within Protestant circles in Beijing, especially Bible-oriented textual culture, and redeployed them to nurture and extend the miraculous ethos of their emerging community. Although the conditions of domestic and international crisis within which the True Jesus Church emerged certainly shaped believers’ worldviews and values, their theological and moral concerns were at least as significant in defining the True Jesus Church as a new religious movement. I find that the early True Jesus Church’s popularity stemmed primarily from its cultural acumen in demonstrating how it adhered to the Bible more closely than other contemporary forms of Christianity, including foreign-missionary Christianity.

At a certain point, communities become too large to hold together through mutual understanding alone. They require formal rules and regulations. We can see the wheels of this process of community regulation begin to turn from Wei’s actions directly after his vision and baptism at the river. Under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Wei wrote out a laundry list of errors of doctrine and practice that encumbered European Christianity and that needed to be corrected. For example, Wei wrote, the baptismal rite should be facedown, by immersion, instead of by sprinkling; missionaries should be unpaid, relying on faith, instead of being tempted to corruption by regular salaries, and so on. Wei soon had this list of “Six Covenants and Five Ordinances of Correction” published and widely distributed.⁵ It became one of the first formal expressions of doctrine in his new movement.

After his vision, Wei proceeded southward to the town of Huangcun 黃村.⁶ He wrote that he “did not dare return home because I knew that people at home [i.e., his wife] would not let me walk this sacred road [i.e., abandon his business].”⁷ In Huangcun, he lodged with fellow merchant friends and continued **(p.89)** to fast, eventually abstaining from food for thirty-nine days. Over the course of his fast, Wei attracted people from near and far and sparked an instant revival. People—mostly Christians—joined the True Jesus Church in droves. Over the next couple of decades, the True Jesus Church grew into one of the major independent Protestant Christian denominations in China, with a membership roll that multiplied overseas and drew friends in the halls of political power.

How did Wei's unusual personal experience in 1917 in Beijing grow into a religious movement that gained traction across China and overseas and endured long beyond his death just two years later? How do religious movements develop a critical mass of ideas, practices, and adherents sufficient for them to take on a life of their own? The same question could be asked for political movements such as China's fledgling Communist movement, in which a young man from rural Hunan 湖南 Province, Mao Zedong 毛澤東, was still trying to find his feet in China's capital city. In 1919, Wei shared the city of Beijing with Mao and other members of a Communist study group that pored over the teachings of the materialist prophets, Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilych Lenin, and discussed how to implement them in China. Wei's and Mao's projects were similar: harnessing the horse of compelling ideas to the cart of a tightly knit organization, resulting in a powerful social force. The major difference is that at this point in 1919, Wei's movement was much more culturally successful and influential than Mao's.

One prelude to Wei's vision and submersion in the river outside the city in May 1917 is that in the months and years leading up to the experience, he had already developed into a Christian leader with a significant degree of self-confidence. In the London Missionary Society congregations under Samuel Evans Meech in the early 1900s, Wei had been a prominent donor and lay evangelist. Subsequently, as an active member of the Apostolic Faith Church congregation overseen by the Norwegian American Pentecostal missionary Bernt Berntsen, Wei and others had organized a "preaching group" 興辦佈道團.⁸ Sometimes their preaching was not well received by members of the Sino-foreign Christian community in Beijing, who tended to view Pentecostalism as excessive at best and heretical at worst.⁹ Wei also hosted in the rooms above his shop worship meetings that attracted a regular following of fellow Pentecostals. The meetings regularly included his family members and "all the employees in the shop," as well as others from the church. They studied the Bible, prayed, spoke in tongues, exorcised devils, and performed healing ministrations.¹⁰

All these activities boosted Wei's assurance of his spiritual capacities. One Saturday in late May, Wei and Zhang Zhongsan 張仲三, a shop assistant and a fellow Pentecostal, went to Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church meeting on Xinglong Street 興隆街, a few minutes' walk from Wei's silk shop En Xin Yong 恩信永. Just after they and the congregation had finished singing a hymn, Zhang (p. 90) Zhongsan suddenly stood up and began to speak in tongues, disrupting the meeting and annoying several fellow congregants and Berntsen's wife Magna.¹¹ Wei stood to speak in his defense: "Brothers and Sisters, please listen," he said. "The Holy Spirit that the Lord gave to the apostles of the past, like Peter and the others, is the same which he gives to us, and that Holy Spirit that he gives to us is the same which he gave to them."¹² After the meeting Wei returned to his shop, resolving to fast for three days for the purpose of "receiving power."¹³

Later, Zhang Zhongsan came to see Wei. Zhang said that the Lord had told him: “Go to your fellow believer Wei’s house, for there is sacred ground. He can testify of the Lord.” The two of them “were overjoyed” and began to pray together, “praising the Lord’s greatness.”¹⁴ Wei then felt moved by the Holy Spirit to write out a divine message that began as follows:

Thus directs the Holy Father in utmost clarity:

Speak and write to all those false preachers, false teachers, false seekers of the Way, and the false learned men who have been sent out by the churches: Woe unto you! You have closed the gates of Heaven. There are people who want to get in, but you are obstructing them. You draw near to me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me.¹⁵ Is not your worship also empty? You have erred in your preaching. Like the blind leading the blind, you shall fall into a bottomless pit.¹⁶

In this, Wei’s first religious text, the voice of God criticized Chinese Christians for baptizing by sprinkling instead of by immersion, seeking the services of a doctor instead of calling on God, failing to observe the “true Sabbath” of Saturday, and generally falling short of God’s standard of righteousness.

This letter’s frequent criticisms of existing Chinese churches for failing to emulate the acts of Jesus and the apostles were “restorationist” in character. For centuries, Christian restoration movements, including the well-known examples of Seventh-day Adventism and Mormonism in the nineteenth century, have promulgated a basic narrative that the doctrines and practices of the early Christian church of Jesus and the apostles became corrupted over time, necessitating a restoration of these original doctrines and practices (usually through closer conformity to biblical texts). Wei’s restorationist critique of the widespread practice of baptism by sprinkling instead of by immersion was broadly in line with the teachings of Berntsen’s Apostolic Faith Church and the general restorationist tendency within Pentecostalism.¹⁷ What was significantly different about Wei’s position, however, was the fact that in addition to appealing to the Bible as an authority, he was also claiming to receive direct revelation from God. This claim set him apart as being in the same mold as the biblical prophets and **(p.91)** apostles, a person with a special relationship with God, and a divinely ordained mission.

Further communications strengthened Wei’s prophetic identity. The following night, his friend Zhang Zhongsan heard a voice saying “ ‘Tell Wei to awake. The Spirit speaks inside his heart, and the Father is in him . . . You should call him ‘Little Jesus.’ ”¹⁸ Wei Enbo subsequently began to write *True Testimony of the Holy Spirit*, his autobiographical account of the early days of the True Jesus Church. He then began a thirty-nine-day fast and had his vision, baptism, and battle with the forces of the devil on the riverbank south of the city.¹⁹

Larger Than Wei

One person's vision of a battle in the spirit world does not constitute a new religious movement. Other people must come to see this experience as meaningful to them.²⁰ Framed with an effective narrative, an experience that might otherwise be forgotten, ignored, or dismissed can come to be deemed universally relevant and widely shared. Wei Enbo's vision was similar to that of Hong Xiuquan, the Taiping founder, in that he saw Jesus's face and personally received a divine mandate and a spiritual weapon with which to fight God's battles. One obvious way in which Wei differed from Hong is that Hong waged war with real weapons, spilling real blood. As Wei Enbo swung his invisible sword, he was attacking demons on a spiritual front. And yet Wei also saw these demons as manifesting themselves in actual human beings.

The account of Wei's vision with which this chapter began is an excerpt from just one of multiple versions of Wei's experience. When it was printed on July 27, 1919, at least two other versions of this story had been previously recorded. A few months later, in November 1919, a fourth version was printed.²¹ Probably other versions in addition to these four eventually circulated. This chapter opened with the third version of the story. The first (earliest-recorded) version of Wei's vision and baptism contains significant content omitted from later versions. It reveals in greater detail the presence of numerous eyewitnesses, also Pentecostal believers, whose experiences overlapped with Wei's.²² Examining all of the vision accounts provides other perspectives on Wei's experience. For instance, according to one of the accounts, Zhang Xisan and an assistant from Wei's shop saw Wei's eyes fixed on something far away, and saw his hands waving and his feet shifting wildly but did not see the devils Wei fought. Beyond these Pentecostal participants, there were countless other Beijing citizens who were simply present, populating the scene as they went about their daily routines.

A key presence sharing the stage of Wei's life was his second wife, Liu Ai 劉愛 (1873–?), also known as Liu Maria 劉馬利亞 or Wei Maria 魏馬利亞 ("Maria" (p. 92) is how Wei referred to her in his diary and how she was known to church members).²³ His first wife lived in his rural hometown of Wufang. Liu Ai lived with Wei in the quarters above the silk shop. She was a widow, six years older than Wei, and had married him after he became wealthy. Their relationship in the spring of 1917 had been strained by Wei's liaisons with another woman who was either his first wife or a new concubine.²⁴ Liu Ai was a fellow Pentecostal. The day before Wei's vision, he had laid hands upon her head in a prayer meeting. She had been "greatly moved by the Spirit" to confess her sins in fervent prayer.²⁵ At the same time, she was not enthused about her husband's increasing religious devotion. She wanted him to remain an obscure wealthy silk merchant.

The possibilities for competing interpretations of Wei's experience are evident within Wei's earliest vision narrative. Far from unfolding within the private, sometimes otherworldly setting implied by the third account, the first account depicts miraculous events as unfolding within a crowded and contentious human context. Because this account is the longest of the three, I have subsequently combined direct quotes with an italicized paraphrase of the section of *True Testimony of the Holy Spirit* in which Wei's vision story was first recorded.

We were praying on the upper floor of the residence, when suddenly "the Spirit came down."²⁶

Suddenly, a devil possessed my second wife, Maria. She shouted, "You're not attending to your business affairs! You are longing for that woman in Baigouhe 白溝河!"²⁷

What a big devil it was! Thereupon I exorcised the devil for her, and exhorted her to repent, but she didn't listen. Because I loved her, I told her to come to heaven with us. She said, "I want to eat food, not go with you," and went downstairs.²⁸

Wei and his friends continued to pray, speaking in tongues, singing songs in the spirit. Their mood was joyful. Wei took the name of Paul. Zhang Zhongsan took the name of John. Zhang Xisan 張錫三, another friend from Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church on Xinglong Street, took the name Mark. They all ate and sang songs of the Spirit, praising the Lord. Thereafter, Wei wrote,

Liu Ai threatened to burn the manuscript of *True Testimony of the Holy Spirit*, saying, "your writing that book will bring calamity upon us."²⁹ I knew that those who received the baptism of the spirit would receive the power to leave behind sin, so I began to pray for her. I wept loudly. Suddenly, the Spirit came down and filled her heart. I drove the devil from her heart. I wept mightily. Then hosts of heavenly armies appeared and **(p. 93)** I saw them. This is the testimony of the Spirit. Truly we have received a great victory.³⁰

Wei, Zhang Zhongsan, Zhang Xisan, and some others who had been meeting above En Xin Yong walked to "a place where there was a river with flowing water" to be baptized. When they reached the place, Wei and Zhang Zhongsan had a disagreement about the proper manner of baptism. They began to argue and each tried to exorcise the devil from the other. Finally Zhang Zhongsan waded into the water by himself. He prayed to Jesus, came out of the water, and then left.

It was Wei's turn. "I asked the Lord, can I drink? Can I be baptized? The Lord said, 'Yes.'"³¹ Wei went into the water and prayed for a long time. Then he said, "Jesus, baptize us," and when he came out of the water, Wei was "greatly moved." Four others who were with him, including a fellow Christian named Zhang Xisan, also went into the river to be baptized. When Wei Enbo laid his hands on Zhang Xisan, Wei felt suddenly weak, and saw that this was because Zhang Xisan also had a devil in him.³²

Wei and Zhang Xisan continued southward. They rested at the shop of a fellow Pentecostal, Zhao Deli. Zhao's father received them warmly, and Wei and Zhang Xisan laid their hands on the elderly Zhao's head and prayed for him. Wei saw that Zhang Xisan still had a devil and exorcised him twice. Since the devil was not leaving, Wei told Xisan to go home. Then he took to the road again.³³

I went out again by myself. God was with me. Amen. I prayed as I walked along, exorcising devils in the name of Jesus. It was extremely dangerous. I fought all along the way, relying on the almighty protection of the Lord to win victory, hallelujah, praise Jesus Christ, Amen. I saw that all people were being used by the devil. A few *li* [a couple kilometers] out of the city, I was very tired. I walked barefoot for a while.³⁴

Wei went into a teahouse. Surrounded by numerous onlookers, he began to write out a manifesto of articles of correction for the churches in China.³⁵

I earnestly prayed: "Please grant that the Lord's Holy Spirit will write this letter. Absolutely do not let even one bit of my own will come into it." The Holy Spirit poured into my body. My hand was not my own. I felt my body full of power, in my heart and in my hand, as if it were the Spirit writing the characters.³⁶

After writing for some time, he set out again into the empty plain, walking and praying.

(p.94)

As I was walking, suddenly the Spirit poured out upon me, and I spoke in tongues. I got in order my full armor and soldiers' clothes, and the Lord granted me great power. I did battle with the great devil in the air, and relying on the Lord's almighty great protection, I beat him Again I walked for a while, and then got tired. I saw a place with sand, and trees. I saw that there were many ants there. The Lord said, "The one who created ants is the Lord. The Lord will surely keep watch over them." I had authority in my body. When I got up, there was not one ant, but then suddenly came a devil. He came in the form of someone from my shop who wanted me to go home I didn't heed him, because he was a little devil being used by the big devil.³⁷

I went to a place and there was a false Christian. He came to me and said a few words, trying to exorcise me. Then I relied on the power of the Spirit of the Almighty Heavenly Father, and the merits of Jesus' cross, and the whole armor and precious sword of the spirit that the Lord had given me to overcome him.³⁸

Then in the middle of the night the Spirit said, "Arise." I prayed. Suddenly the power of the Spirit came down and filled my heart. The almighty Great Lord gave me the full armor. I prayed fervently for the direction of the Spirit in my future mission. Suddenly I saw in the heavens Jesus the Savior, and Moses and Elijah, appearing to me. I was happy, and pled with the Savior, "Lord Jesus, please command me to see your twelve apostles, and then my knowledge will be full." Suddenly I saw the twelve apostles. I carefully counted and counted. All twelve apostles were there.³⁹

This first (earliest) account of Wei's is intriguingly full of details both miraculous and mundane. When Wei left the house, led by the Holy Spirit, he was also fleeing the wrath of his wife. When the heavens opened to reveal Jesus's apostles, Wei carefully did a headcount. When Wei waded into the water, a number of others also entered the water for the same purpose. One friend, Zhang Zhongsan, quarreled with Wei over the proper form of the ritual and left in a huff. The devils in this story were not encountered in the spirit realm, but in the form of familiar friends, coreligionists, and employees, to be exorcised at the drop of a hat.

Later accounts of Wei's vision were sparser in naming their participants. The version of the story at the beginning of the chapter included a scene that focused on an intimate interaction as God's emissary (or perhaps actually God) clothed and armed Wei. When the time came to use the sword to kill devils in this third account, Wei was depicted as facing the devils alone, in the spiritual world. In later retellings, the miracles within the narratives were more concentrated and **(p.95)** coherent in terms of their symbolic import. In the first story, by contrast, flashes of divine power were much more sporadic. One moment, Liu Ai was angry; the next, she was filled with the Spirit. One moment Wei and his friend shared the experience of the Holy Spirit; the next, he and his friend were trying to exorcise devils from each other. One significant detail in the third account that does not exist in the earliest account is Wei's claim to have seen Jesus upon emerging from the water.

Later accounts more explicitly linked miraculous events to the doctrines and practices of the new church. For example, the earliest version of the story in Wei's diary did not mention the facedown posture of Wei's baptism, but later accounts did. It is also important to note how Wei's spiritual mettle was emphasized in subsequent retellings. In the later account, instead of being out with a group of like-minded church friends and arguing noisily about how to be baptized, Wei had a private encounter with God in which he was personally attended by either God or God's messenger. He felt the hands or the force of God on his body. The third account explicitly said that the armor gave him great authority (the earlier versions did not mention authority) and special spiritual abilities (such as the girdle of truth that prevented him from ever telling a lie again). In other words, the telling and retelling of Wei Enbo's story transmuted it from a rambling story about a string of personal religious experiences to a purposeful narrative about being called, consecrated, and specially equipped for a divine mission.⁴⁰

Huangcun Revival

Wei's thirty-nine-day fast created a public spectacle and an instant religious revival. In the first couple of days, his preaching meetings were attended by a couple of dozen people.⁴¹ Eventually he preached to large crowds.⁴² People came to Huangcun to hear him preach and to be baptized facedown. Others from rival churches came to confront him and challenge his teachings. Just as often, Wei and his close compatriots went into other churches to proclaim their message. This approach caused a physical altercation on one occasion, when Wei and his friend Zhao Deli entered a Methodist Episcopal 美以美 Church to pray. Two local church leaders, Wang Zhaoke 王兆科 and Liu Jiyong 劉繼永, angrily called on four stout local fellows to expel Wei and Zhao by force. A large crowd gathered. Wei took the opportunity to proclaim his forgiveness of those who had beaten him and to explain his principles of correction. He led the crowd in prayer on the spot, whereupon the Holy Spirit descended, and many were moved to tears. A number of people followed Wei from this spot to the river to receive facedown baptism.⁴³ Wei's children Huiying 惠英 and Wenxiang 文祥 were also baptized in the early days of this revival.⁴⁴

(p.96) One Li Yongqing 李永慶 (also known as Li Jacob 李雅各) was one of the first to be baptized by Wei. At the time that Wei started his fast, Li Yongqing was a resident of Huangcun. He had been a Methodist for several years. When he heard Wei's claim to be undertaking a thirty-nine-day fast, he decided to verify this claim personally⁴⁵:

[I thought], “Maybe if he’s not eating during the day, then he’s eating at night!” So I began to live with him in the same room, watching him day and night, and in thirty-nine days, he really didn’t eat a single thing, Aiya! During the thirty-nine days and nights, he was praying night and day, singing songs, writing letters, writing books, preaching, walking six or seven *li* out to the Tuanhe River 團河, baptizing people. He had tremendous energy With my own eyes I have seen the miracles the true God has worked through Wei, following us wherever we go.⁴⁶

Convinced by Wei’s miraculous fast, Li Yongqing became an early leader within the True Jesus Church.

The early church meetings in Huangcun were revivalistic and evangelistic in style. Wei drew on his extensive experience as a lay leader to hold emotionally charged meetings in which people were filled with the Holy Spirit, whose presence could be identified through glossolalia and weeping. Following these meetings were often Spirit-filled baptismal rites in which people came out of the water “extremely happy, praising Jesus.”⁴⁷

These large revival-style meetings were not a unique form of Christian worship in China at the time. Yet the levels of energy and emotion were higher than what was usually the case at everyday Christian gatherings, and accounts of physical healing abounded.⁴⁸ Wei’s account of one of these early True Jesus Church meetings recorded healing, dancing, and singing:

The audience was greatly moved. All knelt and prayed. The Holy Spirit poured out in abundance, filling each person’s heart. With one heart and mind all raised their voices in prayers and petitions All were extremely joyful and happy, and praised the Lord. Li Mark reported all the miracles that he had experienced, the healings of sickness that had been accomplished through believers’ relying on God’s great power. The congregation was greatly moved. Zhang Zhirui raised two or three people from the dead, and performed many other miracles The Holy Spirit poured out in abundance. We were all as though in the form of angels, all dancing hand in hand, very happy, singing Spirit-songs, praising the Lord with one voice.⁴⁹

(p.97) Clearly, healing miracles played a central role in early worship meetings led by Wei. Demonstrations of physical efficacy strengthened Wei's doctrinal claims. The preceding description of the worship meeting lists the healing miracles, including Zhang Zhirui's claimed feat of raising the dead, almost with nonchalance. Among the numerous miracles that Wei was said to have personally worked are instances of healing people of tuberculosis, deafness, blindness, possession by devils, and dumbness.⁵⁰ Whether these miracles actually occurred, it is significant that miraculous accounts dominated the discourse.

Given the importance placed on efficacy (靈 *ling*, the ability of divine beings to respond effectively to human petitions) in the native Chinese religious environment dominated by Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism, Chinese Protestants (missionaries and converts) had long engaged in the project of demonstrating that their God, the "one true God," had power to answer prayers. To many converts, Wei's miraculous feat of a thirty-nine-day fast and the charismatic energy felt in the revival corroborated his claims to have been divinely commissioned. A group of believers began to form that promulgated Wei's teachings and sought to replicate his sacred experiences.

As before, the network of Wei's religious activities was intertwined with that of his business activities.⁵¹ Many of the earliest members of the True Jesus Church were Wei's business associates. For most of his thirty-nine-day fast in Huangcun, Wei stayed at the home of another fellow Christian merchant, Ren Yikui 任義奎. Three large rooms above Ren Yikui's shop eventually became a church meeting place.⁵² Wei records that he baptized Dong Hongzao 董鴻早, another apprentice, when Dong accompanied Liu Ai and Wei's daughter Huiying on a visit to Huangcun.⁵³ Zhang Zhongsan, who had traveled to the river on the day of Wei's baptism, was a clothes merchant who had a shop in Nanyuan and who also introduced his apprentices to Wei's message.⁵⁴ The town of Nanyuan was the location of the second True Jesus Church meeting place, a rented space above the medicine shop of Jia Runqi 賈潤齊, a local practitioner of Chinese medicine and fellow Christian. Jia Runqi had heard about Wei's fast from Li Wenhua 李文華, a recent convert. Jia came with his apprentice, Li Yufang 李玉芳, to see Wei in Huangcun. Jia Runqi and Li Yufang were eventually baptized. It was at this baptismal event that Wei instituted the rite of footwashing.⁵⁵

The third True Jesus Church to be established was a room above En Xin Yong, Wei's silk shop in Beijing. Initially only a paper sign by the door of the shop titled "Saints' Prayer Room" set En Xin Yong apart as a place of worship as well as commerce. But eventually Wei and an associate, Wang Peter, set out to make a large banner. The banner was supposed to read "Jesus' True Church" 耶穌真教會, but when Wang miswrote the first character as "True" 真, Wei declared that Wang **(p.98)** had been directed by Jesus, and the "True Jesus Church" 真耶穌教會 banner was hung outside the shop.⁵⁶

Wei's network of other Christian merchants and their employees was a key conduit for the spread of the early True Jesus Church. Fellow merchants formed the core of early supporters. Early members of the True Jesus Church used their networks of kinship and acquaintanceship to spread the word from person to person. The preexisting Christianity and relatively comfortable economic positions of many of the early converts suggests that conversion to the True Jesus Church was more complex than an assortment of poor people indiscriminately seeking an efficacious deity or free medical care. Loyalty to the True Jesus Church spread as a result of interpersonal trust and the perceived authenticity of Wei's mandate of doctrinal "correction" from Jesus.

National Expansion

In keeping with the Chinese Protestant community's strong print culture, some of Wei's first activities involved publishing and distributing. The church's first printed publication, "Six Covenants and Five Ordinances of Correction," was based on the document Wei had written under the influence of the Holy Spirit in the teahouse south of Beijing.⁵⁷ The first printing run was distributed in the early days of Wei's fast to thirty-three local Christian churches and individual Christians who promised to forward it to others. These local churches included the Wesleyan Church, the Presbyterian Church, and "the men and women of the London Missionary Society, in China and abroad."⁵⁸ Upon returning to Beijing following the conclusion of his fast, Wei set about trying to find funding to print 5,000 copies of the eleven "Covenants and Ordinances," shopping around at different lithographers' establishments to find the best price.⁵⁹

Early in 1919, Wei and his associates began to publish the church's first newspaper, *Global Church Correction* 萬國更正教報 and mass-mailed it out to Protestant churches around the country. The first issue was written as a revealed text. When Wei encountered writers' block, he fasted and prayed to understand what to write next.⁶⁰ This revelation did not occur in a sacred vacuum, but within the context of Wei's ongoing financial entanglements. According to a church historical record, Wei drafted the content for the first issue of *Global Church Correction* at the house of a former merchant named Liu Xudong 劉旭東. In Wei's merchant days in Beijing, he had been Liu's guarantor for a loan of over 6,000 yuan. Instead of repaying his creditor, Liu absconded to a rural village, bought land, and became a rich landlord. The original creditor sued Wei for the amount of the loan. This may have been the purpose to which Wei put 2,000 (p.99) yuan Bernt Berntsen had invested previously in Wei's cloth shop business (much to Berntsen's frustration). To bring Liu to account, Wei brought a huge group of True Jesus Church preachers to Liu's large house in the countryside. They barged in and turned Liu's front room into their base of operations. During the day, Wei preached, and at night, he wrote articles for *Global Church Correction*.⁶¹

Like other Pentecostal newsletters of its time, *Global Church Correction* contained sermons, articles, and testimonies that evangelized to outsiders while reaffirming to insiders the church's efficacy and reporting news related to its organization and growth. The first issue called for readers to write in with miraculous stories that would confirm the efficacy of Wei's new doctrines, including "visions you have seen, God's voice that you have heard, times in which you have relied on the Lord and received protection, and all kinds of miraculous methods 妙法."⁶²

In addition to this periodical, Wei and other church members in various areas produced newsletters, leaflets, and other publications explaining how Chinese Christianity had to be "corrected." In a signature combination of religious and secular marketing, Wei prepared a large coupon that announced a massive clearance sale at En Xin Yong and also told the story of his visions and miracle-working. The coupon was titled "Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop Due to Miraculous Occurrences" and promised that "the bearer of this coupon is eligible for an extremely deep discount." The bulk of the printed text on the coupon detailed Wei's thirty-nine-day fast, visions of Jesus, and various locally performed healing miracles.⁶³ All of these messages were distributed in person or sent through the mail to other Chinese churches, taking advantage of the new modern postal system. Once made permanent through paper and ink, Wei's visions and healing miracles traveled easily—in mailbags and by hand, with bargain shoppers and Christian seekers alike.

Many who had not been eyewitnesses to Wei's visions but had read these accounts were convinced that Wei had truly received God's mandate. The pages of *Global Church Correction* contained numerous letters from members of Presbyterian, Baptist, Church of Christ in China, Seventh-day Adventist, and other congregations that had first heard about the church's teachings through rumors and postal mailings.⁶⁴ "I received a copy of *Global Church Correction*," wrote one reader. "In this I read personal testimony that Wei Paul had fasted for thirty-nine days and nights and that, in the Lord's name, he had suffered beating at the hands of foreign pastors who used their influence to entangle and persecute the true way."⁶⁵ "Now that I have heard that Wei is led by the Spirit to correct the problems in each church, my heart has been thanking Jesus," wrote another. "I pray that you will send me several copies of the pamphlet of the things to be corrected, and also other literature . . ."⁶⁶

(p.100) One early convert, Fang Tiaochen 方條塵, described his participation in his old church as lukewarm and formalistic—a matter of mechanically going along with what others were doing, reciting the Lord’s Prayer without any heart. He accused establishment churches of being just as bad as idol-worshippers for their empty worship and just as bad as Buddhist monks for engaging in buying and selling. They were like the Pharisees in the Bible, Fang reflected. He wrote, “I spent days praying earnestly to the true God for direction. I said, ‘I see that there are many churches, but they are all the churches of people, not of God’ Elder Wei Paul is chosen by God. He is the prophet that our brothers testified would come.”⁶⁷ Clearly, many new converts were motivated by a desire to purify their Christian practice.

Often leaders of Christian congregations, having received a True Jesus Church publication in the mail, wrote to the publishers in Beijing requesting that a preacher be sent to them to explain the new teachings. In some cases they traveled to Beijing to investigate the new teaching themselves, as did church leaders from Hunan.⁶⁸ Many from Berntsen’s Pentecostal Apostolic Faith Church network transferred their allegiance to Wei’s new church, including Zhang Lingsheng 張靈生 (1863–?) and Zhang Barnabas 張巴拿巴 (1882–1961), two influential lay leaders of Apostolic Faith Church congregations in Weixian 濰縣, Shandong.⁶⁹ Evangelists fanned out across China and eventually the Chinese diaspora overseas, establishing True Jesus Churches.⁷⁰ In multiple instances, congregations converted en masse when preachers converted and brought their entire flock with them. In its earliest years, the church spread rapidly throughout the northern areas of China such as the city of Tianjin 天津 and the provinces of Zhili 直隸, Shandong 山東, Shanxi 山西, and parts of Manchuria. They also established a foothold in the rich central province of Jiangsu 江蘇.

Enthusiastic conversion was not the only response to Wei’s religious activities. The fledgling Republican government, like the Qing dynasty before it and the Communist regime after it, aspired to maintain tight control over religion. Although the government’s ability to actually enforce regulations varied, Wei and other leaders had to formally register the church with local officials.⁷¹ Beyond this administrative contact, Wei encountered officers of the law, including judges and policemen, on numerous other occasions. In 1918, Wei caused a stir on the streets of Beijing with his coupon, “Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop Due to Miraculous Occurrences” (see street scene in the former Manchu city, Figure 3.2).⁷²

A local police inspector arrested and interrogated him. Hearing Wei claim to have healed a mute former postal worker, Sun Zizhong 孫子鐘, the inspector set out to get to the bottom of the matter. He went to Sun's neighborhood and interviewed several people, who confirmed that Sun had been mute for several **(p.101)** years after a bout with illness but had been healed several months ago by Wei. Unfortunately, Sun himself was nowhere to be found, because he had become a Christian and gone off to live in a church, so the inspector's investigation was inconclusive. Wei's wife, Liu Ai, was summoned to the police station to collect her husband. She signed a statement promising that she would destroy all of the unprinted tracts and the printing plates used to make them.⁷³



Figure 3.2 Rickshaws, pedestrians, laborers, uniformed officers, and camel trains on the streets of the former Manchu city in Beijing, circa 1915.

Credit: Historical Photographs of China, University of Bristol

Liu Ai was another person who regarded Wei's activities with deep skepticism, at least initially. Also known as Wei Maria 魏馬利亞, Liu Ai clearly had a love-hate relationship with Wei's religious activities, and probably with Wei himself. Various scenes from *The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit* depict her vacillating between obstruction and support. After Wei gave up his career as a merchant, Liu Ai ran the silk shop. Burdened with Wei's many debts, the business did not prosper as it had in the past.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, Liu Ai controlled the purse strings. Scenes from early church history in Huangcun in the summer of 1917 (p.102) depict groups of worshippers, including Wei, waiting and praying that Liu would turn up, bringing needed money from Beijing.⁷⁵ Later (apparently later in the year, when the weather had begun to turn colder), Wei and five associates were in Beijing and held a prayer meeting in Liu's upstairs living quarters above En Xin Yong. They were happily praying under the influence of the Holy Spirit, one person experiencing tongues for the first time, when Liu's anger erupted. Even though it was late, she ejected them from En Xin Yong, forcing them to move to Wei's satellite shop, En Zhen Hua. Initially she refused to give them bedding but relented and tossed them a single cotton blanket as they filed out the door.⁷⁶ In another incident, Wei's diary recorded woefully, "We have not had anything to eat these past couple of days, because my wife Maria hasn't given us money." He and several followers slipped up to Liu's upstairs quarters and found some food, which they ate. When she came up and discovered them, she "used every kind of curse to malign us," Wei reported. He wrote that his response was to exorcise her and to "exhort her with many holy words."⁷⁷

As winter came on, Liu Ai appeared to adopt a more tolerant attitude toward Wei's religious activities. In November 1917, a police inspector reported that Liu led the shop assistants in prayer three times a day, and in a lawsuit-related deposition that same month, Liu introduced herself with the words, "My husband and I are members of an independent Christian church."⁷⁸ In 1918, as Berntsen's lawsuit against Wei progressed, Liu frequently mediated between the two men and worked to secure other guarantors for repayment of Berntsen's loan.⁷⁹ In 1918, one of Wei's diary entries describes Liu at a True Jesus Church meeting, preaching to a large group of women.⁸⁰ Later, in 1920, after Wei's death, Liu was recognized as one of the main heads of the church and addressed in church publications as "Bishopess," or as "the most capable Lady Saint and Bishopess Ye Maria Ai, with whom the Lord abides in the upstairs quarters of the True Jesus Church headquarters in East Chashi Hutong outside Chongwen gate."⁸¹

In the winter of 1917–1918, Wei returned to his hometown of Wufang. For this trip, Liu was apparently in a good mood, giving Wei warm winter clothes and ample money to spend.⁸² Wei visited his first wife, Mrs. Wei (née Li), mother of his teenage son Wenxiang (later also known as Wei Yisa 以撒, “Isaac”), whom Wei sometimes took on preaching trips.⁸³ It was apparently a happy reunion. Wei reported that Mrs. Wei tried to seduce him, but that he resisted because he was now holy.⁸⁴ Mrs. Wei received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and later adopted the sacred name “Renewed by the Spirit” 靈更.⁸⁵ Wei’s daughter, Huiying, was some years younger than Wenxiang and did not appear to accompany Wei as frequently on his travels.

By the end of 1919 the church had over sixty congregations across China and a nascent organizational structure headed by two bishops. Wei was the bishop of **(p.103)** Zhili 直隸 Province. Zhang Lingsheng was the bishop of Shandong Province. Below the bishops there were twenty-seven elders and twenty-two deacons and deaconesses.⁸⁶

Through their practices of facedown baptism, tongues-speaking, healing, and exorcism, numerous individuals re-created Wei’s original encounter with the divine and extended its spiritual power to themselves and their own ongoing practice. Within the new church organization, leaders and lay members reached a consensus (both informally, through shared daily practice, and formally, through church governance and publishing) regarding how efficacious practices could lead to salvation through Jesus Christ.⁸⁷

As his confidence in his divine gifts strengthened, Wei ventured into the well-trodden realm of apocalyptic prophecy. He did this with full knowledge that up until the present, no one who had predicted the end of the world had been correct. Yet late in 1917, Wei declared that Jesus would return within four to five years. He wrote:

I was moved by the Spirit, which clearly said to me: “Within five years, but not before four years, the Last Day is coming, when the Lord Jesus will come to judge the world, and when fire shall burn all people and all things on the earth.” After a while I ventured earnestly, “Lord, is this so?” The Lord said, “It is certain.” I asked the Lord, “Why did Jesus Christ say that even the angels in heaven and the Son did not know when the Last Day would come?” God said to me, “The Father knows. This is the Father speaking within you.” Hearing this, I began to cry bitterly. “I do not dare to tell this to others,” I said, “because I am afraid of being wrong.” The Spirit moved powerfully in my heart. “It is not wrong. It is not wrong,” the Spirit said.⁸⁸

Although he was acutely aware of the liabilities of making such a prediction, Wei was in the end convinced that the Second Coming was imminent. He and his associates preached this message to large crowds. The community that had begun with his first vision prepared for the transformations of the Last Day.

Chinese Nationalism and the World of Nations

In the heyday of the imperial government before the decline of the Qing, the start-up of a religious movement that publicly performed healings and proclaimed the imminent end of the world would have attracted the attention of the local officials who would have worked swiftly to curb it as just another troublesome “heterodox religion” 邪教. There was a long tradition of **(p.104)** millenarian religious movements in Chinese history. Such groups often drew the suspicion of the state, which sought a monopoly on both charismatic ideas and large-scale organization.⁸⁹ In the past, the leader of one such movement called the Red Turbans, a Buddhist group, who had preached an imminent apocalypse and the coming of the Buddha Maitreya, had actually toppled the Yuan dynasty and founded the Ming dynasty.⁹⁰ The memory of the Taiping Rebellion, too, was still bright.

Luckily for the True Jesus Church, although the Republican government did aspire to nip potentially destabilizing religious movements in the bud, it lacked the resources to do so. 1917 was a particularly tumultuous year for the beleaguered Republican government. In this single year, noted T. Howard Smith of the London Missionary Society, the residents of North China had witnessed “[political strife] bringing forth the following fruits: Open Rebellion, Temporary Restoration of a Monarchy, Return to a Republic, Change of President and Constant Changes of Cabinet, Separation of North and South, civil wars and vain efforts at reconciliation.”⁹¹

In this state of instability, the Republican government in Beijing neglected not only the surveillance and control of religious organizations, but also the vital maintenance of China’s infrastructure, including the system of dikes, locks, and reservoirs in China. For centuries, these large-scale hydraulic-engineering projects had been symbols of the government’s basic duty to shield the people—to the extent possible—from the perennial threat of floods. Corruption in government meant that this maintenance was left undone, with dire consequences. Between the summer and fall of 1917, “the most disastrous floods in a generation” struck Zhili Province, affecting five to six million victims in 103 counties, “sweeping away the homes of hundreds of thousands of people, destroying the crops and fuel of great areas and leaving the countryside a vast expanse of waters,” according to Smith’s annual report from Tongxian 通縣 just south of Beijing city.⁹² Missionaries had to visit their outstations by boat. Frances Stuckey, a London Missionary Society woman missionary in Beijing, observed:

Many were living on the roofs of their houses, and practically everything they possessed was destroyed. As the winter came on the cold added to their suffering Some places are covered to a depth of 10 ft. with sandy silt, and are thereby rendered useless for agricultural purposes.⁹³

Civil war conditions meant that government institutions were not functional enough to provide significant levels of humanitarian aid. “The year closes darkly for China,” wrote Samuel Evans Meech at the end of 1917 from his mission station in Xiaozhang 肖張 town, farther to the south:⁹⁴

(p.105)

The strife between North and South brings loss and misery wherever it manifests itself, and reveals the utter selfishness and corruption of the men who waste money in maintaining large armies simply for their own aggrandizement, regardless of the sorrows of the people

It is said that when the milder weather comes work will be undertaken for the renovation of the riverbanks, and the control of the rivers, but whether the government funds will be forthcoming, or what amount will survive the handling of the Committee of Chinese officials, remains to be seen. Meanwhile the suffering of the people is extreme.⁹⁵

“Poor China!” exclaimed Frances Stuckey in Beijing in early 1918, noting that President Feng Guozhang 馮國璋 (1859–1919), a former general, had tried to resign several times, but so far was still in office. “She seems to have no strong men capable of taking the helm and guiding the ship of state into calm waters. No one can foresee the end of her troubles.”⁹⁶

Wei Enbo, of course, did foresee the end of all troubles. Along with the turbulence in government, the flood that struck North China was to him a sign of the prophesied calamities of the Last Day:

A flood in Zhuozhou 涿州 has covered forty villages, an entire battalion of soldiers, and countless other villages; tens of thousands are dead. The flood in Wen’an County 文安縣 was 180 *li* [72 kilometers] long and 140 *li* [56 kilometers] wide. Over a hundred villages have been covered. Every county and every province has disasters.

Each country is at war, and the people killed number in the tens of millions. There are earthquakes. All the signs of the Last Day are coming to pass.⁹⁷

Wei's meditation on the manmade calamity of war along with natural disasters acknowledged the fact that the turmoil in China was occurring at the same time other nations were caught up in the cataclysm of the Great War (World War I). For decades, reform-minded Chinese had held up Western nations such as Great Britain, France, Germany, and United States as models of progress and enlightened civilization. Western systems of government had been perceived as according greater dignity to citizens and enhancing the collective strength of the nation. Western cultural developments such as an ethos of continuous progress in science and technology were hailed as keys to those countries' global dominance.

Now, however, the unprecedented scale of death and destruction that spewed from the mouths of machine guns and spurted from canisters of chlorine gas caused many Chinese—who in large cities could monitor the daily and even **(p. 106)** hourly progress of the fighting through morning and evening newspapers—to revise their opinions of European civilization and the Christian ethos that it claimed. At the beginning of the war in 1914, Samuel Meech noted that many Chinese came to enquire simply about this question. "It is a problem to many of the Chinese how Christian nations who believe in the reign of love can be at war with one another," he observed.⁹⁸

Wei in 1919 couched the issue in much stronger terms. In another early message titled "Cry of the Eastern Angel" in an early issue of *Global Church Correction*, he condemned the "blood war," saying that the Western nations are "without morals."⁹⁹ This war, argued Wei, was further evidence that the True Jesus Church was Christ's one true church. The bloodshed "proved that they had wrongly transmitted the way of the gospel." In Wei's eyes, "The war started with a small thing, which led to envy, which led to death." The Western nations had produced "the fruits of death."¹⁰⁰

Wei's emphasis on "fruits" was a reference to Christ's instructions on how to recognize his true followers from among the many false Christians who call him Lord: "by your fruits ye shall know them."¹⁰¹ By this neat reference, the article drew on the Bible to powerfully condemn the supposedly "Christian" nations of the West. In another essay written around the same time titled "Warning," Wei criticized Europeans as "Christians in name but not in deed." He accused "the kings, presidents, and officials of Europe and America" of "loving the world's glory and riches," in stark contrast to Christ's apostles and the early saints. "Fighting for power, envying, being prideful, grasping, killing men and spilling blood, with not a bit of charity, blind to the existence of others—are these the actions of Christians?" he demanded.¹⁰²

Europe was far away, but advances in transportation and communication had made it possible for many people in China to have a degree of familiarity with European culture and to follow the war closely as it unfolded. Every week in *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer*, there were several newswires and longer stories discussing military and diplomatic maneuvers. Commercial newspapers sold war headlines daily. The Republican government was actually supporting the side of the Allies by dispatching Chinese laborers to the major fronts. By early 1919, these Chinese war laborers numbered around 200,000.¹⁰³ Workers' five-year contracts provided an average worker a daily wage of five francs (approximately 0.9 yuan) for a ten-hour-maximum day, with half this wage deducted for board, lodging, and sickness, leaving a total of 2.50 francs (approximately 0.5 yuan) per day, which was more than twice a laborer's daily rate in China.¹⁰⁴ In France, the laborers were assigned to work connected with railroads, mines, factories, fields, ordnance and tank workshops, docks, and the exhumation and reburial of the war dead.¹⁰⁵

(p.107) The majority (but not all) of the workers were illiterate. They were accompanied by 400 Chinese students who worked as interpreters and also by numerous Christian missionaries representing organizations from around China, including the London Missionary Society North China Mission's Dr. Edward J. Stuckey, Frances Stuckey's husband. Although Wei wanted nothing to do with the war, Chinese Protestant organizations' strong ties to Great Britain and the United States led to widespread mobilization in support of the Allied effort. After 1916, the International YMCA and a staff of over 150 Chinese and foreign secretaries oversaw various welfare and educational programs for the workers, including savings clubs, reading clubs, and "self-government" clubs. This work was supported by funds of 1,416,000 yuan raised in China by the United War Work Campaign.¹⁰⁶

These funds to support Chinese laborers in the Allied cause had come not only from the Republican government, but also from ordinary Chinese citizens. These citizens hoped China's contribution to the war effort and the positive impressions made by the Chinese workers' good behavior would win increased international respect for China. After the defeat of Germany, they hoped, German concessions in Shandong were bound to be returned to Chinese sovereignty. Perhaps Britain and France would also walk back from their aggressive imperialistic postures now that China was an ally. Thousands of students and workers whose sense of Chinese identity and national consciousness had been heightened by their experience as a foreign-minority group in France eagerly expected a turning point in the unbalanced relationship between China and her Western allies.

At the Paris Peace Conference that concluded the war in 1919, these dreams for strengthened Chinese sovereignty came crashing down. Although the American president, Woodrow Wilson—himself raised in a family with a long history of missionary service and connected through family ties with Samuel Isett Woodbridge, English-language editor of *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer*—initially supported the return of the German concessions to China, it turned out that Britain, France, and Italy had signed secret treaties with Japan in 1917. They had promised to support Japan’s claims to Germany’s Shandong concessions if Japan joined the Allied side.¹⁰⁷ Around the same time in January 1919 it was also revealed that the Republican government had accepted a secret loan from Japan and mortgaged two railroad lines in Shandong to repay it. Hence, on April 30, 1919, Woodrow Wilson, Prime Minister of Britain Lloyd George, and Prime Minister of France Georges Clemenceau resolved to transfer to Japan all of Germany’s interests in Shandong without any mention of a previous Japanese promise of “the eventual restoration of the same to China.”¹⁰⁸

On May 1, 1919, the Chinese diplomats in Paris sent back reports that the British, French, and Italian agreement with Japan and the Republican **(p.108)** government’s mortgaging the two Shandong railroads to the Japanese were responsible for their failure to secure the return of the German concessions. This report was published in the Beijing English-language daily, *China Press*, on May 1 and spread to the public by other newspapers and foreign teachers in Beijing on May 3. Feelings ran high among student groups, which began to organize a mass demonstration. At one of these meetings, a student of the law school of Peking University cut open his finger and wrote “Return Our Qingdao” [a key city in Shandong] on the wall while his fellow students watched in silence.¹⁰⁹

On May 4, 1919, some 3,000 students from the universities and colleges in Beijing carrying signs gathered outside Tiananmen 天安門, the front gate of the former imperial palace and the traditional seat of Chinese power. After making speeches, they then marched toward Beijing’s diplomatic quarter and then, after being moved along by police, to the house of Cao Rulin 曹汝霖 (a Republican government official judged to be one of the “traitors” who had sold China out to Japan). They smashed it up and set it on fire. Within weeks, news of these events in Beijing triggered sympathetic demonstrations, strikes, and boycotts around China.¹¹⁰ An entire generation was mobilized by the events of May 4, giving rise to a “May Fourth Movement” in which Chinese intellectuals awakened to nationalism sought to transform China into a strong nation through new ideas, new systems, and new culture.

Wei Enbo took a dim view of nationalism because it amounted to a form of idolatry, a distraction from the worship of the one true God. On July 27, 1919, just about two months after May Fourth, the second issue of *Global Church Correction* included an article with the headline, “Church Members Who Promote Patriotism Are Servants of the Devil.”¹¹¹ This was in stark contrast to the Protestant establishment’s *Chinese Christian Intelligencer*, which throughout 1919 included reports on the Paris negotiations with breaking-news reports of “Germany and Japan’s Secret Pact.” In July 1919 the *Intelligencer* was calling for Chinese Protestants to support antforeign boycotts in July 1919. “The problem of Qingdao has stirred up citizens’ patriotism and calls for the boycotting of foreign products,” the *Intelligencer* explained. “Promote Chinese goods!”¹¹²

In contrast to the mainline Sino-foreign Protestant establishment, Wei excoriated such calls for patriotic action as the words of “crazy foolish enthusiastic false Christians” who had become “the sons and daughters of the devil”:

Do they not think of how the Lord Jesus said that the king of this world shall come? We can clearly see that the countries of the world all belong to the devil, their king Why have the nations of Europe and America gone to war with each other? It is because the leaders of each church have frequently sung the praises of patriotism and have been led **(p.109)** astray by the devil. And because of this, they kill people. The bloodshed, the deaths . . . the millions dead in Europe’s bloody war are all due to this sin of patriotism.¹¹³

Wei’s denunciation of patriotism was a clear expression of the church’s sectarian position—a position in tension with the authority, structures, and trends of secular society. Wei’s condemnation of European nations had no China-promoting corollary. In contrast to most of the Western mission denominations, whose religious and secular projects were often framed in terms of building a modern Chinese nation and even fighting on the Western Front, the early True Jesus Church had little interest in building Chinese society and scorned secular solutions to the world’s problems.¹¹⁴ In the early years of the church this was partly because of Wei’s prediction that Chinese society and all world civilization was coming to an end in four or five years. But it was also because of the extent to which church members took their cue from Wei’s revelatory critiques, framing the parameters of their religious concern around restoring Christ’s original church and a timeless Christian authenticity transcending nationality.

Authentic Christianity

Despite the native popular religion and real socioeconomic and political deprivation that were part of the True Jesus Church's founding milieu, a key factor in the success of the True Jesus Church was the theological and moral appeal of its message, communicated with fluency and with astute attention to the subtle nuances of the Chinese language. A similar pattern of charismatic Christian revival leading to the establishment of new churches was also laid down in Africa. Lamin Sanneh notes that in Nigeria and other parts of Africa including South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, and Uganda, spontaneous Christian revival movements "sought more organized channels, and charismatic churches were established and regulated. These churches combined administrative independence from missionary churches with internal liturgical adaptation." Native African churches, Sanneh argues, built a community of committed followers on the foundation of these shared charismatic practices.¹¹⁵

Hence the context for the True Jesus Church's charisma is not only the native Chinese religious environment and social turmoil but also the global translatability of Christianity. The True Jesus Church's fundamental doctrines and practices hewed very closely to those of Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church and another Pentecostal movement in Hong Kong.¹¹⁶ These Chinese Pentecostal movements in turn grew directly out of North American Pentecostal movements. These North American Pentecostals, whose country was not torn by civil war, **(p.110)** devastated by famine, and trampled by imperialists, were just as sectarian, restorationist, and millenarian as the members of the True Jesus Church. After all, Bernt Berntsen had once advised readers of *Bridegroom's Messenger* in the United States and especially around Atlanta, Georgia, where the paper was published, that Jesus was coming so soon that funds usually put into savings might as well be sent to China for mission work.¹¹⁷

Wei's ability to point out gaps between the Christianity of the foreign mission denominations and the Christianity of the Chinese text of the Bible held the key to the True Jesus Church's success. He succeeded in portraying the established denominations as formalistic, affluent organizations that had lost their charismatic spark and become burdened by Western cultural baggage. The third issue of *Global Church Correction* declared that Wei was "the second Martin Luther" who would "reform all the corrupted teachings" with his document, "Six Covenants and Five Ordinances," just as Luther had done with the "Ninety-Five Theses."¹¹⁸ In contrast to the wealthy, bureaucratized mission organizations, the True Jesus Church emphasized purity and simplicity, a return to the straightforward charismatic scripts of the New Testament, and the words of Jesus (all worship and rites were to be done "in Jesus's name").

This is why the simple, straightforward name of the church, *Zhen* [True] *Yesu* [Jesus] *Jiaohui* [Church] 真耶穌教會, was so subtly provocative in Chinese. Wei criticized the awkward, foreign flavor of the names of many Protestant denominations and suggested that these names reflected poorly on their Christianity. In the inaugural February 1919 issue of *Global Church Correction*, an article titled “Cancel All Churches’ Names” criticized the major mission denominations for using non-Christian names and engaging in non-Christian activities. For instance, the article argued, the Chinese name of the “Elders’ Church” (Presbyterian Church, 長老會, *Zhanglao hui*), was incorrect because a church ought to be Jesus’s church, not elders’ church. The “London Church” (London Missionary Society, 倫敦教會, *Lundun hui*) was “clearly just glorifying a city in England.” The “Meiyimei Church” and “Weisili Chapel” (Methodist Episcopal Church, 美以美會, *Meiyimei hui* and Wesleyan Church, 維斯哩堂, *Weisili tang*, respectively) were “both just glorifying themselves [by use of loosely transliterated names with no obvious Christian linguistic content].” The “Immersion Baptism Church” (Baptist Church, 浸禮會, *Jinli hui*) should not focus on a single rite only.¹¹⁹

In a similar vein, the True Jesus Church condemned other denominations’ secular activities. The same February 1919 article’s criticism of the “Youth Church” (YMCA, 青年, *Qingnian hui*) departed from the issue of linguistic accuracy and said only that the Youth Church “should not build movie theaters and do business.” This made explicit the accusation underlying the article’s criticism of other (p.111) churches’ eclectic-sounding names, which was that their activities had become too secularized. Through frequent use, in many of the preceding long denominational church names, the two-character word for “church” (教會, *jiaohui*) to a single character (會, *hui*). *Hui* could mean not only “church” but also “association,” “club,” or “organization.” Hence denominational names that Western English speakers might immediately identify as Christian, such as “Methodist Episcopal,” did sound awkward (clearly a foreign transliteration and not distinctively Christian) in the Chinese “Meiyimei Association.” “True Jesus Church” (真耶穌教會) did indeed sound more like a Christian church.

At this time, the number and scale of secular projects run by foreign mission organizations in China were indeed increasing. For example, beginning in 1902, in the southern port city and longtime Christian stronghold of Fuzhou, the YMCA began to shift its focus from providing religious education for students at mission schools, which it had done for nearly twenty years, to forming a voluntary association open to Christians and non-Christians alike that was housed in attractive, modern facilities.¹²⁰ The Fuzhou YMCA soon became a center of civic and secular as well as religious activities such as lectures on responsible citizenship, part-time vocational night classes, a reading room stocked with “forty-seven of the leading English and Chinese periodicals,” a seven-year high school, team sports, and mass education campaigns on public hygiene.¹²¹

Not just in Fuzhou, but across China in the early 1900s, the education, medicine, publishing, and journalism ventures of Western mission churches became more sophisticated, complex, and professionalized. Deepening missionary involvement with progressive social causes such as famine relief, opium addiction, and even constitutional political reform expanded church institutional structures to include not only evangelists but also professionals and bureaucrats.¹²² Hence, Wei’s criticisms of the seemingly nonreligious names and increasingly nonreligious activities of Western mission churches, such as the YMCA with its movie theater business, may have seemed well founded to many.

Throughout the True Jesus Church’s early years from 1917 to 1919, Wei remained a colorful and controversial figure. When people approached him requesting healing, Wei and his fellow evangelists went to the home and convened an impromptu prayer meeting at the sick person’s bedside.¹²³ He and fellow True Jesus Church evangelists handed out pamphlets at the doorways of other Christian churches and sometimes interrupted their meetings, causing commotion as members of the congregation argued among themselves about whether Wei was right or wrong.¹²⁴ At times leaders of the mission churches called policemen to eject Wei from their premises.¹²⁵

Wei's relations with his former pastor and frustrated creditor Bernt Berntsen continued to be strained, because Wei had neither paid interest owed to Berntsen (p.112) nor returned the amount of Berntsen's original loan. Zhang Barnabas, an early True Jesus Church leader who later led a rival schismatic movement, later claimed that the reason Wei had traveled to the house of fellow church leader Zhang Lingsheng in rural Weixian, 濰縣 (now the modern city of Weifang 濰坊), Shandong in the winter of 1918 to draft content for the second issue of *Global Church Correction*, was to hide from Berntsen. "Berntsen was suing him to recover his loan. Wei was afraid of his influence, and was temporarily avoiding him," Zhang wrote, ten years after the fact. "So his coming to Shandong was in the name of missionary work, but was actually just a matter of avoiding debt repayment."¹²⁶ Zhang in 1929 had many reasons to want to discredit Wei, but it was true that Berntsen's legal actions against Wei were indeed unfolding in 1918. Despite these tensions, it seems that Wei and Berntsen still saw each other periodically. When Wei was in Beijing, the En Xin Yong shop-turned-meetinghouse was only a few minutes' walk from both the Apostolic Faith chapel on Xinglong Street and the London Missionary Society chapel at Ciqikou. Wei frequently mentioned Berntsen in his writings (if only to chide Berntsen for nagging about worldly things such as interest payments and to enumerate articles of "correction").¹²⁷

Another Organization, but Smaller

In the summer of 1918, as Wei and early members of the True Jesus Church were singing newly composed hymns in the rooms above the En Xin Yong cloth shop in the southern suburbs of Beijing, an obscure young man named Mao Zedong 毛澤東 (1893–1976) was starting his new job in the northwestern suburbs as an assistant librarian at Peking University.¹²⁸ Like Wei, Mao was a country bumpkin who had come a long way to the capital city in order to pursue better opportunities. Unlike Wei, Mao had received a rudimentary primary school education at the village school in Shaoshan 韶山, Hunan 湖南, learning to memorize, recite, and expound the Confucian classics. Mao had then gone on to Changsha 長沙, the provincial capital, for further study.

In June 1918, as Wei Enbo preached facedown baptism in Beijing, Mao Zedong was just a little older than Wei's son, Isaac, and was trying to decide what to do with his life. He had just graduated from a teacher training college but had no clear career plans. He and a group of friends in Changsha had recently set up a society to formally pursue a solution to China's weak and disordered situation at the hands of warlords and foreign powers: the New People's Study Society 新民學會.¹²⁹ Patriotic student organizations such as these were springing up all over China at this time, as part of a new associational life made possible after the demise of imperial institutions that had formerly kept tight control of independent civic organizations.¹³⁰ In the summer of 1918 one of Mao's former **(p.113)** teachers, Yang Changji 楊昌濟, who had recently taken up a post at Peking University, found Mao a job in Beijing as assistant to Li Dazhao 李大釗, Peking University's head librarian and a well-known public intellectual.

In late 1918, Li Dazhao started a Marxist study group, eventually joined by others such as Mao and Chen Duxiu, another Peking University scholar who edited the influential journal *New Youth* 新青年. They read prodigiously on the theories of Marx and Lenin and discussed the relevance of these theories for China. Their activities and publications were part of a larger ferment of ideas and “-isms” that arose in the mid-1910s called the New Culture Movement. Intellectuals sought to revitalize Chinese culture by breaking with traditional norms in scholarship, literature, morality, and gender relations. Their search for new ideologies, literature, and organizational models became even more urgent in the wake of the May Fourth Movement. Chen Duxiu and other prominent intellectuals excoriated Confucian philosophy and morality as well as Chinese popular religion as sources of China's weakness. A special Marxism-themed issue of *New Youth* in May 1919 reached a wide, influential readership across the country.

Amid this dramatic expansion of associational life and ideological pluralism, many of the zealous young intellectuals striving to “save China” learned significant lessons from Christianity. One young man who later joined the Chinese Communist Party was Yun Daiying 恽代英 (1895–1931), a native of the inland Yangtze River treaty port city of Wuhan. In August 1917, the year that Wei began to build the True Jesus Church in Beijing, Yun Daiying had been trying to found a movement of his own in Wuhan. He had previously cofounded a poetry club and a self-improvement society, but both of these had fizzled.¹³¹ Yun decided to attend a YMCA camp to learn from the Protestants’ organizational methods. Historian Shakhari Rahav notes that at the YMCA camp, Yun was immersed in a set of key practices that made a deep impression on him: “the format of lecturing, playing, walking, and conducting discussions together, all harnessed to a moral ethic and a vision of society.”¹³² It was the fusion of the usual leisure and self-improvement activities with the Christian “grand strategy and moral vision of the individual and society” that made the YMCA camp so effective. For Yun, who had a keen eye for organizational structures, the YMCA camp was “a transformative experience that catalyzed Yun’s attempts at constructing his own organizations, by supplying an example of an effective blend of personal morality, new opportunities for sociability, and a resulting community.”¹³³ Yun’s subsequent organizational work in the anarchist Mutual Aid Society and, by early 1922, the Chinese Communist Party, would build on inspiration Yun gleaned from this encounter with Christian organizational models.¹³⁴

Mao Zedong himself also gained organizational experience with the YMCA. In 1922, the year of Wei’s doomsday prediction, Mao participated in a “mass **(p. 114)** education campaign” sponsored by the YMCA in Changsha, provincial capital of Hunan. Mao and his Communist associates adapted some of the vocabulary in the 1,000-character primer so that students learned about peasants and workers as the producers of society’s riches and absorbed the history of the Russian Revolution.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, the structure of the primer, as well as the organizational framework within which the campaign occurred, came from the YMCA.¹³⁶

Although the Marxist ideas that brought both Yun Daiying and Mao Zedong into the fledgling Chinese Communist Party did not involve miraculous healing or speaking in tongues, they were in some ways very similar to the True Jesus Church’s Pentecostal project because they linked claims about ultimate reality and meaning with moral self-scrutiny and a collective ethos. Hence the organizational models supplied by Chinese Christianity were highly portable, traveling beyond the mainline establishment churches for which they had been developed. These organizational models and habits found new settings not only in the True Jesus Church, but even beyond Christianity itself.

One major difference between the Chinese Communist Party and the True Jesus Church in the early 1920s is that the party was tiny, and the church was huge. In 1921 the Chinese Communist Party had fifty-seven members from six different cities.¹³⁷ Its founding Congress in Shanghai in July 1921, which Mao attended, featured only thirteen Chinese delegates.¹³⁸ By 1922 the party's membership had grown to around 200.¹³⁹ By contrast, in 1922, the year Wei Enbo prophesied would see the end of the world, the True Jesus Church claimed around 10,000 members, with congregations in rural and urban areas of seven provinces (Zhili, Shandong, Shanxi, Jiangsu, Hubei 湖北, Hunan, and Henan 河南).¹⁴⁰ Establishment churches called it a "flourishing heresy" and engaged it in spiritual combat, such as in *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer's* April 1919 report of a "fast-off" (i.e., a contest to see who could fast the longest) between Zhang Barnabas and a local Presbyterian, Sun Fang 孫芳, in Shandong. (According to author Duan Rende 段仁德, whose intention was to warn fellow Protestants against the upstart new church, Zhang lost.¹⁴¹) However heretical, the True Jesus Church was indeed flourishing. Throughout the 1920s, members of the Protestant establishment continued to note the expansion of the True Jesus Church, often in the context of "sheep-stealing."¹⁴²

The Last Day

Wei never lived to see whether his prediction of the end of the world between 1921 and 1922 would come true. In the summer of 1919, Wei suffered a fatal relapse of tuberculosis.¹⁴³ Despite his untimely death, Wei's influence on the True Jesus (**p.115**) Church was significant. In the first three years of its the church's existence, Wei and his early colleagues established the fundamental doctrines and practices of the church that remain central today: baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidenced by glossolalia, facedown immersion baptism in Jesus's name, the Lord's Supper rite, footwashing as an essential ordinance, and the observance of a Saturday Sabbath.¹⁴⁴ Wei's energetic temperament, financial resourcefulness, business connections, and distinctive charismatic claims helped facilitate the rapid growth of the church within a few years into a large independent denomination with a national following when most independent Christian movements remained fragmented and local.

On September 10, 1919, Wei's last day, Bernt Berntsen went to Wei's home in Beijing. Berntsen parked his bicycle and approached Wei's bedside. "Sleep in peace," said Berntsen. "The interest you owe me, I no longer want." He quoted a verse from the Bible. "The Spirit directed me to come here today," he said. "Let us meet again in Heaven."¹⁴⁵ Wei's response reflected both stubbornness and warmth as he faced his former mentor, religious rival, and frustrated creditor for the last time:

“Elder Berntsen! Please step closer. If you are able to believe that Jesus gave me a face-down baptism and that he personally appeared and gave me commands, then you will indeed enter that holiest place,” said the Apostle Wei, earnestly looking at Berntsen.

Berntsen said, “I’ll have to wait until the Spirit makes it clear to me!” He had not sat down. He extended his hand and shook Wei’s. Then he left.¹⁴⁶

Despite Wei’s prediction, the world did not come to an end in 1921, nor in 1922. As a matter of fact, when in 1921 famine again struck North China, threatening the lives of nearly seventeen-million people, relief came in time. In this instance, the cause was drought. People resorted to numerous food substitutes. They gathered dried leaves and tore off tree bark. This was all chopped up finely and ground to a powder, like flour. Another famine recipe involved chaff mixed with boiled leaves.¹⁴⁷

Remarkably, a mass mobilization of organizations including not only Christian missions but also Buddhist charity groups and private individuals successfully coordinated grain relief efforts. In the end “only” 500,000 died, or around 3 percent of the affected population.¹⁴⁸ By 1922 the famine had ended, but the political situation was still chaotic. Civil war between regional strongmen sent bands of soldiers roving across the countryside, engaging in wanton violence, rape, and plunder. In one place two local London Missionary Society congregations, under **(p.116)** the leadership of native church members, put their collective resources to a new purpose, designating their chapels as places of refuge where up to 1,500 women and children could shelter.¹⁴⁹

In May 1922 the Chinese Christian community gathered together in Shanghai for its first-ever national conference of foreign and Chinese Protestants. For the first time at a major Christian gathering in China, Chinese outnumbered foreigners (564 Chinese delegates to 486 foreign delegates). By now there were 375,000 Chinese Protestants out of China’s total population of 400 million—about one in one thousand.¹⁵⁰ In some ways this conference was not only a testament to the growing maturity of the Chinese church but also a response to the May Fourth Movement of 1919. The new wave of nationalism unleashed in the wake of May Fourth had recently given rise to national anti-Christian movements that had excoriated Christianity as a foreign imperialist religion.¹⁵¹ Many Chinese delegates at the National Christian Conference urgently sought pathways to independence from foreign cultural and administrative control.¹⁵² In a way, this conference, dominated by Anglo-American mission organizations, represented the Protestant establishment’s first concerted effort to respond to the challenge of new native churches such as the True Jesus Church.¹⁵³

At this conference, London Missionary Society pastor Cheng Jingyi 誠靜怡 (1881–1939) was elected first general secretary of the newly established National Christian Council.¹⁵⁴ Educated at the London Missionary Society’s Anglo-Chinese Institute in Beijing and at the Bible Institute in Glasgow, Scotland, Cheng addressed the conference eloquently in English, calling for the “naturalization” of Christianity in China. He declared that Christianity was “a universal religion . . . capable of adapting itself to the needs of every land in every age.”¹⁵⁵ In contrast to the cosmopolitan Cheng Jingyi, the three True Jesus Church delegates in attendance at this conference had no training in Western languages. But they were prepared to speak boldly to the assembled congregation to declare points of correction.

These delegates were Wei Enbo’s son Wei Isaac, Zhang Barnabas, and Gao Daling 高大齡.¹⁵⁶ Gao was a respected elder scholar from Shanxi province who had passed the highest level of the civil service examination as a young man. He eventually converted to Christianity and became an independent church pastor. Upon hearing of Wei’s revival, Gao had traveled to Beijing to experience it for himself and subsequently joined the True Jesus Church.¹⁵⁷ Gao’s literary skill and experience as a preacher apparently equipped him well to speak before such a large audience. According to one church account, Gao and his colleagues “caused a great stir among the delegates,” to the point where they were nearly ejected from the conference. They “bore beautiful testimony before 1,819 delegates and started a great revolution,” encountering sympathy among some Chinese **(p.117)** delegates but annoying others who saw their confrontational style as contrary to the conference’s spirit of unity.¹⁵⁸

Independently of the debates over indigenization in formal meetings, Christian communities around China were expanding organically. The True Jesus Church with its networks of male and female native evangelists, elders, deacons, and deaconesses testified to the self-sustainability of the Chinese Christian project. Even within churches originally established by foreign-mission-controlled denominations, small groups of Christians began to spread like strawberry runners around North China.¹⁵⁹ “The appearance of these new little groups of Christians in these sections is almost bewildering,” reported W. T. Rowlands of the London Missionary Society, “and it is really difficult, unless one is constantly itinerating, to be quite up to date on the latest developments.”¹⁶⁰ Just a couple of years later, the True Jesus Church began to put down roots in South China. London Missionary Society missionary L. Gordon Phillips in Amoy [Xiamen] wrote home to complain that a “so-called ‘True Jesus Church’ has been started by some visitors from Foochow [Fuzhou], and several members of the church have been led astray.”¹⁶¹

This lament over lost sheep testifies to foreign missionaries' ambivalence about relinquishing control over local churches. By the early 1920s, after decades of effort, foreign Protestant missionaries had succeeded in establishing a viable model for congregational self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation (Wei's London-Missionary-Society-derived independent congregation at Ciqikou had been among the earliest of these). Once established, this organizational model took on a life of its own. Autonomous congregations led by Chinese Christians increasingly decided how to shape and define their religious life in the way that made the most sense to them.

Many Chinese Christians at this time were attracted to native churches such as the True Jesus Church, with its cogent critique that the doctrines and practices of the Protestant establishment were clunky and formalistic. This perspective helps balance our view of why the True Jesus Church and other native Christian churches that arose during this time were so successful. It is true that the True Jesus Church was founded in a time of domestic and international turmoil, amid corruption, cultural ferment, flood, drought, famine, and war. It is also true that the Chinese religious marketplace valued efficacious rites. Yet, although these circumstances touched the lives of all in China, including all Christians, not all of them joined the True Jesus Church. Far from grasping indiscriminately for a lifeline in times of trouble or galloping off to respond to the siren call of the Chinese popular religious tradition, the early members of the True Jesus Church sought to dot all the Biblical i's and cross all the Biblical t's, as it were, in a way that foreign churches (non-Pentecostal and **(p.118)** Pentecostal alike) had not yet been able to do (owing to various facts of life arising from language, church organization, the warlike or imperialist actions of Western nations, and so on). In this sense, despite its Pentecostal parentage, the True Jesus Church was also strikingly independent in its exclusivist claims. Then, as now, it recognized early Pentecostal influences but rejected the notion of having evolved inevitably from any Pentecostal tradition. Instead, church members saw—and see—the church as the living testament to God's intervention in human history, and Jesus's one true church.

If we make a place in our consideration for what believers themselves said in the early publications of the True Jesus Church, it becomes clear that a chief concern of many who converted was the problem of sin: the struggle to live above moral reproach, suspicion that establishment denominations' religious routines were not efficacious for spiritual formation, a thirst for special knowledge that one's current Christian practice would be sufficient to gain salvation. For them, the question of whether a church adhered to the Bible or was authentically "Christian" in all aspects including nomenclature and organization was critical. Indeed, the uncertain socioeconomic conditions surrounding them would not necessarily have eclipsed or replaced these religious concerns but would have made them more urgent and acute.

The experience of early believers of the True Jesus Church was complex in its religious, socioeconomic, and political contexts, but it was simpler and at the same time richer in the eyes of the believers themselves as individual agents within this context. They lived in a world in which the narratives and promises of the biblical text could play out in everyday life. Over this world, the Holy Spirit swept like a wind, giving them assurance of salvation and power.

Notes:

(1.) Wanguo gengzheng jiao bao 萬國更正教報 *Global Church Correction* (hereafter *Global Church Correction*) no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1 (“A True Testimony Summarizing Wei Paul’s Experience 魏保羅經歷略表真見證”) and no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4 (“In the War in the Spirit World, Wei Paul Relied on the Holy Spirit 靈界大戰魏保羅靠聖靈論”). There are conflicting accounts of when precisely Wei had his vision. See Tang Hongbiao 唐紅飆, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會歷史史迹考* (self-published, 2006), 19, 28. A November 19, 1917, legal affidavit by Liu Ai (Wei Maria), Wei’s wife, says that on May 28, 1917, Wei Enbo went south to preach and had not yet returned to Beijing (Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 15). A late-May date seems correct.

(2.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1.

(3.) Lau Shaw (Lao She), *Rickshaw Boy*, trans. Evan King (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945) *Modern Chinese Literature*

(4.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4.

(5.) Wei Enbo, 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 17B–20A, 25B.

(6.) Zhongguo gujindiming dacidian 中國古今地名大詞典 *Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Chinese Place Names* (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), 2631

(7.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4.

(8.) *True Testimony* Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed. Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 *True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M8

(9.) *True Testimony* Daniel Bays, “The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement,” in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 50–68

(10.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(11.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(12.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(13.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(14.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(15.) This letter seems to be Wei's earliest theological text. It introduces some of his key ideas likely informed by his contact with Seventh-day Adventist and Pentecostal churches, but also accessible in the Bible: immersion baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, and faith healing. By anchoring this message with a reference from the Book of Isaiah, 29:13 (KJV): "this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me," Wei was laying down a precedent for primitivist biblical rhetoric within the church. For Republican-era Chinese theological texts, see Chloë Starr, *Chinese Theology: Text and Context* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 41–72.

(16.) *True Testimony*, 4B, 5A. Thomas DuBois's study of popular religious practice in Cang County, a county slightly to the east of Rongcheng county in the same province of Hebei, writes that in North China, spirit-writing practice consisted of a human medium transcribing the words of a deity during a state of possession. It was customarily described as "holding the *luan* [a phoenix-like bird] to consult the spirits" (扶鸞請仙 *fu luan qing xian*) (DuBois, *The Sacred Village*, 132). The phrase in Wei's diary that describes what Zhang Zhongsan did was "to write on someone else's behalf" (代筆寫信 *dai bi xie xin*). Like "*fu luan*," Wei was receiving and transcribing a divine message. However, there are numerous examples of direct revelation in the Christian tradition, including biblical prophets and apostles, and later saints and prophets who claimed to follow this pattern. Hence Wei's revelatory experience has parallels in the Chinese environment, but also fits within the global Christian tradition.

(17.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 71

(18.) *True Testimony*, 5B, 6A.

(19.) Wei's claim to be fasting for thirty-nine days—nearly on par with Jesus, who fasted for forty days—created a spectacle in Huangcun. The length of Wei's fast was clearly meant to reference biblical forty-day fasts while at the same time discreetly showing deference by falling short by one day. A few accounts of other True Jesus Church members' thirty-nine-day fasts in the *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume* mention that certain people ate "light" things during their "fast," such as fruit. This was presented as an exception, however, not as a rule, and certainly not as an ideal.

(20.) Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010)

(21.) *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 7 (“In praise of Wei Paul Enbo, bishop of the True Jesus Church in Beijing 誠頌北京真耶穌教會總監督耶保羅恩波記”).

(22.) See Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 114.

(23.) In a 1918 legal document related to Berntsen’s lawsuit against Wei, Liu Ai gives her age as forty-six years (forty-five years by Western reckoning), Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 15.

(24.) One account of this situation appears in a document related to Berntsen’s lawsuit against Wei, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 9.

(25.) *True Testimony*, 7B.

(26.) *True Testimony*, 8A.

(27.) *True Testimony*, 8A; Baigou is a town in Hebei in what is now the south of the city of 高碑店市, near the Baigou River. Zhongguo Gujin Diming Dacidian 中国古今地名大辞典 *Dictionary of Traditional and Modern Chinese Place Names* (上海辞书出版社 Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe), 916.

(28.) *True Testimony*, 8A.

(29.) *True Testimony*, 9A.

(30.) *True Testimony*, 9A.

(31.) *True Testimony*, 10A.

(32.) *True Testimony*, 10A.

(33.) *True Testimony*, 10B.

(34.) *True Testimony*, 10B.

(35.) *True Testimony*, 11A.

(36.) *True Testimony*, 11A.

(37.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(38.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(39.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(40.) A helpful point of reference for understanding Wei's visions comes from religious studies research on charismatic founding visions, such as that found in Ann Taves and Steven Harper's dialogue on the question of how to explain Mormon founder Joseph Smith's differing accounts of his 1820 theophany. Taves suggests that Smith expanded his vision over the course of multiple recounting to strengthen his revelatory and prophetic claims. Harper points to the context in which these accounts were offered and uses theory from memory studies to suggest that an account prompted by spontaneous associative retrieval will necessarily be different from accounts involving strategic retrieval. Ann Taves and Steven Harper, *Mormon Studies Review* 3 (2016): 53–84. In Wei's case, the first (and longest, and most complex) story came from his daily autobiographical record, written down soon after the fact. The second (February 1919) and third (July 1919) accounts were newsletter articles with an evangelistic and regulatory purpose.

(41.) *True Testimony*, 20A.

(42.) *True Testimony*, 27A–28B.

(43.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 3 ("The first instance of Wei Baoluo and others being beaten in Huangxun, south of Beijing, at the hands of the false pastors 魏保羅等頭次被打記京南黃村鎮假牧師現象").

(44.) *True Testimony*, 23AB.

(45.) *True Testimony*, 31B.

(46.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M5.

(47.) *True Testimony*, 24B, 28A, 29B–30A, 31B.

(48.) Lian Xi, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010)

(49.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 4A.

(50.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, N25.

(51.) Contemporary research on "boss Christians" shows a similar profile of Chinese Christians. See, for example, Nanlai Cao, "Christian Entrepreneurs and the Post-Mao State: An Ethnographic Account of Church-State Relations in China's Economic Transition," *Sociology of Religion* 68, no. 1 (2007): 45–66; Chen Cunfu and Huang Tianhai, "The Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today," *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 2 (Dec. 2004): 183–200.

- (52.) *True Testimony*, 16B, 48B.
- (53.) *True Testimony*, 26A-B.
- (54.) *True Testimony*, 48A.
- (55.) *True Testimony*, 35A-B.
- (56.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Year Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*] (Shanghai: True Jesus Church, 1936), 94
- (57.) *True Testimony*, 17B-20A.
- (58.) *True Testimony*, 25B.
- (59.) *True Testimony*, 36B-37B.
- (60.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F1-F2.
- (61.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F1-F2.
- (62.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1 (“Advertising *Global Church Correction* 萬國更正教報廣告”).
- (63.) Pamphlet printed by Wei Enbo and Liu Maria, “Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop due to Miraculous Occurrences 綢緞洋貨布莊因出神跡特別大減價,” Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, p. 26.
- (64.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919; no. 2, July 27, 1919.
- (65.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 1 (“Letter From Nanjing Xinjie Kou Christian Church Ma Zhaorui 南京新街口基督教馬兆瑞”).
- (66.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 1 (“Letter From Song Linzhang, a Person of Gao Village 高邑人宋琳璋”).
- (67.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, p. 4 (“Record of Part II of the Testimony and Warning of Fang Tiaochen to all Christians in the World 綠信徒方條塵致世界耶穌教諸信徒真見證警告后書”).
- (68.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C2.
- (69.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, pp. 1-2 (“Events in the True Jesus Church in Tangjiazhuang, Bochang County, Shandong Province 山東博昌縣唐家莊真耶穌教會發現”).

(70.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 13B, 14A.

(71.) *True Testimony*, 65A.

(72.) Pamphlet printed by Wei Enbo and Liu Maria, “Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop due to Miraculous Occurrences 綢緞洋貨布莊因出神跡特別大減價,” Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, pp. 26–28.

(73.) Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, pp. 13–14.

(74.) *True Testimony*, 71A, 115B; document related to Berntsen’s lawsuit against Wei dated November 10, 1917, says that Wei Enbo has “mental illness,” so his wife must manage his shop. Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801.

(75.) *True Testimony*, 58A, 59A.

(76.) *True Testimony*, 65A, 65B.

(77.) *True Testimony*, 72B.

(78.) Documents from November 1917, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, pp. 9 and 15.

(79.) Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, pp. 176–186.

(80.) *True Testimony II*, 22A.

(81.) *Global Church Correction* no. 5, March 1, 1920, p. 1; *Global Church Correction* no. 6, November 1, 1920, p. 1.

(82.) *True Testimony*, 113B–114A.

(83.) *True Testimony*, 31A, 128B.

(84.) *True Testimony*, 113B–114A.

(85.) *True Testimony*, 115B.

(86.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 2 (“True Jesus Church Personnel 真耶穌教會職員”); *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 4 (“At left, a brief chart of the bishops, elders, and deacons of the Global Church 萬國教會各監督長老執事略表幾位如左”).

(87.) At the group level, “[g]roups perpetuate an initial thing or event deemed special by agreeing on how it can be re-created. The re-creation of thing/event rests on group consensus regarding the efficacy of practices relative to the special goal, which outsiders typically do not find convincing.” Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 53 (table 1.3, “Variations in the Nature of Experience by Ascriptive Unit and Type of Ascription”).

(88.) *True Testimony*, 87AB.

(89.) David Ownby, “A History for Falun Gong,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 2 (April 2003): 223–243

(90.) The rebel leader, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, went on to found the Ming dynasty, which lasted from 1367 to 1644. In 1644, the Qing conquered China.

(91.) T. Howard Smith, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Tongxian, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1918-1921, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(92.) “Probe Into the Relief Mode for the 1917 Flood in Zhili Province and the Capital,” *Journal of Shandong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 58, no. 3 (2013): 81–90

(93.) Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Beijing, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 737.

(94.) “China: Showing Centres of LMS Work” in Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1890–1945* (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), 142

(95.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1917, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1918-1921, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(96.) Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917.

(97.) *True Testimony*, 98.

(98.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1914, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 729.

(99.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F3.

(100.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F3.

(101.) Matthew 7:16–20, KJV.

(102.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, B19.

(103.) Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 37

(104.) Robert C. Allen, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, et al, "Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738–1925: In Comparison With Europe, Japan, and India," *The Economic History Review*, 64 (2010): 8–38. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00515.x/full>

(105.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 38.

(106.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 38.

(107.) President Wilson was first cousin to Samuel Isett Woodbridge's late wife Jeanie Wilson Woodrow Woodbridge. Jeanie had died in 1913, leaving behind eight children, four of whom became missionaries in China. Frank Price, ed., *Our China Investment: Sixty Years of the Southern Presbyterian Church in China: With Biographies, Autobiographies, and Sketches of all Missionaries Since the Opening of the Work in 1867* (Nashville, TN: Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1927), 16, 170, 175; Eugene P. Trani, "Woodrow Wilson, China, and the Missionaries, 1913–1921," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 49 (1962–1985), no. 4 (*China Missions in History*, Winter 1971): 328–351; Woodrow Wilson, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 7, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 637; Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 86.

(108.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 88–89.

(109.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 101.

(110.) Rana Mitter, *Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle With the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4–11

(111.) *Global Church Correction*, July 27, 1919, p. 4 ("Christians who promote patriotism are all servants of the devil 教會人提倡愛世國者都是魔鬼的僕人").

(112.) *Chinese Christian Intelligencer* 通問報, no. 857, July 1919, p. 6, microfiche (hereafter MF) 395.

(113.) *Global Church Correction*, July 27, 1919, p. 4. 教會人提倡愛世國者都是魔鬼的僕人.

(114.) See, for instance, Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China 1857–1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); Lian Xi, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (October 2008): 407–441.

- (115.) Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 188–189
- (116.) Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, “Christian Crossing: Bernt Berntsen and Wei Enbo, and the Beginnings of Chinese Pentecostal Christianity,” in *Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Global China*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017): 91–117
- (117.) *Bridegroom’s Messenger*, April 4, 1909.
- (118.) *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 1 (“Letter From a True Jesus Church Congregation that Will Soon Form in Jiangsu Province 江蘇省真耶穌教會快要成立的要函照登”).
- (119.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 6 (“Cancel All Church Names 取消各公會之名稱”).
- (120.) Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*, 69–72.
- (121.) Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*, 72.
- (122.) Bays, “Protestant Missionary Establishment,” 51.
- (123.) *True Testimony*, 99A.
- (124.) *True Testimony II*, 27A.
- (125.) *True Testimony*, 35B.
- (126.) Zhang Barnabas, *Chuandao ji* 傳道記 [*Mission Record*] (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, self-published, 1929), 23.
- (127.) *True Testimony*, 42B–43A.
- (128.) Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Penguin Books, 1966), 48
- (129.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 1999), 78
- (130.) Timothy Brook, “Auto-Organization in Chinese Society,” in *Civil Society in China*, ed. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015), 19–45
- (131.) Shakhrah Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-Party Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 50–52
- (132.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 57.
- (133.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 52.

