

**ASPECTS OF THE EMERGENCE OF THE CHINESE CHURCH FROM
THE MISSIONARY MOVEMENT, 1900-1949**

by

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to contribute toward an understanding of missionaries and missions of the west and the rising of the Chinese indigenous churches. There is a necessity to trace the historical protestant mission work since Robert Morrison in 1807. Through the inequality of treaties such as the Nanking Treaty of 1842, the door to missions was opened in China. Missions came in along with western colonialism and military force. The Chinese people and government built up their hatred and resentment of the west during this period. The Boxer Uprising was the beginning of an era of unrest and instability, which brought about greater government interventions that impacted the Chinese people. Missionaries and Chinese Christians were murdered and martyred. However, these tragedies did not stop missions from sending more missionaries. Chinese Christians and leaders opened their eyes. The new awakening started Chinese indigenous churches through a revivalist and spiritual emphasis. Speakers such as Ding Li-Mei, Wang Ming-Dao, David Yang, John Sung, Watchman Nee, and Calvin Chao were active during the period between 1925 and 1949. Indigenous churches like the True Jesus Church, Jesus family Church, Zei Li Hwey and Ling En Hwey came into being. This was a most challenging era in modern Chinese Church history. The results were great. Since 1949 and the "Liberation" the Chinese church has marched on without western missionaries.

Key words:

Chinese church(es); Chinese missions; autonomous church(es); revival; local church.

Acknowledgement

This study is a historical and theological analysis of aspects of the development of the Chinese indigenous churches from the missionary movement from the year 1900 to 1949. I was born in 1920 and entered Christian ministry gradually during this period. There were important events and influential persons with whom I had personal experiences, so this history relates also to my life story. I am a third-generation Christian. My father was educated under Dr. Calvin Mateer, who was the president of Kwang Win Christian College. He was taught by Dr. Mateer himself, and received music instruction from Mrs. Mateer. After his graduation from college, my father taught at the Quaker-run Friends Academy. I grew up and received my basic education at this evangelical academy. Hence, my family background and early life was characterized by a close association with missions and missionaries. When the Sino-Japanese War started at 1937, we had severely limited choices as we were in the midst of thousands of refugees. By faith we walked 1300 lis (Chinese "miles") inland and to the western region of China. My father was killed by a Japanese bomb at the Christian and Missionary Alliance church at Kweilin (Kwangxi).

My growth and development as a Christian were closely linked to the revival movement in evangelical churches and missions which reached its peak in the years 1930-1940. Of special importance is a great revival meeting in 1925 led by a great evangelist of that time, Leland Wong. Many young people, who were destined to have a great impact on the Chinese church, consecrated their lives to the service of God as a result of that meeting. Among them were Andrew Gih, Chow Chih-Yu, Alice Lan, Betty Hu, Lu Xuan, Timothy Chao, Zu Kwie Shen and others. I became acquainted to most of them. I also heard John Sung, Watchman Nee, and Wang Ming Tao preach, and witnessed the ordination of Rev. Dr. Jia Yu Ming. All of these people influenced me greatly, and after the death of my father I consecrated myself to full-time ministry. For five years I participated in the Christian college student movement as co-worker with Calvin Chao. Through the student movement the quality and standard of Chinese ministers was raised from a basic high school level to higher education for ministers. Writing about developments in the Chinese Church between 1900 and 1949 thus reminds me about things and persons very close and dear to me and this partly motivated my choice of this thesis topic.

PREFACE

The Emergence of the Chinese Church from the Missionary Movement

That China has been able to both hear the Good News and accept Christianity is due to the missionary zeal (Matthew 28:18-20) of the Western Church and the vision of its missionaries. Wave upon wave of evangelistic efforts brought the great message of salvation to China.¹ As a result of the sacrifices made by these Western missionaries, their perseverance in the midst of various difficulties, and their separation from friends and family, the Chinese have been led to faith in Christ and the Church established in their midst. Each missionary wave had to face linguistic, cultural, and socio-political barriers in order to proclaim the Gospel. They entrusted the Holy Scriptures to the Chinese², and built the Church with Christ as her sovereign. There is every reason therefore, to be thankful for the sacrifices they made in bringing the Gospel to the Chinese. They deserve respect and thanks.

This thesis will focus on articulating both the direct and indirect effects of post-1900 missionary movements upon the Chinese Church. Its purpose is to survey the achievements of the Western missionaries, the impact of the Chinese leaders who followed them, and the revival of the Chinese Church. Our chronology spans the period between 1900 and 1949. During this period, the Boxer Rebels killed over 200 Western missionaries while more than 20,000

¹ Bosch, David. *Transforming Mission*, (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), p. 60. As Bosch said, "Matthew's Gospel is indeed, in more respects, baffling. I have agreed that the 'Great Commission' at the end of the gospel is to be understood as the key to Matthew's understanding of the mission and missionary of Jesus."

² Robert Morrison labored for 13 years to translate the Bible into Chinese. (1807-1820).

Chinese Christians were martyred. Not only were the Western missions agencies undefeated by this painful experience, but they sent even more missionaries than before to China. This phenomenon calls for an evaluation of the causes and effects of such a tragedy and its impact upon future plans and strategies. The blood shed was not in vain. On one hand, the Western denominations preached the Word, and on the other, they nurtured Chinese ministers in the hope that they might one day shoulder the task of building the Church and evangelizing their own people. The Chinese arose in response to the call to build up the Chinese Church.

The foreign missionary-centered approach of the Western missionaries in terms of sustenance, proclamation and government prior to 1900, unwittingly cast a negative shadow on things, resulting in misunderstanding and segregation. It was also during this time that there was a tendency among the Chinese to protect and maintain their ethnic identity. Western missionaries, Western ways of government, the natural sciences, culture and philosophy were significant factors in the revolutionary changes occurring during this period of Chinese history. The Church was affected by ethnic and cultural concerns. Unnoticeably at first a movement toward self-direction, self-motivation, self-government and self-propagation began among the Chinese Christians. In 1906, *the China Self-Establishment Society*, which printed and distributed literature supporting this self-direction, was founded and led by Yu Zongchang in Shanghai. In 1910, the China Inland Mission (CIM) also started supporting the Chinese Church in its efforts toward self-direction, self-propagation and self-sustenance.³

The tragic incidents of 1900 were multi-faceted and had many causes. First, let us evaluate the Christian faith and the content of the Gospel. Not only

³ Chen, Kian-Fu, *The Contemporary Progressive History of Christianity In China* (Taipei, Taiwan: Published by the author 1989), 331.

did Christianity differ theologically from the existing Chinese religions, it also brought about changes in individual lives in terms of perspective and lifestyle. Christianity introduced concepts that were very different from those that were widely held by all echelons of Chinese society. Not only was Christianity experientially different from a religious perspective, the Gospel and the lifestyle of the believers subconsciously generated a series of cultural phenomena. Western missionaries came to China with the intention of becoming acculturated.⁴ Though they adopted the attire of the Chinese people, the culture could not be completely represented by outward dress alone. The social structure of western society, its moral fiber, and family set-up are all deeply influenced by the Bible's depiction of Christian living. Inevitably, the sharp conflict between Christianity and local Chinese culture resulted in a "Hereditary Disease". This was inescapable. Such differences were exacerbated by the gap between Chinese and Western cultures. The scholarly Chinese has all along viewed himself highly, and took great pride in the millennia-old Chinese culture. The moral teachings of Confucius and Mencius, coupled with ideological misunderstandings and rumors, culminated in Chinese enmity towards Christianity.⁵ The Western economic invasion, military superiority, political openness and psychological elitism brought by the Western missionaries conflicted with the traditional elitism of Chinese society that was founded on Confucian and Buddhist influences.

Western politics and missionaries became entangled (as elsewhere) in the colonial project, and the Chinese could not differentiate between the two. Western missionary agencies agreed that military, scientific and political factors

⁴ Matteo, Ricci came to China (Macau), first learning the Chinese language, then working among them, putting on Chinese garb, even participating in the Chinese worship rituals requiring kneeling, hence earning his accolades from the working class. Calvin Chao, *A Discourse on Church and Politics in China* (Los Angeles: Chinese for Christ Press), 1.

⁵ Leung, Ka-Lun, *Between Christianity and Buddhism* (Taipei: Cosmic Light Publishers, 1995), 212-213.

concerning Western nations resulted in the brutal killings of Western missionaries such as the murder of Father Ma by the local government of Guangxi. This resulted in problematic relations between the foreign and Chinese governments.⁶ Another case was that involving Hudson Taylor and his family in Yangzhou, where church buildings suffered damage and losses and the British authorities later sent troops to investigate the incident.⁷ After negotiations following the incident, Hudson Taylor refused to accept compensation just as Timothy Richard had refused in a similar incident. Instead, Taylor made the admirable suggestion of using the funds to establish Shanxi University.⁸ Some Chinese their own weaknesses but generally, people asked why the West had to disturb the tranquility and joy with their missionary efforts. In effect, they were saying to the West, "Why did you not leave us alone? We have not infringed on your lives but you have done that to us." Such ethnic concerns and nationalistic sentiments resulted in enmity towards the West.

The tragedy of 1900 led to the Inevitably, to the sharp conflict between Christianity and local Chinese culture which resulted in a eight-nation joint invasion that penetrated China's borders and presented a real threat when Nanjing and Beijing were taken. The burning of buildings, murders, rapes and other atrocities occurred, including the martyrdom of over 200 Western missionaries and 10 times that number of Chinese martyrs.⁹

⁶ Chen, Kian-Fu, *The Contemporary Progressive History of Christianity of China* (Taipei, Hai-Tien Printing Co., 1989), 237-238.

⁷ Roger, Steer and J. Hudson Taylor, *A man in Christ China Inland Mission* (Hong Kong: Christian Communications Ltd., 1990), 223-235.

⁸ Cohen, Paul A., *Missionary Approaches: Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard* (Cambridge: Havard University, 1957).

⁹ Chen, Kian-Fu, 312.

The sacrifices made by Western mission agencies, Protestant and Roman Catholic alike, in bringing the Gospel to China are worthy of admiration and gratitude. Owing to their lack of understanding of Chinese culture and its nationalistic, some missionaries rode on the back of Western 'strengths' in the form of cultural elitism, military excellence, scientific advancement and Christian superiority. This created psychological barriers and distancing, especially where economic wealth was concerned. The result was that the Chinese churches became the property of the Western Church, to the extent that even independent, self-governing Chinese churches were considered "Half Church,"¹⁰ simply because they lacked the resources of Western missions agencies. The missionaries had difficulty letting go of their 'superiority' over local Christians. The slogan adopted by the Western missions agencies was to establish self-governing, self-propagating and self-sustaining Chinese churches. Before 1900, however, there were very few such churches.

Further, this can be attributed to the underlying Biblical, ecclesiological and discipleship concepts adopted by the Western missions agencies in establishing the Chinese Church. Although the Great Commission includes the command to "make disciples of all the nations,"¹¹ in reality, believers and disciples were not differentiated. Needless to say, believers were never directed towards the objective of personal evangelism and discipleship. Robert Morrison did not lead many people to Christ during his life, but those whom he led, like Cai Gao and Liang Fa,¹² all held to the concept of evangelism. Historically, many of those who became missionaries went on to serve as senior pastors of churches

¹⁰ Bridge, Vol.63, Feb. 1994, 5.

¹¹ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *Prayer and the Prayerology* (Taipei: Olive Christian Foundation, 1997), 2.

¹² Chen, Kian-Fu, 40.

following their missionary work, thus delaying the development of indigenous leadership.

Initially the Western mission agencies came to China with the pure motive of preaching the Good News. Gradually, these agencies grew in their involvement. During 1900, there were around 70 denominational churches and organizations involved in missions, each working independently and establishing churches in accordance with their own denominational beliefs, practices and hierarchical structure. There was never a Civil War between the North and the South in China,¹³ but the Chinese churches somehow followed such a geographical division. China had neither a national religion nor dissenters or non-conformists. However, the status problem of addressing clergy and laity, whether as "Reverend" or merely as "Brother" arose.¹⁴ These are some of the positive and negative characteristics China inherited from the West.

At the same time, the bloody massacre of 1900 has stirred up our admiration for the sacrifices made by the Western missionaries. We shed tears of compassion at what they went through. In the midst of these experiences, the Chinese began and continues to evaluate themselves. Evangelism is a critical part of the role we are supposed to play. Once we have established a church, we should also get involved in missions. Not only should local churches be established, but also mission-oriented churches.

The ministry of Ding Limei, involving himself in student work as well as missions motivation, encouraged young Chinese Christians to give their lives to evangelization and the establishment of the Chinese church.¹⁵

¹³ That is, as occurred in the United States.

¹⁴ Lewis, A.J., *Zinzendorf, The Ecumenical Pioneer* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press), 37, 53.

¹⁵ Qu, Zheng-Min, *The Life of Reverend Ding Limei* (Berkeley:, Wen Xuan, Issue 110).

We evaluate and recall that without the missionaries we would not be where we are today. We must remember the source of the water that we drink. The sacrificial giving of Western Christians (in terms of financial contributions), began with efforts to educate us, to start seminaries, universities, primary and secondary schools, to translate the Bible into our language, to provide us with literature, to inspire in us ideas of nationalism and social reform, to bring us medical aid, and ultimately to bring us the Good News.¹⁶ They have begun a great work. We ought to emulate their exemplary conduct but we must avoid the mistakes they made.¹⁷ In the face of what lies ahead of us in terms of evangelism and church establishment, we must learn to see further, and then go forth in missionary fervor.

Thesis Statement

My topic sets out to analyze the emergence of the Chinese Church from the mission movement in the crucial period 1900-1949. These were tumultuous years in the history of China and they have not yet been the subject of academic study. They span the heyday of foreign colonial domination of Chinese society, to the extent that Chinese sovereignty on Chinese soil was compromised. These were also the years of bloody uprisings (such as the Boxer Rebellion) against Western imperialism, of which Western Christian missions were considered an integral part. The struggle for dominance between the Guomindang (GMD) of Chiang Kai Shek and Mao Ze Dong's Communist Party followed, which resulted in a bloody war. Yet this period also witnessed the rise of the indigenous Chinese Christian leadership and the first beginnings of an indigenous, autonomous

¹⁶ Wei, Wai-Yang, *Missionary Enterprise and Recent Chinese History* (Taipei: Cosmic Press, 1978), 67-68.

¹⁷ Gulick, Edward V., *Peter Park and the Opening of China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973).

Chinese church. It is the author's contention that, despite the undoubted good work by Western missionaries, this Chinese leadership and autonomy grew in spite of rather than because of Western missionary influence. In reality, Western missionaries held on to control over missions in China for far too long, undervalued Chinese culture, and never really prepared local leadership to take over responsibility for missions in China and elsewhere. Yet when all missionaries were expelled from China after the Communist Revolution, there remained behind a vital core of Chinese believers and leaders who maintained and even accelerated the growth of the Chinese churches. This thesis attempts to establish how this came about.

Chapter divisions

In chapter 1 a very brief review is given of foreign missions efforts in China through the ages. Chapter 2 reviews some of the missions principles of the nineteenth century foreign mission associations working in China, especially the most famous of them all, the China Inland Mission. Chapter 3 briefly describes the traumatic events of various uprisings early in the twentieth century, particularly the Boxer Rebellion, and analyses their effects on Christian missions. In Chapters 4,5 and 6 the historic background of the rise of three remarkable Chinese Christian leaders is traced, their careers examined, and their influence sketched. In chapter 7 and 8 two of the pioneering autonomous and totally indigenous pioneering churches are described and analyzed. Chapter 9 contains the author's concluding evaluation and some guidelines for the future.

Sources

As can be expected from a study of this nature, it consists basically of a literature study of books, articles, magazines, newspapers and other printed sources in both Chinese and English. These sources are expanded both through personal

recollections of the author, as well as some private documents (in Chinese, many hand-written) in the possession of the author. The author attempts this study as a participant-observer, since he not only lived through many of these years in China, but also served as co-worker with both the leaders as well as the churches discussed in the thesis. Throughout the thesis he has attempted (as far as is humanly possible) to maintain a critical and self-critical distance from the analysis of a period in history which is also his own history.

CHAPTER 1

The First Missionary Wave

1.1 The Nestorians in the Tang Dynasty.

Anthropologists concur that the Chinese race is the result of gradual migration from the West across the Pamir Heights into China. Beginning from the vicinity of the Yellow River, their development extended through regions between the Yangtze and Yue rivers. The gospel also entered China from the West, via the Silk Route. According to discoveries made on a stone tablet in Xian, known as the Great Qin Memorial of the Jing Religion, the first evangelists were Nestorian monastic. A thousand years before its discovery, the monument recorded accounts of a monk by the name of Alopen, who led a group to the capital city of Xian. The court warmly welcomed them in A.D. 635, during the reign of the Tang emperor Zhen Quan, and this resulted in the construction of monasteries. This was followed by the translation of Scriptures and literature on the essentials of the faith.¹⁸

¹⁸ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *Essentials of the History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishers, 1977), 31-46. Also see Julia Ching, *Chinese Religions* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1993), 187. The book *Jesus the Messiah* probably dates from A.D. 637. Historical remains include a stone tablet unearthed in the early seventeenth century, recounting the arrival in Tang China of the monk Alopen, probably from Persia. This is the so-called Nestorian Monument of A.D. 781, which still stands in a museum in Xi'an (Sian) in the province of Shaanxi. Its discovery in 1625 occurred during the sojourn of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci in China. The Jesuit missionaries were overjoyed at this indication of the ancient presence of Christianity in a country that venerates antiquity. More recently, ancient Nestorian texts were also discovered in the so-called Buddhist caves of Dunhuang. The monument itself is ten feet high, three and a quarter feet wide, and nearly one foot thick. It commemorates the arrival in China of a Nestorian mission that was received in A.D. 635 by Emperor Tai-Tsung. The Inscription includes a description in Chinese of the mission's arrival and settlement in China, with a list of names of over seventy monks, all apparently aliens, in both Syriac and Chinese. This mission took place at the time the Scot-Irish monk Aidan brought Celtic Christianity to England, and when some German

Nestorians believed that the divine and human natures of Christ were distinctive yet co-existent in the person of Christ. It was condemned as a heresy at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, and as the result the Nestorians were exiled. They initially wandered in the Near East, later moving east and settling in Central Asia. Two hundred years later, Nestorianism spread into China.¹⁹ However, the discovery of the Black Cross, believed to have originated in the post-Han period, led to another view contending that the Gospel had already reached China by the post-Han era²⁰ through missionaries sent by Rome. However, this historical perspective lacks the corroboration of evidence in the form of ecclesiastical structures.²¹

The missionary endeavors of Nestorius peaked lasted several decades, with emperors and scholars vying for opportunities to contact him and his followers. They established evangelistic centers within the major commercial areas and enjoyed a wide following for a while. Alopen was a name given

tribes were yet pagans. Once given a foothold in China, the Nestorians were able to have their texts translated, and monasteries built in both Changan and Loyang. An edict of toleration of Christianity was also issued.

¹⁹ McIntack, John, "On Nestorius and Nestorianism" in *Biblical and Ecclesiastical Literature Vol VI* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1969), 959-76.

²⁰ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *Essentials of the History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishers, 1977), 25-26.

²¹ Nestorius knew the Syriac language and was originally a monastic. A former Bishop of Constantine, he often addressed this issue of the dual nature of Christ from his pulpit. He proposed that Christ is both the Son Of Man and the Son of God, with these two natures existing separately within the body of Jesus. The decision of the Great Ecumenical Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431 declared that his views were heretical. As a result, he lost his bishopric and was exiled to Persia together with his monastic followers. According to Basil Mathews, *Forward Through the Ages* (New York: The Friends Press, 1951), 64, Nestorius continued into Central Asia, preaching his beliefs with his faithful followers wherever they went, from the Euphrates until Bagada and later along familiar trade routes over the Pamir Heights into China itself. Wang Chih-Hsin has described in detail the beliefs of the Jing Religion, how it prospered during the Tang Dynasty, the methodology of their efforts at propagation and how it eventually disappeared.

personally to this monk by the Tang emperor Zhen Guan (635) and mean, "the one sent by God." Zhen Guan liked these missionaries very much and built a monastery for the 24 monks to dwell in. More monasteries were later established in various locations. After A.D. 907, the Sung Dynasty reigned supreme. The Nestorians were compelled to leave China without a trace until the discovery of the Great Qin Memorial of the Jing Religion in 1625 at which time their ministry among the Chinese came to light.²²

The pioneering emperor of the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368), Kublai Khan, included numerous missionaries amongst his ranks, including two brothers dressed in noble garb.²³ Based on various accounts, we can see that the only remnants of the Nestorians' ministry may have been a stone tablet and some scattered records. Hence, Chinese Christians are glad that there is no need to carry any historical baggage. Yet, at the same time, they have failed to inherit any

²² Tucker, Ruth A., *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983), 45.

²³ Mathews, *Forward Though The Ages*, 66-67. One day shortly after the middle of the thirteenth century, two brothers, richly dressed merchants from Venice, walked under the archways of the Chinese Imperial Palace and were ushered into the majestic hall where Kublai Khan was enthroned amid courtiers clad in priceless silks. For thousands of miles, over the route that Alopen had taken six centuries earlier, Maffeo and Nicolo Polo had traveled as traders from the "Queen of the Mediterranean," as Venice was called, to Cambaluc, then the most splendid city in Asia. They were received with high honor by the most powerful monarch on earth at that time. Kublai Khan's attitude opened to Christianity a door through which dazzling possibilities gleamed. As a Mongol he knew that his own people had no religion that could create a pattern of life for a great state. He looked around and saw advocates of the religions of Buddhism, of Islam, and of Christianity. He decided to give the Christian church its powerful opportunity. He sent for his scribe and dictated a letter to the Pope. "Send to me," he wrote, "a hundred missionaries able to teach my people Christianity and the science and arts of Christendom."

The Polo brothers, with that astonishing invitation in their pouches, traveled back to Italy and in 1269 handed the letter to the Pope. The Pope sent no reply and years passed. Then the Pope appointed two friars to go with young Marco Polo and his father and uncle across the continent of Asia to Kublai Khan's court. They had not gone far when the friars took fright at the toil and dangers of the journey and fled back to Rome. The merchant adventurers went on. Three and a half years later the Polos reached the palace of Kublai Khan, without a single missionary. Again the Pope sent five friars, but not one of them stood the test. Twenty-five years after the Pope received the letter, Kublai Khan died without having seen the face of one missionary in response

form of spiritual or evangelistic heritage. There is a variety of opinions among scholars, as to why the ministry of the Nestorians failed to leave an imprint in China, and to establish a Christian culture, the most accepted position probably being that of Latourette. He concluded that Nestorian missionaries remained in China for about two and a half centuries. This was not a short duration. Yet, no churches for the Chinese were established, nor were they able to train the Chinese to be missionaries, for the following reasons:

Nestorian Christianity appears never to have ceased to be primarily the faith of a foreign community ... Nestorianism seems to have depended chiefly upon foreign leadership and support. In the second place, Nestorianism arrived at a time when no special need for a new faith was felt ... The older native faiths were popular and strongly entrenched... In the third place, the Nestorian missionaries were separated from the center of their church by immense distances and could look for little assistance and inspiration from the main body of their fellow believers.²⁴

In fact, the ministry of the Franciscan missionaries literally disappeared under the political oppression characteristic of the periods spanning the later years of the Tang Dynasty, the Yuan Dynasty and the post-Yuan eras. They adopted the same strategy as the Nestorians, and eventually met with the same fate. It would be another 300 years before missionaries came to China to reinstate evangelistic work.²⁵

to his invitation for a hundred, which, if responded to in full obedience to Christ's command, might have changed the history, not only of China, but of mankind.

²⁴ Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1956), 58-59.

²⁵ Nestorianism spread up till the fifth year of Emperor Wu Zong Hui Chang (A.D. 844), when they suffered tremendous persecution, because Wu Zong was taken in by the words of the Taoist priest Zhao Guizhen and as a result, issued an edict to destroy all forms of Buddhism. From an economic standpoint, the Buddhist nuns and monks were forced to return to secular lifestyles to earn their own living. From the contents of the edict, we discover that Wu Zong's intention was to purge all foreign concepts. Buddhism had come from India and Nestorianism from Syria. The rest of the smaller religions were also of foreign origin. (See Chapter 5 of Wang Chih-Hsin, *Essentials of the History of Christianity in China*, 42-3 on "The Spread of Christianity During the Tang Dynasty." Also see Ching, *Chinese Religions*, 187-8.

1.2 Ye Li Ke Wen in the Yuan Dynasty (1260-1371)

The Yuan era coined the term Ye Li Ke Wen for the Qing Religion, which is a transliteration from the Mongolian language, meaning “the blessed ones” or “the harbingers of good news.” The Mongols addressed Christians as “Arcoun” (A Er Kang). That Nestorianism continued to be called Ye Li Ke Wen implies little differentiation between the various sects of foreign religions. There were once as many as six Nestorian places of worship in the region of Zhenjiang in Jiangsu Province (modern-day East China.) A Nestorian church was also established in Hangzhou. Both official and private documents mention the existence of a Qing Religion, and also substantiate its equivalence with Ye Li Ke Wen. After a period of time, Nestorianism spread to various regions, scattered in the northern provinces such as Shaanxi, Henan, Shandong, Zhikang. Other provinces include Guangdong in the south, Zhejiang in the east and Yunnan in the west. Ye Li Ke Wen proponents were to be found dispersed in these places, establishing places of worship (i.e. churches) wherever they dwelt.²⁶

1.3 Roman Catholic Missions During the Yuan Dynasty

As the Yuan Dynasty was flexing its military muscles and expanding its territorial dominance, Europe was going through the Renaissance. Culture gained emphasis and trade prospered, especially along the Silk Route. The Roman Catholic church saw opportunities for missionary ventures into China and first set up frontier stations in Central Asia. The two monastic orders of the Franciscans and the Dominicans were especially inclined toward missionary enterprise. When the Mongol army moved West, invaded Central Asia, and was nearing the continent of Europe, Pope Innocent IV sent a Franciscan monk, Giovanni da Piano di Carpino, as an emissary to Mongolia. Di Carpino set forth in the year 1245 and

²⁶Matthews, Basil, op. Cit, 64.

after a seven-month journey, reached Mongolia and met with the then newly-enthroned Khan, Ding Zong Gui You, presenting before him the Pope's letter.

1. 4 Missionary Endeavors in the Ming Period

Missionary work during the Ming Dynasty was initially impossible. The 16th century could well be designated the era of the Portuguese and Spanish missionaries. After the demise of the Yuan Dynasty, missionary enterprise ceased for 200 years. In 1517 Martin Luther began the Reformation Movement. Europe was flooded with new breakthroughs started by the Protestant movement and had little time for missions. The Ming Dynasty enacted laws closing China off from the outside world and rejected foreign culture.²⁷ China became completely immersed in the philosophy and culture of Confucianism. The post-Renaissance intellectual and cultural climate ushered in an age of scientific and philosophical discovery. Advancements were made in nautical studies, the natural sciences, and philosophy. Portugal's sea-faring trade prospered and the Portuguese became the first to circumnavigate the globe. Their land discoveries also made an impact on missionary enterprise. Thus, the 17th century could be described as the Portuguese Century. Most of their missionaries were Jesuits who hoped to open the doors of China once again. During the Protestant Reformation, the Roman Catholics, on reflecting upon the events and goings-on, initiated the Counter-Reformation, which provided Roman Catholicism with a new lease on life. The early Nestorian and Franciscan missionaries mostly followed trade routes, but the Jesuits, on account of the commercial center created by traders in Macau, used it as their

²⁷ Latourette, *A History of Christian Mission* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931), 77 "With the expulsion of the Mongols, Christianity disappeared from the horizon of the Chinese even more completely than it had after the fall of the Tang. No non-Chinese communities survived on the northern marches ready to make their influence felt under more favorable circumstances. If Christianity were ever to become a permanent and influential factor in Chinese life, it could only do so through movements much more powerful than any that had so far appeared."

center of missionary operations.²⁸ During the mid-16th century, one of their most illustrious pioneers was surely Valignani. He knocked on China's doors, but was not allowed to enter. Feeling hopeless in the face of this slammed door and the strict Chinese policies that demanded that all illegal entrants into China would be imprisoned, he cried in despair, "O rock! O rock! Whence wilt thou crack?"²⁹

1.5 Roman Catholic Missions from the Late Ming to Early Qing Era

The late Ming to early Qing era coincided with the advance of the Reformation in Europe. Roman Catholic Jesuits were sent to various places in the Far East to develop missionary enterprise there. Francis Xavier attempted to enter China as a missionary on numerous occasions, but was stopped by anti-foreign, anti-Western, and anti-Christian sentiments, as well as governmental restrictions. He remained outside China's borders and died, stationed on a secluded island with a view of the Mainland. However, the Jesuit missionaries were not deterred and continued to labor for a breakthrough. Finally, they managed to gain a foothold in the capital city of Guangdong Province,³⁰ which provided an opening for Matteo Ricci to enter China as missionary.

Matteo Ricci was an Italian born in 1552. At 19, he resolved to enter the priesthood and later joined the Jesuits, majoring in theology. He went first to India and arrived later in Macau together with Valignani in 1581. Thereafter, he followed Ruggieri into Guangdong Province (1583). Ruggieri requested some land from the governor for the purpose of erecting a church. Later, a church of European architecture was built, which earned the disapproval of the people and

²⁸ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1941), 63-64.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

resulted in social unrest. The government offered protection to the church and averted major trouble.³¹

1.6 Protestant Missionary Movement of the Western Church during 1807-1842

The Missionary movement in the Western church was well structured and included several missionary organizations: the London Missionary Society, the Netherlands Missionary Society, Baptists of America, the Protestant Episcopal Church of the USA, the Church Missionary Society, and the American Bible Society. From within these missionary organizations, Christians from different backgrounds came to join in the missionary movement.³² These great mission events in the 19th and 20th centuries show how missionaries overcame threats of death, culture shock, and hostile native peoples. Through their hard work, the gospel was brought into China.³³

1.6.1 Robert Morrison - Missionary from the London Missionary Society

Robert Morrison (1782-1834) was the first Protestant missionary to come to China. At that time, there were 300 to 400 million Chinese. When Morrison came to China in 1807, the Chinese cultural environment was not conducive to

³¹ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *Essentials of the History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishers, 1977), 74. Ricci was well-accepted by Chinese scholars and high officials. He was successful and established.

³² Cha, She-Jie, *History of Christianity During the Period of Republican China* (Taiwan: Cosmic Light Press, 1993), 14 – 22.

³³ Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), 77. In this book, the author discussed and thoroughly analyzed the social and cultural background in Chinese history, on which the above statements are based.

the teachings of the gospel.³⁴ The Dutch had controlled Taiwan between 1624-1662. There are no records indicating that any missionaries came to establish a church at that time. Finally, Chen-Kun Chan, a military commander and the Emperor's Representative under the Ming dynasty, defeated the Dutch.³⁵ This destroyed any foothold for missionaries to reach the Chinese people. Morrison married again after the loss of his first wife, and returned to China, arriving on May 19 1826. In 1827, Morrison helped to start the *Canton Register*, which became the first English newspaper in China.³⁶

Before Morrison died, he stated in his will that he wished for his children to continue to translate the Bible and establish churches. They succeeded in establishing churches in the following cities and provinces: Shanghai, Fujian, Huabei Tianjin, Xiaozhang, Cangzhou, Jinan, Beijingdongan, Mongolia, Huazhong Wuhan, Hanyang, Xiaowei, Tianmeng, Zhaoshi, Huangbo, Huaxichongqing, Hunan, etc. Their work through the London Missionary Society contributed greatly to the establishment of Chinese churches.³⁷

1.6.2 Karl Friedrich August Gutzlaff

³⁴ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *A Brief History of Chinese Religious Culture* (Hong Kong: China Publishing House, 1921), 1. In this book Wang indicated that Chinese history is a history of religion and ethics which were different from the West. It was influenced by Christianity. Also see Latourette, Kenneth Scott, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), 665. Chinese society was shown to be strongly dominated by Confucianism.

³⁵ Hsu, C.H. ed., *A Centennial History of The Presbyterian Church of Formosa, 1865 - 1965*, (Taipei: Presbyterian church of Formosa Centenary Publications, 1995), 1.

³⁶ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Christian Literature Publishers, 1959), 154. Also see Daniel H. Bays, *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity* (New York: University Press, 1995), 1.

³⁷ Bays, Daniel H., *Indigenous Responses to Western Christianity* (New York: New York University Press, 1995), 162.

Karl Gutzlaff came to China in 1829. He arrived at Tianjin, moved then to Fu chow, and Canton, living eventually in Macau. He started to learn Mandarin and paid special attention to Chinese culture. Later, he was hired by the British as a translator. In 1842, he moved to Hong Kong and started several inland missions. While he lived in Hong Kong, he shared the gospel with the Hakka people who were quite receptive to his teachings. Many of these people converted and started to gather together to worship the Lord. The church formed by these Chinese believers was called the Chinese Union. He could not perform translations and attend to the daily church work at the same time because of the needs of a growing body of believers. He sent requests to the Basle German Evangelical Missionary Society and the Rhenish Missionary Society for more missionaries. Four missionaries were sent and they arrived in Hong Kong on the same boat. The Basle German Evangelical Missionary sent Theodore Hamberg and Rudolph Lechler. The Barmen Mission sent H. Kuster and F. Genahr. They learned Mandarin in Hong Kong first, and were then sent to inland China to start their missions. As a result, churches were established in Canton.³⁸

1.6.3 Missions from 1842-1900

Between 1840 and 1841, due to the opium traffic, China went to war with the British. In 1842, the war ended with the signing of the Treaty of Nanjing. In the agreement, China agreed to open five ports for British residence and foreign trade. Additionally, China ceded the island of Hong Kong to the British, paid a large indemnity, and admitted missionaries to share the gospel freely.

Interestingly, before the signing of the Treaty, China was under Imperial decree that the people should be unfriendly to all foreigners and resist missionary

³⁸ Tang, Christopher, *The First Hundred Years of Protestant Mission in China* (Hong Kong: Tao Sheng Publishing House, 1984), 287.

efforts. People who were practicing idolatry spread the rumor that the missionaries were making medicine with humans' eyes and hearts. The corrupt Qing Administration neglected to address the rumors resulting in several anti-Christian riots. The riots included burning missionary facilities and killing both missionaries and Chinese Christians. One of the riots was led against Robert Morrison.³⁹

The Chinese were forbidden to teach the missionaries to read and write Chinese. If they were discovered, they would be put to death. One example is Fa Leung, the first Chinese pastor, who was discovered giving out pamphlets in Guangzhou. He was put in jail and beaten. Afterwards, he went back to his hometown and formed a school and was also beaten there. While in the Guangzhou jail, he was beaten to the point where his entire body was bleeding. He escaped, however, to hide on a small island.⁴⁰

After putting down an uprising that proclaimed the "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace," the Qing government was convinced that the teachings from these foreigners were harmful. The government decided to resist foreigners and treated Christian doctrines as subversive to Chinese traditional culture. Most scholars in China did not understand Western thought. They believed people would discard Confucius' teachings once they became Christian. People thought that all the disasters which came their way were due to the arrival of these foreigners, who had destroyed the good fortune of the whole country. People were convinced that foreigners would bring bad luck to China.⁴¹

³⁹ Steer, Roger, *Hudson Taylor – A Man in Christ* (Hong Kong: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1990), 223-30.

