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Chinese Theological Review 27 begins with a remembrance of Rev. Wang Weifan (1927-2015). Many of Rev. Wang’s theological essays and sermons have appeared in earlier issues of CTR. To accompany a brief appreciation of his life and work, this issue presents selections from his *Zimu*, a book of devotional writings. Speaking of Rev. Wang’s devotional writing, Philip Wickeri has written: “... although Wang Weifan’s particular time and place contribute to his spiritual understanding, his devotional work reaches beyond historical limitations. His writing can therefore help us overcome the stumbling blocks of our own making, so that we may come to a better sense of how God is calling us to live in this world.”* Part of the charm and accessibility of Rev. Wang’s devotional writings is that they are often both erudite and everyday. The selections included here were written in the latter part of Rev. Wang’s life and include personal reflections as well as insights from his long experience of the church and theological education.

In his “Brief Introduction to the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China,” Rev. Gao Feng, President of the China Christian Council, provides an overview of the formation of the present document. The process that has produced the several revisions will no doubt continue as the church refines and clarifies the expression of its faith and the regulations through which it carries out its work.

Rev. Gao’s article is long and detailed and would be difficult for the reader to put in perspective without reference to the document itself. Thus the most recent Church Order (2008) follows his article. This is reprinted from CTR 21 in which the translation first appeared. Rereading the English document and consulting with colleagues in the CCC&TSPM, I have updated and clarified some terms for greater accuracy.

The CCC&TSPM held a Conference to Commemorate the Centennial of the Birth of Bishop K.H Ting and Consider the Sinicization of Christianity (纪念丁光训主教诞辰一百周年暨基督教中国化研讨会) in Beijing, September 21-24, 2015. Two articles in this issue are papers that were presented at that conference. The first, “Chinese Protestant Christianity Should Establish an Institutional Church,” makes an interesting conversation partner to Rev. Gao’s article and to the Church Order. The more so because the author, Zhang Hua, is a secular scholar who studies issues in Christianity. She is not alone, either in academia or in the church, in her view that the church should move forward in this direction. Ms. Zhang discusses the benefits of an institutional church, rehearses the history of church orders used in China, the constant efforts made and the constant disappointments for various mainly historical and political reasons, and the reasons she feels there is an opportunity at present to realize the establishment of an institutional church. Her conclusion might be summarized as: all sides want it, it has been explored and tried, and leadership of the church should grasp this opportunity and boldly take up the historical responsibility to establish the “Protestant Christian Church of China.”

Our second offering from the Conference is Chen Yongtao’s essay delineating his views on the Sinicization of Christianity. He begins with the reminder that “Christianity had its origins in Asia,” and that “the history of Christianity’s outward spread is a process of indigenization” expressing
itself in Jewish religious culture, in Greek and Roman thought and outward to greater Europe. On the return trip Western missionaries carried an already westernized form to China, making the Sinicization of this “foreign” religion “not only necessary but urgent.” He goes on to discuss what this might mean by considering the Sinicization of Christianity and the Chinese context in three areas: the Sinicization of Christianity and “Three-Self” in the Protestant church in China; Sinicization and Theological Reconstruction; and Sinicization and the engagement of the Chinese church in society. He describes the work of Sinicization taking place when “confronted with the impact and challenges of a new environment, the church must make a suitable response in biblical interpretation and theology, establishing a local church in conformity with the substance of Christian faith as commonly adhered to by the ecumenical church, that can also respond to contextual challenges and adapt to the local culture and society.”

Rev. Dr. Lin Manhong was invited to give the 2015 Cato Lecture to the Assembly of the Uniting Church of Australia. She spoke on “Being a Marginal People of God: A Chinese Christian Understanding,” noting that “a church being marginal and small opens the possibility of becoming the marginal people of God, which has great significance, and is a concept with which Chinese Christians can fully identify.” She goes on to describe new understandings of marginality, with Jesus as the marginal person par excellence and the early church as a marginalized church. From this perspective, small, marginal churches are more likely to seek change and renewal, to “re-read the gospels from a perspective of marginality instead of a centralist point of view, and to do so with the strong reminder that we are called to be the marginal people of God because Jesus Christ was the pioneer of the marginal people of God.” She goes on to discuss the history of the Chinese Protestant church as a
small marginal church, even given its tremendous growth in
the last few decades. In spite of remaining on the margins
of the larger society, it has been by “relying on God’s loving
wisdom and the work of the Holy Spirit that the Chinese
church has developed so much.” Throughout her talk she
drew parallels between the Uniting Church and the Chinese
church, saying “In fact, both our churches have much that
gives witness to the Holy Spirit working among us.”

Our final article in this issue, by Mr. Yan Xiyu, associate
professor at NJUTS, highlights the role of Chen Jinyong,
founder of the Nanking Theological Review, the
precursor to the present Nanjing Theological Review. Mr.
Yan supports the view that the current Review is directly
and continuously related to the journal founded by Chen
Jinyong in 1911, though many date its first appearance to
1953. Chen came to Nanjing, to the Presbyterian Union
Theological Seminary, which later became NJUTS, in 1906,
and was among the first graduates of that institution in
1908; that same year he became the first Chinese faculty
member. He was primarily hired to teach Chinese, his
tenure there coinciding with the rise of the indigenization
movement in the Chinese Protestant churches. He later
wrote: “Based on my thirteen years of teaching at Nanking
Theological Seminary, in philosophical thinking, evangelical
methods, etc., I found one thing most lacking—Chinese were
unfamiliar with Chinese sources. …” According to a later
editor of the Review, “in the 1930s ... Seldom did a Chinese
colleague have any part in the decision-making process
on major issues.”* Chen Jinyong, as editor of the seminary
journal, was the sole exception.

* Wang Peng 王芃, “Protestant Theological Education in China- A
Retrospective focusing on Nanjing Union Theological Seminary,” in
the early history of NJUTS in greater detail and charts the shift away
from missionary control and funding in Chinese theological education.
CTR 27 closes with a listing of the contents of the *Nanjing Theological Review* 2014 and 2015.