- (134.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 52, 57–58, 138.
- (135.) Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, 68–69.
- (136.) Charles A. Keller, “The Christian Student Movement, YMCAs, and Transnationalism,” *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 13, Special Volume—Christianity as an Issue in the History of U.S.–China Relations (2004–2006): 55–80
- (137.) “Introduction to the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China,” *Chinese Communist Party News* (中国共产党一次全国代表大会简介). <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64553/4427940.html>.
- (138.) Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, 64–65.
- (139.) Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 63
- (140.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 2 (“True Jesus Church Personnel 真耶穌教會職員”).
- (141.) *Intelligencer*, no. 846, April 1919, p. 8, MF 0341; no. 846, April 1919, 31, MF 0343.
- (142.) *True Light* 真光, March 21, 1929, 16–21.
- (143.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M8; Tang Hongbiao 唐红飙, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會历史史迹考* (self-published, 2006), 112.
- (144.) In some True Jesus Churches in South China, these are the first five of the True Jesus Church’s Ten Basic Articles of Faith 十大基本信仰信条 and are often referred to as the “Five Great Doctrines” 五大教义. Shi da jiben xinyang xintiao 十大基本信仰信条, 基本信仰概述 *Outline of Basic Beliefs* (Fuqing: True Jesus Church).
- (145.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M9.
- (146.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M9.
- (147.) T. Howard Smith, Report for the Year Ending December 1921, Peking county, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports MF 751.
- (148.) Pierre Fuller, “North China Famine Revisited: Native Relief in the Warlord Era, 1920–1921,” in *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 820–850
- (149.) Smith, Report for Year Ending December 1922, MF 754.
- (150.) F. Rawlinson, Helen Thoburn, and D. MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church as Revealed in the National Christian Conference* (Shanghai: Oriental Press, 1922), 82. https://archive.org/details/MN41609ucmf_0
-

(151.) See Ka-che Yip, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922–1927* (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1980); Jessie G. Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920–1928* (Notre Dame, IN: Cross-Cultural Publications, 1988).

(152.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 19.

(153.) “The Quest for an ‘Indigenous Church’: German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Indigenization Debates of the 1920s,” *The American Historical Review*, 122, no. 1 (2017): 85–114

(154.) *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, Cheng Jingyi, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/c/cheng-jingyi.php>

(155.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 32.

(156.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 3–6; Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume, C23.

(157.) *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, Gao Daling, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/g/gao-daling.php>.

(158.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C23; Lian, “Messianic Deliverance,” 424.

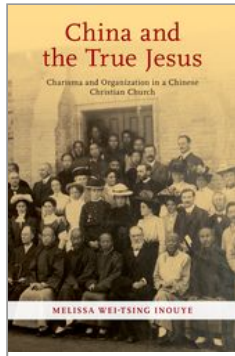
(159.) W. T. Rowlands, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1922, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 755.

(160.) W. T. Rowlands, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1922, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 755.

(161.) L. Gordon Phillips, Report at the End of 1925, Xiamen, Council for World Mission Archives Reports 1866–1939, Fukien Box no. 1-6 (H-2137) Zug, 1978, Box no. 5 1924–1925, CWM/LMS/South China/Reports, MF 357.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

The Three Lives of Deaconess Yang (1922–1932)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0005

Abstract and Keywords

Although patriarchal religion is often depicted as a reactionary influence in women's lives, charismatic religious organizations like the True Jesus Church were part of a flourishing new associational culture in China during the 1920s and 1930s that expanded roles and multiplied life opportunities for Chinese women. Recent scholarship has highlighted ways in which elite women worked as lawyers, doctors, and educators, participated in modern print culture, and engaged in public conversations. The histories of women of the True Jesus Church move us closer to understanding the world of Chinese women at the grassroots in an era during which old and new ideals of womanhood seesawed back and forth. Participation in the True Jesus Church connected women to an organized, collective form of religious life that was strikingly modern and amplified their opportunities to wield spiritual and community authority.

Keywords: patriarchy, religion, charismatic, organizations, women, grassroots, authority, True Jesus Church

Deaconess Yang: Daughter-in-Law, Nurse, Faith Healer

A True Jesus Church publication gives us the biographical sketch of a Chinese woman surnamed Yang, born in 1885 and deceased in 1935, whose birth name was unknown but who later in life called herself Yang Zhendao 楊真道 [Yang True Way]:¹

Deaconess Yang Zhendao 女執事楊真道 was orphaned at a young age, so she married early [because she needed the economic support]. Yang was a woman of Xiaogan 孝感 County in Hubei 湖北 province [near the tri-cities of Wuhan 武漢]. After a short period of time, she was widowed. [At this point she was supposed to dutifully serve her mother-in-law for the rest of her days, but] soon thereafter her mother-in-law died. Neighbors criticized her for her mother-in-law's death. [Perhaps it was a sign of neglect, or even malice.] [Apparently with the intention of proving her loyalty to her husband and her mother-in-law,] Yang attempted to commit suicide by jumping off of a building. Although she did not succeed in killing herself, she was widely admired for having made the attempt. Her good name spread far and wide. The county magistrate had a commemorative stela erected in her honor [a standard government practice, which dated back to the Ming and Qing dynasties, for encouraging proper moral behavior in women].

A foreign Christian heard of her and invited her to enter the local Christian hospital training program. She had had some education [quite possibly in a Christian school, since Christian schools were often the only option for orphans and poor children who could not afford a more **(p.120)** traditional and prestigious Confucian education].² After completing her course of study, she worked as a nurse at the hospital in Hankou 漢口 [one of the tri-cities of Wuhan] for several years. Protestant Christians had been operating in Wuhan since 1858, when the Treaty of Tianjin had opened it up as one of the earliest treaty ports on the Yangzi River, deep in the heart of China. One day her younger brother became very sick. A succession of doctors tried to cure him, with no success. She asked members of the nearby True Jesus Church to pray for him, whereupon he immediately recovered and she joined the church.

One day while she was at the True Jesus Church in Wuchang 武昌 [another one of the tri-cities] a sick person came in seeking healing. No one else was there, so she laid hands upon his head in prayer. The sick person cried out, "When you put your hands on my head, why was it like fire!? How is it that my whole body burned!?" This person immediately recovered. After this event, Yang changed her name to "True Way" [真道]. She decided to give up the work of using medicine to heal people, and to concentrate on the work of praying, preaching, and healing through the Holy Spirit. She had a temperamental personality, but after losing her temper she would receive chastening from the Spirit and would acknowledge her errors, thus demonstrating the sincerity of her Christian practice. She worked in Wuhan for eight years, then went to Shaanxi 陝西 province to plant new congregations of the True Jesus Church. The church was her family and the Word [of God] was her work. Around the age of fifty, she took ill and died and was mourned by all who had known her.³

The three parts of Deaconess Yang's story as dutiful Confucian daughter-in-law, educated urban professional, and charismatic religious leader give us insight into what Dorothy Ko has called "a lingering in-between-ness" in the lives of Chinese women in the 1920s and 1930s, a "seesawing" as cosmological beliefs, social customs, political history, popular discourse, and personal embodied experiences slowly grew out of sync.⁴ Each of Deaconess Yang's three roles gives us insight into the changing and somewhat contradictory ways in which women were finding their way through modern Chinese society during the 1920s and 1930s. The disconnect between the various ways to imagine and embody Chinese womanhood in Deaconess Yang's life was mirrored in the fractured, decentralized political situation within China during a period characterized by regional warlordism, civil war, and a cacophony of competing ideologies driven by strident nationalism. Deaconess Yang eventually found a home in her identity as a charismatic religious leader.

(p.121) The window into the world of nonelite Chinese women that the stories of Deaconess Yang and other True Jesus Church women open up is particularly valuable. Recent scholarship has highlighted ways in which elite women worked as lawyers, doctors, and educators, participated in modern print culture, and engaged in public conversations.⁵ This brief biography of Deaconess Yang Zhendao moves us closer to an understanding of nonelite Chinese women. Participation in the True Jesus Church connected women to an organized, collective form of religious life that was strikingly modern and amplified their opportunities to influence others. Ordinary women in the True Jesus Church took to the printing presses to reach a mass audience, drew on democratic models of government to regulate community life, and used the charismatic (i.e., Holy Spirit-derived) power to heal in ways that simultaneously expanded and constrained the social and ideological parameters of their world.⁶ The meaning and ownership that they found in this charismatically oriented community remind us that the nation-state or the political party was not the only significant form of "imagined community" in China at this time.⁷ Church networks had their own internal norms of governance and citizenship that individuals might have seen as just as relevant as, if not more relevant than, the chaotic political alignment and realignment of the era. Women played a vital role in shaping the church's authoritative networks and cultural structures. The status and influence that Deaconess Yang and other women found within the True Jesus Church, a patriarchal Christian organization, shows how charismatic religious traditions can be a source of empowerment for women, opening up new pathways for agency and influence just as they close others.⁸

Young Mrs. Yang: The Confucian Daughter-in-Law

In 1911 a centuries-old system of government had been swept away, but the fundamental cultural norms that had influenced the lives of Chinese women had even deeper roots and were not so easily undone. We glimpse these expectations in the neighbors' criticism that provoked young Mrs. Yang's suicide attempt and the government accolades that followed it. Specific cultural prescriptions for women were not monolithic in a country as large and diverse as China, but gendered expectations began at birth. The ancient roots for differing treatment of babies according to gender can be seen in a passage from the *Book of Poetry*, dating back to between the eleventh and seventh centuries BCE, a required text for study in the imperial civil service examination system:

(p.122)

Sons shall be born to him:

They will be put to sleep on couches;

They will be clothed in robes;

They will have scepters to play with;

Their cry will be loud.

They will be [hereafter] resplendent with red knee-covers,

The [future] king, the princes of the land.

Daughters shall be born to him:

They will be put to sleep on the ground;

They will be clothed with wrappers;

They will have tiles to play with.

It will be theirs neither to do wrong nor to do good.

Only about the spirits and the food will they have to think,

And to cause no sorrow to their parents.⁹

The philosophy of Confucius (551–479 BCE) reinforced this tradition of making distinctions between men and women that emphasized men's superior value and capacity. In the Confucian ideal of the hierarchical "Five Relationships"—ruler and minister, father and son, older brother and young brother, older friend and younger friend, and husband and wife—a woman occupied the subordinate position. Within the Confucian moral system, the paramount duty of a Chinese person was to revere and serve parents and ancestors—one's own parents and ancestors in the case of men, and one's husband's parents and ancestors in the case of women. Confucian ideology was not merely an influential school of thought, but the established state teaching of first the Han dynasty (206 BCE to 220 CE) and subsequently many dynasties to follow, up until the early twentieth century. Laws and polite customs reinforced Confucian mores.

Throughout the entire life cycle, women and men were subject to different expectations. Even the act of childbirth was laden with gendered prescriptions. Girl babies were considered much more “polluting” than boys.¹⁰ For instance, according to one folk belief recorded in Qinghai 青海 Province in 1955 regarding women’s ritual purification from the pollution of birth, “after the birth of a boy the lying-in period lasts by custom thirty days, but the birth of a girl requires forty days because she is more unclean than a boy.”¹¹ Historian Susan Mann has pointed out that in late imperial China the milestones in women’s lives flew by more quickly than those in men’s lives because women’s lives were measured in units of seven years and men’s lives were measured in units of eight. Girls were expected to lose their baby teeth at seven, boys at eight; girls attained full sexual maturity at twenty-one, boys at twenty-four; women reached their **(p. 123)** prime at twenty-eight, men at thirty-two; physical decay began for women at thirty-five, but for men at forty. A child growing into an adult would take on different roles and responsibilities at each stage of the life course, and these roles and responsibilities were always specific to gender.¹²

Young Mrs. Yang was a teenager when she joined her husband’s family, probably just around the turn of the twentieth century. A 1930s study on the age of marriage in Republican China indicated that around 67 percent of women married between the ages of fifteen and nineteen. Around 5 percent married before they were fourteen. Close to 28 percent, who were likely to be wealthier, more educated, and resident in urban as opposed rural areas, in southern as opposed to northern China, married in their twenties.¹³ As a poor orphan in the last years of the Qing era who “married early,” on her wedding day young Mrs. Yang was likely as old as a middle-school girl today.

Marriage was a major milestone in a Chinese woman’s life. In anticipation of this milestone, girls often spent years in careful preparation, including years of binding their feet. Footbinding was the centuries-old Han Chinese practice of tightly wrapping girls’ feet from around age five or six years old so that they remained small throughout life. The process itself was excruciatingly painful, but grown women took pride in their small feet, signs of beauty and respectability.¹⁴ Degrees of aggressiveness in binding varied. Poor women had loosely bound or unbound feet that enabled them to be more productive as they went about physical labor.¹⁵ As in the case of contemporary Western orthodontics, breast augmentation, and rhinoplasty, footbinding was a bodily practice rooted in multiple motivations including sexual competition, conspicuous consumption, the tyranny of fashion, an ethos of self-sacrifice, and decorum.¹⁶

As one old woman explained to interviewer Ida Pruitt, around the time that Mrs. Yang was a young bride, “match-makers were not asked ‘Is she beautiful?’ but ‘How small are her feet? A plain face is given by heaven but poorly bound feet are a sign of laziness.’”¹⁷ The large feet of servants and laborers were considered crude, whereas small feet were classy. Small feet could be a girl’s ticket to upward mobility, allowing her to marry into a wealthier family. Beyond attractiveness, the pain and discipline involved in creating and maintaining small feet made them symbols of morality and diligence. It is possible that, being a poor orphan, young Mrs. Yang never had the attention of a mother who loved her enough to bind her feet. Even if her parents had been alive during her early childhood, perhaps they could not afford to invest in the sartorial shape of their daughter’s body at the expense of time and energy spent on subsistence.

In the married stage in her life, young Mrs. Yang assumed the obligation of serving her husband, his parents-in-law, and his ancestral spirits. This patrilineal definition of family often influenced families to invest in the education of their **(p.124)** boys, but not their girls. Chang Siao-hung, the daughter of a wealthy family who came of age in the 1920s, recalled a popular saying: “To educate a daughter is said to be like watering another man’s garden.”¹⁸ A family’s financial and even emotional investment in a daughter was not culturally expected. Lu Lihua (1900–1997), who grew up to become a school principal, recalled, “My mother loved me very much. But she had to hide her affection because others would say, ‘Why cherish a girl so much? When she marries, she will belong to someone else’s family, even if she lives to be one hundred years old.’”¹⁹

Ideally, when socioeconomic circumstances allowed, men and women were expected to observe strict separation. Only men were allowed to participate in the public world, at least in person. Women were supposed to live out their days in the innermost quarters of the house. Elite women might spend their time composing poetry, doing embroidery, educating their children, and managing servants, although many did become well known in literary and cultural circles through their writings.²⁰ However, these ideals for gender roles were often compromised. Poor families, for example, could not afford to make rigid distinctions between men’s and women’s work.²¹ In addition to spinning and weaving, peasant women might work in the fields, care for silkworms and mulberry trees, and engage in numerous other agricultural or commercial activities to help support their families (see Figure 4.1).

The reason why young Mrs. Yang's neighbors had criticized her upon her mother-in-law's death was that the mother-in-law was supposed to be a special object of a married woman's dutiful care. Even if her husband died, a wife was supposed to dedicate the rest of her life to serving her parents-in-law. This expectation of service, however, did not guarantee her a roof over her head in the event of widowhood. Especially if she had not produced a son who would become part of the family patriline, her husband's family had a legal incentive to marry her off to another family, thus

divesting themselves of the burden of her upkeep and ensuring that her husband's property would be under their control.²² If she had a living son (i.e., an assured place in her husband's family and a guarantee of family care in her old age), she could instead refuse remarriage and choose to live out the rest of her days as a "chaste widow."²³ As in the case of a young widow such as Mrs. Yang, another "praiseworthy" course of action in the case of widowhood was to commit suicide (demonstrating her loyalty to her husband by permanently ensuring that her body would not serve two men). Suicide was in fact a standard course of action for Chinese women to respond to a variety of situations including widowhood, dishonor, or mistreatment.²⁴



Figure 4.1 Peasant woman in holiday dress with wheel for spinning cotton thread, 1911. Her small bound feet are encased in embroidered cloth shoes.

Credit: Photographs of Ernest Henry Wilson, Arnold Arboretum Archives

The patrilineal ideology placing so much of women's value in the work of their bodies (shaping beautiful feet, bearing male children, engaging in sideline production, etc.) did not automatically reduce women to insignificant shadows. **(p.125)** In the case of elite households, women had significant power, keeping account books, making decisions about the household budget, and shaping children's education and thus worldviews.²⁵ One recent study has shown how in the late Qing, wealthy women such as Lady Zhuang Dehua (1866–1927) wielded considerable financial and cultural influence within their families and in the public sphere. Lady Zhuang relied on modern telecommunication networks including newspapers and the telegraph to make investments in the wholesale market, ship goods throughout extensive coastal and inland networks, track market conditions, promote her family's good name in public, and organize large-scale public charitable activities.²⁶ In poor households, women's work was instrumental to ensuring the family's survival. The traditional female productive labors of spinning and weaving cotton cloth, which could be accomplished as easily with bound feet as without, earned cash that in a year of bad harvests could make the difference between life and death, or allow a family to save enough money to achieve upward mobility by investing in more land or educating sons. If women produced sons who survived to adulthood, married, and had their own children, they reigned as matriarchs over their progeny and were assured of ancestral offerings after death. **(p.126)** Yet, although China's gendered traditions did not prevent women from exercising personality, talent, and acumen throughout the course of their lives, the power of cultural expectations circumscribed their life-pathways in significant ways.²⁷

The life stories of elite Chinese women who came of age in the 1920s testify to these constraints, even for the most privileged. It was an unusual and "enlightened" decision for mothers and fathers to send daughters to school.²⁸ Women who did not give birth to sons were expected not to blame their husbands for taking concubines.²⁹ Because of her observations of the women around her, Chen Yongsheng, an educator, made the controversial and deeply countercultural decision as a young woman not to marry:

[A] woman's life was too hard. She had to raise children and follow her husband no matter what kind of man he was. I saw many women with many children, but their men were absent from home, fooling around with other women. Women could not get a divorce as they can now. Suffering and living like a widow, but with a husband—how hard a woman's life was. Women had no status.³⁰

Alongside these autobiographical reminiscences of elite women, the story of young Mrs. Yang stands out because she was poor and orphaned and because someone else told her story for her. Yet the general cultural milieu her story reflects is the same. Mrs. Yang's widely applauded suicide attempt shows the deep roots of the widespread—though not universal—cultural expectation that the meaning of a woman's life was bound up in the life of her husband and her husband's family.

In sum, although we must reject the stereotype of the oppressed, victimized Chinese woman and acknowledge the agency, ingenuity, and influence of Chinese women of all walks of life, we must also recognize that the flow of Chinese women's life choices was restricted by powerful cultural currents.³¹ Although cultural prescriptions were never the same as lived reality, and the cult of female loyalty went through cycles of wax and wane—the fact that Mrs. Yang received so much praise for her suicide attempt suggests that not every widow attempted suicide—the emotional and physical pain surrounding the struggle to enact the prescribed roles of wife and daughter-in-law was a recurring theme in accounts of Chinese women's lives.³²

Nurse Yang: The Modern Woman

After her brush with death, Mrs. Yang had an opportunity to start life anew when a foreign missionary invited her to enroll in a medical training program. Through **(p.127)** this training and subsequent professional employment, probably during the 1910s, she became Nurse Yang. Since the earliest decades of missions in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Protestant missionaries in China often saw themselves as spreading a double gospel of Christ and “civilization,” the latter of which often meant the trappings of Western-style modernity. In this “civilizing” mission, the issue of women's status was of critical symbolic importance.³³ The lesser value placed upon females as opposed to males in a patrilineal society meant that women were more vulnerable, especially in times of socioeconomic crisis: Female infants might be killed, girl children might be abandoned, wives might be sold, and so on.³⁴

Although such practices had been universally condemned by Chinese elites for centuries, Western missionaries, who disproportionately interacted with the lower classes and the rural poor, saw them as evidence that Chinese civilization as a whole was cruel and barbaric.³⁵ They saw the contrast between women's roles, rights, and opportunities in China and those in their Christian home countries as a testimony of China's need for the greater light and truth of Christianity.³⁶ Protestant and Catholic foreign missionaries from well-funded institutions such as the London Missionary Society devoted formidable resources to Chinese women's issues, including teaching women to read, establishing schools, and creating opportunities for employment. These changes occurred on such a large scale that one scholar has identified the Christian movement (including the combined efforts of both Western missionaries and Chinese Christians) as "a major force for the change of Chinese women's lives in modern Chinese history."³⁷

One significant example of early Christian advocacy for social reforms for women is the Christians' vanguard role in nineteenth-century campaigns against footbinding. The first significant expression of Christian opposition to footbinding was not with Western missionaries but within China's first major native Christian movement, the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom. In areas controlled by the Taiping rebel movement from the mid-1850s to 1864, footbinding was banned on pain of death. This policy was in keeping with the Taipings' radical egalitarianism, inspired by the notion that women and men were all children of God, subject to the same commandments. Taiping women were mobilized to work alongside men in all-female production and military teams, which would have provided another reason for them to be as able-bodied as possible.³⁸ Nineteenth-century Western Protestant missionaries also condemned footbinding. They viewed it as a "heathen" practice that deformed women's God-given natural bodies and violated a parent's duty of love and care. Missionaries built anti-footbinding stances into Chinese Protestant mission institutions.³⁹ In 1867, for example, a Hangzhou mission school required that female students who received free board and clothing unbind their feet.⁴⁰ It is possible that Nurse Yang's higher **(p.128)** education in medicine was offered on similar terms and accompanied by lessons about the evils of footbinding.

Nurse Yang's social mobility and economic independence as a medical professional was at the cutting edge of a nationwide movement to increase women's capacity and contributions in modern Chinese society, in which Christian institutions and actors had played a significant role.⁴¹ The Christian- and missionary-initiated anti-footbinding cause was taken up by elite intellectuals and government officials and came to symbolize a larger transformation in perceptions about women in Chinese society.⁴² When the Republic was first established in 1912, some lobbied for women's suffrage and a constitution that enshrined principles of gender equality, although they were unsuccessful on both counts.⁴³ In the early years of the Republic, the call for women's rights grew in strength in periodicals, including those written by women such as the *Chinese Women's Journal* 神州女報.⁴⁴ In the iconoclastic spirit of the May Fourth era after 1919, proponents of women's rights attacked China's traditional family structure and customs, including the loyalty culture for wives and widows that had driven Mrs. Yang to attempt suicide.⁴⁵ One of the most famous stories written by Lu Xun, arguably the most revered author in modern Chinese literature, depicted the wrongs endured by "Sister Xianglin," a two-time widow.⁴⁶

Despite the condescension that often tinted missionaries' view of Chinese women and Chinese culture, the overall influence of Christianity in diversifying life-pathways for Chinese women in the early twentieth century is undeniable. During Nurse Yang's early years of education, possibly in a Christian school because Christian schools often funded the education of extremely poor students, she had learned how to read. A popular Chinese-language primer titled *Girls' Chinese Reader* 女子國文教科書 was published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai around the time Nurse Yang was in school (first in 1907 and in successive editions up until at least 1921). The fifty short lesson texts in the 1921 edition, each designed to introduce new vocabulary, give us a glimpse of the "lingering in-between-ness" in educational materials that attempted to reform existing cultural realities by providing a new modern ideal for Chinese women.⁴⁷ For example, some of the lessons depicted Chinese girls and women in typical traditional domestic production activities, such as weaving cloth late into the night while the rest of the family slept:

*In the middle of the night, all are quiet.
Underneath the steps
A cricket chirps: ji, ji.
At the front of the village, under a thatched-roof,
The lamplight still burns brightly.
A woman is weaving cloth.*⁴⁸

(p.129) The trope of the poor woman weaving all night to earn money to support her family was well worn, historically. Laudatory biographies of “chaste widows” in the Ming dynasty, for example, depicted widows as “devoting all their efforts to weaving” in order to survive and raise their sons to adulthood.⁴⁹ Other lessons within the *Girls’ Chinese Reader* depicted traditional domestic scenes such as mothers teaching girls handicrafts, women spinning cotton, mothers patching winter clothes, girls washing rice in a local pool, and girls washing clothes and drying them on bamboo poles (see Figure 4.2).⁵⁰ However, a few lessons depicted girls in new, modern activities, such as going to school and doing physical exercises. One lesson depicted two girls as they “sit before the lamp, diligently reading books” (see Figure 4.3).⁵¹

A new emphasis on building a strong nation through strengthening the minds *and* bodies of Chinese women is also evident in the next lesson, which describes girls “coming out of the classroom to the exercise yard to learn gymnastics” and “forming two lines stretching from east to west, setting out in a forward march.”⁵² In contrast to the majority of the other lessons, which depicted girls and women in domestic activities at home, this lesson showed girls in public spaces, learning **(p.130)** to become literate citizens, their strong bodies marshalled together in unity to serve the nation.

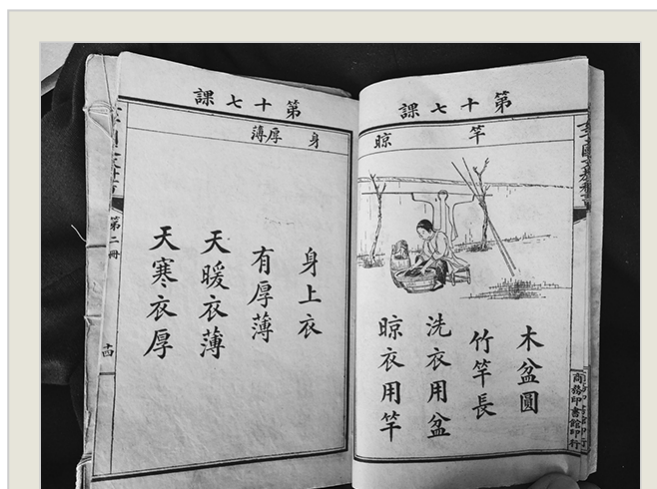
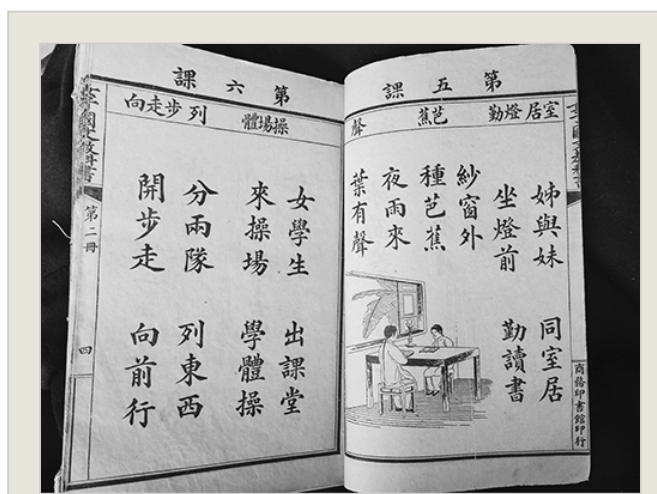


Figure 4.2 *Girls’ Chinese Reader* Lesson no. 17: “The wooden tub is round/the bamboo pole is long;/Use the tub to wash clothes/Use the pole to dry clothes.”

Credit: Shanghai Commercial Press, 1921



Spearheading this movement for women’s education were Protestant missionaries, who in addition to giving formal instruction in schools also utilized numerous systems of phonetic script to enable

Chinese women of all dialects and ages to be able to learn to read the Bible in settings such as churches and hospitals.⁵³ By 1917, over 10,000 copies of various books in the “Wang Chao” phonetic system had been sold under cost and more than 30,000 total volumes had been printed.⁵⁴ Even non-Christian patients in Western missionary hospitals learned to read phonetic script. Clearly the process of learning the script helped to alleviate the boredom of being bedridden and gave some patients a sense of personal progress during their stay. In 1923, for instance, London Missionary Society doctor Sidney Peill reported:

An illiterate girl had her leg amputated, started to learn by her own request the next day, was able to read in sentences after six days, had a Syme’s amputation on the seventh, continued her reading, and went through a whole volume of Scripture Reflections. She was given a key to the Chu Yin **(p.131)** system with printed explanations in Wang Chao phonetic; and without personal instruction she was able to the following day to write correctly from dictation (in her own dialect) in the Chu Yin phonetic.⁵⁵

Significantly, the Wang Chao phonetic system was not a dead end for this girl and others who learned it, but an open door. The Wang Chao phonetic system provided the key for her to master Zhu Yin 注音 [Chu Yin], another phonetic script in which a larger number of texts (both Christian texts and secular, government-printed texts) were available. Texts printed in double-column phonetic script and Chinese characters enabled women eventually to master characters, the gold standard of literacy and the passport to refined culture in China.

Figure 4.3 Girls’ Chinese Reader Lesson no. 5: “Big Sister and Little Sister/occupy the same room;/They sit before the lamp/diligently reading books.”

Credit: Shanghai Commercial Press, 1921

Beyond literacy, Western missionaries created institutions expanding Chinese women's opportunities for training in an emerging sector of modern professions. Because of the foreign missionary's invitation to widowed Mrs. Yang to join the nurse training program at the hospital in Wuhan, she was able to begin a new life as Nurse Yang, medical professional. The proliferation of Western-style missionary hospitals, including the women's hospitals that had been founded by the likes of Dr. Lillie E. V. Saville in the early 1900s, generated a strong demand for trained medical professionals. As early as 1879, missionaries began to offer medical training, including sending Chinese Christian women abroad for medical school.⁵⁶ By 1920 one of these women, Shi Meiyu (Mary Stone, 1873–1954) had returned as a fully fledged doctor and had established the Bethel Training School for Nurses in Shanghai, which by late 1920 had 200 students.⁵⁷ In 1915 a Chinese term for nurse [護士 *hushi*] had to be invented from scratch, but by 1925 there was a Nurses' Association of China and 1,500 nurses were training in over sixty schools. In 1931, the Nurses' Association of China reported a membership of over 5,000, with 174 nursing schools around the country.⁵⁸ Beyond medical education, Chinese women in Christian schools also trained to establish careers as teachers and administrators. By 1922, more than 60,000 female students were enrolled in missionary schools, a number that far exceeded the number of female students enrolled in government schools at that time and signaled a growing and self-perpetuating labor market in education.⁵⁹

Chinese Christian churches were symbols of modernity, with their countercultural challenge to long-standing gender norms.⁶⁰ Most obvious was the integration of women and men in religious and social activities. In this they bore some resemblance to popular Buddhist, Daoist, and Confucian groups, but in many cases the weekly activities of a Christian congregation were more structured, intensive, and frequent than those of sectarian competitors, creating even more opportunities for women and men to cocreate the religious community.⁶¹ As a matter of fact, female sectarian leaders and spirit **(p.132)** mediums often converted to Christianity and carried their influence into church networks.⁶²

Gender-integrated religious associations had long been a source of scandal in gender-segregated Chinese society, and Christian congregations were no exception. Since the earliest period of European Christian missionaries in China, Catholic friars who ministered to women had been accused of gross immorality.⁶³ Even within Chinese churches, maintenance of proper gender separation was a sensitive issue. For instance, in the mid-nineteenth century, Catholics in Nanjing were outraged when Count de Besi (1805–1871), the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Nanjing, ordered prayers to be recited by the entire congregation, men and women in alternation. In their eyes this amounted to an exchange between the sexes that was morally inappropriate.⁶⁴ Early London Missionary Society chapels in Beijing had a long curtain down the center of the chapel to prevent women and men from seeing each other during worship, but this practice seems to have disappeared by the 1910s.⁶⁵ Gradually, both Catholic and Protestant communities developed internal standards of propriety—still countercultural compared with traditional modes—ranging from separate times for worship meetings or separate sessions for Bible study, to the practice of simply seating men and women on opposite sides of the chapel.

By the 1920s, missionary denominations were seeing fruits of their project to establish integrated, independent Chinese congregations in which both women and men played an active role in the day-to-day activities of worship and social reform. Women who trained in Christian schools likewise developed an expectation that they should participate actively in public life outside the traditional confines of the home.⁶⁶ Christian organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) and the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) attracted Chinese women from mill workers to students and engaged in public campaigns for social reform.⁶⁷ The Protestant organizational model, which created local religious communities and linked them to larger networks and social and political causes, had a profound influence on the robust growth of Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, and other religious associations during the social ferment of the May Fourth era.⁶⁸ The expanded collectivity of religious life gave Chinese women increased opportunities to connect to local congregations, national associations, religiously sponsored schools, charitable causes, and pathways of education and leadership.

In this sense Nurse Yang was the very picture of modern Chinese womanhood, an example of alignment between the Christian Social Gospel and the nationalistic modernizing project.⁶⁹ However, as one scholar has noted, missionaries' push to introduce Western ideas and education ironically helped open the door to secular ideas from abroad that Chinese intellectuals ultimately preferred over Christianity in their search for China's salvation. These secular ideologies, **(p.133)** such as anarchism, Marxism, and scientism, inspired Chinese elites to criticize Christianity as inherently irrational and as a form of "cultural imperialism."⁷⁰ The notion that religion was antithetical to the needs of the modern Chinese nation created another vision of the modern Chinese woman.

This secular image of the "New Woman" as someone who was young, urban, educated, and rational, a modern consumer who practiced free love and participated in public life, circulated widely.⁷¹ The New Woman had a new physical appearance that reflected the influence of Western culture: short permed hair and stylish modern clothes such as the *qipao* (a dress with a Mandarin collar and a closer fit than traditional Chinese women's clothing), or Western-cut dresses and skirts (see Figure 4.4).⁷² **(p.134)**

The New Woman filled the front covers of a flourishing new genre of women's magazines such as *Ling Long* 玲瓏 (the English name of the magazine was *Lin Loon*), a magazine published in Shanghai from 1931 to 1937. The inaugural issue of *Ling Long* in 1931 featured content such as news about International Women's Day on March 8, a list of six things a woman should do to prevent her husband from taking a mistress, a report on a charity ball, a still from the American film *New Moon* starring Lawrence Tibbett and Grace Moore, and an ad for Holmes Cigarettes, all liberally interspersed with photographs of women with waved hair and Western fashions.⁷³



The image of the New Woman was also used in advertisements for products such as batteries and Coca-Cola.⁷⁴ She appeared on the silver screen in films of the energetic young Chinese film industry in the 1920s and 1930s, including the 1935 silent film *New Woman*.⁷⁵ She was depicted in literature in

characters such as “Meilin” in Ding Ling’s short story “Shanghai, Spring 1930.” In the course of the story, Meilin, who begins the story as a “gentle and soft” woman happy to be completely dependent on her man, transforms into a passionate Communist Party member who finds fulfillment in a larger political cause.⁷⁶ Like Nurse Yang, Meilin went from a life shaped through her private relationship with a man to a life defined by her activities in the public sphere.

Figure 4.4 In the age of the New Woman, an increasing number of Chinese women, like these young women in Beijing around 1930, wore *qipao* with modern fabrics and a closely fitting semi-Western cut, donned Western high-heeled shoes, and sported Western short, curled hairstyles.

Credit: Hulton Getty Collection.

Romantic relationships in the age of the New Woman can be seen in the story of Mao Zedong and his second wife Yang Kaihui 楊開慧. In his youth, Mao Zedong had ardently supported the notion of women’s liberation from Confucian customs and structural inequality. The Confucian family system had affected him personally as a teenager when his parents had arranged a marriage between him and a girl from a neighboring village. He refused to acknowledge her as his wife, however, and expressed a longing for a loving relationship of mutual choosing. This came to pass when in 1920 he became romantically involved with his former teacher’s beautiful and articulate daughter, Yang Kaihui. Yang Kaihui, who attended a missionary school in Changsha, also partook of the age’s Western ideologies on autonomous choice and free love. “I did not expect to be so lucky,” she wrote. “I had a man I loved. I really loved him so much. I had been in love with him after I had heard a lot about him, and had read many of his articles and diaries.”⁷⁷ After a period of living as lovers, they married. In 1922, Kaihui joined the Chinese Communist Party and gave birth to her first son, Anying 岸英. A second son, Anqing 岸青, was born in 1923, and a third son, Anlong 岸龍, was born in 1927. Despite Mao’s youthful countercultural gender declarations, in the early years of their marriage Mao and Yang Kaihui had a traditional domestic arrangement in which Yang Kaihui stayed home with the children and Mao went out to work.⁷⁸

(p.135) It is possible that Mao and Nurse Yang crossed each other's paths in the busy thoroughfares of the tri-cities of Wuhan, where in 1927 Mao was wearing two hats as a Communist organizer and a high-level official within the Nationalist Party. The Communist–Nationalist alliance was less of a love match and more of an arranged marriage, with agents of the Soviet Union as matchmakers.⁷⁹ In an age of disillusionment about Western democracy and in the ruins of China's parliamentary experiment, both the newborn Chinese Communist Party and Sun Yat-sen's Nationalist Party had reason to try another organizational model. With substantial support from the Soviet Comintern (the organ of the Soviet state dedicated to spreading international revolution), in 1923 the Nationalists and the Communists formed a "United Front" in which the Communists would exist as a bloc within the Nationalist Party.⁸⁰

Despite the role Christian institutions had played in processes of modernization, such as the anti-footbinding campaigns and the schools in which Nurse Yang had gotten her start, the Nationalists' and Communists' materialist ideology led them to take a hard stance on Christianity for its connections to foreign imperialism. In a decade in which foreigners owned nearly half of the Chinese cotton industry (the largest industry in the country), a third of the railways (with mortgages on the rest of the railways), and more than half the shipping in Chinese waters, the crippling influence of foreign imperialism was impossible to deny. In the first Chinese Communist Party periodical, the *Guide* 嚮導, founded in 1922, editor Chen Duxiu frequently criticized Christianity as a vanguard of the foreign capitalist invasion.⁸¹

Nationalism proved a powerful recruitment tool for political activity among ordinary people, including urban workers such as Nurse Yang. On May 30, 1925, British forces in Shanghai fired on and killed Chinese civilians at a public protest and sparked a surge of nationwide anti-imperialist and anti-Christian movements. Thousands of women participated in rallies, strikes, and boycotts to express their outrage at the events of May Thirtieth, taking on new roles in the public sphere.⁸² The author Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶, who was the editor of the Shanghai Commercial Press at the time of the May Thirtieth Incident, wrote a novel based on his own experiences that portrayed the female demonstrators as heroic and militant:

But then a sharp cry cut through the rainy humid air: "Down with imperialism!" Huanzhi quickly looked and saw Miss Yin from the school. She stood in the middle of the road, water dripping from her short hair. She wore a dark blouse and a black skirt that reflected bright drops of water. Her arms were held high, her head turned to the sky. She looked like a valiant goddess.⁸³

(p.136) Not only intellectuals, teachers, and students, but also laborers such as textile workers began to take part in politics, fueling the expansion of Communist Party membership from under a thousand in early 1925 to more than 57,000 by the spring of 1927.⁸⁴ These new recruits included women. By September of 1925, the number of women Communist recruits had risen to around 1,000, ten times what it had been before the May Thirtieth Incident.⁸⁵ Yet that spring the Communist movement suffered a heavy blow. In the midst of a joint Communist–Nationalist “Northern Expedition” to reunify China, after capturing Shanghai in the spring of 1927, Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石, the general who led the Nationalists after Sun Yat-sen’s 1925 death, decided to terminate the alliance. He orchestrated a surprise attack on all known Communists, killing many and forcing those who escaped into hiding.⁸⁶ Mao Zedong, who had been working as an alternate member of the Nationalist Central Committee in Wuhan, escaped the purge but was forced to retreat with thousands of other Communists to the mountainous area of Jinggangshan 井岡山 in the border region of Jiangxi 江西 and Hunan 湖南 Provinces.⁸⁷ In the meantime, Jiang’s troops continued the Northern Expedition until in 1928 Jiang controlled enough territory to declare the establishment of a new national government with the capital in Nanjing.

The split between the Communists and the Nationalists set them on two different courses with regard to discourse and policies on women, further complicating the question of what it meant to be a woman in China during the Republican era. In Communist-controlled areas, Mao and his associates instituted political and social reforms, including quotas to ensure representation of women in party offices and policies in which divorce could be granted even if only one party wanted it (with an exception made for Red Army soldiers, whose wives could not divorce them without their consent).⁸⁸ In the Communist base areas such as Jinggangshan, women joined the army and the party. In 1927, an eighteen-year-old girl named He Zizhen 賀子珍 joined the local guerrilla forces where Mao was stationed. She was from an elite local family, had been educated in a Swedish missionary school, and was renowned among the guerrillas for her ability to shoot both left- and right-handed from horseback.⁸⁹ Her nickname was “The Two-Gunned Girl General,” and she soon became Mao’s third wife. Mao never divorced Yang Kaihui, and Yang Kaihui never denounced Mao, even to the day of her execution in Changsha by troops of a Nationalist general in November 1930.⁹⁰

From their new aspiring “national” government in Nanjing, the Nationalists set out to implement their own programs. Their government institutions won them a measure of legitimacy around the country and around the world. The legislative branch of the government was a national assembly that included representatives from all China’s provinces and cities as well as representatives from various occupations and functional constituencies, such as peasant associations, **(p. 137)** labor unions, and industrial organizations. Once selected, the national assembly began the process of drafting a new constitution.⁹¹

At the peak of revolutionary fervor in 1926, when the Communists worked within the Nationalist Party to advance the revolutionary cause in China, Nationalist organizers claimed to have organized as many as eighty thousand rural women in provincial peasant associations. Women in these peasant associations focused on issues of community and class, along with smaller numbers of women in women’s associations taking on issues such as anti-footbinding, free-choice marriage and divorce, and domestic violence against maids, concubines, and wives.⁹² Yet, after the one-sided severing of the Nationalist–Communist alliance in 1927 and the ascension of the Nationalist Party to power, this revolutionary culture unraveled, and women who had participated in it suffered a backlash. Female Communist organizers were hunted down and killed by the hundreds.⁹³ When the Nationalist commander Xiao Douyin ordered his troops to suppress the peasant associations in Hubei Province, they reportedly “cut open the breasts of the women comrades, pierced their bodies perpendicularly with iron wires, and paraded them naked through the streets.”⁹⁴

Having campaigned for power on a revolutionary platform and obtained it, the Nationalist Party consolidated its control by reorganizing the government bureaucracy and discouraging social activism. Nationalist leaders encouraged Chinese women to draw on what they supposed to be the “essence” of traditional Chinese womanhood (a spirit of self-sacrifice) as they stepped into the modern world.⁹⁵ This preference for traditional constructions of womanhood also appeared in elite male discourse on modern womanhood that depicted education and intellect as desirable, not because they helped women to push back against Chinese patriarchy, but because they made women better companions for modern (but still patriarchal) men.⁹⁶ In this sense, even modern professional women such as Nurse Yang were expected to continue to play traditional roles as wives and mothers, but with unbound feet, educational degrees, and a sense of duty to the nation.

Deaconess Yang: Charismatic Healer and Organizer

Amid the jumble of old and new ways to be a woman in China in the 1920s, the arc of the life of Mrs. Yang-turned-Nurse-Yang ultimately bent neither toward Confucian family roles nor toward the modern New Woman in her Christian or secular forms. In the third and final era of her life, Deaconess Yang walked away from her career in modern medicine and chose to spend the rest of her life in **(p.138)** prayer, preaching, and the establishment of collective religious life. Her activities and authority within the True Jesus Church community at the end of her life contrast strikingly with both her attempt to fulfill the traditional roles of wife and daughter-in-law and her career as a trained nurse in a modern urban hospital. At the same time, however, the culture and structures of the True Jesus Church in the 1920s reflected a mixed milieu of traditional and modern roles for women.⁹⁷

Understanding women of the True Jesus Church in the Republican era gives us a clearer picture of the vast majority of Chinese women whose lives occupied the space between the dutiful Confucian daughter-in-law and the cigarette-smoking, free-loving New Woman. For many women, the ideological and organizational structures within religious organizations helped to hold old and new together. For example, in the 1920s and 1930s women within the World-Wide Ethical Society, a society dedicated to synthesizing the world's great moral philosophies under the umbrella of Confucianism, saw themselves as both exemplifying traditional feminine virtues and being fiercely independent, even revolutionary.⁹⁸ Like the women of the World-Wide Ethical Society, women of the True Jesus Church drew upon a mixture of traditional cultural tropes, modern tools and discourses, and their own distinctive ideology, doctrines, and rites as they charted the course of their lives. Their participation in the True Jesus Church provided points of entry into the modern structures of Chinese society, but also created pathways that bypassed and transcended society's prevailing norms.

True Jesus Church Women and Modern Print Culture

One example of how the True Jesus Church connected women to modernizing processes was its flourishing national print culture. Literary journals, magazines, and newspapers proliferating all over China in the 1920s connected mass audiences with shared ideas, narratives, and identity. A boom in mass religious publishing around this same time was part of the same phenomenon.⁹⁹ Centrally distributed publications of the True Jesus Church such as *Global Church Correction* 萬國更正教報 (1919–1920) and *Holy Spirit Times* 聖靈報 (1924–1951) reached church congregations as far away as Malaysia and the Philippines.¹⁰⁰ This church print culture created a textual community. The shared texts of the Bible and church publications facilitated shared identity that transcended national boundaries. Between 1919 and 1938, at least twenty-one magazines and newspapers circulated within the True Jesus Church, including not only the previously mentioned two centrally distributed periodicals but also smaller newspapers produced in regional strongholds of the True Jesus Church such as Changsha 長沙, Hunan, and (p.139) Putian 莆田, Fujian 福建.¹⁰¹ In addition to these periodicals, church printing centers from Tianjin to Wuchang to Fuzhou produced at least forty-five printed works ranging from hymnals (e.g., *Hymns of the Holy Spirit*) to gospel teachings (*Key Bible Passages*) to collections of members' testimonies (*Brief Record of Miraculous Testimonies*).¹⁰²

True Jesus Church print culture had the same function as secular print culture in delivering a message to a large audience. Like the Marxist editor Chen Duxiu and revolutionary feminist Qiu Jin, True Jesus Church women engaged in the exchange of ideas with large, unseen communities through paper. For example, women signed their names to published articles in the True Jesus Church periodical *Global Church Correction* 萬國更正教報 in July 1919. Some wrote to warn readers that “the Savior is coming again to judge the world; people must repent and believe in Christ and receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit as evidence that they have been saved.”¹⁰³ Others supported a testimonial in praise of Zhang Lingsheng, the “bishop of Shandong,” saying that “through him, the True God has awakened the world.”¹⁰⁴

In addition to using print to broadcast messages into the world, True Jesus Church women also used it to write open letters to each other and to promote a shared identity and culture. In a November 22, 1919, issue of *Global Church Correction*, fifteen women from Yuanshi County wrote to console Wei's bereaved wife Liu Ai 劉 and daughter Huiying 劉愛. They also testified to the efficacy of a new practice that had just begun to spread throughout the True Jesus Church and that continued for around two years thereafter: the adoption of a common surname, Ye 耶 (the character used to transliterate both “Jehovah” [Yehehua 耶和華] and “Jesus” [Yesu 耶穌]). These True Jesus Church women also adopted a common personal name, Maria (Maliya 馬利亞). “Already one hundred congregations of the True Jesus Church have united into one family and changed their surnames to Ye,” the women's letter read. The letter closed with fifteen “Ye Maria” signatures, each followed by a two-character original personal name.¹⁰⁵

To the extent that they subsumed their individual personalities under one symbolic religious name and pressured other women to conform to this practice, the women of the True Jesus Church were nowhere close to the free-loving, freewheeling New Women featured on the Shanghai silver screens. And yet to rename themselves according to an ideological discourse that they had chosen, just as in the case of Deaconess Yang’s decision to be known as “True Way,” was a way of setting the terms for their own existence.¹⁰⁶ Just as a group of women in one small part of southwestern Hunan Province created and maintained their own “women’s script” that allowed them to form exclusively female social networks, women of the True Jesus Church who became “Ye Maria” [“Mary, of the family of Jehovah and Jesus”] extracted a foreign but powerful female name from the (p.140) Bible and used it to unite and redefine themselves as a group of Chinese Christian women.¹⁰⁷

Topics discussed in *Holy Spirit Times* intersected with topics discussed in broader popular culture. For instance, one article in the July 20, 1928, issue of *Holy Spirit Times*, “The True Meaning of the ‘New Woman’ ” acknowledged that the image of the New Woman was very popular (see Figure 4.5).

However, cautioned the author, Zhang Barnabas, a nationally prominent True Jesus Church evangelist and leader, the only way for a woman or man to become truly “new” was by becoming “a new bride united with Christ.”¹⁰⁸

The printed publications that circulated within the True Jesus Church show the influence of not only religious ideas and church policies, but also broader interpretations of morality and behavior that reveal other cultural or political influences. One of the hymns in *Spirit Songs* 靈歌, a hymn collection written by Wei Isaac in 1924, issued prescriptions for a happy family life:

*Children, you should honor your parents,
The father who labors hard and the mother who endures bitterness
to raise you . . .*



*Mothers-in-law, you
should love your
daughter-in-law.
You must never say
that she was bought
with silver,
But should treat her as
your own daughter . . .*

*Daughters-in-law, you
should honor your
mother-in-law.
You must never say that she is not your true mother . . .*

*Husband, you should love your wife.
You must never beat her indiscriminately or constantly find fault . . .*

*Wives, you should love your husband.
In great and small things consult with him and be obedient,
Be humble and patient as you receive God's gospel.
Those who listen to the Lord's word, although their bodies die,
Yet will their spirits see the Father in Heaven.*

Figure 4.5 July 20, 1928, issue of Holy Spirit Times. The cover image shows a Spiritual Convocation meeting in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province. One of the articles in the table of contents is titled "The True Meaning of the 'New Woman.' "

Credit: Holy Spirit Times, July 20, 1928

This hymn, #66, "Love in the Whole Family," showed how True Jesus Church moral discourse drew heavily on traditional Confucian morality while adding a Christian rationale. Recalling the line from Deaconess Yang's biography, "the church was her family and the Word was her work," one wonders whether her status as a widow with no husband or mother-in-law to obey gave her an additional measure of freedom in defining her role within church leadership. **(p. 141)**

(p.142) Another hymn, #148, "Believers Love the Fatherland," depicted the specter of imminent domination by the imperialist powers as similar to the sad state of conquered Israel in the Bible. The first verse of this song read:

*Christians love the Fatherland;
This is how it should be.
First the guo 國 and then the jia 家;
The two cannot be separated.¹⁰⁹
Lord Jesus wept and mourned on behalf of the Fatherland,
But the Jews did not repent.
In the end they were destroyed.
Believers, love the Fatherland! Believers, love the Fatherland!
Do not be like the Jews,
Who even unto death did not repent.*

This hymn, with its biblical allusions, was far from a straightforward parroting of nationalist slogans circulating within China in the 1920s. However, by using the patriotic term Fatherland 祖國 it affirmed the significance of the nation as a community to which church members belonged. Its admonition that the Fatherland was in dire straits and in need of Christians' support aligned with the widespread popular rhetoric of national salvation. This was a reversal from the earliest days of the True Jesus Church, when founder Wei Enbo had taught that patriotism was a sin.

Of course, hymn texts by themselves are simply pedantic poetry. A hymn does not sing itself. What makes a hymn a hymn is not the text alone, but its aptitude for collective vocal production and hence its ability to create collective ritual. Christian congregational singing, moreover, is not something to be taken for granted but rather is a vocal performance requiring mental attention, physical artistry, and emotional engagement in order to succeed. Women within the True Jesus Church participated in the collective singing of hymns in both formal and informal worship settings. Although we have no audio recordings to measure women's enthusiastic response to a beloved hymn or apathetic treatment of a less popular hymn, we can be certain that congregational cultures were subtly shaped by women's individual and collective responses to hymns. Printed hymnbooks allowed True Jesus Church women to cultivate and participate in a congregational culture that existed not only in paper and ink but in breath, sound, memory, and affect. By sending their voices into the collective atmosphere, by preferring some hymns and forgoing others, by taking the hymn texts and tunes into their memories, True Jesus Church women shaped the way in which the numerous **(p.143)** circulating printed religious texts came to life within local, regional, and church-wide culture.

Women of the True Jesus Church thus used printed materials to contribute to a national church culture that integrated themes and values from traditional Confucian culture and the new national modernizing culture as it became rooted in the particularities of local congregational life. This was a form of public life that may be less visible to a twenty-first-century historian than political associations or labor unions, but it sprang from the same ethos of large-scale organization and the development of shared culture. By encouraging the adoption of a biblical name, reading and discussing Bible passages from a certain perspective, or preferring certain hymns for vocal production and memorization, women of the True Jesus Church created an "imagined community." Its boundaries were marked not by geographical proximity or social class but by shared practices, rites, rhetoric, and worldview.¹¹⁰

Women in Church Hierarchies

A second way in which women's experiences within the True Jesus Church connected them to modern structures was in formal church government. In the congregations of the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment (i.e., mission denominations and Chinese churches that had become independent but still maintained close ties), women were vital to organizational life but did not frequently hold positions within the formal governing hierarchies.¹¹¹ In his study of female converts in American Baptists and English Presbyterian missions, Joseph Tse-Hei Lee notes that, in these missions, "institutionally women were barred from formal leadership positions"; "however, there was a middle ground in which women worked closely with men in advancing the interests of the church and mediating between the church, state, and local community."¹¹²

In contrast to their sisters in the churches of the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment, True Jesus Church women participated in the formal structures of church government as deaconesses like Deaconess Yang or as "representatives" within the General Assembly, identified in church publications as the church's "highest-authority organization," or as "councilors" within the Councilors Assembly, a "supervisory body" with authority comparable to the General Assembly.¹¹³ They were a minority presence, to be sure, but in an age in which even most Western missionary women were excluded from ecclesiastical hierarchy, this presence was significant.

Outside the ecclesiastical hierarchy, women of the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment could have salaried careers as Biblewomen, women who explained biblical passages and taught biblical literacy to other women.¹¹⁴ Some women **(p.144)** developed independent careers as revivalists, traveling from place to place as they were invited by local churches to reenergize the congregation's spiritual life (often through charismatic manifestations). However, within these establishment congregations, women were less frequently ordained to positions of ecclesiastical authority set out in the Bible such as the offices of deacons, elders, or bishops. In the True Jesus Church, by contrast, from the early years of the church women were ordained to the ecclesiastical office of "Deaconess" [女执事, "female deacon"]. This was the office held by Deaconess Yang by virtue of her spiritual gifts and single-minded dedication (see two other prominent deaconesses in Figures 4.6 and 4.7).

見以上各名錄之原師也。

黃季俠女執事傳

與母李太夫人傳記

黃華清

名素行，單名季俠，湖南榔縣，長嫗禮訓，針黹宏講，無一不答，而商俱到，尤擅言談，且覽羣書，凡經史詩集，諸子百誦，修養湛深，自十六歲于歸，俯蓄，悉承親意，待人接物，一本至姑極心。並命其主持中饋，斯時先父，大小不下數百人，吾每週旋其間，家稱頌，先父新世後，全家扶掖歸寧，期間，外則擇地安葬，內則誦經超度，與馬踵接，無一不由吾母獨任其勞，物質消耗過鉅，乃徇諸父執之請，按所居，吾母攜領子女四人，卜居省垣

神造，咸信精誠所至金石為開之不誣，教友中貧病無告者，則盡量調濟，並為禱告，至於痛哭流淚，真有已饑已渴之概，凡此種種，無論在何地方，均持之恆從未間歇，數十年如一日，二十三年還歸故里，鑒於當地缺乏真耶穌教會，乃許願開辦，節衣縮食，倍受艱辛，開始僅一二親友聽道，後教友漸增每逢教友有疾，即流行甚速之霍亂，吾母必親往禱告或接至會堂禱告，不畏傳染，遇有癩瘋精神病，亦要來會禱告，不置庭頃，每日熱心祈禱，長



黃季俠遺照

Figure 4.6 True Jesus Church Deaconess Huang Li Xia (1868-1942), featured alongside Deaconess Yang Zhendao in a collection of biographies of notable church members.

Credit: True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume, 1948

From the beginning of the church's General Assembly meetings, held every three years, women delegates had been a fairly regular if minority presence in decision-making bodies that regulated and defined the True Jesus Church. Liu Ai, wife of church founder Wei Enbo, was the lone woman formally participating in the first General Assembly of the church in 1920. This meeting was held in quarters above Wei's En Xin Yong silk shop in Beijing shortly after Wei's death. At this meeting the representatives voted to make Wei Isaac, Wei Enbo's son, the head of the True Jesus Church and to establish the church's headquarters in Beijing.¹¹⁵ Because the world did not come to an end by 1922, as Wei (p. 145) Enbo had predicted, the church continued to strengthen its institutions, holding a second General Assembly in Wuchang in 1922. No obviously female names are on the roster of eighteen delegates from eleven provinces, although it is possible that 陳清潔 [Chen Pure and Clean] or 王真光 [Wang True Light] could have been women.¹¹⁶

At the third General Assembly meeting in Changsha 1924, a woman named Zhang Maria 張馬利亞 was a representative from Weixian 濰縣 in Shandong 山東 Province. Weixian was the home province of prominent church leader Zhang Barnabas 張巴拿巴, possibly Zhang Maria's husband, who had by now spent many years planting True Jesus Church congregations in central and southern China, particularly in the provinces of Jiangsu and Fujian.¹¹⁷ This third General Assembly meeting in Changsha marked the beginning of a temporary split between the southern churches (led by Zhang Barnabas) and northern churches (led by Wei Isaac) from 1924 to 1930.¹¹⁸ Eventually, in 1930, the southern and northern churches reunited under the leadership of Wei Isaac and expelled Zhang Barnabas.¹¹⁹



For the sake of this discussion of how women exercised leadership within the formal structures of the church, let us examine the expanded organizational **(p. 146)** processes put into place at the 1924 General Assembly meeting in Changsha. At this meeting, delegates affirmed a church charter that set out rules of order. For instance, all representatives had the right to speak during the assembly but had to abide by a ten-minute limit or else be cut short by a bell from the chairman. Questions or problems had to be resolved consecutively, one at a time, and competing solutions had to be settled by a two-thirds majority. A revised church constitution was to be prepared at the close of each General Assembly, printed up, and distributed throughout the church as an authoritative guide. Separate dormitory quarters were to be set up for male and female representatives and separately overseen by male and female attendants.¹²⁰ This last regulation shows how quite early in the church's history, True Jesus Church leaders institutionalized women's participation in central church governance.

Women continued to participate actively as church processes of bureaucratic regulation expanded. At the fourth General Assembly meeting in Nanjing in 1926, at least two out of thirty-nine representatives (Lin Julia 林猶利亞 and Guo Lydia 郭呂底亞) were women. At this meeting the delegates revised the church charter and created a General Headquarters staffed by seven central administrators as the top body for church administration.¹²¹ At the fifth General Assembly in Shanghai in 1928, three women among thirty-eight total representatives (Chen Maria 陳馬利亞, a Mrs. Chen née Guo 陳郭氏, and a Mrs. Huang née Guo 黃郭氏) revised the church charter so that it now contained 90 articles.¹²² At the sixth General Assembly meeting in 1929, again held in Shanghai, four women among twenty-seven total representatives (Chen Maria 陳馬利亞, Lin Julia 林猶利亞, Mrs. Zhang née Chen Jiying 張陳季英, and Wu Joanna 吳約亞拿) revised the charter again so that it contained 112 articles. By this point the Headquarters staff had increased from seven to eight.¹²³

At an important seventh General Assembly meeting, in Shanghai in 1930, two women, Wang Shuying 王淑英 and Zhang Eunice 張友尼基, were among the twenty-six total representatives who unanimously excommunicated Zhang Barnabas for claiming to have been the original founder and hence paramount leader of the True Jesus Church.¹²⁴ Both Wang Shuying and Zhang Eunice were from church branches in the southern province of Fujian, a stronghold of loyalty to Zhang, but they signed their names to the long document condemning Zhang's "ridiculous claims" and "extreme arrogance."¹²⁵

At the eighth General Assembly meeting, in Shanghai, at least one woman, Chen Maria 陳馬利亞, was a representative. This conference emphasized nationwide “cooperation with the General Headquarters” and established a three-year central plan for church development.¹²⁶ Chen Maria also held a nationally prominent position as a “Councilor” 代議員, a member of a supervisory Councilors Assembly established in 1929 to assist Headquarters with regulation of the (p.147) regional church “branches” 支部 and to regulate Headquarters itself.¹²⁷ Because the General Assembly met only on two- to three-year intervals on average, the body of Councilors could respond to urgent affairs and coordinate between local and central organization. A hand-notated schematic diagram in a 1936 publication showed the overall administration of the True Jesus Church along the lines of branches of government. The “executive body” was the General Headquarters, the “legislative body” was the General Assembly, and the “judicial body” was administered by the General Headquarters. General Headquarters was labeled “court of final appeal” after the “appeals court” level at the regional branch administration and the “initial trial” at the level of an individual church.¹²⁸

This explicit characterization of ecclesiastical administration in terms of a democratic government suggests the increased political and organizational sophistication of ordinary Chinese citizens, including women, in the Republican era. Despite the dysfunction of the parliamentary system that governed the Chinese state, this was a time when popular associations flourished, including religious organizations. Religious leaders and lay believers from Buddhist, Daoist, Confucian, Muslim, and Chinese popular religious traditions adapted the Protestant Christian model of a centralized national bureaucracy and a prolific devotional print culture.¹²⁹ Groups such as the World-Wide Ethical Society attracted women from all ages and walks of life as supporters and lecturers. They traveled far and wide preaching about Confucian morality and as well as ways in which women could improve the world through breast-feeding, women’s education, and prenatal education.¹³⁰ True Jesus Church women such as Deaconess Yang similarly traveled from place to place, preaching, ministering to individuals, and organizing new churches. These physical journeys also took them very far, ideologically, from the still-influential Confucian notions that women should remain within the inner quarters of the house, never mingling with men.

Hence Deaconess Yang Zhendao’s participation in the True Jesus Church did not mesh with the state’s project of inculcating modern Chinese citizens with secular rationality, nor did it directly support political activities such as the work of national representative assemblies. In other ways, however, the activity of women within the True Jesus Church showed how democratic organizational modes were no longer only part of an elite culture but had reached the grassroots.

The expansion in the church's bureaucratic governance strained the connection to the church's charismatic founding ideas and practices. In 1948, a church publication addressed this tension directly when it recounted the history of the establishment of the Councilors Assembly in the 1920s: "Some people might say, 'The church is a spiritual organization—why does it need to establish a system for supervision?'"¹³¹ The article went on to argue that the Bible in fact showed how God had instituted various hierarchical and supervisory systems, from the **(p.148)** prophets of the Old Testament to the bishops of the New Testament. What is clear from this statement is that within the church, God's divine purposes and deliberate interventions (i.e., charismatic power) continued to be the basis on which organizational authority was legitimized. Scholarship on religious movements around the world has demonstrated a strong relationship between charismatic experience and women's religious authority.¹³² Because of the value ascribed to charismatic practice within the True Jesus Church, Deaconess Yang's spiritual gifts (as demonstrated by her experience of hands-on healing) enabled her to wield significant authority within her local community. The necessity of access to charismatic power also justified the participation of other women in the high governing councils of the church.

Charismatic Power and the Women of the True Jesus Church

Thus far we have discussed two ways in which True Jesus Church women's participation in organized church communities facilitated engagement with the cutting edge of modernization in Chinese society: print culture and formal organizational structures. Both of these examples complicate our understanding of the relationship among women, religious groups, and modernity. A third way in which the True Jesus Church can teach us about women, religion, and modernity is in its history of women coproducing miraculous experiences, which challenges the assumption that patriarchal religion is always a reactionary, oppressive force within women's lives. True Jesus Church communities prioritized a charismatic frame of reference in which God's power and will were of utmost importance. Within this framework, the ethos of obeying God's commandments over all else gave women a degree of liberation from other prevailing narratives of what they were supposed to do and be.

In the long history of Christianity in China, Catholic virgins and Protestant Biblewomen had similarly found within Christianity alternative gender roles that afforded them an unusual degree of independence and community influence.¹³³ For example, Catholic virgins, also known as “beatas” (women who took a vow of chastity and devoted their life to religious service), had the authority to baptize children on the brink of death. During a famine in eastern Sichuan in 1778, they saved as many as 27,000 children from the eternal damnation expected for the unbaptized.¹³⁴ They also served as pastoral authorities and a living repository of prayers during a time when visits by priests and published religious resources were few and far between. Beatas frequently conducted prayer chants at church, offered pious readings, and admonished sinners.¹³⁵ Protestant Biblewomen in the nineteenth century tended to be poorer women whose lives had gone off **(p. 149)** the rails of an ideal life-course through widowhood and who supported themselves through church employment.¹³⁶ In contrast to the vast majority of lower-class Chinese women, Biblewomen learned how to read Chinese characters or Romanized scripts, becoming teachers of literacy as well as Bible lessons.¹³⁷

In the same vein as beatas and Biblewomen, True Jesus Church women, including but not limited to those who held formal positions of church authority as deaconesses and preachers, engaged with their Christian religion as a knowledge field—an arena of accomplishment within which they wielded expertise and authority. Just as one scholar has demonstrated that embroidery was a form of local practice and knowledge through which women of the gentry class could exercise agency and subjectivity, both well-to-do and poor women within the True Jesus Church had a commanding mastery of a repertoire of practices such as Bible-reading, Bible interpreting, prayer, testimony, healing, exorcism, and tongues-speaking. By employing these practices with skill and moral authority, they shaped not only their communities but—from their point of view—the fate of humanity itself.¹³⁸ Despite the prevailing Confucian-Christian patriarchy that certainly influenced gender norms within church communities, women’s charismatic practice acted as a counterweight to formal patriarchal power.

Numerous studies, including studies of Pentecostal women, have set out to explain women's participation in and even contentment with patriarchal Christian traditions. One scholar, pointing out the fact that women tend to be more religious than men, summarized the issue with the question, "Why do women disproportionately participate in an institution that systematically devalues them?" Her answer was that women perceive inequality but cope with it by "cognitive restructuring"; women are willing to cope with inequality in part because it is peripheral to their faith experience.¹³⁹ In a similar vein, and speaking specifically about Pentecostal women, Harvey Cox has asked, "Why would these women want to be Pentecostals, let alone Pentecostal preachers? Why would they want to become part of a religious movement which still, at least formally, insists that the man must be 'the head of the woman' at home, and also in the church (unless God makes exceptions)? Why are women drawn in such lopsided numbers to Pentecostalism?" His conclusion dovetails with that of Elizabeth Brusco, which is that, "for women, the Pentecostal message provided the best way they could see to effect a genuine change in their family relations, to get their men to forgo some of the macho posturing the popular culture encourages, and to reorder the priorities on how the limited family income was spent."¹⁴⁰

Some have argued that women trapped within patriarchal religious traditions find innovative ways to subvert male domination.¹⁴¹ Others have suggested that social or cultural benefits, such as being involved in a caring community or having a stable nuclear family, form the core of the positive meaning women derive from **(p.150)** their religious participation, whereas the formal exclusion of women from ecclesiastical hierarchies is a peripheral issue.¹⁴² Some studies have pointed out that nineteenth-century Mormon women who practiced polygamy reaped social and economic benefits such as large kinship support networks and increased control over fertility, as well as sacerdotal power and the promise of heavenly glory that in these women's minds made their sacrifice worthwhile.¹⁴³ In some contexts, as in the case of Deaconess Yang in Republican China, conservative Christian gender roles may have been seen as relatively progressive or liberating for women, either in contrast to established Confucian traditions or through their emphasis on high standards of moral behavior for men.¹⁴⁴

Scholarship on Christian women is moving beyond the framework of "oppression versus liberation." Recent scholarship has developed what one historian calls "richer and more complicated frameworks for interpreting female religious activity and women's power within organizational bounds."¹⁴⁵ These scholars reject the assumption that to exercise agency means to rebel against or to resist existing structures and note that religious women also exercise agency as they choose to sustain or reproduce existing structures. In many cases, religious women simultaneously reject and affirm patriarchal structures.¹⁴⁶

Even though—as shown by the hymn admonishing women to obey their husbands in matters great and small—the True Jesus Church was a relatively patriarchal space, it provided an organizational and discursive framework that many women found attractive. In the words of another scholar, “Social structures may seem permanent and unchangeable, but they do not exist independently of human beings; they have to be reproduced by people in every generation.”¹⁴⁷ By choosing to participate in the collective life of the True Jesus Church, women coproduced a shared sacred space and cocreated community norms.¹⁴⁸ By cultivating everyday habits, interactions, and mutual expectations, women of the True Jesus Church produced a distinctive church culture within which charismatic practice thrived.

Women feature prominently in numerous miracle stories in the publications of the early Chinese Pentecostal churches from which the True Jesus Church sprang. In the September 1915 issue of *Popular Gospel Truth*, one report told of a woman whose reception of the Holy Spirit gave her the power to detect others’ secret sins and personality flaws and another told of a Mrs. Zhang who was transported to heaven during prayer, where she saw a tall man wearing white clothes.¹⁴⁹ Another story in the same report told of a Pentecostal woman who was being abused and starved by her husband because of her faith and who was then given a vision in which a voice told her not to mourn because Jesus would come in three years.¹⁵⁰ A May 1916 cover story from Yuanshi 元氏 County in Hebei told of numerous exorcisms, healings, involving two men (including the author, **(p.151)** Zhang Zhirui, later a friend of Wei Enbo’s in Beijing) and about eight women, including “Zhang Fuyun’s wife 張福雲的妻子,” “Zhang Fengyi’s girl 張風義的姑娘,” and so on.¹⁵¹ One report of a meeting in Tai’an 泰安, Shandong, in June 1916 mostly discussed women, such as a Mrs. Zhao 趙太太 who spoke in tongues and prophesied, and a “Sister Liu” and “two Sister Mas” who experienced “spirit-crying and spirit-laughing,” a woman who prophesied about the Final Judgment, and a Sister Feng who “spoke more tongues than anyone I have ever seen,” with the exception perhaps of the author’s wife, Mrs. Ma, who shortly thereafter spoke tongues in verse. The report was written by a man, but the majority of the subjects of the report were women.¹⁵² In April 1917, *Pentecostal Truths* published the visions of Hu Zhiying 胡志英, a woman who saw a shining cross, and Yuan Lizhen 袁勵貞, a woman who saw an angel.¹⁵³ In all of these stories, women gain access to God’s special power to see, hear, be exorcised, be healed, or utter things usually beyond the capacity of ordinary beings.

Women were a living, breathing, embodied presence within the congregations of the True Jesus Church. Although they left few documented historical traces, the significance of their physical presence among the actors and the audience for miracle stories cannot be overlooked. Just as hymns must be sung by a living pair of lungs in order to come alive in their intended form, charismatic power must be enacted or received within a living body in order to be “real.” The accounts of ways in which women’s physical bodies manifested charismatic realities within Christian communities are especially significant when we recall the scientific discourse (i.e. discourse invoking science, though not necessarily discourse informed by professional scientific expertise) that increasingly penetrated popular culture. A *Popular Gospel Truth* report on an Apostolic Faith revival meeting in Tai’an 泰安, Shandong, in 1917 gives a sense of the value of these dramatic charismatic manifestations for the entire faith community in an age of skepticism. It described a forty-seven-year-old woman who was overcome with the power of the Holy Spirit to the point that she convulsed with laughter for over an hour, while another woman, who was the leader of young girls within the church, received the Spirit and fell to the ground involuntarily. “These meetings all had the power of the Lord’s spirit, causing us to see with our own eyes and hear with our own ears and receive in our own bodies the beautiful evidence. Hallelujah!”¹⁵⁴

Some might say that these women’s experiences were ultimately not influential because they merely “received” involuntary charismatic experiences, as opposed to presiding over the congregation in a position of executive authority, just as women who sang a hymn written by a male leader might be seen as simply giving expression to his views. Yet I argue that this embodied, performed, mutually responsive presence has tremendous gravity that may outweigh the influence even **(p.152)** of formally recorded precepts and hierarchical chains of authority in shaping a religious movement. The power to discourse authoritatively from the pulpit is useless if no one turns up to hear the sermon. Power that one person derives from teaching charismatic doctrines will expire if no one else corroborates the validity of these claims in her own body. In the case of the Apostolic Faith community previously mentioned, women provided “beautiful evidence” vital to the ongoing viability of the movement.

In the early years of the True Jesus Church, women were frequently involved in coproducing experiences of healing and exorcism, as both physical recipients and ministers of healing.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes these miracles were performed by lay members and sometimes they were performed by women who held such official ecclesiastical titles as “preacher” 傳道 and “deaconess” 女執事. In the very earliest years of the church, but following Wei’s death, Wei’s second wife Liu Ai was called a “bishopess” 女監督 and recognized as one of the heads of the church.¹⁵⁶ Since the stabilization of church offices in the mid-1920s, the chief church offices have been preacher (male and female), deacon (male and female), and elder 長老 (male only). Preachers travel from place to place, and do not officially occupy positions within the administrative hierarchy of a local church unit, as deacons and elders do. In the True Jesus Churches in South and Central China that I studied, most women preachers were married to preacher husbands, so the couple could travel as one unit. Deacons and deaconesses gave sermons and participated in church rites such as baptism, footwashing, “asking for the Spirit,” and in spiritual ministrations such as healing and exorcism. Elders occupied the highest position of authority within the church as the keynote speakers at church meetings and the chief officiants of church rites.

One key reason that was given to me by contemporary church leaders (my only source on this matter) for women’s lack of access to the highest level of spiritual hierarchy is that the term “deaconess” (“女執事 female-deacon,” in the Union translation of the Chinese Bible) is used in the Bible, but there is no mention in the Bible of female elders. Ironically, the verse in 1 Timothy that contains the term “deaconess,” and thus holds the key to women’s ecclesiastical authority in the True Jesus Church, occurs in the context of a larger passage in which the Apostle Paul constrained women’s religious authority:

Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet woman will be saved through bearing children, if she continues in faith and love and holiness, with modesty **(p.153)**

Deacons . . . must be serious, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for gain; they must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then if they prove themselves blameless let them serve as deacons. The women [in the Chinese translation, “female deacons”] likewise must be serious, no slanderers, but temperate, faithful in all things.¹⁵⁷

Hence the biblical literalism of the True Jesus Church accepted scriptural statements of women's inferiority to men in the ecclesiastical and even spiritual hierarchy. At the same time, it relied on these scriptural statements to acknowledge a position of authority for women within these hierarchies. Literalist or fundamentalist interpretations of scripture are usually associated with conservative approaches to gender, but in this verse it was precisely this narrow literalism, along with the particular way in which the term had been translated into Chinese, that created an authoritative space for women within the True Jesus Church ecclesiastical hierarchy from its founding in 1919—an era in which such positions were not available to women in most supposedly liberal, enlightened Western mission denominations.

One early account of a True Jesus Church woman healing in an official ecclesiastical capacity reported that in 1926 a married woman from Anhui 安徽, Mrs. Yang née Hu 楊胡氏, was afflicted with sickness until a “deaconess from the Yu family” 余家女執事 came, laid hands on her head, and healed her.¹⁵⁸ Another account in 1927 related the story of a sick person who was healed by a deaconess.¹⁵⁹ A testimony of 1948 reported that a woman named Miss Lou 婁氏 was healed by Deaconess Chen 陳女執事 and Deaconess Wu 吳女執事.¹⁶⁰ In 1950 another account testified that when a Miss Xiao 肖氏 contracted leprosy, deaconess and prominent leader Liu Ai 劉愛 (Wei Enbo's wife) and another person went to pray for her, whereupon she was immediately healed.¹⁶¹ One especially vivid account from 1948 tells of a Mama Zhao 趙娘娘 who suddenly collapsed while packing sticky rice for the Dragon Boat Festival and who appeared dead for three hours while funeral clothes and a coffin were being prepared, only to be called back to life by two female True Jesus Church preachers, Chen Maria 陳馬利亞 and Shi Meiyang 施美英, who came to her house to pray for her.¹⁶² In all these cases women within the True Jesus Church played roles on both sides of the healing equation, as recipients embodying the miraculous response and as wielders of spiritual authority. In many cases they did so not singly, but with companions, suggesting ways in which church life increased women's opportunities for collaboration and connection.

That women could engage in the legitimate exercise of such ministerial power within the patriarchal structure of the True Jesus Church shows that formal, **(p. 154)** structural power within an organization is just one of many potent sources of influence. The ability to receive or to wield charismatic power is another source of community authority. Even within Protestant churches in China today, older women often occupy a place of respect and influence because they are seen as having special access to spiritual power by virtue of their exemplary piety and faith. Church members, including male ecclesiastical officers, go to these women with requests for spiritual assistance because these women are perceived as having a special relationship with God.¹⁶³

Chinese Superwomen: Neither Miniature nor Gigantic

One scholar of Chinese women's history has argued that there are two kinds of women's history in China: the "miniature" and the "gigantic." The gigantic history, that of the nation, has been widely analyzed because it is traceable through public documents and marked by a clear chronology of significant events. The miniature history, that of private individuals who never attained fame or notoriety, exists at the margins of this gigantic history. It is more difficult to trace because so often women's voices went unrecorded or were transcribed by others.¹⁶⁴ Few records remain of the daily activities or individual reflections of the vast majority of ordinary Chinese women during the Republican era who did not leave images of themselves behind in texts such as the manifestos of the communist martyr He Zhen 何震, the fiction of the feminist writer Ding Ling 丁玲, or the news and advertisements of commercial newspapers.

In the stories of the women of the True Jesus Church we get a sense of histories that were neither miniature nor gigantic, but something in between. Often, instead of being private and individual, these historical traces were collective and public: the story of a person's entry into a community, or the joint declaration of a group of women speaking to the world, or a tale of female companionship and mutual aid. Instead of adhering to the sweeping prescriptions of cultural fashions or government authorities for the modern New Woman, True Jesus Church communities evolved their own gender norms and their own gender-integrated communities within which women played a vital role. Throughout the numerous displacements of political power in the Republican era, across China the women of the True Jesus Church built stable institutions of local and national community governance and propagated a distinctive agenda for righteousness. These orderly structures of church collective life, both formal and informal, held together by women's daily practice, hummed with potential charismatic energy.

(p.155) The faint murmurs of collective strength left behind by so many during the 1920s and 1930s are often drowned out by cries of horror in an era of brutal, naked violence. Between 1928 and 1931, the Nationalist armies under Jiang Jieshi pursued a campaign of extermination against the remaining Communists. In their remote base areas, Communist leaders including Mao Zedong, now with his wife He Zizhen at his side, rebuilt their armies and also experimented with local governance. Mao in particular worked to build rapport between the peasants and the Red Army, describing the peasants as the sea in which the fish (i.e., the revolutionary soldiers) could swim. This rapport became a liability for local villagers as the Nationalist troops advanced. As they entered into Communist-controlled areas, Nationalist armies followed a policy of “draining the pond to catch the fish.” They killed all the able-bodied men, burned the villages, and seized or destroyed grain supplies. Divisions kept a tally of the number of “bandits” whom they had killed, first by collecting their heads, and later, when heads proved too bulky, their ears. One Nationalist division proudly reported collecting 700 pounds of ears.¹⁶⁵ In this bloody civil warfare, women and children were also raped, sold into slavery or prostitution, or killed by Nationalist armies.¹⁶⁶ In the context of the suppression of rebellious movements in Chinese history, including the Taiping Rebellion, such slaughter was comparatively restrained. The Communists’ own internal purges numbered in the tens of thousands.¹⁶⁷ However, in a new age of growing popular expectations for a democratic government responsible to the people, Nationalist violence hurt the legitimacy of Jiang’s government and added fuel to the slow-burning fire of Communist support. On September 18, 1931, Japan invaded Manchuria, the northeastern region of China, and the Nationalist campaign against the Communists was put on hold.

Amid the brewing political storm, women of the True Jesus Church such as Deaconess Yang traveled from house to house, town to town, county to county, establishing new nodes of the church’s network. They exhorted, preached, and testified on streets, in fields, in homes, and on the printed page. They laid their hands on the bodies of women and men to pray, heal, and exorcise. Beyond the well-known roles of the dutiful daughter-in-law and the liberated New Woman, the women of the True Jesus Church held their own ground as leaders in Chinese society in a time of cultural disorientation and political disorder. They used modern print culture to testify of miracles and participated in legislative structures to regulate and encourage charisma. They also embraced a mode of embodied, miraculous religiosity that provokes us to question our assumptions about the relative significance of formal religious power.

Access to formal ecclesiastical authority is often seen as the measure of women's influence and value within a religious tradition. Tellingly, women of the True Jesus Church had both more formal ecclesiastical authority than many (p. 156) of their Chinese and Western peers and less of this authority than their male counterparts. Beyond this, however, the prominence of women within the True Jesus Church's charismatic culture suggests that formal administration is not the only way religious women exercise influence and not the only standard by which women's religious life should be judged. Which is a more meaningful measure of spiritual power—the authority to sermonize to a congregation every Sunday or the authority to raise the dead?

Notes:

(1.) "Deaconess Yang Zhendao," in Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊* [*True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*] (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M25; there is also a brief biographical entry in a chart on *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M3. I have provided a supplementary explanation in brackets.

(2.) Daniel Bays, "Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920–1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144–164

(3.) "Deaconess Yang Zhendao," *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M25.

(4.) Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 11

(5.) Wang Zheng, ed., *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999)

(6.) Laurie Maffly-Kipp, "The Burdens of Church History," *Church History* 82, no. 2 (June 2013): 353–367

(7.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983)

(8.) *Finding Women in the State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2016)

(9.) Shijing 詩經 *Book of Poetry*, 小雅, 祈父之什, 斯干 *Minor Odes of the Kingdom, Decade of Qi Fu, Si Gan*. Chinese Text Project, <http://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/si-gan>.

(10.) Emily Martin Ahern, “The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women,” in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 193–214

(11.) Ahern, “Power and Pollution of Chinese Women,” Johannes Frick, “Mutter und Kind bei den Chinesen in Tsinghai, I: Die Sozialreligiöse Unreinheit der Frau,” *Anthropos* 50 (1955): 341–342

(12.) Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China’s Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 45–47

(13.) Elisabeth J. Croll, *The Politics of Marriage in Contemporary China* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 66

(14.) Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*, 58–61; Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 7; Sidney G. Peill, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Council for World Mission Archives/London Missionary Society/North China/Reports Box 8-1915-1921, SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(15.) Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman*, reprint of 1945 edition (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2011)

(16.) See Dorothy Ko’s extensive discussion of varying motives for footbinding throughout *Cinderella’s Sisters*.

(17.) Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han*, 22; also cited in Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*, 3.

(18.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 7

(19.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 147.

(20.) See Kang-i Sun Chang, Haun Saussy, and Charles Yim-Tze Kwong, *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Grace Fong and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers From Ming Through Qing* (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010); Gail Hershatter, *Women in China’s Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 82.

(21.) See, for example, the story of “Ning Lao Taitai” in Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han*.

(22.) Ann Waltner, "Widows and Remarriage in Ming and Early Qing China," in *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, ed. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen (Youngstown, NY: Philo Press, 1981), 129–146 (138); see also Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York: Viking, 1978), 59–76.