⁴⁰ Gu, Chang Sheng, *A Concise History of Christianity in China* (California: Monterey Park: Evergreen Publishing, 1999), 47. Also see G.H. McNeur's, *The Life Story of Fa Leung*.

⁴¹ Chen, Kian-Fu, 254. Also see Lu, Shi-Cen, *Why Chinese officers and scholars against Christianity* (Taipei: Cosmic Press, 1977), 277.

At that time, most of the western countries were developing colonialistic tendencies and the Chinese became suspicious of the missionaries' intentions for China. The Chinese who were not familiar with western politics or religions, thought that western religions were tools of economic power. At the same time, asking missionaries to preach the Gospel freely was not facilitated by the Church, but instead was initiated by the western governments. The missionaries wanted purely to preach the Gospel; they overcame hardships and tried to establish missions in inland China. Conflict with local people was unavoidable, and the government failed to resolve this. This led to the breakout of several riots.⁴² In actuality Western mission Boards and denominations entered into China by western diplomatic, gunboat policy. Missionaries may think this was the intervention of God through human events, but given the background that the Gospel was preached concurrently with the rise of military power, this was the understanding of the Chinese mind. Colonial policy applied to Chinese territory. The mission boards did the same thing: the divided denominational foreign Board, distrusting each other, divided the area for themselves without informing Chinese Christians. Because of this, the Chinese were divided as Presbyterians Baptist, Anglican, and so forth without any free choice.

Some of the missionaries preached with an attitude of superiority. Sometimes missionaries helped members of their church in gaining legal cases. In the New Testament, apostles went out to preach the Gospel without taking any military escorts. They would rather have had shed their own blood and endured suffering even taking the path of martyrdom for the sake of the Gospel.

1.6.4 Missionary Movement and Its Influence.

⁴² Chen, Kian-Fu, 255 – 264.

The Opium War between China and Britain was fought from 1839 and 1841. The Nanjing Treaty (1842) was signed following China's defeat. It provided for the opening of five seaports for international trading and also allowed missionaries to evangelize freely in those port cities. The Opium War resulted not only in military defeat, but also in a rude awakening for the Chinese intellectuals. For centuries, the Chinese intellect nurtured an introspective worldview, elevating its own sense of self-worth to an extreme degree. Westerners were viewed either as barbarians or savages devoid of cultural finesse. But the battleships and cannons of the West proved to be more than the Qing Dynasty could defend against.⁴³

During that same period, America was engulfed in her own civil war. Soon after it ended in 1865, America experienced the revival attributed in part to the work of D.L. Moody, which produced large numbers of young missionaries. From 1870-1895, missionary organizations and various denominations sent many missionaries into China.⁴⁴

⁴³ Leung, Ka-Lun, *Between Christianity and Buddhism* (Taipei: Cosmic Press, 1997), 98-99.

⁴⁴ Varig, Paul A, *Missionaries, Chinese and Diplomats* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977), 13. With the ratification of the treaties in 1860, the missionary movement in China rapidly expanded its operations from the few treaty ports into most of the eighteen provinces. The number of Protestant missionaries rose from eighty-one in 1858 to 1,296 in 1889; of the latter approximately 500 were Americans. Likewise, the approximately 350 communicants in 1853 increased in number to 37,287 in 1889. Factors operating at home to stimulate missionary interest account for this growth in part, but it could never have taken place had not the Peking government been forced to open the doors to missionary enterprise in 1860. All of the major denominations had begun mission work in China before 1890. The Presbyterian Church, North, had more missionaries than any other society excepting the China Inland Mission, which was largely English. The Methodist Episcopal Church, North, ranked next, followed closely by the boards of the Baptists and Congregationalists. Nineteen American denominations supported missionaries in China by 1890; the more important of these were the Protestant Episcopal Church; Methodist Church, South; the Southern Baptist Convention; the Presbyterian Church, South; and the Reformed Church of America. There were more English missionaries than American, the English numbering 724 and the Americans, 513.

The impact of the Bristol Assembly had been felt in Britain since 1825. It generated widespread revivals and produced many missionaries. Hudson Taylor was a member of the Bristol Associates. When he was sent to China in 1842, the organization had reached a membership of 88 individuals. Taylor, and those who went with him, as well as those who followed later, were trained in the Scripture Knowledge Institute founded by George Mueller. The purpose of the Institute was to equip missionaries to serve in China. Following the opening of China's doors the period between 1876 and 1895 was one in which mission organizations and denominations focused their efforts on.⁴⁵

Because of the incompetence of the Qing Government, and the pervasive influence of witchcraft and idolatry, anti-Christian sentiments continued to gain momentum. This period of history was characterized by the chaotic conditions of the Boxer Rebellion.

In that year, the "Big Knife Commando," which was made up of civilians, formed the mainstay of the Boxer Army. They claimed that once they had become possessed by demons, they would become bullet proof and knife proof. Though some government officials objected, they were outnumbered by many others in high positions who were ignorant of science and technology. Among them was the powerful Empress Dowager, who believed that the Boxers were the solution to clearing out the foreigners. In 1895, the "Big Knife Commando" murdered 11 foreign missionaries in Ku Tien of Fu-Kien Province. The news of their martyrdom reached Britain and inspired greater numbers of young men to dedicate their lives to missions. The Boxers got organized in various locations.

⁴⁵ Coad, Rey, *History of the Brethren Movement* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962), 76.

From 1886 to 1895, there were numerous cases of murder, arson, and anti-church activity.⁴⁶

During those persecutions, both the Western missionaries and the indigenous Chinese believers were victimized. This deeply rooted hatred arose from mixed emotions. 1) It was due to a general lack of understanding on the part of the Chinese of Western culture. 2) It was true that China was brutally invaded, and lost her diplomatic rights to the extent that customs were manned by foreign powers. 3) China had been divided between Western forces, giving rise to a sense of inexpressible frustration. 4) Each case of murder was met by heavy handed gunboat diplomacy. 5) The government was ineffective and lacked leadership ability. In desperation it resorted to calling missionaries names, and creating malicious rumors of evil practices using the organs of human victims to create medicine.

Now the Boxers organized themselves, and led themselves to believe that they were impervious to bullets and knife cuts. They were confident that victory was in their hands. Under the prompting of the Qing government, and the blind passion of the multitude, the attack was focused on both the foreign missionaries and the churches.⁴⁷

During this era, all churches were still under the leadership of Western missionaries. The churches were financed by Western organizations. With financial power in their hands, they were a force to be reckoned with. On the one hand, the missionaries had to focus on evangelizing; on the other hand, they wanted to establish God's everlasting church. They labored in spite of the hatred directed at them. Though the uneducated and uninformed populace opposed them blindly, there were tangible successes and accomplishments. So this became the

⁴⁶ Chen, Kian-Fu, 366.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 199.

era in which Western missionary organizations established the foundation of their work.⁴⁸

1.6.4.1 Denominational Evangelism and Denominational Churches

When missionaries came to China to preach the Gospel, most of them came with the vision that the Gospel was preached to save souls, conforming to the purpose of Zinzendorf and his colleagues.⁴⁹ But once a person believed the Gospel, how was the church to be established? The church was promoted on the principle of denominational fellowships, but in an open and collaborative spirit.

Karl Friedrich Gutzlaff, missionary from Holland, assumed the position of official translator of the British Consulate. He dedicated himself wholeheartedly to Bible translation. At the same time, he trained Chinese pastors to evangelize inland. The Chinese Union was founded in 1846, with 300 members and 50 preachers, a spectacular accomplishment. Gutzlaff can be honored as the founding father of Inland missions. He also established the Berlin Mission, which took root in Ka Yu, Guangzhou, Boar Loh, Hu-Yuan, and Ying Kwang. Theodore Hamberg wrote *The Chronology of the Peaceful Kingdom*, and Ku Zhe Lai wrote *The Report of Evangelism in China*. Hamberg became the second Southern Baptist missionary to China (the first having been Shuck). He established his base camp in Hong Kong. Later Issachar Jacob Roberts came to China, and established the First Baptist Church of China.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Leung, Ka-Lun, *Between Christianity and Buddhism* (Taipei: Cosmic Light Press, 1997), 14-15.

⁴⁹ Lewis, A.J., *Zinzendorf, Ecumenical Pioneer* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1962), 80.

⁵⁰ Wang, Chih-Hsin, 92, 202.

The American Episcopalian Church sent Henry Lockwood and Francis R. Harrison to China, but both men were refused entry into China. Instead of returning, they proceeded to Java, and evangelized the ethnic Chinese there. Later on, they expanded their work into several Chinese Provinces, including Chian-Zu, Wan-Gan, U-Hsian.⁵¹

In 1837, the American Presbyterian Church learned of Robert Morrison's success in translating the Bible, and was prompted to dispatch two missionaries to China. However, they too were not allowed to settle in China. They turned to Singapore, and also worked on translating the Bible. In 1842, the Presbyterians sent more missionaries to learn Chinese in Macao. Later, they were sent to Ning Po, Hsia Men, Shanghai, Kwan Chou. Their fervent efforts resulted in the establishment of the Presbyterian Church in Kwan Chou and Ning Po.⁵²

In summary, prior to 1843, it was difficult for a missionary to secure residence in China. However, though many were turned away, they proceeded to Nanyang (Southeast Asia). They dedicated themselves to learning the Chinese language, evangelizing, and Bible translation. This era between 1807 and 1842 can be recognized as the period of Bible translation, composing tracts, publishing and disseminating tracts.⁵³ "Fu Tan Hua" (Chinese Union) was the first substantial Chinese congregation that saw outstanding results. A particular highlight of this church's accomplishments included the training of over 50 preachers.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Anhui, Kiang Xi, Hu Pei, Hu Nan.

⁵² Wang, Chih-Hsin, 167.

⁵³ Hayes, Ernest H., *Robert Morrison—Chinese Pioneer* (London: Livingston Press, 1925), 127-128.

⁵⁴ Loh, Bing-Shan, *Rhemish Church in China 1847-1947*, (Hong Kong: Rhemish Press, 1968), 2.

After Hong Kong was ceded to Britain in 1842, she became the temporary dwelling place of missionaries, as well as the home base of mission organizations. The Anglican church sent W. H. Medhurst to succeed Morrison and Milne who had died. Morrison's son-in-law, Dr. Hobson, established residence in Hong Kong. In 1848, he invited 12 American and British missionaries to a forum on re-translation of the Bible. In attendance were W.C. Mitinc, Leggle Milne, Walter Lawrie of the American Presbyterian Church. Their purpose was to come up with a translation that could better meet the needs of the Chinese in terms of readability and comprehension. This unity revealed a special cooperation between denominations and was of great significance in the work of evangelization.⁵⁵

1.6.4.2 The Chinese Christian Church

Prior to 1842, missionaries placed little emphasis on denominations. Collaborative efforts were the rule rather than the exception. German missionaries and British missionaries worked together. Churches prospered in Hong Kong. The Anglicans formed a church, as did the Presbyterians. These churches then merged under the name Chinese Christian Church (Chung Hwa). Chang Tsu Ling initiated this merger and promoted similar unions throughout all of China. Many churches were unified under the name of Chinese Christian Church (Chung Hwa Ji Do Jia Hui), forsaking earlier denominational affiliations. The presence of denominations created in the Chinese a sense of division, which often led to sectarian favoritism and conflict. Chang Tsu Ling had the vision to rise above such sectarian infighting. His vision did not stem from patriotic motivation: instead, it stemmed from the vision that the promotion of Christianity in China is the fruit of Christ, and should not be attributed to individuals or particular organizations. However, his suggestions were not accepted.

⁵⁵ Wang, Chih-Hsin, 164

1.7 Concluding remarks on the missionary wave

During this period, they preached, established schools, endeavored to understand Chinese culture, and nurtured Chinese preachers. Despite the Boxer Rebellion, and the fact that the Qing government was unable to enforce the terms of the treaty, the heresy of the Boxers twisted Christianity and established a mixed political-religious system. This cultic movement was characterized by carnality, selfishness, and greed. It bore little resemblance to any religion.⁵⁶

When missionaries came with their deeply rooted denominational background, the churches they formed were reflections of their sending denominations. The American civil war was fought over the emancipation of slaves, and dragging on for more than six years. An incidental result of the Civil War was the establishment of Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches and the Northern and Southern Baptist Churches. Ironically, missionary activities in China were also divided along northern and southern regions.⁵⁷

From an educational perspective, missionaries established churches, hospitals and seminaries, published books and founded modern publishing facilities. During this period of their ministry, Chinese believers started to grow in number. Methodist missionaries were engaged in preaching tours. Over 200 people were converted. Among the examples of the mission movement's positive impact is the formation of different churches. At the same time the China Inland Mission came into being. Missionary Dr. William Ashmore was the first to

⁵⁶ Eberhard, Wolfran, *A History of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 295-297.

⁵⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu, 191. The divisions made by Baptists and Presbyterians aroused the suspicions of the Chinese who questioned the rationale for the disunity.

promote the self-governing, self-sufficiency, and self-preaching of the Chinese church.⁵⁸

When missionaries came to China they brought their beliefs and their own background to China. There were three important influences from the missionary movement in China: denominationalism, the brethren movement, and the Pentecostal movement. The characteristics of indigenous Chinese churches today reveal the cumulative impact of all three of the above influences.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

⁵⁹ Kaplan, Steven (Editor), *Indigenous Response to Western Christianity* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 125. Chapter 6 by Daniel Bays. Also see Coad: *The History of The Brethren Movement*. (Exeter England: The Paternoster Press, 1968), 205.

CHAPTER 2

Mission Principles and the influence of the China Inland Mission

During the next missionary era Protestant mission societies played the dominant role. In this chapter, I therefore wish to examine their principles and practices in more detail. As Hudson Taylor and his society, the China Inland Mission, occupied such a prominent position, I will give special attention to them.

2.1 James Hudson Taylor (1832 – 1905)

The Opium War of 1842 culminated in the Treaty of Nanjing. This was a major watershed for both Chinese as well as missionary history, opening doors for economic and missionary enterprise in China. Concurrently, the Brethren Movement was established in Britain during 1842, and this had a profound influence James Hudson Taylor. The following are some excerpts from the history of the Brethren Movement:

These contacts all brought relief to Groves' last months of intense physical suffering. He died at the Bristol home of his brother-in-law, George Muller, on 20th May 1853, with the exclamation, "Precious Jesus." The work in which his influence had been so positive was now firmly rooted and growing widely in different places. Lesser known, but surely no less significant, was his personal influence on two of the great shapers of the modern missionary movement: Alexander Duff and (indirectly through his writings and his influence at Tottenham) James Hudson Taylor. Disowned by the Friends in that same year, they opened in 1839 a chapel (which is still in use) in Brook Street, off Tottenham High Road. By 1842, eighty-eight persons were in communion. Later in the century, this congregation was to become influential within the movement. Among its members, for a short time before he left for China, was James Hudson Taylor.

The beginnings of an extensive work overseas had already been laid. Two of the more important centers in England were closely involved in these efforts overseas. Muller's Scriptural Knowledge Institute in Bristol was already a considerable channel through which financial support was sent to workers in many different parts of the world, particularly to those connected with their own churches. At the same time, the churches to the north of London (which were in direct personal touch with Bethesda) began to develop their interest in these missionaries. Hackney was then a fashionable residential suburban village, and had long been an important center of non conformity. James van Sommer, a solicitor in the Hackney congregation, started in 1853 the Brethren's first missionary journal, *The Missionary Reporter*, while others in the Hackney congregation

were in touch with men (including James Hudson Taylor and Benjamin Broomhall) who later were to form the nucleus of the China Inland Mission.⁶⁰

Thus, much of Hudson Taylor's faith and concepts of the Church were derived from the Brethren Movement. Moreover, he was in close contact with George Muller. The co-workers in the early days of the China Inland Mission (CIM) were graduates of Muller's Scriptural Knowledge Institute (SKI). Muller lived a life of faith, establishing orphanages as well as edifying his co-workers. Without doubt, Hudson Taylor was deeply influenced by Muller.⁶¹

From the above discussion, it is not difficult to notice that Hudson Taylor's missionary strategy was linked to his background. Muller established the orphanages and the Spiritual Knowledge Institute (SKI) whilst doing away with the tradition of renting pews to church attenders. Rather, Muller established a church and also developed and sustained his ministry, based solely on faith, through the orphanages. This concept was evident in Taylor's venture into Chinese missions as he relied on faith and looked to God for all provision. This also became the administrative principle of the CIM, a so-called "Faith Mission" type of missionary sending agency.⁶²

Muller initially adopted the stance of the Open Brethren.⁶³ This was also the strategy and discipline of the CIM in establishing churches in China. To gloss

⁶⁰ Coad, F. Roy, *A History of the Brethren Movement* (Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 53, 76, 166.

⁶¹ Concerning the relationship and influence of the Brethren Movement on Hudson Taylor, *Hudson Taylor and Maria* by John Pollock (England: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd., 1962), chap. 11, 188 contains an account of Taylor receiving a check for 10 pounds from Muller at a time of tremendous need. Pollock also writes of a particular Sunday during Taylor's furlough in Britain when he shared the vision of the CIM with an Open Brethren congregation, 122.

⁶² Pollock, 22.

⁶³ See Taylor's statement "God's work done in God's way will not lack God's supply" Harold R. Cook: *An Introduction to the Study of Christian Mission* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1955), 150-151.

over the ecclesiological concepts of Hudson Taylor and the CIM without further elaboration would indeed be a great pity and loss. Their missionaries adhered to the CIM's policies, thereby living and ministering by faith alone. Although this meant that they lived frugally, their living testimonies provided the Chinese believers with a correct concept of how an evangelist ought to live. Further, their lifestyles also preached a spiritual message, especially through forging deep and long-term roots among the Chinese Evangelicals,⁶⁴ thus forming an integral part of the tradition and inheritance of the Chinese Church. After 1900, the major traditions of significant influence (such as Wang Ming-Dao, Yang Shao-Tang, Calvin Chao, Hu En-de) as well as organizations (like the Watchman's Group) were undeniably influenced by the Brethren. Apart from the impact made by denominationalism through Wesleyan theology and Pentecostalism, the biggest single influence, whether directly or indirectly, on the Chinese Church scene must surely be that of the Brethren Movement. This influence was mediated mainly through Taylor and the CIM.

Initially (i.e. with reference to the time prior to the signing of the Treaties of Nanjing and Tianjing in 1842 and 1857 respectively), ministry among the Chinese was concentrated along the coastal provinces. Due to the Qing government's official policy regarding missionary enterprise in China, missionaries were restricted to the coastlands. When Hudson Taylor arrived in China (1854-1860), two major wars were taking place (the Sino-British War from 1840 to 1842 and the Anglo-French War in 1857). Under pressure from the British and French governments, the Qing government altered its anti-religious propagation laws:

⁶⁴ Taylor is the "Father of the Faith Missions Movement." See D.W. Bacon's *From Faith to Faith: Influence of Hudson Taylor on the Faith Missions Movement*, 87. Taylor also made an impact on faith missions on the African continent. See Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1994).

Should any foreigner be found propagating Roman Catholicism within Chinese borders, or publishing secretive literature, or doing mass promotion so as to mislead the general public; or for instance Manchurians or Hans, being instigated by foreigners to propagate such religions, or to secretly adopt the use of Western names, then the one who is judiciously found guilty of so misleading the people will be punished without delay. Anyone who propagates religion and misleads the public without adopting Western names will be jailed. Those who have put their faith in a Western religion and refuse to repent of their actions will be exiled to Xinjiang to work towards the enslavement of the Moslem people.⁶⁵

The above measures were in place until withdrawn under political pressure in 1870.⁶⁶ The CIM essentially started in 1865 with its base at Zhejiang. In 1867, they entered Jiangsu and in 1869, pioneering work began in Anhui Province. At this time, they had around 22 co-workers. In July 1897, their publication "Mission Report" had its name changed to "China's Millions." Hudson Taylor led his co-workers in planned, regular praying and fasting sessions, thus bringing their needs before God.⁶⁷

2.2. Moving Inland (1875 – 1885)

In 1875, the CIM ventured into Hunan, with plans to evangelize in Hunan. Hudson Taylor's vision became his heartfelt ambition. He went to Shanxi, Gansu and Sichuan in an attempt to catalyze the progress of inland missions. In 1877, he traveled to Chongqing, but along the way, also visited the provinces of Guizhou, Guangxi and Yunnan. On the one hand, he was making observations of the circumstances in those places. On the other hand, he evangelized as he went

⁶⁵ Gu, Weiming, *Christianity and Modern Chinese Society*, 137.

⁶⁶ Cohen, Paul, *Pre-1900 Christian Propagation Activities and Their Corresponding Impact*; ed. Fei Zhengqing. *Cambridge Late Qing History* (Beijing Chinese Social Science Publishers, 1993) Vol.1, 621.

⁶⁷ See Tang Qing, p. 474. Also, Christopher Tang: *The First Hundred Years of Protestantism* (Hong Kong: Tao Sheng Publishing House, 1990), 474.

about, all in the hope of making concrete and practical plans that would bring the Gospel to these regions. Transportation was then inconvenient, but nevertheless Taylor took on such arduous travels with the sole objective of bringing the Gospel to the inlands of China. According to plan, in 1879, they began work in Shandong Province. He also risked his life on such travels. During this period, a large group of female missionaries who arrived in Shanghai was dispatched inland. Taylor spent two years covering the inland regions, thus gradually nudging his plans to realization. In 1876, two missionaries were sent to Shanxi. Simultaneously, another missionary was sent to Gansu, with another co-worker to Sichuan, and another to Guizhou and other regions. In 1879, Taylor and his wife some co-workers went to Yantai, Shandong, to pioneer a new ministry. The overall master plan had been laid down. These co-workers who had been dispatched also made trips further inland mostly on foot so as to survey in person the situations there. Taylor later went to the northeastern regions and also to Hainan Island, Mongolia. This journey covered over 19,000 miles. As he traveled, he read the Holy Scriptures. In 1880, John Stevenson ventured into Yongchang, Yunnan, through Bamo. He later returned to Bamo, then on to Wuchang before returning to Shanghai. His entire journey covered 5,700 miles over 170 days. Such physically taxing travels took him over mountain high and valley low, through shallow streams and rivers deep. In the process, they felt ever more strongly the need for more missionaries to be sent to preach the Good News.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Choi, Kam-To, *James Hudson Taylor and China Inland Mission* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1998), 64. In January 1877, McCarthy set off from the eastern coast of China, traveling upstream along the Yangtze River until he reached Chongqing. He then ventured south into Dali, Yunnan. This journey from East to West China was dubbed by his contemporaries as "the foolish and impossible journey." Companion to McCarthy on this journey was Yang Tsuen Ling, a Chinese Christian and two coolies (i.e. bondservants). They tried to carry as little necessities as possible with them. The final stage of their journey happened to be on foot, including 16 days on the mountain trails in order to reach the capital city of Guizhou, Guiyang, and thereafter to the capital of Yunnan. As they walked, they preached the Gospel. The complete

2.3 Maintaining the Vision

Within a decade, the ministry needs of the CIM increased. On one hand, there was a shortage of Western missionaries. Also, the ministry needed long-term financial contributions. Thus, raising of support had to go international and could no longer be confined to Britain. The vision now had to be shared in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and Canada. During this period, a few consultative councils were set up, among them the Scottish Consultative Council, the North American Consultative Council and the Australian Consultative Council. In this manner, more young people could be tapped for missionary service in China. Apart from the establishment of consultative councils, various sending agencies stepped forth to participate, such as the Swedish Mission in China (1887), the Norwegian Mission, the Swedish Holiness Mission, the German-Chinese Alliance Mission and the Church of Finland. In 1891, the Scandinavian-Chinese Alliance Party of the Unity Church and the Liebenzell missions Agency also joined the workforce. Under the supervision of the CIM, these agencies became part of a working network. As a result, the CIM was at that time greatly respected and had great influence having become the largest missions sending body in China.

In 1885, the Cambridge Seven, having given themselves for Chinese missions under the preaching of D.L. Moody, joined the CIM and arrived in

account of McCarthy's abovementioned journey has been published in the August 1879 issue of the Royal geographical Society's Magazine (John McCarthy: *The Province of Yunnan*). See M. Broomhall ed., *The Chinese Empire: A General Missionary Survey* (London: Morgan & Scott and China Inland Mission, 1907), 247-248. Also F.A. Steven: *In the Valley of Lake Urh* (China's Millions, Apr. 1895), 470.

China to preach the Gospel, causing quite a stir. They were very willing to be sacrificed, achieving much ministerial success in various ministry roles.⁶⁹

This was also the eve of "The Great Tribulation." The Lord had greatly blessed the CIM. In March 1886, D. E. Hoste was appointed as the Assistant Director of the CIM, assisting Hudson Taylor. The CIM differed from the other agencies in that its headquarters was based in China, not overseas. For this reason, the Assistant Director was able to direct operations within China. Another major development within the Chinese Church was the ordination of the famous Pastor Hsi Shimo.⁷⁰ Originally a scholar, he was addicted to opium smoking and unable to stop this habit. Yet, opium smoking could not fully satisfy him until the Lord found him. During the Great Famine among the mountainous regions, Missionary David Hill arrived to help to relieve the famine conditions. He later became a renowned pastor with a tremendous sphere of influence.⁷¹

In 1890, the Second National Missions Conference was held. Taylor, who delivered the opening message, openly called for a petition to God to dispatch 1,000 missionaries to come and preach the Gospel in inland China. Once this cry was sounded, various mission agencies responded by agreeing to send manpower

⁶⁹Tang, Qing, 480. The Cambridge Seven: D.E. Hoste; C.T. Studd, W. Co. Cassels, Stanley Smith; Montagu 'Beauchamp', Ceciel Polhill Turner, and Arthur Polhill Turner.

⁷⁰Taylor, Howard, *Pastor Hsi* (Christian Witness Press, 1956), 24. Li advertised for literary contributions with the promise of a reward. Altogether, 6 essays were shortlisted, with the top prize being a cash reward of 30 silver coins. Using different pen names, Hsi won 3 out of the 4 prizes awarded. Unwilling to personally accept the prize money, Hsi dispatched one of his younger brothers to claim the prize on his behalf. This was unsuccessful, so Hsi personally met up with Li Xiushan. As a result, Hsi's impression towards Christianity was greatly changed. After his encounter with Pastor Li, Hsi was gradually led towards reading the Scriptures. Eventually, he accepted Christ as Savior and even gave his life for the ministry. At this time, a particular Christian sister was specially praying about Pastor Li's ministry in China. God had answered her prayers. This was evidently a work of the Spirit.

⁷¹Tang, Qing, 450.

and 'prayer power.' This was the final illustrious moment in the history of the Chinese Church as the 19th century drew to a close.

Hudson Taylor (i.e the CIM) did not set up a single university or high school during this period. They also wished to cultivate Chinese church leaders, but alas, they lacked the vision to venture into education. Lin Zhiping's essay written for the 170th anniversary of Robert Morrison's coming to China made mention of this. Taylor held evangelism and the establishment of churches uppermost in his mind. Although he had the desire to nurture Chinese evangelists, there were insufficient numbers for such a venture to be viable. Western missionaries continued to form the bulk of the missionary workforce. Once a Western missionary reached a particular location and began his ministry, he became the presiding pastor and thereby lost his missionary motives. As such, the missionary sending agency functioned as a church. Whether or not a church could grow into a sending church was a different question altogether.

The inlands was then largely closed to the outside world. Lacking modern schools, illiterates abounded whereas intellectuals were hard to come by. Even if someone should be willing to give his life for the ministry as an evangelist, he still had to worry about preparing himself because there were no seminaries. At that time, in Wuzhou, Guangxi, Dr. Robert H. Glover started a Bible seminary for the purpose of training Chinese pastors in South China.⁷² After the events of 1899, turbulent times arrived and the Chinese Church suffered unprecedented setbacks.

⁷² See Leong Ka-Lun's *A Hundred Year History of the Alliance Church in China* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1988). Due to Rev. Paul Cohen's emphasis on nurturing Chinese Christians with potential, he made the following statement: "We cannot keep on sending missionaries to the East indefinitely for evangelism and pastoral roles. There must be localized nurturing which allows for local leaders to take up the leadership responsibilities." Hence, during his early ministry in Guangxi, he already strongly advocated the establishment of Alliance Bible Seminary. In 1899, under his advocacy, a Bible seminary was also set up in Wuzhou, which later came to be known as the Alliance Bible Seminary. This was the training ground for pastors in Central China. (The writer of this Thesis was a graduate of this seminary).

This crisis began a whole new era. The 19th century was marked by the martyrdom of both Western missionaries and Chinese evangelists. The blood of the believers forged a new stream in the flow of Chinese Church history.

2.4 Literary Missions

We previously made mention of Robert Morrison's life of ministry. He had a desire to give the Chinese their very own Chinese Bible. Liang Fa, the first Chinese evangelist, wrote a set of short tracts and distributed them everywhere. One set was given to a forgetful student. Because he did not have firm grasp of the Truth, this recipient started a movement, which later grew into the Taiping Rebellion (1852-1867). This movement ended in tragedy, with millions of souls lost in the process. During this period, it was illegal to congregate. Therefore, Liang Fa was arrested by the government and badly beaten up.⁷³ Literary missions became the most successful form of evangelism up till 1842, when the five ports became open for trade. It was only then that Western missionaries were able to establish a foothold, and many took up the task of translating the Bible. In 1889, missionary Timothy Richard of the Baptist Church of British Wales, envisioned the Gospel being preached to Chinese intellectuals and societal leaders.⁷⁴ In seeking to evangelize the Chinese, one must both understand and adopt Chinese culture and philosophy. Hence, Richard's ministry focused on education and literary evangelism. During times of famine, he also provided the government with practical suggestions and strategies to deal with the situation. In comparing him with Hudson Taylor, we notice a distinctly different style and

⁷³ Tang, Qing, p. 119.

⁷⁴ According to Paul Cohen as recorded in Lin Zhiping's collection of literary records. Su Wen-Long translated Paul Cohen's essay "A Comparison of the Missionary Strategies of Hudson Taylor and Timothy Richard" into Chinese. This article contains a rather extensive comparison.

attitude. Hudson Taylor felt that the Gospel ought to be urgently preached to those who have yet to hear of it as quickly as possible. Hence, his strategy was to enter the midst of the unevangelized with the Gospel at the soonest possible time. Taylor held to an innocent belief that through faith alone, we are able to accomplish the seemingly impossible. To him, literary ministries and education only played supportive roles. However, medical work had a prominent place in Taylor's ministry, being much exploited as a bridge to evangelism. This could probably be attributed to his own training in medicine.⁷⁵ The CIM established numerous hospitals and clinics and sent out medical missionaries. Taylor was able to shed the cloak of denominationalism as he went about his ministry. This can, perhaps, be attributed to his Brethren roots and his continued close correspondence with them. His organization was transdenominational, never favoring any specific group. He always maintained a conservative Christian faith and theology, and refused to participate in Christian liberal activities, such as the Chinese Christian Church (Chung Hwu Ji-Do Chia Hui). He even rejected the Tongues Movement's participation in the CIM.⁷⁶ The CIM deserves special commendation as the major faith agency in China.

⁷⁵ Hudson Taylor's background in medicine is recorded in a few of his biographies: Kam-To Choi: *Hudson Taylor & the China Inland Mission*, (Hong Kong: The Alliance Bible Seminary 1996), 38; Roger Steer: *J. Hudson Taylor – A Man in Christ*, (Hong Kong: Christian Communications LTD 1990), chp. 12; John Pollock: *Hudson Taylor & Maria* (Taiwan: Campus Evangelical Fellowship, 1982), chp.1, 23.

⁷⁶ Kaplan, Steven ed.: *An Indigeneous Response to Western Christianity* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), 131. The Pentecostals were not accorded much respect by the "missionary establishment." One British Baptist source referred disparagingly to "certain sects from America" which entered Shandong after 1912 (Williamson 1957, 344). The China Inland Mission, by now the largest Protestant mission body in China with over one thousand members, found increasing tension within its ranks on the issue of Pentecostalism or the phenomenon, a number were repelled by it, and the all-powerful CIM China Council adopted a long statement condemning the Pentecostal movement, whose meetings were allegedly "characterized by disorder and by manifestations which in some cases have led to mental derangement and maniacal ravings"

The stance represented by Timothy Richard differed from that of Taylor and CIM, and had its own set of reasons. Although he did not directly plant churches, he served an important function. Evangelizing via literature has the advantage of efficacy. When the renowned pastor His Shimo came to Christ, although not as a result of literary evangelism, literary expression of the pros and cons of opium smoking played a significant role in his first contact with the church and missionaries. After many such meetings, his view of Christianity changed and he made a decision to accept Christ.

According to Daniel Bays, after the period from 1868 to 1883, apart from verbal propagation and teaching, Y.J. Allen expanded his missionary, also became aware of the importance of literary evangelism. He subsequently took on the editorship of two magazines:

During the period 1868-1883, Young J. Allen became involved in a variety of activities that expanded his views on the scope of missionary work. Beginning the period as a preacher and a teacher, he soon became an editor of two newspapers and later a third, as well as a translator for the imperial government. Although some of these activities were undertaken to provide him with a livelihood, because the Shanghai mission still felt the financial effects of the American Civil War, as time passed, Allen regarded his diverse secular undertakings as facets of missionary endeavor providing new ways to communicate the Christian message to various elements of Chinese society. The convictions he formed in these years were to remain with him after 1881, when he entered a new phase of his career by becoming the head of his church's mission to China. As in the years before 1868, Allen preached every Sunday and continued through personal contacts to make a small number of converts. But he became increasingly convinced that the Christian mission in China should adopt a broader approach – that it should seek to reach the Chinese women through women missionaries and schools for girls and to reach Chinese literates through publications in Chinese, as well as schools established under mission auspices. Allen aimed at no less than an attack on the Confucian culture, but in pursuing this task, he was also broadening his own concept of Christianity. Concerned with the spiritual salvation of the Chinese, Allen nevertheless aimed at the whole person – his entire being and relations.⁷⁷

(China Inland Mission, 1915). This chapter was written by Daniel Bays (“*Indigenous Response to Western Christianity*”).

⁷⁷Bennett, Adriana, *Missionary Journalist in China – Young J. Allen and His Magazines (1868-1883)* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1983), 47-48.

Y J. Allen did not abandon the pulpit and personal evangelism. His desire was not only to reach the uneducated with the Gospel, but also to preach to the intellectuals. Literature ministry necessarily involves the meeting of societal, economic, scientific and spiritual needs.