In the solitary work of translation, a willing and knowledgeable sounding board is a rare and wonderful thing. Thanks here go to Rev. Dr. Cao Shengjie, Rev. Dr. Chen Yongtao and Mr. Yan Xiyu for their kind and prompt response to many queries. And with regard to translation, this issue follows the usage of the authors whose work appears here (in their English writings) and the current usage of the *Nanjing Theological Review* in translating Zhongguo hua 中国化 as “Sinicization.” Whether “Chinization” or some variant of it will return in future, watch this space.

As always, I am grateful to the authors of these essays for sharing their work. Any errors in presentation are entirely my own. In this issue, we have again included Chinese characters for personal names, titles, some individual terms and citations.

Author names are given in Chinese characters and format—surname + personal name—following the title of each article. For those who also use an English name, this is given with the bibliographic information that follows the article.

Please note the following abbreviations used throughout the journal: China Christian Council & Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (CCC&TSPM); regional, provincial and local levels are referred to as Shanghai CC or Sichuan TSPM (or Three-Self Organization); National Chinese Christian Conference (NCCC) Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS); State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) or its predecessor the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB); Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Communist Party of China (CPC).

The Chinese Theological Review is a publication of the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia.
As always, I am grateful to the Foundation and to Dr. H.S. Wilson, executive director, for their ongoing encouragement and support.

*The Chinese Theological Review* welcomes readers’ feedback. Please feel free to contact the editor: ctreditor@gmail.com. We are especially interested to know whether you have found the journal useful in your work or study.

Web copies of the *Chinese Theological Review* are available at http://www.amityfoundation.org/eng/publications; new issues are made available shortly after publication.

Janice Wickeri, editor
Hong Kong
Rev. Wang Weifan 汪维藩, who died in Nanjing on September 15, 2015, was an emeritus professor of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, a theologian, educator and popular preacher. He was also a poet and a calligrapher, a prolific author of hymns, sermons, devotions and theological treatises, a student of Marxism as well as of Christianity. He was a mentor to and defender of his students, a father, a husband, a tactician. An outstanding theologian of the Chinese church in his generation, Rev. Wang’s sermons and essays in English translation featured frequently in past issues of this journal, beginning with the first issue in 1985.¹

Translating Rev. Wang’s fluent and often poetic writings was a pleasure and a frequent challenge. He drew easily on a deep knowledge of Chinese religious, philosophical, literary and political sources, as well as his wide reading and study of Western theology. He was focused and tireless in these pursuits; at the same time he was a warm and caring friend.

One of his devotional works, *Lilies of the Field*, is a good example of Rev. Wang’s ability to speak to a wide range of readers. In his foreword to a small book of translations from this work, Philip L. Wickeri notes, “Many selections, though disarmingly simple, express the meaning of Christian faith in new and refreshing ways. ... one has the sense of being

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drawn into a spiritual journey which represents a path of renewal and hope.\textsuperscript{2} In rereading \textit{Lilies of the Field} while preparing this section to honor his memory, I was struck again by their immediacy and appeal.

Wang Weifan was born in 1927 in Taizhou, Jiangsu on December 22, 1927. He was baptized in 1947, entered Hangzhou Seminary in 1951 and studied at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) from 1952 to 1955. Following graduation, he was assigned to a church in Zhenjiang, Jiangsu, but with the onset of the Cultural Revolution was sent to work in a factory for eight years. In 1979 he was reassigned to the Institute of Religious Studies at Nanjing University and then in 1981 joined the faculty of NJUTS where he was Professor of Biblical Studies and Chinese Theology and also served as Dean and Head of Publications. In 1988 he was ordained. He retired in 1999.\textsuperscript{3}

The young Wang Weifang was a talented student whose childhood experiences rooted him in both the classical Confucian and Buddhist traditions of Chinese culture. This background served him well in his later theological work as he strived to bring about a creative and many-faceted encounter between Christianity and Chinese tradition.\textsuperscript{4}

His was a constantly questing spirit, unique and warm and generous, curious and bold, with a spark of impishness. He relished turning things on their heads, interrogating


the unquestionable with humor and tenacity, enjoying the joust, the coup de grace. His thoroughgoing, passionate, and unabashed piety was mellowed by a vein of the mystic. As a scholar and as a man he possessed equal measures of intellect and emotion, each quality deeply rooted. Tears came easily to him. In his sermon at Rev. Wang’s funeral, one former student, Rev. Chen Yilu, now executive vice-president of NJUTS, said: “He was easily moved to tears, not tears of failure, despair or weakness, never fake tears; his tears were pearls, he was full of hope, he was strong and courageous.”

He struggled with his demons and they were many, but he faced them down with a strength born of long years of suffering and privation outside the fold, and even rejection by some closest to him. The ground beneath his feet—the ground of faith—held firm. His theology felt visceral, born of light and darkness, deeply experienced.

He delighted in people—old, young, child, student, official—able to bridge gulfs between those who spoke in tongues and government officials, between colleagues and different points of view. He had great affection for his students and a deep commitment to nurturing and mentoring future generations of pastors, theologians and church leaders. His concern for students’ welfare could be quite practical. In 1989 he was in charge of the student cafeteria. Hearing that students demonstrating in the center of the city had sent a request for water, he sent not only water, but water glasses and steamed buns. Later, he was criticized as having aided student rebellion. His reply was: “In a situation like this, what mother or father would not take food to their child?”

At times his dedication to students meant denying himself time with his own family. His son, Wang Hong, who

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5 Chen Yilu, “For her my tears shall fall,” in Tian Feng (November 2015): 45.
spoke on behalf of the family at Rev. Wang’s funeral on Sept. 17, 2015, acknowledged his own difficulty with this as a child. “He mentioned that his father was very strict. He had not understood why his father loved his students more than his children before. But now, he knew the students were his best comforts and thanked those students for coming to the funeral.”

Bishop K.H. Ting took a personal interest in Wang early in his career and became his mentor. Wang Weifang became the bishop’s valued advisor, colleague, co-author and friend. Differences arose between them, causing a rift that lasted some years. But in a later reminiscence of their relationship, Wang wrote, “In the summer of 2006, Ting invited me to his home. When we saw each other, the first words he said were: ‘A lot has passed between us, let’s let it all go.’ I replied: ‘Of course.’ He sat on the sofa. My wife and I sat on either side of him, each holding his hands.”