(23.) *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 99–100

(24.) Margery Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China," in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 111–141 Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China,"

(25.) Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*, 56.

(26.) Yan Wang, "Moving to Shanghai: Urban Women of Means in the Late Qing," in *Gender and Chinese History: Transformative Encounters*, ed. Beverly Jo Bossler (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 161–181

(27.) Grace S. Fong, "Embroidery as A Knowledge Field in Women's Everyday Life in Late Imperial and Early Republican China," *Late Imperial China* 25, no. 1 (2004): 1–58

(28.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 147 (memoirs of Lu Lihua), 261 (memoirs of Chen Yongsheng), 288 (memoirs of Huang Dinghui).

(29.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 223.

(30.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 262.

(31.) *Gender and Chinese History* Gail Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007) Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*

(32.) Beverly Jo Bossler, in Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 9.

(33.) Xiaofei Kang, "Women and the Religious Question in Modern China," in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850–2015, Vol. 1*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 491–559

(34.) Bernice J. Lee, "Female Infanticide in China," in Guisso and Johannesen, *Women in China*, 163–177.

(35.) Lee, "Female Infanticide in China," 167–168; Alison R. Drucker, "The Influence of Western Women on the Anti-Footbinding Movement 1840–1911," in Guisso and Johannesen, *Women in China*, 179–199; Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 495.

- (36.) Ryan Dunch, “‘Mothers to Our Country: Conversion, Education, and Ideology Among Chinese Protestant Women, 1870–1930,” in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010), 324–350
- (37.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 495.
- (38.) Drucker, “The Influence of Western Women,” 185.
- (39.) Drucker, “The Influence of Western Women,” 187; Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*, 14–17.
- (40.) Drucker, “The Influence of Western Women,” 187.
- (41.) Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 162Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*
- (42.) Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915–1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 7
- (43.) Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 8.
- (44.) Joan Judge, “The Fate of the Late Imperial ‘Talented Woman,’ ” in Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 139–160 (142–154).
- (45.) Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 12.
- (46.) Lu Xun, “New Year’s Sacrifice,” in *Death of a Madman and Other Stories*, trans. William Lyell (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), 219–241
- (47.) Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*Nüzi guowen jiaoke shu 女子國文教科書 *Girls’ Chinese Reader* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1921)*Girls’ Chinese Reader*
- (48.) *Girls’ Chinese Reader*, Lesson no.11.
- (49.) Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 100.
- (50.) *Girls’ Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 17.
- (51.) *Girls’ Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 5.
- (52.) *Girls’ Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 6.
- (53.) Dunch, “ ‘Mothers to Our Country,’ ” 327.
- (54.) Sidney G. Peill, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Cangzhou, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1915-1921, SOAS Archives & Special Collections. Missionaries adapted a phonetic system developed by a late Qing reformer named Wang Chao.

(55.) Sidney G. Peill, Paper written by request for the 1923 Conference of the China Medical Missionary Association, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports MF 755, Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections & Archives.

(56.) Shi Meiyu (Mary Stone, 1873–1954), Kang Cheng (Ida Kahn, 1873–1930) and Yang Chongrui (Marian Yang, 1891–1983) were among the most well-known Chinese woman doctors who went abroad in this period.

(57.) Connie Shemo, “‘To Develop Native Powers’: Shi Meiyu and the Danforth Memorial Hospital Nursing School, 1903–1920,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 292–311 (305).

(58.) John R. Stanley, “Establishing a Female Medical Elite: The Early History of the Nursing Profession in China,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 274–291 (281–287).

(59.) Pui-Lan Kwok, *Chinese Women and Christianity, 1860–1927* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992)

(60.) Dunch, “Mothers to Our Country,” 327.

(61.) Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women* Pui-Lan Kwok, “Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Daniel H. Bays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 194–208

(62.) Lee, “Gospel and Gender.” For other work showing connections between popular sectarianism and Christianity, see Daniel Bays, “Christianity and Chinese Sectarian Tradition,” *Ch’ing-shih wen-t’i* 4, no. 7 (June 1982): 33–35; Daniel Bays, “Christianity and Chinese Sects: Religious Tracts in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, ed. Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 122–134; R. G. Tiedemann, “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’: Mass Conversion and Syncretism in Shandong Province in the Early Eighteenth Century,” *Monumenta Serica* 44 (1996): 339–382; Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 86–90; Pui-Lan Kwok, “Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity,” 199–201.

(63.) Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 59–91

(64.) R. G. Tiedemann, “A Necessary Evil: The Contribution of Chinese ‘Virgins’ to the Growth of the Catholic Church in Late Qing China,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Christian Women*, 87–107.

(65.) To this day, many Chinese Christian congregations are self-segregated, with men sitting on one side and women sitting on the other side of the chapel.

(66.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 498–499.

(67.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 499.

(68.) Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 67–68; Vincent Goossaert, “Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Associations in 1912 China,” in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair May-Hui Yang (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); Wang Chien-ch’uan, “Spirit Writing Groups in Modern China (1840–1937): Textual Production, Public Teachings, and Charity,” in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 651–684 (674–675); David Ownby, “Redemptive Societies in the Twentieth Century,” in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 685–727; Ji Zhe, “Buddhist Institutional Innovations,” in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 731–766 (741–748); Xun Liu, “Daoism From the Late Qing to Early Republican Periods,” in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 806–837 (818–823).

(69.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 502. Kang argues that for many Chinese Christian women, “being a Christian woman was to be a modern New Woman, whereas traditional religious practices were associated with the old and backward Chinese past.”

(70.) Ka-che Yip, “China and Christianity: Perspectives on Missions, Nationalism, and the State in the Republican Period, 1912–1949,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 133–135

(71.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 507–509.

(72.) For a pictorial discussion of the *qipao*, see <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/clothing/11qipaos.htm>.

(73.) *Lin Loon Magazine*, 玲瓏圖畫雜誌, Issue 1 (1931). Scanned from original at Columbia University, accessed April 25, 2018, https://archive.org/details/linglong_1931_001.

(74.) Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai’i Press, 2007), 102–130 <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/graph/9posters.htm>

- (75.) See Yingjin Zhang, ed., *Cinema and Urban Culture in the Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Kristine Harris, “The New Woman: Image, Subject, and Dissent in 1930s Shanghai Film Culture,” *Republican China* 20, no. 2 (1995): 55–79.
- (76.) Sarah E. Stevens, “Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China,” *NWSA Journal* 15 (2003), no. 3
- (77.) Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 23
- (78.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 2004), 115–116
- (79.) Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 142–152.
- (80.) Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 60–64
- (81.) Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sumiko Yamamoto, “The Anti-Christian Movement in China, 1922–1927,” *Far Eastern Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (February 1953): 133–147
- (82.) Christina Kelley Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 133
- (83.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 134; Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (also known as Ye Shaojun) 葉紹鈞, Ni huanzhi 倪煥之 [Schoolmaster Ni Huanzhi] (Hong Kong: Sanda chuban gongsi, 1967), 188.
- (84.) Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong* (London and New York: Penguin, 1999), 70
- (85.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 133.
- (86.) Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 142–152.
- (87.) Spence, *Mao*, 75–79.
- (88.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 309–311.
- (89.) Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 37–38
- (90.) Chang and Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, 81.
- (91.) Harrison, *China*, 194.
- (92.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 167–172, 174–192.
- (93.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 199.

(94.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 199.

(95.) Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 132–133.

(96.) Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915–1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003)

(97.) Susan Glosser has pointed out that even the iconoclastic New Culture movement, which overlapped with the May Fourth Movement, did not make a clean break with tradition when it came to gender. Modern ideals still restricted women to the home, “but . . . expanded somewhat the tasks they tackled there and imputed to them a greater significance.” Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 17.

(98.) Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 132–133

(99.) On religious publishing in modern Chinese history, see Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940); Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014); Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, eds., *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015); Melissa Inouye, “Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51.

(100.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] was used as the name for publications by different publishers and editors. One *Holy Spirit Times* was printed in Changsha in 1924 by Zhang Barnabas. Another run of *Holy Spirit Times* from 1926 to 1930 was the organ of the southern churches under Zhang Barnabas. From 1930 to 1951 it was the official organ of the entire True Jesus Church. *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F5.

(101.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F11–F12.

(102.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F12–F13.

(103.) Wanguo gengzheng jiao bao 萬國更正教報 [*Global Church Correction*] (hereafter *Global Church Correction*), no. 2, July 27, 1919, 1.

(104.) *Global Church Correction*, no. 3, November 22, 1919, 2.

(105.) The trend of the “Ye” surname is an intricate and fascinating story that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

(106.) Taking on a new name at an important juncture in one's life was a common practice in Chinese religious orders such as Buddhism, Confucian literary culture, and of course both the Old and New Testaments.

(107.) Cathy Silber, "Women's Writing From Hunan," in *China for Women: Travel and Culture*, ed. Florence Howe and Susannah Driver (New York: Feminist Press, 1995), 13–19

(108.) *Holy Spirit Times*, July 20, 1928, p. 2.

(109.) This is a reference to the two characters that compose the Chinese word for "country," *guojia* 國家. *Guo* means "country" and *jia* means "family."

(110.) Again, here I am drawing on Benedict Anderson's powerful idea of "imagined communities" as the basis for modern nationalism and various other forms of community in the modern era.

(111.) For example, see the various Christian women depicted in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, who wield considerable cultural influence but no formal church governing authority.

(112.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Gospel and Gender: Female Christians in Chaozhou, South China," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 182–198 (183).

(113.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1. One exception to this generalization that women did not participate in formal church governance within Protestant missionary denominations may apply to female Western missionaries, who exercised a great deal of authority in their roles as the primary evangelists and architects of new congregations. In my work in the archives of the London Missionary Society, I found one instance in 1926 in which Ivy Greaves, a female missionary, reported: "I have felt it a great privilege to serve on the diaconate of the Kang Wah Shih Church, and later on the Church Council of five members. I was there not as a missionary of the LMS but as one of the Kang Wah Shih church members." Ivy Greaves, Report for 1926, Beijing (SOAS CWM/LMS/North China/Reports/Box 9 1922-1927).

(114.) Ling Oi Ki, "Bible Women," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 246–264.

(115.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D2.

(116.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D3; Tang Hongbiao 唐紅飆, *Zhen yesu jiaohui lishi shijikao 真耶穌教會歷史史跡考 A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* (self-published, 2006), 174–175.

(117.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4. It is likely, but not certain, that Zhang Maria was Zhang Barnabas's wife or relative. A summary of early True Jesus Church missionaries in various Chinese provinces and overseas localities can be found on *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C2.

(118.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4–D8. The Changsha meeting had been unilaterally convened by Zhang Barnabas from his base in the south without consulting Wei Isaac and Gao Daling, the other two prominent church leaders whose base was in the north, in the city of Tianjin. Between 1924 and 1930 the True Jesus Church's major national institutions, including the periodical *Holy Spirit Times*, were controlled by Zhang Barnabas and his base of churches in the south.

(119.) Tang Hongbiao's treatment of this jockeying for power in north and south is very extensive. Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 223–426.

(120.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4, D5.

(121.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D5, D6.

(122.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D11.

(123.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D8.

(124.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*–D8. This schism and its aftermath are further discussed in Chapter 5.

(125.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D8, D9.

(126.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D14.

(127.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1.

(128.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*] (True Jesus Church, 1936) (hereafter *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*). Diagram on page preceding p. 1.

(129.) Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 67–121 *The Religious Periodical Press*,

(130.) Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 132.

(131.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1.

(132.) Rosemary R. Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, introduction to *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary R. Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century America* (Boston: Beacon, 1989); Jonathan Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 1 (2011): 1–85; Noriyoshi Tamaru and David Reid, eds., *Religion in Japanese Culture: Where Living Traditions Meet a Changing World*. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996), 104–105; Inoue Nobutaka, general editor, Norman Havens, trans., *Contemporary Papers in Japanese Religion: New Religions* (Tokyo: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo), 10–12.

(133.) See R. G. Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil: The Contribution of Chinese 'Virgins' to the Growth of the Catholic Church in Late Qing China," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 87–107. 96: Virgins had to work for a living yet in their spiritual vocation found time to memorize " 'a terrifying repertoire of prayers . . . Ordinarily all the knowledge of a good virgin in Haimen consists of knowing by heart the long morning and evening prayers, those of Sundays and feast days, finally those of the Sacrifice, the Way of the Cross, and the different confraternities that she will not fail to join sooner or later.' " Tiedemann notes that Christian virgins played a role as transmitters of rituals, especially prayers, that helped preserve community solidarity.

(134.) Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil," 90.

(135.) Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil," 94.

(136.) Ling, "Bible Women," 247.

(137.) Ling, "Bible Women," 253–254.

(138.) See Fong, "Embroidery as A Knowledge Field," 2–3.

(139.) Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak, "The Power, but Not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves Through Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996), no. 1 (Mar. 1996): 17–29

(140.) Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 136–137; Elizabeth Brusco, *The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Columbia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

(141.) Most of the work on Pentecostalism and women is contemporary and focuses on women in societies that are very different from Republican-era China. Nevertheless, analyses of gender performance illuminate important dimensions of Pentecostal practice. For instance, Elaine Lawless has argued that Pentecostal American women employ various strategies, such as the performance of personal testimonies, that allow them to temporarily circumvent or find a “respite” from the male domination of the Pentecostal community. See Elaine J. Lawless, “Rescripting Their Lives and Narratives: Spiritual Life Stories of Pentecostal Preachers,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no. 1 (1991): 53–71; “Shouting for the Lord: The Power of Women’s Speech in the Pentecostal Religious Service,” *Journal of American Folklore* 96, no. 382 (1983): 434–459.

(142.) Sally K. Gallagher and Christian Smith, “Symbolic Traditionalism and Pragmatic Egalitarianism: Contemporary Evangelicals, Families, and Gender,” *Gender and Society* 13, no. 2 (Apr. 1999): 211–233

(143.) See Kathleen Flake, “The Emotional and Priestly Logic of Plural Marriage,” *Arrington Annual Lecture*, Paper 15 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009); Kathryn Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females* (New York: Knopf, 2017).

(144.) Salvatore Cucchiari’s study of Pentecostalism in Sicily suggests that Pentecostalism actually provides a more ambiguous form of patriarchy than Catholicism, the dominant religion. Salvatore Cucchiari, “Between Shame and Sanctification: Patriarchy and Its Transformation in Sicilian Pentecostalism,” *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 4 (Nov. 1990): 687–707. Chen-Yang Kao has argued that Pentecostal Christianity attracted Chinese women by giving them the opportunity to worship a clean, high god whereas traditional Chinese religion had relegated them to the pacification of polluting spirits and ghosts. Chen-Yang Kao, “The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2, (2009): 171–188.

(145.) R. Marie Griffith, *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997)

(146.) Amy Hoyt, “Beyond the Victim/Empowerment Paradigm: The Gendered Cosmology of Mormon Women,” *Feminist Theology* 16, no. 1 (2007): 89–100

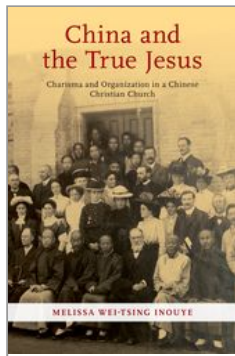
(147.) Catherine Brekus, “Mormon Women and the Problem of Historical Agency,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (2011): 59–87

(148.) Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5

- (149.) Tongchuan fuyin zhenli bao 通傳福音真理報 [*Popular Gospel Truth*] (hereafter *Popular Gospel Truth*), September 1915, no. 6, p. 8.
- (150.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, September 1915, no. 6, p. 8.
- (151.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, May 1916, no. 11, p. 1.
- (152.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, November 1916, no. 13, p. 5.
- (153.) Wuxunjie Zhenli 五旬節真理 [*Pentecostal Truths*] (hereafter *Pentecostal Truths*), April 1917, p. 3.
- (154.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, January 1917, no. 15, p. 7.
- (155.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, N25.
- (156.) *Global Church Correction*, no. 5, March 1, 1920, p. 1.
- (157.) 1 Timothy 2:8–15, RSV.
- (158.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), November 15, 1926, 12.
- (159.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1927, p. 16.
- (160.) *Holy Spirit Times*, December 15, 1948, p. 14.
- (161.) *Holy Spirit Times*, November 15, 1950, p. 23.
- (162.) *Holy Spirit Times*, January 15, 1948, p. 15.
- (163.) Nanlai Cao, “Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China,” in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175
- (164.) Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*, 12–13.
- (165.) Short, *Mao*, 282–283.
- (166.) Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove, 1968), 299–301 Short, *Mao*
- (167.) Short, *Mao*, 264–284.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Four Governments in China (1932–1949)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0006

Abstract and Keywords

During the tumultuous period between the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the Communist victory in 1949, parts of China were controlled by three different governments: the Nationalist government based in Nanjing and then Chongqing, the Communist-controlled area around Yan'an in the northwest, and the Japanese. Against this backdrop of regional division and contested legitimacy, the ecclesiastical government of the True Jesus Church stands out. The church's extensive and relatively functional systems of church governance point to the significance of autonomous ideological organizations, whose stable models of functional governance and legitimate authority contrasted unflatteringly with the dysfunctional or corrupt authority of the Chinese party-state. Legitimate moral authority held the True Jesus Church together in a national and even international community during a chaotic time in which other attempts to create shared identity and common purpose across China failed.

Keywords: Sino-Japanese War, Chongqing, World War II, Nationalist, legitimacy, True Jesus Church

“Forest of Guns and Rain of Bombs”

At 11 p.m. on January 28, 1932, fighting between Chinese and Japanese troops broke out in the Zhabei district within the Chinese-controlled area of Shanghai, rousing church personnel and their family members sleeping at the True Jesus Church Headquarters at the intersection of Baoshan Road 寶山路 and Hengbang Road 橫浜路.¹ Twenty-one church members—women and men, young and old—huddled together under the crossfire for two days. On January 30, Japanese troops bombarded the house. The members fled for their lives. All but two were able to retreat safely from the line of fire. Deng Tianqi 鄧天啟 and Luo Xiquan 羅喜全, both church officers at Headquarters, were unable to escape amid the “forest of guns and rain of bombs.”² They were trapped in the war zone for days. Deng’s foot was injured and Luo went missing, never to be seen again. The Headquarters printing facility and administration building both burned to ashes.

Tensions between Japan and China had been escalating since the invasion of Manchuria in September 1931. Although Manchuria, the northeastern region of China, was not traditionally considered part of the Chinese homeland, exiles fleeing the region worked energetically to stir up popular outrage against Japan’s aggression.³ Yet the Nationalist government under Jiang Jieshi 蔣介石 (also commonly Romanized as Chiang Kai-shek) did not send troops to contest the Japanese occupation. Jiang’s reasons for not resisting the Japanese were complex. They included the possibility that it might not be feasible to dislodge them by military force, but also hinged on the internal political reality that the north of China was controlled not by the Nationalist Party, but by regional militarists such as Yan Xishan 閻錫山, Feng Yuxiang 馮玉祥, and Zhang Xueliang 張學良. **(p.158)** Appeasement diminished the territory controlled by Zhang Xueliang, the warlord of Manchuria, and allowed Jiang to focus his military forces on eliminating other rivals.⁴

From a political point of view, however, the Nationalist policy of nonresistance to the Japanese undermined the Nationalists’ legitimacy.⁵ The Nationalist Revolution had been fueled by students and modern educated elite who embraced the party’s rhetoric of nationalism and anti-imperialism. Now they felt betrayed by a government that stifled domestic dissent while allowing a foreign power to annex Chinese territory. In Nanjing, outraged students demonstrated by the thousands. In Shanghai, anti-Japanese associations such as the National Salvation Association for Resistance formed to lead a widespread boycott of all things Japanese. Students led mass protests and propaganda campaigns, local banks broke ties with Japan, transport and dock workers refused to handle Japanese goods, and merchants stopped supplying members of the Japanese community services such as water, food, and coal.⁶ Over the next few months, the atmosphere in Shanghai grew increasingly tense, and violent clashes broke out between Chinese and Japanese. On January 18, a group of Chinese attacked a group of Japanese Buddhist monks, causing the death of one of them. In retaliation, a troop of militant Japanese residents set fire to a textile factory from which the monks’ attackers were supposed to have come.

Late in the evening on January 28, Japanese military officials used these conflicts as an opportunity to send troops into the Chinese-controlled areas of Shanghai and to demand the withdrawal of Chinese soldiers. The Chinese soldiers of the Nineteenth Army resisted, attacking the Japanese troops.⁷ The fierce fighting that wakened the True Jesus Church Headquarters staff ensued in Zhabei 閘北, one of Shanghai's most densely populated urban neighborhoods, and spread to a fifteen-kilometer radius around Shanghai.⁸ Armed conflict continued for over a month and caused between 10,000 and 20,000 civilian deaths.⁹ Eventually Chinese troops were forced to withdraw.¹⁰ The 1-2-8 incident, as it became known, became an emblem of the Nationalist government's failure to stand up to Japanese aggression.

The *Tenth Anniversary Publication of the Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*, published in 1936, carefully catalogued everything that had been lost in 1932 when the printing facility and administration building caught fire. The first item listed was a set of correspondence files: 2,200 letters received and 2,500 copies of letters sent.¹¹ These letters, the primary mode of communication between the local churches and the national headquarters, embodied the True Jesus Church's mode of togetherness. Like the Qing imperial bureaucracy, the global church community was held together by paper, by collegial and hierarchical relationships cultivated through long-distance communication. The church was **(p.159)** much larger than a single group of neighbors who interacted regularly in face-to-face relationships. It was an "imagined community" of people who, despite their lack of face-to-face interaction, felt a shared identity and sense of purpose.¹² The work of Headquarters was to orchestrate this unity through symbolic as well as through practical means.

As the highest organ of church government, the General Headquarters presided over an international constituency that encompassed not only most of the provinces of China but also branches in Taiwan, India, Southeast Asia, and Hawaii.¹³ In one of the most turbulent periods in China's modern history, when over three governments on Chinese soil vied with each other for legitimacy, the True Jesus Church's government offered order, moral authority, and a community that shared suffering and provided mutual aid.

Autonomous Ideological Organizations

The weakness of the national state during the Republican era opened up space for autonomous organizations such as the True Jesus Church to thrive. This continued a process of expansion that had begun during the late Qing. What one scholar has called the “growing enfeeblement of imperial power” in the nineteenth century not only relieved independent organizations from the jealous surveillance of a control-oriented state but allowed dangerous disorder. Members of the local gentry sought to remedy this by organizing themselves to take on responsibilities that in times of stability were monopolized by the state.¹⁴ Prior to this weakening of the state, gentry-led charitable institutions had simply provided assistance to the poor and orphans, but they began diversifying into road-building and the establishment of police and fire brigades. Formerly guilds had been associations for members of a single profession, but they began to systematically provide mutual aid services for broader segments of society.¹⁵

Around the same time, religious organizations such as temple associations, pilgrimage associations, and sectarian movements, persistent features of the local social landscape, grew in scope and influence. The Taiping Rebellion had been just one of many nineteenth-century religious movements (such as the so-called “White Lotus” Uprisings of 1796–1804, the Eight Trigrams Uprising in 1813, and the Boxer Uprising from 1899 to 1901) that spread over multiple regions, challenging the imperial state’s monopoly on moral authority and violence.¹⁶ In sum, as imperial institutions faltered, new institutions sprang up, expanding the sphere of social activities that existed between the family and the imperial state.

In a similar fashion, the weak “national” governments of the Republican era, from the Beijing governments to the Nationalist government in Nanjing, left an institutional void that filled with many organizations in forms both old **(p.160)** and new.¹⁷ There were trade associations, chambers of commerce, improvement societies, book clubs, choral societies, athletic clubs, student unions, alumni associations, and groups formed around common political causes.¹⁸ There were also organizations rooted in moral philosophy or religion, such as the Confucian Association, which applied the Christian Bible-study model to group study of the Confucian classics, and the YMCA/YWCA, which combined Christian devotion with recreation and civic engagement.¹⁹ This thriving associational life created opportunities for citizens to act collectively and to partake in shared identity.

When one considers the True Jesus Church as an example of an organization existing at local, national, and international levels, it is clear that autonomous ideological organizations such as Christian churches, which “simply” exhorted people to be moral in a particular Christian key, were in fact extraordinarily consequential within Chinese society. They provided stable models of functional governance and legitimate authority that supplied an unflattering contrast with the dysfunctional or corrupt authority of the Chinese state. Legitimate moral authority held the True Jesus Church together as a national and even international community during a turbulent time in which many other attempts to create shared identity and common purpose across China failed. This line of argument seeks to build on the work of other scholars who have demonstrated the social influence and organizational complexity of religious institutions in Chinese local society.²⁰

Gods and religious visions may be imagined. However, the economy of moral capital within a religious community is not simply “a figment of the imagination” but a substantial presence that facilitates collective identity and action. The research of Lily Lee Tsai, a sociologist of twenty-first-century village government in China, shows the link between moral capital and public action. Her study of government officials in rural villages found that local officials performed best in providing public goods when both officials and ordinary villagers belonged to a “solidary community”: a group, such as a temple association, defined by common subscription to shared religious values, whose moral gravity counteracted the widespread tendency of local party-state officials to abuse their power.²¹ Hence, the power to shape and define moral norms within communities was the power to influence governance, build trust necessary for productive social and economic exchange, and shape community culture. During the Republican era—as in the present—Christian churches constituted self-governed moral communities in which leaders had the authority to exhort, encourage, and discipline, and in which rank-and-file members accepted this authority only because they perceived it as rightful. Moral capital was a currency with real social and political value.

(p.161) Although the ecclesiastical government of the True Jesus Church differed from that of the Nationalist, Japanese, and Communist governments with which it shared the stage of the 1930s and the 1940s—most notably in the absence of the use of violence as a method of governance—it was similar enough to these projects in imagined community to constitute a visible alternative. And yet this visibility could also be a risk. When the years of foreign occupation, invasion, and civil war finally led to the Communist party-state’s emergence in 1949, the nexus of bureaucratic and cultural processes that had held the True Jesus Church together over past decades made it a conspicuous and suspiciously familiar organization.

Regulations and Authority

Along with official correspondence, another class of items lost to the fire on 1-2-8 was the church Headquarters' certificates of registration with the Nationalist government, along with local governments' certificates proclaiming the protected status of individual churches.²² Luckily hard copies of these documents had been lodged with government agencies, and facsimiles had been printed in the *Holy Spirit Times*, but the destruction of these government permissions eliminated the church's most direct and accessible evidence that it was complying with official rules and regulations for civic organizations.

Governments issue regulations to protect their authority, delineate legitimate values and activities, and coordinate and unify people's productive efforts. However, regulations are meaningless if not enforced and ineffectual if the people themselves do not see them as legitimate. Between 1932 and 1949, China was a place where Nationalist government, Japanese government, Communist government, and the governments of various other regional militarists all sought to justify their occupation of large swathes of territory. Within the areas and populations they controlled, they sought to rule not merely through force of arms but through civil government. Like the imperial state that had come before them, they proclaimed the righteousness and benevolence of their rule. The Nationalist Party's northern military campaign from 1927 to 1928 was fueled by moral indignation against the foreign imperialists who were dominating China's politics and economy. When Nationalist troops secured control over the strategically important provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang in Central China, they proclaimed themselves the "national" government of China, the rightful heirs to the republican legacy of Sun Yat-sen. Establishing the national capital in Nanjing, which in 1912 had been the first provisional capital of the Republic of China under Sun Yat-sen, was a way of symbolically asserting that the Beijing governments headed by Yuan Shikai and the northern warlords had been illegitimate.²³ The Communists also justified their rule in the rural areas that they controlled in terms of good **(p.162)** and evil: class struggle against capitalists and landlords and against the foreign powers that had made China a "proletarian nation." To win hearts and minds, Communist leaders such as Mao Zedong enforced strict codes of discipline among their guerrilla fighters, such as always paying for things instead of taking them by force. Even the Japanese sought to justify their takeover of Manchuria as benevolent. In March 1932, the Japanese declared that Manchuria was now the state of "Manchukuo" (Manchu-Country). They claimed that the formation of the state was an expression of the "popular will" for self-government among the peoples of the northeast (Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Manchu, and Mongols).²⁴

In fact, between 1932 and 1949, the legitimacy of these three governments varied quite widely as they either succeeded in enforcing their regulations and living up to the values proclaimed therein or failed to do so. Although the Japanese sought to shore up popular support within Manchukuo by suppressing banditry and building roads, the fundamentally coercive nature of their presence was encapsulated in events such as the November 1932 Pingdingshan 平頂山 massacre, in which Japanese troops killed 3,000 men, women, and children and reduced an entire village to charred rubble.²⁵ In areas of North China under the Nationalist government in the 1930s, local government offices such as that of the registration clerk, who compiled land tax registers for the state and recorded all transfers of land titles, could be purchased and exploited for personal gain. Registration clerks were supposed to charge a commission of one-tenth of a yuan per mu 畝 (a unit of land equal to about 670 square meters), but clerks were known to charge between one and three yuan per mu. Clerks often tampered with accounts, charging taxpayers more than what they actually owed and pocketing the difference.²⁶ These abuses created a perception of government authorities as despised local bullies, not respected leaders.

Beginning in 1926, the leaders of the True Jesus Church developed a system of national church government in which they, like the leaders of secular governments, also had to strike a delicate balance between enforcing control and cultivating a sense of popular legitimacy. Unlike the secular governments, all of which were established—at least to some extent—by regional military occupiers who employed extractive or coercive methods, the church had a membership of volunteers united by shared worldviews and practices. The government of the True Jesus Church enjoyed significant legitimacy, as evidenced by its growing international network and regular intake of financial donations.

The True Jesus Church had a working relationship with the Nationalist government under Jiang Jieshi, which governed the area of Shanghai where the church's headquarters were located. The Chinese-controlled area of Shanghai was the northernmost section of a city divided into three parts. To the south, the International Settlement, administered by the British, and the French (p.163) Concession, administered by the French, occupied Shanghai's geographic, cultural, and economic heart. Thanks to the string of "unequal treaties" inaugurated by the Treaty of Nanjing in 1842, within the Shanghai International Settlement and French Concession, foreigners enjoyed privileges of extraterritoriality.

The “national” Nationalist government’s occupation of the least important third of Shanghai neatly presents the party–state’s difficulty in enforcing its rule nationwide. It is true that after 1928, Nationalist governing institutions and terminology spread widely throughout China, and organs of government extended all the way down to the village level. For example, in 1934 the top officers of the True Jesus Church announced that they had altered the terminology for church leadership positions in accordance with the law. “Headquarters” 總部 was now the “council” 理事制, the “general officer” 總負責 was now the “council director” 理事長, and a “councilor” 代議員 was now a “supervisor” 監事. And yet, noted the Headquarters’ ten-year historical publication, “although the names changed, the principles behind them remained unchanged.”²⁷

A similar facade was in place in government offices throughout the country. Despite the creation of new structures of county and provincial governments to administer policing, public health, finance, and so on, real decision-making authority lay in the hands of preexisting powerholders.²⁸ In most regions, local militarists publicly declared allegiance to the Nationalist government but maintained a tight grip on local policy and revenue. For example, on December 29, 1928, Zhang Xueliang, the warlord of the northeastern region of Manchuria, announced that he would affiliate with the Nanjing government.²⁹ However, Zhang Xueliang still headed the highest administrative body in the region, the Northeastern Governmental Affairs Committee. A representative of Jiang Jieshi’s government occupied one of the thirteen seats on this committee, but Zhang Xueliang and other long-standing regional powerholders continued to preside over policy initiatives such as introducing a new regional currency, diverting funds to the regional air force and ordnance factories, and expanding access to primary school education.³⁰ The Nationalists’ lack of actual control over the three northeastern provinces of Manchuria, and Zhang Xueliang’s power as a rival, help to explain why Jiang Jieshi chose to cede rather than contest that territory in 1931.

The government of the True Jesus Church was certainly not the same thing as state government, but there were areas of overlap. The first was in official procedure. The church's regulations employed terms that were also used for the national government. For example, the name "Assembly" 大會 for the church's national (and international) governance meeting was the same term used for the National Assembly 國民大會, the national legislative body of the Republic of China between 1913 and 1924. The minutes of church General Assembly meetings contain parliamentary terms such as motion 動議 and concepts such as the requirement **(p.164)** of a two-thirds supermajority to suspend or modify an existing rule. These terms and concepts reflect the influence of European and American rules of parliamentary procedure, which had circulated in China's public sphere since at least the early 1900s and had also influenced the formation of Republican governing institutions.³¹ Such parliamentary conventions were also a long-standing influence within Protestant mission churches such as the London Missionary Society. Because many of the church's early leaders, including Wei Enbo, had begun their Christian careers within Anglo-American mission churches, it stands to reason that they found these terms and procedures useful in their new church project.

The second overlap between the True Jesus Church and the civil government (because of the headquarters location in Shanghai, in this case the government in question was Jiang Jieshi's) was in nationalist ideology. The True Jesus Church, of course, had always prided itself on its native origins. Wei Enbo's rejection of the churches of his religious mentors Bernt Berntsen and Samuel Evans Meech was not simply a rejection of incomplete doctrine or staid practice, but a rejection of American (or Norwegian American) and British theological oversight. The Nationalist government's heavy-handed ideological censorship made it incumbent upon church leaders to explicitly proclaim their patriotic support for the nation and the party-state in registration applications and formal documents. In other words, the church's founding ethos, the political climate of anti-imperialism, and the reality of state social control conveniently converged, though not without some awkwardness.

For example, a registration document submitted to the government around 1934 said that Wei Enbo had founded the True Jesus Church not only to spread the true word in accordance with the Bible, but also to "cause people to turn from evil, to follow good, and to be virtuous citizens."³² It asserted that the True Jesus Church was "completely different from that European-and-American-style Christianity which was the vanguard of invasion through imperialism and profit-seeking."³³ The church had "recovered tremendous religious authority for the country" and furthermore caused the "light of the Chinese nation to spread from East to West throughout the entire world."³⁴ This carefully crafted language signaled upstanding citizenship and support for anti-imperialist ideology and was offered up from the church to the party-state.

From above, the party-state sent a similarly direct message to the church. For instance, the certificate of registration received from a government office in Shanghai in December 1934 bore the image of Sun Yat-sen and the flags of the Nationalist Party and the Nationalist-controlled Republic of China at the top.³⁵ This document certified the government's approval of the church's registration application but also contained a list of seven points "for the True Jesus Church to accept and implement." These points included conforming to the "Three People's **(p.165)** Principles" ideology promulgated by Sun Yat-sen and "accepting the leadership of the Nationalist Party."³⁶ This nonnegotiable admixture of religion and politics foreshadowed the much more extensive politicization of church governance in the era of the People's Republic of China after 1949.

Like the party-state, the True Jesus Church was an organization that married ideological doctrines to centralized bureaucracy. Before the centralization of the church under Headquarters, read one church account, "in the south and in the north, each church taught its own gospel and enacted its own government. Thereupon leaders in many different areas believed that it was necessary to have a central organization and a regulatory system to unify the entire body of the church."³⁷ The bylaws of the church in the 1930s reveal an extensive system of representative government. The church leadership structure at Headquarters was at the apex of an international network of "prayer meetings" 祈禱所 of ten or more people, "churches" 本會 of thirty or more people, and "branches" 支部 of three or more churches.³⁸ Local churches chose their own deacons and elders. They also elected representatives to the "Branch Assembly," which met once a year and elected representatives to the General Assembly. The General Assembly met once every three years. At the General Assembly meetings, representatives elected seven general officers for renewable three-year terms. From among themselves, the seven general officers elected a general head.³⁹

Like other sophisticated religious institutions such as Buddhist monasteries, the True Jesus Church's regulations articulated a complex and multidimensional relationship between grassroots and central power.⁴⁰ The officials at Headquarters had the power to supervise and discipline local branches, churches, and individual personnel such as elders and deacons.⁴¹ Headquarters oversaw individual ordinations, approved the formation of new church and branch units, set the number of General Assembly representatives from each branch, authorized evangelism, and controlled the editing and production of the monthly periodical *Holy Spirit Times* 聖靈報.⁴² However, the local and regional levels of the church had significant power to shape both the international body of the church and their individual jurisdictions.

General Headquarters officials were elected directly by representatives through secret ballot for a term of three years.⁴³ At General Assembly meetings, five or more representatives could bring a motion to impeach a church official, setting off a chain of procedures including the creation of a five-person tribunal whose final report and decision would then be ratified by a two-thirds vote of all representatives.⁴⁴ Decisions of the General Assembly were established by simple majority among the gathered representatives (usually around twenty-five to forty in total), and all branches and churches worldwide were obligated to abide by them.⁴⁵ At the local level, church congregations had the authority to select elders (**p.166**) and deacons, to convene a church council meeting once a month, to appeal to the branches or headquarters in the case of local church officials' wrongdoing, and to make decisions about the sale of church-owned real estate.⁴⁶

The True Jesus Church's bureaucratic structure was set out in a lengthy constitution that listed regulations for parliamentary procedure during meetings, the duties of each office, accounting procedures, and so on. Many of these constitutional rules, such as procedures to avoid cronyism in elections, reflected lessons learned from a recent power struggle and schism. The key player in this schism was Zhang Barnabas 張巴拿巴, originally named Zhang Dianju 張殿舉 (1880–1961), a farmer and dealer of antiques from Weixian 濰縣, Shandong.⁴⁷ He converted to Christianity in 1909. Later, he and his kinsman Zhang Lingsheng 張靈生 became involved with the Pentecostal movement in North China, along with Bernt Berntsen and Zhao Deli (the friend who introduced Wei to Berntsen's Pentecostal movement).⁴⁸ Zhang Barnabas had joined Wei's True Jesus Church movement in 1919 and become an evangelist of great charisma and influence. Zhang planted numerous True Jesus Church congregations in the southern region of China, including churches in the provinces of Jiangsu, Hubei, Hunan, and Fujian. He also traveled farther south to Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.⁴⁹

In 1924, when Gao Daling 高大齡 and Wei Isaac 魏以撒, at that time the respective senior and junior leaders of the True Jesus Church in the north, contacted other leaders throughout the country about holding a General Assembly, Zhang said that he was unable to attend. He then called an all-church meeting in Changsha without consulting Gao Daling and Wei Isaac.⁵⁰ This meeting was largely attended by representatives from the areas that Zhang had evangelized, but not by Gao Daling and Wei Isaac, who were based in Tianjin, or by other representatives from this northern region.

This meeting marked the beginning of a split between the northern and the southern churches. Zhang also began to claim that he had been the original founder of the True Jesus Church in 1912 and that the church founded by Wei Enbo was a counterfeit imitation.⁵¹ According to Zhang, Wei's church had originally been named the "Global Correction Church" 萬國更正教 but upon meeting Zhang Barnabas, Wei had added the words "True Jesus Church" 真耶穌教會, making Wei's church the "Global Church Correction True Jesus Church" 萬國更正教真耶穌教會.⁵² Zhang made these claims in an October 1929 publication that also claimed that Zhang had accomplished spiritual feats similar to Wei's (such as seeing a vision of the biblical prophets and apostles and hearing audible voices giving messages from heaven), but years ahead of him.⁵³

Zhang wielded considerable power as the head officer of the southern church contingent. As the chair of General Assembly meetings in 1924, 1926 (when the nationwide General Headquarters was first established), 1928, and 1929, he had **(p.167)** the authority to direct the flow of group deliberation. For example, the 1928 version of the church constitution gave him the power to expel "unruly" representatives, to open and close the meetings, to truncate the scheduled length of the meeting, and to set the daily agenda.⁵⁴ These "general" meetings in the late 1920s were akin to Jiang Jieshi's "national" government, which came into being around the same time, because they were "general" in name only. Although the meeting of southern church members claimed to regulate the entire True Jesus Church throughout China and indeed the world, the northern churches were actually outside the scope of Zhang's control.

In 1929 a special ad hoc meeting of the General Assembly convened to investigate (and thereby challenge) Zhang Barnabas's claim to be the original founder of the True Jesus Church.⁵⁵ The atmosphere was awkward and volatile. For years, Zhang Barnabas had been recognized not only as the church's administrative head but as an inspired, miracle-working apostle who had brought the true gospel to hundreds of people. Nevertheless, the church's legislative structures as set out in the constitutional regulations prevailed over Zhang's spiritual charisma, executive power, and personal influence. Clearing the two-thirds bar for a constitutional amendment, the representatives voted to add eleven articles to the existing ninety-article constitution to create a "Councilors Assembly."⁵⁶

The Councilors Assembly was not “under” Headquarters in the church’s hierarchical structure, but “between” the regional branches and Headquarters.⁵⁷ In a way it resembled both the Nationalist and the imperial governments, which had a branch of government dedicated entirely to supervisory functions.⁵⁸ A diagram in a 1936 publication depicts the “executive” (General Headquarters), “legislative” (General Assembly), and “judicial” (General Headquarters) bodies of church government, with the Councilors Assembly playing an intermediary role between the Branch and General Assemblies and the General Headquarters (see Figure 5.1).⁵⁹

One councilor could be elected for every thirty churches in a branch to serve a three-year term (the same as a representative’s term), eligible for reelection.⁶⁰ One-third or more councilors had the authority to call for an ad hoc General Assembly meeting.⁶¹ The Councilors Assembly was charged with reducing the workload of officials in Headquarters, representing the Branch Assemblies so that church business could be quickly dispatched without the inconvenience and expense of a General Assembly, and, most significantly, advising and supervising officials at Headquarters.⁶² The right to approve Headquarters’ budgets and spending gave the Councilors Assembly real power.⁶³ This Councilors Assembly took on the task of judging the legitimacy of Zhang’s claims to foundership.

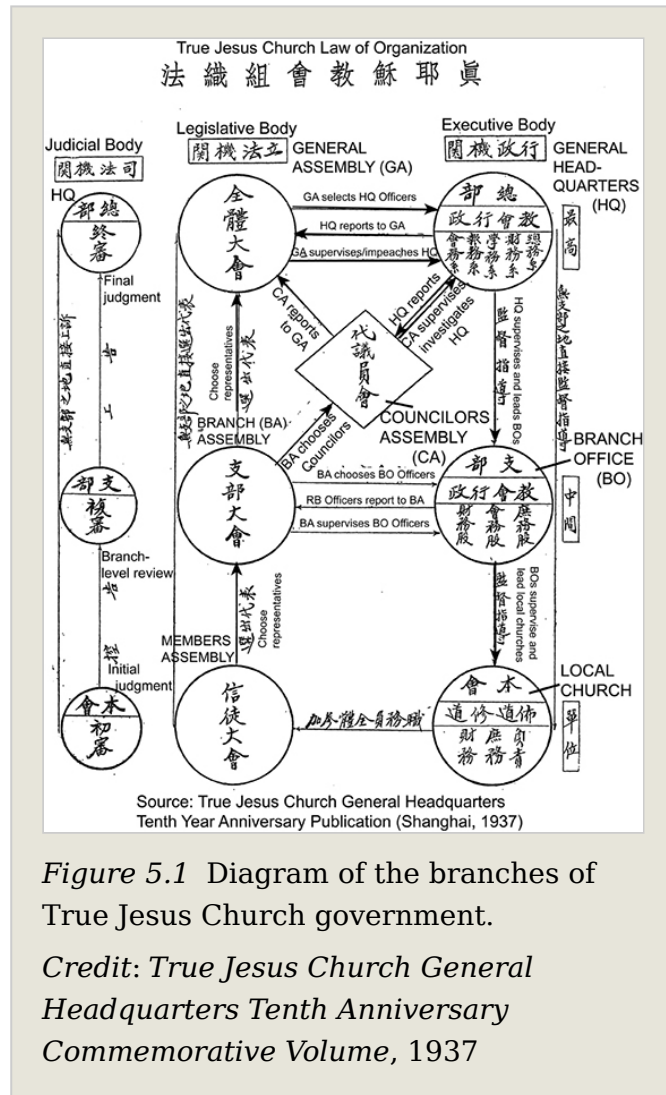


Figure 5.1 Diagram of the branches of True Jesus Church government. Credit: True Jesus Church General Headquarters Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume, 1937

Just prior to the next General Assembly meeting in May 1930, the Councilors Assembly met for the first time. In this meeting, councilors consulted numerous **(p.168)** early church documents produced in 1917, 1918, 1919, and 1920. On the basis of this research, the councilors determined that Wei Enbo had indeed founded the church and that in these early years of the church, Zhang Barnabas had acknowledged Wei's leadership and taken his theological cues from Wei.⁶⁴ Subsequently, two representatives, Jiang John 蔣約翰 from Shanghai and Wang Noph 汪挪弗 **(p.169)** from Jiangxi, were dispatched to Beijing to interview people who had observed the church in its early years (including Bernt Berntsen). Their interviews confirmed Wei's foundership.

The 1930 General Assembly meeting in Shanghai was presided over by Guo Thomas 郭多馬, the head councilor of the Councilors Assembly. The councilors presented their conclusion that Zhang Barnabas had falsely claimed to be the church's founder. Over the course of two days, numerous witnesses, including Wei Isaac, Wei Enbo's son, testified in person before the assembly. The General Assembly voted to nullify Zhang's ordination and excommunicate him from the True Jesus Church. Thereafter, the southern churches in this assembly (originally under Zhang) made plans to reunify with the northern churches (under Gao Daling and Wei Isaac).⁶⁵

The General Assembly meeting in June 1932, held in Shanghai in a church building in the French Concession because the Headquarters building had been destroyed in the 1-2-8 incident earlier that year, was a landmark event. Representatives attended from both northern and southern churches. By 1933, Wei Isaac had been elected as one of the seven general officers at Headquarters.⁶⁶ At this time Wei Isaac was still a young man in his mid-thirties whose testimony before the General Assembly meeting in 1930 had been full of modest apologies for his lack of ability.⁶⁷ However, his election as a Headquarters official set him on a track to become the head of the True Jesus Church.

The leadership crisis of 1929–1930 not only catalyzed creative new responses within the True Jesus Church's self-governing structure, but also affirmed the fundamental value of a formal, authoritative structure to hold the church community together. The church already had a history of spin-off movements. The competing spiritual claims of Gao Daling and the Wei family in the north and Zhang Barnabas in the south threatened to split the church down the middle and sever the line of charismatic transmission initiated by Wei Enbo's remarkable founding visions. In the end, what saved the day was not a miracle of tongues or a divine apparition—for both sides were armed with these—but a system of routine governance, executed by a majority of elected representatives who conscientiously adhered to a long list of regulations (and the spirit of the mission that inspired them). Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, this basic structure of church regulation remained intact.

If we compare the success of representative governing institutions and the rule of law within the governance project of the True Jesus Church in the 1930s with the performance of the Nationalist, Communist, and Japanese puppet governments in China around the same time, the contrast is significant. Of course, the True Jesus Church, a voluntary religious organization without access to the use of violence and without the burden of representing or defending an **(p.170)** entire population, had a much less complicated project to begin with. However, the functionality and legitimacy of church internal government contrasted strikingly with the rampant political dysfunction of the age. In a world in which public officials claimed to be honest and upright but were popularly understood to be thieves and bullies, church officials were viewed as legitimate exemplars who wielded real moral authority.

The legitimacy enjoyed by the True Jesus Church's top governing bodies can be seen in the monthly voluntary donations flowing upward from the local churches through the branches and on to the church headquarters. In a time of worldwide economic depression and severe domestic economic instability, these donations were not trivial. Following the 1-2-8 attack on the church printing and administration buildings in 1932, Headquarters issued an urgent worldwide call for emergency donations to reestablish its operations. The response from a total of thirty-one branches, churches, and individuals from Penang to Taiwan to Harbin generated over 2,000 yuan in silver.⁶⁸ The largest single donation was from a church in Honolulu (424 yuan) and the smallest was from a church in Shantou 汕頭, a treaty port in Guangdong Province (5 yuan).⁶⁹ These donations helped fund a new, purpose-built Headquarters building on Liuying Road 柳營路. Completed in 1933, this new building was a short walk from the site of the old building on Baoshan Road that had been destroyed a year before.⁷⁰

Each year, the operating expenses for Headquarters came from routine donations—the amounts set by the Councilors Assembly—from the local churches and branches in China and abroad.⁷¹ In the first ten years of the Headquarters' existence, from 1926 to 1936, the top three categories of expenditures were salaries, printing, and rent.⁷² The substantial amount of money spent on printing was not surprising, because publishing was a major activity of religious organizations—and particularly Christian organizations—during this period.⁷³ The varying demographic and financial clout of the church's constituent units shows the benefits of international membership. At the end of Headquarters' first decade, out of the 480 total churches and prayer halls on the church's registers in 1936, a full 40 percent (roughly 17,000 yuan out of 43,000 yuan) of donated funds came from overseas locations such as Malaysia, North Borneo, Japanese-occupied Taiwan, and American Honolulu.⁷⁴

The church's central financial administration played a redistributive role not only for overseas funds, but for funds from different regions within China. For instance, in those ten years, the churches from the southern provinces donated roughly 13,000 yuan, about ten times as much as the roughly 1,300 yuan donated by the northern churches in Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, and Hebei (the church's founding location).⁷⁵ Out of the 480 churches and prayer halls affiliated with the church in 1936, over half (52.9 percent) of them were located in the **(p. 171)** southern provinces of Fujian and Hunan, evangelized by Zhang Barnabas and his associates.⁷⁶

Thus the top level of True Jesus Church government drew upon regional constituencies of widely varied demographic and financial strength. By facilitating circulation (and redistribution) of personnel, funds, and ideology, Headquarters sought to blend these diverse constituencies together into a single community. In this sense, the church's project was very similar to the nation-building, self-legitimizing efforts of the Nationalist Party in 1930s China. But it was probably more successful.

Cultural Infrastructure

In addition to correspondence files and the government registrations, another significant loss from the fire at Headquarters on 1-2-8 was the church's printing operation. Damaged or destroyed printing equipment included two lead-type printing machines, a German binding machine, a hole-punching machine, a paper-cutting machine, German and American foot-pedal printing machines, a motor, a hand-operated type-casting machine, and 14,000 copper dies.⁷⁷ In addition to this, the blaze melted the church's entire set of lead type into shapeless lumps. When sifting through the rubble, church members were able to retrieve the lead that had not already mixed into the mud and sold about 4,500 pounds (roughly 2,000 kilos) of these lumps to a dealer for 400–500 yuan.⁷⁸

The sheer mass of the church's printing equipment is impressive. It speaks to the value placed on encouraging communication and shared culture within the True Jesus Church and Protestant church networks. Generally speaking, the price of Protestant publications was not high enough to make them self-supporting, so they required some degree of subsidization by the sponsoring organization.⁷⁹ Although not as universal as classical Chinese in imperial times, the written vernacular could be read and understood by people whose spoken dialects were mutually unintelligible. Given the linguistic variety within the True Jesus Church and the increasingly affordable and reliable infrastructure for mass media, a publishing ministry yielded significant returns. Evangelism and boundary maintenance through publishing also dovetailed with the church's emphasis on appealing to verses of the Bible as the ultimate source of authority. Finally, it was an effective medium through which individual members could tell each other stories—facilitated through the written language and through the selection of the publications editor at Headquarters—about charismatic experiences that validated their membership in the church.

Another group that invested heavily in printing operations, despite the bulk and weight of the equipment, was the Chinese Communist Party. After the **(p.172)** Nationalists turned against the United Front in 1927, those Communists who escaped retreated to remote rural areas on the borders of two or more provinces, including northern Guangdong, northeastern Jiangxi, the Hunan-Hubei border, the Hubei-Henan-Anhui border, Hainan Island, and the Hunan-Jiangxi border.⁸⁰ In these base areas, they experimented with local government. In November 1931, local delegates in Communist-controlled areas of Jiangxi declared the founding of the Chinese Soviet Republic, and the new parliament appointed Mao Zedong state chairman.⁸¹ Eventually, however, the long arm of Jiang Jieshi's Nationalist Army reached them in the form of an all-out encirclement-and-extermination campaign in 1934.⁸² The Red Army was forced to abandon its base areas, break through the Nationalist lines, and embark on a 6,000-mile retreat across rivers and over mountains. At the commencement of this journey, later known as the Long March, transport troops hauled heavy equipment up and down steep mountain slopes—equipment that included not only guns and artillery, but also typewriters and printing machines.⁸³

At the end of the Long March, in 1936, only 5,000 of the original 86,000 soldiers under Mao Zedong's command remained to establish a new base area at Yan'an 延安 in rural Shaanxi 陕西 Province in the northwest.⁸⁴ The vast majority of the Communists' heavy printing equipment had been destroyed or abandoned by the time the Red Army started to build a new government once again. Nevertheless, using mimeograph and stone-block-lithography techniques, they printed propaganda, media, and pedagogical materials, using paper they made themselves.⁸⁵ Illiterate peasants learning how to read were issued simple "Learn Characters" texts containing revolutionary terms. Edgar Snow, a Western journalist embedded in Yan'an in 1936, described the scene at study groups of "people catechizing themselves aloud" with these political primers:

"What is this?"

"This is the Red Flag."

"What is this?"

"This is a poor man."

"What is the Red Flag?"

"The Red Flag is the flag of the Red Army."

"What is the Red Army?"

"The Red Army is the army of the poor men!"⁸⁶

Across numerous Communist-controlled areas in the 1930s and 1940s, the new system of government restructured local society and people's expectations for their individual and collective lives. The Nationalist government called members of the Communist cause "bandits" and worked ferociously to exterminate or at **(p.173)** least "reform" them. However, many found in the Communist project something greater. Chang Siao-hung, a woman doctor working for the "Chinese Soviet Government" in Central China, described with pride an equalizing project in which "all that it was my privilege to learn as a member of the privileged classes I have now placed at the disposal of the peasants and workers." In this new society, she said, "we have schools, hospitals, clubs, dramatic societies—as also free land for all that labor I have looked so long into the eager faces of millions of the oppressed, thirsty for knowledge, that now my eyes can see nothing else It is enough to say that I am a Communist, for that means I am fighting in the ranks for a new world."⁸⁷

Many left-leaning artists and intellectuals fleeing the Japanese occupation of Shanghai also made their way to the Communist base in Yan'an. Among these Shanghai refugees was a beautiful film actress named Jiang Qing 江青 (1914–1991) who soon became Mao's fourth wife (Mao's third wife He Zizhen 贺子珍 had traveled to Russia in 1937, as Mao's interest in her waned, and was divorced from Mao in 1939).⁸⁸ At a party forum on literature and art in Yan'an in 1942, Mao Zedong argued that art should be subordinate to politics; art's primary purpose was to serve the working people.⁸⁹ This emphasis on using art, literature, and other cultural forms to deliver a political message fueled investment in cultural infrastructure, even in the straitened circumstances of war. Through such cultural materials as the "Learn Characters" texts, recited out loud and often, peasants in the Communist-controlled areas absorbed "the basic fighting ideas of Chinese communism" and developed a sense of ownership over the Communist project.⁹⁰

During this time, the True Jesus Church also relied heavily on simple didactic texts, including primers such as "1,000 Characters of the Heavenly Kingdom" 天國千字 (by Wei Isaac, Henan, 1930) and question-and-answer-format booklets such as "What the Chosen People Should Know" 選民須知問答 (Wei Isaac, 1935, Wuchang) and "Simple Truths" 簡單真理 (Jiang Yuehan, Shanghai, 1935). Between 1917 and 1935, a sizable proportion of the most popular texts (twelve out of forty-five) were authored or edited by Wei Isaac, suggesting his stature within the church.⁹¹ Through these accessible texts, produced by different regional centers but approved by Headquarters and circulated throughout the entire church, the members of the church came to identify with each other as a "chosen people" with a distinctive constellation of shared beliefs, practices, and respected leaders.

The 1932 Headquarters fire also destroyed 1,000 hymnbooks.⁹² Some of the earliest texts produced by the True Jesus Church were hymnbooks. Out of the first fifteen church publications in a 1947 list of significant books, seven of these were hymnbooks, published between 1917 and 1924. Between 1924 and 1935, no further hymnbooks were published, giving us reason to believe that there was **(p.174)** relative stability in the body of hymns that circulated within the church during the Republican era, including during the war years.⁹³ Like the primer and the catechistic booklets, hymns converted extensive, complex content into succinct, catchy phrases. For example, one hymn attributed to Wei Isaac, "The Ten Commandments," converted each of the Biblical Ten Commandments into a pithy rhymed couplet.⁹⁴ Another riff on this was "Ten Shouldn'ts 十不該," putting all of the Ten Commandments into a negative form. For instance, the second verse read, "The third Shouldn't, the second Shouldn't: Do not take the name of the Lord in vain; do not fail to come to church on Sunday."⁹⁵ Yet another song gave a historical account of the creation of the church:

The angel of the early morning, bearing the true God's seal, calls us to be sealed as God's true servants.

The lighting comes from the East and shines on the West; in this matter will the Lord Jesus come again.

From the temple of the true God flows a river of living water from East to West; all living things on its banks are in his hands.

The true God says: in the last day will I establish in the East the great mountain of God, and all who see will return to it.

Chorus:

*1917, 1917! In the East there arose one who brought about the true church; the Lord sent the Holy Spirit's fullness among us. Amen!*⁹⁶

In some hymns, the “hidden” function of cultivating group unity and reinforcing church norms was made explicit. One song admonished believers to sit down upon entering the chapel, refrain from chatting, listen attentively to the sermon, and follow church regulations. The final verse concluded: “Only by learning to keep the rules can you enter Heaven.”⁹⁷ Through these hymns, which in the earliest hymnbooks were not accompanied by musical notation but sung to tunes familiar to a given congregation, members of the True Jesus Church breathed, uttered, and pictured heaven in unison. Songs created not only unity but atmosphere. A standard church practice for a baptismal service, one of its most solemn and charismatically charged rites, was to gather at the side of a place with abundant, clean water and sing hymns before offering prayer and immersing people into the water.⁹⁸

The Chinese Communist Party also used group singing as a tool for generating ideological unity and powerful emotion. Scholars of nationalistic and revolutionary songs in modern China have traced their origins directly back to Christian organizations.⁹⁹ As in perhaps every culture, China has a long history of music and song. There were work songs sung by laborers as they lifted and **(p.175)** dropped the heavy compactors to make rammed-earth walls, folk songs sung by peasants in the fields, elegant lyrics written by scholars to fit a popular tune, and so on. However, choral singing for a formal ritual purpose was a European practice brought to China by Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. During Hong Xiuquan's months attending Baptist services with Issachar Roberts in Guangzhou, he had become familiar with the foreign practice of group choral singing. One of Hong's favorites was “Old 100th,” also known as the Doxology, or “Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow,” which he made into the state song of the Taiping Heavenly Kingdom (with appropriately revised lyrics).¹⁰⁰ For over a decade, in the large swathe of Central China controlled by the Taiping, hymns were sung daily. These lyrics and tunes found their way into local folk culture. One scholar of Communist revolutionary songs, Isabel K. F. Wong, has found a strong resemblance between revolutionary songs and the songs of the Taiping era.¹⁰¹

The power of choral singing to unify groups of people, imbue words with emotional power, and spread ideas was recognized by others besides Christians and Communists. From the late Qing and early Republican eras, group singing was employed by both crowds of protestors on the street and government employees in civic ceremonies and schools.¹⁰² In the 1920s, the Methodist warlord Feng Yuxiang developed songs for soldiers. Feng arranged Chinese folk tunes, Japanese Army songs, and Christian hymns and paired them with martial lyrics. In 1922, Edward J. Stuckey, a London Missionary Society doctor in North China, recalled meeting Feng's troops "on a route march, keeping step to the tune of 'Oh! Come All Ye Faithful.'"¹⁰³ Beginning with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and continuing through the War of Resistance against the Japanese, musicians created songs that would move citizens to patriotic unity and outrage against the Japanese enemy.¹⁰⁴ This National Salvation Song Movement, spearheaded throughout the mid-1930s by the Christian leader Liu Liangmo 劉良模, promoted mass choral singing among ordinary citizens. For instance, in 1935 Liu organized a singing club for some sixty clerks, doorkeepers, office boys, and elevator operators in Shanghai.¹⁰⁵ Liu promoted martial, patriotic songs written by the likes of the young musician Nie Er 聶耳 (1912–1935). Nie Er joined the Chinese Communist Party in 1933, became impressed by the use of music in Russian propaganda films, and wrote several highly popular national salvation songs. His last composition, "March of the Volunteers" 義勇軍進行曲, was set to lyrics by Tian Han 田漢 for a patriotic 1935 film called *Children of the Storm* 風雲兒女. The first lines of the song went as follows:

*Arise, you who refuse to be slaves!
Use our blood and flesh to build a new Great Wall! (p.176)*

*As the Chinese nation faces its greatest peril,
Each person must utter their last defiant roar.
Arise! Arise! Arise!*

This song captured anti-Japanese sentiment and was sung all over China.¹⁰⁶ In 1937, when the Communist New Fourth Army made "March of the Volunteers" its official song, the Nationalist government censored it severely, once again eroding its public legitimacy by seeming to discourage resistance to Japan.¹⁰⁷ This censorship was part of the broader, highly unpopular Nationalist policy of suppressing all expressions of anti-Japanese sentiment and all criticisms of this nonresistance policy.¹⁰⁸

From primers to pamphlets to hymnbooks, the True Jesus Church invested significantly in cultural infrastructure, including not only physical equipment such as hole-punching machines and lead type, but also organizational structures such as the entire division of Headquarters devoted to publishing and cultural practices. One way of unifying the church was through consolidating and standardizing the church's musical practices. In 1934, the General Assembly meeting voted to create a unified *Hymns of Praise* 讚美詩 hymnbook, and in 1936 they voted to print additional copies of *Hymns of Praise* containing simplified musical notation.¹⁰⁹ General Assembly meetings also appended "detailed regulations" to church constitutional documents. These detailed regulations set guidelines for regular local church activities. For example, they specified that female deacons and ordinary church members had equal spiritual responsibilities with men.¹¹⁰ All had the right to raise their voices in congregational prayer.¹¹¹ The Lord's Supper rite was to use grape juice and unleavened flatbread that was broken by hand.¹¹² If two church members divorced under any circumstances besides adultery, neither of them could be remarried in a church service.¹¹³ Collections of money could not occur during Sabbath worship services, "for fear of disrupting the Spirit."¹¹⁴ Each church was to use a portion of collected funds to keep a supply of oil lamps, charcoal, tea leaves, and water for entertaining visitors.¹¹⁵ Like shared texts and songs, these subtly distinctive patterns of church practice shaped an international True Jesus Church culture.

One test of the strength of this shared church culture was church members' willingness to sacrifice financially for each other in times of catastrophe. In 1931, a series of floods on the Yangtze River struck several provinces, including Jiangsu, Anhui, Hunan, and Hubei. One source estimates that 400,000 lost their lives in these flood events; many times this number were displaced and faced starvation in the ensuing famine.¹¹⁶

From the affected provinces, local church leaders wrote to Headquarters, describing the countryside as mile after mile of "a vast sea" and relating the pitiful (p.177) conditions of the people.¹¹⁷ One report from the Anjiang 安江 congregation in Hunan read:

Since July 17, for twenty-eight days running, we had ceaseless heavy rain. The waters swelled tremendously. The congregation prayed every day, pleading for the Lord to give us grace, or to turn away wrath, until the Spirit revealed a scripture, that is, Matthew 24:16, which says, "Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains." The next dawn, the waters were even higher, and we moved all of the things inside the chapel to the top of a hill. Not two hours later, the entire city was suddenly covered in water, and the low walls outside the church collapsed; only the hall in the middle was left People are dead and injured, and wealth and property are lost."¹¹⁸

In July 1931, Headquarters sent out a call for donations, appealing to church members' shared spiritual fellowship:

The members of the churches in the disaster area have suffered tremendous loss. All of us at Headquarters are deeply concerned. Since even basic human decency calls for saving the hungry and aiding the weak, how much more should we, brothers who have been born of the same Spirit, show love and make provision for these who are now in the midst of hunger and weakness?¹¹⁹

Altogether, local churches from the southern Chinese city of Xiamen to the Malaysian city of Sandakan raised a total of 2,500 yuan for fellow members in disaster areas.¹²⁰ The money was sent to Headquarters, which redistributed it among the churches in the four provinces.

One year later in September 1932, a flood struck the northeastern city of Harbin. Two reports came in from the congregation in Harbin and the neighboring Yanji 延吉. They described "the entire city submerged under water, and the chapel floor covered in water 3–4 inches," and pleaded for aid for the "poor and suffering fellow believers."¹²¹ Upon receiving these reports, Headquarters sent out another call for a special donation, noting that in the previous year's Yangtze River collection, the Harbin members had been generous.¹²² The response was much smaller than the year before. Branches in Hunan, Hubei, Jiangsu, and Japanese-occupied Taiwan raised a total of fifty-five yuan.¹²³ Probably the response generated fewer funds because of the smaller scale of the disaster. Furthermore, by September 1932 China's political and economic conditions had worsened significantly.

(p.178) All in all, church members' willingness to supply mutual aid to fellow believers in different provinces or even a different country in a time of worldwide economic depression and domestic turmoil suggests that there was real substance to their shared identity, cultural ties, and sense of common welfare. Headquarters' success in soliciting and redistributing donations further suggests the legitimacy it enjoyed as the central organ of church government. The often-fruitless efforts of the various secular governments in China to unify populations and justify their rule during the 1930s show that the True Jesus Church's careful engineering of cultural infrastructure was no mean feat.

Rule in Exile

In addition to the photographs, register books, pamphlets, and priceless historical materials lost in the bombardment of January 28, 1932, the most serious loss was the Headquarters building itself. In the wake of this loss, the church was forced to temporarily move from the location on Baoshan Road to rented quarters in Shanghai's French Concession. This first move from a Chinese–Japanese war zone foreshadowed a second move in 1937, when the Japanese moved down from the remote northeast and invaded China proper.

In July of 1937, war broke out between Japan and China when troops of both nations exchanged fire at Lugouqiao 盧溝橋 near Beijing. Jiang Jieshi's unpopular policy of appeasement finally came to an end.¹²⁴ By the end of the month, both Beijing and Tianjin had fallen to the Japanese but the Chinese opened a second front, attacking Japanese military installations in Shanghai in August.¹²⁵ Within a few months, the Japanese forces gained control of China's urban eastern coastal areas. In December, after fierce fighting, Chinese armies were forced to abandon the capital city of Nanjing. Chinese, Japanese, and Western historians disagree about the total scale of the atrocities committed by the Japanese Army in the infamous event known as the Rape of Nanjing, but estimates regularly posit as many as 200,000 to 300,000 killed and tens of thousands of women raped.¹²⁶ Both government institutions and army commanders retreated up the Yangtze River toward Wuhan 武漢 and, about a year later, farther upstream to the city of Chongqing 重慶 in remote Sichuan 四川 Province.

Fleeing before the occupiers, tens of millions of people also moved from the north and the eastern coast to southwestern cities such as Chongqing or Kunming, and also to the southern British-controlled colony of Hong Kong.¹²⁷ One American journalist, Agnes Smedley, described train cars "like a battlefield, filled with three or four times as many people as there were seats," clogged with "bundles, big and little baskets, boxes and suitcases The baggage racks that ran the length of the car were piled with baggage—and with men stretched along **(p.179)** on top of the baggage." Traveling southwest with a group of refugees in January 1938, Smedley listened to a young father who held on his lap a small child just learning to talk:

"Down with the Japanese!" the father said.
The tiny voice of the child repeated, "Down with the Japanese!"
"Down with the traitors!"
"Down with the traitors!" piped the little voice.¹²⁸

This poignant picture of the older generation teaching the younger generation to find its voice amid fear and destruction speaks to the resilience of ordinary Chinese during these many years of war.

On the same train ride, Smedley heard a Chinese Christian woman begin to preach to those around her, apparently without success:

She was threatening mankind with the coming end of the world. This war was a sign of it. When this didn't impress anyone, she threatened them with death and with hell fire after death. That didn't seem to interest anyone either. So she told them that the foreigners do not want China to become Christian, that they do everything to prevent the Chinese people from knowing the truth of Christianity. At this I saw a man smile, then yawn, huddle up in his corner, and go to sleep. And so the woman's wisdom fell upon the desert air, and she soon ceased talking.¹²⁹

A single journalist's anecdote is not sufficient basis for a grand theory of why Chinese did or did not convert to Christianity, but the scene described here is a helpful reminder of both Christianity's potential appeal as an apocalyptic belief system in a time of war, and the fact that, poor and desperate though they were, deprivation alone did not necessarily make people susceptible to apocalyptic Christian messages. Both Christianity's disruptive ideological potential and the considerable threshold involved for a person actually to adopt a Christian worldview existed in dynamic tension with each other.

The places of refuge deep in China's interior were the destination of not only soldiers and individual citizens, but also government, academic, and cultural institutions. Between November 1937 and December 1938, the Nationalist government, troops, banks, newspapers and publishing houses, half of China's universities, foreign embassies and consulates, and the entertainment industry relocated to Chongqing. Chongqing's population increased by 419,000 people in the first year of the war. By the time the war ended in 1945, this population had tripled from 473,903 in 1937 to 1,255,071.¹³⁰ Among these institutional refugees **(p.180)** were Christian church organizations, schools, and universities, including the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church.¹³¹

For the True Jesus Church leaders, this exodus was desperate but not unanticipated. They had been planning a major relocation of Headquarters in the event of international war ever since a Councilors Assembly in March 1936.¹³² The leaders' migration to Chongqing not only was a self-protective measure predicated on the notion of safety in numbers, but also fit their self-perception as the heads of a top-class institution whose survival was necessary to maintain China's cultural life. Unoccupied China was protected from Japanese ground invasion by the rugged, mountainous terrain around Chongqing. However, it was vulnerable to air attack. In the three years from 1939 to 1941, Japanese aircraft bombarded the city 141 times, dropping 15,000 bombs and wiping out 10,000 homes and the lives of around 10,000 civilians. Instead of achieving the Japanese goal of breaking civilian morale, however, the bombardment simply strengthened civilians' determination to resist.¹³³

Up until the end of the war in 1945, China was under the administration of three major governments, although the borders of the areas that they claimed often shifted. There was the Japanese-controlled “occupied region” 淪陷區 along the eastern seaboard, the Nationalist-controlled “great hinterland” 大後方, and the Communist-controlled “liberated region” 解放區.¹³⁴ In the occupied areas, characterized by repressive conditions including bombings, political kidnappings, torture, and murder, most people had little choice but to acquiesce to Japanese rule (i.e., the rule of puppet governments controlled by the Japanese).¹³⁵ The Japanese-run government in Manchuria, for example, largely succeeded in co-opting local structures of civic influence and administration.¹³⁶ In occupied territory in China proper, the Japanese similarly set up puppet governments, including a government in Nanjing headed by Wang Jingwei, Jiang Jieshi’s old rival within the Nationalist Party and Mao Zedong’s former boss. However, the Japanese never completely controlled the rural areas beyond the cities, where Communists and other groups such as local militias engaged in dogged resistance.¹³⁷ In the “great hinterland” and “liberated” areas, the Nationalists and Communists publicly agreed to put aside their differences and work together in a Second United Front against the Japanese. However, this alliance was strained; as the war progressed, both sides jockeyed for advantage. After the end of the war in 1945, fighting between the Nationalists and Communists soon broke out again.

The War of Resistance from 1937 to 1945 claimed the lives of 10–37 million Chinese civilians.¹³⁸ Some of these deaths were due to the actions of the Chinese armies themselves. For example, in June 1938, trying to slow the Japanese forces’ advance to Wuhan, the Nationalists under Jiang Jieshi deliberately breached the dikes holding back the Yellow River. Undoing the work of centuries of Chinese **(p.181)** laborers and conscientious government officials, the Nationalist Army opened a hole in the dike, allowing the river to spill through the opening and flow southeast across the flat eastern plain of Henan Province. In the short term, this action succeeded in postponing the fall of Wuhan by about four months. In the meantime, however, floods covered forty-five villages in the affected counties in eastern Henan. In eight of these counties, over half the villages were destroyed. The floodwaters further continued to spread into rivers in the neighboring provinces of Anhui and Jiangsu, causing more flooding. Deaths from this flooding in Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu numbered 800,000—nearly three times the highest estimate for Japanese-caused deaths in the Rape of Nanjing a few months before. In the flooded areas, the civilian death rate was 4.8 percent, about eight times higher than the rate of 0.6 percent for battle zones in China. In the provinces of Henan, Anhui, and Jiangsu, 20 percent of the population (four million people) became refugees.¹³⁹ Cultivated crops were covered first in water and then in 100 million tons of silt.¹⁴⁰

During the war, the Nationalist government refused to take responsibility for its decision to destroy critical infrastructure and kill hundreds of thousands of its own citizens in exchange for a short-lived military solution. It claimed that the dikes had been bombed by the Japanese.¹⁴¹ Only after the disaster's true causes came to light after 1945 did the regime alter its narrative to herald the heroic sacrifices made by the Chinese people.¹⁴² Although historian Keith Schoppa has explained that these instances of scorched-earth self-destruction may have been accepted by the Chinese victims as a necessary tactic at the time, he also points out that the government's willingness to choose a path of such staggering sacrifice "showed a leadership callous to the needs of its people."¹⁴³

This callousness was part of the larger story of why the Nationalists failed to win the civil war against the Communists from 1945 to 1949. Not only did the Communist commanders engage in brilliant military tactics, the Communist soldiers and propagandists also succeeded in winning the larger battle for hearts and minds. Red Army songs such as "Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention"—adapted from one of "Christian General" Feng Yuxiang's marching songs—embody the ethos of discipline that made a favorable impression on Chinese citizens:¹⁴⁴

*Soldiers of the Revolution must each be disciplined.
Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention:
First, obey orders in all of your actions.
Consistency in every step is the only way to victory.
Second, do not take even a single needle or thread from the people.
The people will protect and delight in us . . .*¹⁴⁵

(p.182) Like the "Ten Commandments" and "Ten Shouldn'ts" hymns of the True Jesus Church, "The Three Main Rules of Discipline and Eight Points for Attention" helped soldiers internalize key ideological doctrines. In this case, soldiers committed to memory rules for good behavior such as respecting peasant property, being polite, returning borrowed articles, not damaging crops, and not harassing women.¹⁴⁶ In a culture with the proverb "Do not use good iron for nails, or good men for soldiers," this restraint made an impression, especially when contrasted with the behavior of the Nationalist troops and wartime brutality.

Another significant factor in reducing popular faith in the Nationalist government was rampant inflation. The Nationalist response to the economic crisis facing the country in 1945 was to print more banknotes, which made matters worse. The Shanghai wholesale price index was 100 in September 1945 and 257 in December 1945. In December 1946, it was 1,656, and in February 1947 it had nearly doubled to 3,090. Strikes and protests broke out in large cities around the country.¹⁴⁷ Seemingly astronomical contributions to Headquarters' operating expenses for the three-month period of June, July, and August reflected this nationwide inflation: the Shaanxi branch organization gave 300,000 yuan; the local church in Putian Village, Fujian gave 28,500 yuan. As in the 1930s, international support was a great source of strength. The Bandung Church in Indonesia, for instance, gave 264,000 yuan. Donors included individuals as well as church units. Wei Isaac 魏以撒, now listed prominently as publisher on the masthead of *Holy Spirit Times*, gave 10,000 yuan.¹⁴⁸

Headquarters had returned from its exile in the interior to the city of Nanjing. Here, in new facilities at 118 Ji'e Alley 雞鵝巷, as early as at least September 1947, Headquarters resumed printing *Holy Spirit Times*. Jiang John 將約翰, one of the two representatives sent to Beijing to investigate church origins in 1930, was now listed on the masthead as the head of printing operations and editor-in-chief.¹⁴⁹ Wei Isaac was now clearly the national and international head of the church. In the group photo from the General Assembly meeting in May 1947, Wei Isaac sits in the place of honor in the middle of the front row.¹⁵⁰ Gao Daling had died in 1941, during the war years, along with a number of other senior church leaders.¹⁵¹ The whole-assembly photograph from this conference was taken in front of the Nationalist Party's conspicuous monument to its revolutionary legitimacy: Sun Yat-sen's marble mausoleum in the hills of Nanjing, completed in 1929.¹⁵²

Despite superior troop numbers and military equipment, the Nationalists lost the war. In April and May of 1949, the Red Army entered Nanjing and Shanghai. The disruption of the Nationalist defense of the city and Communist occupation seems to have put publication of *Holy Spirit Times* on hiatus from March 1949 to August 1950.¹⁵³ The front page of the *Holy Spirit Times* issue of February 15, 1949, deflected the war's ominous shadow with a lead article explaining "Of All the **(p.183)** Greatest Poisons in the World, None Compares to False Religions." The first line argued that physical dangers paled in comparison with spiritual dangers:

People are killed by other people, or blown up by great bombs, or are poisoned by others, or are hung with millstones and drowned in the depths of the sea, or are eaten by wild animals, or die of thirst, or are killed by atomic bombs or electric shocks; but all of these ways of dying are not the most lethal. Because all these ways of dying kill the body but cannot injure the soul.¹⁵⁴

Despite this brave assertion that physical concerns were of secondary importance, a smaller and less prominent article titled “Headquarters’ Situation” in the February 15, 1949, issue reported that a drastically reduced staff at Headquarters was striving to keep up business as usual, but amid very stressful conditions as the Communist forces approached:

At this extremely tense moment in Nanjing, it is hard to buy even one grain of rice Each day there are five or six incoming letters, but on top of this every day people come in person to ask questions about the Church and discuss the gospel. From morning to evening we have meetings, and practice singing hymns in addition to memorizing Scripture and preaching. We are most preoccupied with writing, worrying about money, proofreading, and printing.¹⁵⁵

This report revealed the desperate situation that skyrocketing wartime prices had caused in Nanjing:

Our economic situation is extremely difficult. One month’s worth of contributions is not enough to cover basic needs such as a day’s vegetables. It is not enough to cover even one day’s postage. We have begun to take good wood beams intended for building and sell them for firewood, and have incurred debt of over two liang [two liang equals about 1 kilogram] in gold. We scarcely had enough money to print this issue.¹⁵⁶

The hazard that war posed to the church’s institutional life was evident in another notice at the bottom of this page announcing an international church-wide fast from sundown on April 6 to sundown on April 7, to “remember the Lord’s death, *pray for peace*, and proclaim the true gospel” [my emphasis]. All branches and local churches were requested to spread the news throughout the entire church for “united prayer.”¹⁵⁷

(p.184) This coordinated physical unity (thousands of True Jesus Church stomachs going empty from the same sundown to the next, across national borders, time zones, and wide oceans) contrasted with the violent division in China's political status as a nation-state at this time. China was about to split into two competing Chinas, each refusing to recognize their "twoness." After losing control of the strategic Yangtze River Delta cities of Nanjing and Shanghai in the spring, the Nationalists were clearly losing by the fall of 1949. Jiang Jieshi's government and army were once again compelled to pack up and retreat to a place with natural defenses, this time the island of Taiwan, which had reverted back to Chinese control after the Japanese defeat in 1945. Here the Nationalist party-state proclaimed that it represented the only legitimate government of the Republic of China. To underscore their claims as the true guardians of Chinese civilization, the Nationalists had already crated up and shipped to Taiwan centuries of China's bureaucratic and artistic heritage: Qing government documents, ancient bronze vessels and jade disks, rare hand-copied books, famous works of calligraphy and painting, and all manner of priceless artifacts.¹⁵⁸

It was before this recently looted imperial palace in October 1949 that Mao Zedong stood atop Tiananmen Gate and proclaimed the establishment of the People's Republic of China to cheering crowds. As the national anthem, the new Communist government chose Nie Er's song "March of the Volunteers," first made famous during the National Salvation Song Movement in 1935. Accompanied by trumpet calls, the stirring final lines of the song exhorted the Chinese to shoulder the burden of unity in order to be saved:

*We millions are all of one heart!
Braving the enemy's fire, press on!
Braving the enemy's fire, press on!
Press on! Press on! Press on!*¹⁵⁹

Rival for Order

The True Jesus Church found stability during the turbulent 1930s and war years through its strong central leadership, international membership, and bureaucratic infrastructure connecting the apex with the grassroots. During the schism between the northern churches under Gao Daling and Wei Isaac and the southern churches under Zhang Barnabas, the church's rules and regulations for self-governance eventually had sufficient weight and legitimacy to bring about reunification. During the War of Resistance against the Japanese, church leaders were so attached to the significance of the True Jesus Church as a formal institution that instead of simply dissolving back into the masses of private citizens, Wei (p.185) Isaac and other officials moved Headquarters to Chongqing along with many other government, academic, and cultural institutions. Following the conclusion of the civil war between the Nationalists and Communists, the True Jesus Church likewise chose to maintain its distinctive institutional profile, despite the attendant hazards.

Ironically, one of the church's greatest sources of institutional strength during the War of Resistance, the civil war, and the decades afterward came from the church in Taiwan, which was a Japanese colony from 1895 to 1945. In 1926, Zhang Barnabas and other True Jesus Church evangelists made their first converts and established the church in Taiwan.¹⁶⁰ After 1949, political stress eroded the functionality of the centralized church structures on the Chinese mainland and contributed to the rise of Taiwan as the church's new international center. In its relatively stable situation, the church in Taiwan stored archival documents, trained leadership, and printed materials. While the mainland was in the throes of the Maoist era, in 1967 the Taiwan church convened the first World Delegates Conference, which organized the first International Assembly. In the twenty-first century, international True Jesus Church operations are officially coordinated by the International Assembly based in Lakewood, California, although the Taiwan church headquartered in Taichung still plays a significant role.¹⁶¹ In this sense, as put by Deng Zhaoming, editor of the Chinese Christian magazine *Bridge*, "the whole development of the [True Jesus Church] overseas has its roots in Fujian. And for this reason, the influence of Barnabas is comprehensive even though he disgraced himself later."¹⁶² In the post-Mao era, regular interaction between church leaders and members on either side of the Taiwan Strait has resumed.

The political stress that the church and many other Chinese religious organizations experienced after 1949 arose from the jealousy of a party-state that, as in the heyday of the imperial governments before it, made sweeping claims to moral as well as political authority and would brook no rivals. As Andrew Walder has noted, in the early years of its rule, the Communist state succeeded in developing a set of new and distinctive institutions that allowed it to gradually consolidate control over China's territory and population. This new national bureaucracy "connected the apex of power in Beijing directly, and relatively effectively, with life at the grass roots."¹⁶³

The new centralized political system created by the Chinese Communist Party after 1949 was both similar to and different from that created by the leaders of the True Jesus Church in the 1930s. Both systems relied on extensive sets of regulations, as well as the personal influence of charismatic leaders, to maintain cohesion and promote their distinctive ideology. Within these centralized systems, top leaders had redistributed both personnel and financial resources. Both systems invested considerable resources into the widespread **(p.186)** cultivation of certain collective cultural forms, including print culture and group singing. Both systems had been relatively successful in creating unity out of diversity, comrades out of strangers. Both moral worldviews affirmed the reality of power behind their definitions of right and wrong. One major point of difference was that the Communist revolutionaries' doctrine of power also had a distinctively practical side: "Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."¹⁶⁴ For the first time since the Opium Wars and the "unequal treaties," a political organization was poised to govern China's vast territory through military might.