2.5 Meeting other societal needs

During His earthly ministry, Christ preached the Gospel of the Heavenly Kingdom while healing and casting out demons, hence relieving people of bodily and psychological distress. When food was nowhere to be found, the Lord also performed miracles that physically fed them (for instance, the feeding of the 5,000 and 4,000 as recorded in the Gospels). Likewise, Hudson Taylor and his co-workers established hospitals and through medical science, they relieved people of bodily pains, thus opening doors to evangelism. Both Taylor and Allen had a common objective of motivating the advancement of evangelistic ministry. Allen, in addition to medical ministries, included ventures into the field of education. Science lectureships were conducted, which allowed Chinese intellectuals to come into contact with Christians and emissaries of the Gospel. At the same time, missionaries were able to mingle with the intellectual stratum of Chinese society. China was thus brought into a deeper understanding in the areas of science, economics and education so that Christianity was no longer considered a superstitious organization, but rather one which consisted of learned intellectuals and was up to date with the times. With the change in perspective towards Christianity, missions became a living testimony.

2.6 Eliminating Opposition to the West

Understanding of the West increased. Yet, the Opium War, the Anglo-French Alliance and the two wars created serious stumbling blocks within the hearts of Chinese scholars, officials and intellectuals. Although the treaties

arising from the two wars contained clauses enabling freedom of religious propagation, the Chinese intellectuals did not necessarily know the distinction between the Church and the political governments, that they were not part of a single body. However, this overlap also brought particular advantages, especially the advancement of education. Although rumors abounded that Westerners gouged out human eyes and hearts to manufacture pharmaceutical products, most of those in church-run schools could discern truth from error as a result of what they personally see and heard. As they read the Bible and listened to the Gospel, these people not only received an education, but also got the chance to hear the Good News. Further, many graduates from these schools heeded God's call to the ministry. That these relatively well-educated ones were willing to become evangelists was a blessing to the Church because they could form the leadership of a localized Chinese church. The Western missionaries' education of the Chinese regarding Western methods of prosperity cannot be considered a sharing of a secret formula. The Western mission agencies established schools to help China as well as to propagate the Gospel.

Both Y.J. Allen and Timothy Richard made great contributions towards Chinese learning via, for instance, the opening of Learning Propagation societies and the pioneering of magazines. These were part of the way of the Gospel. The conflict between the conservative and liberal camps requires separate detailed analysis. The Western churches insisted upon keeping the faith before utilizing new methods and were evidently more effective. Both directly and indirectly, the Chinese church was established and spiritually nourished.

2.7 Conclusion

Regarding missions in China, we can say that by the beginning of the 20th century, missionaries had experienced much blood, tears and suffering. This was due to the prolonged conflict between Western and traditional Chinese cultures.

Further, a mixture of superiority and inferiority complexes arising from nationalistic sentiments created a psychological opposition to Western military, economic and religious elements. The Boxer Rebels saw the abandonment of Chinese superstitious culture for “absurd and impractical” Western methodology as fuel for opposition. The rebels ended up being manipulated by prominent court officials to blindly stir up an anti-West (i.e. Westerners and Western religion) movement. Hence, there was a rallying cry to “butcher the Big Devil (i.e. the Western Missionary) and the Second Devil (the Chinese Christian),” which eventually drew the reaction of the Eight-Nation Alliance. All strata of Chinese society were deceived, being ignorant of the truth as well as blindly following the riotous trend without intellectual discernment.⁷⁸

Western missionaries were not representative of the colonial and economic invasion characteristic of Western nations. Although a minority among these missionaries could have felt racially superior to the Chinese, which was a grievous trespass, many Chinese people also carried their own sense of racial superiority. Whatever the case, after the arrival of Robert Morrison in China (1807), other denominations were awakened as a result of his ministry and an endless stream of Western missionaries were sent. Through much difficulty, the Gospel was preached, one missionary succeeding another. Thus, the Church was established. In the midst of this process, informed missionaries began to direct the building of self-governing, self-sustaining and self-propagating churches, so that the Chinese could themselves share the Gospel with their fellow Chinese. However, the crux of getting the Chinese people to become self-governing, self-sustaining and self-propagating lay not in financial means but rather talented individuals who were able to lead the church such that churches will generate churches. As a result of the impact made by Western missionaries on Chinese

⁷⁸ Chang, Shi-Qiang's *The Reasons Behind Chinese Governmental Opposition to Christianity* provides vivid details.

Christians, there eventually arose Chinese pastors and missionaries in the 20th century. The earliest among them were Lee Shou Hsing and Ding Li Mei.⁷⁹ Twenty years later, the Chinese church was an illustrious sight. The schools, seminaries and Bible colleges started by the Western sending agencies trained countless numbers of pastors, evangelists, theologians and revivalists. Also, through simple and direct teaching, relevant encouragement and economic assistance, many localized Chinese churches were born, such as the Chinese Christian Church arising from the Presbyterians and the Chinese Church from the Missionary and Alliance Church, and the Baptist churches along the coastal regions. Most of them were self-governing, self-sustaining and self-propagating. Hence, from 1900 onwards, after the successful uprising led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen, there was a stream of civil wars, the gradual rise of the Communists, the alliance of the Chinese intellectuals and Christianity, the eight-year Civil War until the Mainland was completely "liberated" by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). The Chinese Church, under the leadership of both Western missionaries as well as Chinese Christians, created an era of spiritual enterprise. Examples include Wang Ming-Dao and the Christian synagogue, Yang Shao-Tang and the Spiritual Work (Ling Gong) Band, Watchman Nee and the Local Church, Jin Dian-Ying and the Jesus Family, Isaac Wei, Zhang Ling-Sheng, Barnabas Zhang and the True Jesus Church. In addition, there were countless independent churches. None of these people were left uninfluenced by Western missionaries. In the theological arena, there were Jia Yuming, Cheng Jigui, Zhou Zhiyi, Huang Yuansu and Zhang Xuegong. Among the revivalists were John Sung, Andrew Gih, Calvin Chao and Leland Wong. The impact made by these individuals on the Chinese church was especially significant during the 15-year period between 1925 and 1949.

⁷⁹ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung: *The Break of Dawn* (Taipei-Hymnody and Bible House, 1998), 195. Lee was trained as a medical doctor during the time of the last emperor of Qing Dynasty. He was called into ministry during the time in medical school. He became an evangelist.

Resources of human talent, money, intellect and spiritual fervor were fully utilized and manifest.

Robert Morrison's arrival brought China her first Christian book. Thereafter, a seven-man committee was set up by various denominations. Included on the panel were Dr. Goodrich, Calvin W. Mateer and Giffith John. The end result of this was the present-day Bible commonly used by the Chinese churches: a Chinese equivalent of the King James Version.

Also, the Chinese people, including Christians, needed "spiritual food." Y.J. Allen and Timothy Richard both made tremendous contributions in the field of literary ministry to the Chinese church as well as to the Chinese people in general. As a result of their work, there eventually arose monthly publications, quarterlies, newspapers and magazines. At the same time, Allen and Richard also established schools for the Chinese people. Other denominations set up kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and universities. These educational facilities not only allowed the Chinese to hear the gospel, but also offered them a fairly good education. Missionaries like Allen and Richard refused to limit themselves to a single church all their lives. Their literature ministry, together with the schools run by the other denominations, have blessed Chinese society. This was an achievement of the Western missionaries. Sun Yat-Sen, Watchman Nee, Wang Ming-Dao and John Sung were all initially nurtured in church-run schools before their own individual careers in the ministry began. A study of the Chinese evangelists within a 20-year period shows that all of them started periodicals: Wang Ming-Dao and *The Spiritual Food Quarterly*, Watchman Nee and *The Revival Times*, Andrew Gih and *The Holiness Directory*, Jia Yuming and *The Spiritual Light Magazine*, the Missionary and Alliance Church and *The Bible Times*, and the Learning Propagation Association and *The Through Question Times*. These periodicals met the needs of the Chinese people. This was also the

result of the good examples set by the Western missionaries and their sending agencies.

Besides establishing schools, the Western missionaries also set up orphanages, correction centers, prostitute shelter houses, hospitals, clinics, famine relief centers and refugee camps. These activities seemingly had nothing to do with the building up of the Church. However, they managed to help the poor and needy, and helped reduce the level of bodily pain among the people. Such work cannot be fully accounted for within a few lines and paragraphs. Yet, this work went towards the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of the Church through both direct and indirect channels of influence.

In 1925, Ernest H. Hayes completed his book *Robert Morrison: China's Pioneer* (London: The Living Home Press, 1925). In the final page of this work, he wrote:

Today, the civilization of the West is sweeping in like a flood. An indigenous Chinese Church is growing slowly but surely, and the work begun by Morrison is being gradually extended. In no part of the world are there greater possibilities for missionary work today than in the land to which he dedicated his life. China needs the service of thousands of Morrison – this hour of opportunity is a challenge to the young manhood of the West.⁸⁰

The past 50 years has been truly an extension to the life of Robert Morrison. His entire life was a prophecy. Not only did many missionaries come to China, they also worked and saw the establishment of localized churches, although this growth took place slowly. What we have today is the extrapolation of the length and breadth of Robert Morrison's life.

⁸⁰ Bays, 127.

CHAPTER 3

After the Boxer Rebellion: Lessons learned and further developments

From a human point of view, Boxer Rebellion (1900) was a huge setback to the Mission Movement and the Chinese churches. The loss of human life and property cannot be measured by numbers. More than 20,000 Chinese Christians were killed and more than 200 missionaries were martyred. We may say that the history of Chinese churches in the twentieth century was begun by the blood of martyrs. Though many Christians were killed, the number of Christians were not reduced. Nevertheless, the Chinese churches were purified through these fiery trials and their faith grew stronger. Some of the mediocre Christians were excommunicated. The church grew tenfold in that year (1900).⁸¹

Many lessons can be learned through this trial. Churches began to reevaluate and reexamine their methodology. Catholic churches forbade their workers to help church members to participate in court cases. Protestant churches shifted their goal of winning an individual to winning a whole family for Christ.⁸² In Yang Shan, the number of Christians before 1900 was 700, immediately after, the number increased to more than 3,000.⁸³ During this period, there was a famine in Chi-Li province (now He-Pei). Missionaries and Christians joined together in providing food to help those who were in need. Many people were greatly moved by this and accepted Christ, for the Christians

⁸¹ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1977), 248.

⁸² *Ibid.*, 249.

⁸³ Chen, Kian-Fu, *The Contemporary Progressive History of Christianity in China* (Taipei: Haitien Printing Co. LTD., 1989), 329.

had shown their love despite being persecuted. At the same time, more schools were established by the missionaries to educate the young people, leading many to Christ. From 1900 to 1912, the number of Christians.⁸⁴

Before 1900, Chinese viewed foreigners not the churches, as enemies. The Baptists in Shangxi made use of the Boxer indemnity to build the University of Shangxi. The American government returned the indemnity to the Qing government for the establishment of Tsin Hwa University.⁸⁵ The other nations (eight allied nations altogether) followed suit by returning their indemnities for the building of educational institutes. The training of the up-to-date scholars and professional was thus underway. These contributions were motivated by the love of Christ, and as a result many were converted. According to a survey in Kwangdong province, 65% of the high-level government officials were Christians. All of them were graduated from Christian schools. Throughout this catastrophic event, churches tried their best to help and to feed the poor. The indigenous movement was born out of this tragedy. According to Chih-Hsin Wong, Tsan-Chew Yu was the first to organize the "Chinese Self-Governing Church" in Shanghai in 1906.⁸⁶

3.1 The influence of the Boxer Rebellion

⁸⁴ Gu, Chang Sheng, *A Concise History of Christianity in China* (Monterey Park, CA: Evergreen Publishing, 1999), 110. At the end of 19th century, there were 61 missionaries; at 1906 this increased to 1067 mission boards. At 1919, increased to 130 mission Boards. Within 20 years double the amounts. At Tien Tsien, the Christian united the members of 5 denominations to form a self rule church (Chung Hwas Zi-Li Hwie). Other places formed similar actions.

⁸⁵ At this time, True Jesus Church began their work in north China and built their church in a rapid way. (Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture LTD, Bridge Vol. 62, 1993)

⁸⁶ Chen, Kian-Fu, *A Contemporary Progress History of Christianity in China* (Taipei: Hai Tien Printing Co. Ltd., 1989) 134.

During the last part of the 19th century, diplomatically, the Qing government was under great pressure of foreign powers. Several wars broke out with foreign countries and treaties were made in unequal terms. Examples were the Opium war (1839-1841), the Anglo-French Unity war (1857) and the Sino-Japan war (1894). Whenever there was a diplomatic dispute in negotiation, the Western countries threaten to attack with all their guns, cannons and battleships. All the foreign battleships were free to move around in the Yangtze River. The colonial policy was obviously an advantage to the Western nations, putting China in their hands as their territory. Under such unequal treaties, China had lost her integrated territory. The government and the people were all very angry with the foreign nations. With hatred and revenge in mind, the Boxer Rebellion evolved. The Boxers claimed they had voodoo power that could overcome guns and knives. They were encouraged by some of the government high officials. Missionaries and Christians alike were cruelty killed. These martyrs gave their lives to the Lord without any compromise. These martyrs were determine to carry the mission work entrusted to them.

The Boxer movement was an anti-imperialist armed struggle waged by north China peasants and handicraftsmen in 1900. Initially, the government tried to dissolve the movement. However, through time they gradually gained recognition by the officials and the educated. Through this recognition, the Boxers were emboldened and encouraged. Gradually they acted publicly and openly. They claimed that through divination, knives and bullets could not harm them. They could kill the "foreign devils" (the missionaries) and the "second devils" (Chinese Christians). At first, the Qing government was concerned about this movement, fearing that killing the Western missionaries would lead to more burdens and pressures in foreign diplomatic relations.

The phenomenon of the cult was described as follows: The members under the evil spirit were in a trance, with mouths full of foam. They shouted

irrational words, jumped around with a big knife, calling themselves Sun Wu Kung (the monkey god), Chu Ba Hie (the pig god) or Guan Gong (god of fortune). In the name of the evil spirit, they cursed, believing that the foreign religions would be terminated by such an act. Under such a trance they claimed to have power within them to resist bullets and knives.⁸⁷

A few high government officials believed in the Boxer and turned in a good report about them to Empress Dowager. At that time, the governor of Shangdong Ben-Heng Lee, governor of Shangxi, Prince Rue and Prince Yi Gang were all in support of the movement. The Boxers began burning churches and killing Christians, thinking they were patriotic and loyal to the country. The Dowager was convinced by these high officials and governors, believing that the Boxers had the supernatural power to subdue the foreign powers. On the contrary, the governor of Shangdong Yuan Shi-Kai opposed the order from Beijing (Peking Qing dynasty), as did the governors of Kwangdong and Kwangxi. Rue-Xian, the governor of Shangxi, who was in favor of this cult, killed missionaries and the Catholics with his sword, and encouraged his subordinates to do so as well. Dead bodies filled the streets. The acts were cruel and merciless: Parts of the bodies were amputated, some beheaded; babies were thrown to death; skins were peeled while still alive; boiling water was poured into mouths. An 80 year-old woman was killed with her heart taken out and her skin peeled.⁸⁸

Some women missionaries tried to escape by walking away. Some were captured, killed and left nude. A few made their way to Hankow. Food and water were provided by some kind people along the way.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu, 287-290.

⁸⁸ Chen, Kian-Fu, 291, 313-315.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 315.

The Boxers gathered together at Beijing (Peking) and started to attack the diplomatic residential areas. More than 2,000 Chinese Christians, together with 400 soldiers defended against the Boxers, who numbered more than 50,000. Day in and day out, they continued to attack Tung Jiao Meng Xiang (diplomatic residential areas). One man climbed up to the roof and watched how the Boxers were attacking the residents. He was scared by these continuing attacks that he decided to hang himself.⁹⁰

The Catholics fought against the attack by the Boxers for 50 days until the arrival of the Baguo Lianjun (the Eight-Power Allied Forces which was made up of Britain, America, Germany, France, Russia, Japan, Italy and Austria). With the arrival of the Eight-Power Allied forces, the Boxers dispersed. During these 50 days, more than 70 soldiers and many Christians were killed.⁹¹

The Germany ambassador in Beijing, who was on his way to negotiate with the Qing government, was killed. Many buildings were burnt down and totally destroyed as the allied forces entered the city. Beijing became a city of woe.

The Dowager and Emperor Kwang Xi escaped to Xian. They were among the refugees and saw with their own eyes the real situation and the suffering of the people. They were sorrowful and felt cheated by the governors and the princes, but it was all too late.

To trace the events back to the beginning, this was all started by Rue-Xian (the former governor of Shangdong). The Boxers were greatly encouraged by him. He was forced to leave Shangdong and settled himself in Shangxi after

⁹⁰ Gu, Chang-Shang, 104.

⁹¹ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity in China*. (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council Ltd., 1977), 237.

two Germany missionaries in Shangdong were killed by the Boxers. The German ambassador was strongly opposed to these killing. Shi-Kai Yuan was then appointed by Dowager to be the governor of Shangdong. He then ordered to arrest the leader of the Boxers in Shangdong. Hung-Dong Chee was thus beheaded. The followers realized they have no place in Shangdong, so they left for Heipeh.⁹²

After his removal from the governorship, Rue-Xian went to Beijing and talked to the influential leaders in the government such as Prince Dai-Qu Rui and Yi Gang, the director of education. They were told that the Boxers were loyal and trustworthy to the country and was able to turn the defeated nation into a brilliant future. Because of his convincing statement, Rue-Xian was nominated as the governor of Shangxi. His guards were all Boxers. After he became the governor, he let the Boxers to do whatever they liked. They began to kill the missionaries and Chinese Christians. This revealed that the court had no definite principles for governing the situation.⁹³

In the very beginning, Empress Dowager rewarded the Boxers in Manchuria, Heipeh, Heinan. By her reckoning, the Boxers were able to deal with the foreign powers. She ordered general Fu-Xiang Tong to lead the Boxers. When the war erupted, General Ben-Heng Lee was killed in the battle. The Dowager gave order to execute those who favored peace. When the eight allied forces came into Beijing, the Chinese had no defense at all. Killing, raping and burning were everywhere; many women committed suicide. In the palace, many women and royal family members either killed or committed suicide. The Dowager dressed as a slave; emperor and queen alike walked

⁹² Ibid., 238.

⁹³ Ibid., 233.

among the refugees. Originally it was a city of three million.⁹⁴ All those who were in the diplomatic residence were saved by the allied forces. They rejoiced, giving thanks to the Lord for His deliverance. Out of the 3,400 Chinese Christians, four 400 were killed in those 50 days. Seventy-six children were killed by bombs. The Dowager had no choice but to ask for peace. Rue-Xian was beheaded. The allied forces punished the real criminals of the war. Several loyal ministers of the government begged for mercy on behalf of the Dowager, asking that she not be punished. At the same time, there were differing opinions among Japanese, Russian and German leaders on different issues. Huang-Cheng Li was able to convince the leaders of the allied forces not to treat the Dowager as a criminal. Finally, twelve agreements were reached in a series of negotiations. In the Sing-Chow treaty, Li tried his best to fight for equal treatment but to no avail as his requests were rejected by the eight allied delegations. China was in the hand of the foreigners. She was not in the position to resist but to accept all their unreasonable requests. China has to pay indemnity (450,000,000 quinces silver), the so-called Boxer indemnity. It was a tragedy to lose all the rights as an independent nation. It was worse than being a secondary colony of all foreign powers.

3.2 Christian Fellowship

During this period, Ting Li-Mei, a well-known evangelist, encouraged Chinese Christians to serve as missionaries to inland China, such as Yun Nan and Gui Zhou provinces.⁹⁵ Many responded to his preaching and vision,

⁹⁴ Chen, Kian-Fu, *The Contemporary Progressive History of Christianity in China* (Taipei: Hai-Tien Publishing Co. Ltd., 1989), 329.

⁹⁵ Chu, Moses, *A Group of Saints* (Hong Kong: Evangelic Magazine, 1998), 88. Rev. Ting Li Mei was trained by Presbyterian mission school (Wing Hwie Quan). He was called "D.L.

consecrating themselves for the domestic missionary movement. Likewise, Chou-Qin Li, a well-accepted evangelist, was making the same call.⁹⁶

A missionary once commented that a self-governed, self-supported church was a "half-church" because there was no missionary and no foreign financial support.⁹⁷ In a way, western missionaries and their board did not encourage Chinese churches to be independent from foreign boards. Western leaders would not easily accept that the ruling authority be yielded to Chinese leaders. The well-known three-selves formula (mission churches should be self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating), first coined by Venn and Anderson, was eagerly adopted by Chinese Christians. Why? Because churches were dominated by foreign Board missionaries and they would not surrender their power to the Chinese, unlike Pauline's methodology of missions, which was led by the local church. An early example of an autonomous Chinese church was the Christian Missionary Alliance church in Kwangsi province under the leadership of Rev. Leo Chao – a fully self-supported church. This desire for autonomy was strong in the hearts of many Christian leaders, for once they were self-supporting, they were no longer dominated by foreign boards.⁹⁸ At the Century Convention in 1908, participants were unanimous in their support to abolish denominational differences. The Unity Church Front was thus born with Zine-Yi Cheng as its general secretary. The conservative and the evangelicals,

Moody" in China. He led many students to Christ. In his later years he was the president of Tien Tsien Bible Institute. Also see Moses Lee-Kung Yu, *The Break of Dawn*, 196.

⁹⁶ Li Shau-Tsing was a medical doctor, and a professor in teaching English. He was an evangelist. He led many students to Christ. Some of them became influential church leaders, and teachers. See Moses Lee-Kung Yu, *The Break of Dawn*, 198.

⁹⁷ Bridge: vol.63. Feb.1994, 5.

⁹⁸ Leung, Ka-Lin: *A Centenary History of the Chinese C & MA* (Hong Kong: Christian and Missionary Alliance Bible Seminary, 1998), 14.

such as China Inland Mission, Christian and Missionary Alliance, and T. J. C., refused to join because of its supposedly liberal stand.⁹⁹

After the Boxer Rebellion, the Catholics reevaluated their work and divided their field into ten districts. Instead of keeping their eyes on the court and legal cases, the priests were told by their superiors to pay more attention to training the Chinese leaders. Chang Dan University was built to provide such educational opportunities for this training. In addition, social concerns (medical care, educational opportunities, helping the poor) were promoted.¹⁰⁰

3.3 The role of various mission boards

The foreign mission board's preliminary task was to bring the Gospel to the Chinese through preaching and evangelizing. At the same time they trained and educated lay leaders and ministers. Though education played a great part in building the church and her leadership, it was not embraced by all. China Inland Mission, for example, did not concentrate its efforts on setting up educational institutions but on preaching and evangelization. The mission organization did produce some leadership but in a limited way through its own effort.¹⁰¹ On the contrary, most Chinese leaders before World War II (such as Ming-Dao Wang, Watchman Nee, Shao-Tang Yang, Calvin Chao, and the author himself) were trained by the denominational institutions, not by the faith missions. Because of their vision in building up educational institutions, the denominational mission

⁹⁹ C.I.M. Christian and Missionary Alliance, True Jesus Church all were in agreement as the Chinese Christian leaders were not educated in U.S.A. and Europe.

¹⁰⁰ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1977) 251.

¹⁰¹ C.I.M carries Hudson Taylor's policy of preaching the Gospel to lead people to Christ. Contrary to Hudson Taylor's policy was Timothy Richard. He emphasized preaching through education. Hudson Taylor ruled C.I.M with Iron hand, however, no one could changed his policy.

boards produced a great number of Chinese church leaders. Without their efforts, the indigenous church with her own leaders may not have existed.

3.3.1 The London Missionary Society

They first established Eng Hwa elementary school in Malacca. When he tried to establish the school, the first minister, Leung-Fat, was strongly opposed by his countrymen because of their hatred against foreigner. In 1818, Eng Hwa College was established, and at the same time, the first church founded by mission board was built. In 1825, a women's college was established. In Hankow (Hupeh province), Boi Xue middle school was first started, followed by Eng Lan middle school in Shanghai.¹⁰²

3.3.2 The Lutherans

Lutheran missions began with Karl Gutzlaff, who first came to Hong Kong and expanded his mission to inland China. Due to the great demands of the work, he requested Basel Mission to send more missionaries over, but only a few missionaries answered the call. They began to establish a girl's school. In order to nurture Chinese leaders, those who were gifted were sent to Germany for higher learning. This policy produced a group of men and women leaders (ministers as well as lay leaders).¹⁰³

In his study, Loh pointed out that there were many well established churches, not only in Hong Kong, but also in Kwangdong province as well,

¹⁰² Tang Christopher, *The First Hundred years of Protestant mission on China* (Hong Kong, Tao Sheng Publishing House, 1987), 94. Wang Chi Suen (Samuel), *History of TO TSAI Church-The First Independent Church of China Hong Kong* (Hong Kong Chinese Christian literature Counsel, LTD, 1986), 3-4.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 102-104. Also see Lo Bing-Yang, *100 Years Autonomy History of Rhemish Church* (Hong Kong: Rhemish Press 1968), 2.

especially among the Hakka dialect speaking people.¹⁰⁴ The separation of the self-governing churches from their mission boards began in the period of World War I (1914-1918). Elders and deacons were responsible for the administrative work in these churches. The sacraments were administered by Rev. Quan-hae Chen. One-third of the financial needs were supported by the foreign board, with the rest supported by the members of the church. After 1918, all financial needs were carried by the local churches.¹⁰⁵

3.3.3 The Congregational Church:

Missions and the co-educational schools were started at Fuchow at the same time. In 1899, Miss Jean Brown started a kindergarten and trained four kindergarten teachers. A rumor was spreading in the local community that the intention of getting boys and girls to school was to obtain their eyes and hearts for making new drugs. Because of this rumor, the parents dared not send their children to the mission schools. At that time, Kindergarten was free (tuition, room and board) to anyone who came.¹⁰⁶

Through Tung Chow University a group of ministers and lay leaders were trained. The local churches were well-established and mission minded. In the Congregational Century Report it was disclosed that there were two seminaries in operation, eight middle schools offering room and board, and 123 other schools. In North China, there was a seminary, a university and 12 schools. In North China there was a seminary, a university and 12 schools with room and board. In Shangxi province there were two schools with room and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 102-104.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 106.

¹⁰⁶ That was the situation in which my father and uncle were educated. In addition, they received pocket money.

board and two other type of schools. In total, there were three seminaries, three universities, 23 schools with room and boards, with 123 other schools, including five high schools and eight junior high. The local Congregational churches became independent with no support (except some financial aid) from the mission board since then. This was a memorable success in their mission history.¹⁰⁷

3.3.4 The Northern Baptists

The Northern Baptists first came to China and started their work at Nanking with six missionaries. Before that, they had been in Hong Kong, and expanded their work to the "four districts" (i.e., the South China district, the East China district, the West China district, and the Central China district). From 1842 to 1913, the South China district began its mission work and established churches at G Hsien county. A co-educational school was opened in 1876. A co-educational middle school was also established at Swatou. In Eastern China district, a seminary was started to train Chinese ministers. Later on, the Shanghai University was established, and many ministers were trained there. In 1906, the Northern Baptists started King Lin University with medical and agricultural departments. Records in 1934 disclosed that there were 1,107 Chinese ministers, with 158 churches and 143 Western missionaries, together with four universities, eight senior high schools and 16 junior high schools. Through the record, we may see the success of the mission work by way of educational policy and strategy. Chinese ministers were several times more in number than the missionaries. This was the success of the Northern Baptists. The high quality of the Chinese ministers was a reflection of their schools.

¹⁰⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu, 131-137.

3.3.5 The Southern Baptist:

Fifteen years before the American civil war, American Baptists were divided into Northern and Southern Baptists. Coincidentally, the Chinese churches were also divided into northern and southern churches. J. J. Roberts was sent to China by the Baptist Mission in 1836. After the Nanking treaties in 1842, J. J. Roberts and his co-workers who started their mission in Hong Kong, expanded their work to the Northern China, such as Shanghai and other cities over that region.¹⁰⁸

The South China district was deeply influenced by Dr. Rosewell H. Groves. He first came to Kwangchow in 1854 and passed into glory in 1912. He was considered the father of theological education among the Southern Baptists. Many famous and gifted Chinese ministers were his students and were trained by this seminary.

In the Central China district, Bible institutes were first established by the Southern Baptists. Later, they developed a seminary close to the Shanghai University. It was divided into two schools for men and women respectively. The seminary and women's Bible school could be found in Zheung Chow and Kai Fun respectively.

In the North China district, a woman's school was first established at Ding Chaw. Many women leaders were trained by this school. A theological seminary was opened in Huang Hsien as well. The name of the seminary was later changed to Baptist Theological Seminary of Northern China.¹⁰⁹

3.3.6 The American Episcopalian Mission

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 415.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 416-417.

The American Anglicans sent out their missionaries in 1835. With no standing in Kwangchow, they turned to Bolivia and worked among the overseas Chinese. After the Nanking Treaty in 1842, they gained a foothold in Shanghai and divided the area into three districts. Churches were built, followed by educational institutions. One of the most notable institution being built was St. John University, which was initially set up for the training of the ministers. This later developed into a full-scale university. Many Chinese leaders, teachers and ministers were trained there.¹¹⁰ At the denominational conference held in 1871, it was reported that there were 26 men's schools and 12 women's schools. Among them, three were senior high, and four were junior high. All of them ceased to function after 1949.

3.3.7 British Congregational Mission Society

The society started its mission work in 1880. In the 20 years they labored, three districts were formed: South China district, West China district, Kwangxi and Hunan district. In their Century Report in 1909, it was disclosed that an university and five schools were built in the central region. In Fujian province, churches, schools and a university were built. Out of the 201 schools, three were senior high, 10 were junior high. In the West China district, six schools were built. In Chekiang district, five junior high and one senior high were established.¹¹¹

3.3.8 Northern Presbyterians:

The Presbyterians came to China in 1837 and laid the foundation of their work after the Nanking Treaty in 1842. Gradually, they developed their work in

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 375

¹¹¹ Ibid., 184.

the central China, Kwangchow, Shanghai, Peking, Kiang Su, An Hwie, Herman, and Hunan districts. The Presbyterians were divided into Northern and Southern Presbyterians after the America civil war (1861-1865). They began their work at Ning Bao. The first missionary that was martyred was Warrie in 1847. Pirates captured his boat and threw him into the water to drown. Warrie's goal was to translate the Bible into Ning Bao dialect.¹¹²

Presbyterians established their schools in South China. Zhen Kwang was one of the notable school besides the colleges, Women's Bible Institute and nursing school being built. The most distinguished university was headed by Calvin W. Mateer. He first established Wing Hua Guan (the cultural center) which later became a university. Many of the well-known church leaders, preachers and Bible teachers such as Ting Li-Mei, Jia Yu-Ming and Liu Kwang-Chao were trained there. Later the cultural center was moved to Wie Hsian and renamed as Kwang Wing University. In 1900, many Christians were trained there to be junior and senior high school teachers. It was moved to Zi Nan later on and was renamed Qu Lu University.¹¹³

Dr. Watson Hayes was another influential missionary who founded the North China Theological Seminary in Teng Hsien, Shangdong. Many church leaders, ministers and Bible teachers were produced there. The seminary was not limited to Presbyterian churches; it was opened to all other denominations as well. The contribution to God's kingdom was great.¹¹⁴

All the above mission work carried out by different major denominations served as examples of their contributions in China before World War II. During

¹¹² Ibid., 237.

¹¹³ Ibid., 244.

¹¹⁴ Su, John, *My Testimony* (Hong Kong Post Publishing, 1950), 72.

the Japanese occupation, all Western missionaries were imprisoned in the concentration camps. Their work ceased but the result of their efforts continued. As a result of their imprisonment, Chinese leaders were raised up to carry the torch and churches continued to grow. At the end of the western missionaries ministry, the communists already dominated China. Regardless, the Gospel was shared, thousands of educated leaders were produced and the contributions of the Western missionaries were innumerable. Balthough it was not originally their policy, yet because of their labors, indigenous churches in China were born and took root. Through education, many scientists, engineers, politicians, professors and other professionals were brought into the Chinese society.

3.4 The search for unity and autonomy after the Boxer Rebellion

The tragedy in 1900 was a terrible blow to the churches from a human perspective. But the records revealed that the Chinese church gained rather than lost during this period. Several churches made great strides forward for many believers were added to the church. Chinese Church leaders began to see that their churches must not be satisfied to be a branch of foreign missions and depending on them financially. They had to become self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, the so-called three-selves. These changes gained strong momentum after 1900. China had learned from the tragedy.¹¹⁵

The churches were hard hit in north China. In 1911, though, eleven years after the Boxer Rebellion, the minds of many Christians were awakened by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's successful revolution against the communists. Chinese churches were beginning to establish independence.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 330.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 443.

After 1900, Chinese leaders wanted a name that would unify the Chinese churches. Unavoidably, Chinese churches were divided by historical denominational developments and doctrines of the Western church. In view of this, Rev. Zho-Ling Chang suggested that all Chinese churches should be named "Zhung Hwa Ji Do Jian Hwei" (Chinese Church of Christ). He believed that such a name would unite Chinese churches into one body. The term "Zhung Hwa" (Chinese) indicates the unity of Chinese churches. Kian-fu Chen also thought along this line.¹¹⁷

Before 1911, Chinese churches named their churches after the foreign mission boards and denominations, thus losing their indigenous character and their integration. During that time, all churches were under the control of foreign boards. There were many divisions. Not even one church could support itself. After 1911, there was a national awakening. Many church leaders began to promote autonomous churches (self-govern, self-support and self-propagate) inspired by the success of the revolution led by Dr. Sun Yat-Sen.¹¹⁸

The first Chinese Church that sought independence was in Hong Kong. Yuk-Cho Wong led his congregation (1886-1926) to build the church and named it "To Tsai Tung" ("To" means Word, "Tsai" means Send, "Tung" means Church). The church was first started by the London Missionary Society in 1883. Rev. T. W. Pierce in his report to the mission board said, "The elders of the local church here in Hong Kong not only support themselves financially, but also promote the Gospel to other districts and built preaching stations. They

¹¹⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu, 331.