The American poet Mark Doty writes of a fellow poet that he had a “soul shaped and educated by love, grief and time.” The same could be said of Wang Weifan, whose soul, shaped and educated by love, grief and time, shone in his face, his manner, and in his gracious humanity.

Janice Wickeri

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6 As reported in chinachristiandaily.com. Also mentioned to me by friends in Nanjing present at the funeral.
Selections from Zimu 自牧

Myself My Pastor

Wang Weifan

Wang Weifan’s numerous works include not only theology, but a number of devotional books as well. The following selections are taken from Zimu, a blend of meditation and memoir, that draws upon a lifetime of writing, teaching and preaching. The title page shown here shows the Chinese title in Rev. Wang’s own hand (other examples of his calligraphy appear below). A small book of fifty selections was published in 2010 by NJUTS. A further fifty selections appeared serially in the church monthly magazine Tian Feng. The selections below are taken from both groups.

Zimu can be understood here as both a classical and religious allusion. Rev. Wang explains the classical overtones in the first selection, which he also titles Zimu, a term taken from the Zhou yi (周易) or Yi jing (易经) the Book of Changes. The missionary-translator James Legge and Wang Tao 王韬, his Chinese collaborator, rendered the term as “nourish” (see below). In Christian use, it is used in the word for shepherd 牧者 (muzhe) as in “The Lord is my shepherd,” and in the term for pastor 牧师 (mushi). In its combination of classical and religious allusion, the phrase carries connotations of both humility and compassion.
(1) Pastor, shepherd yourself

Feng Yuxiang (冯玉祥, 1882-1948), the “Christian General,” was also a calligrapher. His calligraphy has a martial quality about it, robust and commanding. The cornerstone of the Mochou Road Church in Nanjing, originally Hanzhong Church, preserves some of Feng’s impressive calligraphy on its cornerstone, inscribed in 1936: 中华基督教会南京汉中堂: Hanzhong Church, Nanjing, Church of Christ in China. In his study, Feng had a scroll in his own calligraphy of the maxim: “Nourish virtue in humility.” This comes from a line in the Zhou yi 周易, “The superior man who adds humility to humility is one who nourishes his virtue in humility (謙謙君子, 卑以自牧也).” The word mu 牧 can also mean “to cultivate” or “train” and [is used in the Christian sense] to mean “to shepherd,” “to pastor.” Thus the modest gentleman practices self-cultivation through humility, and perseveres in the cultivation of virtue, in pastoring the self.

Teachers of theology and preachers suffer from an “occupational disease”: they are able to teach others, nurture others, pastor others, but they neglect, before God, to teach, nurture and pastor themselves. Chinese cultural tradition stresses reflection and introspection and looking within oneself (rather than seeking the causes of our actions in others). The “self-cultivation through humility” of the Zhou yi is but one example. Confucius’ disciple Zeng Shen (Ziyu, here called Zengzi or the philosopher Zeng) set great store by this sort of introspection and made it one path to self-cultivation: “The philosopher Zeng said, ‘I daily examine myself on three points: whether, in transacting business for others, I may have been not faithful; whether, in intercourse with friends, I may have been not sincere; whether I may have not mastered and practiced the instructions of my teacher.’”

三省吾身：為人謀而不忠乎？與朋友交而不信乎？傳不習乎？”（Analects论语, Xue Er 学而). This means he asks three questions of himself everyday: Has he dealt with others in good faith? Has he been sincere with his friends? Has he transmitted the teachings of his master without alteration or distortion? In fact, what Zengzi examines himself on daily can be exemplified by the word “trust” (信), faithfulness to his friends and faithfulness to his master. But this word “examine” (省) is of even greater importance. A person without truthfulness is a tragic figure; a person who does not examine himself is the most tragic of all.

Two decades passed between 1979, when I was transferred back to teach at NJUTS following the Cultural Revolution, and 1999, when I retired. During that time, I did student work for fourteen years and taught graduate courses for 10 years. During those years, I mainly read on behalf of others; I studied the Bible on behalf of others. I don’t know how many words I have spoken—counseling, teaching, exhorting, while neglecting introspection, neglecting to pastor myself. On countless occasions, work, class preparation, etc., etc. kept me busy from dusk to dawn, neglecting rest and food. And I often neglected to ask God to “waken, waken my ear,” forgot to ask God to give me “the tongue of a teacher,” and failed to understand that a teacher must first of all be “one who is taught.” (See Isaiah 50: 4-5.)

Zengzi’s “three points” are simply matters of ethics. A Christian’s self-examination and self-pastoring, or that of a preacher or theology teacher, should rise to the spiritual, that is, it should rise to the higher spiritual level that includes ethics and morality. It is not simply humility, but should include the numerous aspects of the whole soul and life. Furthermore, for this sort of examination and pastoring the self must first be prostrate before the throne of God, in the light of God’s countenance, not simply reflecting or examining oneself on the human plane. The tragedy of
pastors and preachers and theology teachers is just like that of the Sumerian maiden who sighed: “they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept” (Song of Solomon 1:6). “Keep(er)” contains the meanings of watch over, tend, care for, guard. Life is short. It is time to keep your vineyard!

(6) The “blocked” heart

A compassionate heart—what the [Chinese Union Version of the] Bible translates as “a heart of pity 怜恤的心” (1 John 3: 16-17)—Scripture takes as a sign of whether God’s love abides in a person. The books of John contain two “3:16” verses we know well. In the Gospel of John, chapter 3 verse 16 reads: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.” 1John 3:16 tells us: “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us—and we ought to lay down our lives for one another.” To redeem sinners, God sacrificed his only beloved Son and Jesus gave his precious life. This is called “the holy love that gives itself for the ungodly,” and is greater than dying for a righteous or good person: “But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5: 6-8).