This accomplishment, however, could not have been achieved by coercion alone. The battle for hearts and minds had been hard fought. Yet in the manner of all large, ideologically driven organizational projects, including the project of the True Jesus Church, the fundamental struggle for legitimacy could never be settled decisively. The same natural forces of idealism, zeal, and world-remaking energy that built the structures of the new and better world were also poised to erode it.

Notes:

(1.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan \真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*], Reprint Edition (Taichung: True Jesus Church, 1988) (hereafter *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), 111. At this location in 2018 one can find a hotel, a residential building, and a roast duck restaurant.

(2.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 111.

(3.) Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000), 130–156

(4.) Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 208

(5.) Mark R. Peattie, "The Dragon's Seed: Origins of the War," in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937–1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward Drea, and Hans van de Ven (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 48–78

- (6.) Christian Henriot, *Shanghai, 1927–1937: Municipal Power, Locality, and Modernization*, trans. Noël Castellino (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 1993), 66–69
- (7.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 86.
- (8.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 87.
- (9.) Harrison, *China*, 209–210.
- (10.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 92.
- (11.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121–122.
- (12.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983)
- (13.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.
- (14.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 9; Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 81.
- (15.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 9.
- (16.) Barend J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1992); Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976); Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).
- (17.) My thanks to Joseph Tse-Hei Lee for his insightful reflections on “the institutional void” in Chinese society during this period of time.
- (18.) Timothy Brook, “Auto-Organization in Chinese Society,” in *Civil Society in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 19–45
- (19.) Vincent Goossaert, “Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Association in 1912 China,” in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 209–232; Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857–1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

(20.) See, for instance, Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), especially chap. 5; Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), especially the section on the various procedures for the selection of abbots (the head monk at a monastery), 143–177. My thanks to Justin Ritzinger for bringing this study to my attention.

(21.) Lily Lee Tsai, “The Struggle for Village Public Goods Provision: Information Institutions of Accountability in Rural China,” in *Grassroots Political Reform in Contemporary China*, ed. Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 117–148

(22.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121.

(23.) Harrison, *China*, 194.

(24.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 6, 93–98.

(25.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 101–129.

(26.) Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State*, 229–230.

(27.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.

(28.) Harrison, *China*, 194–195.

(29.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 51.

(30.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 57–71.

(31.) *Robert’s Rules of Order* Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View From Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 39–40

(32.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.

(33.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.

(34.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.

(35.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 171.

(36.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 171.

(37.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 172.

(38.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.

- (39.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.
- (40.) Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 143–177.
- (41.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 22.
- (42.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26–31.
- (43.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 29–30.
- (44.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 31–32.
- (45.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 32, 56.
- (46.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 53.
- (47.) Zhang Barnabas 張巴拿巴, *Chuandao ji 傳道記* [*Mission Record*] (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, 1929), 1–8; *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 86.
- (48.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 12.
- (49.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 1. *Mission Record* recounts his travels up to 1929 and was published in October 1929.
- (50.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊* [*True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*] (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M25*Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*
- (51.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 10.
- (52.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 22.
- (53.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 8, 13, 14.
- (54.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 3.
- (55.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 4–6.
- (56.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 20–33.
- (57.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, diagram before p. 1.
- (58.) Harrison, *China*, 194. A fifth branch of Nationalist government administered the civil service examinations, also in the style of the imperial tradition.
- (59.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, diagram before p. 1.

- (60.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 36.
- (61.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 56.
- (62.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 12–13.
- (63.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 32.
- (64.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 12, 81–94.
- (65.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 5, 95.
- (66.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 14, 173.
- (67.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 88–89.
- (68.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 111–120.
- (69.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 119, 120.
- (70.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.
- (71.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 52.
- (72.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136.
- (73.) Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940); Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 69–108; Jan Kiely, “Spreading the Dharma With the Mechanized Press: New Buddhist Print Cultures in the Modern Chinese Print Revolution, 1866–1949,” in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: 2010), 185–212; Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, “Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51.
- (74.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136, 149.
- (75.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136.
- (76.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 148.
- (77.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 122.
- (78.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 122.
- (79.) Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 90.
- (80.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 2000), 211
-

- (81.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 286–287.
- (82.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 318–352.
- (83.) Reed, *From Woodblocks to the Internet*, Enhua Zhang, *Space, Politics, and Cultural Representation in Modern China: Cartographies of Revolution* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 66
- (84.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 335.
- (85.) Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, First Revised and Enlarged Edition (New York: Grove, 1968), 235
- (86.) Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 236.
- (87.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, ed. Jan MacKinnon and Steve MacKinnon (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 25–26
- (88.) Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 52
- (89.) Mao Zedong, “On Art and Literature,” in *Sources of Chinese Tradition Vol. II*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 441–444
- (90.) Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 236.
- (91.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, “Chart of Historically Important Books,” F12.
- (92.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121–122.
- (93.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, “Chart of Historically Important Books,” F12.
- (94.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Spirit Songs* 靈歌, no. 1.
- (95.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 25.
- (96.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 3.
- (97.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 52.
- (98.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 59.

(99.) Isabel K. F. Wong, “*Geming Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses*,” in Bonnie S. McDougall, ed., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People’s Republic of China 1949–1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 112–143; Joshua H. Howard, “‘Music for a National Defense’: Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War,” *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, E-Journal No. 13 (December 2014), accessed April 17, 2018, <http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13> My heartfelt thanks to Michelle Chang for bringing these articles to my attention and sharing her insights into group choral singing in China.

(100.) Wong, “Songs for the Education of the Masses,” 113.

(101.) Wong, “Songs for the Education of the Masses,” 112–115.

(102.) Wong, “Songs for the Education of the Masses,” 115; Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, 40, mentions a crowd protesting Russian imperialism by singing 愛國歌, “The Patriots’ Song,” in 1903.

(103.) E. J. Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1922, Beijing, Council for World Mission Archives/Reports/North China, Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections & Archives call number MFC 266.00951 L846 CN, microfiche 754; Howard, “Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War,” 6.

(104.) Howard, “Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War,” 2.

(105.) Howard, “Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War,” 14–23.

(106.) Wong, “Songs for the Education of the Masses,” 123.

(107.) Wong, “Songs for the Education of the Masses,” 123.

(108.) Howard, “Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War,” 19–20.

(109.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 9, 17.

(110.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 63.

(111.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 68.

(112.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 64.

(113.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 66.

(114.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 68.

(115.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 70.

- (116.) Jixi Gao, James E. Nickum, and Yingzi Pan, "An Assessment of Flood Hazard Vulnerability in the Dongting Lake Region of China," *Lakes & Reservoirs: Research and Management* 12 (2007): 27–34
- (117.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 104.
- (118.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 104.
- (119.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 103.
- (120.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 103.
- (121.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 109.
- (122.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 109.
- (123.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 110.
- (124.) Mark Peattie, "The Dragon's Seed," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 72.
- (125.) Hans van de Ven and Edward J. Drea, "Chronology of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937–1945," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 7.
- (126.) Hua-ling Hu and Zhang Lian-hong, *The Undaunted Women of Nanking: The Wartime Diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-fang* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 1–2
- (127.) Lu Liu, "A Whole Nation Walking: The 'Great Retreat' in the War of Resistance, 1937–1945," PhD dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2002, 11.
- (128.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, ed. Jan MacKinnon and Steve MacKinnon (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 86–89
- (129.) Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, 89.
- (130.) Bao Weihong, "In Search of a 'Cinematic Esperanto': Exhibiting Wartime Chongqing Cinema in Global Context," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 3, no. 2 (2009): 135–147
- (131.) Peter Chen-Main Wang 王成勉, "Chinese Christians in Republican China," in R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II: 1800 to the Present* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 607
- (132.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 16–17.

(133.) Hagiwara Mitsuru, "The Japanese Air Campaigns in China, 1937–1945," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 249.

(134.) Caroline FitzGerald, *Fragmenting Modernisms: Chinese Wartime Literature, Art, and Film, 1937–49* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 5

(135.) Harrison, *China*, 218.

(136.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 72–129.

(137.) Harrison, *China*, 216–217.

(138.) For instance, John Dower estimated ten million in *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); Rana Mitter estimated twelve million in *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937–1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 5–6; Rudolph J. Rummel cited sources from ten to thirty-seven million deaths in *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991).

(139.) Micah S. Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 31

(140.) Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China*, 30–31.

(141.) Muscolino, *Ecology of War in China*, 31.

(142.) Muscolino, *Ecology of War in China*, 32.

(143.) Keith Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness: Refugees During the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 239

(144.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 6.

(145.) Bryant, Lei Ouyang. "Flowers on the Battlefield Are More Fragrant," *Asian Music* 38, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2007): 88–122 三大紀律八項注意 <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64150/64154/4509647.html>

(146.) Bryant, "Flowers on the Battlefield Are More Fragrant," Stephen Uhalley, *Mao Tse-tung, A Critical Biography* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), 38

(147.) Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), 499

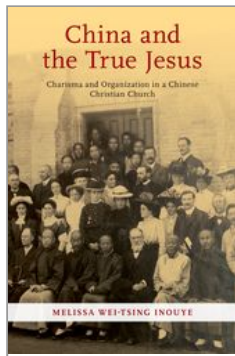
(148.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), September 15, 1947, p. 16.

(149.) *Holy Spirit Times*, September 15, 1947, p. 16.

- (150.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D19.
- (151.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M2.
- (152.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D19.
- (153.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949; September 15, 1950. It is also possible that there is simply a gap in the collection of *Holy Spirit Times* that I accessed at the True Jesus Church archives in Taichung, Taiwan. On either side of this gap, the issues in the Taichung collection are regularly spaced.
- (154.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 1.
- (155.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (156.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (157.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (158.) See the catalog of Taiwan's National Palace Museum. <https://www.npm.gov.tw/en/Article.aspx?sNo=03000060>
- (159.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 11–12.
- (160.) Deng Zhaoming, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today Part II," *Bridge*, no. 63 (January-February 1994), 8–10
- (161.) True Jesus Church International Assembly official website, http://members.tjc.org/sites/en/church_landing.aspx.
- (162.) Deng, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today," 10.
- (163.) Andrew Walder, *China Under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), xii
- (164.) Mao Zedong, "Problems of War and Strategy" (November 6, 1938), *Selected Works*, Vol. II, 224 [Mao Tse-tung Internet Archive](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch05.htm) <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch05.htm> 枪杆子里面出政权 <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64170/4467398.html>

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Saving Comrade Stalin's Soul (1949–1958)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0007

Abstract and Keywords

During the 1950s, the universal ideology of Chinese Christian churches such as the True Jesus Church clashed with the universal ideology of the Maoist party-state. Christian communities' relative ideological autonomy hindered the party-state's ambitions for control. Christians, especially Christian leaders, experienced intense pressure to adopt the new code of Maoist speech during this era. Documents from archives in Shanghai, Nanjing, and Wuhan and oral history interviews with members of the True Jesus Church in South China show how between 1949 and 1958, top church leaders bowed to this pressure, replacing biblical rhetoric and discursive patterns with Maoist rhetoric and discursive patterns. The contest between religious communities and the state to control the terms of public moral discourse demonstrates the significance of such discourse in demarcating and legitimating community authority.

Keywords: Maoist era, party-state, ideological autonomy, rhetoric, discourse, authority

A New Era

After 1949 the Chinese Communist Party consolidated control—not only over territory and government institutions, but also over the realm of moral discourse. A universalist ideology, Marxist-Leninist-Maoist materialism claimed all-encompassing authority to categorize and interpret all forms of human activity. Beyond analysis of capitalist production, the party-state's ideology made claims about good, evil, and the nature of human existence. Capitalists and landlords were evil; workers and peasants were virtuous; the meaning of life was entirely contained within the material realities of economic production and class struggle. Maoism was thus a natural rival to many Chinese religious movements.¹ In particular, the rival universalist worldview found within Chinese Christian churches challenged the party-state's ambitions for ideological control.

Christian churches were communities with a diverse membership held together by moral discourse. Christianity's shared text, the Bible, contained a reservoir of precepts, rites, exemplars, and patterns. Church members and especially leaders who preached from the pulpit drew on biblical tropes and terminology as they engaged in moral discourse, defined by Richard Madsen as “an active social process of understanding, evaluating, and arguing about what is right or wrong in a given situation.”² The universal scope of biblical teachings and the self-governing, morality-oriented culture of church communities made Christian churches ideologically self-contained communities within which members collectively claimed authority to interpret the world and define right and wrong. As independent centers of moral discourse and community authority, churches presented an obstacle to the party-state's goal of forming subjects loyal to the state alone.³ Not only church leaders but also representatives of the party-state keenly (**p.188**) felt the tie between morality and legitimate authority.⁴ This made the struggle between the religious and political realms of discourse production so vital.

Between 1949 and 1958, these two universalist discourses, Maoist and Christian, came to a head. During the 1950s, church communities experienced intense pressure, not to explicitly change their beliefs, for freedom of religion was nominally guaranteed under the Constitution, but to change their everyday language for right and wrong, beneficial and harmful, the community of the chosen versus adversaries. Political activists pressured Chinese Christians to make the rhetorical switch to the terms, tone, and moral categories of Maoism. Such code-switching was not necessarily a sign of speakers' complete cognitive conversion to Maoist ideology, but was rather a submissive “karaoke” or public performance of loyalty signaling acceptance of the state's authority.⁵

For conservative Christian churches that had historically prized biblical rhetoric as a symbol of separation from both the secular world and other ostensibly less orthodox or authentic Christian churches, adopting Maoist rhetoric was not simply a matter of cleverly mouthing empty words. Such a shift breached the walls of symbolic language protecting the community's authoritative moral discourse. The transition to Maoist rhetoric and discursive patterns was especially earthshaking in the True Jesus Church because members held it to be Christ's one true church, directly guided by the Holy Spirit. The history of how for a period of time the top leaders of the True Jesus Church adopted Maoism's politicized rhetoric and moral frameworks illustrates the significance of language in allowing the party-state to penetrate the sacred boundaries setting the church apart as an autonomous ideological community.

Dearth of Sources, Abundance of Judgment

A growing literature on Christian churches during the Maoist era exists, but the body of work is not vast. The field has been shaped by two realities: a dearth of sources and an abundance of judgment. First, documentary sources from this era are hard to access. One reason for this is the widespread destruction of documents during the Cultural Revolution. With over half a century separating us from the 1950s, potential oral history subjects are also quickly aging out of reach. Although voluminous government reports on religion in the 1950s are stored in Chinese archives, access is usually restricted.

A second factor that has shaped historiography on 1950s Chinese Christianity is the question of moral judgment. In his recent study of the Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai, John Keating argued that historians of Chinese Christianity in the 1950s “generally fall into one of two distinct camps, either condemning the church for co-operating with atheist communists or congratulating it on **(p. 189)** expelling the evil foreign missionaries.”⁶ It is more accurate to say that there are more than two scholarly “camps,” including the middle ground Keating's work now occupies, but it is true that the Christian response to the Maoist party-state was polarizing in the 1950s and is still polarizing today.⁷ The story of Chinese Christians in the 1950s is often told in very stark terms as a story of how Christians chose between right and wrong, although scholars disagree over who occupied the moral high ground.

The key point is that during this era, the majority of religious practitioners, from Buddhists to Muslims, cooperated with state programs. One report from a Buddhist monastery listed five categories of monks' responses to Maoist indoctrination programs that could also be applied to Christians at the time. Those within the first two categories embraced the new political ideology and studied hard. Those in the third "knew only that they should do what they were told" and "found it troublesome to attend meetings and to study." Those in the fourth "discovered pretexts for avoiding newspaper-reading groups and meetings" and "sometimes used a couple of modern terms" as verbal symbols of their loyalty and membership in good Maoist society. The few monks in the fifth category were like "canned goods" (i.e., hermetically sealed). When forced to attend political meetings, "they neither heard nor spoke. New things held no attraction for them."⁸ This wide variety in believers' compliance lends credence to the approach of historian Philip Wickeri, who has argued that most Christians who cooperated with the state were neither "zealous converts" nor "stubborn resisters," but "adapters" essentially concerned with coping with a stressful experience and finding a place in the new society.⁹

A survey of existing scholarship shows that variations in the scope of authority churches claimed in their internal discourse tended to shape their response to Maoist political activity. Churches whose internal discourse claimed sweeping, exclusive authority to interpret cosmic truth and morality tended to resist cooperation with the party-state more than those whose discursive culture was segmented and pluralistic. In the majority of cases, higher levels of natural resistance still ultimately gave way to public capitulation, although it was more likely that underground activities would arise within such church communities. This was the case with the True Jesus Church.

The Catholic Church was also among the Christian denominations that made strong claims of moral authority, with its global hierarchical organization, standardized rites, a distinctive version of the Bible, set-apart clerical lifestyle, and assertion of unbroken divine papal authority stretching back to St. Peter, the apostle of Jesus. Most Catholics viewed faith in the authority of this worldwide hierarchy as essential. Catholic Father John Tung (Dong Shizhi) articulated this point of view when in 1951 he declared, "If today I renounce the Pope, **(p.190)** then tomorrow I might be asked to deny the Lord himself."¹⁰ Many Catholics eventually conformed, but throughout the 1950s and 1960s, significant numbers continued to resist the party-state by enduring imprisonment or taking their practice underground.¹¹

Among the churches that made relatively weaker claims of moral authority were the Protestant denominations forming what historian Daniel Bays has called the Sino-foreign Protestant establishment.¹² These churches existed under the umbrella of nationwide formal Protestant governing bodies and included foreign mission denominations such as the Wesleyan Methodist Church as well as mission-derived churches such as the Chinese-run Church of Christ in China 中華基督教會. The Sino-foreign Protestant establishment churches had been heavily influenced by the “social Gospel” theology of the 1920s and 1930s. They operated the majority of Christianity’s public-sector institutions including hospitals, schools, colleges, and social institutions such as the YWCA/YMCA. These churches also tended to be theologically liberal, with many, though not all, on the modernist side of the modernist-fundamentalist controversy. For instance, Wu Yaozong 吳耀宗 was a general secretary of the YMCA who later became chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (the state-sanctioned organization for Protestant Christianity, which emphasized the need for churches to be self-led, self-financed, and self-propagating). Wu wrote that in his formative years as a Christian he had embraced the ethics of Jesus’s Sermon on the Mount but could not accept “supernatural” and “irrational” ideas such as Christ’s virgin birth, resurrection, and second coming.¹³ Liberal or modernist churches interpreted Christianity’s applicability to human experience broadly, sharing the field with the ontological authority of science and the “social gospel” of expressing Christian teachings through secular endeavors in medicine and education. In this sense these churches willingly ceded or shared authority over large territories of meaningful interpretation. Their mixed discourse of biblical ethics, scientific rationality, social reform, and even political engagement regularly overran the boundaries of the community of believers and connected to the ideas, symbols, and phrases of the wider world. For many of these Christians, embracing China’s new materialist political and social order may have been a reasonable and even hopeful choice. In his study of Chinese Protestant leader Chen Chonggui, who followed this course, Daniel Bays argued that Protestants “were not necessarily duped or coerced into state-imposed structures of religious affairs Some may have found it quite natural to work within such structures.”¹⁴

Other Protestant churches, especially those with a fundamentalist bent, including the True Jesus Church and most native churches, more closely resembled Catholicism with their strong internal culture of authoritative discourse and corresponding tendency to resist the discursive framework of the party-state.¹⁵ **(p.191)** These conservative churches tended to emphasize the Bible as their sole authority. Church members and especially leaders consulted it conspicuously to support the veracity of their common beliefs and the sacred value of their individual lives. Shared biblical rhetoric (quotations from the Bible or references to biblical tropes, characters, or teachings) helped to maintain community boundaries and establish a sense of sacred separation from the evil outside.

Although their Bible-centered, authoritative discourse predisposed these churches to resist Maoist control, some were more successful than others. To the extent that some churches succeeded in maintaining their own culture, they did so covertly, by going underground or keeping a very low profile. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee has shown that local-dialect churches and congregations of the Little Flock in Chaozhou succeeded in worshipping autonomously, avoiding the control of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.¹⁶ Seventh-day Adventists, another exclusivist group that set itself apart through distinctive practices such as Saturday Sabbath observance and special dietary codes, also resisted Maoist programs in Shanghai by boycotting certain party-orchestrated mass meetings.¹⁷ Yet the higher the profile of Christian institutions or Christian leaders, the more likely it was that they would be compelled to eventually demonstrate submission to the new order. Publications of the central Seventh-day Adventist organization in 1950s Shanghai vividly illustrate the jarring contrast between native-Christian and -Maoist discourses. A June 1951 publication with a hand-drawn cover image of a hand holding a torch suggested a disruption in regular printing processes and made a statement asserting the Adventist community's exclusive access to truth and disregard for secular power. A caption exhorted believers to "hold high the torch of truth!" and defiantly quoted Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (13:6): "The Lord will help me—I will not fear. What can people do to me?" By January 1955, however, the Adventists' central publication was quoting not the Bible, but anti-imperialist slogans: "If American imperialism dares to obstruct the Chinese people's liberation of Taiwan, then there will be severe consequences."¹⁸ Despite their similarly fundamentalist and exclusivist positions, the three largest native churches (the True Jesus Church, Little Flock, and Jesus Family) attracted the attention of the state security apparatus because their size and tight hierarchical structure gave them a strong internal culture. Their top leaders were imprisoned and their congregations were folded into the official Three-Self Patriotic Movement structure.¹⁹

In sum, the relative scope and exclusivity of a church's internal discourse determined the size of the gap between it and the Maoist party-state, but in the majority of cases, church members eventually took the leap. Even many of the most stalwart Catholics and Protestants arrested by the security apparatus in the 1950s and 1960s eventually gave in to the physical and psychological pressures and **(p.192)** produced submissive statements in the new political idiom.²⁰ Soon after being arrested in 1955, the prominent Jesuit Jin Luxian, Bishop Gong Pinmei's trusted junior colleague in Shanghai, capitulated completely and even recorded an audiotope urging fellow Catholics to cooperate with the regime.²¹ Wang Mingdao, often seen as an international symbol of Christian resistance to Communism, in September 1956 made an abject self-confession in which he called himself a "counter-revolutionary offender" who was "deeply distressed and ashamed" about his initial resistance and vowed to "guide the believers in the Church and the people of the nation in tasks of socialist construction."²² Wang's fame as a resister stems from the fact that a few months after making this confession, he retracted it and was promptly returned to prison, where he remained for the next twenty years.

Many of those who endured prison or gave their lives rather than verbally transfer their highest loyalty to the party-state are now rightfully admired.²³ Because most Chinese Christians did adopt Maoist rhetoric at one point or another, however, it makes sense to closely examine its workings and liabilities within Chinese Christian communities.

Standing Apart

One of the largest independent churches in China by 1949, the True Jesus Church was set apart by its exclusivist theology and native history.²⁴ It was a "sectarian tradition" to the extent that its doctrines and practices maintained high levels of tension vis-à-vis society and other churches.²⁵ Members believed that of all Christian churches, only the True Jesus Church had rituals leading to salvation, including immersion baptism in a facedown posture and speaking in tongues (which church members believed signified the baptism of the Holy Spirit). Members also took pride in the church's native roots. Since its founding in Beijing in 1917, the church had been led entirely by native Chinese including Wei Enbo, Zhang Barnabas, Gao Daling, and Wei Isaac. The church thus ticked all three boxes of the "self-led, self-financed, and self-propagating" criteria that the Maoist state prescribed for Christian churches as a remedy for imperialism. In this sense church members considered themselves exempt from accusations of "imperialism" that had long been leveled at foreign-founded Christian churches.²⁶

The visions of Wei Enbo had yielded a set of revelations shaping how church members drew on the spiritual authority, moral norms, and symbolic resources of the biblical text. Biblical language dominated church activities, from Bible-study meetings to Sabbath sermons to the language of tongues, which church members believed was identical to utterances of the apostles on the Day of Pentecost. Even hands-on practices such as faith healing emulated the postures and ritual **(p.193)** language of biblical scenes. The church's shared biblical discourse marked the boundaries between the divinely governed church community and the chaotic and corrupt outside world.

Yet despite its exclusivist, nativist, Bible-centered group culture predisposed to resist Maoist authority, within a matter of years, the top national leaders of the True Jesus Church fully cooperated with the party-state's programming. Records of the church's central leadership, which during the 1950s moved from Nanjing to Beijing to Wuhan, reveal the uptake of Maoist rhetoric within the church's internal discourse.²⁷ Why (and how) did church leaders, whose personal identity and community authority was derived from consistent adherence to a certain biblical rhetoric, suddenly adopt the politicized labels, slogans, and programs of the Maoist state? Although we cannot fully discern the private motivations underlying church leaders' public statements, we can understand what was at stake as they chose their words: the authority to set the terms of moral discourse and to define the boundaries of their community.

This story about the church's top leadership is far from the whole story of the True Jesus Church as a Christian community in the 1950s. At the level of private practice, many members stubbornly resisted change.²⁸ What is interesting about these accounts of the leadership is that church leaders had to respond to Maoism in public. Their prominent roles in articulating and advocating for the moral norms of the church community now made them subject to the scrutiny of both state officials and the rank-and-file. Rhetorical shifts would not go unnoticed by either audience and would be interpreted as signifying either defiance or capitulation.

1948–1950: New and “Troubled” Times

Holy Spirit Times 聖靈報 gives a good benchmark for the kind of biblical language that characterized True Jesus Church discourse nationwide. The church's main official publication *Holy Spirit Times* was distributed nationally each month from 1926 until at least January 1951.²⁹ The April 1948 issue reflects the uncertainty that prevailed across China as the Communist armies advanced. The cover article, probably written by Wei Isaac, was titled “In a Troubled Time.” Wei called on members to renew their commitment to the church despite the perils of the age:

Right now in a time when the fires of war fill the sky, when weeping and lamentation fill the land, when the howling winds blow unabated—people of God! Are you discouraged? Workers of God! Will you also abandon your work? Are you willing to discard your calling as holy messengers? To **(p. 194)** go and become the slaves of Satan? . . . Do not forget: only those who do God's work in times of great trouble can be counted as builders of the True Jesus Church. "When the family is poor, the dutiful son emerges; when the country is chaotic, the loyal official is revealed."³⁰ Only when there are troubles do we find the extremity that tests whether or not people's love of the Lord is true. Therefore the True Jesus Church will be built anew, in a troubled time.³¹

The evocative language of Wei's admonition drew on the moral rhetoric of both the Christian and the Chinese classical traditions. The headline, "In a Troubled Time," was a direct quote from Daniel 9:25, in which the prophet Daniel lamented Jerusalem's destruction and predicted that it would be rebuilt, albeit in a time of trouble. Wei's reference to the dutiful son and loyal official drew on stock virtuous roles from the Confucian tradition and linked them to the relationship between the Christian God and God's people. The language of testing and loyalty was typical of the authoritative tone of church discourse, always rooted in reference to the biblical text.

Church discourse deployed biblical tropes to call for separation between the church and society at large. For example, the lead article in the March 1948 issue of *Holy Spirit Times* proclaimed "Save Yourselves and Leave Behind This Perverse Generation." It acknowledged that although both good and wicked people were caught up in the troubles of the day, they were defined by their responses of either resisting or accommodating evil, respectively. Quoting a description of a sheep in 1 Peter 2:25 and a description of a pig in 2 Peter 2:22, the article explained:

But good people are like a sheep, who accidentally falls into a filthy pond, and incessantly calls out, and exhausts all its energy to clamber back to the bank. The wicked person is like a pig, who knows that it is in a putrid cesspool, but who finds the new environment agreeable, and does its utmost to burrow in.³²

Here the editors prescribed biblical models of uncompromising resistance, using the analogy of a "cesspool," which did not reflect positively on Chinese society or those in power.

Of course, quotations from a sacred text occur frequently within the discourse of many religious groups, and all Christian churches quoted the Bible. What really draws attention in the case of the True Jesus Church is the contrast between the abundance of biblical discourse in *Holy Spirit Times* in the years leading up to 1951 and the sparsity of biblical references in public-facing church documents after 1952. Between August 1947 and January 1951 (when publication ceased), the **(p.195)** lead articles of the eighteen issues of *Holy Spirit Times* all included quotations from or references to the biblical text.³³ In more than half of these lead articles, more than 20 percent of the printed characters came from biblical quotations or references. Only three lead articles had fewer than 10 percent of “biblical” characters, and another three lead articles had as many as 38–43 percent.³⁴ The proportion of biblical references within pre-1952 church discourse gives a sense of the authoritative weight and familiar ring that this language conveyed.

The undisputed head of the True Jesus Church at the time of the Communist takeover, Wei Isaac had played a major role in shaping church discourse. He had occupied the top rank of central church leadership since the mid-1930s. Another prominent leader was Jiang John 蔣約翰, editor of *Holy Spirit Times*. Both Wei and Jiang had reason to be anxious because politically speaking, the True Jesus Church leaders were on the wrong side of the revolution. Strong ties between the Nationalist government and the church are evident in the first few pages of the church's 1948 *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, which bear congratulatory messages in handwritten calligraphy from numerous high-ranking government officials and generals, including Sun Fo 孫科, the son of Sun Yat-sen and the current president of the Legislative Yuan.³⁵ Perhaps to lower their profile, at a certain point late in 1950, Wei Isaac's and Jiang John's names and titles as publisher and editor, respectively, were removed from the masthead of *Holy Spirit Times*.³⁶

In the first few months after coming to power, the Communist government did not initiate any major campaigns against less-than-revolutionary groups, but instead sought to establish widespread legitimacy.³⁷ In rural areas it did implement land reform, which had a destabilizing effect on many congregations that depended on the financial support and leadership of landowning members.³⁸ It was particularly disruptive for the Catholic Church, which in many rural areas was the largest landowner.³⁹ Party authorities also began to take control of Christian schools and colleges.⁴⁰ One study of the True Jesus Church in Shanxi 山西 Province has shown that party officials initially supported the church because of its antiforeign theology.⁴¹

The outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950 provoked a sharp escalation in nationalist and anti-imperialist rhetoric in China.⁴² The Resist America and Aid Korea campaign targeted foreigners and Chinese organizations with foreign ties, including churches. By early 1951 nearly all foreigners, including businessmen, medical personnel, and missionaries, had been expelled; some foreigners, including Catholic bishops and priests, had been imprisoned or sent to labor camps.⁴³ In May 1950, Wu Yaozong, a high-ranking leader of the YMCA in China, led a group of nineteen Protestant leaders to meet with Premier Zhou Enlai 周恩来.⁴⁴ Following this meeting, these and other Christian leaders drafted a statement, **(p.196)** called the Chinese Christian Manifesto 中国基督教宣言, which proclaimed Christians' loyalty to the new government.⁴⁵ The Christian Manifesto was issued on July 28, 1950, and published in the *People's Daily* on September 23, 1950, along with a list of the first 1,527 signatories.⁴⁶ This document became a political shibboleth as government officials and certain Christian leaders urged Christians all over China to sign. Eventually around 400,000 Christians reportedly signed, including Wei Isaac and his True Jesus Church colleague Liu Jun'an 刘均安 in April 1951.⁴⁷

Government surveillance of churches intensified. On October 26, 1950, the government had announced that all social organizations, including religious groups, were to register anew with the local Bureau of Religious Affairs, which included submitting a membership roster of names, occupations, addresses, and other details. Similar registrations had been required by the Republican government, but updating of the information ensured that the new government would not lose track of religionists. The church republished this announcement, which had first appeared in the *People's Daily*, in the November 1950 issue of the *Holy Spirit Times*.⁴⁸

In early 1951, the top leadership seemed to have survived the initial storm. The March 1951 minutes of a national meeting show that Wei Isaac presided as chairperson and as a member of an inner leadership circle consisting of himself, Jiang John, Li Zhengcheng 李正诚, Liu Jun'an, and Wang Chongguang 王重光. The document reads like a typical internal Republican-era church record, with bland administrative discussions liberally seasoned with biblical phrases such as "the Lord's grace," "true God," and "our God Jehovah."⁴⁹ However, as would prove to be the case in the lives of many during the Maoist era, the political winds could shift rapidly.

1951–1952: The Denunciation Movement and the Fall of Wei Isaac

In 1951, in the tense atmosphere of the Korean War, the state launched the first of a succession of mass campaigns to consolidate control, beginning with the Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries 镇压反革命. This campaign was followed by the 1951–1952 “Three-Antis” 三反 Campaign, targeting corruption and obstructionism within the party and government bureaucracy. Another mass campaign was the 1952 “Five-Antis” 五反 Campaign, aimed at urban capitalism, which mirrored the land reform movements in the countryside. During these campaigns, millions of people across China were made to suffer public humiliation or pay hefty fines. Many were imprisoned and some were killed.⁵⁰

(p.197) Many religious groups became the targets of these campaigns. Especially vulnerable groups included those whose substantial resources in property, finance, organization, and membership gave them a strong, independent internal culture. Buddhist monasteries were among the largest landholders in China, making them vulnerable targets for land reform campaigns.⁵¹ The Yiguandao 一贯道 [Way of Penetrating Unity] sect, which practiced spirit-writing and had an extensive multitiered organizational hierarchy, was suppressed as “counterrevolutionary” on account of its “superstitious” culture and its phenomenal popularity.⁵² The True Jesus Church was targeted in 1951 because, like these other religious groups, it was well resourced and well organized, with a distinctive group culture.

Ambiguity lay at the heart of the “paternalist terror” of mass campaigns—clear definitions for who should be protected and who should be destroyed by the state were lacking.⁵³ In this atmosphere of nebulous vulnerability, many leaders of the True Jesus Church came under political condemnation. For instance, many church leaders in the city of Nanjing, location of church Headquarters, were businessmen by profession.⁵⁴ Their status as religious functionaries and as members of the wealthier classes made them doubly exposed.

Chinese Christian institutions, including churches, hospitals, and schools, were pressured to demonstrate their opposition to foreign influence. In April 1951, more than one hundred Protestant leaders from across the nation gathered in Beijing to meet with the State Administrative Council. By this time, most foreign missionaries had already left the country. At the meeting in Beijing, officials announced that overseas funding for Christian churches would be cut off. A group of Chinese Christian leaders thereafter worked with government officials to organize the “Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement.”⁵⁵

One of the first tasks of the Protestant leaders of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement was launching the Denunciation Movement 控诉运动 in the spring of 1951. A helpful editorial in the *People's Daily* on May 21, 1951 laid out instructions for "How to Hold a Denunciation Meeting." The Denunciation Movement aimed to use the model of struggle sessions developed in land reform movements and Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries campaigns to realign Christians' discourse with that of the party-state. One scholar has noted how the movement began before the Communist victory had been firmly consolidated, in "a period of open trials, mass arrests, and public executions."⁵⁶ The violence and fear of this era as a powerful influence on people's behavior cannot be ignored.⁵⁷

The Denunciation Movement was conducted by Christians, though often under the direction of state officials. Within the Christian community, denunciations introduced a new rhetorical pattern. A speaker identified the individual being criticized as an agent of American imperialism, substantiated the charge with evidence, and provided a self-criticism for complicity in the **(p.198)** relationship. These speeches were made before a large meeting, followed by study and discussion in small groups "designed to deepen the analysis of imperialism, foster individual change, and force a break with the past." At one such meeting in Shanghai on June 10, 1951, an estimated twelve thousand people attended.⁵⁸ Those targeted were expected to ultimately produce a self-criticism or confession in the new political idiom.

The choice to participate in the activities and adopt the rhetoric of the state-sponsored Three-Self Patriotic Movement did not come naturally to groups such as the True Jesus Church whose community ethos emphasized God's universal dominion. The critique of Wang Mingdao (a prominent native evangelist) succinctly framed the high moral and theological stakes involved:

It is lamentable that many Christian leaders use the principle of obedience to man's rules and submission to man's authority to cover up their cowardice and failure This results in the faith of the Church and the ministry being subordinated to the rule of men and men's authority. The truth then becomes obscured, the Bible misinterpreted, the foundations of the Church undermined and the flock scattered.⁵⁹

Historian Philip Wickeri has discussed at length the complexity of Chinese Protestants' responses to these denunciations. Some agonized over their participation, some refused to participate, and some participated only with great reluctance, perhaps fearing that if they did not they themselves would be criticized. Others may have seen political compliance as their Christian duty to "render unto Caesar what was Caesar's," as stated in Matthew 22, or to "be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established," as laid out in Romans 13.⁶⁰ Wickeri has also suggested that some individuals sincerely changed their political views and saw this change as a process of struggle followed by joy and new life.⁶¹ If such ideological changes occurred, the first step lay in the adoption of new terms and rhetorical conventions to articulate them.

This description of Chinese Christian "conversion" to Maoism can help us understand how some Chinese Protestants may have responded to what David Apter calls "the mythic dimensions of Maoism," which, like religion, made claims about cosmology and human purpose.⁶² Some young people from True Jesus Church families also may have naturally gravitated toward Maoism because it was now the dominant ideological influence within Chinese society. Some younger members of the church took government jobs as cadres, and all church members likely participated in mass political activities.⁶³

(p.199) Taken together, the Denunciation Movement and the other mass movements of 1951–1952 introduced a new format for defining in-groups and out-groups through public speech. Preexisting ties of community solidarity were severed. As one scholar has observed, during the mass movements of the early 1950s the Chinese Communist Party used denunciation meetings to make close social relationships "a source of vulnerability instead of a bastion of trust."⁶⁴ This contagion of vulnerability was traumatic within Christian communities whose minority status had prompted them to form extensive, close-knit personal networks and loyalties over the course of many years.

The most prominent church leader affected by the mass campaigns of 1951–1952 was Wei Isaac himself. As the head of one of the largest Protestant churches in the country, Wei was a prime target. In 1951 he was accused of being a counterrevolutionary, ostensibly because he had religious pamphlets in his house. He was also accused of secretly owning a gun (a common counterrevolutionary charge).⁶⁵ On February 23, 1952, Wei Isaac's "self-examination" appeared in *Tianfeng* 天風 [*Heavenly Wind*], the magazine of the recently formed Three-Self Reform Movement. He testified that

the eyes of my heart have been enlightened so that I have now honestly and deeply realized that I myself have been pro-American and against Soviet Russia, the Party, and the People The Communist Party has educated me, enlightened me, and brought me to a painful mental struggle.⁶⁶

In a striking rhetorical departure from his usual scripture-quoting style, Wei's confession listed the church's political errors. For instance, he said, he had taught that true Christians should be above "worldly" concerns such as politics or nationalism, but he now realized that this teaching was "imperialist poisonous thinking" and that the church had a "feudalistic" and "counterrevolutionary" leadership structure.

Wei called upon church members to "follow the call of Chairman Mao" and to inform on each other: "If you know of any [church leader], preacher or spiritual brother who is anti-people, you should in the spirit of Jesus' teaching to let your yea be yea and your nay nay frankly report it to the proper government authority, lest the holy church be corrupted." He repudiated charismatic practices that had been the center of church life: "We should not lay so much stress on miracles, nor tell people that taking medicine and consulting a doctor are sins, but rather should train our preachers in the elements of public hygiene and midwifery." He also abandoned the church's exclusivist stance, urging, "Our church and other churches should come together in denominational union."⁶⁷ This public rhetoric, conspicuously omitting the language of religious authority and **(p.200)** laden with political slogans, must have been both humiliating and delegitimizing for Wei in his position at the head of the church.

Wei Isaac's arrest and confession sent a strong message to members of the General Assembly, the church's national leadership body. The March 30, 1952, minutes from the meeting of the General Assembly, held in Beijing, have a completely different tone from those of the meeting a year before. They lack the extensive biblical references of the 1951 meeting and the issues of *Holy Spirit Times* in the years leading up to 1951. This time the meeting was supervised by Liu Shuzheng 刘淑正, an official from the city's Religious Affairs Bureau. Zhang Hanzhong 张汉中, a leader in the church's General Assembly and the meeting's chair, delivered a speech on imperialist, feudalistic, and counterrevolutionary elements within the church. At this meeting Wei Isaac was excoriated in absentia by Zhang Hanzhong and other former colleagues as someone whose leadership smacked of "feudalistic governance" and who had used the excuse of "being above the world" to pursue a dream of "bringing a huge following to serve Jiang Jieshi [Chiang Kai-shek]."⁶⁸

It was clear that many within the church had misgivings about these denunciations of Wei Isaac, who had led the church for so long. Their expressed concerns, summarized by Zhang Hanzhong in his speech to the assembly of leaders in 1952, are telling:

There are a few individuals who sympathize with Wei Isaac because of their own private feelings, who have written publicly to slander the people who criticized him, saying: "They were all people who criticized him because they wanted to get ahead themselves, because they were fighting to enhance their own position, or because they were under great pressure. This 'reform' is all a farce." Or others have written and distributed letters saying "they oppose and impugn Elder Wei, but they will reap what they sow. It will be proven that those who strive with Elder Wei will certainly meet with failure or destruction in the end. If these people do not repent, then they are just asking for trouble and courting disaster."⁶⁹

The nature of church culture was such that Zhang's acknowledgement of dissent by "a few individuals" revealed significant opposition. First, the exclusivist identity of True Jesus Church meant that unity was paramount. Although formal processes existed for election and oversight of church leaders, the default mode for church operation was supposed to be divine direction from the Holy Spirit. Strident criticism of the church's top leadership under these circumstances was in theory rarely warranted. Hence Zhang would not have publicly acknowledged dissent if he could have possibly gotten away with ignoring it or privately tamping **(p.201)** it down. That he addressed it in such a frank manner and provided detailed accounts of the criticisms shows that they were widespread and had already eluded control.

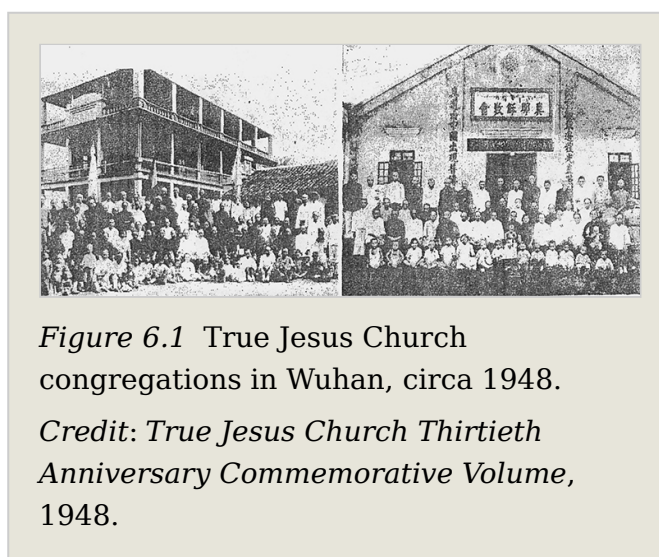
Second, it is clear from Zhang's reference to those who had "written publicly" and "distributed letters" that criticisms were not simply idle grumblings overheard in the back of the chapel, but were circulating formally in print. Zhang's extensive quotations from at least two kinds of sources suggest that these sources and their content were being widely discussed. Like other Republican-era religious organizations, the True Jesus Church had a robust print culture.⁷⁰ National publications such as *Holy Spirit Times*, pamphlets, biblical commentaries, histories, and devotional texts circulated throughout the church in regional and national distribution networks. Even ad hoc, informally printed material could travel easily throughout intrachurch networks and reach a large audience.

Despite these indications that many throughout the church sympathized with Wei Isaac, in the August 1953 meeting under the scrutiny of the government observer, many leaders spoke up to distance themselves from Wei. Following Zhang Hanzhong's speech, Wang Chongguang, who along with Wei Isaac was among of the top five officers at Headquarters, tearfully declared, "I never knew of these sins of Wei Isaac, because I had very little interaction with him."⁷¹

Certainly this document highlights the possibility that some church leaders could have given lip service to Maoism in order to further their own interests. One faction of the church, until recently led by Wei Isaac's son Wei Jacob 魏雅各 (also known as 魏迎), had previously alleged that church leaders' denunciation of Wei Isaac was a self-serving betrayal. According to this account, representing Wei Jacob's perspective, Wei was "ousted" by a small clique of leaders led by Li Zhengcheng 李正诚 (circa 1920–1990), a protégé of Wei's. Li was an Wuhan native and the youngest member of the General Assembly leadership.⁷² This account makes a particularly weighty moral judgment, because Wei had mentored Li for many years. They had first become acquainted during the War of Resistance against the Japanese, when the church Headquarters moved to Chongqing. Li, a young man, met Wei at the local Chongqing church. Wei took Li into his household, ordained him an elder while Li was still in his twenties, and promoted him to the General Assembly leadership.⁷³

After Wei's arrest, Wei was succeeded in church leadership by Jiang John as the national chairman and Li Zhengcheng as the national vice-chairman. One source claims that Li Zhengcheng enjoyed favoritism from government officials: "Since Elder Li had been a representative in Beijing, and also because he was younger, the Communist Party had high expectations for him."⁷⁴ In 1953, the True Jesus Church's General Assembly Headquarters moved from Beijing to Wuhan (Li's hometown) (see Figure 6.1). **(p.202)**

During these years, Li continued to play a major role.⁷⁵ He signed his name to official communications with the government and represented the church at official functions. In these settings he made frequent use of Maoist political slogans and praised the government for its enlightened protection of religious freedoms.⁷⁶



Certainly Li's public acclaim for the state's legitimacy does not necessarily reflect his own private feelings. Jeremy Brown and Paul Pickowicz have acknowledged this potential gap between public and private expression and the pragmatism that underlay much of the seeming endorsement of Communist ideology:

[P]rofound concerns about personal careers and family trajectories played a major role in the "thought transformation" process of individual citizens. These personal concerns were (and are) rarely acknowledged. Many people were faking it. Many others were opportunistic. The party knew this and did not care much in the early years. What people said in public was more important than what they really thought or what they said at home.⁷⁷

Was Li Zhengcheng an eager "true believer" in the promise of Maoism? Was he a backstabbing opportunist? What is clear from the documents is the value of rhetorical adaptability during this time—the ability to acquire a new moral language.

The problem with mastering the new moral language of Maoism, however, was that it had an established lexicon but no fixed usage rules. One's moral status to a large extent depended on labels, such as "worker," "poor peasant," or "reactionary," and not necessarily on one's track record of adherence to a fixed framework of **(p.203)** behavioral standards. Throughout the Maoist era, political accusations often did not have to be substantiated with rigorous evidence. One was only as safe as one's appellations, and these could be assigned by others. Li Zhengcheng would learn this lesson the hard way.

1953–1954: With the Program

On the national scene, throughout 1952 and 1953, the True Jesus Church continued to appear alongside other churches as a signatory to public exhortations printed in the *People's Daily* to "resolutely expel imperialist influence" and to take other positions related to the Korean War.⁷⁸ On March 3, 1953, the General Assembly leadership joined with other Christian and citizens' groups to express solidarity with the people of the Soviet Union after the death of "Chairman Stalin, the dear friend of the Chinese people."⁷⁹

In Wuhan, use of Maoist moral language at church was intensive. The August 30, 1953 "Work Plan of the Three-Self Reform Movement of the True Jesus Church in Wuhan" outlined a political study program for church members, to be held from 7 to 9 each evening: "Getting to Know Our Great Fatherland" (one week), "Understanding How Imperialism Used Christianity to Invade China and the Meaning of the Three-Self Reform Movement" (two weeks), and "Thought-Examination" (two weeks or more as necessary).⁸⁰

A copy of one of the major texts used in these political study sessions is titled “Report to Participants in the Three-Self Reform of the True Jesus Church in Wuhan.” The document reveals the complexity of overlapping worldviews and idioms within the TJC laity. Maoist discourse had been successfully introduced, but older paradigms had not been cleared away. “The Three-Self Reform Movement has already had definite results,” read the report, “but we are still very far from our goal In the True Jesus Church, the movement has been initiated but has not yet deeply penetrated into the masses of members.” The report addressed the problem of getting anti-imperialist self-criticisms to resonate in a proudly native church: “Most people in our church feel that we have nothing to do with imperialism, but this is wrong.” The report criticized “poisonous elements within Christian theology such as unconditional love, forbearance, forgiveness, and an otherworldly outlook” that “teach people not to be concerned with their country or their people, not to make revolution, not to be concerned with physical suffering under counterrevolutionary rule, oppression, and provocation, but instead to only plan for the welfare of the soul after death.”⁸¹ The moral and soteriological impulses at the heart of the Christian project were thus subordinated to the this-worldly Maoist agenda of national and class struggle.

(p.204) Although this document was ostensibly intended only for church members, it was also submitted to local government officials as a demonstration of political compliance. The often-defensive tone of this report suggests that there was in fact significant discomfort within the church with this politicized rhetoric. At another point in this document, the report acknowledged complaints:

Some people who imagine themselves to be spiritual think that this reform means being friendly with that which is worldly, that this is not a spiritual work, that “reform” is controlling “faith,” but this sort of thought is precisely the poisonous thought of imperialism

As for those who say that reform means being friendly with that which is worldly, the Bible says that being friendly with that which is worldly is being friendly with wickedness and darkness. And today's reform is precisely about opposing wickedness and darkness. In the new China of Liberation, society has gotten better and better. Days of wickedness and darkness are gradually becoming extinct

We must oppose imperialism and feudalism, must oppose bureaucratism and capitalism—this, and only this, is true spirituality.⁸²

As in the case of the “few individuals” discussed earlier, the report’s acknowledgment of “some people” revealed the tip of the iceberg of reluctance among the rank-and-file to embrace the new politicized discourse. The report’s repeated emphasis on the “true spirituality” of Maoist ideology suggests that, for many church members, this doctrinal alchemy was a bit of a hard sell. Indeed, the report later acknowledged the existence of “some” (i.e., numerous) church leaders who secretly wished for the return of the “reactionaries” or who were annoyed with the endless committee meetings, study sessions, and criticism meetings. Such people, the report warned, “appear to serve the revolution by day but oppose it by night.”⁸³

The report suggested that younger people were faring better in their adaptation to the new society. It warned that some people who were “stuck in the old ways” were jealous of the younger, more talented members of the church with “progressive thoughts, who work actively.”⁸⁴ Senior leaders were vulnerable to accusations of backwardness, whereas younger leaders found numerous opportunities to demonstrate their enthusiasm and to assume higher levels of ecclesiastical and political responsibility.

The True Jesus Church’s cooperation with the policies of the party-state compelled it to unite with other Protestant churches that it had previously denounced as false. This was an uncomfortable theological position, because as recently as February 1949 the lead article in *Holy Spirit Times* had stated (**p. 205**) that believing in “false religions and false churches” (i.e., churches other than the True Jesus Church) would destroy the soul, a fate even worse than physical death by bombs, poison, drowning, and being devoured by animals.⁸⁵ Yet in 1951, a roster of the Wuhan city Three-Self Reform Movement listed church leaders Jiang John and Li Zhengcheng as committee members, along with leaders from a diverse group of denominations including the Anglican Church, the Church of Christ in China, the YWCA, the Seventh-day Adventists, and the Assemblies of God.⁸⁶ At a National Christian Conference in 1954, Jiang John was elected a permanent member of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement’s standing committee.⁸⁷

As an affiliate of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the True Jesus Church’s relationship with the government was now structured along the party-state’s “United Front” strategy of integrating representatives from China’s many diverse cultural, scientific, and overseas constituencies into one intermediary government body, the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Congress 中国人民政治协商会议. A party-run United Front Work Department 中共中央统战部 also labored to promote policy among independent community organizations such as Christian churches.⁸⁸ As a member of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement’s standing committee, Jiang John interfaced directly with both the United Front Work Department and the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Congress in Wuhan.

No Baptism for Counterrevolutionaries; No Problem for Stalin's Soul
Some True Jesus Church documents show that the integration of Maoist language into the church's everyday functioning could be very thorough. The question of whether leaders sincerely believed what they said or were simply engaged in a strategic performance in order to promote their own welfare or the survival of the church is complex. Surely the fact that they submitted these reports to government bureaus shows at least that they did not reject the state entirely in a spirit of martyrdom. However, if the leaders had simply been trying to put on a good show for the eyes of the Religious Affairs Bureau, they would not have acknowledged dissent within the community. Church leaders employed Maoist ideology not only in church political education classes, but also in rites and activities that originally had had no clear political dimension: baptismal rules and internal discussions about salvation.

In Wuhan, a roster of eighty newly baptized persons from local congregations of Huangwuli 荒五里, Yongningxiang 永寧巷, and Hanzhonglu 漢中路 listed several rules governing baptism in the church, including the regulation that **(p.206)** "Nationalist agents, corrupt persons, local tyrants, and counterrevolutionaries cannot be baptized, or else the person introducing them to the church will bear responsibility."⁸⁹ This was clearly an attempt to demonstrate the church's high standards of Maoist morality, but was also a practical stratagem for avoiding the induction of political pariahs.

Another record shows how political concerns colored even soteriological discussions. In an April 1953 meeting of the Wuhan True Jesus Church, local leaders discussed whether Josef Stalin's soul was saved (Stalin had died a month before, and Premier Zhou Enlai had attended his funeral in Moscow). According to the record, He Hosea 何西阿 said, "Those who believe and are baptized will be saved, but whether or not Stalin's soul will be saved is not clear." To this, another leader surnamed Ma 馬 responded, "Stalin can be saved because of the righteousness that he did." A leader surnamed Huang 黃 said, "Comrade Stalin has saved many tens of thousands of people more than Jesus. Also, Chairman Mao has turned China into a powerful country, and all China has been liberated. The devil is imperialist America." Another leader surnamed Hua 華 pointed out that just as being a Christian did not guarantee salvation, being a non-Christian did not necessarily exclude one from salvation: "I say that Comrade Stalin's soul can be saved People who believe in Jesus can heal sickness and cast out devils, and Jesus may still say, 'I never knew you.'"⁹⁰ As in the case of the church's radical separation from other "Christian" churches on the grounds of fundamental differences, this assessment that a nonbeliever might receive salvation whereas other non-True Jesus Church Christians might not, drew on the church's exclusivist ethos: Christianity outside the church was so flawed that non-Christians might fare no worse than these "Gentile" Christians on the day of judgment.

1955–1957: The Sudden Counterrevolutionary

In 1955 and again in 1957, despite his many years of cooperation with the government and leadership in the church, Li Zhengcheng was denounced as a counterrevolutionary by his fellow leaders. After Li's first arrest in September 1955 on charges of being a counterrevolutionary, he was jailed for a year and then released. Then in a March 17, 1957, meeting, local True Jesus Church leaders in Nanjing reevaluated Li's situation. Wang Baolin 王寶林, the chair of the meeting, explained that "since being released [Li] has not expressed acknowledgment of his sins."⁹¹ According to Elder Ji, a church leader who had been personally acquainted with Li, Li always maintained that he was not guilty of the crimes with which he had been charged. "He always said that he had done nothing wrong," said Elder Ji. "He had worked with the government for all those years. He said, 'You people know me—how could I suddenly be a counterrevolutionary?'"⁹²

(p.207) Given Li's recalcitrance, said Wang Baolin, a criticism meeting of more than one hundred people had been called a month before: "Everyone had the attitude of curing the sickness to save the person, not exaggerating and not minimizing anything. It was completely about seeking the facts in order to give him help."⁹³ Now, said Wang, they were meeting for a similar but smaller discussion in Nanjing. He then listed a variety of criticisms, which he noted were similar to those first aired in 1955: Li "steps on others' heads to satisfy his own ambitions," "grabs for church power and authority," "pulls on personal relationships indiscriminately," and "affects church unity." Other Nanjing church leaders, Li Zimin (李子民) and Wang Xuanmin (王選民), agreed that Li needed to be changed into a new person. Therefore, they said, "we need the government to come and reform him." Another leader said, "When I hear this report, I deeply feel the love that the Party and the government have for the people . . . Let's invite the government to once again educate and take care of him."⁹⁴

That Li's fellow TJC leaders really believed what they said about the state's "love" for the likes of Li is doubtful. The language was a code for establishing their own position within the in-group of loyal citizens and Li's position outside that group. To find a person guilty of heinous political crimes was often simply a matter of enough people applying the appropriate political labels and accusatory phrases. In many of these cases, following a recurring pattern rooted in the imperial past and perpetuated up to the present, individuals used the power of the state's political campaigns to settle private scores.⁹⁵ Their words were more than inflated, empty language. They were clearly aware that they were using stock accusatory phrases to discredit their former colleague and return him to a labor camp. Choosing politicized language was in effect a form of violence.

Thereafter, Li Zhengcheng was rearrested as the head of a “counterrevolutionary clique.” In March 1960, he was sentenced to twenty years’ imprisonment.⁹⁶ During the latter part of his sentence, he worked in a glass factory in Dajunshan 大军山 near Wuhan. When his children went to visit him, they did not recognize him. During his incarceration, his wife divorced him and remarried. Upon appealing for a re-examination of his case and being reclassified as “innocent” in 1985, Li took up residence in a room adjacent to World Salvation Church 救世堂 (not a True Jesus Church) in Wuhan.⁹⁷

The Wuhan TJC’s active cooperation with the Maoist state continued into the first half of 1958. On April 13, 1956, national TJC leader Jiang John gave a speech to a diverse audience at the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference in Wuhan, contrasting the “complete lack of freedom” of the Nationalist era with the era after Liberation “under the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party,” in which he now enjoyed “complete religious freedom.” He credited the party with unifying the competing Christian denominations and bringing about the **(p.208)** “miracle” of an enlightened, unified Christian community. Jiang stressed the need to identify counterrevolutionaries still hiding within the church, the “wolves in sheep’s clothing” to be exposed and purged one by one.⁹⁸ On June 9, 1957, Jiang delivered a speech at an event celebrating the fortieth anniversary of the True Jesus Church that was attended by church members, government officials, and representatives from the Protestant and Catholic patriotic associations. A news report noted that the ceremonies of the day included a salutation to Chairman Mao and “revealed that [church members’] freedom of belief is thoroughly respected and protected by the People’s Government.”⁹⁹

1958: The Suppression of the True Jesus Church

In 1958, the ongoing Anti-Rightist Campaign and the mobilizations of the Great Leap Forward, a campaign to intensify collectivization and accelerate China’s agricultural and industrial development, launched a new era that continued into the Socialist Education Movement and Cultural Revolution. This Maoist high tide eventually led to the complete cessation of formal Christian activity and indeed all public religious activity in China.¹⁰⁰ In 1958, campaigns against religious groups intensified around the country.¹⁰¹

The political climate changed abruptly for the True Jesus Church leaders who had mastered the tone of Maoist moral discourse but who suddenly found themselves in the wrong column in the revolutionary phrasebook—or at least the wrong side of stock political crimes. In August, Nanjing leaders Fang Dan 方舟 and Wang Xuanmin 王选民 (previously quoted, recommending that Li Zhengcheng be returned to the loving care of the government) were arrested.¹⁰² They were accused of “deceiving and harming people” through the illegal activities of “[pretending to] heal sickness and exorcise devils,” of defrauding people of their money, and of sexually coercing women—all stock crimes also leveled against Yiguandao practitioners, Buddhists, Muslims, and Christians in antireligious campaigns in 1958.¹⁰³ Large meetings of Nanjing Christians were assembled to criticize “the illegal activities of the True Jesus Church.”¹⁰⁴ On November 2, more than 1,800 people from the Wuhan religious community (doubtless including many of those who had gathered for the fortieth-anniversary event in the previous year) gathered to criticize Jiang John and twenty-five other “key leaders” within the church who had “used spreading the gospel as a cover for counterrevolutionary activity,” along with the usual “creating rumors, breaking policies, cheating people of their money, coercing women, harming life, and all manner of evils.”¹⁰⁵ Jiang, the article said, had frequently sent sycophantic reports to the Japanese occupation government during the War of Resistance and had told people to “endure” instead of resist the Japanese.

(p.209) Other criticisms were leveled at the church leadership in general. During land reform, one article claimed, Li Zhengcheng and other leaders (including those who were landlords) had refused to hand a church building over to be housing for the masses. They had sabotaged it by bashing a hole in the roof. Church leaders were accused of relying on “sorcery” and other illegal activities such as healing and exorcism to deceive people. The article raised the case of a person named Liu Songshan 刘松山 who came to be healed of mental illness. The article alleged that church leaders tied him up and had his wife kneel and pray for many days until Liu died. One leader’s exclamation, “He’s ascended to heaven,” was seen as a pious-sounding cover-up.¹⁰⁶

Hence the True Jesus Church's formal institutions were finally suppressed on a nationwide level by 1958, as the Great Leap Forward was getting underway. The Great Leap Forward was an effort by China's central planners to jump-start the project of raising China's modern economic production to be on par with Great Britain's in a mere fifteen years. Government leaders extended control over every aspect of daily life by organizing China's peasants into 26,500 "people's communes," each encompassing thousands of households. Cadres worked to encourage expressions of zealous devotion to communism among ordinary people. In rural farming areas, local cadres were so eager to demonstrate the success of this headlong leap into socialism, they drastically inflated production figures in reports to higher-ups. For instance, the national grain output for 1957 had been 195 million metric tons, but in the midst of the Great Leap Forward it was expected to grow to 525 million metric tons.¹⁰⁷ Owing to this imaginary surplus in food supply, the government stepped up grain procurement and export and mobilized tens of millions of agricultural workers for industrial projects such as steel production and construction projects such as dam-building and irrigation. These policies of the Great Leap Forward caused national grain output to plunge by 15 percent in 1959 and by another 16 percent in the following two years. Scholarly estimates of deaths in the resulting famine range between 16.5 and 45 million.¹⁰⁸ Even by the most conservative estimate, this famine was by far the worst in recorded human history.¹⁰⁹ Yet those who spoke up to question the government's triumphant declarations of historic productivity in the early years of the Great Leap Forward were criticized, demoted, and silenced.

In this environment of total ideological and economic mobilization, religious leaders in the 1950s increasingly attracted government scrutiny. The catalog of the Wuhan Municipal Archives lists a number of personal files used to assemble materials to criticize and prosecute leaders of the True Jesus Church General Assembly that all culminate in 1958. In 1953, files were opened for Wei Isaac, Li Zhengcheng, and Li Houan; in 1955, a file was opened for Jiang John; in 1958, files were opened for Han Xingjian, Cai Mark, Wang Chongguang, and Zhang **(p.210)** Yuci.¹¹⁰ In Wuhan, a general file was opened in 1958 to track the "illegal activities of the True Jesus Church."¹¹¹ This file was not closed until 1964, by which time all formal and informal church activities had been driven underground. On July 1958, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement national publication *Tianfeng* wrote,

The "elders," "deacons," and "members" recruited by John Jiang and the [True Jesus Church] "led" by him are *all* reactionary officers, despotic landlords, bandits, and traitors. They keep on saying "preach the true Word," "save mankind," but in actuality what they are doing is business endangering the country and harming the people.

The [True Jesus Church], from its General Assembly down to its [branch churches, local churches, and neighborhood meetings], and from John Jiang to Li Mingshao, and further back to Wei Isaac, Li Zhengcheng, Wang Chongguang, Hu Zhiming, Cui Mark, etc. are *nothing but* people of this kind.¹¹²

From the latter half of 1958 to the new policy of party-state toleration for religious organizations in 1982, the True Jesus Church as a formal ecclesiastical institution shut down all over China.¹¹³

Silence

In the realm of public discourse, the True Jesus Church was completely transformed by Maoism in the 1950s, although—as in the case of religious activity everywhere—more private aspects of church life resisted this change.¹¹⁴ Other native Chinese Christian churches had more localized identities, making it a simple matter for church members to dissolve into informal underground networks. However, the church's exclusivist identity and highly developed centralized bureaucracy made it necessary for church leaders to preserve its organizational integrity as long as possible. This is why they moved to align the church with the party-state. Tragically, by preserving the church, these leaders lost both their moral authority and control of the church organization.

In their exposed position, the leaders of the True Jesus Church faced an agonizing set of choices. Should they resist state incursions, facing imprisonment and possibly the breakdown of the entire institutional church? Or should they compromise and relinquish their community's authority over morality and meaning? Within the Chinese Christian community, leaders' power came from their moral legitimacy: the community's acceptance of leaders' authority to shape moral discourse. Under intense pressure to adopt Maoist rhetoric, these leaders had to weigh conflicting moral priorities. Those who were not ideologically **(p.211)** converted to Communism but who chose to cooperate with the state could have done so for selfish or selfless reasons. Perhaps some felt that self-preservation was more important than principled resistance. It is also likely that some decided to accommodate Maoism in order to shield fellow believers and protect church institutions, at the expense of their personal reputation or self-image. It is impossible to discern which of these motivations prompted leaders to sing the praises of Comrade Stalin, who had "saved many tens of thousands of people more than Jesus," but in either case the leaders lost. The hyperbolic, politicized rhetoric within this formerly Bible-suffused church eloquently expressed the thoroughness with which Maoist ideology penetrated even those spheres of life held to be the most private and sacred.

Notes:

(1.) George R. Urban, *The Miracles of Chairman Mao* (London: Tom Stacey Ltd., 1971); Joseph M. Kitagawa, "One of the Many Faces of China: Maoism as a Quasi-Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1, 2–3 (June–September 1974): 125–141; Andrew Kipnis, "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China and the Anthropological Category of Religion," *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (April 2001): 32–46; David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Discussions about the relationship between "religion" and "the state" often mark them not only as separate actors but as expressions of separate spheres of human endeavor. A body of sociological literature exists on the organizational aspects of religious movements, but one useful recent overview is C. R. Hinings and Mia Raynard, "Organizational Form, Structure, and Religious Organizations," *Religion and Organization Theory*, special issue of *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 41 (2014): 159–186.

(2.) Richard Madsen, *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 8

(3.) Paul Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2

(4.) Yanqi Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China From Past to the Present," in *Reviving Legitimacy: Lessons for and from China*, ed. Deng Zhenglai and Sujian Guo (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 195–214; Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur, "Conclusion: The Future of State-Building," in *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance*, ed. Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 359–387; Robert Jackman, *Power Without Force* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Andre Laliberte and Marc Canteigne, eds., *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century: Adaptation and the Reinvention of Legitimacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Bruce Gilley, "Legitimacy and Institutional Change: The Case of China," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 3 (March 2008): 259–284.

(5.) Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 259; Daniel Leese, "The Mao Cult as Communicative Space," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 3–4 (2007): 623–639; Julia Strauss, "Accusing Counterrevolutionaries: Bureaucracy and Theatre in the Revolutionary People's Republic of China (1950–1957)," in *Staging Politics: Power and Performance in Asia and Africa*, ed. Julia C. Strauss and Donal B. Cruise O'Brien (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 49–70.

(6.) John Craig William Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China: Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai, 1949–1989* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2012), 90

- (7.) Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China*, 91–94.
- (8.) Holmes Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 95
- (9.) Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 144–145; *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).
- (10.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 1.
- (11.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Stories From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013); Mariani, *Church Militant*; Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); James T. Myers, *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China* (New York: Professors World Peace Academy, 1991).
- (12.) Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 99–104
- (13.) Wu Yaozong 吴耀宗, *Hei'an yu guangming 黑暗与光明 Darkness and Light* (Shanghai: Qingnian xiehui shuju, 1950), 76
- (14.) Daniel Bays, "Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920–1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144–164
- (15.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 157–170.
- (16.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China," *Church History* 74, no. 1 (March 2005): 68–96; "Politics of Faith: Christian Activism and the Maoist State in South China," in *Marginalization in China: Recasting Minority Politics*, ed. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Siu Keung Cheung, and Lida V. Nedilsky (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 49–66.
- (17.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Co-Optation and Its Discontents: Seventh-Day Adventism in 1950s China," *Frontiers of History in China* 7, no. 4 (2012): 582–607
- (18.) Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-90.

(19.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground* Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China* Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Xi Lian, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 198–201

(20.) Mariani, *Church Militant* The Missionary's Curse Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Francis Price Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Source Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China* (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1963), 117–121

(21.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 165, 189.

(22.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 117–121.

(23.) Mariani, *Church Militant*; Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*; Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief*.

(24.) Daniel Bays, "Indigenous Protestant Churches in China, 1900–1937: A Pentecostal Case Study," in *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity*, ed. Steven Kaplan (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 124–143; "The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 50–68; Xi Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period (1912–1949)," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2004): 851–898; "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 407–441; Chen-Yang Kao, "The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2 (2009): 171–188.

(25.) David Bromley and J. Gordon Melton, "Reconceptualizing Types of Religious Organization: Dominant, Sectarian, Alternative, and Emergent Tradition Groups," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 15, no. 3 (2012): 4–28

(26.) Ka-che Yip, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922–1927* (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1980); Jessie G. Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920–1928* (Notre Dame, IN: Cross-Cultural Publications, 1988).

(27.) This chapter is based on archival sources in Nanjing and Wuhan and on oral history interviews with True Jesus Church members conducted in China in 2009 and 2010. Because the True Jesus Church was such a large national church, it is difficult to depict its history in a comprehensive way, especially during the 1950s when the church's national administrative structures collapsed. The place where I was able to access a few post-1949 documents, the Wuhan Municipal Archives, was for a time the location of the church's national headquarters and hence a place where political pressure was intense. These documents therefore may represent only an extreme and not a norm. Another methodological problem with these archival documents, including the minutes of meetings of the national church leadership in the 1950s, is that they are preserved by government bureaus and were recorded with the knowledge that they might be viewed by government officials. Hence they were produced for a Maoist audience and as such may be regarded as having elements of a public performance. A final problem is that the Maoist era, though by now decades in the past, was traumatic for many who lived through it. People are often reluctant to remember, or to recall in full detail, what they did and experienced during this time. Major sources for this chapter include several 1950s documents from the Wuhan Municipal Archives in Hubei 湖北 Province, 1940s documents from the Nanjing Municipal Archives in Jiangsu 江苏, news articles from various national and regional newspapers, and church publications and oral history interviews with church members from around China.

(28.) Chen Guangzao 陈光澡, *Zhen yesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties*. No publication information.

(29.) The January 1951 issue is the last issue held by the True Jesus Church archives in Taiwan; the December 1950 issue is the last issue held by the Shanghai Municipal Archives.

(30.) A proverb dating back to Ming xian ji 名賢集 *Collected Famous and Worthy Sayings*, a popular didactic text from the Song dynasty.

(31.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 *Holy Spirit Times* (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), April 15, 1948.

(32.) *Holy Spirit Times*, March 15, 1948.

(33.) These eighteen issues appear to represent all extant issues of *Holy Spirit Times* from this period. There appears to have been a hiatus in publication from March 1949–August 1950. In September 1950, publication resumed until what appears to be a final issue in January 1951.

(34.) *Holy Spirit Times*, issues from August 15, 1947–January 20, 1951.

(35.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊* [*Commemorative Volume on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the True Jesus Church*] (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948).

(36.) *Holy Spirit Times*, September 15, 1950, and October 25, 1950.

(37.) Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1–2.

(38.) Interview with Mr. Qu (pseudonym), South China, 2010.

(39.) Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 62–65; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 151.

(40.) Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850–1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 452–489; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*; Mariani, *Church Militant*

(41.) Andrew T. Kaiser, *The Rushing on of the Purposes of God: Christian Missions in Shanxi Since 1876* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 228

(42.) Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 65–78.

(43.) Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 98; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158–165; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 87.

(44.) Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 161–162; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 68; Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 129–130.

(45.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 19–20; Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China*, 91–94.

(46.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 127–133; Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 19–20.

(47.) Numerous articles mentioning the TJC's support for the state appear in the newspapers of the early People's Republic of China. For instance, see Renmin Ribao 人民日报 *People's Daily* (hereafter *People's Daily*), October 3, 1950, “哈市基督教团体通电愤怒抗议美侵略罪行拥护中国基督教宣言 Harbin Christian Groups Send Telegraph to Angrily Oppose America's Criminal Invasion and Support the Chinese Christian Manifesto”; *People's Daily*, September 10, 1950, “兰州各基督教团体抗议美机侵我领空 Each Christian Group in Lanzhou Opposes America Invading Our Airspace”; *People's Daily*, April 25, 1951, “中国基督教各教会各团体代表联合宣言 The United Manifesto of Representatives from Every Church and Group of Chinese Christianity”. In this document Ni Tuosheng 倪柝声, the leader of the Little Flock, is also listed as a signatory. See also Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 97–103; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 160–162.

(48.) *Holy Spirit Times*, November 15, 1950.

(49.) Wuhan Municipal Archives Document 98-5-350.

(50.) Julia Strauss, “Paternalist Terror: The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries and Regime Consolidation in the People's Republic of China, 1950–1953,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 1 (2002): 80–105

(51.) Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao*, 42–50.

(52.) Thomas DuBois, *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 127–151

(53.) Strauss, “Paternalist Terror,” 99.

(54.) Nanjing Municipal Archives Document 1002-1-848.

(55.) Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 98.

(56.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 134.

(57.) Kenneth Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949–1952* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980)

(58.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 134.

(59.) Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief*, 72.

(60.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 159.

(61.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 136.

(62.) David Apter, "Bearing Witness: Maoism as Religion," *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (2005): 5–37; Barend ter Haar, "China's Inner Demons," in *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives*, ed. Woei Lien Chong (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Zuo Jiping, "Political Religion: The Case of the Cultural Revolution in China," *Sociological Analysis* 52, no. 3 (1991): 99–110; Michael Dutton, "Mango Mao: Infections of the Sacred," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 161–187; Stephen Feuchtwang, "Religion as Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, ed. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 161–177.

(63.) Interview with Mr. Cai (pseudonym), South China, November 2009; interview with Mr. Qu, South China, March 2010.

(64.) Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin*, 181–183.

(65.) Interview with Mr. Ji (pseudonym), South China, April 2010.

(66.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 60–61.

(67.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 65.

(68.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(69.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(70.) Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2014), chap. 2; Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China, 1800–2012* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015); Melissa Inouye, "Charismatic Moderns: Pluralistic Discourse in Chinese Christian Communities, 1905–1926," *Twentieth-Century China* 42, no. 1 (2017): 26–51.

(71.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(72.) True Jesus Church website (northern faction), accessed March 2016, no longer available, <http://www.zysjh.org/index11.asp>. On August 3, 2017, a revised chronology was available, <http://www.zysjh.org/zys/Article/list-5.html>.

(73.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

(74.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

(75.) Revised chronology from True Jesus Church website (northern faction), accessed August 3, 2017, <http://www.zysjh.org/zys/Article/list-5.html>.

(76.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 98-1-582, 96-1-582.

(77.) Brown and Pickowicz, *Dilemmas of Victory*, 10.

(78.) See, for example, *People's Daily*, March 7, 1952, “北京市基督徒和天主教徒 愤怒抗议美国侵略军撒布细菌 决心肃清帝国主义影响、加强抗美援朝工作 Beijing Protestants and Christians Angrily Oppose America's Invading Armies Using Germ Warfare; Resolutely Expel Imperialist Influence and Redouble Efforts to Oppose America and Aid Korea.”

(79.) *People's Daily*, March 8, 1953.

(80.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.

(81.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.

(82.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.

(83.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.

(84.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-582.

(85.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949.

(86.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-480.

(87.) *People's Daily*, August 13, 1954.

(88.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 65–70.

(89.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-101.

(90.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-360.

(91.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(92.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

(93.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(94.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(95.) Philip Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

(96.) Deng Zhaoming, ed., “Religious Problems in Hunan,” *Bridge*, no. 75 (February 1996): 6

(97.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

- (98.) Changjiang ribao 长江日报 *Yangzi River Daily*, April 13, 1956.
- (99.) Changjiang ribao 长江日报, *Yangzi River Daily*, June 9, 1957.
- (100.) Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985) Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Myers, *Enemies Without Guns* The Missionary's Curse
- (101.) Donald E. MacInnis, *Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China: A Documentary History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 105–109
- (102.) *Xinhua Ribao* 新华日报, August 11, 1958.
- (103.) MacInnis, *Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China*, 225, 234; Dubois, *The Sacred Village*, chap. 6.
- (104.) *Xinhua Ribao* 新华日报, August 11, 1958.
- (105.) *Hubei Ribao* 湖北日报, November 6, 1958.
- (106.) *Hubei Ribao* 湖北日报, November 6, 1958.
- (107.) Wei Li and Dennis Tao Yang, "The Great Leap Forward: Anatomy of a Central Planning Disaster," *Journal of Political Economy* 113, no. 4 (2005): 840–877
- (108.) Li and Yang, "The Great Leap Forward," 841; Jung Chang, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Anchor, 2006); Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2011).
- (109.) Wen Li and Dennis Tao Yang note that, in comparison, the Irish famine of 1845–1851 claimed 1.1 million lives, the Bengal famine (1943) 3 million, and the Ethiopian famine (1984–1985) between 0.6 and 1 million. Li and Yang, "The Great Leap Forward," 841, n. 2.
- (110.) I was able to see catalogue entries showing when these files were opened but was not able to access the individual dossiers.
- (111.) In 2010 these files could all be found in the Wuhan Archives online catalog, under the category numbers B546 and B54. Written and oral history sources from Fujian confirm that aboveground church activities almost entirely ceased beginning in the second half of 1958 and did not resume until the 1980s. Chen Guangzao 陈光澡, *Zhen yesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi* 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 *A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties*, 50.

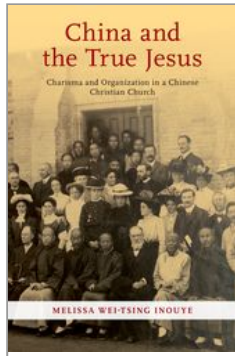
(112.) Deng Zhaoming, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today Part I," *Bridge*, no. 62 (November–December 1993): 14

(113.) One exception was the case of a few churches in Putian, which met for Sabbath services until 1966, and a church in the village of Nandian, which met throughout the Cultural Revolution. Chen, *Zhen yesu jiaohui*, 50.

(114.) Steve A. Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural: The Politics of Holy Water (Shenshui) in the PRC, 1949–1966," *China Quarterly* 186 (December): 999–1022

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

The Handwritten Hymnbook (1958–1974)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0008

Abstract and Keywords

During the Cultural Revolution, organizations and individuals of all stripes came under attack in a chaotic age characterized by the widespread breakdown of social relationships. As “old” art, music, and literature were criticized and replaced by “new” politically orthodox works, clandestine communities formed to preserve and produce alternative forms of culture. The silent prayer meetings of the True Jesus Church are akin to other covert cultural activities such as groups dedicated to reading banned literature, listening to Western music, and creating art. Charismatic experience played a key role in sustaining the life of the True Jesus Church underground because it could occur within informal, intimate settings. The church experienced an inversion of gendered power, as top male leaders were arrested and elderly women became key figures in sustaining the community’s religious life.

Keywords: Cultural Revolution, clandestine culture, art, charismatic, True Jesus Church, women

*And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions.*

Joel 2:28

(The Bible, New International Version)

The Burned Bible

In 1973, Deaconess Wang Dequan 王德全 fell ill and went to heaven. She found herself standing before a great door, white as snow, wide enough for a car, guarded by two angels whose faces shone with such dazzling brightness that she could not look at them directly. From the other side of the door, she heard the final strains of a hymn and then the sound of a great multitude of people uttering the word “hallelujah” in vocal prayer. When she tried to enter, the angels barred her way, challenging her: “Why do you want to go in?” She answered loudly, “The sound of the prayer and the hymn inside are ours—why can’t I go in and participate?”¹ An angel went inside to inquire. She heard the angel say, “Outside there is an old woman who says that our prayers and hymns are the same as her church, and she wants to come in.”² Eventually the angel, whose name was Mystery 奥秘, bade her enter and invited her to be seated on a round, white stool.

Before the congregation of twenty to thirty thousand, all dressed in snow-white robes, stood several angels. One angel preached from the pulpit. Another held up a scroll that displayed scenes from the Bible, lifelike and animated with sound and color “just like a movie.”³ Another wrote the book, chapter, and verse for the relevant stories on a white chalkboard in letters of gold. Behind them was an angel who played the piano, and to the right was an angel who played the accordion. At first she could not understand the language of the angel preaching, until the angel turned to Deaconess Wang and asked, “Can you read the Bible?”⁴ **(p.213)** The question embarrassed her; she could only nod her head. From this time on, she could understand.

Deaconess Wang’s health revived. She wrote an account of her heavenly travel that spread rapidly throughout True Jesus Church networks in southeast China in 1974, sparking a resurgence of organized church activity despite the atmosphere of political repression that had prevailed since the late 1950s. In her account, Deaconess Wang explained that the reason she had been embarrassed by the angel’s question about the Bible was that, in fact, she had not read the Bible for several years. During the years of political repression, she explained, “because I was afraid, I had burned my Bible. It had been a long time since I had studied it, and I had forgotten a great deal.”⁵

As early as July 1949, even before the official founding of the People's Republic of China in October, the Chinese Communist Party held a congress of 824 representatives of writers and the artists to consolidate a cultural policy in which all literature and art would serve the state.⁶ This was the beginning of a process whereby culture, including religion, was made subservient to politics. Previous Chinese governments, including the imperial state, had sought to regulate the realm of culture, but the Chinese Communist Party's ambition to exert cultural control at all levels of society was unprecedented.⁷ Citizens were expected to attend regular political-education classes. The state reallocated private living spaces and put religious buildings to use as schools, offices, factories, and so on. With roots in Mao Zedong's 1942 instructions that literature and arts should serve politics, the politicization of culture gradually increased through successive mass campaigns. For instance, the Anti-Rightist Campaign of 1957–1958 targeted intellectuals for supposed "rightist" errors in their work.⁸ 1958 marked the beginning of the Great Leap Forward campaign, when the party-state mobilized the entire population to wholeheartedly pursue agricultural and industrial projects that would hasten China's economic development. The peak of cultural pressure occurred during the Cultural Revolution era (1966–1976). During this decade, Mao Zedong's call for continuing the project of revolution in China through the demolition of old "ideas, culture, customs, and habits" led to a prolonged period of cultural interrogation within Chinese society. Spearheaded at the top by a group of political operatives including called the Central Cultural Revolution Group (headed by Jiang Qing 江青, Mao's wife) and at the grassroots by youth movements such as the Red Guards, the Cultural Revolution constituted an all-out attack on established authority and long-standing traditions—including the objects and individuals seen to represent them.

The life-courses of many millions of people in China were derailed during the Cultural Revolution. Some people lost their lives altogether. Even though most **(p.214)** Chinese citizens were not made to wear dunce caps and paraded before angry crowds, or imprisoned, or subjected to physical and verbal abuse, the possibility of these kinds of things happening was real.⁹ Respected Communist leaders, from top national officials such as Liu Shaoqi 刘少奇 and Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 to local village cadres, were denounced and demoted. Intellectuals and teachers were criticized by their colleagues and their students. Neighbors informed on neighbors. Children denounced their parents. Zealous bands of students broke into homes, offices, public libraries, and religious sites to seek out and destroy material symbols of the old society such as books with classical stories, ancient texts, scriptures, graves of famous historical figures, shrines, ritual vessels, and religious images.