¹¹⁸ Wang Chi Suen, Samuel, *History of TOTSAL Church—The First Independent Church of China* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council LTD., 1986), 30. According to TO TSAI Church in Hong Kong, under British rule became the First Chinese Independent Church. When Sun Yat Sen was 18, he was baptized in this church. He was a medical student. Many earlier followers of Dr. Sun Yat Sen were members of TO TSAI Church. In fact TO TSAI Church was the headquarter for the earlier days.

have joined together in our outreach." Because of this movement, missionaries called them Native Congregational Church. The evangelistic enthusiasm was not limited to Hong Kong suburbs, it was extended to In Shan in Kwangdong province. Fu-Tong Ho was the first minister they sent to In Shan. The first Chinese church was thus built by the Chinese "missionary." Before that, Chinese missionaries were unheard of and Chinese were never trained to be missionaries. We see in this case that a Chinese person could be a missionary used by God as well!¹¹⁹

By the time in 1890, the members of To Tsai Tung church had organized Medical Evangelic Band of Kwangdong province. The band itself included medical doctors, nurses and helpers. They helped the patients during the day, and preached in the evening. The result was great. Even though Boxer Rebellion had not reached Kwangdong, the anti-foreigner atmosphere was still strong. The band retreated to Hong Kong in 1902. Dr. Sun Yat-Sen lived next to the To Tsai Tung missionary compound when he studied at Hong Kong medical school. Rev. Yuk-Cho Wong's son and Dr. Sun were friends with others in To Tsai Tung's social hall. Dr. Sun was baptized with others in the congregational church. They were the first converts of the church. From then on, To Tsai Tung secretly became an observation point for revolution.¹²⁰

To Tsai Tung not only promoted three-self, but also sent their members to the central China (Hankow), spreading the concept of three-self. In the year 1912, London Mission Society called a meeting which was held at Peking (Beijing). Kwangdong province first suggested the name Zhung Hwa Ji-Du Jiu (literal translation means "middle China Church of Christ"). We are thankful

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹²⁰ Ibid., 35-36.

that this group of Christians and ministers were willing to take the challenge and the vision to spread the concept of three-self in its early stage.¹²³

In 1882, Chinese Gospel Society was established by Rev. Ming-Yang Zhu in Shanghai. He maintained that Christians should not be divided by denominations and foreign societies. He welcomed anyone who was a Christian to join his church. Financially self-supported, this was the first indigenous church in east China.¹²⁴

In 1814, Presbyterians (North) began their work by establishing schools in Macau. In 1901, they combined eight Presbyterian boards (North Presbyterians, South Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, Canadian Presbyterians, Ireland Presbyterians, Scotland Presbyterians, Free Presbyterians and British Presbyterians) into one fraternity. After the combination, they divided into seven districts. In 1916, they formed Zhung Hwa Presbyterians. Not long after, they had a promise from the London Missionary Society to form Zhung Hwa Ji Du Jia Hwe (Chinese Church of Christ). This was a new beginning for the history of the modern Chinese church.¹²⁵

3.5 Conclusion

After 1900, Chinese leaders recognized the problem of culture difference and the foreign board's policy that prevented the development and the growth of indigenous churches. Missionaries learned this lesson from the Boxer Rebellion. From 1906, they willingly handed the control over to the Chinese leaders and became supporting figures behind the scenes. That motivated the Chinese churches to take over the responsibilities that were carried out by mission boards

¹²³ Ibid., 43-46.

¹²⁴ Chen, Kian-Fu, 33.

¹²⁵ Wang, Chih-Hsin, 255.

in the past. In that year, Yu Tsang-Chow established Zhan Guan Zi Li Hwe (China Self Governing church) and issued a magazine to promote his vision. In 1910, China Inland Mission in Pung Yan, Zhai Kiang province, declared independence from China Inland Missions. These instances encouraged many Chinese churches to follow the same trend.¹²⁶ To reduce the enmity between the Chinese and the Westerners, church leaders and missionaries learned from the Apostle Paul to entrust the church to the lay leaders, as this is how Paul built up churches. The Chinese were aware that they should seek for financial independence, since money often dictated the controlling power. After Dr. Sun Yat-Sen's successful revolution, the Chinese people began to see that it was a new era. The missionaries saw it too and allowed the church to become independent. During World War I, all mission boards faced financial difficulty, later aggravated by the Great Depression in America. The Chinese leaders' awakening, the missionaries' revised thinking and the economic depression all brought about a new era of the three-self movement.¹²⁷

It took many lives and much bloodshed to learn a costly yet valuable lesson from the Boxer Rebellion.

¹²⁶ Chen, Kian-Fu, 331.

¹²⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu, 369, 441.

CHAPTER 4

Yang Shao-Tang and His Era (1898 – 1966)

4.1 Introduction

Leslie T. Lyall specified three spiritual giants within the Chinese Church during the first half of the 20th century: Yang Shao-Tang, Watchman Nee and Wang Ming-Dao. Although they did not train or work together, these three individuals all adhered to the Brethren way of church structure and truth.¹²⁸ Apart from their different personalities and organizational structures, the underlying principle behind their disciplines bore no significant variances. All three were born during the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Wang Ming-Dao in 1900, Yang Shao-Tang in 1898 and Watchman Nee in 1903. These three gentlemen occupy positions of great significance in the annals of modern Chinese Church history. There were good reasons why Lyall called them spiritual giants.¹²⁹ The churches started by Wang Ming-Dao and Watchman Nee were all enculturated churches, while Yang Shao-Tang, in cooperation with the CIM, also led churches on the road towards enculturation.¹³⁰ The background behind Yang Shao-Tang's inception into ministry and his establishment of churches is as follows.

¹²⁸ Lyall, Leslie T., *Three of China's Mightyman* (London: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1984), 89. Concerning the influence and way of the Brethren, Wang never mentioned any influence the Brethren had had on him in any of his literary works. Thus, we can only say that he adopted the Brethren way of doing things, and what he followed was the trend among the localized churches. See Stephen Kaplan's: *An Indigenous Response to Western Christianity* (New York: New York Union Press, 1993). The Assembly Hall (Juhuichu or Juhuisuo) or "Little Flock" (Xiaoqun) was organized in the mid-1920's. They were led by Ni Tuosheng (Watchman Nee) prior to 1937. This was a strongly proselytizing church influenced by Brethren ideas of church polity, rather exclusivistic and often in conflict with denominational and mission churches.

¹²⁹ Lyall, 1.

¹³⁰ The Treasures of Wang Ming Dao. (Taiwan: Conservative Baptist Press 1996 on the heavenly case) Vol.15. 9.

4.2 Yang Shao-Tang's personal background

Yang Shao-Tang spent his childhood years at Qu Wo. During the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, he was merely two years old. He was from Shandong Province, where Yu Xian was the proconsul. With Yu Xian's permission, church property, Western missionaries and Christians suffered the worst losses as a result of the Rebellion. The CIM (China Inland Mission) alone lost 42 Western missionaries along with their children in addition to the countless Chinese Christians who were killed. This was a time of unsurpassed adversity for the Church.¹³¹

Shanxi Province is situated approximately 400 miles inland, along the path of the Yellow River. It was a militarily strategic location where Chinese civilization prospered. Originally, life was simple and the people lived happy and contented lives. Toward the north were the scenic Five-fold Mountains, a Buddhist holy ground, where incense burning abounded. More than 10,000 monks resided there and the mountain drew pious worshippers to its pinnacle to revere the Buddha.

The first Chinese evangelist in inland China, Xi Shengmo, came from these mountains. When Timothy Richard and Li Xiu Chan arrived in 1887 to deal with the famine, he invited scholars to submit essays in six different categories. Being a scholar, Xi wrote six essays, of which four were selected. Initially, Xi was unwilling to receive his prize in person, but after Richard's insistence, he finally came and found Westerners to be friendly and approachable. Xi's previous prejudice towards Westerners disappeared and his respect for missionaries grew, culminating in his repentance and acceptance of Christ and Christianity, including

¹³¹ Tang, Christopher, *A First Hundred Years of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Tao-Sheng Publishing House, 1987), 485. Yang was named one of the three Mighty men in Chinese modern history by Leslie T. Lyall.

his abandonment of opium smoking. Later, Xi committed to full-time ministry and was personally ordained by Hudson Taylor.¹³²

Of the historically acclaimed Cambridge Seven, three arrived in Shanxi Province: former member of the Royal Artillery D.S. Hoste, English cricketer C.T. Studd, and Cambridge University oarsman Stanley Smith. Hence, Shanxi became a strategically important base for foreign missions into China.¹³³

The Rebellion of 1900 had caused much damage to Church property and also the deaths of missionaries and local Christians. However, the CIM refused to ask for recompensate and rejected governmental offers of financial compensation, unlike some denominational churches who openly sought revenge upon prominent public figures and the Boxer rebels who had been murderers or accomplices in the deaths of Western missionaries and Chinese Christians.¹³⁴

Yang received his primary education from a school run by the CIM. Subsequently, he entered Hong Dong Prefecture's Christian secondary school. Hong Dong's neighboring city, Zhao City, was a region peppered with hot springs, and especially famous for the Guang Sheng Stream Hot Spring. Each year, many people came in search of cleansing with offerings, to the god of the hot springs. The school principal Rowland Hogbem brought his students there to

¹³² Austin, Alvin, *Missions Dream Team, Christian History* (London: Tyndale House, Inc., 1996), 19-23. Mrs. Hudson Taylor: *Pastor Hsi - Confucian scholar and Christian* (Hong Kong: Christian Witness Press, 1954). Also see Life Story of Xi Cheng Mou which was written by D.E. Hoste who was one of the Cambridge seven. The six essays were: 1) On The Origin of True Tao. 2) On Right Mind. 3) On Prayer. 4) On Evil and Good. 5) On Idolatry. 6) On Opium Timothy Richard and Li made decisions for the 1st Prizes. Xi's writing focus of them hit the first Prize.

¹³³ Lyall, Leslie T., *Three of China's Mighty Men* (London: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1973), 3. Lyall was with the China Inland Mission during the Sino-Japanese War. After the war, he went to Peking to do student work.

¹³⁴ Gu, Chang-Sheng, *A Concise History of Christianity in China* (California: Evergreen Publishing, 1999), 106.

distribute evangelistic tracts. In the midst of such evangelistic fervor, the roots of Yang's Christian faith became deeply entrenched.¹³⁵

After Yang graduated from secondary school, the option of pursuing theological studies at Shanxi Province's seminary was open to him, but the standard of Hong Dong Bible School was too low. Because of his firm conviction to enter the pastorate in the future, he decided in 1923 to enter the North China Theological Seminary run by the Shandong Teng Prefecture Presbyterian Church. This seminary was then the most acclaimed evangelical seminary recognized by the various churches. Jia Yu-Ming taught theology there, while Huss was president.¹³⁶

Yang was 20 during the time of China's Revivalist Period. Revivalists included Leland Wang and John Sung from Fujian Province, Andrew Gih and Timothy Chao from Shanghai, Ding Limei and Jia Yu-Ming from Shandong, Wang Ming-Dao from Beijing, Watchman Nee and Alfred Chao from Fujian Province. Each of these revivalists was directly influenced by Western missionary agencies. Here, we see the latent contributions of the Western missionaries, which resulted in the visible fruits of the Chinese evangelists. Not only was this a service to their era, it produced a generation of successors for the future, without whom the Chinese Church would not have developed deep foundational roots and grown. This is to the credit of the Western missionaries and a blessing of the Chinese Church. Yang Shao-Tang had a part in all of this work.¹³⁷

¹³⁵ Lyall, Leslie, *Three of China's Mighty Men*, 5.

¹³⁶ Tang, Christopher, *A Hundred Years of Christianity in China* (Hong Kong: Tao-Sheng Publishing House, 1987), 497. Also see Report Vol I, 1914, 22. Huss Jia was a well known Theologist. He was recognized by many, see *China Church History Yearly*.

¹³⁷ Leung, Ka-Lun, *Alliance Bible Quarterly* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1999), 111. Yang Shao-Tang (David Yang) Jia Hui Lu (*The Path of the Church*) Church of Christ in Hong Kong 1951 indicates his practice was very close to the Brethren position.

4.3 Revivalistic influences on Yang Shao-Tang's ministry

In 1925, Yang graduated from North China Theological Seminary. He gave up the material benefits of the big cities (i.e. the coastal regions) and returned to Shanxi to serve the Lord. For a young evangelist who had just completed his theological training, the higher salaries of the big cities could have been a tremendous temptation indeed. The commitment to serve where God wanted him to was uppermost in his decision-making process. There were many areas in Shanxi eagerly awaiting his return.¹³⁸ The region in which he served was populated by people with little education. The older folk had very little formal education and the younger generation had mostly attained only a primary school level of education. Anyone with more education was sought after.

When General Chiang Kai-Shek started his northern campaign in 1927, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Guomindang (GMD) became allies. The CCP took the opportunity to flex its own muscles. In the midst of a tense political climate, the entire Western missionary force retreated to the coastal regions. During this time, many churches were destroyed. In 1927, the GMD government signed a series of treaties with various countries called the Ning Treaties.¹³⁹ The Church was enjoying the first waves of revival in the middle of turbulent times in the coastal regions. In the Great Shandong Revival alone, there were two main branches: one was in Eastern Shandong under Norwegian missionary Worie Monson. The other branch of revival began in the Western Shandong City of Fei. The Reverend Yang I-Zheng was influenced by the Apostles' Faith Meeting's Ma Zhao-Ruan and experienced the filling of the Holy

¹³⁸ Lyall, 7-8.

¹³⁹ Tang, Christopher, *The First Hundred Years of Protestant Missions in China*, (Hong Kong: Tao-Sheng publishing House, 1987), 63-64.

Spirit. During this major conference, the congregation spoke in tongues, saw visions, and danced spiritual dances amidst miraculous happenings.

Under the influence of four pastors from the East Shandong Province Presbyterian Synod, the Charismatic Movement's revival spread to the western regions of Shandong, becoming established in the five northern provinces of China.¹⁴⁰ Jia Yu-Ming proceeded to Shandong to observe this revival. He did not criticize the Movement, but started the Spiritual Institute, emphasizing prayer and filling of the Holy Spirit. Yang Shao-Tang and Elizabeth Fischbacker went forth to Shandong to observe the revival there and returned refreshed with new messages for their ministry.¹⁴¹

In 1920, a year after World War I ended, the Bethel Church was started in Shanghai by Mary Stone and Jean Hughes. Both were influenced by the Wesleyan Holiness Movement and pursued spiritual cleansing. They assembled preaching bands headed by Andrew Gih and John Sung to travel to various places. But due to differences of opinion between Sung and Hughes, the former left Bethel Preaching Band and formed his own, leading revivalist and evangelistic meetings in various places.¹⁴²

In the meantime, Leland Wong and Watchman Nee each went their own way.¹⁴³ Wong preached in churches and led many to Christ. He later turned his attention to Southeast Asia, reviving and evangelizing the region. Watchman Nee

¹⁴⁰ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *The Break of Dawn* (Taipei: Hymnody & Bible House, 1998), 34-35.

¹⁴¹ Lyall, 9.

¹⁴² Leland Wong and Watchman Nee were influenced by M. E. Barber from England. Andrew Gih was influenced by Jean Hughes. David Yang was influenced by CIM. John Sung was influenced by the Methodists.

¹⁴³ Tan, Paul Lee, *Chinese Historical and Theological Trends* (Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas: Chapter 9A Syllabus for Course #840, 1988.), 9-14.

began assembling congregations according to the Brethren tradition. In 1925, a major revival meeting was conducted in Shanghai by Reverend Wells, a missionary to Japan and the author of *Dynamics of Work*. A host of revived believers, who included Zhou Zhiyu, Andrew Gih, Lan Ruxi (Alice Lan), Lu Hui, Hu Meilin (Betty Hu), and Zhu Guishen came out of that revival.¹⁴⁴ Yang Shao-Tang was then 27 and the Chinese Church was experiencing the refreshing winds of change brought about by a group of young workers seeking revival. The Church was indeed showing signs of revival. Wang Ming-Dao preached the message of revival throughout the north and other regions. In 1925, Leland Wong spoke at a major conference in Shanghai, saying:

As we look back at our past work, what was it that has brought us the most joy? It has been seeing the growth of many fruits. This has also been the greatest comfort to our hearts, such as the preacher well renowned both within and outside the country, Andrew Gih, whom I personally baptized at Shanghai in 1925. Rev. Timothy Chao dedicated himself at Shanghai in 1925 during the revival meetings. Zhou Zhiyu also believed in Christ in that year's meeting. Theologian and seminary president Lan Ruxi was baptized by me in 1925. Miss Hu Meilin came to know the Lord during the revival meetings of 1925. Mrs. Zhao Junying (Calvin Zhao's wife Faith Zhao) gave her heart to Christ while I was ministering in Yangzhou. The contributions made by these people to the Chinese Church and the entire world is great beyond measure.¹⁴⁵

The year 1925 was of great significance. Yang Shao-Tang was 27 years old; Watchman Nee, 22; John Sung 25; Wang Ming-Dao 25; and Leland Wong 30. They were young evangelists empowered by the Holy Spirit. Such a revived Church became a precursor to a self-governing, self-propagating and self-supporting Church. The numbers at churches grew, as well as the number of those committing their lives to the Lord. Once the truth regarding monetary offerings was understood, not only could the Church be self-governing, self-propagating

¹⁴⁴ Zhu's Preaching Series (Sao Paulo:Published by his daughter, 1980), 101.

¹⁴⁵ Chen, Run-Tang, *A New Breakthrough in the Chinese Church* (Hong Kong: Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism, 1999), p101.

and self-supporting, but it could also mobilize resources for evangelistic movements in and outside the country. The evangelistic efforts within the country focused on evangelizing the various inland provinces. Overseas missions began and missionaries were sent to the Southeast Asian region (Indonesia, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Myanmar, Malaya, Singapore, and Sumatra).

Yang Shao-Tang founded the Spiritual Works Team against the backdrop of this period, gathering a group of young people to live a communal life of dependence on God for physical needs, and to learn from one another. Thus, young people could be trained to go forth and establish localized churches. However, some deviated into denominationalism. At this time, Watchman Nee's ministry resurfaced, stirring up opinions and much opposition, because Nee did not acknowledge the denominational churches as churches. Yang Shao-Tang and the China Inland Mission (CIM) missionaries often met together, enacting a set of ecclesiastical truths, which were accepted by denominational churches in general. He first wrote *The Path of the Church*, based on the teaching of the truth regarding the New Testament church, where all believers gathered for the breaking of bread, singing, praying, remembering the Lord, and using one cup. Clergymen were not exclusive in administering the elements of the Communion, but rather, mature Christians were the ones who broke bread.¹⁴⁶

The church was led and administered through elders and deacons.¹⁴⁷ This was similar to what Wang Ming-Dao and Calvin Chao advocated. However, with co-workers staying and ministering together, practical problems naturally arose. He wrote a second book, *The Church and Its Workers and God and His Workers*,

¹⁴⁶ Chen, Run-Tang, 41.

¹⁴⁷ Yang, Shao-Tang, *The Church and its Workers* (Hong Kong: Youth for Christ, 1940).

which both reflected his convictions regarding church praxis and development.¹⁴⁸ At that time there were two branches of Brethren-style gatherings: one was the more solemn *Meeting Place* of Watchman Nee;¹⁴⁹ the other was the Open Brethren group led by Wang Ming-Dao and Yang Shao-Tang. This was a very clear reflection of the form of the Chinese Church: Such movements were financially independent of external assistance, self-motivated in terms of evangelistic action and self-governing as far as church administration was concerned.¹⁵⁰

4.4 A Bigger Scope of Ministry

During the eight years of resistance wars from 1937 to 1944, Shanxi was the first to be occupied by the Communist troops scattered throughout the province. After the Japanese conquered a few big cities, guerrilla squads surfaced in various locations. This was also an important stage in Yang Shaotang's growth. Once he was finished observing the revival going on there, he did not harbor apprehension in his heart like some of the other observers, but rather joined the CIM Western missionaries and co-workers to attend the evangelists' retreat organized and led by John Sung in 1934. During this retreat, there was

¹⁴⁸ Yang published seven books as follows: 1. *God's Workman* (Hong Kong: Christian Witness Press, 1961); 2. *Victory and Reward – Studies in the Messages to the Seven Churches* (China Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1950), 3. *Church and Workman* (Hong Kong: Youth for Christ Press, 1940) – In the preface, Yang admitted he read *Rethinking Missions* by Watchman Nee. There are so many points made and issues addressed that are the same that there is little necessity to publish this book, according to Yang (pp. 2-3). 4. *The Path of the Church (Jin Hui Lu) Church of Christ in Hong Kong* (Hong Kong: Found Treasure Publishers, 1961). 5. *Devotional Messages, a Collection of Yang's Sermons*. 6. *Bible Studies on the Book of Ephesians*. 7. *Bible Studies on the Book of I John* (Hong Kong: Saint Foundation Publishers, 1992).

¹⁴⁹ Yang Shao-Tang, *The Path of the Church*, (Hong Kong: Found Treasure Publishers, 1951), 32. Yang's view on the position of pastors in Church hierarchy parallels that of Watchman Nee.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 43-46.

mutual confession of sins, self-evaluation and a seeking after the filling of the Holy Spirit. Some among the participants began to speak in tongues. On the third day of the retreat, the participants decided to fast and pray together. At 4 p.m., Yang himself was filled by the Spirit. He testified of it, saying, "In the past, I have also experienced a similar filling by the Holy Spirit however, I lacked freedom in the Spirit. Hence, I entrusted myself completely to Him. The words from Malachi 4:2: "But for you who fear My name the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall" flooded into my heart. Thus, I fully rested in the light of these righteous words, allowing God to heal me."¹⁵¹ After this experience, he felt that what he had before was mere book knowledge. Now, as he personally experienced God, there was praise and bowing before Him, shouting "Hallelujah! I am now also weeping, and caring!"¹⁵²

Not long after, the evangelists started a Bible school at Qu Wo. Together with members of the Spiritual Works Team, they once again sought after God, and everyone was filled by the Holy Spirit, their weaknesses having become a thing of the past. Everyone was filled with new strength and fervor. After the Spiritual Works Team members experienced meetings of this nature and had been trained and equipped, they became part of the CIM team, establishing churches with a local flavor. The Holy Spirit's presence in their ministry was obvious in the development of their ministry. Yang distributed his books for the building up of these co-workers. His three books, *The Path of the Church*, *The Church and Its Workers* and *God and His Workers*, were distributed to various parts of China. At this time, Watchman Nee's church direction became manifest before the churches, particularly through his book, *Rethinking Missions*. His writing came

¹⁵¹ Lyall, 12.

¹⁵² Lyall, 12.

into conflict with those of Yang and resulted in an attack on Yang's philosophy of church direction. Nee did attack denominationalism, and, felt that churches should be established upon the Biblical foundations. Yang defended himself against this attack:

Regarding some denominational churches, I think we cannot simply conclude that they are all incorrect (I am against denominationalism). Their existence cannot be found in the Bible. Their ecclesiological methodology contains many traditional habits, which certainly include some errors. However, if the servants and children of God therein are pious saints, they have simply been thus led over the years and have never questioned the conformity of their practices to the truth. In view of this situation, we should not be too sweeping in our judgment of them. Because this is a question of knowledge and not spirituality, even though they have names like the Presbyterians, Baptists and the like, they gather in true, wholehearted devotion in the name of the Lord, with prayers directed to God and a willingness to perform God's will. Such churches are already true churches in the eyes of the Lord. Thus, you can see that the Lord is with them, the Lord's Spirit moves in their midst and the saved are added to their number. Even though they continue to make use of old terminology and methodology, there is no problem with the devotion of their hearts to God. All they lack is knowledge of the truth. Concerning such churches, our duty is not to make their members leave, but it is sufficient for us rather to educate them through persuasion so that they may rescind all of their erroneous practices.¹⁵⁴

This was similar to the pioneering Brethren churches.¹⁵⁵ Yang Shao-Tang was of the opinion that missions agencies ought to be the working body and not the church. According to Yang:

I was originally from Southern Shanxi, where the churches can be said to have been localized from their beginnings. Although the CIM missionaries established these churches, they told us early on (at least 30 years ago) that our church was not the CIM. Wherever we were, that location was to be the church. The CIM only consists of Western missionaries and not the church. In other words, the CIM is merely an evangelistic team of Western brethren working within the geographical boundaries of China. Their members come from various countries and denominational affiliations. When I first went to North China Theological Seminary, President asked me which denomination I belonged to and I answered CIM. He shook his head, saying that the CIM was not a denomination. At that moment, I felt bad, pondering on the fact that other

¹⁵⁴ Yang, Shao-Tang, *The Path of the Church*, (Hong Kong: Found Treasure Publishers, 1991), 25.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 24.

people's churches were considered denominations, whereas my church was not. How awful (of course, I now understand)! I would think that more than half of the churches established by the CIM missionaries in various parts of China were of this nature.¹⁵⁶

4.4 After the Resistance Wars

Yang Shao-Tang, John Sung and Wang Ming-Dao kept close communications with one another. Yang's initial idea was to return to Shanxi after World War II to establish local churches. On a trip to visit his relatives at home, he discovered that the Guomindang and the CCP were in open and armed conflict, having progressed from guerrilla warfare to direct confrontation. The people of Shanxi were once again swept into crisis. During the revival period following World War II, Calvin Chao, Moses Lee-Kung Yu and David Adeney achieved vibrant successes with the student work they led for a time.¹⁵⁷ Yang was invited to various campuses and churches to speak. Calvin Chao offered him a professorship at the North China Theological Seminary, the pastorate of Zhu Ni Zhou Church established by Moses Lee-Kung Yu, and subsequent involvement with student work in the Shanghai area. Moses Lee-Kung Yu proceeded into Central China to develop student ministry in those regions and was also invited by the Central China Theological Seminary to teach theology. Yu invited Yang Shao-Tang to join him in his student work in South Chinese Guangzhou. Each time Yang preached, he captivated the audience, instigating roars of laughter, sighs of resignation, and inspiring an endless stream of affirmations from the crowds.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 24.

¹⁵⁷ Chao, Calvin, *The Fifty Years* (L.A.: Chinese for Christ), 16.

¹⁵⁸ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *The Break of Dawn* (Taipei: Hymnody & Bible House, 1998), 311-332.

It was also at this time that he wrote his first book *Victory and Reward*, published in 1948. This was when Watchman Nee had already written *The Proper Church*. Yang's book was based on the second and third chapters of Revelation. He used the example of the seven churches to highlight the struggle of mankind, and how it overcomes troubles with the truth, and ultimately receives the reward of the Holy Spirit. In contrast, Watchman Nee interpreted the teaching of Revelation concerning the seven churches to be a portrayal of what an ideal church could and should be in God's eyes. Only the Church (Nee's church) will not be in the Great Tribulation.¹⁵⁹ CIM embraced Yang's interpretation because after the publication of Yang's book on ecclesiology, there was conflict with Watchman Nee's writings. The CIM adopted Yang's methodology, who was much influenced himself by Western missionaries.

After 1949, the political climate in China became turbulent. The CCP gained control and enacted new regulations for religion and the Church. The Church entered an era of fiery trials. Wang, Yang and Nee were also thrown into the midst of this burning furnace.¹⁶⁰ The Spiritual Works Team led by Yang Shao-Tang was much like the team of missionaries gathered by William Carey, living and serving together with good testimony. Carey's trials in India were a reflection of those faced by Yang Shao-Tang. This inspired Yang to write his book, *The Church and Its Workers*.¹⁶¹

According to William Carey's biography:

You will observe that this methodology is similar to that of the Moravian Brethren. If this method is adopted, the expense for 7 to 8 families will only slightly exceed that

¹⁵⁹ Yu, Chung En, *One City One Church* (HuHaan Vol. 84.86), 77.

¹⁶⁰ Chao, Jonathan, *Chinese Communist Policy Toward Christianity* (Hong Kong: China Evangelical Seminary Press, 1986), 107.

¹⁶¹ Kennedy, John W., *Torch of Witness* (Christian Book Publishing House, 1980), 240.

required to maintain one independent family. Thus, I boldly and earnestly entreat mission agencies to turn their attention in this direction and send missionaries here. We ought to have 7 to 8 families. These families should be considered the church's upbringing center. There should be able teachers in our midst to take charge of our children's education.

I propose that all missionaries live together in the same location, dwelling in a single row or a courtyard-style formation of huts. All possessions will be shared, without withholding any for private use. One or two among us should be appointed as stewards to administer all things concerning meals, worship, education, preaching, leisure and other welfare issues, also enacting a set of constitution.¹⁶²

Co-workers are a team of brothers and sisters who love the Lord. They need spiritual nurturing. Yang's *Victory and Reward* was written for this purpose. Knowledge of ecclesiology must also be taught so that there is a proper balance in ministry. Yang's *The Path of the Church* was written for this purpose. Co-workers with different gifts were to dwell and serve together in harmony, building up individual lives that have overcome the self in order to unite and strengthen the body of Christ.

In Yang's, book, we can perceive an ecclesiology with common ideals rooted in the Brethren Movement. There was corroboration with Watchman Nee's ideas despite independent development. Books such as *Rethinking Missions* by Nee and *The Path of the Church* by Yang, were similar in nature. However, Yang Shao-Tang was inclusive whereas Watchman Nee was exclusive.

4.6 Conclusion

Yang Shao-Tang's ministry has great impact in north China's so called China Inland Mission's missions territory. He had trained many workers during his work in Shangxi province. His basic practice and beliefs were also influenced by the Brethren. Unlike Watchman Nee who took a closed Brethren's concept of "Local Church," he was closer to the open Brethren (Anthony Grove & George Miller).

¹⁶² Basil, Miller, *The Life of William Carey* (Hong Kong: Baptist Press, 1953), 79.

On spiritual life, Yang wrote the book *Victory and Reward*. He does not base it on Jessie Pen Lewis' view on tracheotomy but took the basic view on victorious living through faith and practice by the power of the Holy Spirit and by doing the word of God. In this sense, therefore, we can conclude that Yang's thinking was more in line with general Evangelical principles than Nee's. There is no doubt that Yang left behind a very valuable heritage for church and mission, not only in China, but throughout the world. His examples and principles are still very relevant for the world mission of the church today.

CHAPTER 5

Wang Ming-Dao – A Warrior of the Truth

5.1 Born in the Midst of Tribulation

Wang Ming-Dao was still in his mother's womb during the Boxer Rebellion. Some high-ranking officials within the Qing government were of the opinion that the rebellion was the way to revival. The power to repel the Westerners lay in the collective effort of the people to purge all traces of Westerners and their religions. The Boxer rebels represented the heart feelings of the people and consisted of the people. Under permission from the authorities, the number of rebels grew increasingly great.¹⁶³

Because Wang Ming-Dao's father was then working in a church-run hospital, the Boxer rebels' campaign to kill all Christians (Roman Catholic and Protestant) resulted in an attack on all foreign affairs personnel and forced everyone to seek refuge in the eastern suburban area of Min Gang. There were only just over 400 foreign troops and they were greatly outnumbered. The rebels pounded the embassy with more than 2,500 cannon shots. Thankfully, no one was hurt but the explosion of land mines took the lives of an estimated 76 children. Wave upon wave of Boxer rebels attacked the embassy. They believed that after they had recited their mantra, they would be impervious to any form of weaponry. Alas, the bullets from the Westerners' rifles penetrated their bodies nonetheless and killed many of them. Under the command of Dong Fuxiang, they kept up their onslaught. Wang Ming-Dao's father ascended a ladder and witnessed the ferocious battle cry of the Boxer rebels. Overcome by extreme fear, he hanged himself, because he thought suicide better than death at the hands of those

¹⁶³ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years* (Hong Kong: The Bellman House, 1949); *The Call from Above* (China: Conservative Baptist Press, 1996) Vol.5, 9. Also Chester C. Tan: *The Boxer Catastrophe* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc., 1955) and Immanuel C.Y. Hsu: *The Rise of Modern China, 2nd Ed.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), 476-498.

rebels.¹⁶⁴ Wang Ming-Dao's mother was then eight months pregnant with him. After 55 days of bitter defense, the Eight-Nation Alliance took Tianjin, destroyed the cannons at Dagu and headed straight for Beijing. In the midst of thundering cannon shots, the rebels made a last-ditch attempt to counter-attack. The Alliance army approached Beijing and the Rebel army was dispersed upon attack. Thus, the 2,500 foreign affairs personnel, missionaries and believers were spared.

Wang Ming-Dao's autobiography *The Last Fifty Years* states that there were once some photographs of his father. However, these were forever lost during the chaos of battle. Hence, Wang Ming-Dao never ever saw what his father looked like.¹⁶⁵

5.2 His Childhood Years

Wang Ming-Dao grew up near Beijing in the post-war period amidst death and suffering. After the demise of his father, family finances became a problem. His mother exchanged some assets for a house for them to stay as well as for rental to maintain the family. She did not like to cook, so Wang Ming-Dao and his elder sister often went hungry. As a result, Wang Ming-Dao was physically weak and often sick. This had a significant impact on his future health. Since his mother rented out rooms to tenants, he was exposed to a host of immoral characters.¹⁶⁶

Due to the adverse conditions, Wang Ming-Dao grew to have a psychological abhorrence for sinful behavior. He was a keen learner in his early years. His mother personally taught him from the *Three-Word Manual* (Sanzijing), *Hundred Family Surnames* (Baijiaxing), *Thousand-Word Essays*

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 10.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 11.

(Qianziwen), *Pilgrim's Progress*, the complete Old and New Testament Bible. At nine, he entered the Zu Wen Primary School run by the London Missionary Society (LMS), the curriculum of which encompassed both Chinese and foreign elements. For example, the traditional Chinese works were included. Foreign syllabi consisted of mathematics, history and geography. Hence, from his childhood, Wang Ming-Dao was well exposed to both Chinese and foreign philosophy. On the one hand, he was firmly grounded in Chinese moralistic convictions. On the other hand, he accepted Christian philosophy from a very young age. In school, he often participated in the worship and prayer meetings as well as Bible classes. Because his mother was a member of the LMS, she enjoyed special privileges. Hence, his mother and sister were often involved in various LMS activities. The faith held by the LMS was also very sound, advocating direct evangelism such as the passing out of tracts and street evangelism. The LMS boasts of some prominent and successful missionaries such as Robert Morrison, John Griffith¹⁶⁷ and Robert Wilson.

Wang admitted that because he grew up in less than ideal conditions, the church-run schools did not teach him much. Moreover, he thought of church meetings as a cause for headaches.¹⁶⁸ Despite his youth, Wang had a strong instinct for survival. He thought of himself as utterly wretched, having told lies and borne evil thoughts in the mind. At this time, an older friend advised him to pay close attention to his devotional time before the Lord and also warned him regarding his trespasses. This left Wang in a dilemma, at once loving and hating what he was taught. This friend then introduced him to books such as Xie

¹⁶⁷ Chen, Kian-Fu: *Developments in Recent Chinese Church History*, 135.

¹⁶⁸ Wang Ming-Dao: *The Last Fifty Years*, 10.

Hongjia's *An Aid to Devotions*.¹⁶⁹ He began to have a fresh understanding of life. He underwent a transformation and developed a strong abhorrence for sinful behavior, so much so that whenever he committed a sin, his conscience would be pricked to the core and tears would pour forth from his eyes. The struggle between the two laws within oneself as depicted in Romans 7 became personally very real to Wang.¹⁷⁰ He continued to purchase Xie's writings and these made a tremendous impact on him. Xie, who was also chief editor of the *Youth Progressive Magazine*, was open-minded about fundamental doctrines of the faith although his stance was conservative. Because of his attractive writing style, Xie's writings were well-received by his youthful readers. Ever since, Wang's strict lifestyle can be attributed to the deep impact Xie had had on his life, because Wang sought to live a very practical Christian existence.¹⁷¹

From his youth, Wang Ming-Dao developed a character that was undeterred by difficulties and was not easily overcome by pride. He could not stand sinful actions and sinful societal influence. During his secondary school days, a few boys from wealthy families used their status in society to fulfill their unlawful desires. Wang Ming-Dao could not bear the sight of their sin and reported the matter to his disciplinary master. The disciplinary master dared not

¹⁶⁹ Xie Hongjia was an illustrious author among Christian literary circles during the early years of the Chinese republic. Xie, alias Luyin, was born in 1873 of Shanyin descent and died in 1916 after over 20 years' involvement in the world of Chinese literature. His literary works exceeded his contemporary Christian authors. The chief editor of the 20-Year Youth Progressive Movement Magazine, Fan Limei once commented that "Luyin's eventual fame was the result of three to four decades of struggle, laboring with great patience. Only then did he achieve the repute due his name." Xie once worked in a commercial printing house and translated many textbooks. Later, he took on the position of secretary of the publishing wing of the National Christian Youth Association. His representative works include "Christianity and Science," "An Aid to Devotions," "The Essentials of Reading," "The Church and Youth" etc. Xie Hongjia was an open-minded conservative Christian scholar, fully adhering to the key doctrines of the Bible. (Lin Ronghong: *Wang Mingdao and the Chinese Church* (Hong Kong: China Graduate School of Theology, 1982), 23.