Once sinners have been redeemed by the atonement of Christ and conquered by the love of God, God’s love must live in their hearts as the internal source of all their good works. The “heart of love for God 爱神的心” in the Chinese [Union Version] translation of 1John should be translated as “God’s love,” as in 1John 3:17, and what in the Chinese version is “the heart that loves him 爱他的心” as “His love,” as in 1John 4:12. This is to say that when a person has received the grace of God’s great love and Christ’s redemption, God’s love abides in them and becomes the internal impetus for loving
one’s brothers and sisters, for loving others. But because of the selfishness and apathy that arise from the flesh, this inner love and compassion often seem blocked. A person whose heart is blocked will not shed a tear, even when the impoverishment and need of others is very evident.

In the summer of 1990, about a week before I went to Guangzhou to lead a revival, my dentures got lost. I couldn’t preach without them, so I hurried to the clinic on Baixia Road and asked a dentist to make a set as soon as possible. Five days later after the fitting and paying, I still had about 18.30 yuan in my pocket, so I headed back to Sanshan Street to take a bus home. At the bus stop I heard the strains of an erhu behind me. I turned to see a shabbily dressed blind man clutching the instrument, and at his feet a can into which people dropped small coins. Out of pity, I went over and put in a 20 cent note, several times what others had put.

But when I went back to the bus stop, the strains of the erhu reached my ears again and some impulse drove me back to his side. I asked him how many there were at home and he said only his eighty-year-old mother; the two depended on each other. Now the blind man was no longer a lowly beggar in my eyes but a “man” like me, only poorer than me. I pulled out a 5 yuan note and stuffed it in his hand saying, “Here’s 5 yuan; hang on to it.”

Back at the bus stop, the erhu started up again, and that same compulsion drove me to approach the blind man a third time. I asked him if he knew Abing’s “Moon Reflected in the Second Spring”; he grunted assent and began to play it. As far as skill goes, the blind man didn’t hold a candle to the performers I’d seen on stage and television. But for character, feeling and depth, plainly here before my eyes was a living Abing, as Abing might have been in his poorer days,
before he became famous. This “Abing” grew in stature in my mind and I did not dare look down on him but looked up to him. I brought out another 10 yuan—I couldn’t help myself—put it in his hand and told him to take care of it. I really did not think this bit of money could alleviate his difficulties, I just hoped he and his old mother could have a few days of comfort, just as I did.

I had about 10 cents left, just enough for the bus home. But I pondered: wasn’t this bit of love and pity just like “squeezing toothpaste from a tube?” … only a tiny bit comes out. Was my heart “blocked” still, such that God’s love could not pour out? If parting with some trivial bit of property was this difficult, what of one’s life? We talk about love; we write about love—all so easy. The hard part is truth and action (1John 3:18). As we say today, “The hard part is concrete action and truth that comes from the heart!”

“Arise … and come away” (Song of Solomon 2:10,13). Calligraphy by Wang Weifan. Zimu, 100.

9 Abing 阿炳 (Hua Yanjun 华彦钧 1893-1950) studied music from the age of 8 with his Taoist priest father. Following his father’s death, opium addiction and economic hardship drove him into poverty, and syphilis gradually blinded him. As an itinerant street performer in Wuxi, Abing became famous for incorporating topical issues, especially the war with Japan, into his songs. His most famous composition is Erquan Yingyue 二泉映月 (Moon Reflected in the Second Spring).
“A bruised reed he will not break” (Isaiah 42: 3). *Calligraphy by Wang Weifan, Zimu*, 36.
(9) *At times of deep loneliness*

In 1987, while studying the post-May-Fourth elder generation of Chinese theologians, I wrote a poem in memory of T.C. Chao 赵紫宸 (Zhao Zichen, 1888-1979): “Like clouds and water that, separated from mountains, have nothing to rely on/ In deepest loneliness you found total enlightenment/ Autumn flowers cannot help but suffer autumn rains/ Yet in old age you persevered in your study of Scripture and the classics.” Following the outbreak of the Pacific War, Chao was imprisoned by the Japanese invasion forces for 193 days and held in Beiping Prison. He called this a period when his faith became “deeper, more transcendent, purer.” When he was freed, he drew on his memories of that time to write over 170 poems, one of which contained the line, “out of deep loneliness, deep understanding.”

His *Life of St. Paul* is illustrative of this “deep understanding.”

In fact, T.C. Chao was lonely all his life. On his return from his studies in the US to teach at Soochow University 东吴大学, he wrote, “Many among us are like clouds emerging from a cavern, unable return to the sea peaks; we are like the water that comes off the mountain, unable to rejoin the valley stream” (Preface to *Christian Philosophy*, 1926). This is the loneliness of a young philosopher, filled with Western theory and alienated from the reality of Chinese society. In 1941-42, when he was arrested and put in prison, he was a scholar used to academia who could hardly bear being alone. But this loneliness deepened his communication and fellowship with God, such that he experienced enlightenment in his faith. Following the “Five-Anti”

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10 A rather free translation of the original: 离山云水复何依，寂寞深时
悟彻时，秋华无奈遭秋雨，皓首穷经自奋蹄。See *Zimu*, 26.
campaign in the 1950s, Chao could not help but be one who “for a rather long period longed for friendship but could not attain it, one others turned away from, a solitary person” (according to Bishop Ting). This is the kind of loneliness Chinese intellectuals knew in the midst of successive [political] campaigns and even afterwards. Shunted aside and unnerved by the inconstancy of human relationships and the indifference of the world, intellectuals tasted the chill and loneliness of “an empty doorway where few visitors come.” If this thinker and man of faith had not looked to God and pursued his deep study of God’s word and historical change, how difficult it would have been to traverse the final distance along life’s twilight road.

In 1956, after putting forward “three great witnesses and ten tasks” for Chinese Christianity, Wu Yaozong 吴耀宗 (Y.T. Wu, 1893-1979) began his life of loneliness. Before the missions [contained in these proposals] to “expand unity,” “spread the gospel,” “produce publications,” and “do specialized research work,” even began to show results, a political movement came and swept everything away. In 1957, Y.T. Wu became acquainted with the circumstances of many grass-roots churches where the religious policy was not being implemented, and appealed to the relevant [government] departments on their behalf. I still remember clearly a talk he gave at a Methodist church in Nanjing to an audience of members of city churches, and NJUTS faculty and students. Those rallying cries still ring out in memory. But it may have been due to Wu’s behavior then that he could not give the work report as chairperson at the meeting.