As real and as terrible as these losses were, they do not represent the entirety of human experience in China during the Cultural Revolution. The vast majority of Chinese citizens participated in the Cultural Revolution in a way that defies a simple categorization of “perpetrators” and “victims.” As Xueping Zhong, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di have noted in *Some of Us*, a collection of Maoist era women’s memoirs that challenge sweeping generalizations and “the tendency to equate individual experience with historical ‘truth,’” the high tide of Maoism brought about profound cultural contradictions. Despite the unstable and chaotic power of political ideology during this decade, life was not all about politics. Individuals’ “lived experiences” played out in complex and innovative ways. Many resilient and independent individuals created forms of culture that diverged from prevailing political prescriptions.¹⁰ This chapter uses the case of the True Jesus Church to show how clandestine culture during the Cultural Revolution provided not only culture, but also community.

Counterrevolutionary Christianity

Members of the True Jesus Church and all other Chinese who belonged to the “tiny” Christian minority of a few million (about 1 percent of the population) did come under unusually intense political scrutiny because of their religious practice.¹¹ Christianity’s foreign associations, supernatural claims, and role within religious history provided textbook examples of culture easily labeled “backward,” “counterrevolutionary,” “feudal,” “imperialist,” “bourgeois,” and so on. Many Christian edifices and icons were destroyed by zealous youth, along with other religious sites and symbols such as temples, monasteries, shrines, statues, altars, and the like. Such destruction was celebrated in circulating propaganda (see Figure 7.1).

Christians around China experienced Maoist control in different ways, depending on their location, class background, family circumstances, **(p.215)** denominational affiliations, and individual inclinations. Some Protestant and Catholic leaders who refused to be co-opted into official state-sanctioned organizations in the early to mid-1950s were arrested, publicly humiliated, imprisoned, and occasionally even killed.¹² In the years to follow, even some of those leaders and lay members who cooperated with the Three-Self Patriotic Association for Protestants and the Catholic Patriotic Association for Catholics became vulnerable to such consequences.¹³ During the Socialist Education Movement (1962–1966), Catholics in one Shanxi 山西 village were forced to produce signed **(p.216)** confessions renouncing their faith or else face arrest.¹⁴ On occasions during the Cultural Revolution era (1966–1976), priests, nuns, and ordinary Christians were called up by gangs of young Red Guards to be a “living exhibition” of counterrevolutionary culture.¹⁵ Many were humiliated and injured through these struggle sessions. Bands of Red Guards broke into private homes searching for books, documents, diaries, letters, photographs, or other evidence of counterrevolutionary thought.¹⁶ In the same rural village in Shanxi, some lay Catholics were too terrified even to eat good wheat noodles or dumplings on Christmas Day for fear that it would expose them to political criticism.¹⁷



Figure 7.1 “Smash the Old World, Establish the New World.” In the bottom left corner are relics from the old world to be smashed by the Red Guard, including a music record, gambling dice, the historical drama *Peach Blossom Fan*, a Buddhist image, and a Christian crucifix.

Credit: IISH/Stefan R. Landsberger Collections, chinese posters.net

For many Christians, Christian identity and practice coexisted with numerous previously established and newly acquired political identities and practices. During this era, public mastery of Maoist political modes became a new shared way of life. In public during the Cultural Revolution, instead of hymns such as “I Will Ask for the Holy Spirit” 我要求聖靈, True Jesus Church members sang songs such as “The East is Red” 东方红, proclaiming “Mao Zedong is our great red sun.”¹⁸ Along with—or in some cases instead of—stories of Noah’s ark or Daniel in the lion’s den, True Jesus Church children memorized the biographies of model soldiers such as the army truck driver Lei Feng 雷锋 and the engineering platoon leader Wang Jie 王杰.¹⁹ True Jesus Church youth joined the Red Guards, participated in mass movements, and took jobs as party cadres.²⁰

Although the Cultural Revolution did not transform the entire Chinese population into mindless propaganda-spouting machines, it did create a world in which everyday interactions were highly politicized. Even after the Red Guard movement subsided in 1968, surveillance by police, coworkers, neighbors, and even family members was still an everyday reality.²¹ Seemingly insignificant actions and exchanges could escalate into political difficulties with life-changing repercussions. One scholar writes that up to 500,000 Christians died from persecution between 1950 and 1978, up to half during the Cultural Revolution era alone.²² At the same time, Chinese Christians who actually went to prison or lost their lives were a small minority, mostly confined to the leadership. Ordinary Chinese Christians were not regularly taken out and shot. However, as members of a conspicuously foreign-influenced religious community, they were particularly vulnerable to symbolic displays against “imperialism” and “superstition.” In this environment, saturated with fear and suspicion, Deaconess Wang had burned her Bible.

The Cultural Revolution's elimination of Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, and other religious practices from the public sphere cleared the way for the cult of Mao.²³ During the height of the cult in 1968 and 1969, every day was filled with the image and words of Mao Zedong. In the morning, millions of workers around the country ritually turned to the portrait of Mao in **(p.217)** the morning to "ask for instructions." In the evening, they faced Mao again to "report back," reflecting on their work and thoughts for the day. People wore Maoist loyalty on their chest in badges bearing the chairman's portrait. They exchanged Maoist jargon, with shopkeepers and customers for a time greeting each other in the language of Mao's *Selected Quotations*, speaking each quotation in halves like a sign and countersign ("Vigorously grasp revolution; . . ." ". . . energetically promote production").²⁴ Failure or perceived failure to conform to the activities, language, and levels of enthusiasm dictated by the state in one's private as well as public life could be grounds for serious consequences. For example, in October 1968 a middle school teacher in Hebei 河北 Province was sentenced to nine years in prison for having committed such grievous offenses as writing in his private diary that a certain Mao quotation gave him "boundless energy," then changing the phrase to "very much energy."²⁵

Despite the state's seeming hegemony over all forms of culture from visual art to religious devotion, and in the face of significant risk including violence, imprisonment, and execution, an undercurrent of illicit or clandestine cultural activities swirled constantly beneath the surface of Maoist society.²⁶ Although it existed throughout the 1950s and 1960s, underground culture particularly flourished during the final phase of the Cultural Revolution in the 1970s, when people began to be disillusioned with Maoist visions.²⁷ There were underground reading groups that circulated and discussed works of foreign literature such as Theja Gunawardhana's *Khrushchevism*, J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, William L. Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich: A History of Nazi Germany*, and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*.²⁸ There were underground art groups composed of artists who painted Chairman Mao's portrait on factory walls by day and then in the evening met up to paint landscapes, discuss Nietzsche and Sartre, and listen to Beethoven.²⁹ There were underground poetry groups that circulated hand-copied journals containing their own writings or met in salons at private homes to recite poetry and listen to the Beatles.³⁰ Regularly throughout the 1960s and 1970s, these culture groups were discovered and their members were interrogated, tortured, imprisoned, and even killed by either state agents or vigilante fellow citizens.³¹ And yet even widespread suppression, such as the "One Hit and Three Antis" campaign, in which thousands of independent reading clubs and groups were labeled "counterrevolutionary cliques" and rounded up, did not prevent new groups from springing up like wild grass.³²

In places throughout China, underground networks of the True Jesus Church and other Protestant and Catholic forms of Christianity were part of this illicit or underground culture during the Maoist era. One well-informed scholar believes that underground Christian groups began to meet as early as the mid-1950s.³³ Despite ever-present risk, members of the True Jesus Church, like the **(p.218)** underground reading groups, met to read, recite, memorize, and discuss the text of the Bible. Like the underground poetry and music salons, they met to collectively share in prayers and hymns. Like the painters and writers and scholars who suddenly had no safe space in public society for their art and sought a refuge, Christian believers created spaces in which to share their textual knowledge, expertise, and capacity for faith.

This chapter samples Maoist era True Jesus Church practices in two places: Wuhan 武汉, the location of the church's central headquarters, one of the places where the church's formal activity was the last to cease, and Fujian 福建 Province, one of the places where formal church activity was the soonest to revive. In the city of Wuhan, top leaders of the True Jesus Church after 1949 aligned with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and public church activities continued until 1958. In Fujian Province, long a True Jesus Church stronghold and a springboard to overseas missions, organized congregational activities ceased as early as 1951 but revived in 1974. This sampling of late cessation in Wuhan and early resumption in Fujian provides an incomplete picture, but nevertheless yields important insights into Chinese Christian culture during the era of Maoist control. During an era in which religious culture was severely repressed, clandestine practice in True Jesus Church networks persisted. The key to the survival of this clandestine church culture was charismatic practice. In a time in which formal organizations would have been quickly detected and repressed, the inherent collectivism (ironically a Maoist value) and the flexible authority of charismatic practice allowed church life to continue underground.

Clandestine Culture in the Maoist Era

The case of the True Jesus Church in Wuhan in the 1950s and Fujian in the 1960s and 1970s also sheds light on the question of how clandestine culture related to public (i.e., Maoist) culture. Until recently, Western histories of the Maoist era and the Cultural Revolution in particular have emphasized the era as a time of cultural poverty, in which diverse, independent ways of producing and consuming culture such as visual art, literature, music, dance, and so on were suppressed. In their place arose cultural works whose content was rigorously controlled, including wall posters and “model performances” such as *The Red Detachment of Women* (a 1964 ballet about an all-female unit of the Red Army).³⁴ This emphasis on precipitous decline in forms of cultural expression and the destruction of cultural artifacts, including centuries-old statues, temples, and books, produced the trope of the Cultural Revolution as a “cultureless revolution.”

(p.219) Recent work has complicated this view of a “cultureless” Maoist era. In fact, as one scholar has shown, the Cultural Revolution in particular was not simply a time of chaotic, wanton destruction, but a time of cultural innovation and experimentation, “a time of considerable creative energy, official and unofficial, that built on earlier developments and made possible a reorientation in Chinese cultural discourses since the 1980s.”³⁵ For example, this new scholarship shows that the “model performances” were indeed propaganda, but that propaganda culture was still culture and that thousands of cultural workers—from actors to musicians, make-up specialists, and stagehands—poured skill and creative care into the productions.³⁶ One scholar has suggested that model works such as *The Red Detachment of Women* were popular during the Maoist era and remain popular today simply because they were good art.³⁷ Moreover, the “new” culture of the Cultural Revolution continued to draw on “old” Chinese cultural forms and traditions, including stock characters, performers’ gestures, and declamatory practices. Foreign cultural forms such as European concert music and Western dramas also survived.³⁸ Indeed, model works such as *The Red Detachment of Women* exhibited hybridity between these multiple forms, such as incorporating Chinese folk dance and martial arts movements into ballet.³⁹ The proliferation of underground forms of culture during the Maoist era, especially in the 1970s, also testifies to a more varied cultural scene than had previously been acknowledged. Hence the party-state’s narrow and often shifting definition of orthodox cultural expression prohibited certain forms of culture but allowed the continuation, expansion, and creation of others.⁴⁰

In other words, the Cultural Revolution was not, after all, a “cultureless revolution.” However, during these ten years, engaging in some forms of culture could get you promoted and embracing other forms of culture could get you arrested. True Jesus Church practices such as collective prayer, Bible-reading, hymn-singing, and charismatic healing and exorcism fell into the latter category. Church members likely consumed public culture such as *The Red Detachment of Women* as enthusiastically as anyone else. Yet, like many others, they also continued to produce culture of their own. Despite the risks, amid innumerable potential political hazards involved in daily interactions with police, censors, coworkers, neighbors, and even family, people still gathered together in groups to paint, compose, listen, read, write, think, and pray.

Many histories of underground culture during the Maoist era have emphasized the value of the particular activities for the individuals who engaged in them—the power of political ideas, or the beauty of Debussy’s music, or the creative expression found in painting. For example, Wang Aihe, who participated in clandestine painting groups, writes that they enabled “one to be an authentic, self-determining human being.”⁴¹ Others have written that youths in underground (p.220) reading groups “risked the perils of crossing the ocean of knowledge” in order to pursue truth, and that these groups were “proof of the irrepressible human yearning for freedom of expression.”⁴² Another scholar has pointed out that for people being force-fed a “dreadfully familiar diet of local heroes,” the romance and exoticism of underground literature proved irresistible.⁴³ The value that individuals found in authentic expression, the unfettered pursuit of truth, and artistic variety is undeniable.

Yet underground culture during the Maoist era was also a collective activity. This is clearly illustrated in the case of the True Jesus Church, where people found value in informal (and apolitical) association, even if on a very small scale. Theoretically, True Jesus Church members could have chosen to keep their faith strictly private throughout the period of Maoist suppression, praying and believing in God within the security of their individual households, and thus avoiding significant risk. But the church’s charismatic beliefs and practices powerfully motivated collective action. Like a novel, or a symphony, or a painting, a healing miracle requires an audience. The repression of “counterrevolutionary” culture during the Maoist era was the repression not merely of cultural products, but of the many diverse, organic, formal, and informal communities generated in the process of producing and partaking of culture.

The loss of these communities of culture—human networks for shared enjoyment, experience, meaning, and the exchange of cultural and social capital, including transmission of knowledge from one generation to another—was as deeply felt as the loss of the culture itself. Perhaps this is why, when Deaconess Wang Dequan had a vision of heaven, it was not a vision of a one-on-one encounter with God or some dazzling impersonal cosmic glory, but a vision of a vast, orderly congregation in the midst of a group-learning activity, tens of thousands of people all united through their utterance of the same prayers and singing the same hymns as her own beloved earthly community, the True Jesus Church. The latent hunger for these kinds of voluntary communities of trust in Fujian in 1974 meant that when people heard of Deaconess Wang’s vision, they recognized it as their vision too. Deaconess Wang’s story sparked a large-scale revival of clandestine True Jesus Church gatherings, nascent communities inspired by divine promises but grounded in shared earthly concerns.

Charismatic Practice During the True Jesus Church in Wuhan in the 1950s

One of the places where True Jesus Church activity was relatively long-lived was Wuhan. The city was home to the church's central headquarters from the early **(p.221)** 1950s until 1958, when many of the church's top leaders there were imprisoned. The longevity of aboveground Christianity in Wuhan may be due to its history as a former treaty port. Wuhan had a long Christian history and was a stronghold of the "Sino-foreign Protestant establishment," the mainstream Protestant denominations that controlled prominent cultural institutions such as schools, hospitals, and the YMCA. Perhaps in Wuhan, many Protestant churches could not hide and thus felt they had no choice but to cooperate with the party-state.⁴⁴ Despite being allowed to continue public activities under the umbrella of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, True Jesus Church leaders were under constant political pressure to rein in the charismatic practices that were a prominent feature of church life. Local baptismal rosters from August 1952 record that the vast majority of new converts joined the church because they sought charismatic healing.⁴⁵ The August 1953 "Report to Participants in the Three-Self Reform of the True Jesus Church in Wuhan" stated that church leaders were concerned on account of a number of miraculous practices and biblical discourses that persisted within the lay membership of the church. Written by church leaders attempting to implement adherence to the party line, the report described certain "heretical" practices that were "very serious in Wuhan."⁴⁶

These practices all shared certain characteristics. First was their charismatic nature. Second, although they did not constitute independent worship on a congregational scale, they were collaborative: healing or exorcising through at least one person laying hands on another, blessing water and administering it to someone else, group prayer and singing, rituals of congregational inclusion and identity. Perhaps the church leaders who collaborated with the state were just as sensitive to charismatic rituals' tendency to gather people for unapproved purposes as to their "superstitious" or "unhygienic" nature.

The first of these unsanctioned charismatic practices was “refusing doctors and medicine” and relying solely on spiritual methods of healing sickness, such as prayer.⁴⁷ This charge of resorting to religious methods such as prayer instead of medicine was one of several standard accusations leveled against Christians, including Catholics. However, faith healing explicitly without medicine was a real element of True Jesus Church practice, and so it seems likely that it was indeed widespread.⁴⁸ “Before Liberation this method of spreading the Gospel was very common,” read the report, “and although since Liberation most preachers have corrected this sort of erroneous tendency, a few people still do this Although the practice of praying for healing is a problem of belief, if we refuse doctors and medicine it also endangers the people.”⁴⁹ The report exhorted church members to give up this practice, invoking the recent mobilizations of the Patriotic Hygiene Campaign 爱国卫生运动 of 1952 in which citizens all over China had been called upon to defend their country against American germ warfare by fighting **(p.222)** germs in their bodies, households, and outside environment. Washing hands, not laying on hands, was now supposed to hold the key to healing.

Despite energetic attempts to convert all citizens to a modern outlook on hygiene, at the conclusion of the campaign, government officials judged that the public level of hygienic consciousness was still inadequate.⁵⁰ This underlying frustration with people’s inertia (or even resistance) to patriotic hygiene was evident in descriptions of the second and third heresies: “asking for the water of life” and “blowing and fanning.”⁵¹ In “asking for the water of life,” an ordained church leader would pray over a container of water to ask that it be blessed with special healing properties. The report pointed out that in the Bible, Jesus had never “asked for the water of life,” and warned that this method of healing could be counterproductive when unboiled water was used, because the germs in the water could make a sick person get sicker.⁵² One scholar has shown that this practice of using water as a healing substance and widespread condemnation of the practice by government authorities promoting modern science and hygiene were not restricted to Christian churches but were in fact widespread throughout Chinese religious movements. During the early years of the People’s Republic of China, hundreds of “holy water” incidents took place all over China in which people made pilgrimages to ponds and springs believed to contain divine properties and drank the water in order to obtain healing, protection from harm, or other salutary benefits. Officials condemned these quests for holy water as superstitious, unscientific, and a waste of time better spent in economic production.⁵³ In “blowing and fanning,” in addition to laying on hands and praying, the healer would also blow and fan: “For example, if praying for an ailment of the eyes, the missionary spreads apart the sick person’s eyelids, fans the eyes with the hand, and blows into the eyes with the mouth. This is extremely unhygienic.”⁵⁴

The fourth and fifth problematic practices had to do with an excess of motion and noise. According to the report, “shaking the head and massaging” meant laying hands upon a sick person’s head in prayer and then “shaking it back and forth until the person’s head and brains are addled.” Or, said the report, during the prayer, “with no regard for whether the person is a man or a woman,” the healer would “massage the person all over, which gives a bad appearance.”⁵⁵ The hallmark of True Jesus Church worship, vocal prayer in tongues, was also condemned in the fifth point, which criticized “crazy shouting and chaotic noise” because it disturbed public order and violated others’ rights not to be disturbed.⁵⁶ “We should just use our hearts and spirits to pray,” the report advised. “Religious freedom has a certain scope.”⁵⁷ Clearly, a single person praying would not create chaotic noise. The problem was not only the noise but also the collective setting that produced it. The party did not encourage popular gatherings that were not under its guidance.

(p.223) The sixth and final criticism targeted the practice of infant baptism and more broadly the issue of religious education for children. “In the past baptism was administered without regard for gender or age,” read the report. “Children as young as a few months or a few years old can be baptized. Their bodies are not completely developed and their immune systems are weak, and they are completely unclear about matters of faith. We should do our utmost to correct this sort of ignorant baptism of children.”⁵⁸ This critique of child baptism also struck at the foundation of the religious community by seeking to make religion an adult intellectual choice instead of an ascribed community identity or birthright.

In its conclusion, the report urged church members to “unearth the treasures of Jesus’ Gospel and expound the true Word according to righteousness” by means of patriotism, anti-imperialism, antifeudalism, antibureaucratism, and anticapitalism.⁵⁹ It warned that “stubborn” church leaders who persisted in the old ways and old allegiances would be the targets of struggle, and advised that new leaders be chosen who were “pure” and hardworking, and who had “clean histories.”⁶⁰ The cease-and-desist tone of this 1953 report suggests that charismatic practices within the True Jesus Church had been robust in the first few years since the founding of the People’s Republic and likely persisted in informal lay culture for some time thereafter. One scholar has argued that holy-water episodes in China continued until 1966, with the start of the Cultural Revolution, suggesting that for many years the power of the party-state at the grassroots was “less secure than it appeared.”⁶¹ This small-scale but collaborative charismatic practice in the face of anticharismatic state campaigns in the 1950s laid the groundwork for clandestine practice during the Cultural Revolution.

Congregational and Pastoral Practice in the Early 1960s and the Cultural Revolution

During the high tide of Maoism in the late 1950s and 1960s, the lives of Chinese citizens were disrupted as the lines demarcating political orthodoxy and moral rectitude swayed and shifted dramatically. Pressure to abandon “old” religious practices reached unprecedented intensity. During this period many Christian churches and denominations were completely eliminated as institutions, their cultural and theological shadings painted over with the strong colors of the “postdenominational” Three-Self Patriotic Movement.⁶² And yet, although the existence of underground True Jesus Church culture in China as a whole was erratic and fragile, it did survive throughout this era, creating the foundation for revival after the high tide of cultural repression subsided. According to my informants, Fujian Province was a place that had a relatively strong underground church culture throughout the 1960s and 1970s and was one of the places of early **(p.224)** formal church revival in China. Oral history accounts from True Jesus Church members in Fujian indicate that varying degrees of organized church activity continued in certain places throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The ingredient that allowed the True Jesus Church to survive while numerous other churches perished was charismatic practice. This mode of Christianity did not depend on an intact ecclesiastical hierarchy, regular Sabbath meetings, a chapel, or a large group. At the same time, it was inherently collective, nourishing church networks in a time of profound community destruction. Informal charismatic authority in the True Jesus Church was also compatible with the leadership of older women, whom the party-state was less likely to see as potential threats and who were therefore less vulnerable to political surveillance. Because of the True Jesus Church’s long-standing tradition of appointing women as deaconesses and preachers, these older women often had leadership experience, charismatic authority, religious expertise, and family seniority; they commanded respect in the local community. In a time when official, male-dominated ecclesiastical hierarchies had failed, informal, interpersonal networks held together by women succeeded.

One of the hallmarks of Maoist policy was the rending of long-standing social and familial ties and the creation of new ones (to the state, the Chairman, the work-unit, etc.), especially during the Cultural Revolution. However, in the case of the True Jesus Church in Fujian, some church communities maintained their solidarity into the mid-1960s and beyond. In certain rural towns and villages in Fujian, where the overlap between the True Jesus Church community and other community networks was particularly large and interpersonal relationships were particularly strong, church activities continued even after they had been shut down in large cities. For instance, church activity in two coastal towns in Fujian did not completely stop until the mid-1960s.⁶³ In some small villages, regular church meetings continued even throughout the Cultural Revolution.⁶⁴ One example was in a small farming community of a little over twenty households in which only two families did not belong to the True Jesus Church. No one reported the church meetings to government authorities. The village was so small that political campaigns were not conducted there, but in the larger town nearby. This small village became a gathering point, drawing church members who sometimes walked for hours from the neighboring communities. One veteran female preacher from the village, Chen Aiying 陈爱英, who had been a church leader since the 1920s, hosted weekly Sabbath meetings lasting one to two hours and daily evening meetings in the main room of her house. The main room was crammed full, with attendees spilling into the bedroom and sitting on the bed. Other True Jesus Church preachers frequently stayed with the family, although the house was quite small and resources scarce. “When there was food, we ate together; when there was no food, we were hungry together,” one of Chen Aiying’s (p.225) younger relatives recalled.⁶⁵ Knowing of the preachers’ presence, church members from the surrounding community went to the house for healing or spiritual support in times of sickness or other difficulties.

In areas where large meetings could not continue, church members visited each other privately in small groups.⁶⁶ Because church patterns of conversion had often spread along existing networks of business, kinship, or neighborhood acquaintance, even after official congregational meetings ceased church members still associated with one another regularly. Elderly women were especially able to carry out pastoral visits to pray, heal, or offer comfort because, according to the words of one informant, “the government didn’t care about old women.” Male church leaders could not go from house to house without being conspicuous.⁶⁷

During this time many of the younger members of multigenerational True Jesus Church families had little personal identification with the church, although the older members of their family admonished them to pray or share testimony stories with them in the privacy of the home. One church leader, Deacon Wu, a third-generation member of the church who was a teenager in rural Fujian during the Cultural Revolution, said that he “participated actively” in the various official political activities of the time. “This was the environment,” he recalled, with a slight shrug. “*Da shui da liu*” 大水大流 [“I had to go with the flow”].⁶⁸ Another church leader, Elder Zhou, also a third-generation member of the church in Fujian, recalls joining a group in the Cultural Revolution. When his political faction was defeated, he lost his job and any chance to attend university, where admission was curtailed in these years. He went to a nearby village to be a cadre, where he worked in the library of the local commune. “In the 1950s, my father would tell us testimony stories,” he recalled. “He would say, ‘You are Jesus’ child.’ We would pray. When at school I would sometimes secretly pray But I was weak at the time. I had always had an atheistic education. I had no understanding of God.”⁶⁹

Elder Zhou’s father had been the target of political criticism during the 1960s as a True Jesus Church leader, an urban professional, and a local community leader before 1949. To escape the persecution, the family moved to a rural town where political pressure was less intense and where there was a larger concentration of True Jesus Church members. Here, said Elder Zhou, after 1970, his father began to engage in underground church-related activities, and Elder Zhou began to accompany him. “That’s when I started to understand God.”⁷⁰

The Vision of Deaconess Wang Dequan

The early 1970s saw a proliferation of underground culture across China as the contrast between Maoism’s lofty ideals and the brutal power plays in the name of **(p.226)** these ideals sparked disillusionment. In September 1971 the nation was shocked when Lin Biao, a celebrated general, prominent orchestrator of the Cultural Revolution, and Mao’s named successor, was implicated in an assassination attempt on Mao and died in a plane crash while trying to flee with his wife and son. Lin was now excoriated in official media. This sudden reversal severely shook people’s faith in both the Cultural Revolution and in the political labels that had been applied to idolize or demonize people.⁷¹ Underground culture flourished. In this context, in 1973, Deaconess Wang Dequan had her vision of heaven, which sparked a full revival of the True Jesus Church as a formal religious institution.

Wang Dequan had been born in 1892 into a Christian family in the rural village of Gangtou 港头 in Fujian.⁷² Her grandmother had been a lay preacher in the Anglican Church, but her father had fallen into the grip of opium addiction, making the family desperately poor. When Wang Dequan was seven, they sold her to a family in the nearby village of Mangling 芒岭. Her anguished mother told the sad tale at church that Sunday. The English priest's wife heard the story and was moved to pay the money to buy Wang Dequan back and to enroll her in the Anglican school in Gangtou. Wang Dequan married a man from the village of Dongying 东营 when she was twenty. In 1929, when Wang was afflicted with chronic pain of the stomach and caring for a son left blind by sickness, a prominent local True Jesus Church woman (the wife and mother of True Jesus Church leaders) invited Wang to attend a Spiritual Convocation of the True Jesus Church in the town of Yuxi 鱼溪. She was moved to be baptized, whereupon her stomach illness and her son's blindness were miraculously healed. She returned to Dongying and was instrumental in the conversion of more than seventy families to the True Jesus Church. In 1949 Deaconess Wang had been active in the church for twenty years. After public church meetings stopped in 1951, Deaconess Wang "frequently went out to visit other church members' families, strengthening everyone's faith."⁷³ Beginning in 1970, as a church historian describes it, church members "awoke from sleep and got to their feet," forming several underground church meeting places and once again beginning to experience "spiritual gifts, grace, and truth."⁷⁴ In the winter of 1973, Deaconess Wang "saw visions, traveled to heaven, and attended meetings in heaven continuously for twelve days."⁷⁵ This is the vision of the snow-white doors of heaven with which the chapter opened. The vision narrative circulated widely in Fujian Province and beyond.

Deaconess Wang's vision is a vivid, complex description of heaven and hell. On one level, it can be read simply as the wide-ranging hallucinations of an ailing old woman. Surely its susceptibility to this reading is what protected her from political repercussions. On another level, it is a spiritual call to arms, a call for the courageous renewal of religious practice in defiance of the secular authority of (p.227) the state. In its details it is also an example of how religious imaginations draw on ordinary things to represent that which is extraordinary.

Lying on her bed around six or seven in the evening, Deaconess Wang suddenly heard the ethereal sound of hymn-singing from far away. The hymn being sung was a True Jesus Church hymn, "Return in Glory to the Heavenly Home" 荣归天乡.⁷⁶ The first verse of this song referenced the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, three Jewish youths held captive at King Nebuchadnezzar's court in Babylon who refused to bow to the king's golden image despite the threat of death:

*In ancient days there were three people whose hearts were strong,
They were cast into the fire, but were not harmed,*

*In the end, to whence did these three people return?
They must have gone to the beautiful promised land.⁷⁷*

The second and third verses referenced the trials of the prophets Daniel (cast into the lion's den for praying secretly to God when the law forbade it) and Elijah (driven by an angry Queen Jezebel to wander in the wilderness). Like Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the first, in these verses Daniel and Elijah endured hardship and went to the promised land.⁷⁸ The lyrics of the refrain spoke of the closeness and joy of life after death:

*Very soon, the change—I will see God,
Soon, resurrection—I will see God,
A happy reunion in my heavenly home,
The glorious, beautiful land.*

Joining in the song, miraculously leaving her body behind, Wang Dequan followed the sound. She walked up a shining path. A beam of beautiful light lit the way, cutting through the darkness on all sides. She continued to follow the voices along the shore of the sea, up a hill, and eventually to a great building. By now the light overhead was “like the brightness of the sun at midday.”⁷⁹ She saw a long, seemingly endless hallway lined by brilliantly white rooms, their doors, windows, and furniture all made of white jade and edged with gold. She came to a great door,

white as snow, wide enough for a vehicle to go through. It was closed, and the sound of singing was coming from the other side. Two angels stood guard. They wore snow-white robes. Their faces were full of dazzling **(p. 228)** brightness so that one could not look at them directly. Their eyes flashed light. They were thirty or forty years old, tall, martial, and solemn.⁸⁰

This was the moment, related at the start of the chapter, when Deaconess Wang claimed the right to enter heaven because she recognized the songs and sound of prayer inside. The fact that in heaven, worship and prayer matched worship and prayer of the True Jesus Church was clearly a strong endorsement of the church, as was the detail that, once inside, Deaconess Wang recognized a deceased fellow church member, who greeted her warmly. She saw the great space of gold and brilliant white, the tens of thousands of congregants, and the angels preaching at the front. The angel at the podium asked her directly whether she read the Bible, causing her embarrassment because she knew that she had burned her Bible in years before and forgotten many stories. Nevertheless, as she sat there in the great hall, the stories came back to her as she watched the living stories unfold on the scrolls held by the angels.⁸¹

The first story that she heard in the sermon and saw in the pictures was the story of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego from the hymn. In her narrative, Wang Dequan described seeing

a tall golden statue erected in a great square, like a high tower. I saw King Nebuchadnezzar sitting, and the golden statue's face was that of the king's. I saw many people gathered before the golden statue A crier stood and announced: "People of the world! This is the command, that when you hear the sound of [musical instruments], then you must fall down and bow before the golden statue that the king has made. Those who do not fall down and worship it will be cast into a fiery furnace."⁸²

She then observed Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refusing to worship the king's statue. They were reported to the king and thrown into the fiery furnace but emerged from the flames unscathed.

For the next eleven days, Wang Dequan spent most of her time in heaven. Around six or seven each day, her spirit traveled to heaven in a vision. During this time she tossed and turned on her bed, unable to be roused. She returned to normal consciousness around four or five in the morning. Throughout the entire twelve days, she did not eat and only drank a few spoonfuls of water. She attended worship in heaven each day and also spent a short time observing hell (with a devil instead of an angel as a guide). There she saw various forms of punishment that echoed other depictions of the afterlife in popular European and Chinese Christian literature, but also Buddhist hells in popular Chinese literature.⁸³ There were people struggling in a pool of blood, people being alternately **(p.229)** burned and bitten in a pool filled half with fire and half with worms the length of straw shoes, and people being immersed in a huge pot of boiling oil (her guide told her that sinners were boiled daily, but after three years, their punishment was scaled back to once every seven days).⁸⁴ Upon returning to her body after her final day in heaven, she found that her daughters-in-law were preparing her coffin. She had been lying on the bed unresponsive to even the doctor's shots, and they thought that she was about to die.⁸⁵

Wang Dequan's vision merged heavenly and earthly realities with flawless assurance. It resembled not only a True Jesus Church Sabbath worship service, but also a Maoist era political study meeting punctuated by stories of revolutionary martyrs. Separately, the various elements of the vision are interesting but not obviously polemical: the confirmation of the church's claims to be the world's one true Christian church through the use of True Jesus Church hymns in heaven, the format of the large group worship-and-study meeting with masses of people in attendance, the moral warning about the ultimate consequences of righteous or evil conduct, the story of the three youths in the fiery furnace. Taken together and read in cross-reference to each other, however, these elements became a rousing call to renewed faithfulness and fortitude. Introduced by the first hymn sung and the first biblical sermon preached, the vision's overarching theme was that true believers can and must stand up to the secular power of the state. Another strong theme of the vision was the divine character of the church's community culture. Wang's descriptions of heaven testified to a glorious eternal collectivism that shared key cultural elements with the church on earth, including hymns, prayers, and family members.

This vision spread by word of mouth and from hand to hand in written accounts throughout church networks in Fujian in the mid-1970s. It served as a catalyst for the resumption of formal church activities throughout Fujian.⁸⁶ In one representative account, in 1974 Chen Guangzao 陈光藻 in Putian 莆田, a city in Fujian, received a letter from another church leader with a detailed description of Wang Dequan's vision. He was extremely excited, and soon thereafter arranged a Sabbath church meeting at the house of another local member. On this day, there was loud rain, allowing the members to engage in vocal prayer without the fear of being reported. According to Chen's account, many experienced the infilling of the Holy Spirit at this time. This meeting marked the start of the revival of the True Jesus Church in Putian, and within half a year, all of the communities of believers associated with Putian meeting places had resumed activities.⁸⁷ By 1974 in China, space had opened up for this kind of development, with a paring back of party interference in people's personal lives.

The significance of Deaconess Wang’s vision for the renewal of the True Jesus Church underscores two important points: the ongoing power of textual **(p.230)** communities and the way in which charismatic practice provided an avenue for women’s religious influence. The text of Deaconess Wang’s heavenly narrative struck a powerful chord, not only because it was bold in tone and vivid in detail, but also because it referred to scenes and stories from the biblical text that all church members knew well. Wang’s account of certain key hymns and biblical stories spoke in code to those who were already familiar with them and thus powerfully reinforced church members’ sense of shared culture and identity. (In this sense it was similar to the Maoist language people used as a code to express loyalty to the regime during the Cultural Revolution.)⁸⁸ Most powerful of all was Wang’s claim to have seen a vision. Years of state repression of religion had eliminated the church’s male-dominated bureaucratic structures to the point where women’s individual spiritual gifts reemerged as vital for church life. Much as the party-state during the Maoist era had suppressed one kind of culture and nurtured another, within the True Jesus Church this meant that the formal authority of men had diminished while the informal authority of women had increased. This was the case not only in the True Jesus Church, but also in other denominations such as the Seventh-day Adventists.⁸⁹

The Reinstitutionalization of Charisma

Religious institutions form to shelter a charismatic spark. Just as the launch of the True Jesus Church in 1917 depended on Wei Enbo’s vision of Jesus in the river outside Beijing, the revival of the True Jesus Church in 1974 following more than a decade of political persecution and institutional dormancy depended on Deaconess Wang’s vision of heaven. This revival was of course also facilitated by a relative decline in the intensity of political campaigns in the mid-1970s. As Deaconess Wang’s vision emboldened church members to meet in larger and larger numbers, institutionalizing processes once more came into motion to reinstall structures of formal sacerdotal authority and ritual procedures within church communities.

In 1974, a preacher and deacon from Hunan 湖南 named Feng Rongguang 冯荣光, who had been sent by the True Jesus Church General Assembly on an assignment to Fujian shortly before 1949 and who had remained in Fujian after the Communist revolution, became worried that ordained members of the priesthood were about to die out. Although the church taught that all believers have access to the power of the Holy Spirit, leaders had to be ordained through the laying on of hands. This policy stemmed from the church’s exclusivist position that it was Jesus’s one true church and also from its emphasis on biblical protocols. Feng secretly ordained ten new church leaders by laying his hands on their heads after the manner of Jesus ordaining apostles. This first group **(p.231)** consisted of two elders and eight deacons in a small coastal town. Subsequent ordinations followed.⁹⁰

In this period of renewed activity in the mid-1970s, veteran church leaders worked to train a new generation of church leaders from among followers who had been educated during the Maoist era. This transition was not easy. Members of the younger generation, who had been trained to trust only science and to see religion as “superstition,” were originally skeptical of the authenticity of charismatic practice. Yet younger members such as Elder Zhou were eventually converted to their parents’ worldview through personal experiences of charismata. Elder Zhou remembered accompanying his father to the home of a man who was possessed by a devil after fighting with his wife. His father told the man, “In the name of Jesus Christ, I exorcise you,” and the devil departed.⁹¹ Elder Zhou also recalled an occasion during the 1970s, when he was still not a believer, when his wife became ill. “My mother fetched a bowl of water,” he recounted. “My father took the bowl of water and prayed. When I took the bowl of water to give to my wife, I noticed that it had a strong smell, like *feng you jing* 风油精 (a popular medicine) and mint. I gave it to my wife and asked her if she had noticed anything about the water. She said, ‘Why does it smell like *feng you jing*?’ ”⁹² Like many True Jesus Church converts in the Republican and contemporary eras, Elder Zhou began to believe after witnessing miracles. It is important to note the presence of his wife, another empirical witness and part of the charismatic audience, in his explanation of how he came to be convinced.

As in Chinese Christian movements today and other movements in world religious history, the division of religious labor between charismatic experience and institutional administration in the early years of the mid-1970s revival of the True Jesus Church split along gender lines.⁹³ Although women had led and sustained the church throughout the decades of persecution, the first new class of church workers ordained by Feng Rongguang was all male. Because Christian church activities were still officially prohibited by the government until 1982, however, women still played a prominent role in shepherding the revival of worship and rites within the True Jesus Church throughout the 1970s.

Deaconess Fu, who was born in the early 1960s, grew up in a multigenerational True Jesus Church family in Fujian. Her grandmother and mother were very pious in their religious observances, although they undertook them privately, within the household. "Each night my grandmother made us sing hymns and pray for one to two hours," she remembered. "We only had thirty or so hymns, all written out by hand. There was no Bible My grandmother got up very early on the Sabbath and combed her hair. She would fast all day, and we had to fast too. Mama wouldn't make meals."⁹⁴ She recalled people coming to their house for meetings at night behind closed doors and drawn curtains, **(p.232)** praying and singing hymns in hushed tones when most other villagers had gone to bed. At these meetings, before printed Bibles became widely available, people shared testimony stories or recited passages of scripture that they had committed to memory. In 1973 or 1974 regular house meetings began to be held in a nearby rural community. At these meetings, Deaconess Fu's mother reserved the front row for her children and made sure they were paying attention.

Deaconess Fu was baptized in 1975 and counts her baptism as a great miracle in her life. When she was young, she said, she suffered from many ailments, including asthma, a heart condition, and severe seasonal allergies that raised huge swollen welts on her legs and back that itched so badly she would rub against brick walls to scratch them.⁹⁵ Because of these health problems, she thought that if she were baptized, at least she would be cleansed of sin in the event that she died young. She and dozens of others were baptized in the middle of the night, in the midst of a violent storm. It was during the rainy season, so organizers were able to schedule the event when they knew that heavy rains would help keep them from being detected:

We all held hands, following the people who knew the road, and walked in the dark to the river. We didn't even take flashlights. It was very cold. In the morning, the local farmer saw that some of his crops had been trampled by us on the way down to the river. He was angry, and he could have reported that members of the True Jesus Church had had a baptism in the river, but then he saw that the place in the river where the people had been baptized was full of blood [which members of the True Jesus Church interpret as a sign that their sins were truly washed away by the blood of Christ]. This frightened him, and he didn't dare to make the report After I was baptized, all of my sicknesses were healed.⁹⁶

Throughout the 1970s, local members of the True Jesus Church continued to use Deaconess Fu's home as a meeting place. Her father, interestingly enough, was a local government official who had joined the Communist Party as an underground member in the days of the Republican government. He did not participate in True Jesus Church activities himself but did not prevent his mother, wife, or children from participating. "He believed," said Deaconess Fu, "but he couldn't go to church. After he retired in 1986, he would come to church. But if it weren't for his protective presence, we wouldn't have been able to be a meeting point."⁹⁷ Church members describe this as a time when men's participation in church leadership was sharply curtailed by the political context, opening up new spaces for women to lead and minister.

(p.233) The Handwritten Hymnbook

In a church in which women had long held official ecclesiastical positions but in which men had always occupied the top rungs of the hierarchy, the inversion of the True Jesus Church's organizational structure paralleled other inversions during the Cultural Revolution, as cultural and political elites were replaced by formerly lowly students, workers, and peasants. The loose, informal, opportunistic underground culture of the True Jesus Church during this time fit well with the wider culture of amateurism that spread during the Cultural Revolution.⁹⁸ This culture of amateurism had long operated within the True Jesus Church, with its traditions of lay Bible study, evangelism, and charismatic ministry. During the Maoist era, however, it altogether replaced hierarchical organization and became the primary form in which church networks expressed themselves. In various places in China including Wuhan in the 1950s and Fujian in the 1960s and 1970s, members of the True Jesus Church created a clandestine church culture. They did this despite the contemporary context in which all religious culture was subject to political suppression and interpersonal connections could often become a source of vulnerability rather than a source of strength. This underground Christian religious culture highlights the intimately collective nature of underground culture during the Maoist era.

Clandestine religious culture was held together by charismatic as opposed to institutional forms of authority—by the power of mutual healing ministrations, shared prayer, or heavenly visions. Crucially, this mode of Christianity did not require institutional sanction or community property, but it did require networks of relationships, no matter how small. In an age of paranoia and sometimes corrosive sociality, the trusting relationships necessary for charismatic practice were themselves something to be sought after. Like others who risked their freedom and sometimes their lives to read books, listen to music, or paint pictures, members of the True Jesus Church during the Maoist era were driven not only by the intrinsic value of their shared religious practice but also by the value of the intimate communities that charismatic practice created in a time when all of China's citizens were expected to identify as "the masses" and to aspire to be "a bolt" in the vast machine of the Communist nation-state.

Like underground art, music, and literature, the production and exchange of religiosity in the Maoist era were rooted in powerful human motivations that could not be completely suppressed, not least the desire to form communities around shared values. True Jesus Church members were among those who took risks in order to be human together. Under intense scrutiny and pressure, in times of despair they had burned their tracts, their Bibles, and their hymnbooks. But in **(p.234)** the still-dangerous times that followed, many took heart again. They took the risk of writing out the precious Bible verses and hymns by hand, filling the room with familiar faces and melodies, and performing sacred rites. This time, it was the old women who dreamed dreams, saw visions, and prophesied: a change, a return, a reunion of friends in a beautiful land.

Notes:

(1.) Wang Dequan 王德全, Wang Dequan zhishi kan tianguo diyu jianzheng 王德全执事看天国地狱见证 [“The Testimony of Deaconess Wang Dequan’s Vision of Heaven and Hell”], 2. This is an eleven-page, mostly first-person account with about one page of an anonymous church member’s introduction, circulating in manuscript form from March, 1974. This copy of the document is in the author’s possession.

(2.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(3.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(4.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(5.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(6.) Michelle Yeh, “Chinese Literature From 1937 to the Present,” in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature Vol. II, from 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 565–705

(7.) *Imperial China: 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)

(8.) Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); Yeh, “Chinese Literature From 1937 to the Present,” 602–603; Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 167–168.

(9.) See Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Yeh, “Chinese Literature,” 605–612.

(10.) Zhong Xueping, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di, eds., *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), xiii–xxxiii; Bai Di, “My Wandering Years in the Cultural Revolution: The Interplay of Political Discourse and Personal Articulation,” in Zhong, Wang, and Bai, *Some of Us*, 77–99; Kong Shu-yu, “Swan and Spider Eater in Problematic Memoirs of Cultural Revolution,” *Positions* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 239–252.

(11.) M. Searle Bates, “Churches and Christians in China, 1950–1967: Fragments of Understanding,” *Pacific Affairs* 41, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 199–213 (202); Paul Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 16–17; Bays, *New History*, 169; James T. Myers, *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 37; Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China’s United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 117. It might be useful to compare this growth in numbers of Christians with the growth of the overall population of China. Although statistics during the Republican era were notoriously inaccurate, the missionaries in 1922 quoted the generally accepted statistic of a little over 400 million total Chinese. A census in 1953 recorded a population of 582.6 million. F. Rawlinson, Helen Thoburn, and D. MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church as Revealed in the National Christian Conference* (Shanghai: Oriental Press, 1922), 82; Judith Banister, *China’s Changing Population* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3.

(12.) See Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158–182; Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary’s Curse and Other Tales From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 145–171; Mariani, *Church Militant*; Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, “Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China,” *Church History* 74, no. 1 (March 2005): 68–96; Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, “Politics of Faith: Christian Activism and the Maoist State in South China,” in *Marginalization in China: Recasting Minority Politics*, ed. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Siu Keung Cheung, and Lida V. Nedilsky (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 49–66; Thomas Alan Harvey, *Acquainted With Grief: Wang Mingdao’s Stand for the Persecuted Church in China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002).

(13.) Daniel Bays, “Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920–1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism,” in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144–164

(14.) *The Missionary’s Curse* Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-Ch’ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–1966* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968)

- (15.) Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 164.
- (16.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 117–118.
- (17.) Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 169.
- (18.) No. 45, "Wo yao qiu shengling 要求圣灵 I Will Seek the Holy Spirit," Liangbai shou zanmei shi 200首赞美诗 *Two Hundred Hymns of Praise*, True Jesus Church (the traditional form of the character is used for 聖 but the simplified character is used for 灵) (digitally scanned copy kept by church leaders in Fujian, exact date of publication perhaps during the 1950s and certainly before 1965); Chinese lyrics for "The East is Red" at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64150/64154/4482098.html>; English lyrics and tune history for "The East is Red" at <http://www.morningsun.org/east/index.html>. Both accessed April 25, 2018.
- (19.) 中国青年 *China Youth* 学习王杰通知专辑 Lei Feng de gushi 雷锋的故事 *Stories of Lei Feng*, ed. Chen Guangsheng 陈广生 and Cui Jiajun 崔家骏 (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyishe, 1973)
- (20.) Interview with Mr. Zhou (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.
- (21.) Wang Aihe, "Wuming: An Underground Art Group During the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3, no. 2 (2009): 183–199
- (22.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 206.
- (23.) Daniel Leese, "The Mao Cult as Communicative Space," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 624–634
- (24.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 262–267.
- (25.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 267.
- (26.) Wang, "Wuming"; Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 605–612; Song Yongyi, "A Glance at the Underground Reading Movement During the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 51 (May 2007): 325–333; Song Yongyi and Zhou Zehao, "Guest Editors' Introduction," *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 33, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 3–19; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 226–231.
- (27.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution* Wang, "Wuming," Denise Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution in China's Turbulent Decade: A Cultural Revolution State of the Field," *History Compass* 12, no. 3 (2014): 226–238
- (28.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 6, 12.
- (29.) Wang, "Wuming," 189, 196.

- (30.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 608-611; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 230.
- (31.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 608; Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 11.
- (32.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 14.
- (33.) Bays, *New History*, 177.
- (34.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 607.
- (35.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 4.
- (36.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 55-108.
- (37.) Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 22
- (38.) Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution," 229-231.
- (39.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 251.
- (40.) Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution," 231; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 188.
- (41.) Wang, "Wuming," 189.
- (42.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 18.
- (43.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 227.
- (44.) Catholics, who had a more pronounced and theologically mandated anti-Communism stance, generally came into the state's crosshairs earlier than Protestants. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158-159.
- (45.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-101. I sampled every two or three out of eighty records total, and in this sampling only one individual is listed as having come to the True Jesus Church for a reason other than sickness.
- (46.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.
- (47.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.
- (48.) In my observations of True Jesus Church contemporary teaching and practice, for instance, although healing solely through prayer is not the most widespread form of healing (prayer is usually combined with modern medicine), it is not infrequently held up as an ideal.

(49.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(50.) Ruth Rogawski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 297

(51.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(52.) Henrietta Harrison's study identifies a government booklet that circulated during the Socialist Education Movement in 1965 called 控诉：谁害死了我的妈？ ("Denunciation: Who Killed My Mother?"). This booklet claimed that one Catholic woman died because she drank unboiled holy water. Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 159–160.

(53.) Steve A. Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural: The Politics of Holy Water (Shenshui) in the PRC, 1949–1966," *China Quarterly* 186 (Dec. 2006): 999–1022

(54.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(55.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(56.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(57.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(58.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33. Although I can find no specific evidence in the church's records on infant baptism during the 1950s, I have seen instances of infant baptism in the contemporary True Jesus Church in southern China.

(59.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(60.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(61.) Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural," 1019.

(62.) Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988)

(63.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian. Most of my informants similarly referred to the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, as the endpoint for organized church activities. Henrietta Harrison's study of rural Catholics in Shanxi shows that aboveground activities shut down in 1965 during the Socialist Education Movement, prior to the Cultural Revolution. Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 152–167.

- (64.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, Mr. Zhang (pseudonym), and members of the church in a Fujian village, March 2010; Chen Guangzao, *Zhenyesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 [A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties]* (hereafter *Brief History*), 3rd ed. (Place of publication not given: True Jesus Church, 2000), 50.
- (65.) Interviews with Ms. Yang (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.
- (66.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (67.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.
- (68.) Interview with Mr. Wu (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.
- (69.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.
- (70.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.
- (71.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao’s Last Revolution*, 332–336; Wang, “Wuming,” 190.
- (72.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (73.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (74.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (75.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (76.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.
- (77.) This hymn is included in Liangbai shou zanmei shi 200 首赞美诗 *Two Hundred Hymns of Praise*, no.76.
- (78.) The final verse in the 1950s–1960s edition (“Glory, glory, hallelujah/ Glory, glory, hallelujah/Seeing the Lord, I will be changed/Receive the promised land”) was omitted from the hymnbooks currently in use in China.
- (79.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.
- (80.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.
- (81.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.
- (82.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(83.) See, for instance, Dante's description of hell, purgatory, and heaven in *The Divine Comedy* (Part I, Hell, trans. Dorothy Sayers, 1950; Part II, Purgatory, trans. 1985, Mark Musa; Part III, Paradise, trans. Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, 1962) (New York: Penguin Classics); Nicolas Standaert, "Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld," in *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, ed. Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1993), 54–70; Beata Grant and Wilt Idema, trans., *Escape From Blood Pond Hell: The Tales of Mulian and Woman Huang* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

(84.) Wang Dequan, "Testimony," 10.

(85.) Wang Dequan, "Testimony," 10.

(86.) Interview with Mr. Wu, March 2010, Fujian; interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian; interview with Ms. Fu (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.

(87.) Chen, *Brief History*, 52–53.

(88.) Daniel Leese, "The Mao Cult as Communicative Space," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8 (2007): 623–639

(89.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Co-Optation and Its Discontents: Seventh-Day Adventism in 1950s China," *Frontiers of History in China* 7 (2012): 587–607

(90.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(91.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(92.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(93.) Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175

(94.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(95.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

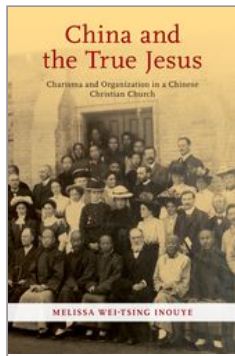
(96.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(97.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(98.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 213–214.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Don't Be Like the Gentiles (1974–Present)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0009

Abstract and Keywords

Within China's diverse civil society, certain groups including Christian churches like the True Jesus Church are autonomous ideological communities (communities oriented around a shared ideology or set of truth-claims about the nature of reality, including the moral dimensions of right and wrong).

Autonomous ideological communities (or "truth-claiming" groups) are not hermetically sealed off from surrounding society, but their strong ideological orientation creates a distinctive and complex community culture. Within the True Jesus Church, efficacious charismatic practices such as healing, exorcism, and tongues-speaking strengthen shared community culture by certifying that the church's sacred worldview, governance, and shared way of life are legitimate (rooted in truth). This shared culture within the church gives rise to discourse that sometimes rejects Chinese society and sometimes affirms it, but always refers back to the church's own internal truth-claims as the basis for engaging with the wider world. Despite the stereotypically "uncivil" insularity and exclusivity of the True Jesus Church's teachings, its strong community culture strengthens civil society on a society-wide scale by valuing truth, building trust, and contributing to ideological pluralism.

Keywords: True Jesus Church, civil society, Christian, charismatic, legitimacy, pluralism, China

The Sign

For months—years, actually—church members in different places around the world had been telling me about a fabled True Jesus Church chapel in a city in South China. Church members from other cities said this city was different. Church members attending other chapels in the city said this chapel was different. Finally, I was going to see with my own eyes what I had heard only in legends. I took a plane, a taxicab, a bus across town. From the bus station, it was a short walk.

The chapel occupied an entire upper floor of a large mixed-use apartment building. Outside on the street, the entrance to the chapel was inconspicuous, located at the far end of the block next to several garages that repaired cars and scooters. Disemboweled machines and spare parts sporting a coat of dull black grease crowded the sidewalk for several meters. The only marker to distinguish the chapel entrance as a place of worship was an illuminated sign. This was what I had come to see. The sign bore a red cross and two Chinese characters reading “chapel” 教堂, just like any other state-sanctioned church in China. But next to the Chinese characters, in English, were the words: “True Jesus Church.”

Technically, the True Jesus Church does not exist as a denomination in the People's Republic of China, where all forms of state-sanctioned Protestant Christianity are supposedly nondenominational, subsumed under a single generic “Protestant” 基督教 umbrella.¹ In 1982, in the early years of the “reform and opening up” policies of Deng Xiaoping, who emerged as the new leader of the Communist Party after the death of Mao Zedong, in a document now known as Document 19, the party–state officially adopted a stance of toleration for religion as a long-term presence in Chinese society.² The party–state granted **(p. 236)** formal recognition to five religious traditions: Buddhism, Daoism, Catholicism, Protestantism, and Islam.³ To this day, official government associations exist to liaise with sanctioned religions. Individual places of worship and their chief religious personnel must be registered with the government. Churches outside of this official framework, such as “house churches,” are technically illegal, although lines between “official” and “unofficial” religious organizations are often blurred and flexibility is built into local governments' modes of enforcement.⁴ Of course, state aspirations to tightly control religious activities did not originate with the Communist Party but date back to the late imperial era.

According to contemporary religious regulations, no sign presented to the general public in China was allowed to advertise the existence of a separate (i.e., sectarian or denominational) True Jesus Church. This is why the True Jesus Church members who had hung the dual-language sign outside this chapel in this city were walking a fine line in a way that drew the attention of other church members, even from far away. In Chinese, the nondescript word “chapel” bowed to the official state position that all Christian churches were the same, but in English, the name “True Jesus Church” asserted the church’s denominational distinctiveness and theological exclusivity. To church members, the name of the church was very important, because it had been given by revelation and because only within this particular church could people—not just people in China, but all humankind—receive salvation. To them, the claim that this particular True Jesus Church was simply one of many equally valid places for Christian worship was false. In actuality, this sign identified a special place where people could access the exclusive doctrines and practices necessary to enter heaven. Here, on the face of this sign, using a set of foreign characters, the prescriptions of the party-state and the truth-claims of the True Jesus Church struggled silently, side by side.

This chapter examines the role of the True Jesus Church in contemporary Chinese society. The 1976 death of Mao Zedong and the fall from power of the “Gang of Four” (the group of four top leaders including Jiang Qing, Mao’s wife, who had held power during the Cultural Revolution) marked the end of the Cultural Revolution. In the new era of “reform and opening up,” Chinese society experienced an associational boom similar to that which occurred after the fall of the Qing dynasty in the early twentieth century. After Mao’s death, reform-minded leaders such as Deng Xiaoping quietly dismantled the socialist system and introduced capitalist market reforms under the euphemism “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” For example, in 1980 the government authorized the creation of the first Special Economic Zones (Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Shantou, and Xiamen) on China’s southeastern coast, areas with historically strong trade ties to overseas Chinese communities. Within these Special Economic Zones, **(p. 237)** Chinese–foreign joint ventures and foreign-owned investor enterprises could operate with greater administrative flexibility than was the norm.⁵ Agricultural production was decollectivized and individual producer households were allowed to sell some of their crops on the private market.⁶ As market reforms spread throughout the entire country, individual commercial activities revived, and many state-owned enterprises were privatized. In 2001 China reintegrated more fully with the global economy as a member of the World Trade Organization. In the 1950s and 1960s the Maoist party-state had sought to integrate all aspects of daily life into a comprehensive political and economic structure. In the reform era, however, the state’s retreat from socialism once again opened up space for independent associations, including organizations dedicated to environmental protection, AIDS and HIV prevention and treatment, professional and business interests, and cultural activities such as sports, martial arts, and religion.⁷ In 1986 there were just 400 registered independent groups in China, but by 2006 this number had grown to 400,000. Recent studies have posited that the number of active unregistered groups far exceeds the number of registered groups and that the total number for both unregistered and registered groups may be as high as eight million.⁸

Among these civil society groups are religious organizations, which have experienced dramatic growth since the 1980s.⁹ Sociologist Yang Fenggang has described China's religious economy as a "shortage economy" in which the official state-provided options (atheistic communist ideology and official state-sanctioned religious activity) are unable to meet roaring demand for spiritual life. He argued, "Atheist propaganda has become less and less effective in the reform era while more and more people's spiritual hunger is awakened."¹⁰ In the midst of this awakening, Christianity (Protestant and Catholic) in particular has benefited from the Maoist regime's efforts to eradicate religion. The Maoist destruction of traditional forms of Chinese religion as "feudal" and "superstitious" leveled the playing field and gave Christian organizations new territory into which to expand.¹¹ As of the first decade of the twenty-first century, the total number of Catholic and Protestant Christians in China was perhaps twenty million to one hundred million, and the number continues to grow.¹²

In this chapter I argue that the True Jesus Church is one of a class of civil society groups that I call "autonomous ideological communities" whose activities strengthen Chinese civil society. Within the True Jesus Church, charismatic practices such as healing, exorcism, and tongues-speaking strengthen shared community culture. Such miraculous phenomena, reported in members' testimonies, certify that the church's sacred worldview is rooted in ultimate reality. Therefore, these testimonies imply, the church's teachings, governance, and shared way of life are also legitimate. This shared church culture sometimes rejects and sometimes **(p.238)** affirms Chinese society, but always refers to the church's own truth-claims as the basis for engaging with the wider world. Thus despite the stereotypically uncivil insularity and exclusivity of the True Jesus Church communities, on a society-wide scale, the truth-claiming culture of the church and other communities like it elevate the value of truth, build social trust, and generate ideological pluralism.

The main sources for this chapter are in-person oral history interviews and participant-observer fieldwork that I conducted with members of the True Jesus Church in a city in South China from August 2009 to May 2010. During this time I regularly attended Friday and Saturday worship services, as well as weekday Bible-study meetings, university students' fellowship groups, and children's Sabbath School classes. I was present at a baptismal service, a footwashing rite, and a Spiritual Convocation 灵恩会 [literally "Spiritual-Gifts Meeting"]. I also conducted interviews and participant-observer research with True Jesus Church members in two major cities in central China (the summer of 2007 and January–June 2009), a city in North China (a short visit in the spring of 2010), and some small cities, towns, and villages in a rural area of South China (the spring of 2010). At these other locations, I similarly attended Sabbath worship services, Bible study, prayer meetings, and young-adult conferences. During the summer of 2007 in the city in central China, I also conducted participant-observer fieldwork within a Three-Self Church, regularly attending public worship services in a chapel and small-group meetings held in a home.

Altogether I conducted in-depth interviews with several dozen church elders, deaconesses, deacons, female and male preachers, and rank-and-file members, and interacted casually with many more at worship services. On many occasions I asked a question after a church service and soon found myself surrounded by a number of congregants, animatedly exchanging stories and opinions. Church members hosted me very kindly. They welcomed me to take photographs and videos of church activities, including sacred rites such as baptism and footwashing. To protect their privacy, in this book I have omitted any photographs clearly depicting people's faces, anonymized all personal names, and listed only the regions of the cities and villages I visited. During my time with members of the True Jesus Church, I noted members' many opportunities for developing relationships, shared responsibilities, and common culture.

Truth-Claiming Groups and Civil Society

Recently scholars have sought to understand civil society in China's authoritarian political system. In such a system, to what extent can people independently pursue association and social exchange, and to what extent are these activities constrained by the party-state? The steady expansion of associational life in **(p.239)** the reform era has contributed to an evolving relationship between civil society groups and the party-state. "Civil society" can connote either a democratic ideal or, more generally, the broad realm of society between the family and the state.

The ideal of civil society frequently invoked in discussions of Western liberal democracy often emphasizes the presence of the virtue of “civility” or “civil manners.” Such a civil society, wrote Edward Shils, is premised on “the pluralism of autonomous spheres and autonomous institutions acting within and between such spheres. Civil society accepts the diversity of interests and ideals which will arise in any numerous society.”¹³ Because of this fundamental postulate of pluralism, in this sort of ideal civil society, fellow citizens regard other persons, even their political adversaries, as having moral dignity and being part of the same inclusive collectivity despite differences in political party, ethnicity, religion, and so on.¹⁴

Within China, a single-party authoritarian political system, Shils’s ideal definition of civil society based on a Western liberal-democratic system does not fit, because political pluralism is not encouraged and social groups have comparatively less autonomy. However, since the reform era, the “third realm” has indeed flourished—though it has gone through phases of expansion and contraction—and numerous groups espousing different identities, interests, and agendas have arisen. Therefore, China scholars have adopted an action-based definition of civil society. Civil society groups (such as disaster-relief organizations, professional associations, reading clubs, and churches) are groups that are not politically influential but that are institutionally distinctive and socially transformative because they allow civic participation, take collective action, and create social trust.¹⁵ Although they are fairly autonomous, in terms of their activities, they are still constrained by direct and indirect government control.¹⁶ However, by virtue of their diverse causes, memberships, and activities, they do foster ideological and organizational pluralism within society.

Some scholars suggest that, instead of ushering in democratic reforms, as was the recent case in Central and Eastern Europe, the expansion of civil society in China may have strengthened authoritarianism by improving the delivery of public goods and ameliorating social problems, thus reducing popular discontent.¹⁷ Civil society groups have the opportunity to work collaboratively with the government when their agendas converge. In some cases, local governments directly outsource public services to social groups. For instance, in 2007, a single department of the Shanghai municipal government, the Pudong District Civil Affairs Bureau, purchased services from more than one hundred social groups for more than thirty public service projects, including hiring nonprofit organizations to run schools for children of rural migrant workers.¹⁸ Civil society tends to expand in times of crisis (such as the earthquake in Sichuan in 2008).¹⁹ Jessica **(p.240)** Teets’s term “consultative authoritarianism” captures this model of collaboration between the party-state and civil society groups, managed by direct and indirect government control, to improve the delivery of public goods. This collaboration increases groups’ social influence while strengthening the party-state’s political legitimacy.²⁰

Scholars of Christianity in China have frequently asked the question of how Christian churches participate in civil society, especially in the Protestant sector where churches are proliferating, despite ongoing legal constraints such as registration. Some, including numerous Chinese scholars, have noted that churches may provide moral leadership amid the “spiritual crisis” or “crisis of morals” created by the decline of socialist ideology and the rise of materialism and economic inequality.²¹ In keeping with recent observations on the effectiveness of ongoing authoritarian control, many scholars have found that Chinese Christian churches may seek greater autonomy for their religious activities but are far more likely to seek active alliance with the party-state than to oppose it or advocate for political reforms.²² On the question of the “civility” of Christian groups, one study by Richard Madsen argued that true civic engagement required individuals and groups to be “alive to the interests of others” and that the rural Catholic communities in his study were too oriented around vertical ecclesiastical hierarchies, otherworldly salvation, and parochial interests to foster broad, horizontal engagement. Focusing on church-state relations, Shun-Hing Chan argues that when Catholic churches seek freedom through collective action, they contribute to the development of Chinese civil society.²³ A recent study on urban and rural Protestant house churches by Jie Kang gives a contrasting picture in which rural churches closely connect with and even imitate urban churches in Beijing and South Korea. Another study argues that ongoing diversification within Protestantism creates subcultures with shared values and behaviors.²⁴ Overall, the existing picture shows that Christian churches’ formal influence on Chinese society is largely restricted to modest charitable activities, either through the state-supported Amity Foundation (the non-governmental organization (NGO) arm of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement) or local ad hoc programs such as the “Gospel Rehab” program created by evangelical Christians in the southwestern city of Kunming. However, studies also suggest a variety of ways in which Christian groups engage in collective action and create social trust.²⁵

The case of the True Jesus Church complicates our understanding of how Christian churches and perhaps other religious groups with strong, autonomous ideological orientations contribute to civil society in China. In the same vein as the theory that the expansion of civil society coexists with—and perhaps even reinforces—authoritarianism, I find that the True Jesus Church must indeed toe the line of compliance with official policies, including registration, established **(p.241)** by the party-state. On paper, a True Jesus Church congregation is a generic postdenominational Protestant congregation under the jurisdiction of two official organizations, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement 三自爱国运动 and the China Christian Council 中国基督教协会. Church leaders must loudly advertise how the church's project of cultivating Christian disciples supports the state's agenda of developing moral, law-abiding citizens. There is also genuine convergence between church members' pride in their church's native roots and the party-state's project of seeking legitimacy by promoting nationalism.

At the same time, the case of the True Jesus Church provokes us to consider the particular ways in which civil society is developing in China. Congregations of the True Jesus Church around China belong to a kind of civil society group quite different from an environmental advocacy group, charitable NGO, or commercial association. Their goal is not to transform society in a quantifiable or observable way (such as reducing greenhouse-gas emissions below a certain level, delivering a certain amount of medical supplies to earthquake victims, or raising the profile of a group of businesses in the local economy). Nor is their goal to spread a strictly moralistic ideology or ethic of service (in contrast to service clubs dedicated to emulating Lei Feng, the legendarily selfless soldier who died in 1962). Rather, in various instantiations around the People's Republic of China, a local or regional True Jesus Church is a community dedicated to enacting a distinctive worldview, an organization that exists to maintain a set of claims and practices setting out the boundaries of truth, reality, and the meaning of human life.

True Jesus Churches belong to a category of groups within Chinese civil society that I call autonomous ideological organizations. Such organizations are “ideological” because they are centered around a comprehensive set of ideas or claims about the nature of reality, including the moral dimensions of right and wrong. Their activities reinforce these claims in daily life. They are “autonomous” not because they are able to do whatever they want—in actuality, they have to live with the same legal and political constraints as other groups in Chinese society—but in the sense that their ideological framework is self-produced, and their community is internally regulated. Their collective understanding of the grand scheme of things and how people should live within it is a fire that community members constantly tend, a fire that generates light and casts shadows in a distinctive pattern.

Shared truth-claims and internal organization are characteristics we tend to associate with religious groups. However, not all religious activities constitute participation in an autonomous ideological organization. For instance, offering incense at a temple is a religious act, but is not the same thing as actively participating in a community oriented around a shared view of truth and morality. Nor must autonomous ideological organizations be religious. For instance, **(p.242)** a group of atheists with a core belief in the dignity of human beings that engages in regular activities to defend human rights has an assertive ideological culture. In sum, autonomous ideological organizations are groups of people whose deliberate attachments to each other and to their shared norms are very strong because what they share is universal, but also personal: truth-claims, worldviews, and moral culture. They bring together compelling, ambitious ideas and compelling, ambitious organization. They have the collective audacity and will to make and defend claims about truth, despite the inherent risk and effort of such a project. Throughout the rest of this chapter, to avoid the cumbersome fifteen syllables of “autonomous ideological organization,” I will mostly use the shorthand “truth-claiming group.”

From the party-state’s point of view, truth-claiming groups are a nuisance to the extent that they produce counternarratives and organizational competition that may distract citizens from the party-state’s own ideological project.²⁶ Some scholars have recently characterized the party-state ideology as “Leninist state religion” or “pseudo-religion” in the name of Chinese nationalism, supported by faith in the sacred tenets of the utopian Communist vision and China’s vital need for the strong leadership that only the party can provide.²⁷ The Chinese Communist Party, which has described Communism as “the loftiest ideal and noblest belief,” is an organization defined by the same nexus of collective faith and moral action found within many religious organizations.²⁸ In early 2018, a Shanghai Municipal Archives historical exhibit titled “The Power of Faith” and expounding the beliefs and values party members and government officials ought to hold, along with an exhibition of early Marxist texts in the Shanghai Library, both indicated a renewed emphasis on the ideological systems on which the party-state bases its legitimacy.

This moral and ideological rivalry is part of why the party-state tried to eradicate religious organizations during the Maoist era. When outright repression failed, the party-state settled for trying not to lose control over religion’s apparently inevitable growth, transforming itself into a “pluralist Leninist religious state in which Chinese nationalism retains the privileged and dominant position as state religion.”²⁹ Notwithstanding political controls to restrict their numbers and extent, truth-claiming organizations such as religious groups with a universalistic ideology implicitly challenge the supremacy of this state religion.

In his book on transnational advocacy networks, Stephen Noakes discusses what he calls the principles-rationality nexus: the calculated trade-off an organization makes between sticking to its foundational moral values and compromising with the party-state to achieve tangible results. He finds that one group, Falun Gong, a spiritual-cultivation network, refused to alter its core mission or moral message even in the face of party-state rejection or repression.³⁰ In the **(p.243)** contemporary case of Falun Gong, because truth-claims lie at the heart of its organizational identity, members are willing to defy the party-state even in the face of violent suppression.³¹

However, truth-claiming groups are not inevitably locked into an antagonistic conflict with the party-state. The congregations of the True Jesus Church in China have been much more successful than Falun Gong in cooperating with government institutions. Members in True Jesus Church congregations I studied downplayed the significance of an ideological clash. Clearly, the party-state's primary ideological pillar was atheism. However, church members described their community's strong moral discipline—a result of the strength of its truth-claiming ethos—as completely aligned with the moral program of the party-state. Hence the peculiar ideological coherence and discipline that characterizes truth-claiming organizations is not only a potential source of tension, but also a potential resource upon which a productive alliance with the party-state may be built.

The history of the True Jesus Church in the twentieth century demonstrates the resilience of this community's truth-claims and corresponding moral postulates. When these truth-claims were compromised, serious negative consequences resulted. For example, when the top central leadership of the True Jesus Church wholeheartedly adopted Maoist rhetoric in the 1950s, this compromise eroded the legitimacy of the church's formal institutions. Despite this temporary setback, however, as early as 1974 (prior to the reform era) many True Jesus Church local communities re-coalesced despite significant risk.

Because of their easily scalable organizational structure and the invisible quality of the main good they produce (a shared worldview), truth-claiming groups such as Christian churches, Buddhist temples and institutions, and others may have more functional autonomy and organizational resilience than other groups in Chinese civil society, even though they have historically occupied a more precarious public position. Community organization to maintain truth-claims does not require extensive funds, property, or other resources easily restricted through government regulations. A large church topped by an impressive cross will do, but so will a room in a run-down settlement on the edge of town.

In sum, although the party-state's dominance unmistakably shapes the environment in which truth-claiming groups operate, truth-claiming groups are not defined solely through their relationship to the party-state. Truth-claiming groups' ideological and organizational autonomy is evident in the fact that they may criticize the party-state, praise it, or pay it no attention at all. Because of their self-sufficient and resilient character, truth-claiming groups such as the True Jesus Church may act as anchors of ideological and moral stability in Chinese civil society.

(p.244) Truth and Trust

What is the role of truth-claiming organizations within Chinese civil society? Organizations such as Christian churches, with strongly articulated, highly particularistic worldviews, may indeed generate social division and conflict.³² Human history includes many incidents in which people have fought and sometimes killed each other over competing claims about what is true or doctrinally correct. Forming an organization to proclaim a certain story about what is true does not make those claims true for everyone else; disagreements are bound to arise. At the same time, truth-claiming organizations may play a positive role in promoting the value of truth—a fragile commodity in contemporary China. In the first place, the flow of public information is dominated by control of the press and censorship of the Internet, armies of web commentators paid to promote party views in public forums, and phrases that say one thing but can potentially mean something very different, such as “socialism with Chinese characteristics” (capitalism) or “building a harmonious society” (censorship and suppression of dissidents).³³ In the second place, the reckless pursuit of profit and the apparent insufficiency of Leninist state religion for inspiring widespread moral behavior has led to a market and society full of fakes, knock-offs, and tainted products such as infant milk powder laced with melamine, cabbages sprayed with formaldehyde, forged identity documents, and falsified financial statements.³⁴ All too often, truth-claims in reform-era China are tentative, temporary, forged, tied to a marketing strategy, plausibly deniable, easily overwritten, overshadowed by threat of violence, or used as a temporary vehicle for political messaging.

A society in which things widely proclaimed to be true are widely regarded as not necessarily true, in which society's leaders declare one thing and do the opposite, is a society experiencing a profound erosion of social trust and even the moral value of truth itself. (To be clear, such an erosion does not occur only within China; all societies are susceptible.) Shared recognition of the value of truth and the opportunity to freely examine competing truth-claims are essential to meaningful human life. As philosopher Erazim Kohák has pointed out,

A century ago, Borden Parker Bowne listed the need for truth as one of the most elementary human needs. Today, that may seem quaint. We have become accustomed to living in a world of make-believe, of artifacts masquerading as physical objects—the paper flowers pretending to be living plants, the plastic furniture pretending to be wood, the robots pretending to be humans—and humans pretending to be robots. Yet through the ages humans have known that there is no condition more basic to authentic humanity than *to live in truth*.³⁵

(p.245) In China's case, the "spiritual crisis" or "crisis of morals" may at its root be a crisis of truth—that is, a dramatic contraction in people's confidence in what is true or false, real or fake, right or wrong. Civil society organizations dedicated to truth-claiming, such as Buddhist temple groups and Christian churches, fill this vacuum by declaring in tones of certainty how the world is and how human beings should live in it. Within religious communities such as congregations of the True Jesus Church, miracle stories that are spread by word of mouth within networks of personal relationships provide evidence to seekers that the church's distinctive interpretation of truth is not just another empty slogan or counterfeit product, but something rooted in ultimate reality.³⁶

As a civil society organization dedicated to making morally significant claims about the nature of reality, not to effecting social change, the True Jesus Church's social influence is not obvious. "Truth" exists largely in the minds of believers. The church's presence in society is largely confined to the bodies of the believers themselves, and the spaces where they gather. Yet the truth-claiming dimension in which the True Jesus Church's work occurs is extremely important because it shapes ultimate claims about reality, virtue, and meaning that circulate freely in the marketplace of ideas.³⁷ In this ideological dimension, despite the party-state's regulatory controls, local True Jesus Churches can have a high degree of functional autonomy. Amid all of the increasingly sophisticated tools available to proclaim, constrain, and fabricate claims about what is real, moral, and valuable, truth-claiming organizations such as the True Jesus Church stake and defend positions about reality and meaning.³⁸

The relationship between the party-state and Christian organizations is therefore more unstable than the relationship between the party-state and organizations concerned with improving public health or getting youth involved in community service. It is a strategic alliance akin to that of the Communists and the Nationalists in the First and Second United Fronts: pragmatic, mutually advantageous, but fraught. In an ideal world, as party documents have acknowledged, religion would be eliminated; because this ideal is not yet possible, mutual tolerance or “adaptation” is necessary.³⁹ This fundamental antipathy to rival truth-claiming ideologies helps explain why at times the government is willing to pull aside the curtain of broad religious tolerance and reveal its facility for exercising “arbitrary and sometimes positively brutal” power over religious groups.⁴⁰ The threat the party-state perceives from truth-claiming organizations is evident in its regular suppression of religious entities, such as Falun Gong in 1999 and more recently some Christian house churches, despite these entities’ initial lack of overt political or social agendas.⁴¹ At the same time, in many local and regional settings across China, this alliance is seen as mutually beneficial on both sides. Church leaders and government officials with the **(p.246)** right combination of acumen and optimism often find ways to achieve win-win outcomes.

Beyond investing in the value of truth, another way in which the True Jesus Church strengthens civil society in China is through building trust. As a church with an exclusivist theology and a particularist internal culture, the True Jesus Church is not really a “civic” organization in the sense of a group dedicated to improving Chinese society for the benefit of all citizens. What social trust and collective action the church creates, it keeps within its own tight radius. Yet however narrow, the basis for its community is very deeply rooted, like the pilings driven deep into the marshy soil under the skyscrapers of Shanghai’s Pudong district. The depth of trust and interdependence created within truth-claiming groups makes them bulwarks of reliable relationships and safe interactions.

The narrowness of the True Jesus Church's ideology fosters the expansiveness of its collective project in China and abroad. With their shared doctrine that only those who receive facedown baptism, footwashing, and glossolalia within a True Jesus Church context may enter heaven, members' primary affinity is not with neighboring Christian congregations or charitable groups, but with other church members in other cities, provinces, and countries. Despite the destruction of nationally centralized religious organizations during the high tide of Maoism in the 1950s and 1960s, True Jesus Church congregations' exclusivist theology and practices push congregations to associate and collaborate with each other, although strong regional differences between northern and southern congregations persist. In both North and South China, church networks cross city and provincial borders. This broad transregional networking is a practice shared with some—though certainly not all—Protestant groups, but is quite unusual for civil society groups in China, only 6 percent of which are interprovincial.⁴² In South China, church personnel and multimedia resources circulate along well-established transnational networks. The multiple horizontal connections within and among church congregations may therefore create networks of people “alive to the interests of others” and mitigate some of the factional tendencies that Richard Madsen identified as potentially eroding civil society.

Within the truth-claiming church community itself, trust, collaboration, and mutual support abound. Self-governance within the True Jesus Church is imbued with a strong sense of legitimacy because, as I previously argued, the church's charismatic culture validates its leadership and community norms. The True Jesus Church's tightly bounded exclusivism contrasts with the more broadly ethical, liberal humanism of state-supported Christian organizations such as the Amity Foundation. Anthropologists Robert Weller and Keping Wu argue that tightly integrated groups like the True Jesus Church provoke state unease because they disrupt the state's promotion of boundless, universal love. Weller and Wu (**p.247**) have theorized that in comparison with the moral frameworks of exclusivist religious groups, the all-encompassing discourse of “banal love” in state-supported social campaigns is in fact the least able to tolerate pluralism and the most bent on annihilating differences through violent coercion.⁴³ In this sense, perhaps, the “uncivil,” particularistic True Jesus Church community may in fact help develop pluralism within Chinese civil society because it is ideologically self-sufficient and therefore secure. Its esoteric beliefs insulate the community against the dilution of its ideological and organizational autonomy, making it a vital center of truth-claiming, moral discourse, and associational life.

In the sections of the chapter that follow, I will provide examples of how the True Jesus Church engages with Chinese society as an autonomous ideological community. This engagement has both negative and positive aspects. Such complexity is to be expected from a truth-claiming group with a distinctive, independent worldview.

Critiquing Chinese Society

As an organization with a strict and narrow set of standards, the True Jesus Church inevitably finds flaws within Chinese society. Within state-sanctioned churches, the Christian traditions of social critique and end-of-the-world preaching are often absent because social criticism is politically sensitive and the party-state considers apocalyptic rhetoric particularly superstitious and subversive.⁴⁴ In the True Jesus Church, however, discourse focused on social critique and the imminence of Christ's Second Coming is not uncommon.

Preachers at the pulpit call upon members to rise above the immorality and emptiness of the world of non-church-members, to whom they refer, in the biblical tradition, as "Gentiles." These critiques directly address the materialism and consumerism that have driven the economic development of the reform era. In a sermon to potential new converts at a Spiritual Convocation meeting in South China, one church leader said, "We have severe problems in society. The emptiness of industrial society cannot be solved with the material life. We still have a spiritual life. We must have balance. Jesus said that man does not live by bread alone."⁴⁵ The preacher then referenced Ernest Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea*. He explained that the old man put up a protracted, heroic struggle, but in the end he just got a fish head. "This is a symbol of today's life," he said. "It's very busy. But all people get is a fish head. Life is empty."

In another sermon in a Saturday-morning meeting in South China, the preacher critiqued the material standards by which popularity and success were judged in Chinese society and called on church members to cultivate a spiritual life. His conclusion that only God provided real security implicitly critiqued the **(p.248)** insecurity of the status quo owing to fierce competition and government social policies such as the one-child rule, rescinded in 2016 but still in force at the time:

As Christians in the world, we should be clear-headed. We should not go chasing after what's popular. Who creates the things that are popular? Stars, rich people. Rich people buy big, famous, world-renowned cars . . . or big houses, like villas. These are all the signs of rich people. This is not something that we really need for life. As Christians, we must seek the things that we really need From Matthew 4:4 we see that man does not live by bread alone. King Solomon wrote Ecclesiastes. At the end of his life he said he did not need money. He knew that all was vanity. The needs of the inner self cannot be bought with money. As a person gets more material things, he becomes more tempted to sin. What can give you safety? Money? It can be spent. Position? Power? People? Your children? People change. You can't count on people. You can't count on children. You have only one. In the future the little children will have four old people to take care of. This is a lot of stress. Your kid will go crazy. He needs to work. Only God can give us a sense of safety. God is our support.⁴⁶

In another Sabbath meeting in South China, the preacher flatly rejected the value of the search for economic prosperity that now dominated popular consciousness: “Money cannot buy true life, health, or happiness.”⁴⁷ Another church leader in a South China coastal city directly compared the good morals of church members to the bad morals that he saw “in society,” including in the government itself. “One of the reasons people believe in the church is our church administration,” he said. “First the wife believes. Then the husband comes, and finds that this church is better than society. People’s moral character is good. To be a government official you cheat money from others. To be a church worker, you end up spending your own money to help others.”⁴⁸

In these discussions of relative morality, even members of other Christian churches (referred to as “outside churches” or “Sunday churches”) are classified as “Gentiles” and perceived as having lower standards. “We can’t do some things in our True Jesus Church,” said a deaconess in central China to the congregation at a Friday evening service. “In outside churches you can drink, smoke, and even commit adultery.”⁴⁹ Based on my observations of Three-Self congregations, this claim is exaggerated. However, the point is that True Jesus Church members perceive themselves as practicing a more rigorous and therefore more authentic form of Christianity. “We are more strict,” a preacher in a city in central China told me. “We adhere more closely to the Bible.”⁵⁰ As in the past, the church’s **(p.249)** increasingly interregional and mature institutions have given church governing structures a strong mantle of moral authority. It may be that individual True Jesus Church believers feel more certain about the moral authority of their church than about the moral authority of their government, which may serve to deepen ideological pluralism within Chinese society. A key point to notice is that the term “Gentiles” does not refer to “Communist Party members” or “authoritarian stooges,” but to everyone who is not a member of the True Jesus Church. Such is the scope of the church members’ joint truth-claiming project. They do not see themselves as defined by their relationship to an authoritarian government. Rather, they engage in their own authoritative processes of defining the significance of things in their world.