¹⁷⁰ Lin, Rong-Hong, *op.cit.*, 16, 23.

¹⁷¹ Wang, Ming-Dao: *The Heavenly Call* (The Last Fifty Years), 108.

interfere, since the school depended upon continued patronage of those boys' parents. Wang Ming-Dao thought the school was better off closed than being an institution teaching wrong values. When his fellow students learned of his view, they nicknamed him the "Doctor of Morals." Yet, Wang did not bow to the pressure of being made a laughing stock. He personally hated sin as a dreadful enemy and this gradually became a constant warning to himself. By the time he graduated, he was already a youth of firm conviction and ambition.¹⁷²

From his youth, Wang loved his mother and both listened and practiced what she taught him. In his autobiography, he wrote about motherly love and the magnificence of a mother, hence advocating filial piety.¹⁷³

5.3 His Call to Ministry

Not long after Wang Ming-Dao's birth, Dr. Sun Yat-Sen led the national uprising. When he was 11, there was opposition in Wuchang, which overthrew the Qing government and brought about turmoil. Various factions sought to divide up China. Civil wars sprang up one after another, and there was much societal unrest. Ways of thinking were constantly changing. At 17, Wang was in Beijing, where the May Fourth New Culture Movement was initiated.¹⁷⁴ Confucian philosophy, which had been extolled for centuries, now came under unprecedented question and widespread judgment by intellectuals. They argued that old concepts like Confucian Ethics were unable to meet current societal needs. Confucianism was judged. Youthful students gladly responded and openly welcomed Western ways of thinking without reservation. At this time, the

¹⁷² Ibid., 15.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 210.

¹⁷⁴ Hu Shi was a key instigator of the May Fourth Movement. He was a student of John Dewey.

thinking of John Dewey had permeated North America, that empiricism was the way to go.¹⁷⁵ We can say that this was a form of revolutionary cultural movement, replacing classical Chinese with conversational Chinese. Bagu¹⁷⁶ and poetic songs were no longer promoted, but were replaced by short essays. Hu Shi and Chen Duxiu were then leaders of this change at that time. Chinese moral values of the past were devalued while humanism and individualism gained acceptance. Wang Ming-Dao, then a youth and living in Beijing, was subject to the winds of philosophical change and different values.¹⁷⁷

From age 14, Wang Ming-Dao lived a well-disciplined and structured life. He woke up each morning for devotional time, which consisted of reading Scriptures and prayer. In such a situation, he was certainly a patriotic youth, with dreams of doing great things for the sake of his countrymen. He revered American President Abraham Lincoln as his role model.¹⁷⁸ In *The Last Fifty Years*, he stated that his initial ambition was to become a politician. However, at age 15, he felt God calling him to the ministry. The conviction in his heart grew stronger. He also prayed for external verification of his internal convictions. He fell seriously ill on many occasions but was healed each time so that he could continue to live. If God did not want him to become a missionary, then why did He heal him? Such sentiments towards his decision grew out of a long and arduous process.

Wang Ming-Dao also observed the church structures. Due to the lack of financial ability on the part of believers, there was a need to rely on the Western

¹⁷⁵ Chow, Tse-Tsung, *The May Fourth Movement* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 1-15, 289-313.

¹⁷⁶ Bagu was a type of literary format used during the Qing era.

¹⁷⁷ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 28-29.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

missionary sending agencies for sustenance. Subconsciously, Chinese evangelists became subject to the patronage of Western missionaries. Even if the church could attain self-governance, the educational qualifications of the Chinese preachers were very low. Moreover, the church could not afford high salaries. Hence, evangelists were dubbed "Preachers with nothing." Most preachers were unlearned. To put himself in the same class as these people would seem a waste of his talents. Hence, he rejected God's call for three long years.¹⁷⁹ Wang said:

Apart from this, there was yet another reason that caused me not to consider becoming a preacher no matter what. I observed that the majority of preachers were incompetents. Some of them were initially teachers to Western officials and after teaching for a few years, they gradually became preachers. Others include those who cooked, performed sundry duties, washed clothes and took care of church buildings, who because of their constant exposure to sermons were able to read a few lines of Scripture, sing a few praise hymns and speak a few words of truth which they probably half understood or perhaps not at all. These also gradually became preachers. There were also some who studied in church-run schools, having been retained twice within three years, could neither become doctors nor enter the Teachers' College and ended up spending two years in a seminary reading the Bible and subsequently served as preachers in churches. I am of the opinion that I do not belong to this class of incompetent students. Since starting school, I have never failed to be listed near the top when exam results were announced. During my years of study in higher primary and secondary school, I often relied upon scholarships for my studying expenses. My mother had only to give me some money to buy books and for miscellaneous expenses. I was thinking: Would it not be a huge waste of talent if I should embark on a career in ministry since one endowed with such intelligence as I could certainly achieve great things? To be listed alongside those whom I despise is truly something I have no heart for. Because I already harbored such thoughts, I thereby firmly insisted on rejecting the call of God.¹⁸⁰

Under the constant harassment of illness, Wang Ming-Dao began to realize his mistake. Having to take the common exam at age 18, his body was extremely weak and he could not sustain himself for the five-day duration of the exams. His illness grew worse. He promised God that if he could continue living and could eventually graduate, then he would obey his call. At this time, there was little will in him to live on and he pleaded with God to deal graciously with

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 26.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 27.

him. Due to his regular excellent academic performance, he was permitted to graduate.¹⁸¹

To continue with university studies became the pressing issue for Wang. Two denominational churches could not reconcile their differences due to differences arising from their sending agencies' denominational beliefs, thus affecting his financial support. Wang Ming-Dao fell into their bad books, which made him very furious. World War I had just concluded and the stipulations arising from the Paris Convention did not favor China. Owing to the imminent threat from Japan, students started protest demonstrations. In the midst of all this, Wang Ming-Dao had a turn-around in his spiritual life. As his plans for higher studies seemed to be making no headway, the recommendation of a friend brought him an opportunity to teach at the Presbyterian-run Lie Shi Hui Primary School in Baoding. Wang was initially unwilling to accept this low-paid position. His ambitious heart suffered a setback, but for the sake of getting employed, he proceeded to leave home for Baoding.¹⁸²

During his teaching stint, his faithful attitude towards the students greatly influenced them. Outside the classroom, he had meetings with his students. His colleagues attacked him out of jealousy. This dark side of church fellowship caused Wang much pain in the heart. Such a situation demanded a reformation before the church could see signs of revival. A sense of responsibility and duty took shape in his heart, so much so that he vowed to do the Lord's work for the rest of his life. In 1920, he finally realized his dreams. His decision made over the past year led him to alter his name from the original "Yong-Sheng" to "Ming-Dao" so as to depict the new direction in his life: the "Bright Way that leads a

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 32.

¹⁸² Ibid., 45.

new people" has come into the midst of darkness to be a bright roadway, one that will bring revival to the Church of China.¹⁸³

5.4 His First Steps in Ministry

After Wang decided to give his life for the ministry, he desired to do great things for the Lord: to first enter university, then seminary, then to Great Britain for overseas studies before becoming an evangelist. Owing his inability to enter university at that point, he returned to Baoding to continue teaching in the primary school. The school principal was impressed with his good performance and earnestly sought to retain him in his teaching position.¹⁸⁴

During his teaching stint at the primary school, he also started a youth association that emphasized the Bible and morality. Wang assumed the role of chairman, but before long, a fellow colleague pointed out his sin of arrogance. Wang became convicted of his sin and asked God for forgiveness.¹⁸⁵

Not long thereafter, he resigned from his teaching position and went to Beijing to further his studies. Having been baptized according to the Wesleyan tradition, his study of the Scriptures brought him a deep conviction that baptism by immersion was the proper teaching of the Bible. He went on to clarify this with the school authorities, who felt that such a move was redundant. If he insisted upon his stubborn demands for baptism by immersion, the school would fire him. Also included in this matter were five students, among them one Shi Tian-Min, who later became Wang's long-time co-worker.¹⁸⁶ On January 5, 1921, he was baptized in the freezing waters of a river. After returning home, he

¹⁸³ Ibid., 38.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 44.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 41.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 57.

faced new problems. Six youth sought after the Holy Spirit and the experience of holiness, and all six ended up speaking in tongues. Wang held the conviction that such an experience did not arise out of a request to God. Later, a Swedish Pentecostal missionary, Eric Pilquist, led Wang to understand the truth of justification by faith. One who had been justified still had to live out the holiness of God and bear the fruit of the Spirit.¹⁸⁷

His mother and sister posed another problem. His mother felt that her son had, for no good reason, given up on a job with reasonable remuneration. Friends and relatives expressed no sympathy for Wang. He was surrounded by opposition on all sides. He spent this time at home studying the Scriptures closely. For the sake of his future and his relationship with God, he accepted an invitation from a cousin, who was then serving as an army medical officer, to stay at the latter's house in the countryside. This house happened to be situated not far from the Summer Palace (Yi He Yuan). Wang was able to spend 62 days in tranquility. This was what Wang himself termed as his "Arabian desert" experience.¹⁸⁸ During this time, he quietly studied the Scriptures and prayed. This was also the time and place where he renewed his strength. On returning to Beijing, friends and relatives realized that Wang had not lost his mind after all, but was seeking to obey the will of God in his life. On July 2 of that same year, Wang preached for the very first time at the church where his friend Chen Zihao was serving. The topic of this first sermon was: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Thereafter, he began his preaching stint in Yan and Xian counties for a total span

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 56-57.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 54.

of three months. He knew that God has given him messages to preach. He was then 22 years old.¹⁸⁹

5.5 The Anti-Christian Movement

During the 1920s, a new movement arose in Chinese society among the intellectuals. When World Student Christian Federation announced that it would hold an international conference in Beijing in 1922, it drew protests from a group of pro-Communist students in Shanghai, who opposed the convening of a conference of such nature in China.¹⁹⁰ They immediately formed a "Non-Christian Student Federation" to express their dissent. On March 9 of the same year, they issued a declaration describing the dark and sinful atrocities that had resulted from Christian presence in history:

We object to the "World Student Christian Federation." We oppose the "World Student Christian Federation" with the well-being of the people in mind. We hereby make evident our attitude for all to see. We know that Christianity and the Christian Church have been the cause of many sins during the course of history. Whoever is human, has a conscience and is unwilling to degrade themselves will surely not tolerate and forgive them.¹⁹¹

At this moment, a group of students and political factions joined the attack. Wang Jing-Wei, Cai Yuan-Pei and Chen Duxiu all wrote articles in favor of such opposition. Zhang Yi-Jing in Guangzhou and even the newly established True Jesus Church issued written statements to argue their case.¹⁹² When the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 62-63.

¹⁹⁰ Chang, C.S., *The Anti-Religion Movement* (Chinese Recorder 54 August 1923), 459-467.

¹⁹¹ Chang, C.S., ed. *The Tide of Religious Thought* (Chinese Record), 187-188.

¹⁹² Chang, C. S., ed. *A Critique of the Compendium of Non-Christian Conclusions* (?) (Shanghai: Mei Hua Faith Baptist Church, 1927), 143-145.

conference was in session, Li Shi, professor at Beijing University, once openly attacked the value and effect of religions upon the human race. The president of Beijing University, Cai Yuan-Pei, held the view that religion, politics and education ought to remain as separate and distinct entities. Religion, he believed, did not further the advancement of either education or the country. This anti-Christian movement spread like wildfire to various parts of China. Before long, the conference ended. Such dissenting sentiments receded after the event and gradually disappeared. Thus, it would seem that this phenomenon was merely a play on emotions. However, two years later, civil war exploded upon the scene. There was a struggle for the executive powers of the presidential seat by Li Yuanhong, Cao Kun and Duan Qirui. Each lost his position before he had even warmed his seat.

The chaos caused by these turbulent times resulted in a revival of the Non-Christian Federation. In 1924, under the patronage of the Guomindang (GMD), they were renamed the "Non-Christian Greater Federation." On August 31 in Shanghai, Wu Zhi-Hui spoke to the Non-Christian Federation. The speech portrayed Christianity as an instrument of imperialism. During Christmas season that year, the Non-Christian Federation organized large-scale street protests passing negative comments on church-run schools as slaves of imperialism and instruments of cultural invasion.¹⁹³ This also happened to be the time when Wang Ming-Dao was beginning his preaching ministry. With societal conditions in such a disarray, and coupled with misunderstandings with his family, Wang was then plunging into a great despondence. When his sorrow had reached an extreme, a verse of Scripture reassured him: "No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape

¹⁹³ Wu, Zhi-Hui. *The Enslavement of Christianity* (Realization magazine, ?), 2-4.

also, that you may be able to endure it."¹⁹⁴ At a time when there seemed to be no light at the end of his tunnel of despair, Wang evermore turned to the study of the Scriptures. He seldom made use of Bible commentaries and reference books. He focused his energies on reading the Bible which was full of promises.¹⁹⁵ Wang reflected and pondered upon all that he had experienced in the church, including his excommunication by the Presbyterian church for seeking baptism by immersion. He reached the conclusion that "everything previously seen and heard in the church ought to be discarded, with focus only on the study of the Scriptures." He was also "unwilling to accept the tiniest bit of tradition and humanly-ordained rules."¹⁹⁶ In other words, he could not tolerate the inheritance of the church or any form of tradition and man-made stipulations. He saw a need to adhere solely to the direct instruction of the Bible. The Bible had to be read afresh so as to be illumined anew.

Through careful study of the Scriptures, Wang also discovered some errors in views he had previously held, such as the question of Charismatism.¹⁹⁷ The advent of Charismatism in Northern China can be attributed to American missionaries sent by the church of Azusa Street, Los Angeles, after they themselves had experienced similar revival. These missionaries preached in Beijing and the cities in its vicinity.¹⁹⁸ This was also the beginning of the True Jesus Church. Wang Ming-Dao had a desire for such an experience, but never

¹⁹⁴ 1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB).

¹⁹⁵ Wang, Ming-Dao. *The Last Fifty Years*, 59.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

¹⁹⁷ Wang, Ming-Dao, *Charismatism Under the Illumination of the Holy Scriptures* (Wang Ming-Dao's Treasury Vol.4), 93.

¹⁹⁸ See Daniel Bays' works. Charismatism arrived in Northern China from the United States.

spoke in tongues. He later understood and concurred that it was appropriate to observe the Sabbath. During this span of five years, Wang kept the Sabbath.¹⁹⁹ He also attended Fulin Seventh-Day Adventist Church. After the five years, during which he extensively studied and pondered over the Scriptures, Wang came to the conclusion that the New Testament did not teach Gentiles to observe the Sabbath.²⁰⁰

From such incidences, we can see that Wang was subject to all facets of challenges to his faith. This also consolidated his convictions of facing the awesome task of establishing the Church and the faith in his later ministry. In the midst of tribulation, he was able to stand firm such that he could fight the good fight.

5.6 The Establishment of Churches

Wang Ming-Dao was chased out of the Presbyterian Church because he sought baptism by immersion. His dreams of studying in the States also dashed. Being in Beijing and experiencing first hand the emergence of a new culture via the May Fourth Movement, in particular the yells of protest from the Non-Christian Federation, he witnessed the dark side manifested by the church he was attending.²⁰¹ To a young man seeking the Word of God, what he faced was indeed a tremendous challenge. The question of what kind of meeting to participate in and where to serve the Lord were some of the issues bothering him at that time. Whilst facing these questions, the May Thirtieth Massacre took

¹⁹⁹ Wang, Ming-Dao. *The Last Fifty Years*, 68.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 70

²⁰¹ Cha, Shi-Jie. *A Collection of Christian Theses from the Republic* (Taipei: Cosmos Publishers, 1988), 445-448.

place.²⁰² The massacre occurred for the following reasons: Workers in a Japanese-owned factory in Shanghai asked for a pay rise from their employers. The employers refused and negotiations fell through. Amidst the squabbling, one worker was killed while another was injured. The incident snowballed as the Shanghai Works Department, in a bid to arrest the culprit, instead took away some of the workers. This generated even more dissatisfaction among the workers and they marched in united protest. However, the mob entered territory on loan to the British and the British police opened fire on the crowd, killing over 10 workers in the process. This created a nationwide uproar over what was seen as the uglier side of imperialism. At the same time, in various big cities throughout China, protest marches were held. These also led to similar conflicts with lives lost at the hands of the British. Eventually, the common conclusion was reached that all Westerners were cast in the same mold. The Church was also seen as a tool for furthering the cause of imperialism. Communist activities were initiated at various levels of society.²⁰³ The flames of dissent were thus fanned into a burning pyre.

This was a period of self-discovery and establishment for the church. After the Boxer rebellion was clamped down 20 years earlier, attendance in Chinese churches increased.²⁰⁴ World War I lasted from 1914 till 1918. Although Western missionary sending agencies suffered financial setbacks, Chinese believers were rising up to take up the task of evangelization, and their educational qualifications varied. Some came with impure motives of “getting fed through Christianity.” Church leaders lacked leadership abilities. The turmoil

²⁰² See *May Thirtieth Massacre* (Eastern Magazine July 1925).

²⁰³ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *The Break of Dawn* (Taipei: Hymnody and Bible House, 1998), 27-28.

²⁰⁴ Lin, Zhi-Ping, *Commemorative Essay Collection for the 170th Anniversary of Christianity in China* (Taipei: Cosmos Publishers), 19.

and soul searching accompanying all these processes had a substantial influence on Wang Ming-Dao, who was then commencing his ministry, doing evangelistic work in the area around Beijing.²⁰⁵

When he was 25, he started holding religious meetings in his home. According to the description found in *The Last Fifty Years*, there were only three of them when Scripture reading sessions began. This type of Scripture reading and prayer sessions gradually drew bigger crowds, who came at Wang's invitation. He led them in the reading of the Bible, which was to be the measure of all things. Although he organized a youth association while teaching at Baoding, other similar associations were being set up in various places as a type of club. Known as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), the actual activities were as far from Christian as east from west.²⁰⁶ Service to the multitude was simply a guise for modern liberalism. The YMCA's criticism of Wang almost became a legal affair, but things eventually died down.²⁰⁷ Wang felt that, to gain God's favor and stand firm upon one's conviction for the Lord, "one would rather face others' opposition and not incur the wrath of God's fury."²⁰⁸ Scripture reading and personal practice were the basic disciplines he advocated. These were also the foundational principles for the churches he established.

According to the teaching taken from the epistles, many spiritual gifts are needed in order for the Church to be established. The "Pastor" (i.e. Reverend) is a type of gift, but not a clerical title. The system of pastors is a tradition of the

²⁰⁵ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 64, 82.

²⁰⁶ Fairbank, John, *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America* (Harvard University Press, 1974), 150-154.

²⁰⁷ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 56.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 73.

Church and is equivalent to the system of clergy. This was contra-Biblical. Thus, in his lifetime, Wang never requested for anyone to ordain him as a pastor. Neither did he allow anyone to address him as "Reverend." One could call him "Mister" or "Brother Wang Ming-Dao." Should anyone introduce him as "Reverend," he was sure to rectify the error. Based on general denominational practice, only ordained ministers were authorized to conduct baptisms, give the benediction and dispense the Holy Communion. However, things concerning the Holy Communion were handled quite differently from the conventional denominational churches. Wang would gather everyone together and after a period of prayer, a prayer to remember the Lord would be prayed. Some hymns with the theme of remembrance would be sung, with everything focusing upon Christ, because:

... the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is for you: do this in remembrance of Me." In the same way He took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this as often as you drink in remembrance of Me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:23-27, NASB)

Thus, intercession should not form part of prayers made during remembrance. When the time came, a brother who felt led by the Spirit would proceed to give thanks, break bread and distribute the wine. Thereafter, the preaching portion of the meeting would commence. Mr. Wang came up with a hymnal especially designed for his own meetings. This hymnal contained certain hymns reserved solely for remembrance of the Lord.²⁰⁹

In his churches, he appointed deacons similar to the methodology adopted by the Open Brethren and George Muller. No collections were made. Co-

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 130.

workers or the preacher would set up a small box so that whoever felt led to give could freely do so. Preachers received no salary and depended upon the Lord for provision.²¹⁰

Thus, his meetings were called Christian Synagogues. He did not really advocate localized churches and never claimed the title of apostle for himself. He did not go about establishing Christian Synagogues much as one sets up subsidiaries of a company. Although he adopted the stance of the Open Brethren, he did not follow the extremist attitude of criticizing the denominational churches. The things which he opposed were religious convictions and immorality.²¹¹

In his church, he designated deacons as well as deaconesses. He used great caution in selecting deacons and deaconesses for appointment. His chief co-worker was Shi Tian-Min. Together, they went through the arduous process of the church's growth.

5.7 His Itinerant Ministry

While leading a church, from the age of 22, Mr. Wang received speaking invitations. Within 24 years, he traveled throughout the major cities in the northern, western, central, southern and eastern parts of China. He would often conduct meetings at a particular location over an eight-day period. His travels coincided for a time with the GMD-CCP Allied Northern Campaign. In 1920, when the Non-Christian Federation created a tense atmosphere with their movement of opposition, Wang fervently and courageously fought a spiritual battle for the Lord. In 1927, during the Northern Campaign, due to the presence of Communist elements within the ranks of the military, incidents of opposition to the Church and her missionaries occurred. The Northern Campaign brought much

²¹⁰ Ibid., 135-137.

encouragement to the Chinese people, for there was hope that martial law could be done away with and China could finally be united as one nation. Chiang Kai-Shek personally marshaled the army which set off from Guangzhou. The Campaign began in July and, by September, Wuhan was taken. In November, Nanchang was won and the very next month, Fuzhou as well. Barely into 1928, Nanjing was conquered and the country was reinstated with a democratic system of government. The Communist elements among the GMD troops were the cause of the anti-Christian movement, which repelled anything Western. Missionaries were murdered and church buildings doused in flames. Being reminded of the chaos caused by the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, the Western missionaries dared not drop their guard and variously escaped to the territories rented by the Western powers. Where there were once over 6,000 Western missionaries, only 4,000 plus remained ministering in the inlands.²¹² The ordeal which the author and his family went through is as follows:

During this time, the Church suddenly found herself being charged on two counts: abetting an imperialistic colonial policy and making religion an opium of the people (i.e. a drug). The passing of such criminal sentences upon the Church resulted in burdens which the preachers had to carry. Thus, the damage caused to the Church cannot be depicted numerically. Mr. Wang himself was also affected by chaos of war during his three evangelistic trips to Jiangnan.²¹³

During his itinerant preaching, Mr. Wang delivered the following messages: his first sermon was, as usual, on the topic of "Once Saved, Always Saved." He was a thoroughbred Calvinist. His second sermon was on "Baptism by Immersion," not by sprinkling. His sermons mostly focused on Christian

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 137-139.

²¹² Chao, Jonathan, *Hong Kong: Chinese Coordination Center of World Evangelism* (CCOWE Conference Papers, 1981). 82.

²¹³ Chao, Calvin, *The Chinese Church in the Last Fifty Years*, 153-154.

living, which also coincides with his own repeated admission in his autobiography. For instance, he never made use of the church's paper, envelopes or postage stamps for personal mail. He carefully segregated such things. His table at home was clean and tidy, He was also very prudent in his dealings with others. For this reason, he wrote a book entitled *How to Deal With Others*, teaching believers that they ought to be courteous and deal with other people Biblically. For a while, his teachings were popularly received. This also formed the content of his sermons.

Due to the situation he was in at that time, Mr. Wang's messages also focused on fundamental beliefs without allowing for any trace of compromise. Believers and non-believers could never be fellow yoke-bearers.²¹⁴ Mr. Wang's gift of the gab and crystal clear voice, coupled by his occasional outcries and fluently precise Mandarin allowed him to fully identify with his audience and draw their response. Despite restricting himself to one church, he set foot in the various big cities in China. Thus, his influence was very great. This was the time of the Shandong Revival, a charismatic movement. Revivalists John Sung, Andrew Gih and Jia Yu-Ming also held meetings as they traveled to various places. It was an era of revival meetings,²¹⁵ and Wang Ming-Dao was one of these revivalists.

There were many who concurred with Wang's messages. Youth and university students were deeply affected. For a while, Wang Ming-Dao became a household name often mentioned in Chinese church circles countrywide. He was known as a preacher with conviction and unafraid of difficulties. In the course of his travels, he met his future wife. In *The Last Fifty Years*, he mentioned this

²¹⁴ Wang, Ming-Dao, *We Do It All For the Faith* (1925), 17-21.

²¹⁵ Leung, Ka-Lun, *Evangelists and Revivalists Modern China* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary Quarterly, 1999). 8.

stage of his married life. The entire process from their engagement till their eventual marriage on August 8, 1928, has been covered in full detail in his autobiography.²¹⁶

5.8 The Japanese Occupation

As Wang embarked on the road of ministry as a preacher, he encountered many difficulties: the May Fourth Movement, the Non-Christian Student Federation, the Northern Campaign, and not long after, the Japanese Occupation. The expansion of imperialist Japan's military might showed its first signs in the September Eighteenth Incident, when three eastern provinces were taken by the Japanese. The Japanese conquest of China was not planned overnight. Since the Sino-Japanese War started in 1894, Korea had come under Japanese control and the three eastern Chinese provinces followed. However, the Japanese army was not satisfied as such, but rather, moved ever closer to China with each advancing step. The organization of those 3 provinces into the country of Manchuria was merely a guise for further invasion. Not long after Manchuria was formed, they pushed beyond those borders. This forced the GMD government to yield more ground.²¹⁷

In 1937, the Lugou Bridge Incident which was a cover for the start of an official invasion of China in Hebei. The GMD government led by Chiang Kai-Shek was then facing the threat to its political domain by the CCP. The Communists had formed an army and used military maneuvers to instigate all kinds of "uprisings." From 1930 to 1934, Chiang Kai-Shek personally commanded an army on five separate campaigns. The Communist army could

²¹⁶ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 181-189.

²¹⁷ Eberhard, Wolfram, *A History of China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 333-335.

not maintain their foothold in Jiangxi and therefore headed southwesterly through Hunan, Guizhou, Yunnan and Sichuan till they reached Shanbei. This was the famous Long March covering 6,000 mile. The Communist Army was trapped at Shanbei while Chiang concentrated his troops in the northwest under his deputy Zhang Xueliang.

Then, the Xian Incident took place.²¹⁸ It was precisely at this time of great internal strife that the Japanese began to execute their plan of invasion from Hebei. On July 7, 1937, the Lugou Bridge Incident occurred.²¹⁹ The Japanese ceased to restrict themselves to a puppet government and went for the jugular with direct invasion and began the eight-year Sino-Japanese War.

Faced with both internal and external threats, the GMD government had little choice but to “ally” with the Communist army against a common foreign enemy. The alliance of CCP and GMD arose out of the progressively compromising atmosphere after the Xian Incident (1936). The Japanese army intended to blitzkrieg China, but the Chinese opted to prolong the war. When the Japanese took the big cities, the Nationalist army responded with guerrilla warfare. This strategy diminished Japanese military strength in that they were unable to focus their might in their conquest of China. Moreover, the larger the number of cities they dominated, the more dispersed their military strength due to the stationing of troops to guard each city. Hence, they decided to create a ‘National Government’ run by Chinese in an attempt to soften the hearts of international critiques and of the local people. Wang Jing-Wi was the premier. North China was also designated as an autonomous region. The Chinese people ubiquitous persecution and suffering.²²⁰

²¹⁸ Ibid., 316.

²¹⁹ Ibid., p. 317. (University of California, 1969),18-19.

²²⁰ Ibid., 319.

Wang Ming-Dao was restricted in his activities in certain areas due to the war. Hence, he had to turn down some speaking engagements. Moreover, the Japanese martial law imposed on North China also sought to control religious activities out of fear that "rebellious" elements were latent within the Church. The Japanese thus organized the "Christian Federation" which every church was required to join. During meetings, bowing to the Japanese Emperor and submission to the Japanese military orders were mandatory. All church leaders had to participate. British and American missionaries were kept in concentration camps and were unable to preach.²²¹

No matter what the faith or denomination, all were required to join the Christian Federation. Wang Ming-Dao adamantly refused to walk into this obvious trap with a firm "No." To the Japanese military then governing China, killing Wang Ming-Dao would have been an easy matter. Wang's refusal to join their organization put his head on the line. His reason for not joining was the impropriety of being yoke-fellows with those of a different faith.²²²

Here, it is also important to note that theological circles of the Chinese Church in the 1920s had already been deeply influenced by Western missionaries and their theology. The liberals were clearly distinct. The impact made by German theological thought on the Western Church during the second half of the 19th century began with their critique of the Bible. They argued that the Bible was a compilation of books written in different eras. Some books were pseudonymous, with the authors making use of their predecessors' names in their writings. Thus, a deep shadow of doubt was cast over tradition.²²³

²²¹ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 143-150.

²²² *Ibid.*, 150.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 37-40. Also, see *We Do It All for the Faith*.

Further, Darwin's *Theory of Evolution* gained the acceptance in the Church, which disbelieved the Creation account, insisting upon scientific evidence. John Dewey's advocacy of empirical pragmatism, emphasized that something is beneficial if it worked.²²⁴ Biblical values were considered outdated. Such a philosophy resulted in everyone seeking to be scientific and unwilling to be bound by the superstitious creeds of the Bible and Church tradition.

Conservative Western theologians consolidated their efforts to refute such heresy. Theological apologists insisted that the fundamentals must never be shaken. The *Fundamental Truth* (1909-1915) and *The Scofield Reference Bible* (1909) were representative works published by the fundamentalists.²²⁵ Hence, the fundamentalists and the liberals debated each other over faith issues. The fundamentalists sought to earnestly and fervently preserve the faith "once for all entrusted to the saints." The liberals held the opinion that the old camp was insufficiently scientific and of a lower standard of scholarship.

At that time, among the Western missionary sending agencies in China, the CIM held fast to their beliefs without any room for compromise. Thus, they became an apologetic missions agency. They also refused to have any part in activities organized by the ecumenical movement.²²⁶ Many churches even

²²⁴ McElroy, Howard C., *Modern Philosophers*, (New York: Russell Moore, 1950), 109.

²²⁵ Bates, M. Searle, *The Theology of American Missionaries in China 1900-1950* in *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*, ed. John K. Fairbank (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), 150-153.

²²⁶ Rawlinson, Frank, ed. *The China Christian Year Book, 1926* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society, 1926), pp. XXV – XXVI; *China Christian Year Book Vol.9 (1927)*, 17. CIM director Hoste wrote to the Chinese National Christian Ecumenical Association on 15 March 1926 indicating their withdrawal from the organization. On 14 May, the Association sent a reply accepting their request. In that same year, the Missionary and Christian Alliance also left the Association. See also K.S. Latourette: *A History of Christian Missions in China*, 797.

believed that the "Chinese Christian Church" consisted of many churches adhering to the new camp. Hence, lines of segregation were clearly drawn.²²⁷

Wang Ming-Dao felt that he could not bear the same yoke with these people. The Japanese military ruled China with an iron hand. They were suspicious of many people and freely used inhuman methods of torture on their suspects even to the point of death. Wang Ming-Dao had risked his life with his bold defiance. On numerous occasions, the Federation sent envoys to persuade him to participate, both with threats of harm and the lure of benefits. However, Wang was unmoved. He would rather die and bear witness for his faith than compromise. He was ready to die each time he turned down the Federation's invitation.

During the Japanese Occupation, some in the Church were jealous of Wang, and attempted to frame him. Yet, he remained unperturbed and managed to tide over the difficult situation. After information concerning these things were spread, people saw Wang Mingdao in a different light, and respected him all the more.²²⁸

5.9 Apologetic Literature

Literature not only can propagate a message, but can serve as an apologia. In China, publications which were both proclamatory and apologetic in nature included Jia Yu-Ming's *Spiritual Light Magazine*, Chen Chong-Gui's *Evangelism Magazine*, Watchman Nee's *Revival Times* and Wang Ming-Dao's *Spiritual Food Quarterly*. These were unanimously acknowledged by all as magazines full of

²²⁷ Bates, op. cit.

²²⁸ See *The Last Fifty Years*. Introduction by Wang Cheng Chung; ed. The treasure of Wang Ming-Dao, Vol. V, 1.

challenge and quality. Wang Ming-Dao edited this publication with the aim of presenting three aspects:

1. His messages concerning life in general. For example, he wrote about David's sin in peeping at the beautiful Bathsheba taking a bath, which manifested his lack of prudence. Also, Wang, on the issue of the rape of Jacob's only daughter Dinah, felt that although Shecem's son was in the wrong, the fact that Jacob and his wife allowed Dinah to freely enter someone else's residence with the end result of being defiled was worth noting. Thus, Wang paid particular attention to the believer's lifestyle. A believer who did not scrutinize his own lifestyle could never live the overcoming life. Hence, Wang not only penned messages exhorting believers to carefully watch how they live, he himself practiced strict discipline.
2. An apologetic for the faith. During the May Fourth Movement, Wang fervently defended the truth. Foremost among those of like mind was Zhang Yi-Jing, the chief editor of the Baptist Press. Wang Ming-Dao made mention of his friendship with Zhang Yi-Jing. The May Fourth Movement and the Non-Christian Federation generated much literature from the pens of socially prominent individuals criticizing Christianity, including those holding high offices in education and politics. The Christian Church had not only to logically argue their defense, they also had to retaliate. Zhang Yi-Jing often wrote such letters of retaliation as published in *True Light Magazine*.²²⁹ Zhang was of Guangxi origin (born 1817) and wielded a lethal pen which expressed his sharp and creative mind. He was well learned in general knowledge. His refutation of his opponents revealed his superiority, being well acquainted with the finer details of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. These

²²⁹ The Light Magazine was published by the Baptist Church in Hong Kong and Canton.

refutations not only contained quotes from the Christian Scriptures, but also made use of terminology from Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism, thus producing essays manifesting Chinese culture and thought. Wang Ming-Dao and Mr. Zhang had many things in common. Thus, Wang heaps much praise on Zhang by saying: "Mr. Zhang has made unique contributions to the ministry of Christian literature, especially in the area of arguing in defense of the truth."²³⁰

3. As armor for the Church, as a prophetic voice protecting the Church from worldliness, Mr. Wang's books and essays were representative of his deep knowledge of the Bible. His spiritual attainment gave him the right to a prophet's role, crying out on God's behalf. He spoke with the flair of a prophet, without fear of incurring the displeasure of his listeners. His aim was to warn brothers and sisters in the Church according to the teachings of the Bible so that they may remain steadfast in their faith and live lives that give glory to God.