11 The Three-Anti Campaign (1951) and the Five-Anti Campaign (1952) were reform movements targeting corruption and enemies of the State.

12 A reference to the Bai Juyi 白居易 (772-846) poem 琵琶行 (Song of the Pipa Player); the line is roughly “with ever fewer chariots at [the] door”: the fate of a social outcast.
of the national standing committee of Three-Self in Suzhou in early 1960. The report was delivered by the deputy chair, Wu Yifang 吴贻芳. A neighbor told me that Mr. Wu spent hour after hour pacing around the yard every afternoon during the “Cultural Revolution.” Of course, with the reopening in 1979 of Mu’en Church [in Shanghai], Mr. Wu felt a bit hopeful and gratified, but when he died that same year, there were reasons why his loneliness was even more profound. During the democratic revolution, Mr. Wu was one of the democrats; he went through fire and flood with them. Following the establishment of the People’s Republic, Mr. Wu worked for the church. He worked hard, without regard for honor or shame. But he never had a large following and he never courted public favor.

From his ordination at the age of twenty in Weifang, Shandong, Jia Yuming 贾玉铭 (1880-1964) was involved in theological education all his life. He taught in Huabei (North China) Theological Seminary, in Nanking Seminary, in Jinling Women’s Theological Seminary and in the Chinese Christian Bible Institute that he founded without foreign funding. Early in the War against the Japanese, the Institute, like all universities in the occupied area of China at the time, moved west to Chengdu or Chongqing in Sichuan. With the victory over Japan, he moved back to Nanjing to the Lingguang Church on Shanxi Road and later to Julu Road in Shanghai. In 1956 at the Second Meeting of the National Chinese Christian Conference (enlarged), Rev. Jia said in a speech on “The Bright Future of the Church in New China,” “Though I am old today, I’m willing to use the time I have left to give my utmost under the leadership of the Party and government for love of country and love of church.” But just two years later, Jia Yuming and other evangelical delegates, following in the footsteps of Chen Chonggui 陈崇桂, were all labeled “Rightists.” This was Jia Yuming’s loneliness—that in his old age, though he was willing to follow the leadership of the Party and government and to do his utmost for loving
country and loving church, he was totally rejected. Happily, Rev. Jia was one who as a rule spent a great deal of time every day in prayer, in God’s presence. For him political loneliness might simply have been of no importance. At the time, 550,000 were wrongly labeled “Rightists.” The cost of this loss of talented people across Chinese professions is difficult to assess; similar losses to the church even more so.

Xie Fuya 谢扶雅(1892-1991) is another who knew deep loneliness. Though he had become a US citizen, his sincere love for his country compelled him, at over 90 years of age, to return to Guangzhou and prepare to bury his old bones in the soil of his homeland. But at the time, the Chinese church did not welcome him. Here was a great man, huddled in a room on the fifth floor of a tall building in Guangzhou, exceedingly lonesome and nearly blind in both eyes. When I went to visit him in 1989, this gentleman wrote a poem for me using a bald brush and dried up ink. It contained these lines: “weak and feeble the body remains/ relying on the gospel and the Lord’s pity.” Two years later, he died at the age of 100 and I heard that there was quite a to-do over whether an overseas Chinese who was an American citizen could be buried in China.

I don’t dare compare myself to these masters, but indeed we seem to share the same fate—a lifetime of loneliness. At seven I lost my father; at eighteen my mother. Once I turned thirty, I experienced “three rises and three falls,” and these became the main stations along my way in life. Add to this that it was my nature to hate being neglected or overlooked was just added trouble I caused myself.

Yet, “He will not cry or lift up his voice, or make it heard in the street; a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; he will faithfully bring forth justice, he will not grow faint, or be crushed” (Isaiah 42: 1-4). This is the way marked out for us by the Suffering Servant Jesus. Can one who humbly follows him be otherwise?
(35) Following in the Lord’s footsteps

In early 1957, Li Chenzhong 李晨钟 and I were part of the editorial board at Sheng Guang 圣光 magazine, a magazine with a name chosen by Rev. Jia Yuming. The periodical’s office was located on the third floor of the Methodist Chengzhong Church in Guyilang on Changjiang Road. Sheng Guang published sermons, Bible studies and devotional pieces. It was launched in February 1957 as a bimonthly, publishing six issues that year. Only one issue appeared in 1958; then publication was halted by the Anti-Rightist Movement. Before its demise it published seven issues altogether.

In the latter half of 1957, a short verse I wrote, with music by Lin Shengben 林声本, was published in Sheng Guang with the title “Song of Solomon.” It was based on Song of Solomon 2: 10-14. The first two lines spoke of the Lord’s call to me, calling me on a bright Spring day to walk with him. The third line was my response: I was willing, amid bird song and blossoming flowers, to follow him. In reality, this was a long and hard way that we young Christians walked in the 1950s, following Christ in the face of the realities of the times.

The final phrase of the verse went: “In your steps (Lord Christ), I’ll follow you.” I was thirty at the time, likely to mouth empty slogans, a young man who spiritually had no idea how high the heavens nor how deep the earth. How could I understand what “Christ’s footsteps” meant? But the Lord knew; the Lord would grant that understanding to those determined to follow him. The Lord seemed to say: “Come, let us go!”

In the autumn of 1958 when I was thirty-one, I was labeled a “Rightist”, and so began to follow the way of the cross in the Lord’s footsteps, walking that path until the Cultural Revolution ended and I returned to my life in the church.
In 1982 during the editing process for *Hymns of Universal Praise (New Edition)*, my colleagues thought of this hymn and asked me to add to it. This was a full twenty-five years later, but the inspiration for those lines was still with me. After praying about it, I wrote: “Jesus my Lord, my love, my all.” It was a cry that had built up in my heart over twenty-five years; another Spring after a twenty-five-year passage through the Valley of Death. The tune for this hymn, now called “Following the Lord,” is also by Lin Shengbin. Singing the hymn now, the music and words lift you and you have no sense of the twenty-five year gap it contains.