Social critique within the True Jesus Church is boosted by the dire, irreversible consequences experienced by the immoral in the Bible. In another Saturday meeting in South China, a preacher warned:

Those who indulge their sexual greed are cursed. See the fate of David, Solomon, and Sampson. All these people started out well, but their end was very sad. We can’t commit adultery, can’t cohabit before marriage, can’t have affairs. One might say, “This is so hard, because of the way society is nowadays.” We can think about Job and how he could control himself. We must also control the self Don’t bear false witness. Absalom had a terrible death. Jezebel, too—she was eaten by dogs.⁵¹

These warnings of the consequences of sin in people's lives are also accompanied by warnings that the Last Day is imminent. I heard sermons on this topic in both the north and the south. In South China at a large Spiritual Convocation, a preacher instructed the congregation:

There is a lot of turmoil in today's world. In Iraq the sound of explosions is more common than fireworks. It's the same in Pakistan. We don't have terrorists, but we have separatists who use holidays to make trouble in Tibet or in Xinjiang. There are infectious diseases: SARS, bird flu, swine flu. There are lots of other diseases: diabetes, cancer, and chronic diseases. Today's days are the last days. The signs are all around us. We should be more sensitive than others. We should watch and pray.⁵²

Another preacher in the same city in South China exhorted members of the church to work diligently in their evangelistic efforts as the time grew short. He said, "This really is the last day. There are signs: earthquakes, tsunamis, hand-foot-and-mouth disease, swine flu. There are more and more signs of the coming of the **(p.250)** Last Day The Last Day is very near. The harvest is great but the laborers are few."⁵³

The phenomena that the preachers cited as apocalyptic signs did not necessarily contradict the views of the party-state, which also took a dim view of separatists, SARS, and swine flu. However, the take-away message of the sermon was not that China was "the best of all possible worlds"—a message that Christian churches are generally expected to affirm—but that society was in such "turmoil" that a catastrophic end might be near.⁵⁴ This view of degradation and imminent further decline did not dovetail with the party-state's projects of encouraging citizens to invest in Chinese society for the long term.

In a True Jesus Church sermon in North China, the Ms. Shi who was preaching stood in front of a blackboard and wrote "Signs of Lord Jesus' Second Coming." "These are the last days," she said. "There are earthquakes. There is greed, the root of all evils. These days are especially evil. Brothers and sisters, are you prepared? The True Jesus Church is an ark The Lord Jesus is coming. Watch and pray. Focus on godly things. When Jesus appears, he will judge all."⁵⁵ Tying this critique of Chinese society to the biblical narrative of Noah's ark powerfully underscores the True Jesus Church's ethos of separation.

Thus sermons within the True Jesus Church draw liberally on biblical similes to condemn greed and immoral behavior in the present. This biblical paradigm also views the Bible as a prophetic text intended to describe the future (and the descriptions are dismal). Just as the Bible can warn of disaster, however, it also prescribes pathways by which the righteous may avoid the worst of the disaster. By their adherence to the rigorous standards of the True Jesus Church, church members hedge against the possibility that Christian self-profession alone may not be enough to separate them from the calamities of the Last Day.

Counterculture

In its attempt to widen the separation between church members and those members of society, including fellow Christians, who may feel uncomfortable at the Last Day, the True Jesus Church gives its members clear instructions on the proper way to engage in social rituals and customs such as funerals, marriages, and eating. These cultural regulations are bound into the *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook* 信徒生活手册, which circulates among many churches in South China. The *Handbook* advises that church members whose family members have died should write “gone to rest,” “in mourning,” or “house of mourning” in white paper pasted outside the door. These phrases differ conspicuously from more traditional phrases such as “abstaining in mourning,” “solemn restriction,” “compassionate restriction,” or “observing restriction,” which refer to Chinese popular **(p.251)** religious practices.⁵⁶ Similarly, flower arrangements should not bear ribbons reading “sacrifice [for the spirits of the dead]” but instead should bear ribbons with phrases such as “resting in paradise,” “returned to heavenly home,” “enjoying eternal rest,” etc.⁵⁷

Adapting traditional Chinese marital customs, the church has established a formal service for an engagement rite. In this ceremony, to be presided over by an elder or a deacon, attendees from both families sing one of six prescribed hymns, then pray. Next the man and woman exchange “articles of belief,” including rings and Bibles. Only after this “religious” exchange has been made do the heads of household exchange gifts. Following these exchanges, the presiding church leader gives the couple spiritual counsel, after which the group sings one of thirteen prescribed hymns, and ends the service with prayer. Once this engagement service has been held, couples are expected to marry within three months. They must not engage in sexual relations before marriage or else the church will not perform the marriage.⁵⁸ Furthermore, a person who breaks an engagement once an engagement service has been held is considered to have broken a contract with God, cannot remain in good standing with the church, and cannot ever be married in the church.⁵⁹ At the wedding ceremony itself, nonbelievers who come to the wedding should be instructed not to smoke in the chapel. No confetti or firecrackers are used. The widespread custom of providing guests with tobacco and alcohol at the wedding feast may not be followed. Instead, the True Jesus Church hosts are to print cards reading “To comply with church rules, we are not providing tobacco and alcohol” and put them on the tables. Husband and wife are not permitted to divorce except in cases of adultery.⁶⁰

The church’s attempts to differentiate itself from Chinese society show its deep engagement with society’s everyday rhythms. Biblically based lifestyle habits prescribed for members include prohibitions against eating blood or food that has been sacrificed to idols. Roasted sparrows (a popular street snack, spitted on a bamboo stick) that have been killed by strangling and from which the blood has not been drained are also prohibited. Members are not to drink alcohol, to smoke, or to use recreational drugs. They are not to participate in dance parties, gamble, or to patronize hair parlors that are fronts for prostitution, and so on. Because of the widespread practices of drinking, smoking, and womanizing to signal masculinity in contemporary Chinese culture, these prohibitions are most countercultural for male members of the church.⁶¹ Men are not to have long hair and women are not to apply makeup excessively. Body tattoos are not allowed. Birthday celebrations are permitted only if they have an explicitly Christian feeling that glorifies Jesus, not the individual whose birthday it is.⁶² Members are to pay a tithe of one tenth of their income and are additionally encouraged to make various offerings as the occasion comes up: free-will offerings, thank **(p. 252)** offerings, inheritance offerings, charity offerings, building offerings, Spiritual Convocation offerings, and evangelism offerings.⁶³

The close-knit character of the local church community provides an alternative to Chinese society at the same time that it reproduces it in microcosm. In a society currently experiencing what is likely the largest rural-to-urban migration in human history, along with the accompanying social dislocation, church communities generate new interpersonal bonds and group networks.⁶⁴ “There is love in the church,” said Mr. Dong, a preacher in South China. “People have a group life. Brothers and sisters look after each other—pray for each other, help each other. How could we find such a group in Chinese society? If a husband gets sick, and his wife is a believer, the members of the church will go to the hospital with food, and pray for him. They can do what relatives can’t do, because nowadays you don’t have relatives in every place. But wherever you go, there’s the church.”⁶⁵ Another woman in a Central Chinese city described the response to her father’s death. “The church people were really loving,” she said. “Other people were more perfunctory in their sympathies, but I could tell that the church people really cared.”⁶⁶ In a city in South China, a Ms. Ke said that she was struggling with depression when her friend introduced her to the church. Upon investigating the church, she stopped feeling depressed and began to feel happy. The best thing, she said, “was the love of the members. When I was sick they came and visited me, prayed for me. No one had ever done this for me before. I had never felt love like that before.”⁶⁷ In at least some regions, these community interactions are part of the church’s formal institutional operation. In the churches I studied in South China, local congregations had a group of members, usually older women, who were assigned with “visiting” responsibilities. They visited members of the church who were sick, experiencing family or economic difficulties, less active in the church, newly converted, or otherwise in need of special attention.

In some cases, the church takes on roles that were traditionally family responsibilities, such as bringing together potential partners for marriage. In at least some congregations I observed in South China, for example, a group of older church members was assigned to be part of a “marriage-introduction group,” to which young adults in the church could turn for matchmaking help. Help with finding mates, especially across multiple localities, is an especially important priority for young women because the consumption of sex, alcohol, and cigarettes as a way of displaying masculinity in Chinese contemporary culture makes it difficult to find men who shared their beliefs and values. In advance of regional young-adult “fellowship activities,” interested young single members filled out a form with information about themselves, their family background, their education and hobbies, and the qualities they sought in a mate. At the fellowship activity they interacted with other young adults, listened to sermons on Christian marriage, **(p.253)** performed in choral competitions, and engaged in small-group discussions. In the meantime, the marriage-introduction group looked over the forms and made introductions.⁶⁸ “Don’t be like the Gentiles,” said a female preacher at one of these young-adult fellowship activities bringing together singles from two large cities in Central China. “Don’t place too much emphasis on external attractiveness. Beautiful, short, etc.—these are not absolute standards. What is important is respecting God in marriage. Pray: Is this the person prepared for you by God? Ask the older people in the church. Ask brothers and sisters whose spirituality is high. Don’t go off impetuously making decisions. Let the True Jesus Church preachers introduce you to someone. Ask, then pray.”⁶⁹ She then told the story of Isaac, whose wife was chosen for him by his father’s servant. “Prepare for your marriage. Pray to become a mature person. Be careful with your money. Make money, save money. Whenever you can make money, make money.”⁷⁰

This concern with family matters such as marriage and practical advice on saving money highlights how, instead of completely disengaging with the world, the True Jesus Church’s “alternative” outlook on the nature of reality and the best way to live flow into everyday concerns. The church’s countercultural lifestyle and close-knit community implicitly critique certain aspects of contemporary Chinese culture and society. However, the church does not advocate complete world renunciation, but rather the correction of one’s life according to biblical precedents and in opposition to the evils of the day.⁷¹

Affirming Chinese Society

Although the True Jesus Church's truth-claims lead it to critique certain aspects of Chinese society, they also affirm other aspects of Chinese society and lead church members to enthusiastically support China's ongoing domestic and international development. For instance, church members are often quick to point out that the government considers their church "progressive," "law-abiding," and well administered. In this sense the church's project of cultivating moral individuals may align with the party-state's priority of cultivating law-abiding citizens.⁷² Just as the party-state tolerates and even encourages the activities of certain NGOs whose work enhances the state's provision of public goods, perhaps the party-state tolerates truth-claiming religious organizations because they contribute to public morality.⁷³ Church members also characterize their native church, with no history of European or American leadership, as less politically suspect than other forms of Christianity in China. For instance, one church elder in South China said, "The Chinese Communist Party is at ease about us because we are native. We don't have a foreign denominational problem. We have no interest in politics. For instance, in one town 95 percent are our church members, but we don't **(p.254)** organize to use this influence politically. Our own administration is very strict. Every church supports itself."⁷⁴

Members of the church in both the north and the south proudly emphasize the fact that the True Jesus Church was founded in China. A quote featured on a website run by a northern center of the church reads:

In this time in which each church had become fallen and corrupt, the spirit of the True God's latter rain came down once again and restored the True Jesus Church in the East, in China, restoring the true face of the church of the apostolic era. Ever since it was established in 1917 . . . the True Way has gone forth, the spiritual work has developed in a way that is undeniably rapid and undeniably great, fulfilling the scripture in which "the lightning comes from the East, and shines upon the West."⁷⁵

As in the church's founding era, interpretations of the Bible that point to the significance of China as a part of God's world-historical "plan of salvation" are widespread within contemporary True Jesus Church lore. "The first church was transmitted from west to east. Now the church is being transmitted from east to west, from China to the West," said Deaconess Xie, the instructor for a Bible class for women in a city in Central China.⁷⁶ Lay members and leaders alike cite scriptures such as Isaiah 49:12, which states that God's people will be gathered from "Qinguo" 秦国 [China], and Ezekiel 47:1–7, a passage that True Jesus Church members read as a prophetic allegory describing the process of the church's spread from mainland China to the rest of the world. They refer to the story of Noah's three sons, Ham, Shem, and Japheth, explaining that Shem's descendants are in Asia.⁷⁷ They express pride in China as an ancient civilization worthy of the momentous event of the restoration of Jesus's one true church. "I was talking to an Italian person about the church," recounted the preacher in a sermon in a city in Central China. "This person asked, 'Why would God come to China?' I said, 'Because we have a many-thousand-year culture and our original nature is good.'" ⁷⁸ Others hope for the day when China is not only a political and economic but a religious superpower.⁷⁹ "Right now, people don't take seriously a Christian church that comes from China," said one elder from Central China. "That's why it's so important for China to become a powerful country. When China is a powerful country, then people all over the world will take our church seriously."⁸⁰ Church members may thus see the legitimacy of the True Jesus Church as being tied to the legitimacy of the Chinese nation itself.⁸¹

At the same time, this expressed pride in China's cultural heritage and growing geopolitical power coexists with a widespread awareness that the ongoing growth of the True Jesus Church is dependent on the toleration of government officials **(p.255)** and policymakers. For example, True Jesus Church congregations all around China must comply with the government restriction on public expressions of denominational identity. Hence, atop a historic church building in Changsha, a center of True Jesus Church worship since the 1920s, a sign facing the street that once included the words "True Jesus Church" now simply reads "Chaozong Street Chapel" (see Figure 8.1).

When asked why, if it is so important to spread the message that the True Jesus Church is the only true form of Christianity, the sign outside most churches reads only “chapel” or “church” instead of “True Jesus Church,” members tended to shake their heads apologetically. “The government doesn’t allow it,” they said. This is why the chapel in South China with the English-language “True Jesus Church” on its street sign is so famous within church networks. Other accounts suggest that sometimes the threat of government interference is acute. One South China preacher told the story of a local congregation that was in the process of building a chapel when the local party committee came with equipment to tear it down. In response to this threat, he said, “the members of the church used prayer and their own lives to protect it.”⁸²



Figure 8.1 Exterior of True Jesus Church with sign reading “Chaozong Street Chapel” in Changsha. This church was not a research site for this book.

Credit: Anonymous photographer.

Despite ongoing tension and occasional flare-ups, it seems that the relationship between the True Jesus Church and local representatives of government (p. 256) organizations that oversee religious activities is generally one not of antagonism, but of strategic mutual sufferance. For instance, one preacher in Central China described how he dealt with local officials' efforts to enforce existing restrictions. He acknowledged that according to government regulations, local churches were not allowed to communicate with each other, preachers were restricted to preaching in one locality only, the True Jesus Church was not allowed to hold Spiritual Convocation meetings, and baptism in "living water" (lakes, rivers, and oceans) was forbidden. "But," he said, laughing, "we *do* privately communicate with pastors in other places, and we *do* have Spiritual Convocations. We just say, 'It's a holiday. We don't have work. The only place to get together for fun is the church.'" He said that they also conducted baptisms in the local river, just "in a more remote location." He went on to recount a story about how, on one occasion, an official from the local State Administration for Religious Affairs 国家宗教事务局 office attended a True Jesus Church meeting in which first a woman and then a man spoke from the pulpit, neither of whom was the individual officially authorized by the government to preach in that location. According to this account, after the woman's sermon, when the official protested, "Hey, she's preaching!" the local church leaders said, "No, no, she's just talking about her own personal understanding of the Bible, her own feelings about what she read," whereupon the official said, "Oh! No problem." Then after the man's sermon, the Religious Affairs official protested again, "Hey, he's preaching!" To this the church leaders responded again, "No, no, he's just sharing *his* feelings about *her* feelings," whereupon the official said, "Oh! No problem."⁸³ Hence church leaders are able to translate church activities into a language with which local government officials are comfortable.

Church leaders similarly tolerate the oversight of the state-sponsored “Two Associations” 两会 (the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the China Christian Council). However, they make relatively few concessions in the structure of worship or the charismatic content of their teaching. All aboveground Christian churches in China officially conduct “united worship” 联合礼拜 under the auspices of these “postdenominational bodies.” In practice, however, denominational differences have continued to exist within many church congregations under the Two Associations umbrella throughout the reform era. For instance, in a 1996 article titled “Put Away the World, Eliminate Contention” in *Tianfeng* 天风, the official publication of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, the author described visiting a chapel that was used by two congregations that were nominally under the postdenominational Three-Self umbrella: a True Jesus Church congregation that met on Saturday and a Wesleyan Methodist congregation that met on Sunday. The author was appalled to see the particularity of the members’ denominational identities. “Who knew that each of their denominational (p.257) mindsets was so very intense, each sticking to their own position and not giving ground, not mixing like water and fire, preaching their own sermons on Sabbath or on Sunday, unable to accept the other, with believers unwilling to pray for each other,” he wrote.⁸⁴ Another article in *Tianfeng* in 1999 noted with concern that when a Three-Self leader went to visit Christians in Yishan (an area in Jiangsu Province with a high proportion of True Jesus Church believers), church members in congregations that were officially under the umbrella of the Two Associations told him, “We are not Three-Self; Three-Self is the Communist Party’s organization.”⁸⁵ Most members whom I have interviewed similarly identify themselves as being distinct from both the Three-Self Patriotic Movement and the house church networks.

One True Jesus Church leader in South China spoke dismissively of the government's attempt to create postdenominationalism with united worship under the Two Associations. "The Two Associations are a form of self-comfort 自我安慰," he said. "But in practice there are many denominations. In our city, currently the Two Associations let each denomination have its own organization, and let each church govern itself. Before, the government would appoint a guy to oversee everyone. This guy would be from a denomination like the Church of Christ in China 中华基督教会 and would use his own opinion to meddle in other churches' affairs. If you didn't have the same faith, they wouldn't approve you or wouldn't let you register."⁸⁶ The relative autonomy enjoyed by the True Jesus Church and other denominations in this particular city does not necessarily represent the situation across China. In many other regions, including South China, the tensions alluded to by the church leader above still exist. In one city in Central China, a church leader acknowledged, "If the Three-Self or China Christian Council people don't like you, they can get the government to make trouble for you."⁸⁷ Certainly the True Jesus Church, like most Christian organizations in the People's Republic today, exists in both the "red" (state-approved) and "gray" (not yet completely "black," or state-suppressed) markets of religion.⁸⁸

Some scholars have recently made the case that there is no single government in China today, but a pluralistic symbiosis or "fragmented authoritarian" system in which the central, provincial, and local levels of government each have their own set of concerns.⁸⁹ Although the central government sets policy and issues directives, the autonomy enjoyed by a church congregation largely depends on the attitudes of local or regional government authorities. Jie Kang's research on house churches in Shandong notes that "in some cases, village authorities even give financial support towards the construction of church buildings," citing their function in providing elderly villagers with a safe, clean place to gather.⁹⁰ Susan McCarthy's case study of the Kunming "Gospel Rehab" program gives a similar example in which local governments prioritize public-goods provision and turn **(p.258)** a blind eye to religiously tinged charitable activities that are illegal from a strict policy perspective and undesirable from an atheist perspective.⁹¹ However, under Xi Jinping, authoritarianism is strengthening. Congregations frequently subject to government interference naturally express the strongest opposition to the policies of the party-state. Church leaders, who have to interact with the power structures of the party-state, tend to display more ambivalence about party governance than ordinary church members. A recent ratcheting-up of authoritarianism under Xi Jinping may significantly alter the status quo described above.

The case of the True Jesus Church as a truth-claiming group (an autonomous ideological community) thus complicates our understanding of Chinese Christian social engagement. Even as church leaders denounce the various degradations of Chinese society and speak of the church as an “ark” of the faithful seeking refuge from a wicked world, they often promote an exceptionalist view of Chinese society and pursue strategic alliance with the party-state. This alliance is rooted not only in the motive of pragmatic self-preservation, but also in church members’ hope that China’s global rise will enhance their status as members of Jesus’s one true church.

Not of the World, but in China

Grounded both in its exclusivist claims as well as in its historic origins in Chinese soil, the relationship among the True Jesus Church, its individual members, Chinese society, and the party-state is complex. The church must negotiate ongoing political constraints as it pursues its mission of proclaiming and living in truth. In a society characterized by tremendous ideological as well as physical dislocations, as a truth-claiming group the True Jesus Church provides anchors of deeply rooted ideology and tightly knit communities that hold fast against shifting political and cultural currents. Sermons in the church sometimes condemn corruption in society and warn of the coming apocalypse, and at other times extol the virtues of Chinese civilization and exhort church members to invest in their communities. Church members proudly declare that the government considers their church the most “progressive” or unproblematic of all Christian churches while admitting that they are yet subject to political constraints. Their shared charismatic claims have strength sufficient to inspire and sustain extensive internal organization and external social and cultural engagement. Yet charismatic claims are also inherently controversial.

Amid these contradictions, True Jesus Church members maintain community coherence by relying on the authority of the Bible, a text whose internal diversity has accommodated a tremendous variety of interpretive needs in the past and the present. Despite the potential instability that their **(p.259)** collective project of truth-claiming poses for their relationship with the party-state, True Jesus Church congregations, like other autonomous ideological communities in Chinese society, form centers of ideological and social security. Church members’ persistent engagement with each other and outsiders is not always “harmonious” along the lines of prevailing ideological prescriptions. Preachers at the pulpit who admonish members, “Don’t be like the Gentiles,” as if the church community consists of a separate ethnicity or nation, are not seeking boundless assimilation into society. However, their choice of these potent biblical terms suggests the strength of the community’s shared identity and ability to act collectively. The tightly woven networks and connections brought together by the church’s audacious truth-claiming project stand out, a solid patch against the often-frayed backdrop of trust and reliability in twenty-first-century China.

Notes:

- (1.) Zanmei shi 赞美诗 [*Hymns of Praise*] (Nanjing: China Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee, China Christian Council, 2006)
- (2.) See the text of “Document 19,” accessed April 30, 2018, https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Document_no._19_1982.pdf.
- (3.) Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 315–330
- (4.) Hong Qu, “Religious Policy in the People’s Republic of China: An Alternative Perspective,” *Journal of Contemporary China* 20, no. 70 (2011): 433–448; Fenggang Yang, “The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China,” *Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2006): 93–122.
- (5.) Charlotte Ikels, *The Return of the God of Wealth: The Transition to a Market Economy in Urban China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 20
- (6.) Ikels, *Return of the God of Wealth*, 58.
- (7.) Jessica C. Teets, “Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China,” *China Quarterly* 213 (March 2013): 19–38
- (8.) Jessica C. Teets, “Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?” *China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 330–347
- (9.) Depending on methodology, estimates of the religiosity of the Chinese population vary widely, from as little as 13.7 percent (which does not take into account informal religious or “superstitious” practices such as support of a local temple organization, attendance at a temple festival, geomancy [*fengshui*], or fortune-telling) to as much as 85 percent of the population engaging in some religious practice. Fenggang Yang, “Religion in China Under Communism: A Shortage Economy Explanation,” *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 1 (2009): 3–33 (11); Cheng-Tian Kuo, “Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan,” *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 249–267.
- (10.) Fenggang Yang, “Religion in China Under Communism,” 3–33 (6, 31).
- (11.) 宗教生态失衡对基督教发展的影响以江西余干县的宗教调查为例 *China Ethnic News* 中国民族报 Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 254

(12.) Government statistics tend to be conservative, and estimates by believing Christians tend to be liberal. Nanlai Cao cites a conservative estimate of 23 million in “An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China,” in *Annual Report on China's Religions*, eds. Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010): 190–212, referenced in Nanlai Cao, “Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China,” in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175 (173). The Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project's moderate estimate in 2011 was 67 million, accessed July 29, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-regions/#asia>. On the higher end, see David Aikman's estimate of 80 to perhaps even 100 million in *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 7–8.

(13.) Edward Shils, “The Virtue of Civil Society,” *Government and Opposition* 26, no. 1 (1991): 10

(14.) Shils, “The Virtue of Civil Society,” 12, 13.

(15.) Jessica C. Teets, “Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?,” 332–338; Jennifer Y. J. Hsu, “Chinese Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society: A Review of the Literature,” *Geography Compass* 8, no. 2 (2014): 98–110; Stephen Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap: Transnational Activism and State Power in a Rising China* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017).

(16.) Jessica C. Teets, “Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China,” *China Quarterly* 213 (March 2013): 19–38; Timothy Hildebrandt, “The Political Economy of Social Organization Registration in China,” *China Quarterly* 208 (Dec. 2011), 970–989; Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap*.

(17.) Jessica C. Teets, “Civil Society Participation in Local Governance: Outsourcing Migrant Education in Shanghai,” in *China's Search for Good Governance*, ed. Zhenglai Deng and Guo Sujian (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

(18.) Teets, “Civil Society Participation in Local Governance,” 77.

(19.) Teets, “Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts,” Timothy Brook, “Auto-Organization in Chinese Society,” in *Civil Society in China*, ed. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 19–45

(20.) Teets, “The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China.”

(21.) A search for “道德危机 moral crisis” on the China Academic Literature Database on www.cnki.net yields 634 results from 1983–2017. Some sample articles include Chen Qian and Wang Fengcui, “道德危机及其规范建设 The Crisis of Morals and the Construction of Norms,” *Fazhu yu shehui 法制与社会 Legal System and Society* 2016, no. 2: 173–174; Ran Sidong, “公共道德危机的法律干预—从范跑跑事例说起 Legal Meddling in the Crisis of Public Morality—The Case of ‘Running Mr. Fan,’” *Jinan xuebao (zhexue shehuixue ban) 暨南学报 (哲学社会学版) Journal of Jinan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 143, no. 6 (2009): 70–76; Liu Yuchun, “道德危机的隐显及其社会根源 The Implicitness of Moral Crisis and Its Social Root,” *Sixiang zhengzhi jiaoyu yanjiu 思想政治教育研究 Ideological and Political Education Research* 24, no. 6 (December 2008): 100–102; Gao Shining, “Faith and Values: Case Studies of Chinese Christians,” in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, ed. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 315–324; Qiao Zhenli, “道德危机与重建 The Moral Crisis and Moral Rebuilding,” *Lilun daokan 理论导刊 Journal of Socialist Theory Guide* 1995, no. 7: 35–36. For a sampling of literature on Christianity’s potential contributions in addressing this spiritual crisis, see Zhuo Xinping, “The Significance of Christianity for the Modernization of Chinese Society,” in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, ed. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 252–264; Zhibin Xie, *Religious Diversity and Public Religion in China* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); Fenggang Yang, “Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald’s: Conversion to Christianity in Urban China,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 4 (2005): 423–441; Xie Wenyu, “基督教和当代中国问题笔谈 Discussion of Christianity and Contemporary China,” *Shanghai daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban) 上海大学学报 (社会科学) Journal of Shanghai University (Social Sciences)* 11, no. 2 (2004): 109–112; Yang Fenggang, “中国社会伦理道德的挑战 The Challenges of Ethics and Morals in Chinese Society,” in *Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua gengxin 基督教与中国文化更新 Christianity and the Renewal of Chinese Culture*, ed. Chen Huiwen (Dallas, TX: Dashiming zhongxin, 2000), 84–94.

(22.) Carsten T. Vala, *The Politics of Protestant Churches and the Party-State in China: God Above Party?* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017); Karrie Koesel, *Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict and the Consequences* (Cambridge University Press, 2018); Ryan Dunch, "Protestant Christianity in China Today: Fragile, Fragmented, Flourishing," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, ed. Stephen Uhalley, Jr., and Xiaoxin Wu (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 195–216; Ying Fuk-tsang, "Church-State Relations in Contemporary China and the Development of Protestant Christianity," *China Study Journal* 18, no. 3 (2003): 19–48; Yang Fenggang, "Civil Society and the Role of Christianity in China: A Preliminary Reflection," in *Civil Society as Democratic Practice*, ed. Antonio F. Perez, Semou Pathe Gueye, and Fenggang Yang (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005). In a period of increased anti-Christian persecution during the presidency of Xi Jinping, numerous church groups, including officially registered churches, have publicly opposed local government actions such as cross demolition and church demolition, which they argue violate the Chinese Constitution's guarantee of freedom of religion. However, this is a far cry from demonstrating against the party-state itself.

(23.) Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 126–148; *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*

(24.) Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to Urban Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11; *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*

(25.) [http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/Susan K. McCarthy](http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/Susan%20K.%20McCarthy), "In Between the Divine and the Leviathan: Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China," *China Review* 17, no. 2 (June 2017): 65–93

(26.) On these tensions, see Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China, Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds., *God and Caesar in China* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004); Teresa Zimmerman-Liu and Teresa Wright, "Unregistered Protestant Churches in the Reform Era," in *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Francis Khek Gee Lim (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), 220–233.

(27.) Cheng-Tian Kuo, "Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan," *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 249–267 (259); Fenggang Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism: A Shortage Economy Explanation," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 1 (2009), 3–33 (14).

(28.) Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism," 14.

(29.) Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism," 32; Kuo, "Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan," 262.

(30.) Stephen Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap: Transnational Activism and State Power in a Rising China* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017), 11–19

(31.) A. Sharif, M. Fiatarone Singh, T. Trey, and J. Lavee, "Organ Procurement From Executed Prisoners in China," *American Journal of Transplantation* 14, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 2246–2252; Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap*

(32.) Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 126–148.

(33.) China Digital Times, the Internet site based at the University of California, Berkeley, translates and catalogues countless examples of press control and censorship.

(34.) "Chinese Alarm Over Formaldehyde-Tainted Cabbages," *BBC News*, May 7, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-17981323>. A new iPhone app was developed in 2014 to track food contamination outbreaks. "New iPhone app lets you track China's latest food scandals," *Shanghaiist.com*, June 19, 2012, <http://shanghaiist.com/2012/06/19/iphone-food-scandal-app.php>. The iPhone app was downloaded more than 200,000 times within the first week of its launching. "Big Data Could Make China's Food Safer," *Xinhua News*, July 10, 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/10/c_135502440.htm. "Cracking Down on China's Dangerous Fake Food Sector," *Independent*, accessed August 7, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-fake-food-sector-unlicensed-products-knock-offs-supply-chain-contamination-public-health-a7880341.html>. "China Fake Data Mask Economic Rebound," *Financial Times*, accessed January 16, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/a9889330-f51c-11e7-88f7-5465a6ce1a00>.

(35.) Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 79–80

(36.) Melissa Inouye, "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories Within Chinese Protestant Christianity," in *Modern Chinese Religion II, 1850-2015, Vol. 2*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 884–919

(37.) Kipnis, "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China," 43.

(38.) Stephen Feuchtwang, "Religion as Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, ed. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 161–177 (162–163). One example of a marriage of cosmology and moral ideology that proved particularly volatile was the Falun Gong movement and the government's ongoing suppression of the movement since 1999. See David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Maria Hsia Chang, *Falun Gong: The End of Days* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012); Stephen Noakes and Caylan Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign," *China Quarterly* 223 (Sep. 2015), 658–679.

(39.) Ying Fuk-tsang, "Church-State Relations in Contemporary China and the Development of Protestant Christianity," 20–22.

(40.) Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 128.

(41.) David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

(42.) Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies Bloom," Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert Hefner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 149–175

(43.) Robert Weller and Keping Wu, "On the Boundaries Between Good and Evil: Constructing Multiple Moralities in China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 1 (Feb. 2017): 47–67

(44.) Ying, "Church-State Relations," 33.

(45.) True Jesus Church investigators' meeting at Spiritual Convocation, November 10, 2009, South China.

(46.) True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, November 7, 2009, South China.

(47.) True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.

(48.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(49.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, March 20, 2009, Central China.

(50.) Interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

(51.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.

- (52.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday morning meeting, November 14, 2009, South China.
- (53.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.
- (54.) Ying, "Church-State Relations," 33.
- (55.) Ms. Shi (pseudonym), Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday morning meeting, April 24, 2010, North China.
- (56.) True Jesus Church, *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook* 信徒生活手册, 88.
- (57.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 91.
- (58.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 79. The Shandong house churches studied by Jie Kang similarly had strict community norms discouraging sexual relations before marriage. See Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 148–151.
- (59.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 86.
- (60.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 81.
- (61.) John Osburg, *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 2013)
- (62.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 62–65.
- (63.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 42–43.
- (64.) Kam Wing Chan, "China: Internal Migration," in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), accessed July 26, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm124/abstract?userIsAuthenticated=false&deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=>
- (65.) Interview with Mr. Dong (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.
- (66.) Interview with Ms. Ju (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.
- (67.) Interview with Ms. Ke (pseudonym), October 2009, South China.
- (68.) Interview with Mr. Dong (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.
- (69.) (Name unknown). Sermon at True Jesus Church, young adults' Fellowship Conference, May 2, 2009, Central China.
- (70.) (Name unknown). Sermon at True Jesus Church, young adults' Fellowship Conference, May 2, 2009, Central China.

(71.) Jie Kang finds a similar coexistence of ascetic, antimaterialist attitudes and attitudes embracing of the pursuit of material prosperity for righteous purposes in her study of house churches in Linyi, Shandong. Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 203–208.

(72.) Nanlai Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 163

(73.) Jessica C. Teets, "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?" *China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 330–347; Timothy Hildebrandt, *Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jessica C. Teets, "Civil Society Participation in Local Governance."

(74.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(75.) Northern True Jesus Church website. Quoted from Wei Isaac's *Da Dao Zhi Xing*, sec. 6, "Jiaohui lueshi" (*Brief Church History*), accessed May 8, 2010, <http://www.zysjh.org/dadaozhixing.asp>.

(76.) Deaconess Xie, True Jesus Church, women's meeting, May 2009, Central China.

(77.) Interview with Ms. Wang, March 27, 2010, South China.

(78.) (Name unknown). True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(79.) Nanlai Cao's study also finds that some Christians aspire to compete with the West and achieve elite status in global Christianity by exporting the Gospel from China to other parts of the world. Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," 164.

(80.) Interview with Mr. Jiang (pseudonym), April 2010, South China.

(81.) Karrie Koesel, "China's Patriotic Pentecostals," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Yang Fenggang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 240–263 *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*

(82.) Interview with Ms. He (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(83.) Interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

(84.) Kuai Maoqing, "Bingqi shisu, mixi fenzheng" ("Put Away the World, Eliminate Contention"), *Tianfeng* (May 1996): 30–31.

(85.) An Xiaohui, “Fu guanyun jiaohui yougan” (“Impressions of Traveling to the Guanyun Churches”), *Tianfeng* (Jan. 1999): 16

(86.) Interview with Mr. Qiu, March 2010, South China.

(87.) Interview with Mr. Fan, March 2009, Central China.

(88.) Yang, “The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China.”

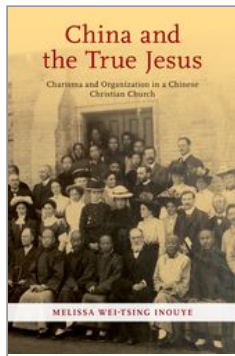
(89.) Anthony J. Spires, “Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China’s Grassroots NGOs,” *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 1 (2011): 13; Andrew Mertha, “‘Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0’: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process,” *China Quarterly* 200 (2009): 996. Referenced in McCarthy, “Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China,” 70–71.

(90.) Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 250.

(91.) McCarthy, “Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China,” 81–87.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

The Parable of the Cursed Chicken (1974–Present)

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0010

Abstract and Keywords

In the charismatic culture of the True Jesus Church in contemporary China, extraordinary occurrences are expected within the mundane circumstances of modern life. The church community's claimed access to miraculous power strengthens the legitimacy of church ideology and church government. These charismatic experiences, often framed in reference to the Bible, inject vitality into church members' shared life and the organizational structures holding them together. At the same time, church leaders attempt to carefully define and regulate charismatic experience in order to preserve community norms and maintain optimal levels of tension with surrounding society. At the level of individual practice, the church's emphasis on Christian separation from the world results not in withdrawal, but in engagement with nearly every aspect of everyday life.

Keywords: charismatic, culture, contemporary, China, True Jesus Church, miracle, Bible, modern

The Cursed Chicken

One day, just at the peak of a local True Jesus Church leader's fit of bad temper, a chicken walked past his door. Angrily he cursed at the chicken. The chicken fell over dead.¹

He told this story for a Saturday-morning service in a major city in South China. This chapel was located a short walk from a top-tier university. The audience included both women and men, young and elderly. The older people tended to sit near the front and to self-segregate by gender into opposite sides of the center aisle.² Toward the back, the audience was more mixed. Husbands and wives sat together, sometimes with a child between them. Middle-aged women propped their Bibles on the special reading shelf built into the back of each wooden pew, their fingers turning pages to follow along with the Bible verses sprinkled liberally throughout each sermon.³

This particular speaker explained that he was relieved: Suppose it had been a human being, instead of a chicken, who had walked past his door! He had never realized that curses could be so powerful. This story, he explained in a matter-of-fact tone of voice, showed that people should be circumspect with their language. Members of the church should not swear or curse. As I listened to this story, I was struck by the absence of any commentary on the feat of chicken-killing itself. He did not point out how this act violated the laws of science or seemed straight out of the Old Testament in its sudden, smite-till-you-stay-smitten violence. That scientifically inexplicable events such as this could occur went without saying. What he had not taken for granted—what surprised him—was that even casual curses could set them off. It was as if the miraculous killing of the chicken had revealed an aspect of natural reality that had always existed, like the laws of physics, but of **(p.261)** which he had not been aware until that moment. This chicken-killing story was hardly an ecstatic vision or a divine apparition. In it, however, the speaker showed the audience how the church's everyday moral teachings were consequential in a cosmic sense.

In this final chapter, I show how practice within the True Jesus Church cuts across the numerous dichotomies scholars often employ to describe and differentiate types of Christianity in China: charismatic versus rationalistic, “physical miracles” versus “doctrinal truth,” urban versus rural, religious groups versus the party-state, aboveground versus underground, world-renouncing versus world-affirming. Church members live in a state of pluralistic entanglement in which physical miracles coexist with biblical truth and modern medical sensibilities. True Jesus Church practice in China extends into all of these categories and modes at the same time. Charismatic practice supplies the strength of the True Jesus Church's community culture by certifying that the sacred community is not merely imagined, but *real*, and that its teachings, governance, and shared way of life are legitimate.

As in the previous chapter, in this chapter I draw on in-person oral history interviews and participant-observation fieldwork that I conducted with members of the True Jesus Church in a city in South China from August 2009 to May 2010, in two major cities in Central China (the summer of 2007 and January–June of 2009), a city in North China (a short visit in the spring of 2010), and some small cities, towns, and villages in a rural area of South China (the spring of 2010). At all of these locations, I attended a range of meetings including Sabbath worship, Bible study, and other weekday and seasonal meetings large and small. I conducted personal interviews with numerous female and male church leaders. In the course of these interactions, I observed how church members' practice of drawing parallels between everyday life and stories in the Bible created a common culture in which individuals' experiences and interpretations shaped the worldview of all.

Charisma and Community

The shared worldview of the True Jesus Church is held together by a culture of miraculous expectation. "Reality," as scholar of religion Robert Orsi has put it, "is a construct, although this is not how it is commonly experienced by those who must live within it. Particular arrangements of gender, class, race are treated as natural or given, part of the taken-for-grantedness of the world, even though they are made and sustained by culture."⁴ For example, Orsi has argued, through the process of prayer, American Catholic women making petitions to St. Jude **(p.262)** "refashioned the world and then directed themselves toward this new horizon become real in the moment of praying."⁵ In the True Jesus Church, a similar construction of the "real" is ongoing. Miracle stories do not merely reflect believers' anxieties or concerns (for example, "economic insecurity" or "a search for moral meaning"). To believers, charismatic manifestations reveal the contours of reality itself and legitimate church teachings on ultimate concerns.

True Jesus Church culture has a miraculous-yet-mundane quality, in that encounters with divine power are commonplace and casual. This worldview is more than the simple admixture of devotional activities such as prayer or worship with daily routines such as shopping and going to school. It is defined by the active expectation of God's presence in daily life. To be clear, such a worldview is widespread within Christian church cultures around the world. It is not confined to Pentecostal-charismatic movements, or to indigenous movements in developing countries, or to Protestant churches in areas hit by economic recession. I emphasize the ordinary, universal quality of the True Jesus Church's miracle-expecting culture to problematize explanations of the church's charismatic practice that emphasize either continuity with Chinese religious tradition or socioeconomic deprivation. Many studies of the True Jesus Church have focused on showing links between the church's charismatic culture and Chinese popular religious tradition or socioeconomic marginalization. However, there is nothing exclusively Chinese about healings or exorcisms, although there is clearly overlap between Chinese popular religious practices and imported European religious practices. Nor are visions or other charismata experienced exclusively by those who are poor or uneducated. The miraculous-mundane worldview found within the True Jesus Church also exists within the "postdenominational" urban churches of China's Three-Self Patriotic Movement, in evangelical Baptist fellowships in Los Angeles, and in Latter-day Saint wards in the affluent Orange County, California.⁶ Hence, this culture of miraculous expectation within the True Jesus Church is not striking in itself.

The miraculous-mundane worldview is significant because the True Jesus Church community's claimed exclusive access to miraculous power strengthens the legitimacy of church ideology and church government.⁷ In other words, because miracles are far more difficult to produce than sermons, the apparent regularity of miracles within the True Jesus Church community adds authority to leaders' doctrinal and moral teachings. A steady stream of stories in which church members defied the laws of science or were able to overcome usually insurmountable obstacles creates a community with confidence in its special identity and shared norms. These charismatic experiences, often framed in reference to the Bible, inject vitality into church members' shared life and the organizational structures holding it together. If, as the political theorist Benedict Anderson has **(p.263)** said, all communities are imagined (in the sense that even a group of people who regularly interact face-to-face exists not only physically, but also as it is visualized or conceived by participants), imagining that community as bound together by manifestations of divine power can only strengthen the collective vision.⁸ In fact, many True Jesus Church members would likely push back against such political theorizing to assert that their community is not, actually, "imagined"—it is the deliberate creation of God's hand, an institution whose place in human history is not contingent, but inevitable. This was the essence of a comment made by a Deacon An when I sat down to interview him about church history. He explained that it was impossible to truly understand the history of the True Jesus Church unless I accepted the church's divine origins as fact. Although the rationalistic paradigm of scholarly inquiry often leads researchers to attempt to demarcate the "supernatural" from the "ordinary," in practice the members of the True Jesus Church regularly blur these distinctions, allowing divine power to infuse into even the humblest structures of their human community.

Aid in Time of Need

The miraculous mode of Christianity within the contemporary True Jesus Church is revealed within the mundane circumstances of modern life. When church members talk about the importance of truth, the Bible as the key to truth, or the significance of the church as the one true church, they are not confining their notion of truth to a purely spiritual or moral category, but are affirming their religious tradition's authority to interpret all aspects of life: moral behavior, human nature, language, proper attire, music, biology, and so on.

Perhaps the most common kind of charismatic account within the True Jesus Church congregations I studied involves protection from danger or illness. At a Spiritual Convocation meeting in a South China city in November 2009, Zhang Pin, a student at the prestigious local university, told a rapt audience of fellow twentysomethings about a resurrection from the dead that occurred in 1995. A mother and a little seven-year-old boy went to the market in a rural area. While his mother shopped, the boy went off to play. He accidentally fell into a shrimp pond. By the time his parents found him, he was lying in the mud at the bottom of the pond. They pulled him out and saw that his eyes were open and staring. Blood was leaking from his nostrils and ears. He had no pulse and no other signs of life. They took him to the hospital, where an EKG revealed no heart activity. The father began to weep uncontrollably. The mother, however, was a Christian and had heard that God had the power to bring people back from the dead. She prayed for over three hours. After another hour or so, by which time the boy had been without a pulse for over five hours, his pulse suddenly returned. His eyes **(p.264)** became lively. He began to speak, saying that he wanted to watch television. The doctors were unable to deny that something miraculous had happened, because they had been present the entire time. “Fourteen years went by fast,” concluded Zhang Pin. “I was that little seven-year-old boy. Glory be to God.”⁹

In this story, the miracle did not occur entirely within an otherworldly realm (as did Wei Paul’s battle with devils, for example) but took place within the world of human activity and was verified by rationalistic measures such as physical descriptions, the accounting of time, the EKG, and the presence of the doctors.¹⁰ Hence these miracle stories go beyond “the recasting of mundane experience in another ‘symbolic’ or ‘religious’ key.”¹¹ Rather they are intended to offer evidence of the true scope of reality, including the laws of nature, and to add credence to True Jesus Church members’ claims to possess truth.

Like the biblical stories of Lot's being led out of Sodom or the Israelites being led into Canaan, church members tell stories of God's miraculous and particularistic protection for church members. One Saturday morning as I sat in a worship service in a city in Central China, a visiting preacher told a story about a church member who took her pregnant daughter to a poor mountain hospital to deliver a baby. At this small rural hospital, her daughter was one of three women in labor. In the midst of her daughter's labor, the True Jesus Church mother grabbed her daughter's hand and said, over and over again, "In the name of Jesus Christ, receive strength."¹² The daughter went on to very smoothly deliver the baby. The woman in the bed next to her asked the mother, "What sort of spell are you using?" (Hearing this line, the congregation laughed.) This woman also began to say what the True Jesus Church mother had said: "In the name of Jesus Christ, receive strength."¹³ She, too, eventually delivered her child smoothly. The third woman, who had not recited these words, had to have a Caesarean section. (This was met by a loud exclamation from the congregation).¹⁴ The members thought that it was amusing for the nonbelieving woman to call the church member's prayer a "spell," as this word indicated the nonbelieving woman's superstitious, magical beliefs. At the same time, the gist of the story confirmed that even when used as a spell by a nonbeliever, prayer in the name of Jesus was efficacious in avoiding danger (in this case, Caesarean section).

In addition to demonstrating God's willingness to protect people's lives, the church's miraculous discourse also reinforces the sacredness of the church's teachings and symbols. In one story, it was a True Jesus Church hymnal that received special protection. A woman in a village in South China gave an account of a fire which broke out next to her house in the 1980s. The farmers were burning dead grass in the fields next to the house, but the fire blazed out of control and began to consume the house. "I ran into the house to get the kids, then ran out," said Ms. Yang. "All the books in the house burned. The pigs in the pen burned. **(p.265)** Only our single copy of *Hymns of Praise* 赞美诗 was completely untouched."¹⁵ This miraculous preservation was particularly welcome because in those days, hymnbooks, being political contraband, were extremely scarce. They were often written out by hand and not easily replaced.

Within the church as an institution, discourse suggesting that True Jesus Church members experience miracles whereas non-True Jesus Church Christians and nonbelievers experience fewer or no miracles buttresses the church's exclusivist claims. "Our church has three things: authority, miracles, the Holy Spirit," declared a preacher in a city in Central China.¹⁶ She discussed a book written by someone from an "outside church" titled *Why There Are No More Miracles*. "But we have many miracles," she said.¹⁷ She told the story about an elderly woman who had a severe skin disease, whose husband converted to the True Jesus Church in Singapore. Under his influence, she decided to pray to Jesus. The woman then had a charismatic experience in which she spoke in tongues and heard a voice: "Wash in clear water."¹⁸ After washing in clear water in the same tradition as Naaman the leper from the Old Testament, she was healed. "There are many incredible things that happen," the preacher concluded. "Just as a person came to Jesus and said, 'Lord, I believe. Help thou mine unbelief,' we are ready to be people who help others, who cause miracles to happen. If we do this we will see more and more miracles in the church."¹⁹

This frequent reliance on biblical tropes in everyday life shows the Bible's significance for True Jesus Church believers. They see it as the holding the key to bringing to pass the miraculous reality that God is willing to grant true believers. As suggested by the preacher's previous concluding exhortation that congregants should ask God to "help their unbelief" and help them be people "who cause miracles to happen," the church's claim to contain an abundance of miracles is self-fulfilling. The more miracles are proclaimed, the more miracles are expected, and consequently, the more miracles are sought and experienced. Charismatic discourse assures believers not only that God will grant them aid in time of need, but also that this salutary assistance occurs with special frequency within the True Jesus Church. Within church culture, salutary protection in everyday life is deemed as miraculous as any biblical apparition, and regular recitation of such everyday miracles to the congregation validates the church's claim to be the one authentic vessel of Jesus Christ's power.

Exorcising Demons and Illness

A second major category within church charismatic discourse is exorcism, often in the context of healing. Amanda Porterfield's research on the history of healing in Christianity has demonstrated the biblical connection, especially in stories of **(p.266)** Jesus's miracles, between healing and exorcism.²⁰ These biblical themes, which also overlap generally with traditional Chinese religious beliefs, are further colored by local lore and individuals' particular perspectives.²¹ As I sat around a table with a group of villagers in rural South China, eating fruit, they and all of the local church leaders who had accompanied me on the visit regaled me with tale after tale of "devils" or "demons" 鬼.²² Everyone had a devil story. One very elderly woman said that in the days before she believed in the True Jesus Church, the place had many devils and people were frequently sick. Once, she saw the devils having a meeting: "There were black cats, and shadows, and the whole village was frightened."²³ After she joined the church, there were fewer devils and people got sick less often. Another woman describes devils as having big eyes and four legs: "Where they walked, the wheat went down."²⁴ The True Jesus Church preacher in charge of administering the local church's computer network said that a friend of his in the army had seen devils resembling a squid. He also said that a fellow preacher's mother was a witch, who could use telekinetic powers to pull nails out of wood and move them around without touching them. The woman who tended the church dormitories in the local town told numerous stories in which she had encountered devils, such as the spirit of a woman who had lived next to a temple and who had died in childbirth, or an invisible devil that had jumped onto her bed one night.²⁵ Clearly this discourse, as with Christian demonology in all parts of the world, drew both on biblical ideas as well as on long-standing local views of malevolent supernatural forces.

According to Mr. Chen, a preacher in the True Jesus Church in another location in South China, nowadays many people join the church after being possessed and successfully exorcised. He informally estimated that 90 percent of those who were possessed were not Christians and that they initially came to be possessed when they worshipped bodhisattvas or engaged in similar traditional religious practices. “Many superstitious people convert,” he said.²⁶ In the context of the conversation, he used the word *mixin* 迷信 [superstitious] to describe not only a personal quality or state of belief, but also Chinese popular religion more generally. The clear distinction that Mr. Chen drew between the superstitious victims who followed Chinese popular religion and the enlightened practices of the True Jesus Church brings to mind anthropologist Joel Robbins’s caution about continuity theories of charismatic Christianity. Robbins argues that the thoroughness and fluency of local Christians’ engagement with the ontologies and terminology of native religiosity should not blind researchers to the fact that the Christian project is fundamentally geared toward rupture with native religiosity.²⁷ In the mind of Mr. Chen, the break between Chinese religious tradition and the church’s true teachings and practices could not be more dramatic.

(p.267) Mr. Chen also made it clear, however, that the stark difference between the Christian religion of the True Jesus Church and popular Chinese religion did not immunize church members against possession. Everyone was susceptible to possession, although the church’s correct methods would eventually prevail. For example, he said, when he and a group of True Jesus Church preachers traveled from South China to Beijing to visit another True Jesus Church preacher and tour the venue for the 2008 Olympics, their host suddenly became violently possessed. So serious was his case that their sightseeing plans were ruined because they had to tie him to the bed and say prayers of exorcism around the clock for three days straight until he finally came to himself. “It was the first time that I had ever had the sense of doing battle in the spiritual world,” Mr. Chen said. “It was the first time that I really understood it.”²⁸ This “battle in the spiritual world” did not take place in a vision, or in a dream, but in a bed in Beijing as the clocks of the ordinary world ticked away.

At the same time that Mr. Chen expressed belief in the reality of the spiritual world, he also affirmed the reality of the material world, including science. When I mentioned to him that members of the church had described the ongoing use of “prayer water” (blessed water used for healing) and healing through prayer alone (instead of medicine), he laughed somewhat apologetically and said, “These things, prayer water, not going to the doctor, are becoming less and less common. If old people get sick, they don’t go to the hospital, don’t take medicine. Most church workers today are young. We think God uses the doctor’s hands. God is a God of order. If you are sick and lack calcium, you should supplement with calcium.”²⁹

This prayer-and-medicine approach to healing seems widespread within the congregations that I studied, although there are numerous indications that the prayer-only approach is deeply rooted within church traditions as an ideal. For instance, part of a verse from *Spirit Songs* 灵歌, a hymnbook written by Wei Isaac during the Republican era and still in use in some northern congregations, implies that those who depend first on medicine and second on God's grace need to strengthen their faith:

*Lazy, lazy, lazy, I'm really lazy,
Because my faith is weak, Jesus warns me:
My kid gets sick,
We adults feel uneasy,
Medicine and shots are useless,
And then we remember the Lord's grace.*³⁰

In my attendance at church worship services I also regularly heard admonitions and testimonies describing exclusive reliance on prayer for healing as a superior **(p.268)** demonstration of faith in God.³¹ These teachings coexisted somewhat contradictorily with church leaders' statements to me in more formal interviews that the True Jesus Church did not condone the refusal of medication and medical treatment in healing. Refusing medicine and relying solely on faith healing was a stock antireligious charge in both the 1950s and is still used against groups like Falun Gong or Christian house churches in the twenty-first century. Clearly leaders did not want to put such a position on the record, although it was part of informal church culture.

Although the miraculous–mundane worldview continues to define church members' fundamental paradigm for how God is able to intervene in individuals' daily lives, some "old" church members said that in the 1980s, accounts of very dramatic miracles were more frequent than in the present. Another church member reflected to me that nowadays, dramatic healing miracles are not as numerous as they were during the 1980s. "Maybe this is because now, when people get sick, they both pray and go to the hospital," mused Mr. Jing. "Back then, when people got sick, the medical care was not very developed, so they just prayed."³² These veteran church members are not suggesting that since the 1980s, God has gradually ceased to be a God of miracles, but rather that nowadays people needing miracles have weaker faith, or that perhaps they bring in medicine to heal when prayer alone would have been sufficient.

Another factor contributing to internal perceptions of a decline in miracles since the 1980s may be church institutions' self-preserving incentive to set boundaries for the miraculous. In the first place, out-of-control "superstitious" and "unscientific" practices could make church members vulnerable to state suppression campaigns. In the second place, too much charisma would destabilize their own careful institution-building. An abundance of miracles at the grassroots counterbalances the hierarchical ecclesiastical authority structure that church leaders began to rebuild in the late 1980s and the 1990s. Charisma and organization exist in a mutually supporting, mutually corroding dynamic. When unchecked, miraculous modes may weaken existing organizations through schisms and spin-offs. The earliest example of this within the True Jesus Church is the story of the church's founding: Wei Paul, Zhang Barnabas, and others within Pentecostal churches experienced miracles that gave them confidence that they did not need existing church institutions, such as Bernt Berntsen's Apostolic Faith Church or Samuel Evans Meech's London Missionary Society-sponsored native church, to access divine power. With sufficient stores of charisma, they could create their own institutions.

A steady stream of "heresies" since 1917 is listed in historical accounts in the church's *Thirtieth Anniversary Publication*. These accounts end with a neat **(p. 269)** statistical chart that summarizes details such as "name," "location of heresy," "reason of heresy," and so on: "Ye Fusheng 耶復生, Tangjia Village 唐家莊, male, fifty years old, in the True Jesus Church for one year, thirty followers, dead, church dissolved, said he was Christ"; "Dai Cangzhu 戴藏珠, Sichuan 四川, female, forty years old, in the True Jesus Church for one year, ten followers, lost her way, fasted for a long time, became prideful, and was deceived."³³

Even new religions with all their innovative energy must eventually stabilize, or else cease to exist by transforming into divergent groups. Church leaders must attempt to institutionalize charisma without destroying its appealing potency. This ongoing dynamic helps to explain the decline of miracles or a decline in certain types of miracles accompanied by an increase in others.

The majority of healing stories that I heard personally from members of the True Jesus Church had to do with non-life-threatening situations, such as a woman in a city in South China who was down by the beach when her stomach suddenly began to hurt. She sat down, but her stomach hurt more and more. She felt lonely in her predicament. Her home was a long eight-stop bus ride away. “The Lord Jesus helped me,” she said. “On the way home my stomach was fine. It didn’t hurt at all. But, right afterwards, when I got home and my mother looked for me, I was in the toilet.”³⁴ Another woman from the same congregation in South China gave a testimony about a recent experience in which her eight-month-old son hit his eye on the corner of the bed so that it bled. She was frightened that he might have permanently damaged the eye, and prayed. When the blood was gone, she saw that the eye was not seriously hurt. “Some people would say, ‘This is a small thing,’ ” said the church worker who came to the pulpit after this testimony. “But it could have been a big thing, depending on what part of the eye was hit. Even in small things, God is protecting us.”³⁵ The fact that the church worker felt the need to defend the miraculous nature of “small things” both showed the strength of people’s expectations of the miraculous (because they frequently hear “great,” dramatic miracle stories) and also responded to those in the audience who might have doubted whether a small, ordinary thing qualified as a miracle. Modernizing processes within Chinese society have not necessarily led to the decline of charismatic experience. Indeed, by multiplying the ways in which people live and the ways in which life can go awry, modernity has nourished the miraculous.³⁶

Charismatic Routines

A striking feature of the way in which the miraculous becomes mundane within the True Jesus Church is the standardization and routinization of manifestations of the Holy Spirit in church worship. Matching the abundance of charismatic accounts within the contemporary True Jesus Church (**p.270**) is an abundance of prescriptions for the proper context or format in which charismatic experience should take place. In a meeting in a city in Central China in April 2009, a preacher gave a sermon titled “On Revelation from Visions or Dreams” and explained in detail how to distinguish messages from God in visions or dreams from messages from Satan, ordinary dreams, or hallucinations. Clearly, not all extraordinary manifestations are to be understood as beneficial.³⁷

True Jesus Church leaders have emphasized that although visions can be faith affirming, one “should not talk about miracles too much.”³⁸ For instance, one well-known story heard in a South China city and the surrounding countryside tells of a heavenly apparition that occurred in 1985. The local True Jesus Church congregation was meeting on Saturday in a chapel that they shared with a Wesleyan Methodist congregation, which met on Sunday. At this Saturday worship service, in the middle of the administration of the Lord’s Supper, two angels were seen to appear “eleven times” throughout the rite, “standing on either side of the preacher, tall, all white, with golden hair, very white clothes, and a halo.”³⁹ Deaconess Jia, who was telling the story, noted with satisfaction that the Sunday congregation did not see the angels, even though they met in the same chapel just a day later. However, when I interviewed the church leader who had been administering the Lord’s Supper during the apparition, he said that he himself had seen nothing. “I was the person doing the Lord’s Supper,” said Elder Qiu. “I had just finished blessing the grape juice. Then [he waved his hands] about one hundred people began saying they saw a big light. I peeked out of the corner of my eye [he chuckled]. I didn’t see anything. I said to the congregation, ‘First the Lord’s Supper, then testimonies.’ If you talk about miracles too much then you sound proud.”⁴⁰ Hence charismata are vital because they affirm the presence of the Holy Spirit, but at the same time they are subordinated to the church’s established doctrines, rituals, or routines.

The church’s discussion of evil spirits similarly acknowledges the reality of the forces of evil while establishing rules for classifying and combating them. In a lesson to the women’s weekday Bible-study class in a Central Chinese city, one deaconess explained how to distinguish the Holy Spirit from evil spirits. “The Holy Spirit comes from the top down,” she said. “Evil spirits come from the bottom up.”⁴¹ She also went through a list of various manifestations of the Holy Spirit that, according to her, were often misunderstood within the church. “Spiritual laughter—we don’t seek it. Spiritual singing—it’s not actually singing. People who start singing loudly are not correct. It just feels like your heart is singing. Spiritual dancing—it’s not actually dancing, more like being really happy.”⁴²

This emphasis on manifestations of the Holy Spirit as an interior feeling as opposed to physical sensation or transformation seems to be a departure from **(p.271)** the numerous accounts of spirit-laughter, spirit-singing, and spirit-dancing from the early days of the True Jesus Church. Theologian and Pentecostal historian David Reed considers True Jesus Church glossolalia to be strikingly distinctive in comparison with glossolalia in other Pentecostal churches around in North America and Africa for its routinized, regularized character.⁴³ Indeed, Yen-zen Tsai considers the True Jesus Church's glossolalia to be an important tool for boundary maintenance.⁴⁴ In the True Jesus Church congregations I studied in Central, North, and South China, a few seconds after the announcement of prayer, nearly every member of the congregation began to speak in tongues and to shake clasped hands back and forth in a rhythmic and distinctive “lo lo lo lo lo,” “de de de de de,” “Hallelujah hallelujah hallelujah,” or similar repetitive sounds. Often, though not always, worshippers knelt on the ground to pray (sometimes foam mats were provided to cushion the knees) (see Figure 9.1). After a few minutes, when the church worker at the front of the room rang a bell, the prayer instantly ceased.

Ke-hsien Huang has suggested that the routinization of glossolalia within the True Jesus Church may be a long-term survival strategy to make the church more respectable to native Confucian moral traditions.⁴⁵ I would add that throughout the decades, a more restrained form of prayer also would have made the church **(p.272)** more acceptable to the mainstream Protestant Christian establishment and, significantly, to the various modernist governments of Republican and Communist China. I have noticed, for instance, that in contemporary True Jesus Church worship in Taiwan and California diaspora communities, prayer in tongues reaches much louder intensity and goes on for much longer—perhaps around fifteen minutes, compared with the tight two- to four-minute periods I observed on the mainland.

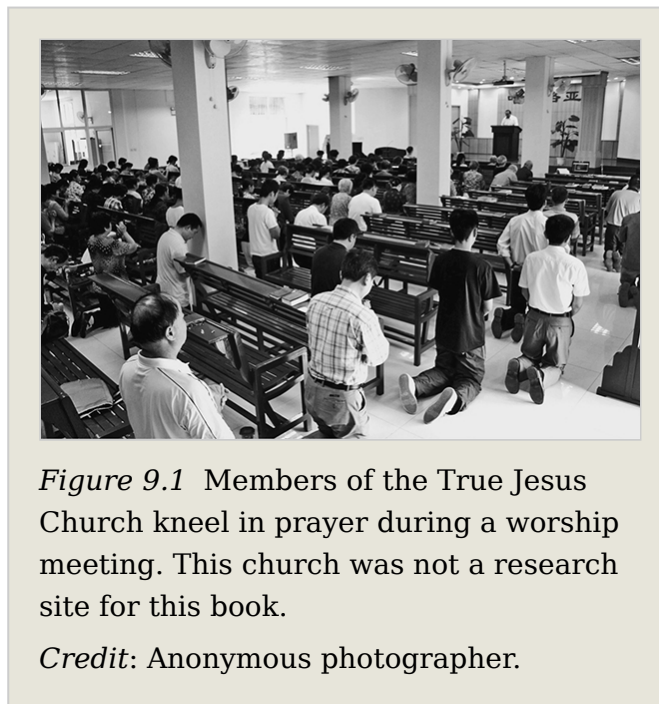


Figure 9.1 Members of the True Jesus Church kneel in prayer during a worship meeting. This church was not a research site for this book.

Credit: Anonymous photographer.

This routinized attitude toward prayer also manifests itself in how some church members instruct newcomers to pray. “It’s very simple,” Ms. Ju in a city in Central China told me. “Kneel. Say ‘In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ Then say ‘Hallelujah.’ It’s like you’re calling God on the phone, and ‘Hallelujah’ is God’s phone number. You will get the Holy Spirit if you ask.”⁴⁶ According to this point of view, receiving the Holy Spirit and the accompanying gift of tongues is not a rare or unusual occurrence; rather, it is an almost mechanical miracle that can be reliably expected, perhaps with a little time and persistence.

Despite its routine occurrence, members of the church are quick to emphasize that the phenomenon of speaking in tongues cannot be mimicked or affected without the actual presence of the Holy Spirit. Members of the church in Central China told me a story of one woman who had tried to pretend that she was speaking in tongues and whom God then caused to spit blood. Others told me that if one is only pretending to speak in tongues, it is impossible to go on for more than a few minutes without getting tired, whereas those who are genuinely speaking in tongues can go for longer periods of time, even hours.⁴⁷ At southern Spiritual Convocation meetings, after baptism, footwashing, and Lord’s Supper (圣餐) rites, new converts were given time to “ask for the Spirit.” During this time they came to the front of the congregation and knelt in prayer. Elders, deacons, deaconesses, and preachers moved among them, laying hands on their heads to help facilitate their receiving the Holy Spirit and also observing them closely to verify that their reception of the Holy Spirit was genuine. According to Ms. He, a preacher in South China, “[speaking in tongues] takes at least twenty to thirty minutes. Their tongue has to be moving; they can’t just be making sounds. Then we put a sticker on their clothing, and at the end, the names of all those who have a sticker are recorded on a list of those who have received the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁸

Hence even potentially dramatic phenomena such as visions and spiritual gifts are transformed within the present-day True Jesus Church into routinized, standardized occurrences that confirm the church’s charismatic claims while simultaneously conforming to doctrinal and procedural guidelines. Such constraints protect the integrity of the True Jesus Church as an institution, both in the sense of ensuring against schism and in the sense of avoiding government suppression for being too “superstitious.” They also confirm the reality and **(p. 273)** accessibility of the Holy Spirit to believers in systematically framing the laws of the spiritual realm of the world, just as one might outline the fundamental laws of physics. Widespread charismatic discourse begets widespread charismatic experience, until miracles become so commonplace that they must be sorted and ordered by rules.

In sum, the miraculous, mundane, and modern world perceived within the True Jesus Church brings together the contrasts that constitute human reality: what is known through faith and what is known through science, things spiritual and things material, the unusual and the ordinary.⁴⁹ The all-encompassing quality of the True Jesus Church's worldview makes the church community peculiarly resilient. If, in believers' understanding, the True Jesus Church is proven to be true in people's bodies, bus rides, and unfortunate neighborhood chickens, then surely its cosmological, doctrinal, and moral teachings are also true, and their collective endeavor is not in vain.

Not of the World, but in China

In the twenty-first century True Jesus Church's full-fledged embrace of the charismatic mode of Christianity, it exhibits strong continuities with its Republican- and Mao-era history. At the same time, there are important differences. Church members' miraculous experiences are shaped by twenty-first-century contemporary circumstances and assumptions. At the level of individual practice, the church's emphasis on Christian separation from the world results not in withdrawal, but in engagement with nearly every aspect of everyday modern life. Nationalism, science and technology, economic development, local community, morality, and the nature of reality itself all find a place in the church's discourse of truth and power. The church's culture of claiming miraculous experience certifies its truth-claims and strengthens its large community networks.

Within these church communities, members partake of a highly particular but extraordinary narrative in which the divine project of restoring Christ's one true church began in the dusty streets of Beijing, China, and will someday spread to fill the entire earth. In this sacred story, the essence of the Christian gospel is manifested not in systematic theologies but in the worlds of wonder formed by ordinary women and men. Here, amid the mundane conundrums of modern life, they lay claim to what they know is true.

Notes:

(1.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service in South China, October 2009.

(2.) Ke-hsien Huang, "Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Yang Fenggang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 125

(3.) Ke-hsien Huang writes that within the True Jesus Church, this style of preaching by connecting "dozens or even over a hundred biblical references" is known as "bead-stringing" 串珠. Huang, "Taming the Spirit," 126.

(4.) Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 211

(5.) Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, 210–211.

(6.) Here I refer to church cultures that I have experienced personally.

(7.) Michael Chambon comes to a similar conclusion that charisma is not only a force for deregulation but can also “be applied to strengthen ecclesiological institutions and to regulate beliefs and practices.” Michael Chambon, “Are Chinese Christians Pentecostal? A Catholic Reading of Pentecostal Influence on Chinese Christians,” in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 181–199 (197).

(8.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)

(9.) Zhang Pin (pseudonym), November 2009, at a Spiritual Convocation meeting in South China.

(10.) Similar arguments about miracles and modern science are made in Jacalyn Duffin, “The Doctor Was Surprised; or, How to Diagnose a Miracle,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 81: no. 4 (winter 2007): 699–729; Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in a Secular Age* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1999); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). Duffin’s article, for example, argues that physician testimony has been a critical part of the Vatican’s investigation into miracles taken as evidence of sainthood since the seventeenth century. The prognosis must be hopeless, and the recovery must be a great surprise to the doctor, to verify a healing miracle has occurred.

(11.) Orsi, *Thank you, St. Jude*, 186. In this quote, Orsi is also arguing that miraculous accounts are more than simple “recasting.”

(12.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(13.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(14.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(15.) Interview with Ms. Yang (pseudonym), March 28, 2010, South China.

(16.) Ms. Wu (pseudonym), sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.

- (17.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.
- (18.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.
- (19.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.
- (20.) Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- (21.) Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004); Barend ter Haar, *Telling Stories: Witchcraft and Scapegoating in Chinese History* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006).
- (22.) The Chinese word is *gui* 鬼 or *mogui* 魔鬼; in Chinese Christian discourse, *mogui* can stand for “the Devil” or can simply mean “a devil,” “a demon,” or “an evil spirit.” An exclusively Christian word for evil incarnate is *Sadan* 撒旦 (Satan). “Devil” is the rendering that best conveys these multiple meanings across Christian and traditional popular religious contexts.
- (23.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.
- (24.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.
- (25.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.
- (26.) Interview with Mr. Chen (pseudonym), April 2010, village in South China.
- (27.) Joel Robbins, “On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking,” *Religion* 33, no. 3 (2003): 221–231
- (28.) Interview with Mr. Chen, April 2010, South China.
- (29.) Interview with Mr. Chen, March 2010, South China.
- (30.) Ling ge 灵歌 *Spirit Songs*, Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., Hymn no. 41, “Lan, Lan, Lan” (“Lazy, Lazy, Lazy”), fourth verse.

(31.) Jie Kang's research on house churches in Linyi, Shandong, argues that in rural areas, church members believe that one should rely solely on God for healing instead of employing modern medicine. Among the True Jesus Church congregations, by contrast, I have encountered both sides of this story in both rural and urban areas, although the prayer-only approach seems more like an ideal that is not commonly realized. Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 231-232.

(32.) Interview with Mr. Jing (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(33.) Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1947), J1-J9

(34.) True Jesus Church, testimony meeting in Spiritual Convocation, November 14, 2009, South China.

(35.) True Jesus Church, testimony meeting in Spiritual Convocation, November 14, 2009, South China.

(36.) A substantial body of religious studies literature refuting the secularization thesis has accumulated over the past few decades. See, for example, Rodney Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999): 249-273; and Harvey Cox and Jan Swyngedouw, "The Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rise and Fall of Secularization," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, no.1/2 (Spring, 2000): 1-13.

(37.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church, Sabbath meeting, April 2, 2009, Central China.

(38.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 29, 2010, South China.

(39.) Interview with Ms. Jia (pseudonym), March 28, 2010, South China.

(40.) Interview with Mr. Qiu, March 29, 2010, South China.

(41.) Ms. Xie (pseudonym), True Jesus Church women's meeting, March 2009, Central China.

(42.) Ms. Xie, True Jesus Church women's meeting, March 2009, Central China.

(43.) David Reed, personal email and in-person communication.

(44.) Yen-zen Tsai, "Glossolalia and Church Identity: The Role of Sound in the Making of a Chinese Pentecostal-Charismatic Church," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 137-157.

(45.) Huang, "Taming the Spirit."

(46.) Interview with Ms. Ju (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

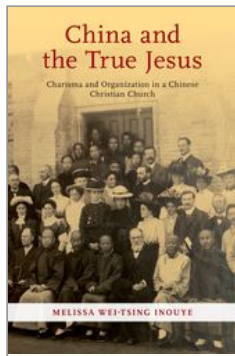
(47.) Interview with Ms. He (pseudonym), March 2010, South China; interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, South China.

(48.) Interview with Ms. He, March 2010, South China.

(49.) Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, 209.

University Press Scholarship Online

Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

Conclusion

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

DOI:10.1093/oso/9780190923464.003.0011

Abstract and Keywords

Rooted in decades and even centuries of Chinese history, the history of the True Jesus Church highlights the significance of charismatic experience in creating community. Observations from a contemporary baptismal rite and Lord's Supper rite provide points of reflection for the admixture of miraculous and mundane within the True Jesus Church's Christian culture.

Keywords: True Jesus Church, charismatic, baptism, Lord's Supper, ritual, Christian, China

Public Rite

In November 2009, I attended a True Jesus Church baptismal service in a coastal city in South China. I had been anticipating this service eagerly for months, having heard numerous stories of miraculous occurrences at the moment people accepted the True Jesus Church's facedown baptism in "living water" (i.e., a natural body of water). Various people throughout church history had been healed of life-threatening illnesses. A church leader in Central China had told me how she came out of the water speaking a language she did not recognize and that her condition of being deaf in one ear was completely cured.¹

These November baptisms were performed in the ocean, at a popular public beach. Those in attendance met at the chapel in the morning and then took the bus three stops to the beach. They walked across the sand and reassembled just in front of a historic site that was now a popular tourist attraction. The sky was mildly overcast but the air was warm. Vendors walked back and forth selling sausages, “stinky tofu,” and sugar-glazed fruits on skewers to university students and young families. Swimmers’ heads bobbed up and down on the gentle brown waves. In the midst of this leisurely scene, the True Jesus Church members clustered together and began to sing hymns. Several municipal sanitation workers and a policeman paused in their work to watch the baptismal proceedings.

Two church leaders dressed in all white stood waist-deep in the water at the end of a pathway (“sacred gate”) created by two lines of church members holding towels. The congregation stood together on the beach, singing one hymn after another. Those awaiting baptism were dressed in ordinary street clothes. They stood quietly in a line, edging deeper into the water as the line advanced. Upon reaching the two elders dressed in white, the person to be baptized knelt in the water, head (p.275) bowed. One of the elders pronounced a short prayer of baptism “in the name of Jesus,” plunged the person face-first into the water, then hauled the person back out. The newly baptized walked back, dripping wet, through the gauntlet of church members with towels, each towel-wielder swabbing a little water off the person’s face or body (see Figure C.1).

A baby was baptized and came up screaming, drawing sympathetic laughter from onlookers. The baptized persons changed clothes, took a picture together (there were more than sixty), and then took buses back to the chapel for the footwashing rite.



Figure C.1 A True Jesus Church baptismal service at a public beach in South China. Church members form a “sacred gate” in the water. Faces have been blurred to protect privacy.

Credit: Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye.

On the bus ride back, I thought of the many miracle stories church members had told me about baptism. I reflected on the miraculous nature of the rite for those who accepted it. Among other things, baptism was believed to effect spiritual rebirth and unity with Christ. The pathway of church members standing in the water symbolized a sacred passage into salvation. All of these things were on my mind as I caught the eye of a woman standing across from me on the bus. She smiled in recognition, the curls of her permed hair still dripping seawater onto her black nylon jacket. “How did it feel to be baptized?” I asked. “No especial feeling,” she said, shrugging her shoulders and looking at me good-naturedly. “Just baptized, that’s all.”

(p.276) Charismatic Tradition

At the beginning of my research on the True Jesus Church’s history, I saw miraculous practice within the church as a way in which church members might transcend or challenge the status quo within Chinese society. Now, at the end of my project, I can still see the otherworldly and disruptive elements of this miraculous mindset, but I also see that these elements are entwined with—or are perhaps the same thing as—concerns deeply rooted in the ordinary and claims about truth that affirm the world as it is now.

These miraculous dimensions for everyday experiences have been present within the True Jesus Church from the beginning. As we saw from the multiple narratives of Wei Enbo’s early visions, extraordinary manifestations were often situated within ordinary contexts such as marital disputes and gatherings of friends. In the early days of the church, as evangelists such as Wei and Zhang Barnabas traveled about to spread the message of “church correction,” miracles of healing and exorcism played a critical role in legitimizing their theological teachings about biblical adherence and the True Jesus Church’s exclusive claim to Christian truth. These miracles were effective in convincing Christians to leave their old churches and seek rebaptism because within the larger spheres of the transnational Pentecostal movement, Chinese Christianity, and the native Chinese religious environment alike, charismatic manifestations were an accepted source of legitimacy. The miraculous forms found throughout the history of the True Jesus Church are at home not only within the Chinese popular religious tradition but also constitute a mode of belief and practice that has long been part of the great stream of Christian tradition. Of course, the strength of miracle stories as a currency within Chinese popular religious culture allowed True Jesus Church members to establish the value of their faith to others who were not Christian.

This charismatic orientation has historically been a liability as well as a source of strength for the True Jesus Church. During its earliest days, its bold claims and noisy, Holy-Spirit-filled meetings attracted strong criticism from rival Christian churches controlled by foreigners. Yet the church's insistence that all could turn to the Bible and to the Holy Spirit for divine guidance empowered its believers. This was especially true for women, for whom the church offered opportunities to lead, exhort, and wield divine power that expanded their influence far beyond the constraints of traditional Chinese gender norms. In the 1950s, the True Jesus Church's openly proclaimed access to miraculous experience made the church institution and its leaders vulnerable to accusations of superstition, backwardness, and reactionary intransigence. However, this access to divine power, widely available within the church at the grassroots, helped the church survive years and **(p.277)** even decades underground. Then, as always, the miraculous-mundane worldview within the church represented a potentially disruptive force capable of upending traditional hierarchies. During the years in which political suppression was most severe, those within the church who had the least formal power, such as women and the elderly, were actually most influential in sustaining church social networks and private religious practice.

Now, in the reform era, this miraculous worldview continues to characterize the True Jesus Church, in both members' self-definition and outsiders' observations. In the present day, the worldview of members of the True Jesus Church both embraces and rejects the party-state's ideology of economic development and national strength. Without a strong China, some members feel, the True Jesus Church's gospel message cannot penetrate the entire world. They eagerly welcome their country's geopolitical rise. At the same time, they view Chinese society as showing signs of the degenerate conditions of the Last Days, described so vividly in biblical prophecies of floods, earthquakes, war, lust for sex and lust for money, pride, ignorance, and vain self-seeking. Although Wei Enbo declared 1922 to be the year of the end of the world, in the contemporary True Jesus Church this apocalyptic awareness is manifest in believers' lives not so much as a temporal deadline but as an underscore of the imperative of living righteously as they go to work, oversee their children's education, and deal with the chaos and competitiveness of Chinese society in the twenty-first century.

Further consideration of the regionalized and factionalized character of the contemporary True Jesus Church in China and on a global scale is still needed; I hope that future research and writing can address it. The split between northern and southern factions in the 1920s has been the source of significant regional differences in doctrine and practice and mutual accusations of heresy ever since. The northern churches, representing a small minority of total True Jesus Church adherents worldwide, in recent years aligned themselves with Wei Jacob 魏迎新 (recently deceased), Wei Isaac's son and Wei Enbo's grandson.² The southern churches, historically evangelized by Zhang Barnabas, tend to align themselves with the leaders of the True Jesus Church in Taiwan. In coming years the rift will probably widen, a process supported by the party-state's official strictures on national-level religious organizations. The International Assembly of the True Jesus Church is headquartered in southern California, but also has close ties to the church in Taiwan. The International Assembly coordinates international mission networks, where the True Jesus Church has made inroads in more than sixty countries, including many African countries.³ Through proselytizing in Africa, international church leaders hope to expand the church's general membership far beyond ethnic Chinese in enclaves around the world. Still, the majority of church **(p.278)** members live in the People's Republic of China. Thus the contemporary True Jesus Church has multiple institutional centers of gravity throughout the world.

Overall, this study of the True Jesus Church highlights the significance of religious experiences at the individual and collective level. The worldviews that these experiences create are, in one sense, invisible—entirely “in the people's heads.” In another sense, however, these worldviews fuel the creation of actual worlds, realized within church homes and communities, whose social and cultural gravity is unmistakable.

The elderly Deaconess Wang Dequan's vision of heaven and hell exemplifies this world-making combination of originality and familiarity. Notwithstanding its various affinities with Chinese popular religious discourse and the “deprived” status of its narrator, the self-aware, documentary style of Wang Dequan's narrative about journeying to heaven asserts the journey's uniqueness, veracity, and Christian authenticity. The lively texture of her narrative integrates a variety of religious and organizational assumptions about truth and morality. Thus it is not merely a spiritualized, symbolic reflection of some “actual” reality such as old age or a lack of education. Wang's vision, which inspired and animated the revival of organized True Jesus Church communities around China, was a consequential claim to be recognized and reckoned with because it gave rise to actual communities housed in brick and mortar and persisting over decades.

As an outside observer, I have tried to describe the faith of the hundreds of thousands of Christians within the True Jesus Church with respect and scholarly objectivity. Although I still cannot completely follow the admonition of Deacon An, whom I quoted in the Introduction, by writing a history of the True Jesus Church from the perspective of a person who has become convinced of all of its doctrinal and historical claims, I hope that this study comes close to capturing some aspects of how church members see the Holy Spirit at work in their lives and in their shared history.

Cathartic Communion

One Saturday afternoon in a city in Central China in April 2009, I sat in the congregation of a Sabbath worship service, crammed between young women and young men holding Bibles and taking notes. The chapel was unusually full because that day was a special occasion. In addition to the usual crowd of local church members, more than a hundred young adults in their twenties and thirties had gathered that weekend for a regional fellowship conference.

The sodden winter chill had finally given way to spring. Clusters of delicate pink blossoms caught sunlight in the branches of plum trees; tall willows drooped with a new burden of tender green leaves. Along with the usual yellow haze from **(p.279)** local chemical factories and the smell of charcoal from household stoves, a sense of promise hung in the air. It hung over the young people at the fellowship conference as they participated in hymn-singing competitions and getting-to-know-you activities. The purpose of this conference was to build support and religious fellowship among young people, but many were also actively seeking a future spouse who would share their values, miraculous worldview, and ideal of a life lived in emulation of Jesus.

This worship service, at which the Lord's Supper 圣餐 would be served, was the spiritual climax of the conference. "Partaking of the Lord's Supper is like partaking of Jesus's life," the preacher told the congregation in his sermon preceding the rite. "This is bread and grape juice, but inside you it will turn into Jesus's body and Jesus's blood. This is a great miracle." He paused, then continued, "Some people's belief in the Lord's Supper is not correct. They think that the bread and the grape juice are just symbols. But we know what Jesus says. It is his body and blood. We believe his promise—those who eat his body and drink his blood will have life We make a new covenant. We will live for God. We will live a holy life."

When he had finished his address, he and some other church leaders began preparing the emblems and vessels for the rite: the large, round flatbread baked specially for the occasion, the pitcher of grape juice, the trays, and the cups. During these preparations, the congregation sang the five short verses of a hymn, "Remembering the Lord's Death," over and over again.⁴ The voices in the congregation rose and fell with the natural dynamics of the musical phrases, gathering intensity with every repetition. It seemed to me as if the meaning pronounced in the words of the hymn and the devotion expressed in the plaintive sway of the melody were building upon each other in layer after layer of heightened emotion, felt throughout the entire congregation. When the song ceased and the officiator knelt before the congregation, holding the large round of flatbread over his head, a hush fell. Many were weeping.