Wang was a contemporary of John Sung, Andrew Gih and Watchman Nee. John Sung emphasized "...rebuke of sinful behavior, call to repentance and proclamation of the Gospel of salvation through Jesus Christ before leading a person to the Lord."²³¹ Likewise, Wang Ming-Dao, in the midst of his itinerant preaching, never once made an altar call. He did not want people to raise their hands in declaration of their decisions for Christ. In this, Wang differed from Sung and Gih. However, his contribution to the Church cannot be overlooked. He helped train batches of youth for the Lord. He was armor to the Church.

²³⁰ Wang, Ming-Dao, *The Last Fifty Years*, 94.

²³¹ Smith, C. Stanley, *Modern Religious Movement in China Christian Year Book 1934-1935*, Vol.19, 99.

5.10 Conclusion

Mr. Wang spent his entire life up till 1949 shepherding a single church. Thereafter, under the Communist regime, he suffered much "torture." Throughout his life, he never intended to establish a great and influential testimony. His every word and action, his life and his convictions provided others with a role model. That he has been hailed as one of the spiritual giants of the Chinese Church was not because of his organizational skills or his creativity in formulating new theology. His claim to fame lay in his steadfastness, like a tree planted by the water's side, holding fast to the truth without compromise. The impact made by his influence reaches far and wide.

He originated from the Western missionary sending agencies and was under the tutelage of Western missionaries. Hence, he closely kept the Word of God and forged a path for himself. The Western missionaries provided him with a beachhead, but he forged a path which those coming after could follow by establishing an independent and encultured church. This generated an immeasurably powerful testimony, providing a role model for other encultured Chinese churches.²³²

We would never think of Wang Ming-Dao as a stubborn man. Such an opinion is erroneous. He was one who would bravely admit his shortcomings.²³³ The moment he is illumined to the truth, he will obey. He abhorred worldliness, falsity and formality. When he traveled, so as not to waste money, he opted for third-class seats, often being worn out by the one-to two-day journey by the time he arrived at his destination. His health was already poor. The long and arduous

²³² That is why Leslee Lyall named him as one of the three great China's almighty men.

²³³ Wang, Chung Xin Stephen, *Stephen Another Forty Years*. (Ontario, Canada: Canada Gospel Publishing House Inc. 1997), 9.

journeys, and preaching immediately upon arrival, really took a heavy toll on his body. Later on, someone suggested that he switch to second-or even first-class carriages. He initially refused, thinking that this was worldliness, a love for the things of this world. Once he agreed to try out the suggestion, he experienced the benefit that such an arrangement brought to his health. He was able to preach on the very night of his arrival.

He initially refused to polish his shoes, also deeming this as an act of worldliness and love for worldly things. Later, he discovered that his leather shoes were easily damaged. He sought the reason behind this and was asked in return, "Did you polish them with oil?" He answered, "No." Thereafter, he polished his shoes with oil, not only maintaining their cleanliness but also lengthening their life span.²³⁴ When he preached, he admitted to his previously incorrect concept arising out of his ignorance. Thus, he was bold to change and to assimilate new things. Hence, he was able to soldier for the truth over a prolonged period of time not because he was stubborn but because he considered truth his life and persevered till the very end.

Lin Rong-Hong, in his book *Wang Ming-Dao and the Chinese Church*, fairly described Wang Ming-Dao's life philosophy and way of doing things:

According to Wang's understanding, suffering is a form of spiritual armor which is effective in curbing sinful behavior; to suffer in the flesh, one can directly cultivate the spiritual life, because the believer can more clearly evaluate his own weakness and trespass, and admit to sin and repent before God. Wang said: "It is only through suffering that the impurities in us can be purged as gold by fire, that our protrusions can be filed off as a stone made smooth." In his essay "Suffering is Beneficial," he mentions that God has prepared "three steps of baptism" for the believer, that is, baptism by water, baptism by the Spirit and baptism by fire. Water and Spirit baptism are related to regeneration, whereas baptism by fire referred to the various sufferings to be encountered in this world. Wang quotes Luke 12:49 to explain that Jesus "threw fire upon the earth so as to cause disaster, unrest, conflict, persecution and all kinds of suffering upon the earth." This is the trial by fire. Every believer who is willing to suffer together with

²³⁴ Another illustration on Wang's life.

Christ will experience such trials, to the extent that his faith is strengthened and his spiritual life matures.²³⁵

²³⁵ Lin, Rong-Hong, *Wang Mingdao and the Chinese Church* (China Divine Light Research Institute, 1982). 202-203.

CHAPTER 6

Watchan Nee: a man of the local Church

Watchman Nee's greatest influence on the Chinese Church and the Chinese Christians was not limited to his understanding of ecclesiology. His messages and teachings on spirituality have penetrated the ranks of evangelists and believers not only in China, but in American evangelical churches as well.²³⁶ It was Nee's conviction that for the Church to be well established, it was essential for believers to be extremely good at working together. He believed that the ability to work together is a reflection of the state of one's spiritual life. A Christian must be growing spiritually. Thus, Nee made detailed analyses of both church and personal growth. He also attempted to articulate the levels of spiritual life. Nee was strong in administration and organization. He emphasized interpersonal relations and held to strict standards of proper conduct in the establishment of churches. He stressed that all teaching on spirituality must be biblically based. In his youth, he once worked for 11 months at the Spiritual Light Press run by Jia Yu-Ming.²³⁷ Jia Yu-Ming was a seminal figure in Chinese

²³⁶ Roberts, Dana, *Understanding Watchman Nee* (Plainfield, NJ: Haven Books, 1971), p. 134. Nee's was born in Nov. 4, 1903. Died in May 30, 1972 at his age of 70. See *Shout* Vol 85-86 (Oct 1998). In the original edition, Nee honestly admitted to having quoted extensively from many authors of the Western Church. When we look into his set of books, the contents and terminology used reflect the writings of Margaret E. Barber, Jessie-Penn Lewis and John Nelson Darby. Missionary Margaret Barber came to China in 1908 but returned to England during her first term. When she came to China a second time, she came by faith, no longer receiving financial support through denominational organizations. She also brought with her many Christian books. We believe that these books became the sources from which Nee obtained edification and made quotations in writing his own set of books. See Chen Zhongdao: *My Uncle, Watchman Nee* (Golden Lampstand Press, 1970), 14.

²³⁷ Chen, Chih-Hsin, *A Concise History of Brother Watchman Nee*. (Hong Kong: Christian Press, 1971), 134.

theological circles. Nee received much theological and exegetical knowledge from Jia.²³⁸

Of all his writings, Nee's major work, *The Spiritual Man*, attracted the most attention. Another work was *The Normal Christian Life*, a record of his lectures given at the Keswick Convention. Some of his booklets, *The Crushing of the Soul*, *The Crisis of the Spirit*, *Temple of Worship*, *The Worship of God* and *The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* contain numerous spiritual messages and teachings. In the midst of publishing and distributing *Revival Times*, he also included many messages concerning the nurturing of the spiritual life. *The Nurturing of the Believer* was also a teaching in the form of systematic lessons. The impact of these literary works was unprecedented and was greatly welcomed and read by the churchmen of that era. It is therefore necessary to include a brief overview of the contents of some of his writings.

6.1 "The Spiritual Man"

The Spiritual Man was written when Nee was 26. According to Yu Chongen²³⁹ in the preface to his first edition of *Rethinking Missions*, much of Nee's materials were based on the work of Mrs. Jessie-Pen Louis and other writers. He was also deeply influenced by John Nelson Darby. The original preface of the first edition, which revealed the sources used by Nee, was never reproduced in subsequent prints.²⁴⁰ It contained specifications with historical

²³⁸ Ibid., 134. According to what Jia Yuning told me at Chongqing, Nee came to learn from him.

²³⁹ Yu Chongen's father was an able assistant to Watchman Nee as elder of his meeting place at Shanghai. He read Brother Lawrence's *Living in the Presence of God* and *The Biography of Madam Guyon* (vol.62). Yu Chongen grew up in a local church. He expressed his views on Nee's local churches in *Shou* magazine.

²⁴⁰ When I read the preface to the first edition of *Rethinking of Missions* in 1955, the preface differed from the 1938 edition.

significance, indicating the reasons for writing the book and the underlying bases for its contents.

Concerning *The Spiritual Man*, the first preface of the 1932 edition (written by the editor at Langci, Shanghai on May 30, 1932), contained the following words:

In the first edition, it was not that these differentiations were unknown. Rather, it was thought that, if the underlying spiritual truths and principles are correct, then the terminology used were not of the essence. Even the amendments for this edition initially did not include those differences. It was only a few days ago that the Lord specifically pointed this out to me I also hope that, in the future, all these changes can be implemented across the board to all publications.²⁴¹

From these words, we can see that they were written after the first edition or a few editions later. Nee was born in 1903. He wrote this book at 26. In the year 1932, he would have been 29, and the book would have already been published. The June 4, 1927 Preface contained these words:

The teaching regarding the separation of the soul and spirit did not originate with me. Andrew Murray said, "The one thing that should be feared by both the Church and the individual is the volition of the soul and overuse of the heart's thought process." F.B. Meyer also mentioned, "If I do not know how to differentiate between the soul and the spirit, then I do not know how my spiritual life would be today." Others like Stuchmeier, Jessie-Penn Lewis, Evan Roberts and Madam Guyon bear the same testimony. Since we have received the same commission from the Lord, I have freely quoted from their works. Because I have done so rather extensively, these quotations have not been variously highlighted.²⁴²

However, Nee also mentioned in his preface that "I know I had no intention of writing this book until I was clearly entrusted by the Lord with this

²⁴¹ The Chinese editions have different prefaces. One is dated May 30, 1932. Another is dated June 4, 1927. I have quoted the preface taken from the 3-volume set of "The Spiritual Man" published in 1928. The prefaces from the English editions are dated June 4, 1927 and June 25, 1928.

²⁴² Vol. I, 11.

responsibility. In any case, the truths contained in this book are not my own. Rather, He has given it to me. In the midst of penning this down, He has also showered me with many fresh blessings."²⁴³

6.1.1 A Critique of *The Spiritual Man*

Watchman Nee once stated that this thousand-page book was written between the ages of 23 and 26. The contents of the book cannot be only his own personal experience. According to Yu Chongen, in the preface to the first edition, Nee said that his materials had been taken from Jessie-Penn Lewis and John Darby. This was stated in the preface to the original edition of *Rethinking Missions* but subsequent editions no longer carry these words.

He stressed that people who read his book should not use it to analyze themselves. In actual fact, he has analyzed the truths and messages concerning the spiritual man, making special mention of the twin aspects of spirit and soul. His thesis is based upon the Bible. He first delivers the "message," and then draws upon the Scriptures to validate and support his statements. Regarding some of his presuppositions and deductions on "spiritual analysis," Nee's failure to disclose his sources has created suspicion and drawn accusations of plagiarism. Although this book contains materials and messages for teaching, the reader must himself be able to pick and choose that which is believable and applicable.

Nee tried his best in order to lead us to see and understand the self (of three divisions). Soul and Spirit exist and dwell in the body, according to Nee's explanation. We may distinguish "self" as three parts that may not be divided easily. According to the secular dictionary's position, soul and spirit are the same for convenience's sake. If we divide soul and body, then the "mind-body" problem still remains in our body. Without the final explanation we may take

²⁴³ Vol I. 38.

Biblical terminology to describe something, which exists and experience and live with it and yet have no adequate explanation. We call it "mystery." "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great" (Tim II 3:16).

It is a fact that when Nee published *The Spiritual man* judging from his co-workers, he was not very enthusiastic about the contents. It was more like "Psychoanalysis" (Spirit analysis). Many statement are impossible to understand and hardly can apply to daily living. His faithful co-worker Stephen Kiang also translated the text into English. In their mind they had a clear understanding of Soul, Spirit and body relations. They were, however, not able to articulate their position clearly and logically enough.

6.2 "The Normal Christian Life"

The Normal Christian Life contains Watchman Nee's sermons delivered in the British Isles and Europe as compiled by British brother Angus I. Kinnear. Originally released in English, 50 to 60 thousand copies were sold worldwide within a short time after its publication. Having been translated into over 30 languages, it has now been translated into Chinese by Zhang Zu-Jun. Many have had their lives changed as a result of the book's message.²⁴⁴

This book was published more than a decade after Nee's *Spiritual Man*. The two books addressed different topics, so naturally, their contents differ. The first seven chapters of *Romans* form the basis for the sequence and substance of *The Normal Christian Life*.

1. It reveals many of his own experiences and personal testimonies.
2. It makes abundant use of examples and parables.
3. It contains everyday disciplines and some experiences of believers.
4. It includes both theoretical and practical aspects.

²⁴⁴ Nee, Watchman: *Normal Christian Life* (Gospel Book House R.C.O. 1981), 1. (Witness Lee's Preface)

5. It refers to original source materials and reference books.

These features are unique to *The Normal Christian Life* and are not found in *Spiritual Man*.

6.2.1 Spiritual Growth

The Normal Christian Life elaborates on the process of Christian spiritual growth as well as the theoretical and practical obstacles to such growth. As such, it contains important indicators of the growing theological autonomy characterizing the growth of the Chinese church. The Christian is defined by Galatians 2:20, "It is no longer I that liveth, but Christ who liveth in me." He lives out Christ. That he is able to begin living in this manner must be attributed to the blood of Christ, which has cleansed and forgiven us of our sins, and has dealt with our natural inclinations towards sinful behavior. This is the effect of the blood shed by Christ.²⁴⁵ The aim is for one to attain holiness and righteousness, and also to possess a holy and righteous life.²⁴⁶ Only thus is God satisfied.²⁴⁷ At the same time, one can draw near to God through His blood (Ephesians 2:13)²⁴⁸ because our Accuser has no case against us. This is the major reason for Satan's lack of a basis for our accusation.²⁴⁹

6.2.2 The Means to Spiritual Growth

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 4.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., 9.

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 10.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 16-19.

At the Cross, our former history has been terminated. Our new life has commenced with the resurrection.²⁵⁰ We have also started to grow spiritually. Growth is a four-step process: 1) knowing; 2) counting; 3) presenting oneself to God; and 4) walking in the Spirit.²⁵¹ All four steps must be observed, according to Nee.

He who follows the Lord must carry his cross and deal with the flesh. Only then can he start on the path of Christian service.²⁵² The Lord wants His disciples to "daily bear their crosses." This is a daily affair where we follow Him step by step. In the process of following Him, we must gain victory over "emotions"²⁵³ until the result of the Cross is attained, even as a grain of wheat dies such that it may bear fruit a hundred-fold.²⁵⁴ Paul exemplified this in his ministry as a good servant of Jesus.²⁵⁵

6.2.3 Conclusion

The contents of this book are an extension of *Spiritual Man*. The Christian's spiritual growth, is viewed as dealing with the soul and the flesh, and living, doing and serving under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Again, it provides evidence of the theological autonomy growing in the Chinese church. Although Nee's thinking concurs with evangelical theology in general it indicates indigenous Chinese dimensions. This provided a basis for the Chinese church to accept their autonomy and be weaned from missionary control.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 38.

²⁵¹ Ibid., 38.

²⁵² Ibid., 244.

²⁵³ Ibid., 437.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 253.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 261.

6.3 Other Literary Works

When Nee initially started the *Revival Times*, most of the articles were written by him. Publication was terminated after a few issues. The content dealt with the question of spiritual edification and spiritual living. The booklet "The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the One Who Sent the Spirit" was well received and widely read. From the contents of his literary works, such as *Spiritual Man* written between the age of 23 and 26, we observe that he was deeply affected by Western authors like Jessie-Pen Lewis, Darby, Murray, Simpson, and others. His Plymouth Brethren style of Christian discipline can be attributed to the foundation laid in him by Western missionaries. There is little doubt that Nee himself and the ministries, which he started, carried the deep imprints of Western missionaries' influence. This is, of course, to be expected. Yet as has been indicated above, Nee himself, his ministry and writing, served an important bridging function and undoubtedly motivated the Chinese church to joyfully accept responsibility for all aspects of being an autonomous church of Christ.

6.4 Watchman Nee's Concept of the Church

Watchman Nee was deeply influenced by missionaries Margaret E. Barber and Ruth Paxon. On her second visit to Fujian Province, He Shou-En (M.E. Barber's Chinese name) brought along much Christian literature,²⁵⁶ which strongly drew the attention of Watchman Nee. The coverage of the topic of life (i.e. spirituality) between the covers of these books shaped Nee's thinking. His first edition of *Spiritual Man* contained references to his source materials and

²⁵⁶ Crutchfield, Sheldon F.: *A Dangerous Trip to China*, 1996. Ruth Paxon was a missionary from Boston. Her book on "The Higher Life" was translated into Chinese and in it she taught Christian Spiritual life often determined by the structure of body, soul and spirit.

most of them were from Jessie-Pen Lewis and John Nelson Darby.²⁵⁷ Nee frankly admitted to having been influenced by them. Nee concurred with the Brethren in many key areas of Christian convictions and the disciplines arising from their theological views.

6.4.1 The Bible as the Only Source and Basis

Without doubt, Nee followed the path of restoration. He felt that we ought not to unconditionally accept denominationalism. This was his inclination as expressed in *Rethinking Missions*. Denominational churches contain the traditions and dogma of the past which the missionaries had brought along with them. Such an opinion was not without basis.²⁵⁸ In seeking to establish a church, one must return to the Bible and not only Church history. This was a historical fact. Western missionaries and mission agencies of more recent times were mainly from churches that arose after the Reformation. These mission organizations were also a post-Reformation Movement phenomenon, bearing the mark of the then gradually emerging "Church Organizations" such as the Baptists, Quakers, Congregationalists, Wesleyans, Methodists and Anglicans.²⁵⁹ The Western missionaries and their agencies were under the supervision of their

²⁵⁷ According to Yu Chong-En's words, in the preface to the first edition of "Spiritual Man," Nee made mention of the deep impact that Mrs. Jessie-pen Lewis had had on his life. Many of his thoughts and materials had been derived from her. Yu's father was formerly an able assistant to Nee as an elder in the meeting places of Shanghai, having been baptized at 16 and inaugurated into "Nee's Circle," where he grew up as a brother of the meeting place. (Shout 1998 Vol. 85-86).

²⁵⁸ Berkhoff, L., *The History of Theology* (Michigan Wm. B. Eerdmann Publishing Company. 1949), 243-245.

²⁵⁹ Wang, Chih-Tsin, *History of Christianity in China* (Chinese Christian Council, Hong Kong. 1959), 199-263.

respective denominational bodies.²⁶⁰ The Baptist missionaries established Baptist churches while the Presbyterian missionaries started Presbyterian churches. We must adopt a fair attitude when evaluating the "churches" which emerged from the flow of history. When the Baptists movement began, it was a rebellious act against the traditions of the "Church."²⁶¹ The theological concepts which Calvin established sought to meet the needs of his time. Church structures derived from Roman Catholicism found necessity for guidelines so as to meet their current needs. The term Baptist carried connotations of their practices. (Others, such as the Quakers and Methodists were nicknamed likewise.) If the Chinese people hope to establish the Church, then they had to return to the Bible and observe what the Biblical convictions are.²⁶² In any case, the Bible ought to be our standard, providing us with the correct answers. From the concept of "rethink" inherent in the book title *Rethinking Missions*, we can see that Nee was trying to establish the Church and attempted to carry out reforms. In his other books, Nee never failed to convey his idea of the Bible as the sole authority for Christian conviction. John Nelson Darby, Anthony Grove, George Muller and Francis Newman all lent weight to such a proposition. Muller began a ministry to train ministers and lay workers, and named it the Scripture Knowledge Institute, from which we can decipher the content of the training provided. The early co-workers of Hudson Taylor were graduates of this institute.²⁶³

²⁶⁰ Nee did not recognize denominational churches as true churches (*Rethinking of Missions*). See also Stephen Chen, *My Uncle Watchman Nee*, 63-64.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁶² Nee, *Rethinking of Missions*, 64.

²⁶³ Coad, Roy F., *A History of The Brethren Movement* (Michigan Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968), 53.

Nee held the view that, not only should the doctrine of the Church (i.e. ecclesiology) be based on a search for Biblical principles and models, all church methodology should be based upon a principle of constantly re-examining and reflecting on the teachings of the Bible.²⁶⁴

6.4.2 The System of Clergy

Nee held that “apostolic tradition” was not a Biblically derived concept, but rather something which arose out of church tradition and creeds, i.e., a product of human origin. The position and office of apostle, as seen in the Bible, was one which God Himself directly elected. When Christ was on earth, He specially chose 12 apostles from among the disciples.²⁶⁵ The term apostle denotes one who is sent out to establish churches through the preaching of the Gospel. According to Acts, the role of the 12 and the other apostles were predominantly to “bear witness to the resurrected Christ.”²⁶⁶ They went out to establish churches. The purpose of Paul’s calling was so to establish churches as well as a system of belief in carrying out the work of God.²⁶⁷ To Nee, apostleship was not a spiritual gift, but, rather, a type of office:

This is a very important point. If we do not understand that apostleship is an office and, instead, think that it is a spiritual gift, then we have fallen into an abyss of darkness. Thus, we must determine from Scripture what apostleship basically is. 1 Timothy 2:7 Paul says, “And for this I was appointed a preacher and an apostle as a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth” (NASB). Also, in 2 Timothy 1:11, he says, “for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher” (NASB). We observe one thing, that is, that an apostle is sent out to do something. Whether or not a person is an apostle centers around the question of whether or not God has sent him, and not depending upon

²⁶⁴ Just as Nee expressed in the foreword to “Reflections on the Ministry”: “We have one objective, that is to hopefully base our ministry entirely upon the Bible.” (*Rethinking Missions*), 13.

²⁶⁵ Luke 6.

²⁶⁶ Acts 1:21-22; Nee, *Rethinking Missions*, 64.

²⁶⁷ Wang, Chih-Hsin, *History of Christianity* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1959), 122-230.

his ability or lack thereof i.e. a question of spiritual gift. If he is sent, then it becomes an issue of office. An apostle is sent. Therefore, apostleship is an office.²⁶⁸

Concerning such an argument, how are we to reconcile it with the words of Ephesians 4:11, "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers" (NASB). Further, 1 Corinthians 12:28 stipulates that "God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers" (NASB). Such sequential arrangement always placed the apostle first. Hence, apostleship is an office while the others are spiritual gifts.²⁶⁹ An apostle has been specially chosen by God. They are the overseers to whom God's work has been entrusted. Nee's hermeneutics understands the rendering of apostleship as an office but the others as spiritual gifts as God's methodology in carrying out His work on earth. Thus, we arrive at a definition for the spiritual gifts. Nee said: "A gift is something we were already able to do. Spiritual gifts are an empowerment via the Holy Spirit for us to perform the offices which we were already capable of doing. In contrast, apostleship comes from God and is an office."

The difference between spiritual gifts and offices, according to Nee, centers around the issue of commission and ability. Commission is from God. Ability is also ultimately from God. However, one is able to carry out God's tasks without having been sent by Him. Man inherently possesses the abilities of an apostle. He also needs empowerment. Paul also says, "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NASB).²⁷⁰ Apollos

²⁶⁸ Nee, *Rethinking Missions*, 64. In his thinking here, Nee actually concurs with the theology of the apostolate especially as it developed in the Netherlands. It is not known whether Nee actually knew about the work of Nan Ruler, Hoekendyk et al. Since they were mainly publishing in Dutch, it seems unlikely, though.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 44.

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

possessed the gift of the gab and knowledge, but lacked the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in Ephesians 4:11, the apostle is placed first. This is a matter of sequence.

Apostleship, together with the rest, are all gifts from God. But, apostleship is an office. Because all four come from God, empowerment is needed. Hence, all four ought to be understood as offices for all four require gifts, because gifts encompass more than power. The one who has been spiritually gifted must also train, learn, experience and be empowered by the Holy Spirit in order to be effective.²⁷¹

This also implies that Nee considered the church as a geographical entity and the apostle as an office given for all locations, while the other three gifts are localized in nature.

6.4.3 The Universal Church & the Local Church

Nee believed that a difference exists between the local church and the universal Church.

There is one more thing which is amazing. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says that God has appointed in the church, first apostles, second prophets, third teachers. What church is in view here? The universal Church is being referred to in this instance. This Church consists collectively of all the children of God to date, transcending all chronological and geographical boundaries. In this Church, the apostle is first, the prophet is second and the teacher is third, up till Chapter 14 ... where it is the local church instead of the universal Church.²⁷²

Nee held that this part of Scripture specifically mentions the relationship between the apostle and the Church, which in turn led Nee to formulate his concepts of the local church. The universal Church refers to all the children of

²⁷¹ Ibid., 48-49.

²⁷² Nee, *Rethinking of Missions*, 48.

God from ages past. This includes the saints of old as well as the saints presently in glory. Thus, there are apostles. Such an understanding places the apostles in charge of the spiritual "Church" of the past, present and future. Do the apostles do pioneering work in the spiritual realm as well? If the local church is in view, and it requires prophets but not apostles, then it appears strange, for the apostles were given for the sake of the entire Church. Such an office surpasses that of the prophet with a scope that exceeds the spiritual gift of prophecy, being more than a position. In Christ, all ought to be equal so as to realize the Body of Christ. Beyond this, "there is another office" that is able to take care of the places without a church (i.e. where the Gospel has not been preached).²⁷³

Both the prophet and the evangelist in the local church are spiritual gifts with the objective of establishing the Body of Christ. They do not govern the local church. The government and administration of the local church is the job of the elders. Nee said, "The elder's work is the daily running of the church. The ministry of the prophet and the teacher consists of edification during church services. If the elder is also a prophet and teacher, then he can be involved in the daily running of the church as well as edify the church during services."²⁷⁴

The apostle Paul traveled widely in preaching the Good News, and people were saved through the grace of God. For instance, there was a church in Lystra, and "he went away with Barnabas to Derbe (where) they ... preached the gospel to that city and ... made many disciples."²⁷⁵ The apostles went from one city to the next ministering, rather than staying put in one particular city. They did not stay behind to nurture the believers. In order to achieve this purpose, they instead "appointed elders for them in every church, having prayed with fasting (and) they

²⁷³ Ibid., 56.

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 59.

²⁷⁵ Acts 14:20-21(NASB).

commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed."²⁷⁶ "In every church" implies that elders were appointed in every geographical location.

The term "elder" has been passed down from Old Testament times. Paul followed Old Testament and Jewish customary practice in letting the elders handle church affairs and take responsibility. Hence, the work of nurturing and administration in the local church were in the hands of the elders. The ministry of an apostle and an elder differs:

Hence, God was not to do away with the "shepherd," do not use human means in caring and nurturing the local church. Rather, that responsibility is divided between the apostle and the elder. The apostle weaves through various locations whereas the elder is responsible for a single location. The apostle is characterized by going, while the elder is earmarked by his staying. An apostle never stays put at a particular location to pastor a church. That is an elder's responsibility. Under the present "pastoral" system of church polity, "the pastor's work is, in reality, what the elders ought to be doing."²⁷⁷

The appointment of elders is a sign of progress and maturity in the Church. The elder is likened to "a head of the family." He who is elder in one geographical location cannot be an elder also in another. Such appointment of elders is in actual fact a work of the Spirit. Those upon whom the Lord shows favor evidence the lordship of the Holy Spirit.²⁷⁸ They never become "geographically transcendent elders." Apostles who remained in one location could also be appointed as elders.

²⁷⁶ Acts 14:23 (NASB).

²⁷⁷ Nee, *Rethinking Missions*, 104.

²⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 107.

The elder's role is not to perform work on others' behalf.²⁷⁹ Instead, his job is one of overseeing the workers, because "the Bible does not present any brethren who do not do work but that each brother needs to labor." Thus, the administration of the church²⁸⁰ "is the primary responsibility of the elder. The elder takes charge of all internal administration, logistics, personnel, decision-making and focus of the church. These ought to be the normal scope of responsibility of the elder."²⁸¹ An elder is one who works, and he also leads others to labor along with him.

Apart from handling administrative affairs, "if they possess the gift, they ought also to take up the responsibility of spirituality, teaching being yet another important area of ministry."²⁸² "Those (elders) who labor away at preaching and teaching should all the more do so." Both teaching and administration at the localized level is the responsibility of the elder. Such instruction and persuasion allow for the nurture of brothers and sisters through caring for their church life and personal needs in the pursuit of spirituality. This is the pastoral ministry. Thus, the elder also takes up the responsibility of pastoral work. The elder is the most important office in the local church. The pastoral role should be taken up by the elder rather than choosing and hiring a person to carry out the task. This is where the offices of apostleship and eldership differ.²⁸³

6.4.3.1 Membership and Unity of the Local Church

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 110.

²⁸⁰ 1 Timothy 3:5.

²⁸¹ Nee, *Rethink of Missions*, 111.

²⁸² See 1 Timothy 5:17.

²⁸³ Nee, *Reflections on the Ministry*, 103-104.

According to Nee's view, the Church consists of "all who have been saved through the grace of God from all locations in all the ages, all who have the Life, all who have been redeemed by the Blood of Christ and have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit, regardless of time and location. Whoever comes under the banner of the Lord is included in the Church, i.e. the universal Church."²⁸⁴ It is obvious that such a concept is universal, transcending geography, chronology and space, being spiritually inclusive of the local church. "This is the Lord's only Church. It is singular. This Church is the Body of Christ."²⁸⁵ In this manner, the Church is sometimes invisible to the human eye (i.e. including the saints of all locations of all time). This belongs to a spiritual realm.

However, "the churches in each individual location is visible, with physical form ... thus, all forms of hierarchy includes elders and deacons."²⁸⁶ The Church essentially cannot be separated. There should only be one church in each location. In the New Testament, we only find the Church segregated according to geographical location but not vice versa. The Church can only be differentiated by geography. Apart from this, if there be any form of division, all separation is a fleshly work of human origin. The Church established by the apostles "were established according to geographical locations. The borders between cities became the lines drawn between individual churches." "The Bible never classifies churches according to nations or provinces or regions. What the Bible has are the church in Ephesus, the church in Rome, the church in Jerusalem, the church in Antioch and the church in Derbe ..."²⁸⁷ However, modern-day cities, towns, counties and villages differ from those in the past. The Church of

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 118.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., 120.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 119.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 124.

those days made use of the "city" as a boundary. The Bible does not have a church bigger than the "city." Neither does it have a church smaller than the "city." The "city" refers to "a protected confine." God does not make use of either the province or the nation as a unit of differentiating within the Church, because nations change according to the rise and fall of empires and fluctuations in political and military affairs. The universal Church cannot be manipulated by man, for she is not built by human hands. Only the "local church" exists other than the universal. There is no third category of the Church. The church cannot exceed the location. Neither can it be more minute. The one who seeks to establish numerous churches in a single location goes about in vain. It is impossible, out of sync with God's will and absolutely disallowable.²⁸⁸

The people in a particular localized church are all our "brothers and sisters." If anyone starts another organization and claims that they "belong to Christ," that is denominationalism, which amounts to unrightful segregation of God's children. Thus, Nee believes that we should not differentiate people using this method. The Bible mentions clusters of churches, but God never organizes these clusters of churches together to form a single organization. The Bible has "the churches of Asia,"²⁸⁹ "the churches of Galatia,"²⁹⁰ and "the churches of Judea which were in Christ."²⁹¹ These churches were related to each other spiritually, but never within the structure of an organization. For instance, the church in Shanghai, the church in Suzhou and the church in London are not related organizationally. Hence, only the local church should exist, without church

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 127.

²⁸⁹ 1 Corinthians 16:19.

²⁹⁰ Galatians 1:2.

²⁹¹ Galatians 1:22.

groups differentiated on the basis of provinces, regions, nations or even continents.

No administrative ties exist between individual local churches. Each is, as such, independent.²⁹² Each has its own system of doing things and do not merge²⁹³ or mimic one another.

The local church does not have a "superior." It only has Christ as its sovereign. Hence, it must seek to maintain its localized nature, geographical boundary and scope. Once it loses all three, it has entered into "denominationalism." Apostles do not each establish their own individual churches or their own meetings. Once a location "has elders, the apostle must immediately yield control over to the elders."²⁹⁴ Otherwise, denominationalism sets in. "Whenever the localized nature of churches is sacrificed, denominationalism ascends to take its place. The meaning of denominationalism is to have a belonging other than that of the Lord and geographical location."²⁹⁵

One cannot seek to link believers from various locations into a single organization through creeds, doctrines or personalities, so that it becomes a huge, united Church.²⁹⁶ In this manner, the localized nature is lost. Denominationalism separates and segregates. The purpose of the local church is to establish a "non-denominational church."²⁹⁷

²⁹² Nee, *Rethink of Missions*, 137.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, 139.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 193.

²⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 114.

²⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

The local church must not differentiate based on race or social status, as is evident between white and black churches. Neither can the church separate due to differences in language. When “those who believe in Christ within a particular city” gather together, that culminates in “how invaluable a unity?”²⁹⁸

Neither should there be union between workers.²⁹⁹ They ought to be “very independent.”³⁰⁰ The moment union occurs, the localized nature of the church is lost. However, there existed “Paul’s team of co-workers,” or “Peter’s team of co-workers,” “... God’s work and God’s workers. Organizations cannot be found in the Bible. The plurality of churches existed without an umbrella organization. Once they are organized together, they have become a denomination.”³⁰¹ Organization is required for ministry, even as Paul and Barnabas were part of a single organization. After they separated, organizations arose. However, we can not have an organization over the plurality of churches.³⁰² The apostles formed teams according to spiritual principles “rather than human hierarchy.”³⁰³ The most important thing in the church is submission to authority, mutual submission with the aim of establishing the work of God and the church.

Thus, on the one hand is submission to the Lord while on the other is mutual submission. That they submitted to the other brethren is not on account of their counterparts’ positional superiority, but rather because of the different offices which the Lord had given to each of them. This is a completely spiritual matter and not a positional issue.³⁰⁴

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 186.

²⁹⁹ Nee’s view on the usage of the term “worker” is that of “minister,” referring to the preacher.

³⁰⁰ Nee, *Rethinking Missions*, 194.

³⁰¹ Ibid., 196.

³⁰² Ibid., 197.

³⁰³ Ibid., 203.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 205.

Hence, co-workers, where ministry is concerned, ought to mutually “submit to spiritual authority and do the Lord’s work with one heart and mind ...”³⁰⁵

6.4.3.2 The Local Church and Missions

Paul ventured forth to perform the ministry of an apostle, to do mission work and to establish churches. No special names were given to these churches. They were named according to their geographical locations. Neither did he set up branches. He did not set up the “Branch of Asia.” Neither could those coming from Jerusalem come up with a branch for Jerusalem, or the Antiochians, one for themselves. Also, none of the workers established churches based upon their own “doctrines” so as to further their individual viewpoints. Once a missionary has preached the Gospel to the people of a particular location, he sets up “a church of that location.”³⁰⁶ This is different from different missionaries setting up their branches, which segregates within the Body of Christ and ultimately buffers their own denomination.³⁰⁷ Watchman Nee had this to say concerning those missionaries working in Inland China:

We give thanks to God from the bottom of our hearts, because in the past hundred years, He has sent many of His faithful servants to China to preach the Good News. Many Chinese born in spiritual darkness had an opportunity to hear and believe. Their sacrifice, suffering, holiness and industry truly serve as good models for our emulation. How often have we turned our eyes upon these who have returned, having suffered in the

³⁰⁵ Ibid, 208.