For one who follows in the Lord’s footsteps, this way of the cross never ends. One suffering is bound to be followed by another; when Spring comes, there is bound to be flowers and bird song!

(93) “Creature-feeling”

“God is my creator and I am God’s creation.” Out of this consciousness of being made, this creature-feeling, I wrote the devotional piece “Has the potter no right over the clay?” (*Lilies of the Field*, no. 55, see below.) Here the potter is God: the Lord is the potter. I am the clay. As the potter molds the vessel, so I am shaped by the potter’s hands. I may be rejected, useless, but his profound grace will never abandon me. God will turn the potter’s wheel and form me anew. As God sees fit, so he has the power to shape me.

God has the power to mold me into a precious vessel and the power to bring me low. But whatever God does, I am content as long as I can be made useful. But I implore you, Lord, do not let me defy you, do not let me become a vessel

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of wrath awaiting destruction. He is my Lord, can I compare the potter to the clay? Can I resist God’s will? I am but God’s creation and God is my creator!

When I call myself the clay, I am like Abraham saying, “I who am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27); in that fleeting instant experiencing “creature-feeling.” Without this sense, religion would no longer be religion.

The German theologian Rudolph Otto (1869-1937) said that this sense of creature-feeling arises in comparison to something much greater than itself. The creature feels small and low, tiny and insignificant, equivalent to nothingness.

What the term “creature-feeling” is meant to suggest is extreme self-abnegation. This arises when faced with something of transcendent force and absolute power. Yet each creature is dependent on the transcendent qualities of this being, qualities that cannot be expressed in language. This is why Gerhard Tersteegen (1679-1769) said, “A God that can be understood is not God.” Simple reason, simple logic, cannot bring one closer to knowledge of God.

Has the potter no right over the clay?\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{(Lilies of the Field, No. 55)}

God is the potter; we are the clay. As the potter molds the vessel, so we are shaped by the potter’s hands. We may have been rejected as useless by the world, but God’s profound grace will never abandon us. God will turn the potter’s wheel and form us anew. As God sees fit, so he has the power to shape us.

God has the power to mold us into vessels for beauty and the power to make us into vessels for menial use. Whatever God does, I am content so long as we can be made useful. But Lord, do not let me defy you, becoming a vessel

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\textsuperscript{14} Wang Weifan, \textit{Lilies of the Field}, 34.
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for wrath awaiting destruction. The vessel may be small, but it seeks the riches of your mercy.

Though I be shattered, I will not complain; for God will gather up the pieces, and when they have been ground to dust and mixed back into the clay, God will work these anew and shape me to his use, in order to realize his beautiful plan.

He is my Lord. Can I compare the potter to the clay? Resist God’s will? I am but God’s creation and God my Creator!

(96) The spirit permeates all

In 1 Corinthians 2: 10-11, in the phrase “for the Spirit searches everything” the two characters meaning “searches” in the Mandarin Union Version are translated quite correctly and vividly. In Chinese, this term for “search” 参透 (cen tou), means “to thoroughly apprehend some truth or mystery.” In this translation, the phrase “even the depths of God” in the translation has an additional “search” (cen tou). But in the Catholic Studium Biblicum version, the first instance is translated as 洞察 (dong cha), “insight” and the second as 洞悉 (dong xi), discern; both compounds with dong, using cha in the first case and xi in the second. From insight (cha) comes discernment (xi); this is more in line with common sense. And in insight and discerning the mystery of God, the Spirit is manifest (revealed) to humans. This is what Paul received and preached: “Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” For preachers, there is nothing besides this to preach; outside the Holy Spirit, what is preached lacks the power to inspire, lacks dependability. When Peter preached he moved thousands to the depths of their hearts; this is a true gift.

In the summer of 1955, I was in Shanghai waiting for my work assignment. I was fully counting on staying at Jinling—Nanjing Seminary—as Bishop Ting had said. But
I received an unexpected letter from Bishop Ting saying, “There’s a problem with your staying on at the seminary. I must backtrack on what I said; please forgive me.” While I was in Shanghai, Rev. You Shuxun 尤树勳, director of the Society for Christian Endeavor asked me to preach. For a while, I could not find inspiration, so I preached on “the mystery of God” as my teacher Zang Antang 臧安堂 once did at morning prayers when I was at seminary. But since I did not have the movement or presence of the Spirit in me, I felt my preaching was dry and boring. After that, especially after the 1980s, I tried never to preach if I was not moved by the Spirit or inspired.

Every time I had an opportunity to preach, I would wait for a spark from the Holy Spirit, without first indulging in logical thinking. When a spark appeared in the depths of my soul, then I would let it grow and become clear in silent meditation. And I would take this inspiration from the Holy Spirit and associate it with the passage, or look up the passage in a commentary. At the same time, I would take that inexpressible spark and inspiration, and pondering, translate it into speech. If time permitted, I would write out an outline, revising and editing the whole sermon. When I was preaching, I sought the Spirit’s presence, creating a spiritual atmosphere (what is called a spiritual air) striving to leave the manuscript behind.

This is what is meant by “… no one comprehends what is truly God’s except the Spirit of God”; “And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual” (1 Corinthians 2:13). A sermon with “three main points,” rigid as the traditional Chinese eight-legged essay, is tedious: purely rational, uninspired “religious poetry”—nothing there to chew on.

This current generation’s style awaits the restorative spark of the Spirit.
(100) But the earth remains forever

Ordinary lives are lived out on a stage. This is even more true of the lives of preachers, “exhibited” as the Bible says, spectacles to the world, to angels and to mortals (see 1 Corinthians 4:9). Apostles, writes Paul in 1 Corinthians, have been “exhibited as last of all, as though sentenced to death,” for they are fools, “weak, like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things” (see 1 Corinthians 4:10-13).

Every preacher, especially those loyal to Christ, who experienced the successive [political] campaigns of the past thirty years, have all played the tragic Paul-like role. With the passage of time, for preachers today there is no comparison between present and past. But strength, honor, wisdom are not sought by servants of the Lord; we are resigned to being lonely, to being treated coldly; keeping a servant’s state of mind for the master.