After blessing the bread, the officiator, aided by his assistants, broke the single round into hundreds of tiny pieces, which they then distributed to the congregation as it sang the first hymn repeatedly. Then the audience sang a second hymn, "As I Think About the Cross," slower and more melancholy than the first.⁵ This hymn was followed by silent prayer. Congregants' lips moved rapidly, their eyes shut, their hands clasped around their small bit of bread. The officiant rang a bell, bringing an instant stillness, and then said, "Partake." All ate the bread at the same time. A similar sequence of singing and prayer followed for the blessing and distribution of the grape juice. "This is the Lord Jesus's precious blood," said the officiator, holding his small plastic cup. "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." A few scattered throughout the congregation were quietly speaking in tongues, their **(p.280)** voices whispers, their hands and shoulders shaking. There was much sniffing and eye-wiping. "Partake."

Community of Believers

I felt that day that I had come the closest yet to understanding how people might experience the miraculous within the True Jesus Church. That day, I felt a sense of profound reverence and transforming empathy for those gathered together with me.

Comparing this Lord's Supper rite in Central China with the baptismal service in South China described earlier, I find contrasts but also important commonalities. In the Lord's Supper was presented as "a great miracle," and it was apparent that for many, it was indeed experienced charismatically. Observing the church members immediately around me, I saw that the rite was an intensely personal and deeply moving experience of the divine. By contrast, in the baptismal service, the atmosphere seemed more casual and routinized, despite its theological status as the first gateway to salvation. No great healing transformations were reported by those who rose from the water. The newly baptized church member to whom I spoke on the bus did not report experiencing any particularly moving feelings. Her individual experience in that moment of baptism may have been nothing out of the ordinary. Yet for her, baptism had just opened the door to a new set of extraordinary possibilities, including not only salvation in the world to come but divine help and human fellowship in the present. The same was true for the young adult participants in the Lord's Supper ritual.

Embracing divine help and human fellowship in the present means participating in the local community of the True Jesus Church. Within this community, miraculous occurrences (perhaps during a baptismal service, perhaps as the grape juice is passed, perhaps at someone's mother's sickbed or in a child's high school entrance examination) are ubiquitous. Participating in the True Jesus Church also means working an ownership share in a cooperative dedicated to cultivating and reaping miracles: great and small, biblical and modern, lasting and temporary. After economic reforms enabling the development of private enterprise that transformed Chinese society in the late twentieth century, in the twenty-first century perhaps the development of truth-claiming organizations independently cultivating universal claims and moral certainty will also be transformative.

(p.281) The history of the True Jesus Church, with its deep, meandering roots planted in the rich soil of decades and even centuries of Chinese history, is a history of the dynamic between individuals and the greater believing community as they reach for the extraordinary. Within the deliberate entanglements of sacred organization, charismatic experiences and collective longings shape ordinary life—a rich life, a consequential life, created by divine visions and human hands. **(p.282)**

Notes:

(1.) Interview with Ms. Xie (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

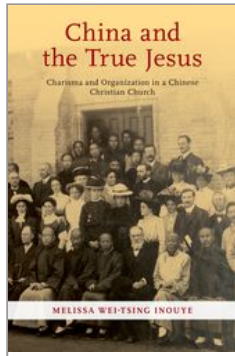
(2.) Ke-hsien Huang, "Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 118-136

(3.) Website of the TJC International Assembly, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://tjc.org/true-jesus-church/history/>.

(4.) This hymn (Hymn no. 296 in Zanmei shi 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise*), like the majority of hymns in the current *Hymns of Praise* (True Jesus Church, publication information unknown) is translated from Western hymnody. The lyrics for "According to Thy Gracious Word" were published by James Montgomery in *The Christian Psalmist* in 1825, and the tune name, "Maitland," was written by George N. Allen in 1844; accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.hymnary.org/text/according_to_thy_gracious_word; http://www.hymnary.org/tune/maitland_allen.

(5.) This hymn (Hymn no. 78 in Zanmei shi 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise*), in English "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," was written by Isaac Watts in 1707 and set to music by Lowell Mason; accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.hymnary.org/text/when_i_survey_the_wondrous_cross.

University Press Scholarship Online
Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

(p.283) Notes

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Introduction

(1.) To protect interviewees' privacy, throughout the book I use only pseudonyms.

(2.) Here I have written "Devil" with a capital D to denote Satan as opposed to a more generic evil spirit, i.e., "a devil." The Chinese word *mogui* 魔鬼 can mean either, depending on the context.

(3.) Interview with Ms. Fu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(4.) Interview with Mr. An (pseudonym), November 2009, South China.

(5.) Daniel H. Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 130; Xi Lian, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (October 2008): 407-441 (esp. 408).

(6.) Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1978), 215

(7.) For a discussion of Pentecostal and charismatic terminology see Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Allan Anderson, Michael Bergunder, André Droogers, and Cornelis van der Laan (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–29; for a discussion of Pentecostal and charismatic movements in an Asian context, see Allan H. Anderson and Edmond Tang, eds., *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011).

(8.) Stephen Feuchtwang and Wang Mingming, *Grassroots Charisma: Four Local Leaders in China* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 1–16

(9.) Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, 16.

(10.) Feuchtwang and Wang, *Grassroots Charisma*, 16.

(11.) Donald Miller, "Contextualizing the Contemporary Pentecostal Movement in China," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), (p.284) 17–32 (26–27); Xi Lian, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 47–49, 64–65, 214, 230–232, 240–241; Chen-Yang Kao, "The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2 (May 2009): 171–188 (181–184); Xi Lian, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 407–441 (410, 432); Xi Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period (1912–1949)," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (October 2004): 851–898 (856, 864–865, 894–898); Deng Zhaoming, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 354–378 (355).

(12.) Daniel Bays, "Christianity and Chinese Sectarian Tradition," *Ch'ing-shih wen-t'i* 4, no. 7 (1982): 33–35; Lian, *Redeemed*, 9, 230–239; Lian, "Messianic Deliverance," 432–433; Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period," 855–856, 892–895; Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 355; Murray A. Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan: Mission, Seminary, and Church* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1991).

(13.) Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 104–105; Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

(14.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 210–216

(15.) Allan Anderson, "Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 118–140 (126); Michael Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 143–173.

(16.) H. Byron Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and Religion in Contemporary Japan: Returning to the Center* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989), 226

(17.) Albert G. Miller, "Pentecostalism as a Social Movement: Beyond the Theory of Deprivation," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 4, no. 9 (1996): 97–114 (113). In the same vein, see Eva Keller, "Scripture Study as Normal Science: Seventh-Day Adventist Practice on the East Coast of Madagascar," in *The Anthropology of Christianity*, ed. Fenella Cannell (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 273–294 (274, 289).

(18.) As Amanda Porterfield's work on the history of healing in Christianity has shown, healing and related charismatic practices have been central to Christian history since its inception. Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). On the widespread presence of practices that constitute a global Pentecostal and charismatic norm but often appear to researchers to be uniquely rooted in local culture, see Joel Robbins, "On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking," *Religion* 33, no. 3 (July 2003): 221–231.

(p.285)

(19.) For discussions of cross-cultural global Christianity, see Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998); Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission and Appropriation of Faith* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002); Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

(20.) William A. Christian, Jr., *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996)

(21.) For example: "That Pentecostalism casts such a spell over many free-lance evangelists in China is because it fits well with traditional Chinese popular religion, which also stresses the miraculous and the supernatural." Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 438.

(22.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Stories From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 4

- (23.) Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message*, 221.
- (24.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 71.
- (25.) Lian, *Redeemed by Fire*, 10.
- (26.) Deng, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," 355.
- (27.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 83.
- (28.) Cox, *Fire From Heaven*, 105.
- (29.) Joseph Smith, in *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), xxi
- (30.) David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 43
- (31.) Helen Hardacre, *Lay Buddhism in Contemporary Japan: Reiyukai Kyodan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 10
- (32.) Earhart, *Gedatsu-kai and Religion*, 236.
- (33.) Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 39-42
- (34.) *Lived Religion in America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997)
- (35.) Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 18
- (36.) Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Karen Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995)

(p.286)

- (37.) 楊約翰林榮杰 Daniel H. Bays, "Indigenous Protestant Churches in China, 1900-1937: A Pentecostal Case Study," in *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity*, ed. Steven Kaplan (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 124-143
- (38.) Here Bays is quoting Grant Wacker, "China's Homegrown Protestants," review of Xi Lian's *Redeemed by Fire*, in *Christian Century* (February 6, 2013): 32-34. Daniel H. Bays, "Chinese Ecstatic Millenarian Folk Religion With Pentecostal Christian Characteristics?" in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 33-42.

(39.) Rubinstein, *The Protestant Community on Modern Taiwan*, 138.

(40.) Deng Zhaoming, ed., "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today, Part I," *Bridge* no. 62 (November–December 1993): 2–16; "The True Jesus Church, Part II," *Bridge* no. 63 (January–February 1994): 2–15; Deng Zhaoming, "Indigenous Chinese Pentecostal Denominations," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 437–466.

(41.) Xi Lian, "Messianic Deliverance"; "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period"; *Redeemed by Fire*.

(42.) Ke-hsien Huang, "Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 118–136.

(43.) Yen-zen Tsai, "Glossolalia and Church Identity: The Role of Sound in the Making of a Chinese Pentecostal-Charismatic Church," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 137–157.

(44.) Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630–1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988) Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling*

(45.) *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010)

(46.) Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Talcott Parsons (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003)

(47.) Thomas Robbins, "Charisma," in William H. Swatos, Jr., ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society* (Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press, 1998), accessed April 25, 2018, <http://hirr.hartsem.edu/ency/charisma.htm>

(48.) John A. Coleman, S. J., "Church-Sect Typology and Organizational Precariousness," *Sociological Analysis* 29, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 55–66

(49.) H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929)

(p.287)

(50.) William R. Swatos, Jr., in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society*, ed. William R. Swatos, Jr. (Walnut Creek, CA: Sage, 1996) "Church-Sect Theory,"

(51.) Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 75–76

(52.) Melissa Inouye, "Tale of Three Primaries: Critical Mass in Mormonism's Informal Institutions," in Joanna Brooks and Gina Colvin, eds., *Decolonizing Mormonism: Approaching a Postcolonial Zion* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2018): 229–262

(53.) Joel Robbins, "Secrecy and the Sense of an Ending: Narrative, Time, and Everyday Millenarianism in Papua New Guinea and in Christian Fundamentalism," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 43, no. 3 (2001): 525–551

(54.) Lian, *Redeemed*, 239.

(55.) Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, Robert Hefner, ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 149–175

(56.) Government statistics tend to be conservative, and estimates by believing Christians tend to be liberal. Nanlai Cao cites a conservative estimate of 23 million in "An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China," in *Annual Report on China's Religions* (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010), 190–212, referenced in Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175 (173). The Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project's moderate estimate in 2011 was 67 million. See <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-regions/#asia>. Accessed July 29, 2017. On the higher end, see David Aikman's estimate of 80 to perhaps even 100 million in *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 7–8.

(57.) In 2010 and 2015 Italy's population was around fifty-nine million. United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division

(p.288)

(2017): Population Prospects: The 2017 Revision, custom data acquired via website, <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/DataQuery/>.

(58.) Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," 173.

(59.) Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857–1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001)

(60.) "Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century," *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51

Chapter 1

- (1.) Jonathan Spence, *God's Chinese Son: The Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan* (New York: Norton, 1996), 323–325
 - (2.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 192–209.
 - (3.) True Jesus Church meeting in April 2009, Nanjing. Hymn #296, 纪念主死 “Remembering the Lord's Death,” 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise* (printed by the True Jesus Church, most recent edition, date and location of publication unknown).
 - (4.) Just to name a few points in the well-populated Taiping constellation, see also Carl Kilcourse, *Taiping Theology: The Localization of Christianity in China, 1843–64* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Thomas H. Reilly, *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2004); P. Richard Bohr, “The Taipings in Chinese Sectarian Perspective,” in *Heterodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Shek (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 393–430; P. Richard Bohr, “The Hakka and the Heavenly Kingdom: Ethnicity and Religion in the Rise of the Taiping Revolution,” *China Notes* 18, no. 4 (Fall 1981): 133–136; Rudolph G. Wagner, *Reenacting the Heavenly Vision: The Role of Religion in the Taiping Rebellion* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1982); Teng Ssu-yü, *The Taiping Rebellion and the Western Powers: A Comprehensive Survey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1971).
 - (5.) P. Richard Bohr, “Taiping Religion and Its Legacy,” in *The Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume Two: 1800–Present*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010), 371–395 (372); Frederick Wakeman, *The Fall of Imperial China* (New York: Free Press, 1975), 20–23. See also Henrietta Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams: One Man's Life in a North China Village, 1857–1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2005), 24–50; Henrietta Harrison, *China (Inventing the Nation)* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 12–13.
 - (6.) Franz Michael, ed., *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents, Volume II: Documents and Comments* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1971), 52–76
 - (7.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 57.
- (p.289)**
- (8.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 58.
 - (9.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 61–62.
 - (10.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 63.

- (11.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 69.
- (12.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 112.
- (13.) P. Richard Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," in Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 371–395 (380).
- (14.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 381.
- (15.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 121.
- (16.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 147–148.
- (17.) C. A. Curwen, *Taiping Rebel: The Deposition of Li Hsiu-ch'eng* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
- (18.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 122–123. Reilly points out that a very small number (1,500) came from Guangxi, where the movement began.
- (19.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 126–129.
- (20.) Naquin, *Peking*, 357–359.
- (21.) Chinese population growth over the centuries is succinctly summarized in "Issues and Trends in China's Demographic History," *Asia for Educators* website initiative of the Weatherhead East Asia Institute of Columbia University, accessed September 14, 2016, http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_population.htm
- (22.) See Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 19–38.
- (23.) John King Fairbank and Ssu-yu Teng, *Ch'ing Administration: Three Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), 1–45
- (24.) Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 40–55.
- (25.) Fairbank and Teng, *Ch'ing Administration*, 59–67.
- (26.) Jeffrey Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells: State Rainmaking and Local Governance in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center East Asian Monographs, 2009), 18
- (27.) Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells*, 165.
- (28.) Snyder-Reinke, *Dry Spells*, 192–193.
- (29.) Pei-Kai Cheng and Michael Lestz, *The Search for Modern China: A Documentary Collection* (New York: Norton, 1999), 146–149

(30.) William T. Rowe, *China's Last Empire: The Great Qing* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 31–33

(31.) Spence, *God's Chinese Son*, 249; Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 155–156.

(32.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 3.

(33.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 165–166.

(34.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 34–35, 168–175.

(35.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 558.

(p.290)

(36.) *North China Herald, Western Reports on the Taiping*, ed. Prescott Clarke and J. S. Gregory (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1982), 262–264
Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*

(37.) E. G. Fishbourne, *Impressions of China and the Present Revolution: Its Progress and Prospects* (London, 1855)
Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*
Curwen, *Taiping Rebel*

(38.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 548.

(39.) Michael, *Taiping Rebellion*, 457.

(40.) Reilly, *Taiping Heavenly Kingdom*, 11.

(41.) Bohr, “Taiping Religion and Its Legacy,” 384–385.

(42.) Vincent Yu-cheng Shih, *The Taiping Ideology* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1967), 481–491

(43.) Bohr, “Taiping Religion and Its Legacy,” 384–385.

(44.) Franz Michael, *Taiping Rebellion, Volume I: History* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), 585–666

(45.) Teng Ssu-yü, “Ts'eng Kuo-ch'üan 曾國荃,” in *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing Period (1622–1912), Volume II*, ed. Arthur W. Hummel (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1944), 749–751

(46.) Frederic Wakeman, Jr., “‘Cleanup’: The New Order in Shanghai,” in *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic in China*, ed. Jeremy Brown, Paul G. Picowicz, and Frederic Wakeman, Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010)

(47.) Rudolf Löwenthal, "The Protestant Press in China," in *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940), 75

(48.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of March 30, 1872, Beijing, Council for World Mission [formerly London Missionary Society] archives, CWM/LMS/North China/Correspondence, accessed at the Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections and Archives, call number MFC 266.00951 L846CN, microfiche 41. Hereafter sources will be identified with "MF" for microfiche and the number of the fiche.

(49.) Mark Elliott, *The Manchu Way* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002)

(50.) Elliott, *The Manchu Way* Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 398-399

(51.) Naquin, *Peking*, 4.

(52.) Elliott, *The Manchu Way*, 103; Naquin, *Peking*, 4-5.

(p.291)

(53.) Naquin, *Peking*, 4-8.

(54.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 27, 1904, Peitaiho, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 295. The Chinese language has five tones (itches).

(55.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of September 18, 1883, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 91C.

(56.) William Purcell, *Onward Christian Soldier: A Life of Sabine Baring-Gould, Parson, Squire, Novelist, Antiquary 1834-1924* (London: Longmans, Green, 1957), 74-75 http://www.hymnary.org/text/onward_christian_soldiers_marching_as

(57.) Pamela J. Walker, *Pulling the Devil's Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2001), 42; Greg Cuthbertson, "God, Empire and War: The Nonconformist Conscience and Militarism in Britain 1850-1900," *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory*, no. 65 (1985): 35-48.

- (58.) Henrietta Harrison, "‘A Penny for the Little Chinese’: The French Holy Childhood Association in China, 1843–1951," *American Historical Review* 113, no. 1 (2008):72–92
- (59.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter to LMS Home Secretary of June 25, 1890, Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates Papers, Council for World Mission Archives, CWM/LMS/01/05/04/014, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.
- (60.) Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1890–1945* (London, New York, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), 12–17
- (61.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Application of July 1, 1890, Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates’ Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.
- (62.) Saville, Letter to LMS Home Secretary of June 25, 1890.
- (63.) Ryan Dunch, "Beyond Cultural Imperialism: Cultural Theory, Christian Missions, and Global Modernity," *History and Theory* 41 (October 2002): 301–325
- (64.) Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, "Cultural Technologies: The Long and Unexpected Life of the Christian Mission Encounter, North China, 1900–1930," *Modern Asian Studies*, forthcoming 2019.
- (65.) Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, 400.
- (66.) Lauren Pfister, "Bible Translations and the Protestant ‘Term Question,’” in *The Handbook of Christianity in China, Volume Two: 1800–Present*, ed. R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010), 361–370
- (p.292)**
- (67.) Mao Haijian, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War: The Collapse of the Heavenly Dynasty*, Joseph Lawson, English text ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 89–99
- (68.) Mao, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War*, 416–437.
- (69.) Mao, *The Qing Empire and the Opium War*, 453.
- (70.) Bohr, "Taiping Religion and Its Legacy," 373–381.
- (71.) "A Report by T T Meadows, FO 17/180, no. 116, enc. in Bonham to Palmerston, September 29, 1851, in Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*, 14.

(72.) "A Letter From the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I J Roberts," *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, vol. II.9 (February 1853) Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*,

(73.) "A Letter From the American Baptist Missionary Rev. I J Roberts," *The Chinese and General Missionary Gleaner*, vol. II.9 (February 1853) Clarke and Gregory, *Western Reports on the Taiping*

(74.) Douglas Hurd, *The Arrow War: An Anglo-Chinese Confusion 1856-1860* (London: Collins, 1967), 170-172

(75.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 175.

(76.) Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang, "Zeng Guofan and Li Hongzhang: On Sending Young Men Abroad to Study," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition vol. II*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano, trans. Chester Tan (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 240-241

(77.) Zeng and Li, *Sources of Chinese Tradition* vol. II, 240-241.

(78.) Edward J. M. Rhoads, *Stepping Forth Into the World: The Chinese Educational Mission to the United States, 1872-81* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011)

(79.) Goodall, *History of the London Missionary Society*, Appendix III, 754-755.

(80.) See the "Form of Medical Report on the Health and Physical Eligibility of Candidates for Service in the London Missionary Society," Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates' Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(81.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of January 24, 1876, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 47B.

(82.) Gladys Evans Meech (1888-1935) was also a London Missionary Society missionary in North China from 1925 to 1935.

(83.) William Hopkyn Rees, Letter of December 15, 1887, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 118C.

(84.) James Gilmour, Letter of December 16, 1887, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 119C.

(85.) *The Anti-Foreign Riots in China in 1891* (Shanghai: *North China Herald*, 1892), 7-10, accessed September 16, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/antiforeignriot00heragoog>.

(86.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 22, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 142B.

(p.293)

(87.) Lillie E. V. Saville Candidates' Papers, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(88.) The information here is taken from the detailed notes in the SOAS Archive Catalogue in a search for "Lillie Saville," including the following files: CWM/LMS/01/05/04/014, "Candidates' Papers (Rice-Sewell)" (Saville is listed as appointed in 1895); CWM/LMS/18/02, "North China Incoming Correspondence"; CWM/LMS/18/02/037, "North China, 1896"; CWM/LMS/18/02/038, "North China, 1897"; CWM/LMS/18/06/028/15, "Report by Lillie Saville, Peking [Beijing]" (dated January 22, 1897). Accessed April 25, 2018, <http://archives.soas.ac.uk/CalmView/Advanced.aspx?src=CalmView.Catalog>.

(89.) E. N. Anderson, "Agriculture, Population, and Environment in Late Imperial China," in *Environment, Modernization and Development in East Asia: Perspectives From Environmental History*, ed. Cuirong Liu and James Beattie (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 42 Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*

(90.) S. C. M. Paine, *The Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895: Perceptions, Power, and Primacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

(91.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China*, 191-192.

(92.) Wakeman, *Fall of Imperial China* Luke S.K. Kwong, "Chinese Politics at the Crossroads: Reflections on the Hundred Days Reform of 1898, in *Modern Asian Studies* 34, no. 3 (July 2000): 663-695

(93.) J. M. Allardyce, Report for the Year Ending December 1898, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 670.

(94.) Micah S. Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 23

(95.) Robert Bickers and R. G. Tiedemann, eds., *Boxers, China, and the World* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 20

(96.) The Scottish missionary Eric Liddell, of Olympic track fame and featured in the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*, was also a London Missionary Society missionary in North China from 1925 to 1943.

(97.) Paul Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 77-78

(98.) Edith Prankard Meech, Letter of June 9, 1900, Xiaozhang, in "Meech, Samuel Evans," MS 380590/2, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(99.) Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, 51–52.

(100.) Mary Bryson, *Cross and Crown* (London: Selwood Printing Works, ca. 1904), 84–92. Accessed September 29, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/crosscrownstorie00brysiala>

(101.) See Bickers and Tiedemann, *Boxers, China, and the World*.

(102.) Cohen, *History in Three Keys*, 184.

(p.294)

(103.) Henrietta Harrison, "Village Politics and National Politics: The Boxer Movement in Central Shanxi," in Bickers and Tiedemann, *Boxers, China, and the World*, 1–15 (11).

(104.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 687.

(105.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of June 5, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 288.

(106.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 20, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 289.

(107.) Wei Enbo's deposition from October 1918 states that he is forty years old (thirty-nine by Western reckoning). Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268.

(108.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 2B.

(109.) 唐红飙真耶稣教会历史史迹考 *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* Zhongguo gujindiming dacidian 中国古今地名大词典 [*Dictionary of China Place Names Past and Present*] (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), 2558–2559

(110.) Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.

(111.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.

(112.) Chris Elder, *Old Peking: City of the Ruler of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 17

- (113.) Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its Histories* (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 2003), 32
- (114.) Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.
- (115.) *True Testimony* Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 [True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume]* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M8 *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*
- (116.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B; Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690; Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 692.
- (117.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B; Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 14.
- (118.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.
- (119.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China Reports, MF 692.
- (120.) Samuel Evans Meech, Letter of August 20, 1903, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 289.
- (121.) Wei, *True Testimony*, 2B.

(p.295)

- (122.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (123.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (124.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.
- (125.) Mary J. Bryson, Letter of December 1, ca. 1905, Tianjin, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 307.
- (126.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.

- (127.) Lillie E. V. Saville, Letter of December 17, 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 296.
- (128.) Lillie E. V. Saville, "Candidates' Papers (Rice-Sewell)," CWM/LMS/01/05/4/014, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.
- (129.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1904, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Reports, MF 690.
- (130.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China Reports, MF 692.
- (131.) Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams*, 11.
- (132.) Harrison, *The Man Awakened From Dreams*, 86-87.
- (133.) Lillie E.V. Saville, Letter of October 20, 1905, Beijing, CWM/LMS/China/North China/Correspondence, MF 305.

Chapter 2

- (1.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1906, Beijing, Council for World Mission [formerly London Missionary Society] Archives (hereafter CWM), CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, accessed at the Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections and Archives, 266.00951 L846CN microfiche 698. Hereafter sources from this collection with this call number will be identified with "MF" for microfiche and the number of the fiche.
- (2.) Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 624-625
- (3.) Naquin, *Peking*, 623-625.
- (4.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 692.
- (5.) Tongwenbao 通問報 *The Chinese Christian Intelligencer* (hereafter *Intelligencer*), no. 182, December 26, 1905-January 30, 1906, p. 4, Shanghai Municipal Library record no. J5030, MF 00017.
- (6.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905, Cangzhou, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 694.
- (7.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905.

(p.296)

(8.) Edith S. Murray, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1905. It is interesting that she refers to the Holy Spirit as having a gender (as “He”).

(9.) Young-Hoon Lee, “The Korean Holy Spirit Movement in Relation to Pentecostalism,” in *Asian and Pentecostal: The Charismatic Face of Christianity in Asia*, ed. Allan H. Anderson and Edmond Tang (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2011), 413–426

(10.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 1–7

(11.) Bergunder, “Constructing Indian Pentecostalism: On Issues of Methodology and Representation,” Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal* Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 45–65

(12.) Historians of classical Pentecostalism have long wrestled with “the problem of origins.” First there was the “providential” view held by Pentecostals who assumed that God’s power had touched down among humanity in an abrupt, universal, and unprecedented way. Then there were more focused, historically oriented narratives of how the twentieth-century Pentecostal movement originated with American revivals, the Azusa Street revival foremost among them, and were outgrowths of nineteenth-century holiness traditions and possibly black Christianity in the United States. Recently a new global turn has emphasized the multiplicity of Pentecostal centers, including some that predated the Azusa Street revival. Allan Anderson, “Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective,” in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 118–140 (118–126); Allan H. Anderson, *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1–15; Cox, *Fire From Heaven*; Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); David Reed, *In Jesus’ Name: The History and Beliefs of Oneness Pentecostals* (Dorset, UK: Deo Publishing, 2008); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Cheryl J. Sanders, *Saints in Exile: The Holiness-Pentecostal Experience in African American Religion and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Bergunder, “Constructing Indian Pentecostalism,” 143–173.

(13.) For example, see Robert Hefner's definition in "The Unexpected Modern—Gender, Piety, and Politics in the Global Pentecostal Surge," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert W. Hefner (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana (p.297) University Press, 2013), 1–36 (2): "first, an emphasis on the achievement of a personalized and self-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ . . . second, ritual performance that highlights the ever-present power of the Holy Spirit . . . and, third, religious enthusiasm centered on the experience of charismata ("gifts of the Holy Spirit"), including prophecy, exorcism, miraculous healing, and speaking in tongues (glossolalia). Put simply, Pentecostalism is an affectively expressive, effervescent Christianity that takes literally the wondrous miracles described in the New Testament's Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1–4), and proclaims their availability and importance for believers today." See also Allan Anderson's definition in *An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 9–15.

(14.) Allan Anderson, "Varieties, Taxonomies, and Definitions," in *Studying Global Pentecostalism: Theories and Methods*, ed. Michael Bergunder, A. F. Droogers, Cornelis van der Laan, and Allan Anderson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 13–29

(15.) Melissa Inouye, "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories within Protestant Christianity," in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850–2015, Vol. 2*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 884–919

(16.) Bergunder, "Constructing Indian Pentecostalism," 143–173.

(17.) See John Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (New York: Belknap, 2012); Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Vintage, 2007); Anderson, "Revising Pentecostal History in Global Perspective," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 126–129; Roger E. Hedlund, "Indigenous Pentecostalism in India," in Anderson and Tang, *Asian and Pentecostal*, 174–197 (175); A. C. George, "Pentecostal Beginnings in Travancore, South India," *Asian Journal of Pentecostal Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 220; Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

(18.) John W. O'Malley, *The Jesuits: A History From Ignatius to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014) *Rough Stone Rolling*

(19.) Jonathan Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Penguin, 1985), 138

(20.) Spence, *Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci, The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia's History* (New York: Macmillan, 1967)

(21.) Bernt Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 12 (Jan. 1908): 3

(22.) Bernt Berntsen, 1908 Passport Application, US Department of State, General Records of the Department of State, Record Group 59, US Passport Applications, 1795-1925, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) Microfilm Publication M1490.

(23.) Bernt Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."

(p.298)

(24.) Bernt Berntsen's 1908R. G. Tiedemann, "Protestant Missionaries," in *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II*, ed. Nicolas Standaert and R. G. Tiedemann (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009), 550

(25.) Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."

(26.) Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."

(27.) Elizabeth Sinn, *Pacific Crossing: California Gold, Chinese Migration, and the Making of Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013), 96-98; E. Mowbray Tate, *Transpacific Steam: The Story of Steam Navigation From the Pacific Coast of North America to the Far East and the Antipodes, 1867-1941* (New York, London, and Toronto: Cornwall Books, 1986), 21-23.

(28.) Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 72.

(29.) Elizabeth Sinn notes that this \$60 fare for passage from Hong Kong to San Francisco on the *Sultana* in 1852 was a relatively high fare because in the middle of the Gold Rush, high passenger volume could result in fares as low as \$28. Sinn, *Pacific Crossings*, 62. 2017 price taken from the Consumer Price Index estimates of the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis, accessed April 22, 2018, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>.

(30.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 23-25.

(31.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 24.

(32.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 24-25.

(33.) *North China Herald*, "Washington's Knowledge of Shanghai," February 9, 1906, 288, accessed April 25, 2018, <http://primarysources.brillonline.com.ezproxy.auckland.ac.nz/browse/north-china-herald-online>

(34.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 62.

(35.) Rotem Kowner, "The Impact of the War on Naval Warfare," in *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War*, ed. Rotem Kowner (Abingdon, UK, and New York: Routledge, 2007), 269–289

(36.) *Intelligencer* no. 284, January 4–February 1, 1908, last page.

(37.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 62–65. The *Nippon Maru*, built in 1899, had accommodations in first class, second class, and steerage.

(38.) This advertisement does not list individual fares for classes but I have estimated these fares based on rates for steerage from Hong Kong to San Francisco in 1867 (\$40, in Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 125) and relatively low cabin fares of \$200 from San Francisco to Hong Kong in 1874 (Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 29). This gives us an idea of the ratios between cabin and steerage fares (5 to 1). Rates of \$225 (first class) for Pacific Mail Steamship Company passage between San Francisco, Shanghai, and Hong Kong in the first half of 1916 (just before a rate hike, suggesting that prices had been at this level for some time) suggests that the fare in the several years before could have been around \$225 or perhaps a bit less (Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 39). Tate (*Transpacific Steam*, 55–56) lists first- and second-class rates for

(p.299)

round-the-world fares offered by the Oceanic Steamship Company in 1900 (\$600 and \$375, respectively), which gives us an idea of the ratio of first- to second-class fares (1.6 to 1). Prices estimated for 2017 with Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis CPI calculator, accessed April 25, 2018, <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/community/teaching-aids/cpi-calculator-information/consumer-price-index-1800>.

(39.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 39.

(40.) Tate, *Transpacific Steam*, 65.

(41.) *Intelligencer* no. 212 (August 20–September 17, 1906), last page, MF 0248; Nestle's Milk advertisements appear regularly in the *Intelligencer* from at least as early as no. 201 (April 24–May 29, 1906), last page, MF 0163.

(42.) R. G. Tiedemann, "Protestant Missionaries," in Standaert and Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2009); Daniel Bays, "The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (University of Illinois Press, 1999), 53–54.

(43.) Here I edited out a typographical error, a double "your."

- (44.) Berntsen, "Came From China to America for Pentecost."
- (45.) "Everywhere Preaching the Word," *The Apostolic Faith* 1, no. 10 (September 1907), 1
- (46.) Bernt Berntsen's 1908 *Handbook of Christianity in China Vol IIR*. G. Tiedemann, "Consequential Transatlantic Networks Shaped the Polyglot Nature of the Protestant Missionary Enterprise in China," *Ching Feng*, New Series, 16, no. 1-2 (2017): 23-51
- (47.) Bernt Berntsen June 20, 1919, Emergency Passport Application, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington DC; NARA Series: *Passport Applications for Travel to China, 1906-1925; Volume 18: Emergency Passport Applications: China*. Located from a search on Ancestry.com.: *U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925* (database online).
- (48.) Stanley K. Burgess, ed., *Encyclopedia of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity* (Routledge, 2006)
- (49.) Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 51-65
- (50.) Tongchuan fuyin zhenli bao 通傳福音真理報 [*Popular Gospel Truth*] (hereafter *Popular Gospel Truth*), May 1916, 1; November 1916, 5.
- (51.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, September 1915, 8.
- (52.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, November 1915, 1.
- (53.) Gail King, "Christian Women of China in the Seventeenth Century," in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010), 59
- (p.300)**
- (54.) See Christopher A. Reed and Cynthia Brokaw, eds., *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008* (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010); Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, eds., *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015).
- (55.) David Strand, *Rickshaw Beijing* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), 168
- (56.) Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2014)

(57.) Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940)

(58.) Melissa Inouye, "Charismatic Moderns: Pluralistic Discourse in Chinese Christian Communities, 1905–1926," *Twentieth-Century China* 42, no. 1 (2017): 26–51

(59.) Donald MacGillivray, ed., *A Century of Protestant Missions in China (1807–1907): Being the Centenary Conference Historical Volume* (New York: American Tract Society; Shanghai: American Presbyterian Mission Press, 1907), 403. These circulation numbers were surpassed by the circulation figures for the Seventh-Day Adventist monthly, *Signs of the Times* [Shizhao yuebao], which stood at 10,000 subscriptions in 1916 and 70,000 in 1937. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee and Christie Chui-Shan Chow, "Publishing Prophecy: A Century of Adventist Print Culture in China," in *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China*, ed. Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015), 51–90 (56–57); Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 87.

(60.) *Intelligencer* no. 181, February 4–March 5 1905, MF 0010, p. 3B.

(61.) *Gospel Proclamation* 福音宣報, June 1909. Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-1.

(62.) Lauren Pfister, "Bible Translations and the Protestant 'Term Question,'" in Tiedemann, *Handbook of Christianity in China*, 361–370.

(63.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 50

(64.) Lori Ferrell, *The Bible and the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 60–62

(65.) Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 90.

(66.) *Gospel Proclamation* 福音宣報, June 1909. Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-1.

(p.301)

(67.) Löwenthal records that between 1815 and 1937 periodicals were produced in Mandarin, Fuzhou dialect, Shanghai dialect, Xiamen dialect, Romanized Mandarin, Romanized Fuzhou dialect, and Romanized versions of two other dialects. Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 81.

(68.) Bernt Berntsen, "From Brother Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, December 1, 1908, p. 4; "From Brother Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 15, 1909, p. 4.

(69.) To cite one example from each: an account of his tongue's experience and return to China in *The Apostolic Faith*, January 1908; a report on China missionary work in *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 15, 1909; a paragraph in *Pentecostal Testimony*, July 1, 1910; a brief paragraph in *Word and Witness*, September 20, 1913, on how Berntsen's young son Henry has been called to preach the gospel; a note in *Meat in Due Season*, June 3, 1916, on \$25 disbursed to Berntsen; a bulletin item in *Pentecostal Evangel*, October 2, 1920, on the sale of Berntsen's old mission station to the Salvation Army (twenty-eight rooms), for \$1000. <https://pentecostalarchives.org/search/>.

(70.) *Intelligencer* no. 193, March 25–April 30, 1906, p. 4, MF 0107.

(71.) Berntsen, "From Brother Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 15, 1909, p. 4

(72.) Berntsen, "From Brother B. Berntsen," *Bridegroom's Messenger*, August 1, 1910, p. 1

(73.) Gordon Mathews, *Ghetto at the Center of the World: Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011)

(74.) Technically, however, Chinese emigrants often requested that their bones be shipped back to their homeland, making it a round-trip journey. Sinn, *Pacific Crossing*, 266–269.

(75.) Erik Baark, *Lightning Wires: The Telegraph and China's Technological Modernization, 1860–1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1997), 42–45

(76.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 46.

(77.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 75.

(78.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 81.

(79.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 86.

(80.) Baark, *Lightning Wires*, 172.

(81.) David Pong, "Confucian Patriotism and the Destruction of the Woosung Railway, 1877," *Modern Asian Studies* 7, no. 4 (1973): 652–655

(82.) Ralph William Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse: The Economics of Railroads in China, 1876–1937* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University East Asia Center, 1984), 46–47

(83.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 49.

(84.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 51.

(85.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 51.

(86.) Huenemann, *The Dragon and the Iron Horse*, 66.

(p.302)

(87.) *Intelligencer* no. 184, December 26, 1905–January 24, 1906, p. 5.

(88.) Cho-yun Hsu, *China: A New Cultural History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 541

(89.) Madeleine Yue Dong, *Republican Beijing: The City and Its History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 36–37

(90.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1906, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports/Box 5/1904-1907.

(91.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1906.

(92.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 3A and 45A. Here Wei records that the land for the China Christian Church was given to them by Samuel Evans Meech (Mi Zhiwen) of the London Missionary Society. He claims to have made the application with the Qing government (“Prince Regent’s government”) but the church may have been completed in 1912. Daniel Bays discusses these earliest independent churches beginning with the Chinese Christian Union (基督徒會 *Jidutu hui*) in Shanghai in 1903 in *A New History of Christianity in China*. He dates the formation of the Beijing independent churches to 1912–1913 (Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 96, 102.

(93.) *True Testimony* Robert C. Allen, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, Christine Moll-Murata, and Jan Luiten Van Zanden, “Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738–1925: In Comparison With Europe, Japan, and India,” *Economic History Review* 64 (2010):8–38. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00515.x/full>

(94.) Scott Sunquist, *A Dictionary of Asian Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001) <http://www.bdcconline.net/en/stories/c/cheng-jingyi.php>

(95.) J. D. Liddell, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1917, Kang Wa Shih Church in West City, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 740.

(96.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1911, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 715.

(97.) *True Testimony*, 3A.

(98.) *True Testimony*, 3A.

(99.) Dong, *Republican Beijing*, 164–165.

(100.) Frances Stuckey, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1912, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 719.

(101.) Frances Stuckey, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1912.

(102.) Mingzheng Shi, “From Imperial Gardens to Public Parks: The Transformation of Urban Space in Early Twentieth-Century Beijing,” *Modern China* 24, no.3 (July 1998), 219–254

(103.) Dr. and Mrs. E. J. and Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1916, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 736.

(p.303)

(104.) *True Testimony*, 3A; Zhang Barnabas, *Mission Record* 傳道記 (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, self-published, 1929), 23; in a November 19, 1917 deposition, Liu Maria gives her age as forty-six years old (forty-five years by Western reckoning), Beijing Municipal Archives, J181-031-02801, p. 15.

(105.) David E. Mungello, *The Great Encounter of China and the West, 1500–1800* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 21–22

(106.) *True Testimony*, 3A.

(107.) Tang Hongbiao 唐红飙, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* 真耶穌教會历史史迹考 (self-published, 2006), 15. Here he seems to be quoting *Shitu Baoluo Luezhuan* (使徒保羅略傳 *A Short Biography of Apostle Paul*), a True Jesus Church publication to which I have not yet obtained access.

(108.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan* 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 *True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M6張之瑞

(109.) *True Testimony* 3B, 4A. This section of Wei’s diary is written in the third person, although the other sections are written in the first person.

(110.) Hsu Chung-mao, Lee Chia-ta, Ho Pang-chieh, Chou Ching-hui, and Huang Pao-chin, *The Chinese as Seen by the Western Illustrators in the 19th Century* (Taipei: Nueva Vision, 2012), 55

(111.) Ryan Dunch, “Mothers to Our Country: Conversion, Education, and Ideology Among Chinese Protestant Women, 1870–1930,” in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010) 324–325

(112.) Bernt Berntsen’s letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801 直隶交涉公署关于魏恩波借贲德新银洋请传饬清还等情的函, p. 197.

(113.) A legal document dated November 10, 1917, gives Berntsen’s address as “Apostolic Faith Church on Xinglong Street, outside of Qianmen” 前門外興隆街信心會. J181-031-02801, p. 2.

(114.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(115.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, August 1916, p. 6.

(116.) Peter Chen-main Wang, “Chinese Christians in Republican China,” in Standaert and Tiedemann, eds., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. 2*, 600–607 (600).

(117.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1915, Beijing, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 731.

(118.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Section Seven.

(119.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(120.) *True Testimony*, 122B, 123A.

(121.) Bernt Berntsen’s letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917.

(p.304)

(122.) Bernt Berntsen’s letter to Judge Chao, written November 23, 1917.

(123.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Section Nine (Wang Peter 王彼得).

(124.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M6, Sections Six and Nine (Wang Peter 王彼得).

(125.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, *Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】* [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 3A, 4B, 8A.

(126.) Bernt Berntsen's letter to the local court, written January 1, 1918, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801 直隶交涉公署关于魏恩波借贲德新银洋請传饬清还等函, p. 166.

(127.) Matthew 28:19. KJV.

Chapter 3

(1.) Wanguo gengzheng jiao bao 萬國更正教報 *Global Church Correction* (hereafter *Global Church Correction*) no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1 ("A True Testimony Summarizing Wei Paul's Experience 魏保羅經歷略表真見證") and no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4 ("In the War in the Spirit World, Wei Paul Relied on the Holy Spirit 靈界大戰魏保羅靠聖靈論"). There are conflicting accounts of when precisely Wei had his vision. See Tang Hongbiao 唐紅飆, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會历史史迹考* (self-published, 2006), 19, 28. A November 19, 1917, legal affidavit by Liu Ai (Wei Maria), Wei's wife, says that on May 28, 1917, Wei Enbo went south to preach and had not yet returned to Beijing (Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 15). A late-May date seems correct.

(2.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1.

(3.) Lau Shaw (Lao She), *Rickshaw Boy*, trans. Evan King (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1945) *Modern Chinese Literature*

(4.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4.

(5.) Wei Enbo, 魏恩波, *Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [shang] 聖靈真見證書【上】* [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. I*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear) (hereafter *True Testimony*), 17B-20A, 25B.

(6.) Zhongguo gujindiming dacidian 中国古今地名大词典 *Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Chinese Place Names* (Shanghai: Shanghai cishu chubanshe, 2005), 2631

(7.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 4.

(8.) *True Testimony* Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed. Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 *True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary (p. 305) Commemorative Volume* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M8

(9.) *True Testimony* Daniel Bays, "The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 50–68

(10.) *True Testimony*, 4A.

(11.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(12.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(13.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(14.) *True Testimony*, 4B.

(15.) This letter seems to be Wei's earliest theological text. It introduces some of his key ideas likely informed by his contact with Seventh-day Adventist and Pentecostal churches, but also accessible in the Bible: immersion baptism, the baptism of the Spirit, and faith healing. By anchoring this message with a reference from the Book of Isaiah, 29:13 (KJV): "this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me," Wei was laying down a precedent for primitivist biblical rhetoric within the church. For Republican-era Chinese theological texts, see Chloë Starr, *Chinese Theology: Text and Context* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 41–72.

(16.) *True Testimony*, 4B, 5A. Thomas DuBois's study of popular religious practice in Cang County, a county slightly to the east of Rongcheng county in the same province of Hebei, writes that in North China, spirit-writing practice consisted of a human medium transcribing the words of a deity during a state of possession. It was customarily described as "holding the *luan* [a phoenix-like bird] to consult the spirits" (扶鸞請仙 *fu luan qing xian*) (DuBois, *The Sacred Village*, 132). The phrase in Wei's diary that describes what Zhang Zhongsan did was "to write on someone else's behalf" (代筆寫信 *dai bi xie xin*). Like "*fu luan*," Wei was receiving and transcribing a divine message. However, there are numerous examples of direct revelation in the Christian tradition, including biblical prophets and apostles, and later saints and prophets who claimed to follow this pattern. Hence Wei's revelatory experience has parallels in the Chinese environment, but also fits within the global Christian tradition.

(17.) Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 71

(18.) *True Testimony*, 5B, 6A.

(19.) Wei's claim to be fasting for thirty-nine days—nearly on par with Jesus, who fasted for forty days—created a spectacle in Huangcun. The length of Wei's fast was clearly meant to reference biblical forty-day fasts while at the same time discreetly showing deference by falling short by one day. A few accounts of other True Jesus Church members' thirty-nine-day fasts in the *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume* mention that certain people ate "light" things during their "fast," such as

(p.306)

fruit. This was presented as an exception, however, not as a rule, and certainly not as an ideal.

(20.) Ann Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010)

(21.) *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 7 ("In praise of Wei Paul Enbo, bishop of the True Jesus Church in Beijing 誠頌北京真耶穌教會總監督耶保羅恩波記").

(22.) See Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 114.

(23.) In a 1918 legal document related to Berntsen's lawsuit against Wei, Liu Ai gives her age as forty-six years (forty-five years by Western reckoning), Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 15.

(24.) One account of this situation appears in a document related to Berntsen's lawsuit against Wei, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, p. 9.

(25.) *True Testimony*, 7B.

(26.) *True Testimony*, 8A.

(27.) *True Testimony*, 8A; Baigou is a town in Hebei in what is now the south of the city of 高碑店市, near the Baigou River. Zhongguo Gujin Diming Dacidian 中国古今地名大辞典 *Dictionary of Traditional and Modern Chinese Place Names* (上海辞书出版社 Shanghai Cishu Chubanshe), 916.

(28.) *True Testimony*, 8A.

(29.) *True Testimony*, 9A.

(30.) *True Testimony*, 9A.

(31.) *True Testimony*, 10A.

(32.) *True Testimony*, 10A.

(33.) *True Testimony*, 10B.

(34.) *True Testimony*, 10B.

(35.) *True Testimony*, 11A.

(36.) *True Testimony*, 11A.

(37.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(38.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(39.) *True Testimony*, 11B.

(40.) A helpful point of reference for understanding Wei's visions comes from religious studies research on charismatic founding visions, such as that found in Ann Taves and Steven Harper's dialogue on the question of how to explain Mormon founder Joseph Smith's differing accounts of his 1820 theophany. Taves suggests that Smith expanded his vision over the course of multiple recounting to strengthen his revelatory and prophetic claims. Harper points to the context in which these accounts were offered and uses theory from memory studies to suggest that an account prompted by spontaneous associative retrieval will necessarily be different from accounts involving strategic retrieval. Ann Taves and Steven Harper, *Mormon Studies Review* 3 (2016): 53–84. In Wei's case, the first (and longest, and most complex) story came from his daily autobiographical record, written down soon after the

(p.307)

fact. The second (February 1919) and third (July 1919) accounts were newsletter articles with an evangelistic and regulatory purpose.

(41.) *True Testimony*, 20A.

(42.) *True Testimony*, 27A–28B.

(43.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 3 (“The first instance of Wei Baoluo and others being beaten in Huangxun, south of Beijing, at the hands of the false pastors 魏保羅等頭次被打記京南黃村鎮假牧師現象”).

(44.) *True Testimony*, 23AB.

(45.) *True Testimony*, 31B.

(46.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M5.

(47.) *True Testimony*, 24B, 28A, 29B–30A, 31B.

(48.) Lian Xi, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010)

(49.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (True Jesus Church, date of publication unclear (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 4A.

(50.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, N25.

(51.) Contemporary research on “boss Christians” shows a similar profile of Chinese Christians. See, for example, Nanlai Cao, “Christian Entrepreneurs and the Post-Mao State: An Ethnographic Account of Church-State Relations in China’s Economic Transition,” *Sociology of Religion* 68, no. 1 (2007): 45–66; Chen Cunfu and Huang Tianhai, “The Emergence of a New Type of Christians in China Today,” *Review of Religious Research* 46, no. 2 (Dec. 2004): 183–200.

(52.) *True Testimony*, 16B, 48B.

(53.) *True Testimony*, 26A-B.

(54.) *True Testimony*, 48A.

(55.) *True Testimony*, 35A-B.

(56.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Year Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*] (Shanghai: True Jesus Church, 1936), 94

(57.) *True Testimony*, 17B-20A.

(58.) *True Testimony*, 25B.

(59.) *True Testimony*, 36B–37B.

(60.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F1-F2.

(61.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F1-F2.

(62.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 1 (“Advertising *Global Church Correction* 萬國更正教報廣告”).

(63.) Pamphlet printed by Wei Enbo and Liu Maria, “Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop due to Miraculous Occurrences 綢緞洋貨布莊因出神跡特別大減價,” Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, p. 26.

(p.308)

(64.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919; no. 2, July 27, 1919.

(65.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 1 (“Letter From Nanjing Xinjie Kou Christian Church Ma Zhaorui 南京新街口基督教馬兆瑞”).

(66.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, July 27, 1919, p. 1 (“Letter From Song Linzhang, a Person of Gao Village 高邑人宋琳璋”).

(67.) *Global Church Correction* no. 2, p. 4 (“Record of Part II of the Testimony and Warning of Fang Tiaochen to all Christians in the World 綠信徒方條塵致世界耶穌教諸信徒真見證警告后書”).

(68.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C2.

(69.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, pp. 1-2 (“Events in the True Jesus Church in Tangjiazhuang, Bochang County, Shandong Province 山東博昌縣唐家莊真耶穌教會發現”).

(70.) Wei Enbo 魏恩波, Shengling zhen jianzheng shu [xia] 聖靈真見證書【下】 [*The True Testimony of the Holy Spirit, Vol. II*] (hereafter *True Testimony II*), 13B, 14A.

(71.) *True Testimony*, 65A.

(72.) Pamphlet printed by Wei Enbo and Liu Maria, “Special Discounted Prices at the Silk and Imported Cloth Shop due to Miraculous Occurrences 綢緞洋貨布莊因出神跡特別大減價,” Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, pp. 26-28.

(73.) Beijing Municipal Archives J181-019-22268, pp. 13-14.

(74.) *True Testimony*, 71A, 115B; document related to Berntsen’s lawsuit against Wei dated November 10, 1917, says that Wei Enbo has “mental illness,” so his wife must manage his shop. Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801.

(75.) *True Testimony*, 58A, 59A.

(76.) *True Testimony*, 65A, 65B.

(77.) *True Testimony*, 72B.

(78.) Documents from November 1917, Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, pp. 9 and 15.

(79.) Beijing Municipal Archives J181-031-02801, pp. 176-186.

(80.) *True Testimony II*, 22A.

(81.) *Global Church Correction* no. 5, March 1, 1920, p. 1; *Global Church Correction* no. 6, November 1, 1920, p. 1.

(82.) *True Testimony*, 113B-114A.

(83.) *True Testimony*, 31A, 128B.

(84.) *True Testimony*, 113B-114A.

(85.) *True Testimony*, 115B.

(86.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 2 (“True Jesus Church Personnel 真耶穌教會職員”); *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 4 (“At left, a brief chart of the bishops, elders, and deacons of the Global Church 萬國教會各監督長老執事略表幾位如左”).

(87.) At the group level, “[g]roups perpetuate an initial thing or event deemed special by agreeing on how it can be re-created. The re-creation of thing/event rests

(p.309)

on group consensus regarding the efficacy of practices relative to the special goal, which outsiders typically do not find convincing.” Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered*, 53 (table 1.3, “Variations in the Nature of Experience by Ascriptive Unit and Type of Ascription”).

(88.) *True Testimony*, 87AB.

(89.) David Ownby, “A History for Falun Gong,” *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 6, no. 2 (April 2003): 223-243

(90.) The rebel leader, Zhu Yuanzhang 朱元璋, went on to found the Ming dynasty, which lasted from 1367 to 1644. In 1644, the Qing conquered China.

(91.) T. Howard Smith, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Tongxian, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1918-1921, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(92.) “Probe Into the Relief Mode for the 1917 Flood in Zhili Province and the Capital,” *Journal of Shandong Normal University (Humanities and Social Sciences)* 58, no. 3 (2013): 81-90

(93.) Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Beijing, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 737.

(94.) “China: Showing Centres of LMS Work” in Norman Goodall, *A History of the London Missionary Society 1890-1945* (London, New York, and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1954), 142

(95.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1917, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1918-1921, accessed at SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(96.) Frances Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917.

(97.) *True Testimony*, 98.

(98.) Samuel Evans Meech, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1914, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 729.

(99.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F3.

(100.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F3.

(101.) Matthew 7:16-20, KJV.

(102.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, B19.

(103.) Chow Tse-tung, *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1960), 37

(104.) Robert C. Allen, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, et al, **(p.310)** "Wages, Prices, and Living Standards in China, 1738-1925: In Comparison With Europe, Japan, and India," *The Economic History Review*, 64 (2010): 8-38. <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1468-0289.2010.00515.x/full>

(105.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 38.

(106.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 38.

(107.) President Wilson was first cousin to Samuel Isett Woodbridge's late wife Jeanie Wilson Woodrow Woodbridge. Jeanie had died in 1913, leaving behind eight children, four of whom became missionaries in China. Frank Price, ed., *Our China Investment: Sixty Years of the Southern Presbyterian Church in China: With Biographies, Autobiographies, and Sketches of all Missionaries Since the Opening of the Work in 1867* (Nashville, TN: Executive Committee of Foreign Missions, Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1927), 16, 170, 175; Eugene P. Trani, "Woodrow Wilson, China, and the Missionaries, 1913-1921," *Journal of Presbyterian History* 49 (1962-1985), no. 4 (*China Missions in History*, Winter 1971): 328-351; Woodrow Wilson, *The Papers of Woodrow Wilson*, vol. 7, ed. Arthur S. Link (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 637; Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 86.

(108.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 88-89.

(109.) Chow, *The May Fourth Movement*, 101.

(110.) Rana Mitter, *Bitter Revolution: China's Struggle With the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 4-11

(111.) *Global Church Correction*, July 27, 1919, p. 4 ("Christians who promote patriotism are all servants of the devil 教會人提倡愛世國者都是魔鬼的僕人").

(112.) *Chinese Christian Intelligencer* 通問報, no. 857, July 1919, p. 6, microfiche (hereafter MF) 395.

(113.) *Global Church Correction*, July 27, 1919, p. 4. 教會人提倡愛世國者都是魔鬼的僕人。

(114.) See, for instance, Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China 1857-1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press); Lian Xi, "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (October 2008): 407-441.

(115.) Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*, 2nd ed. (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2009), 188-189

(116.) Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, "Christian Crossing: Bernt Berntsen and Wei Enbo, and the Beginnings of Chinese Pentecostal Christianity," in *Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity in Global China*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017): 91-117

(117.) *Bridegroom's Messenger*, April 4, 1909.

(118.) *Global Church Correction* no. 3, November 22, 1919, p. 1 ("Letter From a True Jesus Church Congregation that Will Soon Form in Jiangsu Province 江蘇省真耶穌教會快要成立的要函照登").

(p.311)

(119.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 6 ("Cancel All Church Names 取消各公會之名稱").

(120.) Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*, 69-72.

(121.) Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants*, 72.

(122.) Bays, "Protestant Missionary Establishment," 51.

(123.) *True Testimony*, 99A.

(124.) *True Testimony II*, 27A.

(125.) *True Testimony*, 35B.

(126.) Zhang Barnabas, *Chuandao ji* 傳道記 [*Mission Record*] (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, self-published, 1929), 23.

(127.) *True Testimony*, 42B-43A.

- (128.) Stuart Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Penguin Books, 1966), 48
- (129.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 1999), 78
- (130.) Timothy Brook, "Auto-Organization in Chinese Society," in *Civil Society in China*, ed. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2015), 19–45
- (131.) Shakhari Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals in May Fourth Societies and the Roots of Mass-Party Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 50–52
- (132.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 57.
- (133.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 52.
- (134.) Rahav, *The Rise of Political Intellectuals*, 52, 57–58, 138.
- (135.) Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, 68–69.
- (136.) Charles A. Keller, "The Christian Student Movement, YMCAs, and Transnationalism," *Journal of American-East Asian Relations*, 13, Special Volume—Christianity as an Issue in the History of U.S.–China Relations (2004–2006): 55–80
- (137.) "Introduction to the First National Congress of the Communist Party of China," *Chinese Communist Party News* (中国共产党一次全国代表大会简介). <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64168/64553/4427940.html>.
- (138.) Schram, *Mao Tse-Tung*, 64–65.
- (139.) Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 63
- (140.) *Global Church Correction* no. 1, February 1, 1919, p. 2 ("True Jesus Church Personnel 真耶穌教會職員").
- (141.) *Intelligencer*, no. 846, April 1919, p. 8, MF 0341; no. 846, April 1919, 31, MF 0343.
- (142.) *True Light* 真光, March 21, 1929, 16–21.
- (143.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M8; Tang Hongbiao 唐红飙, *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* 真耶穌教會历史史迹考 (self-published, 2006), 112.
- (144.) In some True Jesus Churches in South China, these are the first five of the True Jesus Church's Ten Basic Articles of Faith 十大基本信仰信条 and are often referred to as the "Five Great Doctrines" 五大教义. Shi da jiben xinyang xintiao 十 (p.312)
-

大基本信仰信条, 基本信仰概述 *Outline of Basic Beliefs* (Fuqing: True Jesus Church).

(145.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M9.

(146.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M9.

(147.) T. Howard Smith, Report for the Year Ending December 1921, Peking county, CMS/LMS/North China/Reports MF 751.

(148.) Pierre Fuller, "North China Famine Revisited: Native Relief in the Warlord Era, 1920-1921," in *Modern Asian Studies* 47, no. 3 (2013): 820-850

(149.) Smith, Report for Year Ending December 1922, MF 754.

(150.) F. Rawlinson, Helen Thoburn, and D. MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church as Revealed in the National Christian Conference* (Shanghai: Oriental Press, 1922), 82. https://archive.org/details/MN41609ucmf_0

(151.) See Ka-che Yip, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922-1927* (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western Washington University, 1980); Jessie G. Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920-1928* (Notre Dame, IN: Cross-Cultural Publications, 1988).

(152.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 19.

(153.) "The Quest for an 'Indigenous Church': German Missionaries, Chinese Christians, and the Indigenization Debates of the 1920s," *The American Historical Review*, 122, no. 1 (2017): 85-114

(154.) *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, Cheng Jingyi, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/c/cheng-jingyi.php>

(155.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 32.

(156.) Rawlinson, Thoburn, and MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church*, 3-6; *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C23.

(157.) *Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Christianity*, Gao Daling, accessed April 18, 2018, <http://www.bdconline.net/en/stories/g/gao-daling.php>.

(158.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C23; Lian, "Messianic Deliverance," 424.

(159.) W. T. Rowlands, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1922, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 755.

(160.) W. T. Rowlands, Report for Year Ending December 31, 1922, Xiaozhang, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports, MF 755.

(161.) L. Gordon Phillips, Report at the End of 1925, Xiamen, Council for World Mission Archives Reports 1866-1939, Fukien Box no. 1-6 (H-2137) Zug, 1978, Box no. 5 1924-1925, CWM/LMS/South China/Reports, MF 357.

(p.313)

Chapter 4

(1.) "Deaconess Yang Zhendao," in Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 [*True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*] (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M25; there is also a brief biographical entry in a chart on *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M3. I have provided a supplementary explanation in brackets.

(2.) Daniel Bays, "Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920-1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144-164

(3.) "Deaconess Yang Zhendao," *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M25.

(4.) Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 11

(5.) Wang Zheng, ed., *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment: Oral and Textual Histories* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999)

(6.) Laurie Maffly-Kipp, "The Burdens of Church History," *Church History* 82, no. 2 (June 2013): 353-367

(7.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983)

(8.) *Finding Women in the State* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2016)

(9.) Shijing 詩經 *Book of Poetry*, 小雅, 祈父之什, 斯干 *Minor Odes of the Kingdom, Decade of Qi Fu, Si Gan*. Chinese Text Project, <http://ctext.org/book-of-poetry/si-gan>.

(10.) Emily Martin Ahern, "The Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 193-214

(p.314)

(11.) Ahern, "Power and Pollution of Chinese Women," Johannes Frick, "Mutter und Kind bei den Chinesen in Tsinghai, I: Die Sozialreligiöse Unreinheit der Frau," *Anthropos* 50 (1955): 341–342

(12.) Susan Mann, *Precious Records: Women in China's Long Eighteenth Century* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1997), 45–47

(13.) Elisabeth J. Croll, *The Politics of Marriage in Contemporary China* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 66

(14.) Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*, 58–61; Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 7; Sidney G. Peill, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Council for World Mission Archives/London Missionary Society/North China/Reports Box 8-1915-1921, SOAS Archives & Special Collections.

(15.) Ida Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han: The Autobiography of a Chinese Working Woman*, reprint of 1945 edition (Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books, 2011)

(16.) See Dorothy Ko's extensive discussion of varying motives for footbinding throughout *Cinderella's Sisters*.

(17.) Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han*, 22; also cited in Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*, 3.

(18.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 7

(19.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 147.

(20.) See Kang-i Sun Chang, Haun Saussy, and Charles Yim-Tze Kwong, *Women Writers of Traditional China: An Anthology of Poetry and Criticism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Grace Fong and Ellen Widmer, eds., *The Inner Quarters and Beyond: Women Writers From Ming Through Qing* (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: Brill, 2010); Gail Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 82.

(21.) See, for example, the story of "Ning Lao Taitai" in Pruitt, *A Daughter of Han*.

(22.) Ann Waltner, "Widows and Remarriage in Ming and Early Qing China," in *Women in China: Current Directions in Historical Scholarship*, ed. Richard W. Guisso and Stanley Johannesen (Youngstown, NY: Philo Press, 1981), 129–146 (138); see also Jonathan Spence, *The Death of Woman Wang* (New York: Viking, 1978), 59–76.

(23.) *The Confusions of Pleasure: Commerce and Culture in Ming China* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 99–100

(24.) Margery Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China," in *Women in Chinese Society*, ed. Margery Wolf and Roxane Witke (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 111-141
Wolf, "Women and Suicide in China,"

(p.315)

(25.) Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*, 56.

(26.) Yan Wang, "Moving to Shanghai: Urban Women of Means in the Late Qing," in *Gender and Chinese History: Transformative Encounters*, ed. Beverly Jo Bossler (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), 161-181

(27.) Grace S. Fong, "Embroidery as A Knowledge Field in Women's Everyday Life in Late Imperial and Early Republican China," *Late Imperial China* 25, no. 1 (2004): 1-58

(28.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 147 (memoirs of Lu Lihua), 261 (memoirs of Chen Yongsheng), 288 (memoirs of Huang Dinghui).

(29.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 223.

(30.) Wang, *Women in the Chinese Enlightenment*, 262.

(31.) *Gender and Chinese History* Gail Hershatter, *Women in China's Long Twentieth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007)
Ko, *Every Step a Lotus*

(32.) Beverly Jo Bossler, in Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 9.

(33.) Xiaofei Kang, "Women and the Religious Question in Modern China," in *Modern Chinese Religion II: 1850-2015, Vol. 1*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2015), 491-559

(34.) Bernice J. Lee, "Female Infanticide in China," in Guisso and Johannesen, *Women in China*, 163-177.

(35.) Lee, "Female Infanticide in China," 167-168; Alison R. Drucker, "The Influence of Western Women on the Anti-Footbinding Movement 1840-1911," in Guisso and Johannesen, *Women in China*, 179-199; Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 495.

(36.) Ryan Dunch, "'Mothers to Our Country: Conversion, Education, and Ideology Among Chinese Protestant Women, 1870-1930,'" in *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women: Gender, Christianity, and Social Mobility*, ed. Jessie G. Lutz (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2010), 324-350

(37.) Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 495.

- (38.) Drucker, "The Influence of Western Women," 185.
- (39.) Drucker, "The Influence of Western Women," 187; Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*, 14-17.
- (40.) Drucker, "The Influence of Western Women," 187.
- (41.) Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China* (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 162; Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*
- (42.) Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*; Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915-1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 7
- (43.) Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 8.
- (44.) Joan Judge, "The Fate of the Late Imperial 'Talented Woman,'" in Bossler, *Gender and Chinese History*, 139-160 (142-154).

(p.316)

- (45.) Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 12.
- (46.) Lu Xun, "New Year's Sacrifice," in *Death of a Madman and Other Stories*, trans. William Lyell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990), 219-241
- (47.) Ko, *Cinderella's Sisters*; Nüzi guowen jiaoke shu 女子國文教科書 *Girls' Chinese Reader* (Shanghai: The Commercial Press, 1921) *Girls' Chinese Reader*
- (48.) *Girls' Chinese Reader*, Lesson no.11.
- (49.) Brook, *The Confusions of Pleasure*, 100.
- (50.) *Girls' Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 17.
- (51.) *Girls' Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 5.
- (52.) *Girls' Chinese Reader*, Lesson no. 6.
- (53.) Dunch, " 'Mothers to Our Country,' " 327.
- (54.) Sidney G. Peill, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1917, Cangzhou, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports Box 8-1915-1921, SOAS Archives & Special Collections. Missionaries adapted a phonetic system developed by a late Qing reformer named Wang Chao.
- (55.) Sidney G. Peill, Paper written by request for the 1923 Conference of the China Medical Missionary Association, CWM/LMS/North China/Reports MF 755, Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections & Archives.

(56.) Shi Meiyu (Mary Stone, 1873–1954), Kang Cheng (Ida Kahn, 1873–1930) and Yang Chongrui (Marian Yang, 1891–1983) were among the most well-known Chinese woman doctors who went abroad in this period.

(57.) Connie Shemo, “‘To Develop Native Powers’: Shi Meiyu and the Danforth Memorial Hospital Nursing School, 1903–1920,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 292–311 (305).

(58.) John R. Stanley, “Establishing a Female Medical Elite: The Early History of the Nursing Profession in China,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 274–291 (281–287).

(59.) Pui-Lan Kwok, “Chinese Women and Christianity, 1860–1927 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992)

(60.) Dunch, “Mothers to Our Country,” 327.

(61.) Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women* Pui-Lan Kwok, “Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century,” in *Christianity in China: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present*, ed. Daniel H. Bays (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 194–208

(62.) Lee, “Gospel and Gender.” For other work showing connections between popular sectarianism and Christianity, see Daniel Bays, “Christianity and Chinese Sectarian Tradition,” *Ch’ing-shih wen-t’i* 4, no. 7 (June 1982): 33–35; Daniel Bays, “Christianity and Chinese Sects: Religious Tracts in the Late Nineteenth Century,” in *Christianity in China: Early Protestant Missionary Writings*, ed. Suzanne Wilson Barnett and John King Fairbank (Cambridge, MA: Harvard (p.317) University Press, 1985), 122–134; R. G. Tiedemann, “Christianity and Chinese ‘Heterodox Sects’: Mass Conversion and Syncretism in Shandong Province in the Early Eighteenth Century,” *Monumenta Serica* 44 (1996): 339–382; Joseph Esherick, *The Origins of the Boxer Uprising* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 86–90; Pui-Lan Kwok, “Chinese Women and Protestant Christianity,” 199–201.

(63.) Eugenio Menegon, *Ancestors, Virgins, and Friars: Christianity as a Local Religion in Late Imperial China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2009), 59–91

(64.) R. G. Tiedemann, “A Necessary Evil: The Contribution of Chinese ‘Virgins’ to the Growth of the Catholic Church in Late Qing China,” in Lutz, *Pioneer Christian Women*, 87–107.

(65.) To this day, many Chinese Christian congregations are self-segregated, with men sitting on one side and women sitting on the other side of the chapel.

(66.) Kang, “Women and the Religious Question,” 498–499.

(67.) Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 499.

(68.) Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 67–68; Vincent Goossaert, "Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Associations in 1912 China," in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair May-Hui Yang (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008); Wang Chien-ch'uan, "Spirit Writing Groups in Modern China (1840–1937): Textual Production, Public Teachings, and Charity," in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 651–684 (674–675); David Ownby, "Redemptive Societies in the Twentieth Century," in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 685–727; Ji Zhe, "Buddhist Institutional Innovations," in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 731–766 (741–748); Xun Liu, "Daoism From the Late Qing to Early Republican Periods," in Goossaert, Kiely, and Lagerwey, *Modern Chinese Religion*, 806–837 (818–823).

(69.) Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 502. Kang argues that for many Chinese Christian women, "being a Christian woman was to be a modern New Woman, whereas traditional religious practices were associated with the old and backward Chinese past."

(70.) Ka-che Yip, "China and Christianity: Perspectives on Missions, Nationalism, and the State in the Republican Period, 1912–1949," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 133–135

(71.) Kang, "Women and the Religious Question," 507–509.

(72.) For a pictorial discussion of the *qipao*, see <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/clothing/11qipaos.htm>.

(73.) *Lin Loon Magazine*, 玲瓏圖畫雜誌, Issue 1 (1931). Scanned from original at Columbia University, accessed April 25, 2018, https://archive.org/details/linglong_1931_001.

(p.318)

(74.) Laikwan Pang, *The Distorting Mirror: Visual Modernity in China* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 102–130 <http://depts.washington.edu/chinaciv/graph/9posters.htm>

(75.) See Yingjin Zhang, ed., *Cinema and Urban Culture in the Shanghai, 1922–1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999); Kristine Harris, "The New Woman: Image, Subject, and Dissent in 1930s Shanghai Film Culture," *Republican China* 20, no. 2 (1995): 55–79.

- (76.) Sarah E. Stevens, "Figuring Modernity: The New Woman and the Modern Girl in Republican China," *NWSA Journal* 15 (2003), no. 3
- (77.) Jung Chang and Jon Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 23
- (78.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 2004), 115–116
- (79.) Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 142–152.
- (80.) Harold R. Isaacs, *The Tragedy of the Chinese Revolution* (New York: Atheneum, 1966), 60–64
- (81.) Tatsuro Yamamoto and Sumiko Yamamoto, "The Anti-Christian Movement in China, 1922–1927," *Far Eastern Quarterly* 1, no. 2 (February 1953): 133–147
- (82.) Christina Kelley Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution: Radical Women, Communist Politics, and Mass Movements in the 1920s* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995), 133
- (83.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 134; Ye Shengtao 葉聖陶 (also known as Ye Shaojun) 葉紹鈞, Ni huanzhi 倪煥之 [Schoolmaster Ni Huanzhi] (Hong Kong: Sanda chuban gongsi, 1967), 188.
- (84.) Jonathan Spence, *Mao Zedong* (London and New York: Penguin, 1999), 70
- (85.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 133.
- (86.) Mitter, *Bitter Revolution*, 142–152.
- (87.) Spence, *Mao*, 75–79.
- (88.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 309–311.
- (89.) Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010), 37–38
- (90.) Chang and Halliday, *Mao: The Unknown Story*, 81.
- (91.) Harrison, *China*, 194.
- (92.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 167–172, 174–192.
- (93.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 199.
- (94.) Gilmartin, *Engendering the Chinese Revolution*, 199.
- (95.) Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 132–133.

(96.) Susan Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State, 1915–1953* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2003)

(p.319)

(97.) Susan Glosser has pointed out that even the iconoclastic New Culture movement, which overlapped with the May Fourth Movement, did not make a clean break with tradition when it came to gender. Modern ideals still restricted women to the home, “but . . . expanded somewhat the tasks they tackled there and imputed to them a greater significance.” Glosser, *Chinese Visions of Family and State*, 17.

(98.) Prasenjit Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity: Manchukuo and the East Asian Modern* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 132–133

(99.) On religious publishing in modern Chinese history, see Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940); Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014); Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, eds., *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015); Melissa Inouye, “Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51.

(100.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] was used as the name for publications by different publishers and editors. One *Holy Spirit Times* was printed in Changsha in 1924 by Zhang Barnabas. Another run of *Holy Spirit Times* from 1926 to 1930 was the organ of the southern churches under Zhang Barnabas. From 1930 to 1951 it was the official organ of the entire True Jesus Church. *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F5.

(101.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F11–F12.

(102.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, F12–F13.

(103.) Wanguo gengzheng jiao bao 萬國更正教報 [*Global Church Correction*] (hereafter *Global Church Correction*), no. 2, July 27, 1919, 1.

(104.) *Global Church Correction*, no. 3, November 22, 1919, 2.

(105.) The trend of the “Ye” surname is an intricate and fascinating story that is beyond the scope of this chapter.

(106.) Taking on a new name at an important juncture in one’s life was a common practice in Chinese religious orders such as Buddhism, Confucian literary culture, and of course both the Old and New Testaments.

(107.) Cathy Silber, "Women's Writing From Hunan," in *China for Women: Travel and Culture*, ed. Florence Howe and Susannah Driver (New York: Feminist Press, 1995), 13-19

(108.) *Holy Spirit Times*, July 20, 1928, p. 2.

(109.) This is a reference to the two characters that compose the Chinese word for "country," *guojia* 國家. *Guo* means "country" and *jia* means "family."

(110.) Again, here I am drawing on Benedict Anderson's powerful idea of "imagined communities" as the basis for modern nationalism and various other forms of community in the modern era.

(p.320)

(111.) For example, see the various Christian women depicted in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, who wield considerable cultural influence but no formal church governing authority.

(112.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Gospel and Gender: Female Christians in Chaozhou, South China," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 182-198 (183).

(113.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1. One exception to this generalization that women did not participate in formal church governance within Protestant missionary denominations may apply to female Western missionaries, who exercised a great deal of authority in their roles as the primary evangelists and architects of new congregations. In my work in the archives of the London Missionary Society, I found one instance in 1926 in which Ivy Greaves, a female missionary, reported: "I have felt it a great privilege to serve on the diaconate of the Kang Wah Shih Church, and later on the Church Council of five members. I was there not as a missionary of the LMS but as one of the Kang Wah Shih church members." Ivy Greaves, Report for 1926, Beijing (SOAS CWM/LMS/North China/Reports/Box 9 1922-1927).

(114.) Ling Oi Ki, "Bible Women," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 246-264.

(115.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D2.

(116.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D3; Tang Hongbiao 唐紅飆, Zhen yesu jiaohui lishi shijikao 真耶穌教會歷史史跡考 *A Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church* (self-published, 2006), 174-175.

(117.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4. It is likely, but not certain, that Zhang Maria was Zhang Barnabas's wife or relative. A summary of early True Jesus Church missionaries in various Chinese provinces and overseas localities can be found on *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, C2.

(118.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4–D8. The Changsha meeting had been unilaterally convened by Zhang Barnabas from his base in the south without consulting Wei Isaac and Gao Daling, the other two prominent church leaders whose base was in the north, in the city of Tianjin. Between 1924 and 1930 the True Jesus Church's major national institutions, including the periodical *Holy Spirit Times*, were controlled by Zhang Barnabas and his base of churches in the south.

(119.) Tang Hongbiao's treatment of this jockeying for power in north and south is very extensive. Tang, *Survey of the History of the True Jesus Church*, 223–426.

(120.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D4, D5.

(121.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D5, D6.

(122.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D11.

(123.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D8.

(124.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*–D8. This schism and its aftermath are further discussed in Chapter 5.

(125.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D7, D8, D9.

(126.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D14.

(p.321)

(127.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1.

(128.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*] (True Jesus Church, 1936) (hereafter *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*). Diagram on page preceding p. 1.

(129.) Vincent Goossaert and David A. Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 67–121 *The Religious Periodical Press*,

(130.) Duara, *Sovereignty and Authenticity*, 132.

(131.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, E1.

(132.) Rosemary R. Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin, introduction to *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary R. Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979); Ann Braude, *Radical Spirits: Spiritualism and Women's Rights in Nineteenth Century America* (Boston: Beacon, 1989); Jonathan Stapley and Kristine Wright, "Female Ritual Healing in Mormonism," *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 1 (2011): 1-85; Noriyoshi Tamaru and David Reid, eds., *Religion in Japanese Culture: Where Living Traditions Meet a Changing World*. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1996), 104-105; Inoue Nobutaka, general editor, Norman Havens, trans., *Contemporary Papers in Japanese Religion: New Religions* (Tokyo: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, Tokyo), 10-12.

(133.) See R. G. Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil: The Contribution of Chinese 'Virgins' to the Growth of the Catholic Church in Late Qing China," in Lutz, *Pioneer Chinese Christian Women*, 87-107. 96: Virgins had to work for a living yet in their spiritual vocation found time to memorize " 'a terrifying repertoire of prayers . . . Ordinarily all the knowledge of a good virgin in Haimen consists of knowing by heart the long morning and evening prayers, those of Sundays and feast days, finally those of the Sacrifice, the Way of the Cross, and the different confraternities that she will not fail to join sooner or later.' " Tiedemann notes that Christian virgins played a role as transmitters of rituals, especially prayers, that helped preserve community solidarity.

(134.) Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil," 90.

(135.) Tiedemann, "A Necessary Evil," 94.

(136.) Ling, "Bible Women," 247.

(137.) Ling, "Bible Women," 253-254.

(138.) See Fong, "Embroidery as A Knowledge Field," 2-3.

(139.) Elizabeth Weiss Ozorak, "The Power, but Not the Glory: How Women Empower Themselves Through Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 35 (1996), no. 1 (Mar. 1996): 17-29

(p.322)

(140.) Harvey Cox, *Fire From Heaven: The Rise of Pentecostal Spirituality and the Reshaping of Religion in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 1995), 136-137; Elizabeth Brusco, *The Reformation of Machismo: Evangelical Conversion and Gender in Columbia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010).

(141.) Most of the work on Pentecostalism and women is contemporary and focuses on women in societies that are very different from Republican-era China. Nevertheless, analyses of gender performance illuminate important dimensions of Pentecostal practice. For instance, Elaine Lawless has argued that Pentecostal American women employ various strategies, such as the performance of personal testimonies, that allow them to temporarily circumvent or find a “respite” from the male domination of the Pentecostal community. See Elaine J. Lawless, “Rescripting Their Lives and Narratives: Spiritual Life Stories of Pentecostal Preachers,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 7, no. 1 (1991): 53–71; “Shouting for the Lord: The Power of Women’s Speech in the Pentecostal Religious Service,” *Journal of American Folklore* 96, no. 382 (1983): 434–459.

(142.) Sally K. Gallagher and Christian Smith, “Symbolic Traditionalism and Pragmatic Egalitarianism: Contemporary Evangelicals, Families, and Gender,” *Gender and Society* 13, no. 2 (Apr. 1999): 211–233

(143.) See Kathleen Flake, “The Emotional and Priestly Logic of Plural Marriage,” *Arrington Annual Lecture*, Paper 15 (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2009); Kathryn Daynes, *More Wives Than One: Transformation of the Mormon Marriage System, 1840–1910* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A House Full of Females* (New York: Knopf, 2017).

(144.) Salvatore Cucchiari’s study of Pentecostalism in Sicily suggests that Pentecostalism actually provides a more ambiguous form of patriarchy than Catholicism, the dominant religion. Salvatore Cucchiari, “Between Shame and Sanctification: Patriarchy and Its Transformation in Sicilian Pentecostalism,” *American Ethnologist* 17, no. 4 (Nov. 1990): 687–707. Chen-Yang Kao has argued that Pentecostal Christianity attracted Chinese women by giving them the opportunity to worship a clean, high god whereas traditional Chinese religion had relegated them to the pacification of polluting spirits and ghosts. Chen-Yang Kao, “The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China,” *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2, (2009): 171–188.

(145.) R. Marie Griffith, *God’s Daughters: Evangelical Women and the Power of Submission* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997)

(146.) Amy Hoyt, “Beyond the Victim/Empowerment Paradigm: The Gendered Cosmology of Mormon Women,” *Feminist Theology* 16, no. 1 (2007): 89–100

(147.) Catherine Brekus, “Mormon Women and the Problem of Historical Agency,” *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (2011): 59–87

(148.) Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic (p.323) Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 5

- (149.) Tongchuan fuyin zhenli bao 通傳福音真理報 [*Popular Gospel Truth*] (hereafter *Popular Gospel Truth*), September 1915, no. 6, p. 8.
- (150.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, September 1915, no. 6, p. 8.
- (151.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, May 1916, no. 11, p. 1.
- (152.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, November 1916, no. 13, p. 5.
- (153.) Wuxunjie Zhenli 五旬節真理 [*Pentecostal Truths*] (hereafter *Pentecostal Truths*), April 1917, p. 3.
- (154.) *Popular Gospel Truth*, January 1917, no. 15, p. 7.
- (155.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, N25.
- (156.) *Global Church Correction*, no. 5, March 1, 1920, p. 1.
- (157.) 1 Timothy 2:8–15, RSV.
- (158.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), November 15, 1926, 12.
- (159.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1927, p. 16.
- (160.) *Holy Spirit Times*, December 15, 1948, p. 14.
- (161.) *Holy Spirit Times*, November 15, 1950, p. 23.
- (162.) *Holy Spirit Times*, January 15, 1948, p. 15.
- (163.) Nanlai Cao, “Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China,” in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175
- (164.) Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters*, 12–13.
- (165.) Short, *Mao*, 282–283.
- (166.) Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China* (New York: Grove, 1968), 299–301 Short, *Mao*
- (167.) Short, *Mao*, 264–284.

Chapter 5

(1.) Zhen yesu jiaohui zongbu shizhounian jinian zhuankan \真耶穌教會總部十週年紀念專刊 [*Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the General Headquarters of the True Jesus Church*], Reprint Edition (Taichung: True Jesus Church, 1988) (hereafter *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), 111. At this location in 2018 one can find a hotel, a residential building, and a roast duck restaurant.

(2.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 111.

(3.) Rana Mitter, *The Manchurian Myth: Nationalism, Resistance, and Collaboration in Modern China* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 2000), 130-156

(4.) Henrietta Harrison, *Inventing the Nation: China* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2001), 208

(p.324)

(5.) Mark R. Peattie, "The Dragon's Seed: Origins of the War," in *The Battle for China: Essays on the Military History of the Sino-Japanese War of 1937-1945*, ed. Mark Peattie, Edward Drea, and Hans van de Ven (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 48-78

(6.) Christian Henriot, *Shanghai, 1927-1937: Municipal Power, Locality, and Modernization*, trans. Noël Castellino (Berkeley and California: University of California Press, 1993), 66-69

(7.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 86.

(8.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 87.

(9.) Harrison, *China*, 209-210.

(10.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 92.

(11.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121-122.

(12.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983)

(13.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.

(14.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 9; Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 81.

(15.) Henriot, *Shanghai*, 9.

(16.) Barend J. ter Haar, *The White Lotus Teachings in Chinese Religious History* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1992); Susan Naquin, *Millenarian Rebellion in China: The Eight Trigrams Uprising of 1813* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1976); Paul A. Cohen, *History in Three Keys: The Boxers as Event, Experience, and Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

(17.) My thanks to Joseph Tse-Hei Lee for his insightful reflections on “the institutional void” in Chinese society during this period of time.