³⁰⁶ Ibid, 216.

³⁰⁷ Ibid, 201.

inlands of China, and inevitably caused our hearts to be moved to pray: "May the Lord make me like him." May the Lord bless them and reward them!"³⁰⁸

We ought to be thankful instead of critical of the waves of missionaries who have come to China to bring opportunities of hearing the Gospel. However, was the result of their labor localized churches or XX Church? The setting up of mission agencies is correct, but the establishment of XX missions agency culminating in XX Church is not Biblical.³⁰⁹ As Nee elaborates:

Try Thinking along this line: if your XX society arrives in Dali and establishes Dali Church, and the Pentecostals and Anglicans do the same when they too come to Dali, then everybody is setting up branches of their respective sending organizations. Such actions ... indicate that we are unable to co-operate with one another ... The example for us in the Bible is to establish localized churches.³¹⁰ Thus, we "impede the Lord to rescue us from the errors of mutual segregation, so that the Church of God may be established in every location."³¹¹

Watchman Nee held that a faith-based organization must never be a church. Even if their numbers exceeded that of a church, they still cannot be considered a church. He cited the example of George Muller, who set up an orphanage in Bristol. The numbers at his orphanage exceeded that of the church, and he ran it by faith. However, it was not a church, but a faith-based ministry, also called "faith-based ventures."³¹² There was once when somebody asked Nee a question in Jinan:

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 217.

³⁰⁹ Ibid., 220.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 220.

³¹¹ Ibid., 221.

³¹² Ibid., 248.

I was in Jinan five years ago when a brother from Jilu University asked me: "Is it alright if we break bread here?" I asked them whether they would eat it for Jilu or Jinan. They answered: "For Jilu, of course." I replied that if it was such, then I would not break bread with them. They inquired: "Why?" I said: "What is your stand? The Bible does not allow Jilu University to have the table (of communion). The Bible only allows Jinan to have the table."³¹³

Even if the number of the brethren at Jilu had exceeded that of Jinan, they would still not be able to have the table. Since we cannot ignore "Jinan's stand," the church is only "as big as Jinan." This applies to any form of faith-based ministry. This comparison explains that "the locality" is the scope of ministry. Even the faith-based organization cannot supercede the church. Neither should the church be subordinate to the faith-based organization. In a sense, we see this as the "Dogma of Localization."

6.4.3.3 Remuneration of Church Workers.

The worker who works should get his living from the Gospel.³¹⁴ That a worker receive his wages is reasonable. However, if one is to "await the provision of the Lord based on faithful prayer," one must pay attention to the "economics of faith." We cannot place money matters first and ministry second. Whatever the case may be, in order for one to begin a ministry by faith, he must use faith to appropriate God's provision. "Even though the worker receives his support from the hands of fellow believers, they still look up to God for their needs. Their hearts still depend on the Lord and their eyes are still fixed upon God. As a result of prayer, God moves the hearts of the brethren to give them their gifts ..."³¹⁵ However, he should not draw a salary from the church. Paul did

³¹³ Ibid., 256.

³¹⁴ See I Corinthians 9:14.

³¹⁵ See *Reflections on the Ministry*, 261-262.

not receive his support from a singular church.³¹⁶ “The meaning of getting one’s living from the Gospel does not imply that the church takes a regular responsibility for such provision.”³¹⁷

The worker ought to know himself if he had indeed been called and sent by God. For those who have been called and dispatched by God, God would naturally take up the responsibility. When the missionary Miss Barbara (He Shou-en) came to China, she felt lonely and isolated working by herself in a foreign land. She consulted Wei Jing-Sheng, someone with much experience in the Lord. His reply was, “Did you go of your own will? Or did God send you?” What this means is that, if God wants you to go, then he will surely be responsible for all your needs.³¹⁸

6.4.3.4 Characteristics of the Local Church

Watchman Nee had three things to say regarding today’s Church. Only when these three things are present has a church been established. It is insufficient to merely have brothers and sisters. There is also a need for “the pastor,” “worship” and “the sanctuary.” These are the three main ingredients of a contemporary church. What if a particular location has the brethren but lacks these three elements? Is it then a church? Is it still Biblical without them? Does it become a church only when it has all three?

1. The “pastor” takes care of everything on behalf of the brethren. “He runs the church.”³¹⁹

³¹⁶ See Philippians 4:16 and 2 Corinthians 11:9.

³¹⁷ Nee *Reflections on the Ministry*, 262.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 263.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 295.

2. There must be a meeting on the Lord's day. It does not matter whether or not we have the other meetings, but the believer's basic responsibility is to attend worship. Fifty-two times a year, he goes to church to attend worship. If there is no worship service, then it is not a church.
3. There must be a meeting place, one specifically set aside for the purpose of meeting. We must see what the Bible has to say concerning this issue.

Does the Bible stipulate that there has to be a "pastor" to manage the affairs of the church? Rather, the Bible says that the church ought to be run by elders, or "... a few elders collectively responsible for the shepherding responsibility of a church. In the Bible, only the elders take care of the affairs of the church. There is no mention of any other such position."³²⁰ Even the apostle has no place in the local church. The apostle is dispatched for the sake of the universal Church but the elder belongs in a locality and is not one who is sent.³²¹ If the apostle reaches a location and people come to Christ, and he were to appoint a worker as "pastor," then the truth regarding a localized church would have been lost. Rather, he would choose a few relatively more mature ones and appoint them as elders. "If an apostle takes up responsibility for a particular local church, either he degrades the credentials of an apostle or he has lost the essential nature of the church."³²²

³²⁰ Ibid., 297.

³²¹ Ibid., 300.

³²² Ibid., 301.

Since all affairs in the church are run by the elders, they should be in charge of the meetings in the church (i.e. the so-called "worship services"). Everyone ought to adopt a mentality of "mutuality as essential and mutuality as our distinguishing mark." Brothers and sisters should work together in servitude so as to generate the service.

Another form of meeting is when "individuals have a song or a teaching or a revelation or a tongue or something to be read." This is a localized meeting, one which is earmarked by mutuality.³²³

According to the Acts of the Apostles, we can observe 4 different forms of meetings:

1. The meeting of prayer (Acts 4:24, 31).
2. The meeting of proclamation of God's Word (Acts 15:21, 30-31)
3. The meeting of the breaking of bread (1 Corinthians 11:20). "When you meet ... according to the Lord's supper." The objective of such meetings is to remember the Lord.³²⁴
4. The meeting of the spiritual gifts. "This is a meeting which is church-wide." It is also an "especially prominent" type of church meeting.³²⁵ This kind of meeting is also characterized by "mutuality." The worship services of our day are directed by one person with the congregation following. This is "an apostolic meeting"³²⁶ rather than church-wide. It is a work-based meeting.

³²³ Ibid., 308.

³²⁴ Ibid., 309.

³²⁵ Ibid., 310.

³²⁶ Ibid., 315.

Regarding the construction of the "sanctuary," the physical building is not the church. The church consists of people rather than a geographical location with a church sign and an address. Thus, to say that this is So-and-so church; this is not Biblical teaching.³²⁷ On earth, the church only has a mailing address, but never a residential address.³²⁸ The Jews have synagogues while the New Testament church have a people who have been built up as a spiritual house and temple. The brethren can have a place of meeting either in houses or in "the upper room." Such is the church meeting.³²⁹

6.5 Conclusion

It is very obvious that Watchman Nee strongly advocated the "Local Church" concept of ecclesiology, which stresses locality. These basic ideas bear much similarity to those held by the Brethren. The Brethren (J.N. Darby's group) does stress locality very strongly. However, both oppose apostolic tradition and the system of clergy to the extent that every single thing has to be based upon the Bible, with the praxis of the church based upon the teachings found in Acts and the Pauline epistles. For instance, concerning the breaking of bread to remember the Lord, it is held in homes without adopting the church's name. Church polity is elder-based with emphasis on messages regarding the spiritual life and the exercise of the spiritual gifts. No sprawling church buildings are constructed. Neither are donations collected. These all form common ground between the two.

³²⁷ Ibid., 320.

³²⁸ Ibid., 322.

³²⁹ Ibid., 328.

These were also practices adopted by Wang Ming-Dao, Yang Shao-Tang, Calvin Chao and Hu Ende.³³⁰

One thing is for sure: Nee was opposed to denominationalism. He himself was deeply nurtured by Western missionaries (in particular, Miss Margaret E. Barber, He Shou-en). The books he read came from Westerners. When He Shou-En came to China in the year 1907, Nee was but four years old. Margaret E. Barber's first stint in China was under the auspices of the Anglican Church. Her second term followed "the path of faith" just as the founding principle held by the China Inland Mission (CIM), a "Faith Mission." The Western missionaries who came out of the Azusa Street revival movement (1907) also depended on faith. This path of faith influenced Nee. In his *Rethinking Missions*, Nee makes mention of Margaret E. Barber's experiences on this path of faith as an illustration.³³¹

For the sake of revival in the Chinese Church, Barber interceded earnestly for 12 long years. At that time, people such as Leland Wong, John Wong, Wilson Wong and Hu Si-Xin emerged on the Church scene, culminating in a significant era. Their very existence is a result of the work done by the Western missionaries.

However, Nee, Wang (Ming-Dao) and Young (David) differed in that, despite the backdrop and influence of Chinese cultural lifestyle, they did not study the writings of Confucius and Mencius. Although they experienced the Chinese Cultural Revolution (May 4 Movement) and the era of the coalition of non-

³³⁰ Hu, Ende, Hu is leader of the Brethren type of churches in Hong Kong area. He has a gift of preaching, quite an influential man in South China.

³³¹ Shout, Issue 85-86, 73. As a matter of fact, Chinese Christians did divide along denomination lines. From a Chinese Christian viewpoint, if we have to divide by "your denomination," we also have to carry your "historical background and burden." This type of resentment unintentionally or unintentionally rooted in the Chinese Christian mind. Denominationalists really do not study the Bible carefully and at the time they gave Chinese Christians the wrong concept of the doctrine of church.

Christians, they managed to stand firm without being influenced by the winds of change. Rather, each blazed his own trail for Chinese evangelicalism. They refused to have any dealings with the liberals. Neither did they join the organizations under the umbrella of WCC (World Council of Churches). This can also be attributed to the influence which the CIM's stand on the liberals had on these Chinese Church leaders.³³² In 1949, when the country was full of localized churches everywhere, Nee nurtured workers and elders and even lay believers, such that they were able to pray and preach and pioneer new ministries. On the one hand, the leadership provided by the Western missionaries during the initial stages had generated an illustrious group of successors. On the other hand, these successors, despite the limitations of human and financial resources, superceded the ministerial achievements of the Western missions agencies.

³³² Machay, John, *The Great Commission and The Church Today, In Mission Under the Cross, ed.* (New York Friendship Press, 1953), 139.

Chapter 7

True Jesus Church

7.1 Background

Not much has been written concerning The True Jesus or The Jesus Family, which is in itself an important consideration why their contributions are analyzed in this thesis. Still readers may ask why better-known Chinese churches, especially those related to denominations well-known elsewhere, are not analyzed in these two chapters. In order to further motivate the inclusion and special mention in my thesis, it is therefore necessary to point out the significant influence and impact made on the contemporary Christian community in China by these two indigenous church models. The True Jesus Church claimed in a publication issued to commemorate their 70th Anniversary that they have influenced two-thirds of the Christian population in China. With the political situation that exists at the moment, nobody would be able to undertake the research necessary to prove or disprove this claim. Based on my personal knowledge and research and experience of the state of Christianity in China, however, they did indeed have a significant and widespread impact on a large number of Chinese Christians. And it is important to note that their influence has extended throughout five continents, in other words, also amongst Chinese Christians worldwide. The Jesus Family was and is a major influence in the underground church movement. As the focus of my topic of study is the growth and development especially of indigenous Chinese Christianity during the period 1900-1949, these two churches had, in my opinion, to receive special mention. The important of their impact and influence will become clearer still in the following analysis of the two churches individually.

The True Jesus Church was established in Beijing 1919. Its founder first came to Taiwan over 70 years ago, and the church has grown tremendously there. A statement appeared in the church's 70th anniversary publication, describing its historical development:³³³

The True Jesus Church was founded in Peking. There were 3 founders: Chang Hing-Sheng, Wai Pao-Lo (Paul Wai), and Chang Ba-na-ba (Barnabas Chang). They carried the message of Heavenly Kingdom to many places in Mainland China. It brought forth wonderful fruits with miracles and wonders. The Lord had been with them, returning the different beliefs of many denominations from wrong practices to the right path, by encouraging Christians to go back to the Bible and its teachings. The founders established in the True Jesus Church the practice of being self-supporting, self-propagating and self-governing. The church has grown rapidly in a marvelous way. Our churches had suffered greatly during World War II, and in the occupied territory after 1940 persecution persisted during which there was no freedom of choice in religious matters. However, our church members persevered and comprise one-third of the total number of Christians in China today. This would be the lowest estimation. These true Christians glorified His Holy name.³³⁴

There are no reliable sources for the actual number of Christian believers in China today. However, it would not be surprising if one-third of the total number of believers were members of the True Jesus Church in China. The True Jesus Churches are Pentecostal and emphasize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and divine healing. The True Jesus Church is deeply influenced by the Pentecostal movement in America. They believe that at the end

³³³ Huang, Shundao, *70th Anniversary of the True Jesus Church in Taiwan 1926-1996* (Taipei: True Jesus Church Press, 1996), 3.

³³⁴ *Ibid.* It was March 2nd, 1926 when Elisha Huang of Zhang Hwa, Taiwan, invited Barnabas Chang with other co-workers to come to Taiwan. They first arrived at Ji-Lung, after a few days of preaching, there were 62 people were baptized. They immediately established a church called Xi-Xian True Jesus Church. They baptized 32 people at Jia-Yi. They also built another church called Niu-Tao-Wan's True Jesus Church. On April 3rd, 11 people were baptized at Tai Chung and built Tai-Chung True Jesus Church within 40 days. They began with 3 churches and now they have 223 churches with 46,384 at the end of 1995. They have another chapels (or preaching and prayer point). Totally they have 263. Xu-Donglin "The Lighting From the East" in *70th Anniversary Issue*, 6.

of the world, before the coming of the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit will come again upon believers for the purpose of building His church. There were several significant events that took place in America. During the 1900s in Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma, there were many prayer meetings in which Christians became filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy and speak in tongues. This was taken as a sign indicating that the Holy Spirit was coming to fulfill the promise of latter rain (Joel 2:23).³³⁵

In 1906 there was a small group of Christians in the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, California, who called themselves the Little Apostle Faith Mission. During their services, the Holy Spirit came from above like fire upon the members and filled all of them. Immediately, they were moved by the Holy Spirit and decided to go overseas to preach the message of His coming, the outpouring of the Spirit.³³⁶

Within a few years they established two Bible institutes in America, one in the north and one in the south, training more than 5,000 workers. They organized a headquarters to send out missionaries to the world, and sent three groups to Hong Kong, Shanghai and Tianjin, these went to north and Southeast China to preach the gospel.

As a result of opposition from traditionalists, the missionaries were forbidden to speak in the language of the Holy Spirit and were secularized, being no different from the ordinary churches. This report concurs with what Kenneth Scott Latourette wrote concerning the indigenous church:

³³⁵ Ibid., 8.

³³⁶ Bays, Daniel H., "Indigenous Protestant Churches in China, 1900-1973: A Pentecostal Case Study" in *Indigenous Response to Western Christianity* ed. Steven Kapla ed. (New York: New York university Press, 1993), 128. All these elements coalesced in the particular conditions of the United States. Soon after 1900, the Apostolic Faith movement emerged and then came the great watershed of the foundation of the modern Pentecostal movement, the Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles, 1906-1908.

An interesting development was the appearance of new Chinese Christian sects (Chiao). Its organizer was Barnabas Chang who professed to have received a divine Commission in a vision around 1909-1910. He claimed to have spent three years in quiet study and then began to preach. The movement rejected any relief from foreign financial and staff support and denounced other Christian organizations as false. They claimed to have brought back the apostolic doctrines and practices. Its members rejoiced in poverty and persecution, and they observed baptism by immersion on the Sabbath. They also believed in healing by the laying on of hands and direct communication through dreams and trances. Speaking in tongues, the infilling of the Spirit and the early Second Coming, were to be found in several practices.³³⁷

From these events we conclude that the True Jesus Church was greatly influenced by the Pentecostal movement and they built Chinese indigenous churches. Based on Daniel Bay's reports, the True Jesus Church was deeply rooted in the American Pentecostal movement. This was not only true of the True Jesus Church but likewise for the Great Shandong Revival. The Jesus Family Church was also indirectly influenced by American missionaries.³³⁸

Before 1937, the True Jesus Church was the first Chinese Christian group since the mid-19th-century Taiping Heavenly Kingdom to generate a creative and self-defined set of doctrines, and it was also the largest of the indigenous churches by the 1930s, spreading across several provinces. Another comparable group was the Jesus Family, a local rural communal Christian church that was even more doctrinally creative. It spread before 1937 but remained confined to North China, especially Shandong. Both groups were distinctly Pentecostal in belief and practice, and both were influenced by foreign Pentecostal missionaries or their literature at key stages of their development.³³⁹

³³⁷ Lattourette, Kenneth Scott, *A History of Christian Mission in China* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), 808.

³³⁸ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *The Break of Dawn*. (Taipei: Harmony and Bible House, 1977), 2.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 32-34.

After the Azusa Street Revival, a group of missionaries immediately went to the Far East. Rev. Alfred G. Garr was the first to come to Kong Hong and he established the Pentecostal Church there. Another group of missionaries came to Hubei Province: The third group, under the leadership of M. Lawrence Ryan came to Shanghai and established the Apostolic Faith Mission in Nanking, as well as an orphanage.³⁴⁰ Rev. Ma Zhaorui was the principal and he went to West Shandong to seek out orphans. After the Yellow River Catastrophe, Rev. Ma stayed in Rev. Yang Yi-Cheng's house. Rev. Yang asked him how a minister could have power from the Holy Spirit. He simply answered, "Confess your sins." Rev. Yang, a graduate of North China Presbyterian Theological Seminary, stayed in his study for three days and fasted, finally coming out when he had been filled with the Holy Spirit. His church was greatly revived and membership increased. During worship service, following hymn singing, members went to the altar to confess their sins, after which they heard the sermon. They conducted prayer meetings into the night, as was the pattern of worshippers during the Shangdong Revival.³⁴¹

Because of the Shandong Revival, many Chinese independent and indigenous churches were established. Bays mentioned in his writings that there was another indigenous church established called Ling En Hui (Spiritual Gifts Church).

The Ling En Hui was based in Shandong Province in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and is perhaps best seen as a Pentecostal movement rather than as an ecclesiastically organized body. The movement encompassed Chinese churches and pastors who broke away from denominations which refused to accept their

³⁴⁰ Bays, *Indigenous Protestant Churches in China*, 127.

³⁴¹ Bays, *Indigenous Protestant Churches in China*, 129. The Apostolic Faith Mission in Shanghai started this work in Nanking and Ma was the master of the orphan house influenced by the Shandong Revival. Also see Moses Yu, *The Break of Dawn*, 32-34.

Pentecostal doctrines and practices. They also impacted foreign mission communities, as in making the famous Shandong Revival of the early 1930s a joint Sino-foreign experience.³⁴²

Western missionary movements also contributed to the establishment of a Chinese indigenous church. The Azusa Street Revival caused the three groups of mission movements mentioned above. The first group came to Hong Kong and founded their base. They won their first convert named Mok Lai Chi who received the outpouring and baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Mok published a new magazine which was named *Pentecostal Truth Magazine* (Wuxunjie Zhenlibac) with an approximate circulation of 6,000 issues. This magazine was sent to all parts of China. The contents of the magazine initially influenced the readers in Taiwan and Northern China.³⁴³

The second group of 12 missionaries were led by Mr. Berntsen. Settling at Zhengding, Xian, Khang established the South Hebei mission. They issued a magazine named *Shi Tu Xin Xin Bao* (Apostolic Faith) in 1908. Later Mr. Bernsten moved to Shijiazhuang and call their mission "Xin Xin Hui" (Faith Mission). The magazine's contents not only emphasized filling but also outpouring of the Holy Spirit. They also encouraged Christians to spread the Gospel because Jesus will come soon.³⁴⁴

The leaders of the third group were Mr. and Mrs. Lawler (they were also products of the Azusa Street Church Revival). They named their mission "Faith Union." Bays recorded their influence on the founding of the True Jesus Church as follows:

³⁴² Ibid., 129.

³⁴³ Ibid., 129.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 130.

The True Jesus Church in effect had two co-founders. One was Mr. Zhang Bin of Weixian district in Northern Shandong province (Zhen Yesu Jiaohui 1979). Zhang, who had been an elder in the Weixian Presbyterian church for several years, in 1909 was told by his son about Apostolic Faith Mission (Shitu Xin Xin Hui) in Shanghai where one could "receive the Holy Spirit." The elder Zhang set off on a quest that would take him far and wide. He went to Shanghai, where the Pentecostal missionaries (very likely Mr. and Mrs. Lawler, Azusa Street products) laid hands on him, but he did not receive his Spirit baptism. He continued earnestly to seek it at home, and finally in December 1909 he received the Holy Spirit and the sign of tongues. In 1910 he went to Suzhou and was rebaptized (by immersion in water), and some time after that he went to the north, including Beijing, where he received instruction from two members of the Xin Xin Hui of Faith Union, one of them probably brother Berntsen from Zheugding (who may have been visiting in Beijing or perhaps came there regularly to tend to Faith union activities; the two Faith Union members were surnamed Pen and Kui, and Berntsen's Chinese surname was Pen).³⁴⁵

Of these three groups of missionaries, the first group influenced the idea of the True Jesus Church through literature. However, the second and the third group directly influenced the founding of the True Jesus Church.

7.2 The Lighting of the Torch

There were three founders according to the history of the True Jesus Church: Wei Yisa (Isaac Wei), Chang Lingshen (Spirit-born), and Zhang Banaba (Barnabas Zhang). It was at Tianjin in the winter of 1917 that they began to gather without a name. Wei Yisa, who had made a banner 12 feet long, knelt down and prayed with 17 other believers. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit spoke in a loud voice. The voice commanded them to write Zhen Yesu Jiaohui (five character in Chinese). This was the first True Jesus Church in Tianjin.³⁴⁶

They claimed it was the right time and place because Tianjin means "Heavenly Place," making it the most suitable place to begin the movement. The following year, on July 28, 1918, they established their headquarters in Hebei in

³⁴⁵ Ibid., 132.

³⁴⁶ Deng, Zaoming, ed., *Bridge Magazine* (Hong Kong: Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion and Culture Ltd, 1994), 4.

the shophouse of Wei (selling cloth which was owned by Wei). Wei took the position of general superintendent.³⁴⁷

A second version of the church's founding was based on an article written by Zhang Shitou, the son of Barnabas Zhang. He denied that Wei Yisa was the founder. Rather, it was Zhang Lingsheng who was the founder. Zhang Lingsheng, a native of Weixian, was originally a Presbyterian. There was a riot in West Wei-xian, and Zhang Lingsheng ostensibly went to solve their problem as a peacemaker. Instead, he took the opportunity to preach the love of Jesus and pleaded with them to accept Jesus as their Savior. People from the two parties were angry with Zhang Lingsheng. Barnabas Zhang's wife was moved by Zhang Lingsheng's preaching and she accepted Jesus as her savior. After this event, Barnabas Zhang was filled with the Holy Spirit and reportedly started the True Jesus Church. One day while he was working in the field, Zhang was suddenly filled by the Holy Spirit and began to speak in tongues and shouted "Hallelujah" while his body shook. It was April 25, 1909. After this event, he was baptized by Zhang Lingsheng in a nearby river. He was also filled with enthusiasm after his baptism. He claimed that he had received direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, and on instruction by the Holy Spirit, he started the True Jesus Church and preached on the Second Coming of Jesus.³⁴⁸

During the process of establishing the True Jesus Church, Zhang always used the term "True Jesus." Paul Wei (Wei Baoluo) first started the church named "Reformed True Jesus Church"(Geng Zheng Yesu Jiaohui). After Zhang Lingsheng and Wei (Isaac) met at Tianjin, they agreed to change the church's name to Wan Gua Geng Zheng Zhen yesu Jiaohui (All Nation Reformed, True Jesus Church). After the death of Wei (Isaac), his son Wei Baoluo changed and

³⁴⁷ Ibid., 2.

³⁴⁸ Bridge Dec. 1993. Vol 62, 4.

simplified the name as the True Jesus Church. When Barnabas Zhang went to south China and east China as a travelling evangelist, to propagate their message, he used the name True Jesus Church. Not until 1927 when they established headquarters in Shanghai did they unify this name as True Jesus Church. (Isaac Wei died in 1919).³⁴⁹

Barnabas Zhang and Isaac Wei met in 1909. They met again in 1917, but because of differing opinions on some doctrinal issues, they regarded each other as enemies. Wei went back to the North and died afterwards. Zhang established many churches in Shangdong (this is the reason why his followers in Shandong claimed that Barnabas Zhang was the founder, since people did not know Isaac Wei.) Zhang Ling-Sheng was getting old and unable to lead anymore. Although Wei was the superintendent, his failing health also reduced his activities for the church. Barnabas Zhang went to east and south Central China and Taiwan. Later, members of the church became dissatisfied with Barnabas Zhang's way of handling church matters and doctrinal issues. When the southern and northern branches met at their annual convention in Shanghai, they decided to excommunicate Zhang. During the sixth annual convention, Zhang Ling-Sheng and Barnabas Zhang clashed over certain issues on which both were unwilling to compromise. However, although they were opponents, people still recognized Barnabas Zhang's contribution to the movement. Chang Ling-Sheng went home with a broken heart. Soon he withdrew from the movement, and in 1935, he joined the Assemblies of God.³⁵⁰

The reason was not because of the arguments between the two Zhang's (Ling-Sheng and Barnabas). "We are afraid that the spirit that they received was

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 5

³⁵⁰ Ibid., 6

not the true spirit of Jesus. They were inconsistent and could not distinguish right from wrong. Due to this condition they fell easily into the sin of doubt. Think clearly of the consequences: one of the three founders died earlier, one withdrew from the movement and the other one was dismissed by the delegates of the 6th Annual Convention. We have the right to suspect internal problems.³⁵¹

The conflict between the earlier leaders came about because they were lacking in a basic knowledge of biblical truth. Isaac was a silk and cloth dealer. Barnabas Zhang and Zhang Ling-Sheng were antique dealers. None of them studied theology, so they were naive about many issues. Thomas Kuo commented on this in the 30th anniversary issue of the True Jesus Church:

Spiritual work has been greatly developed but personnel and personal relationships hindered cooperative efforts. They could not work together with a united spirit. This had affected the development of the movement and caused confusion and laxity in cooperation. It was marked by uncommonly low morals and unfaithfulness. If we do not keep ourselves on the right track of the Word of God it will result in the following conditions. We now face a worldly and sinful generation, coupled with a decline of the Christian faith. This negative influence has caused the future of the church to suffer greatly.³⁵²

Barnabas Zhang was excommunicated at the 6th Annual Convention. He formed his headquarter in Hankou, calling his church the Chinese True Jesus Church and set the constitution, by-laws, and established a system of his own.³⁵³

7.3 Theological and Doctrinal Position

The name "True Jesus Church" itself carries theological implications. We must understand that their doctrinal position was not formed in a short period of

³⁵¹ *Bridge Magazine* Vol.63 1995, 5. This was also admitted by their followers

³⁵² See 30th Anniversary of Taiwan True Jesus Church. Also see *Bridge Magazine*, Vol.63, 3.

³⁵³ *Bridge magazine* Vol. 63. 1974, April 2, 3.

time. In the beginning, the name of their organization was the "All Nations Reformed True Jesus Church." Judging from this title, we can infer that they would have liked to build their church according to basic apostolic teachings.³⁵⁴ At the beginning of the movement, because of a lack of basic Bible knowledge, they had practiced their faith in a peculiar way. For instance, Wei (Bao-Luo) said in 1917 that he had been baptized by Jesus, and that after the baptism, he had fasted for 30 days.³⁵⁵ He claimed that all Christians ought to share all of their belongings (such as money). Within five years, Christ would return and the whole world would then be consumed by fire. From 1919, all believers should change their surname to Ye (because the name of Jesus and Yehovah both begin with Ye). Isaac Wei would become Ye Isaac. Wei Bao-Luo would be Ye Bao-Luo, Zhang Ling-Sheng would be Ye Ling-Sheng (Peter Ye in English); and Barnabas Chang, Barnabas Ye.³⁵⁶

True Jesus Church leaders later realized that it was wrong to have so changed their names and recognized they would be guilty of cultic teachings and practices. For instance, the first cultic practice occurred when Li Shou-Chun changed his name to Ye Fu-Sheng. He was a farmer from Bochang Xian with no former education. Paul Wei went to Ye Fu-Sheng's village to preach for 50 days. In his preaching, Wei mostly shared his visions, and some personal feelings as well as his personal "experience in the Spirit." They called their church "Jesus Home." Everyone was instructed to sell their property in order to offer everything they had to God. They were to live together and forbidden to be married. Paul Wei ordained several deacons included Li, to claim that he is "Living Jesus;" only

³⁵⁴ Huang, Elijah, "Revival of the Apostolic Church" in *30th Anniversary of Taiwan True Jesus Church*, 44.

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 45.

³⁵⁶ *Bridge magazine* (Hong Kong: Christian study centre on Chinese Religion and culture Ltd., December Issue, 1994), 3.

those who were baptized by him would be saved. He also said that the resurrection of Jesus was because of the enjoyment, such that any woman who had sexual relations with him would be blessed. Finally, the whole church rose up and put him out of their church to put a stop to his cultic practices.

In time, Barnabas Zhang claimed to be the head of the True Jesus church and also said that Jesus would not come back. At the church's 30th anniversary, he announced that there were in all 15 cultic groups. Thus, it is easy to see why there were chaotic activities in the earlier movement.³⁵⁷

Literal interpretation of the word "True" (Zhen) mostly came in their earlier exodus from out of the older denominational movements. "True" (Zhen) is equivalent to God because God is the only one who is real.³⁵⁸ The True Jesus Church was, hence, God truly working among men during the last days. Their commission was to correct the wrong teachings of denominational churches. The True Jesus Church claimed to return to the original form of the apostolic church. Only Jesus is true. Likewise, only the True Jesus Church is the true church. No others were true. All denominations are built upon the wrong foundation because they are built upon dogma and deceptive philosophy which depends on human tradition and based upon the principles of this world rather than on Christ (Col. 2:8-9 and Gal 1:6,10). Only the True Jesus Church, it claimed, was built upon direct revelation from the Holy Spirit, which ensures walking in the original apostolic path; all other denominations were built upon wrong interpretation generated by man's own ideas and preferences, adding what they like and omitting what they disliked.³⁵⁹ Based on 1919 confession, they issued 13

³⁵⁷ *Bridge Magazine* 62, 3.

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁹ *70th Anniversary issues*, 6.

requirements for their members to keep. Some of the most important doctrines and practices adopted at this time were as follows.

Believers must:

Receive full immersion, face-down baptism;

Seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit, with speaking in tongues as evidence of such baptism;

Keep Saturday as the Sabbath for worship;

Seek the power of healing and of exorcising demons;

In communion break the bread, not cut it;

Implement the sacrament of foot washing among church members;

Have ordination by laying on of hands;

Have no time limit for Sabbath worship;

All have the right to speak during services;

All be permitted to pray aloud during services;

Seek revelation of the Holy Spirit in choosing overseers (bishops, Jiandu), elders (Zhanglao), and deacons (Zhishi);

If evangelists, should not receive a set salary;

Devote their heart, spirit, and livelihood to the Lord, and give at least 10 percent of their income. Interestingly, a brief comment asserted that this list says that only those who abided by these provisions were true Christians.³⁶⁰

Another set of clauses defined a series of corrective measures which must be taken by other Christian churches in order to become proper or pure. Other churches must:

Stop using the term Shangdi for God and use Zhenshen ("True God");

Eliminate the office of "pastor" (mushi) and ordain only overseers, elders, and deacons;

³⁶⁰ Instruction for new believers. Issued by True Jesus Church. (Pamphlet form).

Stop teaching the doctrine of the Trinity (*Sanwei yiti*) and teach the Unitarian and undivided (*Duyiwuer*) one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
 Baptize only in the name of Jesus, not of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;
 Stop using denominational names and call themselves the True Jesus Church;
 Stop depending on finances or influence of foreigners;
 Stop baptizing by sprinkling, but only by immersion;
 Honor the Sabbath as the only proper day of worship;
 Not restrict the right of preaching to only one person in the assembly, but allow everyone to have this right;
 Not give set salaries to evangelistic workers;
 Not put time limits on worship services.³⁶¹

7.4 The beliefs of the True Jesus Church in relation to generally accepted evangelical teaching.

The basic beliefs and practices as stated in the above statements are based on decisions made at the second general convention of delegates from the worldwide True Jesus Church. There are some basic teachings different from the general evangelical position and practice. An analysis follows:

7.4.1 The concept of God and the Trinity

Zhen Shen--True God. Elohim and Theos should be translated as True God (Zhen Shen), not "Shang di". "Shang di" is a traditional term to indicate that God is the only God, the one magnificent, glorious Divine Being. "Zhen" means "True" and "Truthfulness" and gives a better rendition of God's uniqueness.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Bays, 134.

³⁶² The Term for God in Chinese should be "Shen" instead of "Shang di" (Superior Emperor) was which controversial issue in the earlier days among the Catholic translators. See

They had abandoned the belief in the doctrine of the Trinity because they believed in only one God (Unitarianism). They took the Unitarian position during the time of baptism and they avoided the use of the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is the only true God who created the Universe. (John 1:1-3). The True Jesus Church used the term "Reform" to indicate that all denomination are not practicing what the Bible teaches. For this reason the Holy Spirit had revealed His revelation to them and yet what was allegedly revealed by the Spirit was nothing more than what the Bible already taught. The doctrine of the Trinity, was in their view the result of a process of several hundred years involving studying and consideration by saints, Ecumenical Councils, and debates, finally being decided upon by a majority of early church fathers. As a result came the term "Trinity". Trinity should not indicate three independent persons and three dispensations of the past, present, and future. It is not wise to call God "Shang di," which gets easily mixed up with pagan religions. It is better to call God "Zhen Shen." Shang di has Chinese religious concepts and mixes up the true God with the Chinese cultural God. L. Berkhof gives us a short and precise statement to indicate the belief of Trinity.³⁶³

The western concept of the Trinity reached its final statement in the great work of Augustine, *De Trinitatis Dei*. He too stressed the unity of essence and the trinity of Persons. Each one of the three Persons possesses the entire essence, and is in so far identical with the essence and with each one of the other Persons. They are not like three human persons, each one of which possesses only a part of generic human nature. Moreover, the One is never and can never be without the

Wang Chih-Hsin, 135-136. They adopted "Tianzhu" (Heavenly Lord) instead of "Shen" because the Pope preferred "Tianzhu."

³⁶³ Berkhof, L., *History of Christian Doctrine* (Michigan: Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), 91.