I remember when I was in junior high school, in my second and third years I was always class leader. I was in charge of the exercise books and I got a taste of what it was like to be a first class student. From first year of senior middle school to third year, I had top marks in math and physics, coming first on every test. I got an even bigger swelled head and right into the years that followed I never had to resign myself to being lonely or to coming second.

Then during the twenty years from 1958 to 1979, I had to be servile, living “with my tail between my legs.” But from 1979 on, I gradually stood taller, no longer coming second. This lasted twenty years to 1999. After retirement, when I was no longer working, a sense of loss and loneliness returned.

“A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever” (Ecclesiastes 1:4). The earth as our stage remains forever, but those who play their roles upon it follow each other on and off stage. One generation goes
and another comes; this is the law of history. When we make our entrance, we must play our part grandly and heroically. And when the next generation comes, we should go willingly and gracefully, making our exit quietly and gratefully. As I prepare my own exit from the stage of history, it is precisely this gratitude and calm that I stand in need of.

[final installment of Zimu]

Postscript:

From August 2005, a total of 100 installments of Zimu have been carried in successive issues of Tian Feng, and now we have reached the end. I thank the Lord for his compassion, and editors and readers for their encouragement.

(signed) Wang Weifan, aged 85 in this May of 2012.

Zimu has had a warm reception from readers since its first appearance. We want to thank Rev. Wang for his care and support for Tian Feng, and his affection for its young editors. His years have advanced but his pen has not diminished.

May the Lord continue to strengthen the work of his hands!

Tian Feng editorial department.
A Brief Introduction to the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China*

GAO FENG

1 The Importance of the Church Order

Why should we understand and familiarize ourselves with the Church Order? What is the significance of such an understanding? What significance does the Church Order have? What importance does it have for the founding and building up of the Chinese church? In this section I will focus on two aspects: 1) The need for the church to be “self-governing”; and 2) How the Church Order provides standards and a base for the building up of the Chinese church.

The need for the church to be self-governing

In the 1950s, the elder generation of church leaders initiated the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of self-government, self-support and self-propagation. In financial terms, self-support meant that the church no longer depended on foreign assistance. For many churches of the time, this posed

* This paper was prepared for a pastoral training course for theology graduates in the central and western regions conducted by the CCC&TSPM in Xi’an from October 21-24, 2014. The author notes that the church order “is an extremely important regulatory document for the church in the post-denominational era. Though its form is still somewhat rudimentary and quite brief, yet it embodies and reflects the most basic, core doctrines and canons of the Protestant churches and bears great significance for the founding and development of the Chinese church.”
a great difficulty and challenge. Today the Chinese church is a self-supported church, though certain difficulties remain and the church has some way to go to be well-supported. Self-propagation means that in China it is Chinese Christians ourselves who preach the gospel and establish the church. The strengthening of Theological Reconstruction that the church embarked on following the “Jinan Meeting” in 1998, has resulted in greater efforts to better preach the gospel and establish the church in today’s context.

Of “self-governing,” “self-supporting” and “self-propagating,” self-governing comes first. Self-government, or autonomy, means that the Chinese church should be governed by Chinese Christians ourselves. Through the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the 1950s, the Chinese church became an independent and self-run church, one that is managed and governed by Chinese Christians ourselves. Following the implementation of union worship in 1958, Chinese Christians moved toward union, entering a post-denominational era and bringing to an end the era marked by a plethora of denominations and their denominational bodies.

How then should a Chinese Protestant church that has achieved self-government in the post-denominational era be governed? This was the very important issue the Chinese church faced.

Wherever we look in the ecumenical church, the various denominations have their own administrative models and systems. Prior to the 1950s, every denomination in China had its own administrative order; for example, The Organizational Principles of the Church of Christ in China, the Constitution of the Zhonghua Sheng Kung Hui, the Rules and Regulations of the Chinese Methodist Church, and so
on. Now that denominations no longer exist in the Chinese church, the Chinese church, embarked on the path of union, cannot simply copy a denominational order, but it also cannot proceed without regulations. This is the background to the gradual formation of the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China. Thus, the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China is an essential element for the Chinese church to achieve the status of a not only self-governed, but well governed church and an important fruit of self-government.

Providing standards and a base for the building up of the Chinese church

The Church Order is of the highest importance for the establishment and building up of the Chinese Protestant churches and for their government and operation. We have constantly posed the question: what sort of church do we wish to build? The Church Order offers us a basic framework, standards and blueprint. We can see that this Church Order, though still in a rudimentary stage and quite basic, contains the most central, the most foundational content of doctrine and canons of the Chinese Protestant churches. Without the Church Order, people would not know what it is that the Chinese Protestant church believes, what the substance of our faith is, our basic understanding and vision, how we experience and understand liturgy or how liturgy is done. Nor would our administrative model and order be clear. Apart from this essential content, how can we speak of building up the church?

1 See Cao Shengjie, 《你了解，《中国基督教会教会规章》吗》 “Do You Know the ‘Chinese Protestant Church Order?’” (Shanghai: CCC&TSPM 2008), 5-6.
2 The Drafting Process of the Church Order

An understanding of the process of formation of the Church Order is helpful in understanding the document and its content. The Church Order we have now is that discussed and adopted by the (Joint) Standing Committees of the Seventh National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Chinese Protestant Churches and the Fifth China Christian Council at their expanded Conference in Beijing on January 8, 2008.² It is a product of over twenty years of exploration and effort by the elder generation of clergy and pastoral workers.

As I mentioned earlier, through the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the 1950s, and due to the social and historical background of the time, Chinese Christianity severed its ties to imperialism,³ and no longer relied financially on foreign mission bodies, becoming a self-supporting church. In the area of self-propagation, the theological mass movement of the 1950s and Theological Reconstruction in the 1990s were

² See 《中国基督教第八次代表会议专辑》 (Documents of the Eighth National Chinese Christian Conference) (Shanghai: CCC&TSPM 2008), 201.
both efforts by Chinese Christians to undertake contextual thinking on better preaching the truth of the gospel in light of the realities of the times and society. The process of drafting and refining the Church Order was an exploration by the Chinese church of what is involved in being self-governed and well governed.