(18.) Timothy Brook, “Auto-Organization in Chinese Society,” in *Civil Society in China* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 19–45

(19.) Vincent Goossaert, “Republican Church Engineering: The National Religious Association in 1912 China,” in *Chinese Religiosities: Afflictions of Modernity and State Formation*, ed. Mayfair Mei-Hui Yang (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2008), 209–232; Ryan Dunch, *Fuzhou Protestants and the Making of a Modern China, 1857–1927* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001).

(20.) See, for instance, Susan Naquin, *Peking: Temples and City Life, 1400–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); Prasenjit Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State: Rural North China, 1900–1942* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988), especially chap. 5; Holmes Welch, *The Practice of Chinese Buddhism, 1900–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), especially the section on the various procedures for the selection of abbots (the head monk at a monastery), 143–177. My thanks to Justin Ritzinger for bringing this study to my attention.

(21.) Lily Lee Tsai, “The Struggle for Village Public Goods Provision: Information Institutions of Accountability in Rural China,” in *Grassroots Political Reform (p. 325) in Contemporary China*, ed. Elizabeth Perry and Merle Goldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 117–148

(22.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121.

(23.) Harrison, *China*, 194.

(24.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 6, 93–98.

(25.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 101–129.

(26.) Duara, *Culture, Power, and the State*, 229–230.

(27.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.

(28.) Harrison, *China*, 194–195.

(29.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 51.

- (30.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 57-71.
- (31.) *Robert's Rules of Order* Jeffrey Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China: The View From Shanghai* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 39-40
- (32.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.
- (33.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.
- (34.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 169.
- (35.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 171.
- (36.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 171.
- (37.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 172.
- (38.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.
- (39.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.
- (40.) Welch, *Practice of Chinese Buddhism*, 143-177.
- (41.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 22.
- (42.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26-31.
- (43.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 29-30.
- (44.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 31-32.
- (45.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 32, 56.
- (46.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 53.
- (47.) Zhang Barnabas 張巴拿巴, *Chuandao ji 傳道記 [Mission Record]* (Place of publication unknown, but probably Shanghai or Nanjing, 1929), 1-8; *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 86.
- (48.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 12.
- (49.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 1. *Mission Record* recounts his travels up to 1929 and was published in October 1929.
- (50.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 [True Jesus Church Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume]* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*), (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948), M25 *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*

(51.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 10.

(p.326)

(52.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 22.

(53.) Zhang, *Mission Record*, 8, 13, 14.

(54.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 3.

(55.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 4-6.

(56.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 20-33.

(57.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, diagram before p. 1.

(58.) Harrison, *China*, 194. A fifth branch of Nationalist government administered the civil service examinations, also in the style of the imperial tradition.

(59.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, diagram before p. 1.

(60.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 36.

(61.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 56.

(62.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 12-13.

(63.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 32.

(64.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 12, 81-94.

(65.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 5, 95.

(66.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 14, 173.

(67.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 88-89.

(68.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 111-120.

(69.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 119, 120.

(70.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 173.

(71.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 52.

(72.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136.

(73.) Rudolf Löwenthal, *The Religious Periodical Press in China, With 7 Maps and 16 Charts* (Peking: The Synodal Commission in China, 1940); Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2014), 69–108; Jan Kiely, “Spreading the Dharma With the Mechanized Press: New Buddhist Print Cultures in the Modern Chinese Print Revolution, 1866–1949,” in *From Woodblocks to the Internet: Chinese Publishing and Print Culture in Transition, circa 1800 to 2008*, ed. Cynthia Brokaw and Christopher A. Reed (Leiden, The Netherlands, and Boston: 2010), 185–212; Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye, “Charismatic Moderns: Chinese Christian Print Culture in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Twentieth Century China* 42, no. 1 (Jan. 2017): 26–51.

(74.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136, 149.

(75.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 136.

(76.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 148.

(77.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 122.

(78.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 122.

(79.) Löwenthal, *Religious Periodical Press*, 90.

(80.) Philip Short, *Mao: A Life* (New York: Holt, 2000), 211

(81.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 286–287.

(82.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 318–352.

(p.327)

(83.) Reed, *From Woodblocks to the Internet, Enhua Zhang, Space, Politics, and Cultural Representation in Modern China: Cartographies of Revolution* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 66

(84.) Short, *Mao: A Life*, 335.

(85.) Edgar Snow, *Red Star Over China*, First Revised and Enlarged Edition (New York: Grove, 1968), 235

(86.) Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 236.

(87.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, ed. Jan MacKinnon and Steve MacKinnon (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 25–26

(88.) Rebecca Karl, *Mao Zedong and China in the Twentieth-Century World: A Concise History* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 52

(89.) Mao Zedong, "On Art and Literature," in *Sources of Chinese Tradition Vol. II*, ed. William Theodore de Bary and Richard Lufrano (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 441-444

(90.) Snow, *Red Star Over China*, 236.

(91.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, "Chart of Historically Important Books," F12.

(92.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 121-122.

(93.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, "Chart of Historically Important Books," F12.

(94.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., *Spirit Songs* 靈歌, no. 1.

(95.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 25.

(96.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 3.

(97.) Wei, *Spirit Songs*, no. 52.

(98.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 59.

(99.) Isabel K. F. Wong, "Geming Gequ: Songs for the Education of the Masses," in Bonnie S. McDougall, ed., *Popular Chinese Literature and Performing Arts in the People's Republic of China 1949-1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 112-143; Joshua H. Howard, "'Music for a National Defense': Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," *Cross-Currents: East Asian History and Culture Review*, E-Journal No. 13 (December 2014), accessed April 17, 2018, <http://cross-currents.berkeley.edu/e-journal/issue-13> My heartfelt thanks to Michelle Chang for bringing these articles to my attention and sharing her insights into group choral singing in China.

(100.) Wong, "Songs for the Education of the Masses," 113.

(101.) Wong, "Songs for the Education of the Masses," 112-115.

(102.) Wong, "Songs for the Education of the Masses," 115; Wasserstrom, *Student Protests in Twentieth-Century China*, 40, mentions a crowd protesting Russian imperialism by singing 愛國歌, "The Patriots' Song," in 1903.

(p.328)

(103.) E. J. Stuckey, Report for the Year Ending December 31, 1922, Beijing, Council for World Mission Archives/Reports/North China, Hong Kong Baptist University Special Collections & Archives call number MFC 266.00951 L846 CN, microfiche 754; Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 6.

(104.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 2.

(105.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 14-23.

(106.) Wong, "Songs for the Education of the Masses," 123.

(107.) Wong, "Songs for the Education of the Masses," 123.

(108.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 19-20.

(109.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 9, 17.

(110.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 63.

(111.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 68.

(112.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 64.

(113.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 66.

(114.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 68.

(115.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 70.

(116.) Jixi Gao, James E. Nickum, and Yingzi Pan, "An Assessment of Flood Hazard Vulnerability in the Dongting Lake Region of China," *Lakes & Reservoirs: Research and Management* 12 (2007): 27-34

(117.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 104.

(118.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 104.

(119.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 103.

(120.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 103.

(121.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 109.

(122.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 109.

(123.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 110.

(124.) Mark Peattie, "The Dragon's Seed," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 72.

(125.) Hans van de Ven and Edward J. Drea, "Chronology of the Sino-Japanese War, 1937-1945," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 7.

(126.) Hua-ling Hu and Zhang Lian-hong, *The Undaunted Women of Nanking: The Wartime Diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-fang* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 2010), 1-2

(127.) Lu Liu, "A Whole Nation Walking: The 'Great Retreat' in the War of Resistance, 1937-1945," PhD dissertation, University of California, San Diego, 2002, 11.

(128.) Agnes Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, ed. Jan MacKinnon and Steve MacKinnon (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1976), 86-89

(129.) Smedley, *Portraits of Chinese Women in Revolution*, 89.

(130.) Bao Weihong, "In Search of a 'Cinematic Esperanto': Exhibiting Wartime Chongqing Cinema in Global Context," *Journal of Chinese Cinemas* 3, no. 2 (2009): 135-147

(p.329)

(131.) Peter Chen-Main Wang 王成勉, "Chinese Christians in Republican China," in R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China, Vol. II: 1800 to the Present* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 607

(132.) *Tenth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, 16-17.

(133.) Hagiwara Mitsuru, "The Japanese Air Campaigns in China, 1937-1945," in Peattie et al., *The Battle for China*, 249.

(134.) Caroline FitzGerald, *Fragmenting Modernisms: Chinese Wartime Literature, Art, and Film, 1937-49* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 5

(135.) Harrison, *China*, 218.

(136.) Mitter, *Manchurian Myth*, 72-129.

(137.) Harrison, *China*, 216-217.

(138.) For instance, John Dower estimated ten million in *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (New York: Pantheon, 1986); Rana Mitter estimated twelve million in *Forgotten Ally: China's World War II, 1937-1945* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2013), 5-6; Rudolph J. Rummel cited sources from ten to thirty-seven million deaths in *China's Bloody Century: Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1900* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1991).

(139.) Micah S. Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 31

(140.) Muscolino, *The Ecology of War in China*, 30-31.

(141.) Muscolino, *Ecology of War in China*, 31.

(142.) Muscolino, *Ecology of War in China*, 32.

(143.) Keith Schoppa, *In a Sea of Bitterness: Refugees During the Sino-Japanese War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 239

(144.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 6.

(145.) Bryant, Lei Ouyang. "Flowers on the Battlefield Are More Fragrant," *Asian Music* 38, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2007): 88-122 三大紀律八項注意 <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64150/64154/4509647.html>

(146.) Bryant, "Flowers on the Battlefield Are More Fragrant," Stephen Uhalley, *Mao Tse-tung, A Critical Biography* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1975), 38

(147.) Jonathan Spence, *The Search for Modern China* (New York: Norton, 1990), 499

(148.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 [*Holy Spirit Times*] (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), September 15, 1947, p. 16.

(149.) *Holy Spirit Times*, September 15, 1947, p. 16.

(150.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D19.

(151.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, M2.

(152.) *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*, D19.

(153.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949; September 15, 1950. It is also possible that there is simply a gap in the collection of *Holy Spirit Times* that I accessed at the True Jesus Church archives in Taichung, Taiwan. On either side of this gap, the issues in the Taichung collection are regularly spaced.

(p.330)

- (154.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 1.
- (155.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (156.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (157.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949, p. 16.
- (158.) See the catalog of Taiwan's National Palace Museum. <https://www.npm.gov.tw/en/Article.aspx?sNo=03000060>
- (159.) Howard, "Making Martial Music During the Anti-Japanese War," 11-12.
- (160.) Deng Zhaoming, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today Part II," *Bridge*, no. 63 (January-February 1994), 8-10
- (161.) True Jesus Church International Assembly official website, http://members.tjc.org/sites/en/church_landing.aspx.
- (162.) Deng, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today," 10.
- (163.) Andrew Walder, *China Under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), xii
- (164.) Mao Zedong, "Problems of War and Strategy" (November 6, 1938), *Selected Works*, Vol. II, 224 [Mao Tse-tung Internet Archive](https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch05.htm) <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/mao/works/red-book/ch05.htm> 枪杆子里面出政权 <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/64170/4467398.html>

Chapter 6

(1.) George R. Urban, *The Miracles of Chairman Mao* (London: Tom Stacey Ltd., 1971); Joseph M. Kitagawa, "One of the Many Faces of China: Maoism as a Quasi-Religion," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 1, 2-3 (June-September 1974): 125-141; Andrew Kipnis, "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China and the Anthropological Category of Religion," *Australian Journal of Anthropology* 12, no. 1 (April 2001): 32-46; David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). Discussions about the relationship between "religion" and "the state" often mark them not only as separate actors but as expressions of separate spheres of human endeavor. A body of sociological literature exists on the organizational aspects of religious movements, but one useful recent overview is C. R. Hinings and Mia Raynard, "Organizational Form, Structure, and Religious Organizations," *Religion and Organization Theory*, special issue of *Research in the Sociology of Organizations* 41 (2014): 159-186.

(2.) Richard Madsen, *Morality and Power in a Chinese Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 8

(3.) Paul Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 2

(p.331)

(4.) Yanqi Tong, "Morality, Benevolence, and Responsibility: Regime Legitimacy in China From Past to the Present," in *Reviving Legitimacy: Lessons for and from China*, ed. Deng Zhenglai and Sujian Guo (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 195–214; Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur, "Conclusion: The Future of State-Building," in *Making States Work: State Failure and the Crisis of Governance*, ed. Simon Chesterman, Michael Ignatieff, and Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2005), 359–387; Robert Jackman, *Power Without Force* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1993); Andre Laliberte and Marc Canteigne, eds., *The Chinese Party-State in the 21st Century: Adaptation and the Reinvention of Legitimacy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008); Bruce Gilley, "Legitimacy and Institutional Change: The Case of China," *Comparative Political Studies* 41, no. 3 (March 2008): 259–284.

(5.) Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 259; Daniel Leese, "The Mao Cult as Communicative Space," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 3–4 (2007): 623–639; Julia Strauss, "Accusing Counterrevolutionaries: Bureaucracy and Theatre in the Revolutionary People's Republic of China (1950–1957)," in *Staging Politics: Power and Performance in Asia and Africa*, ed. Julia C. Strauss and Donal B. Cruise O'Brien (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 49–70.

(6.) John Craig William Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China: Moore Memorial Church in Shanghai, 1949–1989* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2012), 90

(7.) Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China*, 91–94.

(8.) Holmes Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972), 95

(9.) Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 144–145; *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007).

(10.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 1.

- (11.) Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Stories From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013); Mariani, *Church Militant*; Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics: Tragedy and Hope in an Emerging Civil Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998); James T. Myers, *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China* (New York: Professors World Peace Academy, 1991).
- (12.) Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 99-104
- (13.) Wu Yaozong 吴耀宗, *Hei'an yu guangming 黑暗与光明 Darkness and Light* (Shanghai: Qingnian xiehui shuju, 1950), 76
- (14.) Daniel Bays, "Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920-1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism," in **(p.332)** *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144-164
- (15.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 157-170.
- (16.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China," *Church History* 74, no. 1 (March 2005): 68-96; "Politics of Faith: Christian Activism and the Maoist State in South China," in *Marginalization in China: Recasting Minority Politics*, ed. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Siu Keung Cheung, and Lida V. Nedilsky (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 49-66.
- (17.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Co-Optation and Its Discontents: Seventh-Day Adventism in 1950s China," *Frontiers of History in China* 7, no. 4 (2012): 582-607
- (18.) Shanghai Municipal Archives U103-0-52-90.
- (19.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground* Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China* Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Xi Lian, *Redeemed by Fire: The Rise of Popular Christianity in Modern China* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 198-201
- (20.) Mariani, *Church Militant* The Missionary's Curse Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Francis Price Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement: Source Materials for the Study of the Protestant Church in Communist China* (New York: National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1963), 117-121
- (21.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 165, 189.
- (22.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 117-121.
-

(23.) Mariani, *Church Militant*; Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*; Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief*.

(24.) Daniel Bays, "Indigenous Protestant Churches in China, 1900-1937: A Pentecostal Case Study," in *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity*, ed. Steven Kaplan (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 124-143; "The Protestant Missionary Establishment and the Pentecostal Movement," in *Pentecostal Currents in American Protestantism*, ed. Edith L. Blumhofer, Russell P. Spittler, and Grant A. Wacker (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 50-68; Xi Lian, "The Search for Chinese Christianity in the Republican Period (1912-1949)," *Modern Asian Studies* 38, no. 4 (2004): 851-898; "A Messianic Deliverance for Post-Dynastic China: The Launch of the True Jesus Church in the Early Twentieth Century," *Modern China* 34, no. 4 (2008): 407-441; Chen-Yang Kao, "The Cultural Revolution and the Emergence of Pentecostal-Style Protestantism in China," *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 24, no. 2 (2009): 171-188.

(25.) David Bromley and J. Gordon Melton, "Reconceptualizing Types of Religious Organization: Dominant, Sectarian, Alternative, and Emergent Tradition Groups," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 15, no. 3 (2012): 4-28

(26.) Ka-che Yip, *Religion, Nationalism and Chinese Students: The Anti-Christian Movement of 1922-1927* (Bellingham, WA: Center for East Asian Studies, Western **(p.333)** Washington University, 1980); Jessie G. Lutz, *Chinese Politics and Christian Missions: The Anti-Christian Movements of 1920-1928* (Notre Dame, IN: Cross-Cultural Publications, 1988).

(27.) This chapter is based on archival sources in Nanjing and Wuhan and on oral history interviews with True Jesus Church members conducted in China in 2009 and 2010. Because the True Jesus Church was such a large national church, it is difficult to depict its history in a comprehensive way, especially during the 1950s when the church's national administrative structures collapsed. The place where I was able to access a few post-1949 documents, the Wuhan Municipal Archives, was for a time the location of the church's national headquarters and hence a place where political pressure was intense. These documents therefore may represent only an extreme and not a norm. Another methodological problem with these archival documents, including the minutes of meetings of the national church leadership in the 1950s, is that they are preserved by government bureaus and were recorded with the knowledge that they might be viewed by government officials. Hence they were produced for a Maoist audience and as such may be regarded as having elements of a public performance. A final problem is that the Maoist era, though by now decades in the past, was traumatic for many who lived through it. People are often reluctant to remember, or to recall in full detail, what they did and experienced during this time. Major sources for this chapter include several 1950s documents from the Wuhan Municipal Archives in Hubei 湖北 Province, 1940s documents from the Nanjing Municipal Archives in Jiangsu 江苏, news articles from various national and regional newspapers, and church publications and oral history interviews with church members from around China.

(28.) Chen Guangzao 陈光澡, *Zhen yesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties*. No publication information.

(29.) The January 1951 issue is the last issue held by the True Jesus Church archives in Taiwan; the December 1950 issue is the last issue held by the Shanghai Municipal Archives.

(30.) A proverb dating back to Ming xian ji 名賢集 *Collected Famous and Worthy Sayings*, a popular didactic text from the Song dynasty.

(31.) Shengling bao 聖靈報 *Holy Spirit Times* (hereafter *Holy Spirit Times*), April 15, 1948.

(32.) *Holy Spirit Times*, March 15, 1948.

(33.) These eighteen issues appear to represent all extant issues of *Holy Spirit Times* from this period. There appears to have been a hiatus in publication from March 1949–August 1950. In September 1950, publication resumed until what appears to be a final issue in January 1951.

(34.) *Holy Spirit Times*, issues from August 15, 1947–January 20, 1951.

(p.334)

(35.) Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), *Zhen yesu jiaohui sanian jinian zhuankan 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 [Commemorative Volume on the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Founding of the True Jesus Church]* (hereafter *Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume*) (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1948).

(36.) *Holy Spirit Times*, September 15, 1950, and October 25, 1950.

(37.) Jeremy Brown and Paul G. Pickowicz, eds., *Dilemmas of Victory: The Early Years of the People's Republic of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 1-2.

(38.) Interview with Mr. Qu (pseudonym), South China, 2010.

(39.) Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 62-65; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 151.

(40.) Jessie Gregory Lutz, *China and the Christian Colleges, 1850-1950* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1971), 452-489; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*; Mariani, *Church Militant*

(41.) Andrew T. Kaiser, *The Rushing on of the Purposes of God: Christian Missions in Shanxi Since 1876* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2016), 228

(42.) Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 65-78.

(43.) Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 98; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158-165; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 87.

(44.) Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 161-162; Myers, *Enemies Without Guns*, 68; Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 129-130.

(45.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 19-20; Keating, *A Protestant Church in Communist China*, 91-94.

(46.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 127-133; Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 19-20.

(47.) Numerous articles mentioning the TJC's support for the state appear in the newspapers of the early People's Republic of China. For instance, see Renmin Ribao 人民日报 *People's Daily* (hereafter *People's Daily*), October 3, 1950, “哈市基督教团体通电愤怒抗议美侵略罪行拥护中国基督教宣言 Harbin Christian Groups Send Telegraph to Angrily Oppose America's Criminal Invasion and Support the Chinese Christian Manifesto”; *People's Daily*, September 10, 1950, “兰州各基督教团体抗议美机侵我领空 Each Christian Group in Lanzhou Opposes America Invading Our Airspace”; *People's Daily*, April 25, 1951, “中国基督教各教会各团体代表联合宣言 The United Manifesto of Representatives from Every Church and Group of Chinese Christianity”. In this document Ni Tuosheng 倪柝声, the leader of the Little Flock, is also listed as a signatory. See also Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 97-103; Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 160-162.

(48.) *Holy Spirit Times*, November 15, 1950.

(49.) Wuhan Municipal Archives Document 98-5-350.

(p.335)

(50.) Julia Strauss, “Paternalist Terror: The Campaign to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries and Regime Consolidation in the People's Republic of China, 1950-1953,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 44, no. 1 (2002): 80-105

(51.) Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao*, 42-50.

(52.) Thomas DuBois, *The Sacred Village: Social Change and Religious Life in Rural North China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005), 127-151

(53.) Strauss, “Paternalist Terror,” 99.

(54.) Nanjing Municipal Archives Document 1002-1-848.

(55.) Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China*, 98.

(56.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 134.

(57.) Kenneth Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin, 1949-1952* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1980)

(58.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 134.

(59.) Harvey, *Acquainted with Grief*, 72.

(60.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 159.

(61.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 136.

(62.) David Apter, "Bearing Witness: Maoism as Religion," *Copenhagen Journal of Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (2005): 5-37; Barend ter Haar, "China's Inner Demons," in *China's Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution: Master Narratives and Post-Mao Counternarratives*, ed. Woei Lien Chong (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); Zuo Jiping, "Political Religion: The Case of the Cultural Revolution in China," *Sociological Analysis* 52, no. 3 (1991): 99-110; Michael Dutton, "Mango Mao: Infections of the Sacred," *Public Culture* 16, no. 2 (2004): 161-187; Stephen Feuchtwang, "Religion as Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, ed. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 161-177.

(63.) Interview with Mr. Cai (pseudonym), South China, November 2009; interview with Mr. Qu, South China, March 2010.

(64.) Lieberthal, *Revolution and Tradition in Tientsin*, 181-183.

(65.) Interview with Mr. Ji (pseudonym), South China, April 2010.

(66.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 60-61.

(67.) Jones, *Documents of the Three-Self Movement*, 65.

(68.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(69.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(70.) Paul Katz, *Religion in China and Its Modern Fate* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 2014), chap. 2; Philip Clart and Gregory Adam Scott, *Religious Publishing and Print Culture in Modern China, 1800-2012* (Boston and Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015); Melissa Inouye, "Charismatic Moderns: Pluralistic Discourse in Chinese Christian Communities, 1905-1926," *Twentieth-Century China* 42, no. 1 (2017): 26-51.

(71.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.

(p.336)

(72.) True Jesus Church website (northern faction), accessed March 2016, no longer available, <http://www.zysjh.org/index11.asp>. On August 3, 2017, a revised chronology was available, <http://www.zysjh.org/zys/Article/list-5.html>.

(73.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

(74.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.

- (75.) Revised chronology from True Jesus Church website (northern faction), accessed August 3, 2017, <http://www.zysjh.org/zys/Article/list-5.html>.
- (76.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 98-1-582, 96-1-582.
- (77.) Brown and Pickowicz, *Dilemmas of Victory*, 10.
- (78.) See, for example, *People's Daily*, March 7, 1952, “北京市基督徒和天主教徒 愤怒抗议美国侵略军撒布细菌 决心肃清帝国主义影响、加强抗美援朝工作 Beijing Protestants and Christians Angrily Oppose America's Invading Armies Using Germ Warfare; Resolutely Expel Imperialist Influence and Redouble Efforts to Oppose America and Aid Korea.”
- (79.) *People's Daily*, March 8, 1953.
- (80.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.
- (81.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.
- (82.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.
- (83.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582.
- (84.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-582.
- (85.) *Holy Spirit Times*, February 15, 1949.
- (86.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-480.
- (87.) *People's Daily*, August 13, 1954.
- (88.) Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground*, 65–70.
- (89.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-101.
- (90.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-360.
- (91.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.
- (92.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.
- (93.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.
- (94.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 112-1-335.
- (95.) Philip Kuhn, *Soulstealers: The Chinese Sorcery Scare of 1768* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

- (96.) Deng Zhaoming, ed., "Religious Problems in Hunan," *Bridge*, no. 75 (February 1996): 6
- (97.) Interview with Mr. Ji, South China, April 2010.
- (98.) Changjiang ribao 长江日报 *Yangzi River Daily*, April 13, 1956.
- (99.) Changjiang ribao 长江日报, *Yangzi River Daily*, June 9, 1957.
- (100.) Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985)
- (p.337)**
Welch, *Buddhism Under Mao* Bays, *New History of Christianity in China* Myers, *Enemies Without Guns* The *Missionary's Curse*
- (101.) Donald E. MacInnis, *Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China: A Documentary History* (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 105-109
- (102.) *Xinhua Ribao* 新华日报, August 11, 1958.
- (103.) MacInnis, *Religious Policy and Practice in Communist China*, 225, 234; Dubois, *The Sacred Village*, chap. 6.
- (104.) *Xinhua Ribao* 新华日报, August 11, 1958.
- (105.) *Hubei Ribao* 湖北日报, November 6, 1958.
- (106.) *Hubei Ribao* 湖北日报, November 6, 1958.
- (107.) Wei Li and Dennis Tao Yang, "The Great Leap Forward: Anatomy of a Central Planning Disaster," *Journal of Political Economy* 113, no. 4 (2005): 840-877
- (108.) Li and Yang, "The Great Leap Forward," 841; Jung Chang, *Mao: The Unknown Story* (New York: Anchor, 2006); Frank Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine* (New York: Bloomsbury USA, 2011).
- (109.) Wen Li and Dennis Tao Yang note that, in comparison, the Irish famine of 1845-1851 claimed 1.1 million lives, the Bengal famine (1943) 3 million, and the Ethiopian famine (1984-1985) between 0.6 and 1 million. Li and Yang, "The Great Leap Forward," 841, n. 2.
- (110.) I was able to see catalogue entries showing when these files were opened but was not able to access the individual dossiers.

(111.) In 2010 these files could all be found in the Wuhan Archives online catalog, under the category numbers B546 and B54. Written and oral history sources from Fujian confirm that aboveground church activities almost entirely ceased beginning in the second half of 1958 and did not resume until the 1980s. Chen Guangzao 陈光澡, *Zhen yesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties*, 50.

(112.) Deng Zhaoming, "The True Jesus Church Yesterday and Today Part I," *Bridge*, no. 62 (November–December 1993): 14

(113.) One exception was the case of a few churches in Putian, which met for Sabbath services until 1966, and a church in the village of Nandian, which met throughout the Cultural Revolution. Chen, *Zhen yesu jiaohui*, 50.

(114.) Steve A. Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural: The Politics of Holy Water (Shenshui) in the PRC, 1949–1966," *China Quarterly* 186 (December): 999–1022

Chapter 7

(1.) Wang Dequan 王德全, Wang Dequan zhishi kan tianguo diyu jianzheng 王德全执事看天国地狱见证 [“The Testimony of Deaconess Wang Dequan’s

(p.338)

Vision of Heaven and Hell”], 2. This is an eleven-page, mostly first-person account with about one page of an anonymous church member’s introduction, circulating in manuscript form from March, 1974. This copy of the document is in the author’s possession.

(2.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(3.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(4.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(5.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(6.) Michelle Yeh, “Chinese Literature From 1937 to the Present,” in *The Cambridge History of Chinese Literature Vol. II, from 1375*, ed. Kang-i Sun Chang and Stephen Owen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 565–705

(7.) *Imperial China: 900–1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999)

(8.) Yue Daiyun and Carolyn Wakeman, *To the Storm: The Odyssey of a Revolutionary Chinese Woman* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987); Yeh, "Chinese Literature From 1937 to the Present," 602–603; Daniel Bays, *A New History of Christianity in China* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 167–168.

(9.) See Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); Paul Clark, *The Chinese Cultural Revolution: A History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 605–612.

(10.) Zhong Xueping, Wang Zheng, and Bai Di, eds., *Some of Us: Chinese Women Growing Up in the Mao Era* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), xiii–xxxiii; Bai Di, "My Wandering Years in the Cultural Revolution: The Interplay of Political Discourse and Personal Articulation," in Zhong, Wang, and Bai, *Some of Us*, 77–99; Kong Shu-yu, "Swan and Spider Eater in Problematic Memoirs of Cultural Revolution," *Positions* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 239–252.

(11.) M. Searle Bates, "Churches and Christians in China, 1950–1967: Fragments of Understanding," *Pacific Affairs* 41, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 199–213 (202); Paul Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 16–17; Bays, *New History*, 169; James T. Myers, *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in China* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), 37; Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 117. It might be useful to compare this growth in numbers of Christians with the growth of the overall population of China. Although statistics during the Republican era were notoriously inaccurate, the missionaries in 1922 quoted the generally accepted statistic of a little over 400 million total Chinese. A census in 1953 recorded a population of 582.6 million.

(p.339)

F. Rawlinson, Helen Thoburn, and D. MacGillivray, eds., *The Chinese Church as Revealed in the National Christian Conference* (Shanghai: Oriental Press, 1922), 82; Judith Banister, *China's Changing Population* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3.

(12.) See Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158–182; Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse and Other Tales From a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2013), 145–171; Mariani, *Church Militant*; Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Watchman Nee and the Little Flock Movement in Maoist China," *Church History* 74, no. 1 (March 2005): 68–96; Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Politics of Faith: Christian Activism and the Maoist State in South China," in *Marginalization in China: Recasting Minority Politics*, ed. Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, Siu Keung Cheung, and Lida V. Nedilsky (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 49–66; Thomas Alan Harvey, *Acquainted With Grief: Wang Mingdao's Stand for the Persecuted Church in China* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2002).

(13.) Daniel Bays, "Foreign Missions and Indigenous Protestant Leaders in China, 1920–1955: Identity and Loyalty in an Age of Powerful Nationalism," in *Missions, Nationalism, and the End of Empire*, ed. Brian Stanley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 144–164

(14.) *The Missionary's Curse* Richard Baum and Frederick C. Teiwes, *Ssu-Ch'ing: The Socialist Education Movement of 1962–1966* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968)

(15.) Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 164.

(16.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 117–118.

(17.) Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 169.

(18.) No. 45, "Wo yao qiu shengling 要求聖靈 I Will Seek the Holy Spirit," Liangbai shou zanmei shi 200首赞美诗 *Two Hundred Hymns of Praise*, True Jesus Church (the traditional form of the character is used for 聖 but the simplified character is used for 灵) (digitally scanned copy kept by church leaders in Fujian, exact date of publication perhaps during the 1950s and certainly before 1965); Chinese lyrics for "The East is Red" at <http://cpc.people.com.cn/BIG5/64150/64154/4482098.html>; English lyrics and tune history for "The East is Red" at <http://www.morningsun.org/east/index.html>. Both accessed April 25, 2018.

(19.) 中国青年 *China Youth* 学习王杰通知专辑 Lei Feng de gushi 雷锋的故事 *Stories of Lei Feng*, ed. Chen Guangsheng 陈广生 and Cui Jiajun 崔家骏 (Beijing: Jiefangjun wenyishe, 1973)

(20.) Interview with Mr. Zhou (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.

(21.) Wang Aihe, "Wuming: An Underground Art Group During the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Modern Chinese History* 3, no. 2 (2009): 183–199

(p.340)

(22.) Mariani, *Church Militant*, 206.

(23.) Daniel Leese, "The Mao Cult as Communicative Space," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 624-634

(24.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 262-267.

(25.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 267.

(26.) Wang, "Wuming"; Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 605-612; Song Yongyi, "A Glance at the Underground Reading Movement During the Cultural Revolution," *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 51 (May 2007): 325-333; Song Yongyi and Zhou Zehao, "Guest Editors' Introduction," *Contemporary Chinese Thought* 33, no. 1 (Fall 2001): 3-19; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 226-231.

(27.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution* Wang, "Wuming," Denise Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution in China's Turbulent Decade: A Cultural Revolution State of the Field," *History Compass* 12, no. 3 (2014): 226-238

(28.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 6, 12.

(29.) Wang, "Wuming," 189, 196.

(30.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 608-611; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 230.

(31.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 608; Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 11.

(32.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 14.

(33.) Bays, *New History*, 177.

(34.) Yeh, "Chinese Literature," 607.

(35.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 4.

(36.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 55-108.

(37.) Barbara Mittler, *A Continuous Revolution: Making Sense of Cultural Revolution Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 22

(38.) Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution," 229-231.

(39.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 251.

(40.) Ho, "Culture, Class, and Revolution," 231; Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 188.

(41.) Wang, "Wuming," 189.

(42.) Song and Zhou, "Guest Editors' Introduction," 18.

(43.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 227.

(44.) Catholics, who had a more pronounced and theologically mandated anti-Communism stance, generally came into the state's crosshairs earlier than Protestants. Bays, *New History of Christianity in China*, 158-159.

(45.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 92-1-101. I sampled every two or three out of eighty records total, and in this sampling only one individual is listed as having come to the True Jesus Church for a reason other than sickness.

(46.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(p.341)

(47.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(48.) In my observations of True Jesus Church contemporary teaching and practice, for instance, although healing solely through prayer is not the most widespread form of healing (prayer is usually combined with modern medicine), it is not infrequently held up as an ideal.

(49.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(50.) Ruth Rogawski, *Hygienic Modernity: Meanings of Health and Disease in Treaty-Port China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 297

(51.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(52.) Henrietta Harrison's study identifies a government booklet that circulated during the Socialist Education Movement in 1965 called 控诉：谁害死了我的妈？ ("Denunciation: Who Killed My Mother?"). This booklet claimed that one Catholic woman died because she drank unboiled holy water. Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 159-160.

(53.) Steve A. Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural: The Politics of Holy Water (Shenshui) in the PRC, 1949-1966," *China Quarterly* 186 (Dec. 2006): 999-1022

(54.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 32.

(55.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(56.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(57.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(58.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33. Although I can find no specific evidence in the church's records on infant baptism during the 1950s, I have seen instances of infant baptism in the contemporary True Jesus Church in southern China.

(59.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(60.) Wuhan Municipal Archives 96-1-582, 33.

(61.) Smith, "Local Cadres Confront the Supernatural," 1019.

(62.) Philip Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988)

(63.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian. Most of my informants similarly referred to the Cultural Revolution, which began in 1966, as the endpoint for organized church activities. Henrietta Harrison's study of rural Catholics in Shanxi shows that aboveground activities shut down in 1965 during the Socialist Education Movement, prior to the Cultural Revolution. Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse*, 152-167.

(64.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, Mr. Zhang (pseudonym), and members of the church in a Fujian village, March 2010; Chen Guangzao, *Zhenyesu jiaohui zonghui ji bufen shengxian jiaohui jianshi 真耶稣教会总会及部分省县教会简史 [A Brief History of the True Jesus Church General Assembly and the Church in Some Provinces and Counties]* (hereafter *Brief History*), 3rd ed. (Place of publication not given: True Jesus Church, 2000), 50.

(p.342)

(65.) Interviews with Ms. Yang (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.

(66.) Wang Dequan, "Testimony," 1.

(67.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(68.) Interview with Mr. Wu (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.

(69.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(70.) Interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(71.) MacFarquhar and Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution*, 332–336; Wang, “Wuming,” 190.

(72.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.

(73.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.

(74.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.

(75.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.

(76.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 1.

(77.) This hymn is included in Liangbai shou zanmei shi 200 首赞美诗 *Two Hundred Hymns of Praise*, no.76.

(78.) The final verse in the 1950s–1960s edition (“Glory, glory, hallelujah/ Glory, glory, hallelujah/Seeing the Lord, I will be changed/Receive the promised land”) was omitted from the hymnbooks currently in use in China.

(79.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(80.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 2.

(81.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(82.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 3.

(83.) See, for instance, Dante’s description of hell, purgatory, and heaven in *The Divine Comedy* (Part I, Hell, trans. Dorothy Sayers, 1950; Part II, Purgatory, trans. 1985, Mark Musa; Part III, Paradise, trans. Dorothy Sayers and Barbara Reynolds, 1962) (New York: Penguin Classics); Nicolas Standaert, “Chinese Christian Visits to the Underworld,” in *Conflict and Accommodation in Early Modern East Asia: Essays in Honour of Erik Zürcher*, ed. Leonard Blussé and Harriet T. Zurndorfer (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 1993), 54–70; Beata Grant and Wilt Idema, trans., *Escape From Blood Pond Hell: The Tales of Mulian and Woman Huang* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011).

(84.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 10.

(85.) Wang Dequan, “Testimony,” 10.

(86.) Interview with Mr. Wu, March 2010, Fujian; interviews with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian; interview with Ms. Fu (pseudonym), March 2010, Fujian.

(87.) Chen, *Brief History*, 52–53.

(88.) Daniel Leese, “The Mao Cult as Communicative Space,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8 (2007): 623–639

(89.) Joseph Tse-Hei Lee, "Co-Optation and Its Discontents: Seventh-Day Adventism in 1950s China," *Frontiers of History in China* 7 (2012): 587–607

(90.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(91.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(p.343)

(92.) Interview with Mr. Zhou, March 2010, Fujian.

(93.) Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149–175

(94.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(95.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(96.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(97.) Interview with Ms. Fu, March 2010.

(98.) Clark, *Chinese Cultural Revolution*, 213–214.

Chapter 8

(1.) Zanmei shi 赞美诗 [*Hymns of Praise*] (Nanjing: China Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee, China Christian Council, 2006)

(2.) See the text of "Document 19," accessed April 30, 2018, https://www.purdue.edu/crcs/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Document_no._19_1982.pdf.

(3.) Vincent Goossaert and David Palmer, *The Religious Question in Modern China* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 315–330

(4.) Hong Qu, "Religious Policy in the People's Republic of China: An Alternative Perspective," *Journal of Contemporary China* 20, no. 70 (2011): 433–448;
Fenggang Yang, "The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China," *Sociological Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (2006): 93–122.

(5.) Charlotte Ikels, *The Return of the God of Wealth: The Transition to a Market Economy in Urban China* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 20

(6.) Ikels, *Return of the God of Wealth*, 58.

(7.) Jessica C. Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China," *China Quarterly* 213 (March 2013): 19–38

(8.) Jessica C. Teets, "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?" *China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 330-347

(9.) Depending on methodology, estimates of the religiosity of the Chinese population vary widely, from as little as 13.7 percent (which does not take into account informal religious or "superstitious" practices such as support of a local temple organization, attendance at a temple festival, geomancy [*fengshui*], or fortune-telling) to as much as 85 percent of the population engaging in some religious practice. Fenggang Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism: A Shortage Economy Explanation," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 1 (2009): 3-33 (11); Cheng-Tian Kuo, "Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan," *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 249-267.

(p.344)

(10.) Fenggang Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism," 3-33 (6, 31).

(11.) 宗教生态失衡对基督教发展的影响以江西余干县的宗教调查为例 *China Ethnic News* 中国民族报 Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to City Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 254

(12.) Government statistics tend to be conservative, and estimates by believing Christians tend to be liberal. Nanlai Cao cites a conservative estimate of 23 million in "An In-House Questionnaire Survey on Christianity in China," in *Annual Report on China's Religions*, eds. Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui (Beijing: Social Sciences Academic Press, 2010): 190-212, referenced in Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 149-175 (173). The Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project's moderate estimate in 2011 was 67 million, accessed July 29, 2017, <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/global-christianity-regions/#asia>. On the higher end, see David Aikman's estimate of 80 to perhaps even 100 million in *Jesus in Beijing: How Christianity Is Transforming China and Changing the Global Balance of Power* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003), 7-8.

(13.) Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," *Government and Opposition* 26, no. 1 (1991): 10

(14.) Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," 12, 13.

(15.) Jessica C. Teets, "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?," 332-338; Jennifer Y. J. Hsu, "Chinese Non-Governmental Organisations and Civil Society: A Review of the Literature," *Geography Compass* 8, no. 2 (2014): 98-110; Stephen Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap: Transnational Activism and State Power in a Rising China* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017).

(16.) Jessica C. Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies Bloom: The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China," *China Quarterly* 213 (March 2013): 19-38; Timothy Hildebrandt, "The Political Economy of Social Organization Registration in China," *China Quarterly* 208 (Dec. 2011), 970-989; Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap*.

(17.) Jessica C. Teets, "Civil Society Participation in Local Governance: Outsourcing Migrant Education in Shanghai," in *China's Search for Good Governance*, ed. Zhenglai Deng and Guo Sujian (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)

(18.) Teets, "Civil Society Participation in Local Governance," 77.

(19.) Teets, "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts," Timothy Brook, "Auto-Organization in Chinese Society," in *Civil Society in China*, ed. Timothy Brook and B. Michael Frolic (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1997), 19-45

(20.) Teets, "The Rise of Consultative Authoritarianism in China."

(p.345)

(21.) A search for “道德危机 moral crisis” on the China Academic Literature Database on www.cnki.net yields 634 results from 1983–2017. Some sample articles include Chen Qian and Wang Fengcui, “道德危机及其规范建设 The Crisis of Morals and the Construction of Norms,” *Fazhu yu shehui 法制与社会 Legal System and Society* 2016, no. 2: 173–174; Ran Sidong, “公共道德危机的法律干预—从范跑跑事例说起 Legal Meddling in the Crisis of Public Morality—The Case of ‘Running Mr. Fan,’” *Jinan xuebao (zhexue shehuixue ban) 暨南学报 (哲学社会学版) Journal of Jinan University (Philosophy and Social Sciences)* 143, no. 6 (2009): 70–76; Liu Yuchun, “道德危机的隐显及其社会根源 The Implicitness of Moral Crisis and Its Social Root,” *Sixiang zhengzhi jiaoyu yanjiu 思想政治教育研究 Ideological and Political Education Research* 24, no. 6 (December 2008): 100–102; Gao Shining, “Faith and Values: Case Studies of Chinese Christians,” in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, ed. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 315–324; Qiao Zhenli, “道德危机与重建 The Moral Crisis and Moral Rebuilding,” *Lilun daokan 理论导刊 Journal of Socialist Theory Guide* 1995, no. 7: 35–36. For a sampling of literature on Christianity’s potential contributions in addressing this spiritual crisis, see Zhuo Xinping, “The Significance of Christianity for the Modernization of Chinese Society,” in *Sino-Christian Studies in China*, ed. Yang Huilin and Daniel H. N. Yeung (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006), 252–264; Zhibin Xie, *Religious Diversity and Public Religion in China* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); Fenggang Yang, “Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald’s: Conversion to Christianity in Urban China,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 4 (2005): 423–441; Xie Wenyu, “基督教和当代中国问题笔谈 Discussion of Christianity and Contemporary China,” *Shanghai daxue xuebao (shehui kexue ban) 上海大学学报 (社会科学) Journal of Shanghai University (Social Sciences)* 11, no. 2 (2004): 109–112; Yang Fenggang, “中国社会伦理道德的挑战 The Challenges of Ethics and Morals in Chinese Society,” in *Jidujiao yu zhongguo wenhua gengxin 基督教与中国文化更新 Christianity and the Renewal of Chinese Culture*, ed. Chen Huiwen (Dallas, TX: Dashiming zhongxin, 2000), 84–94.

(22.) Carsten T. Vala, *The Politics of Protestant Churches and the Party-State in China: God Above Party?* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2017); Karrie Koesel, *Religion and Authoritarianism: Cooperation, Conflict and the Consequences* (Cambridge University Press, 2018); Ryan Dunch, "Protestant Christianity in China Today: Fragile, Fragmented, Flourishing," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, ed. Stephen Uhalley, Jr., and Xiaoxin Wu (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2001), 195–216; Ying Fuk-tsang, "Church-State Relations in Contemporary China and the Development of Protestant Christianity," *China Study Journal* 18, no. 3 (2003): 19–48; Yang Fenggang, "Civil Society and the Role of Christianity in China: A Preliminary Reflection," in *Civil Society as Democratic Practice*, ed. Antonio F. Perez, (p.346) Semou Pathe Gueye, and Fenggang Yang (Washington, DC: The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2005). In a period of increased anti-Christian persecution during the presidency of Xi Jinping, numerous church groups, including officially registered churches, have publicly opposed local government actions such as cross demolition and church demolition, which they argue violate the Chinese Constitution's guarantee of freedom of religion. However, this is a far cry from demonstrating against the party-state itself.

(23.) Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 126–148; Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives

(24.) Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China: From Rural Preachers to Urban Pastors* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 11; Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives

(25.) [http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/Susan K. McCarthy](http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/Susan%20K.%20McCarthy), "In Between the Divine and the Leviathan: Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China," *China Review* 17, no. 2 (June 2017): 65–93

(26.) On these tensions, see Fenggang Yang, *Religion in China, Survival and Revival Under Communist Rule* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) and Jason Kindopp and Carol Lee Hamrin, eds., *God and Caesar in China* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2004); Teresa Zimmerman-Liu and Teresa Wright, "Unregistered Protestant Churches in the Reform Era," in *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Francis Khek Gee Lim (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2013), 220–233.

(27.) Cheng-Tian Kuo, "Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan," *The Oxford Handbook of Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 249–267 (259); Fenggang Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism: A Shortage Economy Explanation," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 1 (2009), 3–33 (14).

(28.) Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism," 14.

(29.) Yang, "Religion in China Under Communism," 32; Kuo, "Sacred, Secular, and Neosacred Governments in China and Taiwan," 262.

(30.) Stephen Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap: Transnational Activism and State Power in a Rising China* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2017), 11-19

(p.347)

(31.) A. Sharif, M. Fiatarone Singh, T. Trey, and J. Lavee, "Organ Procurement From Executed Prisoners in China," *American Journal of Transplantation* 14, no. 10 (Oct. 2014): 2246-2252 Noakes, *The Advocacy Trap*

(32.) Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 126-148.

(33.) China Digital Times, the Internet site based at the University of California, Berkeley, translates and catalogues countless examples of press control and censorship.

(34.) "Chinese Alarm Over Formaldehyde-Tainted Cabbages," *BBC News*, May 7, 2012, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-south-asia-17981323>. A new iPhone app was developed in 2014 to track food contamination outbreaks. "New iPhone app lets you track China's latest food scandals," *Shanghaiist.com*, June 19, 2012, <http://shanghaiist.com/2012/06/19/iphone-food-scandal-app.php>. The iPhone app was downloaded more than 200,000 times within the first week of its launching. "Big Data Could Make China's Food Safer," *Xinhua News*, July 10, 2016, http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2016-07/10/c_135502440.htm. "Cracking Down on China's Dangerous Fake Food Sector," *Independent*, accessed August 7, 2017, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/asia/china-fake-food-sector-unlicensed-products-knock-offs-supply-chain-contamination-public-health-a7880341.html>. "China Fake Data Mask Economic Rebound," *Financial Times*, accessed January 16, 2018, <https://www.ft.com/content/a9889330-f51c-11e7-88f7-5465a6ce1a00>.

(35.) Erazim Kohák, *The Embers and the Stars* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 79-80

(36.) Melissa Inouye, "Miraculous Modernity: Charismatic Traditions and Trajectories Within Chinese Protestant Christianity," in *Modern Chinese Religion II, 1850-2015, Vol. 2*, ed. Vincent Goossaert, Jan Kiely, and John Lagerwey (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2013), 884-919

(37.) Kipnis, "The Flourishing of Religion in Post-Mao China," 43.

(38.) Stephen Feuchtwang, "Religion as Resistance," in *Chinese Society: Change, Conflict and Resistance*, ed. Elizabeth J. Perry and Mark Selden (London: Routledge, 2000), 161–177 (162–163). One example of a marriage of cosmology and moral ideology that proved particularly volatile was the Falun Gong movement and the government's ongoing suppression of the movement since 1999. See David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Maria Hsia Chang, *Falun Gong: The End of Days* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012); Stephen Noakes and Caylan Ford, "Managing Political Opposition Groups in China: Explaining the Continuing Anti-Falun Gong Campaign," *China Quarterly* 223 (Sep. 2015), 658–679.

(39.) Ying Fuk-tsang, "Church-State Relations in Contemporary China and the Development of Protestant Christianity," 20–22.

(40.) Richard Madsen, *China's Catholics*, 128.

(41.) David Ownby, *Falun Gong and the Future of China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

(p.348)

(42.) Teets, "Let Many Civil Societies Bloom," Nanlai Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," in *Global Pentecostalism in the 21st Century*, ed. Robert Hefner (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 149–175

(43.) Robert Weller and Keping Wu, "On the Boundaries Between Good and Evil: Constructing Multiple Moralities in China," *Journal of Asian Studies* 76, no. 1 (Feb. 2017): 47–67

(44.) Ying, "Church-State Relations," 33.

(45.) True Jesus Church investigators' meeting at Spiritual Convocation, November 10, 2009, South China.

(46.) True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, November 7, 2009, South China.

(47.) True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.

(48.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(49.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, March 20, 2009, Central China.

(50.) Interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

(51.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.

(52.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday morning meeting, November 14, 2009, South China.

(53.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Friday evening meeting, October 9, 2009, South China.

(54.) Ying, "Church-State Relations," 33.

(55.) Ms. Shi (pseudonym), Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday morning meeting, April 24, 2010, North China.

(56.) True Jesus Church, *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook* 信徒生活手册, 88.

(57.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 91.

(58.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 79. The Shandong house churches studied by Jie Kang similarly had strict community norms discouraging sexual relations before marriage. See Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 148-151.

(59.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 86.

(60.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 81.

(61.) John Osburg, *Anxious Wealth: Money and Morality Among China's New Rich* (Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press, 2013)

(62.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 62-65.

(63.) *Believers' Lifestyle Handbook*, 42-43.

(p.349)

(64.) Kam Wing Chan, "China: Internal Migration," in *The Encyclopedia of Global Human Migration* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), accessed July 26, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/9781444351071.wbeghm124/abstract?userIsAuthenticated=false&deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=>

(65.) Interview with Mr. Dong (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(66.) Interview with Ms. Ju (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

(67.) Interview with Ms. Ke (pseudonym), October 2009, South China.

(68.) Interview with Mr. Dong (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(69.) (Name unknown). Sermon at True Jesus Church, young adults' Fellowship Conference, May 2, 2009, Central China.

(70.) (Name unknown). Sermon at True Jesus Church, young adults' Fellowship Conference, May 2, 2009, Central China.

(71.) Jie Kang finds a similar coexistence of ascetic, antimaterialist attitudes and attitudes embracing of the pursuit of material prosperity for righteous purposes in her study of house churches in Linyi, Shandong. Jie Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 203–208.

(72.) Nanlai Cao, *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010), 163

(73.) Jessica C. Teets, "Post-Earthquake Relief and Reconstruction Efforts: The Emergence of Civil Society in China?" *China Quarterly* 198 (June 2009): 330–347; Timothy Hildebrandt, *Social Organizations and the Authoritarian State in China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Jessica C. Teets, "Civil Society Participation in Local Governance."

(74.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

(75.) Northern True Jesus Church website. Quoted from Wei Isaac's *Da Dao Zhi Xing*, sec. 6, "Jiaohui lueshi" (*Brief Church History*), accessed May 8, 2010, <http://www.zysjh.org/dadaozhixing.asp>.

(76.) Deaconess Xie, True Jesus Church, women's meeting, May 2009, Central China.

(77.) Interview with Ms. Wang, March 27, 2010, South China.

(78.) (Name unknown). True Jesus Church sermon, Saturday morning meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(79.) Nanlai Cao's study also finds that some Christians aspire to compete with the West and achieve elite status in global Christianity by exporting the Gospel from China to other parts of the world. Cao, "Gender, Modernity, and Pentecostal Christianity in China," 164.

(80.) Interview with Mr. Jiang (pseudonym), April 2010, South China.

(81.) Karrie Koesel, "China's Patriotic Pentecostals," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Yang Fenggang, Joy (p.350) K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 240–263 *Shields of Faith: Christianity in Contemporary China: Socio-Cultural Perspectives*

(82.) Interview with Ms. He (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.

- (83.) Interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.
- (84.) Kuai Maoqing, “Bingqi shisu, mixi fenzheng” (“Put Away the World, Eliminate Contention”), *Tianfeng* (May 1996): 30–31.
- (85.) An Xiaohui, “Fu guanyun jiaohui yougan” (“Impressions of Traveling to the Guanyun Churches”), *Tianfeng* (Jan. 1999): 16
- (86.) Interview with Mr. Qiu, March 2010, South China.
- (87.) Interview with Mr. Fan, March 2009, Central China.
- (88.) Yang, “The Red, Black, and Gray Markets of Religion in China.”
- (89.) Anthony J. Spires, “Contingent Symbiosis and Civil Society in an Authoritarian State: Understanding the Survival of China’s Grassroots NGOs,” *American Journal of Sociology* 117, no. 1 (2011): 13; Andrew Mertha, “‘Fragmented Authoritarianism 2.0’: Political Pluralization in the Chinese Policy Process,” *China Quarterly* 200 (2009): 996. Referenced in McCarthy, “Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China,” 70–71.
- (90.) Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 250.
- (91.) McCarthy, “Faith-Based Charity, Religious Overspill and the Governance of Religion in China,” 81–87.

Chapter 9

- (1.) (Name unknown). Sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service in South China, October 2009.
- (2.) Ke-hsien Huang, “Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism,” in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Yang Fenggang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 125
- (3.) Ke-hsien Huang writes that within the True Jesus Church, this style of preaching by connecting “dozens or even over a hundred biblical references” is known as “bead-stringing” 串珠. Huang, “Taming the Spirit,” 126.
- (4.) Robert Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1996), 211

(p.351)

- (5.) Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, 210–211.
-

(6.) Here I refer to church cultures that I have experienced personally.

(7.) Michael Chambon comes to a similar conclusion that charisma is not only a force for deregulation but can also “be applied to strengthen ecclesiological institutions and to regulate beliefs and practices.” Michael Chambon, “Are Chinese Christians Pentecostal? A Catholic Reading of Pentecostal Influence on Chinese Christians,” in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 181–199 (197).

(8.) Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983)

(9.) Zhang Pin (pseudonym), November 2009, at a Spiritual Convocation meeting in South China.

(10.) Similar arguments about miracles and modern science are made in Jacalyn Duffin, “The Doctor Was Surprised; or, How to Diagnose a Miracle,” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 81: no. 4 (winter 2007): 699–729; Ruth Harris, *Lourdes: Body and Spirit in a Secular Age* (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1999); Suzanne K. Kaufman, *Consuming Visions: Mass Culture and the Lourdes Shrine* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005). Duffin’s article, for example, argues that physician testimony has been a critical part of the Vatican’s investigation into miracles taken as evidence of sainthood since the seventeenth century. The prognosis must be hopeless, and the recovery must be a great surprise to the doctor, to verify a healing miracle has occurred.

(11.) Orsi, *Thank you, St. Jude*, 186. In this quote, Orsi is also arguing that miraculous accounts are more than simple “recasting.”

(12.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(13.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(14.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church meeting, April 4, 2009, Central China.

(15.) Interview with Ms. Yang (pseudonym), March 28, 2010, South China.

(16.) Ms. Wu (pseudonym), sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.

(17.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.

(18.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.

(19.) Ms. Wu, sermon in True Jesus Church, Saturday-morning service, March 21, 2009, Central China.

(20.) Amanda Porterfield, *Healing in the History of Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

(21.) Richard von Glahn, *The Sinister Way: The Divine and the Demonic in Chinese Religious Culture* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, (p.352) 2004); Barend ter Haar, *Telling Stories: Witchcraft and Scapegoating in Chinese History* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2006).

(22.) The Chinese word is *gui* 鬼 or *mogui* 魔鬼; in Chinese Christian discourse, *mogui* can stand for “the Devil” or can simply mean “a devil,” “a demon,” or “an evil spirit.” An exclusively Christian word for evil incarnate is *Sadan* 撒旦 (Satan). “Devil” is the rendering that best conveys these multiple meanings across Christian and traditional popular religious contexts.

(23.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.

(24.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.

(25.) Interview with multiple members of the True Jesus Church, March 28, 2010, village in South China.

(26.) Interview with Mr. Chen (pseudonym), April 2010, village in South China.

(27.) Joel Robbins, “On the Paradoxes of Global Pentecostalism and the Perils of Continuity Thinking,” *Religion* 33, no. 3 (2003): 221–231

(28.) Interview with Mr. Chen, April 2010, South China.

(29.) Interview with Mr. Chen, March 2010, South China.

(30.) Ling ge 灵歌 *Spirit Songs*, Wei Yisa 魏以撒 (Isaac), ed., Hymn no. 41, “Lan, Lan, Lan” (“Lazy, Lazy, Lazy”), fourth verse.

(31.) Jie Kang’s research on house churches in Linyi, Shandong, argues that in rural areas, church members believe that one should rely solely on God for healing instead of employing modern medicine. Among the True Jesus Church congregations, by contrast, I have encountered both sides of this story in both rural and urban areas, although the prayer-only approach seems more like an ideal that is not commonly realized. Kang, *House Church Christianity in China*, 231–232.

- (32.) Interview with Mr. Jing (pseudonym), March 2010, South China.
- (33.) Thirtieth Anniversary Commemorative Volume of the True Jesus Church 真耶穌教會卅年紀念專刊 (Nanjing: True Jesus Church, 1947), J1-J9
- (34.) True Jesus Church, testimony meeting in Spiritual Convocation, November 14, 2009, South China.
- (35.) True Jesus Church, testimony meeting in Spiritual Convocation, November 14, 2009, South China.
- (36.) A substantial body of religious studies literature refuting the secularization thesis has accumulated over the past few decades. See, for example, Rodney Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999): 249-273; and Harvey Cox and Jan Swyngedouw, "The Myth of the Twentieth Century: The Rise and Fall of Secularization," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, no.1/2 (Spring, 2000): 1-13.
- (37.) Visiting preacher, sermon in True Jesus Church, Sabbath meeting, April 2, 2009, Central China.
- (38.) Interview with Mr. Qiu (pseudonym), March 29, 2010, South China.

(p.353)

- (39.) Interview with Ms. Jia (pseudonym), March 28, 2010, South China.
- (40.) Interview with Mr. Qiu, March 29, 2010, South China.
- (41.) Ms. Xie (pseudonym), True Jesus Church women's meeting, March 2009, Central China.
- (42.) Ms. Xie, True Jesus Church women's meeting, March 2009, Central China.
- (43.) David Reed, personal email and in-person communication.
- (44.) Yen-zen Tsai, "Glossolalia and Church Identity: The Role of Sound in the Making of a Chinese Pentecostal-Charismatic Church," in Yang, Anderson, and Tong, *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, 137-157.
- (45.) Huang, "Taming the Spirit."
- (46.) Interview with Ms. Ju (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.
- (47.) Interview with Ms. He (pseudonym), March 2010, South China; interview with Mr. Fan (pseudonym), March 2009, South China.
- (48.) Interview with Ms. He, March 2010, South China.

(49.) Orsi, *Thank You, St. Jude*, 209.

Conclusion

(1.) Interview with Ms. Xie (pseudonym), March 2009, Central China.

(2.) Ke-hsien Huang, "Taming the Spirit by Appropriating Indigenous Culture: An Ethnographic Study of the True Jesus Church as Confucian-Style Pentecostalism," in *Global Chinese Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*, ed. Fenggang Yang, Joy K. C. Tong, and Allan H. Anderson (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2017), 118-136

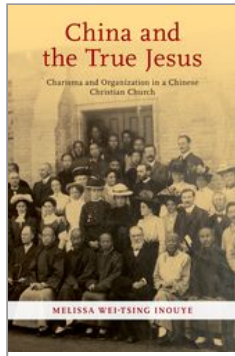
(3.) Website of the TJC International Assembly, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://tjc.org/true-jesus-church/history/>.

(4.) This hymn (Hymn no. 296 in Zanmei shi 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise*), like the majority of hymns in the current *Hymns of Praise* (True Jesus Church, publication information unknown) is translated from Western hymnody. The lyrics for "According to Thy Gracious Word" were published by James Montgomery in *The Christian Psalmist* in 1825, and the tune name, "Maitland," was written by George N. Allen in 1844; accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.hymnary.org/text/according_to_thy_gracious_word; http://www.hymnary.org/tune/maitland_allen.

(5.) This hymn (Hymn no. 78 in Zanmei shi 赞美诗 *Hymns of Praise*), in English "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross," was written by Isaac Watts in 1707 and set to music by Lowell Mason; accessed April 25, 2018, http://www.hymnary.org/text/when_i_survey_the_wondrous_cross.

(p.354)

University Press Scholarship Online
Oxford Scholarship Online



China and the True Jesus: Charisma and Organization in a Chinese Christian Church

Melissa Wei-Tsing Inouye

Print publication date: 2019

Print ISBN-13: 9780190923464

Published to Oxford Scholarship Online: January 2019

DOI: 10.1093/oso/9780190923464.001.0001

(p.377) Index

1-2-8 incident. *See* January Twenty-Eighth Incident
acculturation

 in London Missionary Society churches, 75-76

 in Protestant churches, 116

 in True Jesus Church, 97, 110-111, 117-118

Africa, Christianity in, 109, 277

Amity Foundation, 246

angel, 212, 227-228

Anglican Church, 69, 205, 226

anti-Christian movements, 116

antiforeignism, 108, 110, 116, 135, 158, 175-176, 195, 199, 204, 206

Anti-Rightist Campaign, 208, 213

apocalyptic expectations, 101, 103, 105, 140

 contemporary, 247, 249, 250, 258

 of Wei Enbo, 103, 105

Apostolic Faith, The, 60, 71

Apostolic Faith Church, 80-82, 151-152

armies, destructive activities of, 31, 115, 155, 157, 178

Assemblies of God, 205

associations, popular. *See* organizations, popular

autonomous ideological organizations. *See also* civil society; organizations

 contemporary, 237, 241-247

 definition of, 241-242

 in Maoist era, 187, 188, 190, 191, 192, 193, 210

 in Republican era, 159, 160

 and trust, 244

Azusa Street Revival, 60, 64, 66. *See also* *Apostolic Faith, The*

baptism, 49, 92-93, 95-97, 174, 205, 223, 238, 256, 274-275

- beatas. *See* virgins, Catholic
- Beijing, 33, 47, 57–58, 80–81, 86
- Berntsen, Bernt, 60–63, 89
 - Pentecostal networks of, 71–72
 - Wei Enbo and, 80–84, 102, 111–112, 115
- Berntsen, Henry, 63
- Berntsen, Magna Maria Hanson Berg, 63–64, 67, 90
- Berntsen, Ruth, 67
- Bible
 - and authority, 110, 111, 152–153, 258
 - and literacy, 49, 56, 71, 130–131
 - and restorationism, 67, 110, 118
 - as rhetorical resource, 191–195, 248, 259
 - study meetings, 160, 238
 - translations and transcriptions of, 36, 70–71
- (p.378)** Bible references
 - Ephesians 6:11–17, 87
 - Isaiah 29:13, 90
 - Matthew 4:4, 248
 - 1 Peter 2:25, 194
 - 2 Peter 2:22, 194
 - 1 Timothy 2:8–15, 152–153
- Bible stories, 78, 228–229, 249
- Biblewomen, 49, 143, 148–149
- bishops and bishopesses, 102–103
- Boxer Protocol, 45
- Boxer Uprising, 44–45
- business networks
 - in Chinese Christian community, 57, 83–84
 - in early True Jesus Church, 97–99
- Campaign
 - Anti-Rightist, 208, 213
 - Five Antis, 196
 - One Hit and Three Antis, 217
 - Patriotic Hygiene, 221
 - to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries, 19
 - Three Antis, 196
- Cangzhou, 59
- Cao Rulin, 108
- capital, moral, 160
- Catholic Patriotic Association, 215
- Catholicism in the Maoist era, 189
- editorship, 164, 176
- charisma, 3, 12, 269, 279
- charisma and organization, relationship between, 4, 12, 28, 62, 268, 270
- charismatic Christianity, global, 109
- charismatic organization, 20
 - and the Chinese Communist Party, 114, 185–187, 242
 - and Falun Gong, 242–243

- and the London Missionary Society, 39-40, 52, 55
- and Marxism, 89
- and the Qing imperial bureaucracy, 27-28, 54-55
- and the True Jesus Church, 98-100, 143-148, 159-171, 184-186, 229-234
- charismatic religious movements, 3-9, 88
- Chen Duxiu, 113, 135
- China Christian Council, 256
- Chinese Christian Intelligencer, The*, 59, 108, 114
- Chinese Communist Party, 114, 136, 172-173, 182-183
- Chinese People's Political Consultative Congress, 205, 207
- Chinese popular religion, 6-7, 27, 97, 104-105, 266
- Chongqing, 178, 179
- Christian Manifesto, 196
- church government. *See* government, church
- Church of Christ in China, 205, 257
- church-sect model, 12
- church-state relations, 161-163, 257
- citizenship, 253-254
- civil service examination, 22, 25, 53-55
- civil society, 237-240. *See also* autonomous ideological organization
- civil war between Nationalists and Communists, 155, 181-185, 193
- clandestine culture, 217-220, 223-225, 231-234
- collective experience, religious, 229, 233
- Communist Party of China. *See* Chinese Communist Party
- communication, 25-27, 61, 63, 73-74
- concubinage, 79
- continuity theories of religious movements, 5-9, 117
- corruption, 162, 248
- Councilors Assembly, 167, 169-170
- counterculture of True Jesus Church, 250-253
- (p.379)** crisis of morals, 240n21, 245
- cult of Mao, 216-217
- cultural imperialism, 35, 133
- Cultural Revolution, 213-217. *See also* clandestine culture
- deacons and deaconesses, 103, 143-144
- death
 - in civil war and internal purges, 155
 - in foreign missionary life, 40-41, 46
 - in Great Leap Forward, 209
 - in manmade Yellow River flood, 180-181
 - in Rape of Nanjing, 178
 - of Taiping rebels, 31
 - in War of Resistance against Japanese, 180-181
- Deng Xiaoping, 214, 235-236
- Denunciation Movement, 197-199
- deprivation theories of religious movements, 4-9
- devil, 1-2, 87, 93-94, 266
- Document 19, 235
- Durkheim, Emile, 9

- elections, 79, 165
- exorcism, 2, 87-89, 92-94, 150-151, 267
- fakes, 244
- Falun Gong, 242-243
- famine, 115
- fast, 91, 95-96, 114
- First Opium War. *See* Opium War, First
- Five Antis Campaign, 196
- floods, 104, 176-177
- food contamination, 244
- footbinding, 123, 127-128
- footwashing, 80-81, 115, 328
- funerals, 250
- Gao Daling, 116, 166
- General Assembly of True Jesus Church, 133-147, 167-169, 210
- Gentiles, 206, 247, 249, 259
- Global Church Correction*, 99
- globalization, 73, 77, 84-85, 240
- glossolalia,
 - in classical Pentecostal contexts, 60-62, 66-67, 82
 - historical precedents for, 67
 - in True Jesus Church, 10, 92, 94, 222, 237, 265, 271-272
 - women and, 151
- God
 - as author of True Jesus Church history, 2
 - Chinese terms for, 70
- Goforth, Jonathan, 82
- Gong Pinmei, 192
- government
 - London Missionary Society church, 75, 77
 - procedures of, 164-165, 169
 - regional, 161-163
 - True Jesus Church, 143, 152-153, 162-163
 - warlord, 157
- Great Leap Forward, 208-209
- He Zizhen, 136, 173
- healing
 - within Chinese popular religion, 97
 - contemporary, 264-265, 269
 - and conversion, 120, 226
 - in early True Jesus Church, 96-97
 - in Maoist era, 221-223
 - and medicine, 267-268
 - in Pentecostal churches, 82, 150
 - women and, 1-2, 120, 152-153, 231-232
- heaven, 92
 - visions of, 86, 91, 94, 212, 226
 - voices from, 80, 86-87, 91
- hell, 228

- heterodox religion, 103, 104
- (p.380)** Holy Spirit
 - asking for the, 272
 - and Chinese Protestant churches, 72
 - and London Missionary Society, 51, 52, 59–60
 - and Pentecostal churches, 62–67, 82, 150–151
 - and True Jesus Church, 90, 92–93, 95–96, 151, 272
 - writing inspired by, 93, 98
- Holy Spirit Times*, 138, 140, 152
- Hong Xiuquan, 18, 22–23, 91
- house churches
 - in Maoist era, 224, 232
 - in reform era, 13, 238, 268
 - in Republican era, 89, 92, 102
- Huangcun, 88
- hymnbooks, 71, 139–140, 143, 173, 176
- hymns. *See also* songs
 - in Cultural Revolution, 218, 231–232
 - Taiping, 175
 - True Jesus Church, 1–2, 19–20, 142–143, 174, 212, 216, 267, 279
 - Western missionary, 34
- imperialism and missionary organizations, 35
- India, 62
- International Assembly of True Jesus Church, 277
- January Twenty-Eighth Incident, 157
- Japan
 - and First Sino-Japanese War, 42–43
 - in Manchuria, 155, 158
 - and Second Sino-Japanese War, 178–181
 - in Shanghai, 157–158
- Jesus
 - name of, 97, 110, 139
 - Wei Enbo's encounters with, 86, 94–95, 98
- Jesus Family, 191
- Jiang Qing, 173, 213
- Jiang Yuehan (John), 195, 205, 207–209
- Jin Luxian, 192
- Kang Youwei, 43
- Korean Revival, 5, 60
- Korean War, 195
- land reform, 195, 197
- legitimacy
 - of Communist government, 162, 173, 181–182
 - of Nationalist government, 158, 162
 - of True Jesus Church government, 170–171, 176–177, 248, 262 (*see also* government: True Jesus Church)
- Lei Feng, 216
- Lenwood, Norah, 50–51
- Li Dazhao, 113

- Li Hongzhang, 39, 43
- Li Zhengcheng, 201–202, 206–207, 209
- literacy campaigns, 114. *See also* Bible: and literacy
- literature, Western, 217
- Little Flock, 191
- Liu Ai, 78, 91–92, 95, 139
 - ambivalence toward True Jesus Church of, 101–102
 - as church leader, 102, 139, 144
 - as mediator between Bernt Berntsen and Wei Enbo, 102
- Liu Dapeng, 52–53
- Liu Shaoqi, 214
- London Missionary Society, 20, 34–35, 39–41, 69
 - charismatic revivals within, 59–60
 - churches of, 33, 45, 51, 76
 - at Ciqikou, 47, 49, 57, 75, 81, 117
- Long March, 172
- Lord's Supper, 19–20, 115, 278–280
 - (p.381)** Manchuria, 155, 157, 162–163
- Mao Zedong
 - in Beijing with Wei Enbo, 89, 112
 - cult of, 216–217
 - in Wuhan with Yang Zhendao, 135
- Maoism
 - charismatic practice during, 220–225
 - Christian responses to, 189–192, 198–199
 - True Jesus Church cooperation with, 188, 199–208, 216, 225
 - True Jesus Church resistance to, 200, 229–234
 - as universalist ideology, 187–188
- market models of religion, 237, 257
- marriage, 119, 122–126
 - contemporary True Jesus Church practices surrounding, 250–253
- Marxism, 89, 187
- May Fourth Movement, 107–108
- May Thirtieth Incident, 135
- medical assistants, 53
- medical education, 41–42, 120, 126
- Meech, Edith Prankard, 32–33, 44–46
- Meech, Gladys, 40–41
- Meech, Grace, 41
- Meech, Samuel Evans, 21, 32–33, 40, 47, 82
 - and church government, 75, 77
 - political commentary of, 104–105
 - and Wei Enbo, 58–59, 75
- meetings, revival, 82, 96. *See also* revivals
- millenarianism, 103, 110, 249–250
- miracle stories, 94–95, 261
- miracles, 94, 232, 260–261, 264–265. *See also* charisma; exorcism; glossolalia; healing; Holy Spirit
- moral crisis. *See* crisis of morals

- morality
 - in contemporary True Jesus Church, 251
 - and conversion to early True Jesus Church, 100, 118
- Mormonism, 3, 90. *See also* Smith, Joseph, Jr.
- Morrison, Robert, 35–36
- Nanjing
 - as Taiping capital, 18
 - True Jesus Church headquarters in, 182–183
- National Christian Conference, 116–117
- Nationalism
 - contemporary, 254
 - in True Jesus Church hymns, 142
 - Wei Enbo’s preaching against, 108–109
- Nationalist government
 - and censorship, 176
 - and corruption, 162
 - and inflation, 183
 - religious policies of, 164–165
 - in Taiwan, 184
- Nationalist Party, 79
 - and Chinese Communist Party, 135–136
 - and women, 137
- native Christianity
 - organic expansion of, 117, 132
 - orthodoxy as motivation for, 117
 - overlap with Western missionary Christianity, 7
- New Culture Movement, 113
- New Policies, 52
- Northern Expedition, 136
- One Hit and Three Antis Campaign, 217
- opium, 36
- Opium War, First, 36
- organization
 - and charisma, 11–14, 17
 - models of, 117
 - precariousness of, 12
- (p.382)** organizations, autonomous ideological. *See* autonomous ideological
- organizations
- organizations, popular, 111–113
- Patriotic Hygiene Campaign, 221
- Peking. *See* Beijing
- Pentecostal Truths*, 151
- Pentecostalism
 - and communication and transportation developments, 84–85
 - definitions of, 61
 - explanations for, 5–9
 - global networks of, 5, 62, 71–73, 110
 - and True Jesus Church, 80–81, 118
- phonetic script, 130–131. *See also* Bible: and literacy

- Popular Gospel Truth*, 67-71, 150-151
- postal system
 - London Missionary Society correspondence through, 40
 - Pentecostal communication through, 63-64
 - of Qing, 25-26
 - True Jesus Church use of, 99-100
- postdenominationalism, 235, 256-257
- prayer, 212, 272. *See also* glossolalia
- print culture
 - Chinese Christian, 68-71
 - Communist, 172, 217
 - Pentecostal, 62-63, 67-68, 71-73
 - True Jesus Church, 138-143, 171, 193-195, 201
- Qing dynasty
 - Cixi, Empress Dowager of, 43-44
 - Guangxu, Emperor of, 43
 - Puyi, Emperor of, 78-79
- Qing government
 - communications of, 25-27
 - religious policies of, 103
 - similarity to Taiping, 29
 - small size of, 42
- railroads, 74-75
- Red Detachment of Women, The*, 218-219
- Red Guards, 213, 215
- reform and opening up, 235-236
- religious movements, formation of, 88, 91, 94-95, 109
- restorationism, 67-68, 80-81, 90
 - in early True Jesus Church, 106, 110, 118
- revivals, 59-60. *See also* meetings, revival
- Revolution of 1911, 78
- Revolutionary Alliance, 77
- Ricci, Matteo, 63
- Roberts, Issachar, 37-38
- Russo-Japanese War, 65
- Sabbatarianism, 9
- salvation
 - for Stalin's soul, 206
 - and True Jesus Church conversion, 109-111, 115, 117-118
- Saville, Lillie E.V.
 - medical career of, 41-42, 45, 49-51
 - middle names of, 34
 - social isolation of, 50
 - Society Islands birthplace of, 34
- Second Great Awakening, 35
- Seventh-day Adventists, 70, 90, 191, 205, 230
- sexual discipline, 102, 249
- Seymour, William Joseph, 60
- Shanghai

- Chinese Communist Party Founding Congress in, 114
- foreign concessions in, 162–163
- True Jesus Church headquarters in, 157, 169–170
- signs, 235, 255
- Sino-Japanese War, First (1894–1895), 42–43
- Sino-Japanese War, Second (1937–1945), 178–181
- (p.383)** “Six Covenants and Five Ordinances of Correction,” 88, 98, 110
- Smith, Joseph, Jr. *See also* Mormonism
 - charismatic leadership of, 3, 62
 - and parallels to Wei Enbo’s vision accounts, 95n40
- Socialist Education Movement, 208, 215–216
- songs, 174–175. *See also* hymns
 - Communist, 174, 181, 216
 - in National Salvation Song Movement, 175–176
 - for soldiers, 175, 181
- South Chihli Mission, 64
- Special Economic Zones, 236
- Spiritual Convocation, 238, 247
- Stalin, Josef, 206
- steamships. *See* transpacific travel
- Stuckey, Edward J., 107
- Stuckey, Frances, 104–105
- suicide, 119, 121
- Sun Yat-sen, 77
- Suppression of Counterrevolutionaries Campaign. *See* Campaign: to Suppress Counterrevolutionaries
- Taiping Rebellion, 1–19, 38
 - egalitarianism in, 30
 - and Qing bureaucratic structure, 29
 - Westerners’ disillusionment with, 30, 37
 - Westerners’ enthusiasm for, 37–38
- Taiwan, 43, 159, 170
 - and glossolalia, 272
 - and Nationalist government, 184
 - and True Jesus Church international institutions, 184–185, 277
- telegraph network, 73–74
- Temple of Heaven, 78
- temples, 49
- Ten Commandments, 70, 174
- Three Antis Campaign, 196
- “three-self” criteria for independent churches, 192
- Three-Self Patriotic Movement, 197, 203, 205, 223, 256–257
- Tianfeng, 210. *See also* Three-Self Patriotic Movement
- tithe, 251
- tongues-speaking. *See* glossolalia
- transnational networks
 - of commercial interests in China, 64–65, 73–74
 - of the London Missionary Society, 39, 55, 76, 107
 - of other Protestant churches, 55, 69–70, 107, 240

- of Pentecostal churches, 61, 66–67, 71–73
- of the Revolutionary Alliance, 77
- of the True Jesus Church, 138, 176–178, 183–185, 235, 277
- of the World-Wide Ethical Society, 138
- transpacific travel, 64–66
- treaties, unequal, 36
- Treaty of Nanjing, 36–37
- treaty ports, 37–38, 44, 59
- Treaty of Shimonoseki, 43
- Treaty of Tianjin (1858) and Convention of Peking (1860), 38
- True Jesus Church
 - and affirmation of Chinese society, 253–254
 - apocalyptic rhetoric within, 247, 249
 - Bible-centered rhetoric of, 193–195, 260
 - culture of, 176
 - divine origins of, 2
 - exclusivism of, 204–205, 246
 - ideological authority of, 193–194, 229
 - innovative practice within, 10
 - name of, 110, 235–236
 - north–south divisions of, 116–167, 246, 277–278
- (p.384)**
 - and party–state (contemporary Communist), 243, 245, 256–257
 - and party–state (Maoist), 186–192, 195–199, 201–211
 - and party–state (Nationalist), 161–165
 - print culture of, 138–139, 171
 - restorationism within, 9
 - and social critique, 248–253
 - transnational networks of (*see* transnational networks: of the True Jesus Church)
 - transregional networks of, 246
- True Jesus Church Headquarters, 157–159, 161–163, 165
 - financial resources of, 177
 - international jurisdiction of, 170
- True Testimony of the Holy Spirit*, 91, 92–94
- trust, 233, 244, 252. *See also* crisis of morals
- truth, value of, 244–245
- truth-claiming group. *See* autonomous ideological organization
- Two Associations, 256–257. *See also* China Christian Council; Three-Self Patriotic Movement
- universalism, 28, 34, 187–188
- virgins, Catholic, 148
- visions
 - of Wang Dequan, 225–230
 - of Wei Enbo, 86–87, 91–95
- Wang Dequan, 212, 225–230
- Wang Jie, 216
- Wang Mingdao, 192, 198
- War of Resistance. *See* Sino–Japanese War, Second (1937–1945)
- warlords, 156, 163

- Weber, Max, 3
- Wei Enbo (Wei Paul), 47–48, 56
- business activities of, 75
 - commonalities with Hong Xiuquan, 19
 - commonalities with Joseph Smith, Jr., 95n40
 - commonalities with Mao Zedong, 89
 - conversions of, 49, 82
 - death of, 115
 - excommunication of, 79
 - as a financial sponsor, 75–80
 - visions of, 86–87, 91–95
- Wei Enbo and Bernt Berntsen, relationship between, 80–84, 89–90, 99–100, 102, 112
- on Wei's last day, 115
- Wei Huiying, 82, 95, 102, 139
- Wei Liu Ai (Maria). *See* Liu Ai
- Wei née Li, Mrs., 48, 102
- Wei Wenxiang Yisa (Isaac), 48, 95, 116
- arrest and self-examination, 199–200
 - as True Jesus Church leader, 166, 195
- women
- agency of, 150
 - charismatic authority of, 148–156
 - charismatic practices of, 148–156
 - Christianity as a knowledge field for, 149
 - and clandestine culture, 224–225, 230–231
 - collaborative work of, 150
 - and Confucian family roles, 119, 121–123
 - and economic production, 128–129
 - education of Chinese, 124–130
 - within native Chinese Christianity, 15
 - and religious patriarchy, 121, 148–154
 - segregation of, 132
 - suffrage for, 35, 128
- women named in this book
- Berntsen, Magna, 63
 - Chang Siao-hung, 124
 - Chen Aiying, 224
- (p.385)**
- Chen, Deaconess, 153
 - Chen Maria, 146
 - Chen née Guo, Mrs., 146
 - Cixi, Empress Dowager, 43
 - Fu, Deaconess, 231
 - He Zizhen, 136
 - Huang Lixia, 144
 - Huang née Guo, Mrs., 146
 - Jiang Qing, 173
 - Lenwood, Norah, 50
 - Liu Ai, 101
-

- Lin Julia, 146
Lou, Miss, 153
Lu Lihua, 124
Meech, Edith Prankard, 44
Murray, Edith, 59
Pruitt, Ida, 123
Qiu Jin, 139
Saville, Lillie E.V., Dr., 33
Shi Meiyong, 153
Shi Meiyu, Dr., 131
Stuckey, Frances, 104
Wang Dequan, 212
Wang Shuying, 126
Wei Enbo's mother, 49
Wei née Li, Mrs., 102
Wu, Deaconess, 153
Wu, Joanna, 146
Xia Jingzhen, 145
Yang née Hu, Mrs., 153
Yang Kaihui, 134
Yang Zhendao, 120
Zhang née Chen Jiying, Mrs. 146
Zhang Eunice, 146
Zhuang Dehua, Lady, 125
Women's Christian Temperance Union, 132
World War I, 105-107. *See also* May Fourth Movement
World War II. *See* Sino-Japanese War, Second (1937-1945)
World-Wide Ethical Society, 138, 147
Wu Yaozong, 195
Wuhan, 119-120, 135-136, 203, 205
Xiaozhang, 44-45
Yan'an, 173
Yang Zhendao, 119-121, 123-128, 131-132, 135, 137
Yangtze River, 176, 178
Yellow River, 180
Yiguandao, 197
Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), 111, 113-114
Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), 132
Yun Daiying, 113
Yuan Shikai, 79
Zeng Guofan, 24, 29, 31, 39, 52
Zeng Guoquan, 24, 29, 31
Zhang Barnabas, 100, 112, 116
 and north-south divisions in the True Jesus Church, 166-169, 277
Zhang Lingsheng, 100, 103
Zhou Enlai, 195