Others; the relation of dependence between them is a mutual one. The essence belong to each of them under a different perspective, as in generating, being generated, or existing through inspiration.

7.4.2 The terms for Baptism

The True Jesus Church teaches baptism by immersion which means immersion with the head bowing into the living water (i.e. river or other natural water source). The reason they are doing this is because when Christ was nailed on the cross before He committed His Spirit to the Father, He bowed His head. Therefore, only people who receive this form of baptism shall be saved. Rom 6:3-4 indicates that one must be buried with Jesus. One must bow one's head before entering into "death" with Christ. According to True Jesus Church the basic purpose for immersion baptism is found in Jeremiah 2:13. The Israelites have committed two sins. First, they have forsaken the spring of living water. Second, they have dug their own cistern; a broken cistern that cannot hold water. Based on this passage, the True Jesus Church decided that baptism must take place in living water and one must not be baptized in a well or cistern. When examining this passage within the context of its historical background (a basic hermeneutic principles),³⁶⁴ we easily see that passage has nothing to do with New Testament baptism. Judging the text by context and contents it indicated the Israelites were like broken cisterns, the "vessel" to store drinking or cooking water which symbolize their forsaking God to worship idols. They lost their faith and lost their function as cisterns holding water. They lost the blessing and purpose of God. This is supposed to be the correct interpretation.³⁶⁵

³⁶⁴ Yu, Moses Lee-Kung, *The Yu Study Bible on Hermeneutics* (Berkeley: Hymnody and Bible House, 1985), 1935-1941.

³⁶⁵ Jeremiah 2:13 must be interpreted with the principle of historical

7.4.3 On Feet Washing

In the 30th Anniversary Issue of True Jesus Church of Taiwan it was written that based on John 13:4-5, Christ had taught His disciples to love one another. He set an example by washing their feet. He told them “you also should wash one another’s feet.” Therefore we should follow this practice to love one another. In practicing this ritual, our body would be totally cleansed. Having participated in Christ, we shall be blessed by observing this new commandment.³⁶⁶

A study of the historical background for foot washing reveals that it was a custom during a time when people wore sandals, and hosts washed their guests’ feet because they were dirty. Jesus’ washing of the disciple’ feet was not to welcome guests but to teach a lesson. It was at the time of His departing. It did not take place before the feast but after their meal. We can see that Peter misunderstood Jesus. He asked the Lord to wash his whole body. Christ answered very clearly that the washing of feet is the institution of a new relationship between the disciples. This was a symbolic cleansing. Its purpose was to point out the fact that there is one in their midst who was not clean. Their relationship should be built upon truth, faithfulness and loyalty. The motivation to self-exalt was in their midst and is a result of an unclean mind. Jesus’ foot washing indicated the host’s willingness to set an example to serve someone of a lower position. This is to point out the importance of concern to help one another (John 13:16-17). At the same time, it was to teach the disciples to learn humility

background. See Yu Study Bible on Hermeneutics and basic principles, 1935-1936 on “Historical Background,” context and content.

³⁶⁶ *Instruction for Young Adults* (Taiwan: True Jesus Church Press, 1990)

and the importance of building good relationships amongst themselves so that they may become a loving community.³⁶⁷

7.4.4 Keeping the Sabbath Day

The True Jesus Church maintains the practice of keeping both the Sabbath day as the teaching of the Bible as well as the Lord's Day in accordance with present church tradition. The Sabbath Day was set apart by the Lord as a day of rest. The purpose for the Sabbath Day is for the rest of body as well as walking with the Lord in Spirit. God rested not because He was tired, but because He wished for humans to have rest and to observe the Sabbath. It was a way of receiving blessing. The body and soul all rest in Him. It is good for health and spirituality. However, we also see that Christ's resurrection indicated His victory over sin and also the accomplishment of true rest for our body and soul (Rom 9:10, Acts 1:22). On the Lord's Day we bear witness of His resurrection.³⁶⁸

From these passages we begin to see that the early believers gathered together on the Lord's day for the purpose of bearing witness to Jesus' resurrection. They kept the Lord's Day but substituting it for the Sabbath was not their intention. Based on the Epistle to the Romans, we would more clearly answer that it is not "the day" but bearing witness that is more important.

7.4.5 The System of Pastors, Elders and Deacon

The 30th Anniversary collective Issue of Taiwan True Jesus Church rejects and eliminates the Pastorate. In Ephesians 4:11, pastor is mentioned also as a gift

³⁶⁷ See also the Book of James which teaches Christians not only as a saved person but ought to live as a true believer, otherwise he is a dead believer James 2: 21-26.

³⁶⁸ See Mark 16:9; Luke 24:1; John 19:26; Acts 2:46-47; Romans 14:5.

from the Holy Spirit. Most churches have a pastorate and it is also a traditional church rule. This system makes the pastor a clergyman. New Testament churches also had deacons and elders who were chosen by the apostles or by the congregation. This does not go against Biblical teaching. Paul taught through his letters to Timothy how to select deacons as well as elders. It is obvious that elders and deacons were first installed, hence setting the pattern derived from Paul and his teaching.³⁶⁹

Judging from our brief review, some of the ideas are not aligned with accepted evangelical doctrines and positions. However, on a different note, the True Jesus Churches were perfectly self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating. They have maintained themselves as an indigenous church without any foreign financial support, and have gone through tremendous difficulties, trials, and suffering in the process of building the True Jesus Church.

7.5 How is the True Jesus Church developing?

When the True Jesus Church was started at Tianjing, Isaac Wei was a strong leader and Barnabas Zhang and Zhang Ling-Sheng were co-leaders of the movement. Zhang Ling-Sheng met Wei in 1919. Two years later Isaac Wei passed away. Zhang Ling-Sheng then assumed leadership as superintendent. After the 6th Annual Meeting in 1929, he resigned and joined the Assemblies of God. When Isaac Wei was very strongly against denominations, he considered them as 'false churches' which were not really following the teachings of the Bible. Because of this belief, he went into denominational churches and reacted very violently, even to the extent of destroying their furniture, pews, pulpits, etc. He was twice arrested because of his violent actions. He said that he was doing

³⁶⁹ See Tim 3:1-13.

this because these churches received money from foreign missions. After some time he stopped accusing existing churches. In the meantime, Barnabas Zhang had built many True Jesus Churches in Shandong province (for this reason, in Shandong the True Jesus Church claimed that Barnabas was their founder).³⁷⁰ These followers pushed their vision to other provinces. They were utterly dependent upon the revelation they received from the Holy Spirit. They had gone to many places by faith to propagate their teaching about the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues and spiritual gifts, often doing everything entirely by faith alone. Everything depended upon God's provision. Whatever people gave, they would accept.³⁷¹

7.6 Developments in Taiwan

The True Jesus Church spread rapidly in North, East, Central and South China. Barnabas Zhang contributed a great deal to this effort. In October 1923, Zhang went from Shanghai to Fujian province by boat. He convinced a group of Seventh Day Adventists, to become members of the True Jesus Church. They elected Thomas Kou as superintendent of the Fujian churches, supervising all the developing administrative work. Barnabas Zhang and Kou continued to preach and to organize the True Jesus Church. At this time, Taiwan was under Japanese rule. People were fighting for liberation from Japanese domination. They faced a dilemma upon contact with the True Jesus Church group. They realized that only trust in the Holy Spirit could restore freedom to their country. At this time of psychological stress, they invited Barnabas Zhang and Thomas Kou to come to Zhan-Hwa Xue (Taiwan) to hold evangelistic meetings. Many young people accepted their message and experienced the baptism and the filling of the Holy

³⁷⁰ *Bridge Magazine* Vol.62. 1993, 1-12.

³⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

Spirit. The first group of the people who received the baptism were 62 in number. Immediately, they formed a True Jesus Church and appointed elders. Within a short period of time, they had more than 30 churches, which later increased to 61. Obviously, these were fast-growing churches.³⁷²

7.7 Malaysia, Europe and North America

Many Chinese merchants from the Fujian province went to Southeast Asia, to places such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Among them were converts of the True Jesus Church, such as Titus Hu, and Hu Man Li. These immigrants to South East Asia began the True Jesus Church's work. Barnabas Zhang was invited by these newly converted members to those places. First they established a Singapore branch of the True Jesus Church. There was a female member named Mary Chu who was appointed as a deaconess. She was a midwife who went back to Hong Kong and through her ministry many people were converted. They established a True Jesus Church in Hong Kong in 1929. Later, they built several True Jesus Churches in Kowloon, with more than a thousand members.³⁷³

Some members of the Taiwan and Hong Kong True Jesus Church migrated to Europe and North America and built churches there.

7.8 Conclusion

For 30 years, from 1919 to 1949, the True Jesus Church built their 'church' in China, Korea, South East Asia, Europe, North America, without a penny from Western churches. Their mission boards were entirely built on self-

³⁷² History of True Jesus Church (Taiwan: True Jesus Church Published, Lesson 9), 42-47.

³⁷³ Ibid., 37.

govern, self-supporting, and self-propagating principle. They were truly indigenous churches built by Chinese Christians, unlike many Chinese churches which were originally under foreign missions boards or denominational supervision and gradually became independent. The True Jesus Church paid the price and went to many places where they were sometimes welcomed and sometimes rejected suffering hardship, hunger, thirst, etc. It was true that in the early days there were false doctrinal practices. Some may not accept the Charismatic practices which are another issue. We must make a fair judgment and admire their indigenous spirit. Their 'vision' may have been over-emphasized from a scriptural view-point. People may not agree with them, but they did build an indigenous organization, which meant they were as effective as missionaries from the Western world. Today, Christians are able to preach, and build churches. Comfort may be given to those who gave their lives in spreading the gospel in China. Also it is the answer to the people who had contributed their effort and lives for the Gospel.

Judging from the lives of these men, we can see that when they arrived to a new place, they first looked for an existing mission church as did the Anglicans, London Missionary Society, China Inland Mission, Seventh Day Adventist, Presbyterian, Apostolic Faith Mission, Methodist, and other. We may see that they built their work on the foundation of other denominational churches. But the result of their work was built upon false doctrines. We may admire their labor, enthusiasm, and their attitude on mission. At least we can say they built their church first on the foundation of a missionary movement.

Chapter 8

Ye Su Chia Ting (The Jesus Family)

Jing Dian-Ying was the Founder of the Jesus family. In his youth, Jing was greatly influenced by Nord Dillenback, a Methodist missionary. This was recorded by Dr. Zhu Xin.

The history of the Jesus Family was started in 1922. Jing began his formal education at Eng Chung Middle School. After a year, Miss Dillenback came to Taian, Shandong. She came from an American Methodist background. Miss Dillenback needed someone to teach her the Chinese language. Jing was an over-aged student, having entered the school at the age of twenty. He studied Confucian teachings and the historical background of this Chinese philosophy. After being in a Chinese language school, he was baptized as a Christian but was not entirely convicted of his Christian faith. He maintained his loyalty to Confucianism. During this time he was moved by the Christian character and earnest attitude of Miss Dillenback. He often heard her exhortation to accept the Gospel message of Christianity.

At this time he contracted tuberculosis. Miss Dillenback rented a room for him at the Taishan resort area. She served him with the best food, and at night he studied the Bible, which was a gift from Miss Dillenback. Through a period of meditation and being taught by the Holy Spirit, he was wholeheartedly converted to Christianity. The Jesus Family was an indigenous church which represented new ideology on an ideal Christian society. In Rees' book, Yuen Ho Zie wrote in the preface saying: "Jesus Family" arose in China as the work of God's own hands. Its distinguishing characteristic was not prophetic preaching, nor the tongue they spoke, nor the truth of church but it was their love for one another.³⁷⁴

³⁷⁴ Rees, Dr. Vaughan, *Jesus Family* (Hong Kong: The Bell man House Chinese edition, 1950), 1.

Dr. Rees maintained that these were spiritual organizations, like Watchman Nee's group. He joined the Family and began working with them. He recorded honestly what he had seen and experienced while living with them. He thought that there were many practices of the Family that revealed Western churches' ways of learning and adapting. However, many of the indigenous groups harbored "anti-foreigner" sentiments. Western missionaries should learn from them so as to gain a greater understanding of their practices, for they are a group of people blessed of God. Unfortunately, many Western missionaries were lacking in humility to recognize their own failures.

8.1 Jing Dian-Ying, The man and the Practice

Jing Dian-Ying, the founder of the Jesus Family, was born in Ti An, Shandong. He was raised in an atmosphere which favored Confucianism. In 1911, he entered Ti An Cai-Eng High School for study. This school was established by the Methodists. Due to the Christian environment there, Jing became interested in the Christian faith and eventually accepted it. Now the province of Shandong had been influenced by the Charismatic movement of the Azusa Street Revival of Los Angeles. After the Azusa Street Revival, three groups came to China. One of the groups settled in Shanghai as the Apostolic Faith mission. They started an orphanage headed by Rev. Ma Zhou-Rue. A minister named Yang I-Chang (in Shandong) sought for the power of the Holy Spirit under the guidance of Rev. Ma. Yang was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in tongues. Soon, their movement spread to the whole of Shandong.³⁷⁵ Then he began to see how Christ came into this world becoming poor in order to reach poor people. Yang was convicted to live in poverty and so, he gave up his personal belongings and property to live like a beggar in order to

³⁷⁵ Yu, Moses, *The Break of Dawn*, 23-24.

preach. He and a few of his followers organized a society called the “Believers, Saving Society.” Not long after they started the society, a few of them lived together by self-support. Not only were they self-supporting, but at the same time they also sold what they had harvested. For a short period of time, they called themselves the “Saints Society”. Later, they changed their name to “Jesus Family”. By 1949, they had built and organized 500 Families in North China.³⁷⁶

After his consecration, Jing’s life changed in many ways. He began putting a great deal of effort into studying the Bible and set his mind to consecrate his life for God’s kingdom. First, he started the “Saints Society”, subsequently changing the society’s name to the “Believers’ Saving Society,” and finally naming it “Jesus Family”. The real purpose of the Family was “to sell everything you have and give to the poor to deny, self and to suffer for the Lord.” Anyone who is willing to join the Family must “Po Chuang Ru Jia” (literally means making you broken by selling everything for the Lord and than gaining a spiritual family). Everyone in the Family does what he can and tries his best to have only what is needed for survival. Their goal was to live together without personal belongings, having no selfish purpose, and to live a communal life. All members of the family had to save everything for the sake of the Family, their aim being to help the poor and aged, and to spread the Gospel of God’s Kingdom.³⁷⁷

The Jesus Family movement first started at Ma-Chuang Jing’s own property and remained there for 20 years. They later spread throughout Northern China, their numbers rising from 60 to several thousand. They may have had more than a quarter million members ultimately. This new movement drew many

³⁷⁶ Dr. Delwyn Vaghan Rees wrote his book on the “Jesus Family” 1959. The Jesus Family had already been shut down by the Communist Regime. By 1949, there were 500-600 families in North China. Based on another source, by the time of 1949 there were about 127 Family branches in North China. Hai Yen: Main Record of China Church History. (accomplished in Dec. 1999), 28.

³⁷⁷ I am adopting the idea from Acts 2:43-37; 5:1-11.

professional people into their ranks, such as medical doctors, nurses, engineers, teachers, and farmers. Even Miss Dillenback resigned from her mission board to join the Family as the “mother” of the Family. She assisted Jing to deal with minor domestic affairs of the family. She was happy to see the person she led to Christ now became the leader of the movement. She joined the Family and gave herself to the movement. She died in the Family and was buried there.³⁷⁸

8.2 The Purpose

There is a hymn by Jing they often Sung in the Family:

“Merchants are most self-motivated. They have given their lives for material things. They have no standard of character and are always seeking for fame. Cheating old and young, pleasing those who are rich with a smile, threatening the poor with injustice. This is a dark merchant’s world. It makes us sad. Come, come, come! Seek a path that is Jesus, the spirit of self-denial. He made Himself poor in order to be blessed. Poor and rich all belong in a world of equality. Happy and joyful every one singing the same tune. The one who comes in the name of the Lord should be praised.”³⁷⁹

These people lived together, seeking spiritual freshness while working hard. There was another song which depicted their daily life, saying:

“Eat simple food, wear simple clothes. Eat with contentment, control the desire for expensive clothes and food. Blessed is spiritual life; it is foolish to seek after lustful things. Be careful not to be used by Satan. The more you eat, the Sadder you become. Be careful, discern what is worthy and unworthy.”³⁸⁰

Act 5 became their model. This practice became their philosophy of life and their philosophy of living. Their prayers were: “May your kingdom come.....” (Matt 6:9)³⁸¹

³⁷⁸ Chu, Xin, *Shout* (Vol.62, 1991), 52.

³⁷⁹ Rees, Dr. Vaughan, (Hong Kong: The Bellman House 1979), 55-60.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

³⁸¹ They have morning and evening service in pray and praise. They consider every day is a day of worship.

(The author had the chance to live with a Family branch in south Shandong not far from Ling-I. The head of that Family Branch was a leader of outlaws. The local government was negotiating with him when he became a Christian. He was moved by Jing Dian-Ying's ideology. He gave all his money to build a family—(Jia). What I saw was truly a family of love).³⁸³

8.4 Family Products

Products were manufactured in their own factories. Their food came from the field in which they all worked together, including fruits. Although they only had 43 acres of land, they later rented more land. At that time, they had more than 500 adult members, excluding children. Everyone had many guests from all over the nation. They ruled with strict hands and like many similar organizations and practices in church history, all their clothing, food, housing, were provided for according to biblical principles. Dr. Rees said the following words: "They (the Family) followed the practice of the early church whereby all the believers were together and had everything in common, selling their possession and goods."³⁸⁴

They were willing to give up their "private family life." There were many cases like this in the church's history, such as in India and England where they received great blessings from God. They believed that personal possessions led to selfishness. When people were willing to give up materialistic belongings, it helped them in their spiritual life and growth. They were to live every day in "full consecration" and completely offering their lives for the Lord in order to help one another.³⁸⁵

³⁸³ Yu, *The Break of Dawn*, 77-81.

³⁸⁴ Rees, 57.

³⁸⁵ Rees, 55.

8.5 Extra Work

These people were not only to carry out the routine work at the Family but also to work for the sake of neighboring villages, offering their service when needed. For instance, during wintertime, the Family members would shovel snow for several miles.³⁸⁶ I spent a week with one of the branch homes at South Shangdong to conduct a special revival meeting with them. Their members were not highly educated. The one thing which struck me, was the way in which they lived together with brotherly love. This group of people were poor. When they came to the meeting, they had no blankets. Sometimes they had only one blanket for the whole family. Because it was too crowded in the room, they did not have enough space to sleep so they slept outside the house without their blankets. It was winter time and the people who went out to use the restrooms at night found the Jesus family members were sleeping outside the house without any blanket. By the next morning, they were covered by several blankets. Those people who slept inside of the house testified that they could not leave those sleeping outside uncovered. "How can we let our brother suffer?" I was there, and I felt that Christ's love was with them.

8.6 Conclusion

After 1949, these organizations were all shut down. It became a memory in history. These people never received one penny of support from the West, yet within 18 years, they had raised about 500 "Families." This is evidence again that the Chinese people can build an indigenous church if they are allowed to do so themselves.

³⁸⁶ Yu, *The Break of Dawn*, 80-81.

CHAPTER 9

Conclusions

9.1 The Missionary Contribution

Hudson Taylor came to China with great enthusiasm for preaching the Gospel and reaching the erstwhile unreached people. He went where others could not go. This was his personal vision and policy, whereas other mission boards focused upon providing education through establishing schools, through which they reached the Chinese for Christ. In doing so, they also focused their efforts on reaching Chinese children in schools. Young people received a proper education that prepared them for various fields in addition to hearing the Gospel. William Malne was the first person who built a school in Malacca.³⁸⁷ Later this school was moved to Hong Kong. This method touched the lives of thousands of children and youth. The influence was not only at the local level of society, but it extended to the education of those who would ultimately become influential figures in society and government. Dr. Sun Yat Sen was a typical case.³⁸⁸

By the beginning of the 20th century, many universities, colleges, high schools, grammar schools, and even childcare were established. Thousands and thousands of people became Christians, as they were educated in Christian schools. Among the graduates were many who turned toward ministry and the preaching of the Gospel. Wang Ming Tao, Yang Shoa Tong, John Sung, Andrew Gih, and Timothy Chao all went through missionary-established schools.

³⁸⁷ Tang, Christopher, *The First Hundred Year of Protestant Mission in China* (Hong Kong: Tao Sheng publishing House 1989), 93. William Malne came to China in 1813. He established Eng Hwa College. This was the first school which started formed by missionaries.

³⁸⁸ Wang Chih-hsin, 254. After the Republic of China successful established, many official in the government were Christian. Between 1915-1920, 65% of the officials in Rwang Tung province were Christians.

As schools for women were established, it brought to fruition the historical Confucian teaching that "No education for a woman is part of her virtue". Women's position, till then, was supposed to be in the home to bear children and do housework. In the early years, Dora Yu was a medical student who became an evangelist. Watchman Nee was converted to Christianity through her preaching. She was the first Chinese woman to establish a Bible school to train youth for Christian ministry. Dr. Mary Stone, the first Chinese woman doctor, was co-founder of Bethel mission. Andrew Gih and John Sung and many other evangelists were sent out by Bethel mission. There were many others such as Madam Kiang and her sisters who were very powerful and influential in China. Around the time of the Sino-Japanese war, all three women received their formal education through mission schools. These schools were influential in modern Chinese history.³⁸⁹ During the three years of Christ's ministry on earth, healing was an important part of his mission.³⁹⁰ Many missionaries were medical doctors, among them Hudson Taylor, Hobson, and Dr. Robert H. Glaver, the founder of Wuchow Alliance Bible institutes.

The majority of hospitals in China were built by mission board of various denominations. Church historians are in general agreement over the value and fruitfulness of this type of ministry.³⁹¹

It is unfortunately very much a part of human nature to create groups and assign ourselves and others to various groupings. Denominationalism was imported by mission boards and missionaries into China. Chinese Christians did

³⁸⁹ Leung Ka-lun, *Evangelists and revivalist of Modern China* (Hong Kong Alliance Bible Seminary, 1999), 132-135.

³⁹⁰ Yu, Moses lee kung, *Bible Atlas and History* (Taipei: Olivet Printing Press, 1996), 131.

³⁹¹ See Leung Ka-lun, *The Centenary History of Alliance Bible Seminary 1899-1999* (Hong Kong: The Alliance Bible Seminary 1999), 16.

not know anything about denominational and church affiliations. All denominations have this historical past as well as the painful process wrought by denominationalism in the China of those early days of mission work. When missionaries came into the mission field of China, converts became assigned or classified by denominations. This occurred both intentionally as well as unintentionally. After 1900 a hundred Chinese churches pondered how they might unify all these denominations under the single rubric of "Chung Hwa" (meaning Chinese). Watchman Nee especially never tired of preaching in local churches, calling them forth from what many Chinese Christian leaders considered their sinful denominational partisanship. There were some mission churches who joined in this effort, but most preferred to maintain their exclusive denominational identities in their denominations, most notably the evangelicals within the China Inland Mission, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the Baptists. This unfortunate missionary heritage of denominational participation therefore remained to be strong and active in the Chinese church until the denominational walls were broken under compulsion in 1949

9.2 The Emergence of Chinese Leadership.

Since Robert Morrison first came to China, missionaries have made great sacrifices to win souls for the Kingdom and to train Chinese church leaders. From that time, the Chinese church had been dominated by missionaries and their sending organizations. It is a painful memory that these missionaries did suffer greatly for their faith. Through their lack of understanding the culture and language of the Chinese, the missionaries encountered great obstacles for an extended period. It is true that the Chinese language is a difficult language to learn. The written form of the language was even more daunting and few missionaries managed to master it. Most of them were unable to progress beyond mastering the spoken language. They found themselves in many situations when

their language skills were simply insufficient for the task of delivering the Gospel message.

Despite the Mission Board's inability to provide missionaries skilled in the Chinese language, young men and women were dedicating their lives to the ministry of the gospel. Many responded to the call of God as they heard the gospel message delivered to them by the great revivalists and preachers such as Ting Li-Mei, Dr. John Sung, Wong Ming Tao, Andrew Gih, Timothy Chao, and Calvin Chao. They were the trailblazer within the local Chinese church during the opening of the mission field in China. All of them were quite young remarkable in Chinese culture, where leaders are generally older people. All had to endure great hardship and suffering for their faith. This had an important influence on their lives and leadership. All came from a revivalistic background, were innovative and not afraid to take risks in exploring new ways of being Christian in China. All had an inclusive rather than an exclusive emphasis in forming new Chinese churches. They put great stress on an inclusive, local church and rejected denominationalism.

This is evidence of the shift from mission-centered ministries to that of the Chinese evangelists and ministers. After a careful examination of the history of missions we may observe its weaknesses and failures. Missionaries seldom taught the Chinese to conceive of themselves as missionaries and there were few mission-minded churches. Many Chinese churches remained as branches of foreign boards. Chinese Christians have never been trained and the church was not oriented as a mission church in order that Chinese may become missionaries. It indeed seems as if most missionaries wanted the Chinese Christians to remain dependent on missionaries and mission boards in order to maintain control of the emerging Chinese Church. It is interesting to note that it was mainly those mission boards considered as "liberal" which trained Chinese leaders with a relatively high education. Conservative ("faith") mission boards, such as the

China Inland Mission, seemed to prefer rather to call for more foreign missionaries to be sent to China than to transfer leadership and responsibility to Chinese Christians. Despite this, a few mission churches may have been mission oriented. Ting Li-Mei was the first Chinese evangelist to promote missions. Some college students were led to be missionaries and taught to reach their own people. This work was pioneered by China Inland, also known as the Domestic Mission Society.³⁹² Leland Wong was another evangelist, who not only preached on missions but also became a missionary and brought Chinese missionaries to parts of South East Asia including Indonesia, Borneo, New Guinea. These Chinese missionaries were led by Chinese leaders. They built many churches by faith. Chinese churches and Chinese Christians were criticized by foreign missionaries. They were not perceived as leadership material. During 1900-1949, however, Chinese Christians began preaching themselves and started to build churches on their own initiative.³⁹³ This shows that the Chinese church can be self-governing, self-supporting, and self propagating. We should say they could be self-motivated if they knew the great commission of our Lord.

9.3 The contribution of some indigenous leaders and churches: Watchman Nee, Wang Ming-Dao, Yang Shao-Tang, The True Jesus Church, and The Jesus Family

The period from 1900-1949 can be described as the era which gave rise to an awakening of Chinese Christians and churches to their autonomy and

³⁹² *China Church Year Book* (Taipei: Olivet Foundation, 1981), Vol. II, 13.

³⁹³ Cheng, Ren-Tong, *Chinese Church and Her Break Through*. This book was written by a Chinese missionary who had been in Indonesia for many years. Cheng earned his Doctoral degree from missiology at Fuller Theological Seminary. The whole book recorded Chinese foreign mission movement. The whole book covers 1930's. Many of these Chinese missionaries were educated by The Alliance Bible Seminary.

indigeneity, with enthusiastic acceptance of the “three selves” as guiding principle. In the midst of many social, economic and religious crises shaking China to its core, there was revival in the Chinese churches. Indigenous churches grew as a result of the work of men such as Watchman Nee, Yang Shao-Tang and Wang Ming-Dao. These men left their mark on the church by establishing a foundation and pattern for the indigenous churches. No longer entirely dependent on Western missionaries and Mission Boards, the Chinese churches were able to take up their vocation of evangelism and church planting. Through their dynamic style of preaching, the Chinese churches developed a strong preaching heritage. Their writings and deep devotional and theological materials remain as a primary source for spiritual growth. Without these men establishing a strong foundation for the churches in China, it would have been difficult for the underground “house churches” which developed after the Communist Revolution to survive persecution.

During this same period there emerged two similar, but distinct Chinese indigenous churches, The True Jesus Church and The Jesus Family. Both had deep roots in the Pentecostal movement, so there are obvious similarities in their application and preaching. They both emphasize speaking in tongues and depending on the Holy Spirit for their message. Often preaching is consciously undertaken without any prior preparation in dependence on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The obvious difference between the two churches is that the True Jesus Church continues to influence the Christian population in China, while The Jesus Family no longer exists. They were dissolved by the Communist regime in 1952. All of their members merged with the underground “house churches” that spread throughout China. Apart from this very obvious difference, there were noticeable differences in emphasis and style. The True Jesus Church, for example, believed in the ongoing obligation of Christians to keep the Sabbath. They therefore gathered for worship on Saturdays. As far as The Jesus Family is

concerned, a unique contribution was their emphasis on “broken home” (a literal translation from the Chinese), which required giving up all one’s earthly belongings to the Family on joining the Family, and then on possessing all things in common.

As far as the three church leaders discussed in this thesis are concerned, the following should be noted. I have already in the introduction to chapter 4 pointed out the shared heritage they left to the Chinese church, based on similarities in their approach and faith convictions. Each one of them also made a unique contribution to the growth and development of the Chinese church, though, based on different emphases on the local church. These churches were spread throughout China, in big cities as well as small villages. These local churches eventually had a bigger membership than churches planted by China Inland Mission (CIM). CIM started their work in 1865 as an official mission organization. By 1900 CIM had built up to a total number of 1300 missionaries. Watchman Nee started his work in 1925 with 6 co-workers. Within 15 years, they had more than 700,000 members according to Jonathan Chao.³⁹⁴ In 1950, before Watchman Nee was arrested and imprisoned, he asked his people in the cities along the Chinese east coast to move inland as immigrants. These people became the founding members of the “house churches” in China. Nobody knows for sure how many members they have at present, but it is estimated at three million or more.³⁹⁵

Wang Ming-Dao is less well known than Watchman Nee in the West, and did not leave a heritage of the same proportions. Yet his influence on the Chinese Church in the period under discussion was crucial, and the results can still be seen today. Dr. Lam Wing-Hung of China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong

³⁹⁴ Chao, Jonathan, *A history of Christianity in Socialist China* (Taipei CMI Publishing 1997), 44.

³⁹⁵ Chao, 44.

wrote a book on *Wang Min-Tao and the Chinese Church* (Published by China Graduate School of Theology, Hong Kong, 1982). The title of the book, as well as its contents, is an indication of the enduring influence of his thinking and patterns of church life on the Chinese Church. He established only one church in Beijing, but his writing and preaching, as an evangelist, especially during the time when liberal theology began to spread in China, had a wide-ranging influence. He stood up strongly in defense of the Evangelical position. His pattern of a local church has been an example for "house churches" as well as overseas Chinese churches, especially in his rejection of the Western style of denominational churches. For this reason he was more attracted to the Brethren type of practice. He was never ordained, but he set the example for thousands of ordained ministers.

In the case of Yang Shao-Tang, the emphasis was very much on training local church workers. His style and practice were also strongly influenced by the Brethren. The influence of his writing and his preaching heritage is also still apparent in many independent churches in China, as well as Chinese churches overseas.³⁹⁶ His preaching and teaching ministry have been extended to many parts of China.

One can conclude, then, that the three leaders left a heritage to the Chinese church both insofar as there were similarities in their approaches and contributions, as well as in the unique contribution which each one made. The latter is mentioned not so much to stress that there were differences among them, but rather to indicate that each one possessed a special gift of God for the Chinese Church. Even in their differences, therefore, they actually complemented each other and contributed essential emphases on which the Chinese Church can still build today.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Yang Shao-Tang, *Devotional messages* (Foundation of Saints: Gospel Bookstore, Hong Kong 1992), 7.

9.4 General Characteristics of Early Chinese Christian Communities

There was a strong emphasis on the classical New Testament twofold understanding of the church being local and universal. The Western missionary heritage of denominationalism was rejected as neither suitable nor beneficial in carrying out Christian mission in China. The leaders had no patience with either a nationalistic or ethnic approach. The local church was led and ruled by the elders, and not by the pastors. The emerging Chinese churches understood their calling to mission especially as an integral dimension of being an apostolic church. They therefore interpreted apostolicity in its original meaning, namely being sent. Dr. John Sung, for example, wherever he went, at the closing of his revival meetings, he asked people to form a two person team to pray and to evangelize. This was during the years between 1928-1949.³⁹⁷ It was done in accordance with Christ's example, who called disciples and trained them to go out in pairs. As a result, the church and its membership began growing rapidly.

9.5 A Future Perspective

The example of hardship and suffering endured by the early leaders provided string motivation for their followers for the times of trial and suffering which were to come as a result of the Communist Revolution. The strong emphasis on the local church which was self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating, certainly played a role in the development of evangelistic house churches during the years of oppression. The first generation of Chinese leaders and Chinese churches established a proud tradition of indigenous Chinese mission and witness. This inspired Chinese Christians to continue their witness and

³⁹⁷ See *Sung's Diary*. Also see Yu, Moses Lee Kung, *Yu Study Bible* (Berkeley Hymnody and Bible House, 1985), 1726-1729.

outreach, especially once all Western missionaries had left. The early tradition of elders governing the church enabled the house churches to survive during times when no organized church structures were allowed.

It seems as if the emergence of the Chinese Church from the missionary movement during the period 1900-1940 has left us with a rich heritage. If the Chinese Church in the twenty first century is to build on the foundations laid during 1900-1949, then the following characteristics must be kept in mind:

1. The Bible must be more valuable for the Chinese Church than anything else.
2. All individual Christians and every new generation of Christians must be taught to understand mission. A local church has to consider this its primary function. The commission is to be a missionary and to give money for sending out missionaries.
3. Mobilization of the church to see the vision is of great importance. The history of the church in Antioch (Acts 13:1-4) should serve as motivation and example, and be taught as the duty and responsibility of every local church to reach out in action and prayer.
4. A broad and inclusive view should be taken on doctrine in the church. Chinese missionaries must not be selfish and arrogant. They have to learn how to give and not to become denomination or mission board oriented.
5. Twenty-first century missionaries must be different from missionaries in the past. The Chinese Church had enough missionary lessons to learn. These must now be taken applied in new actions to face new challenges.

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In terms of organization and system, every Family had a host. He was responsible, besides his administrative duties, to teach. He was to guide and lead the members of the Family to grow spiritually. Jing Dian-Ying was the founder, so naturally he was the host. He had a group of assistants just like Charles and John Wesley had. There was a gentleman named Tong Hen Xin who was an smoker and opium dealer. He became a Christian and also became Jing's right hand man. Dr. Chen Pier Xi, a medical doctor, was the head of a hospital and cared for children and pregnant women. Zoe Shung Sheng came from a noble family. Cae Xing Hsing (who was my art teacher during my primary school days) was a wonderful helper of Jing Dian-Ying.

8.3 Important beliefs

They kept the Lord's Day as a day completely for the Lord, not working but spending the whole day in song, worship and prayer. This applied to all their factories and schools from elementary school to high school. Besides the children of the Family members, children from the neighbor villagers who attended their schools were taught likewise.

All of their food supplies came from their own harvest. Young and old, all had to work together in the field or kitchen or factory or hospital or school, without exception. They all came to work on time. They produce their own clothing and all other things were made by their own hands.³⁸² The head of the Family arranged their marriages. They had very strict rules about relationships between men and women. After marriage, the Family determined where the couple would stay. During the woman's pregnancy, they participated in her care.

³⁸² Rees, 46-48.