The formation process of the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China may be divided into three phases:

1) The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China for Trial Use (1991);
2) The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China (1996);

*The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China for Trial Use (1991)*

In the late 1970s, a renewed and thorough implementation of religious policy took place. Churches were reopened and resumed every aspect of ministry. In October 1980, the Third National Chinese Christian Conference was held in Nanjing. At this meeting, the China Christian Council was established, to strengthen the administrative work of the church and promote self- and improved running of the church.\(^4\) The elder generation of church leaders at the time, including Bishop K.H. Ting and the Rev. Tsai Wen-Hao 蔡文浩 (Cai Wenhao), were already aware of the needs of the Chinese church regarding a church order and other areas of administration. In August 1986, the Work Report

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of the Fourth National Christian Conference stated that “in advancing the self-government of the church, under the premise of continuing to thoroughly implement mutual respect in matters of faith, we will explore certain systems to build up the church.” In 1987, the at the Second (Joint) meeting of the Standing Committees of the Fourth TSPM and the Second CCC, a “Church Order Committee” was set up and a “Resolution on Strengthening Self-Government and Drafting a Church Order” was passed. Following this, the Church Order Committee, basing its work on church orders already drafted at the provincial level, began to formulate a national church order (draft). Over several years, through repeated soliciting of opinions and multiple revisions, on December 30, 1991, at the Fourth (Joint) meeting of the Standing Committees of the Fourth TSPM and Second CCC, the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China for Trial Use was passed. Following its adoption and enactment, this Church Order was widely recognized and welcomed in churches throughout the country.

This church order was drawn up according to biblical teachings, as successor to the historical traditions of the church, with reference to the life of the ecumenical church, and integrating the real situation of the Chinese churches. In his closing address at the Fifth National Chinese Christian Conference, Bishop K.H. Ting gave a strong affirmation and assessment of this Order:

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5 中国基督教第四届全国会议专辑 (Documents of the Fourth NCCC) (Shanghai: CCC&TSPM 1986, 32.
6 See Cao, 1-2.
7 Ibid., 3.
I would venture to say that this is another significant document of our TSPM, the crystallization of its past forty years’ experiences. When we look back some years from now, we may find this document rudimentary and incomplete. Today, however, it gives full expression to the principle of mutual respect in matters of faith and worship and, most particularly, in matters relating to ecclesiology. It reflects how far we have come over the past forty years and the heights we are still to attain on our path of unity in the Chinese Protestant churches. I believe that this document will be given due attention and studied by Christians elsewhere, because it is a creative document, distinctively and uniquely Chinese, which has ground-breaking significance. ... This church order for trial use is of great practical significance. ... I hope that all delegates as well as our colleagues nationwide will earnestly study this order and make themselves familiar with it, protect its prestige and be examples of abiding by the document, in order to manage the church well, to protect its image and the prestige of the TSPM.9

And the Resolution of the Fifth National Chinese Christian Conference stated:

This document, following the Chinese church’s passage into the period of post-denominationalism, incorporates different traditions in a spirit of mutual respect and marks our church’s entrance into a new era of doing things decently and in good order. It is a trial church order, designed as a model for the churches. It is the recommendation of this conference that three-self associations, Christian councils and local churches in China conscientiously publicize and practice this trial order, and make suggestions for additions

9 K.H. Ting, 《闭幕词》 (Closing Address) in Documents of the Fifth NCCC. English translation in CTR: 7: 35.
and revisions, so that our Chinese church’s order may be continually improved.\textsuperscript{10}

Indeed, 1991’s Church Order for Trial Use had great real and historical significance. In terms of self-government, for the Chinese Protestant church as an already independent and autonomous church embarked upon the path of unity, this was an historic breakthrough. From then on, the independent Chinese Protestant Church in the post-denominational era no longer lacked rules of order. Disorderly phenomena that had appeared in some local churches at the time—an “as you please” approach to baptism and the conferral of holy orders, individuals creating themselves as preachers, etc.—were promptly remedied. The formulation of this Church Order further encouraged, guided and supervised the continual building up, strengthening and perfecting of the work of local church orders, and laid the foundation for the later official formulation of the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China.

\textit{The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China (1996)}

With the enactment of the Church Order for Trial Use as a national model in churches nationwide, the Chinese church was able to implement self-management in a more regular and orderly way in areas that included the conferral of holy orders and conducting liturgy, and management of churches and meeting points, and to play a positive role in local churches, formulating rules and regulations and standardizing management.

\textsuperscript{10}《中国基督教第五届全国会议决议》 (Resolution of the Fifth National Chinese Christian Conference) in Documents of the Fifth NCCC. English translation in CTR: 7: 31.
In 1995, after several years of use, the committee’s Church Order Standing Group offered its revision proposals for the Church Order for Trial Use, based on responses from churches nationwide. After gathering views and suggestions, on December 28, 1996, this Church Order was formally adopted at the second meeting of the Standing Committees of the Fifth National CCC&TSPM.\(^{11}\)

*The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China (2008)*

After being in effect for over a decade, on January 1, 2008, the Sixth Meeting of the (Joint) Standing Committees Enlarged Conference of the Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference formally adopted the new revised Church Order of Protestant Churches in China (hereafter: Church Order). This is the Church Order now in use in the Chinese church. Compared to the 1996 Church Order, this 2008 version has undergone extensive revisions.

The main reasons for these more extensive revisions are as follows:\(^{12}\)

1) The 1996 Church Order had been in use for over a decade and during this decade, the church, as well as society, underwent rapid development. The church experienced a gradual rise in the level of theological thinking, and new issues such as the emergence of denominational phenomena, an increase in privately established meeting points, a lack of internal unity in the church,

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\(^{11}\) See 《中国基督教第六届全国会议专辑》 (Documents of the Sixth NCCC), 61-66.  
\(^{12}\) See KanBaoping 阚保平, 《中国基督教教会规章的修改说明》 in 《中国基督教第八届代表会议专辑》 (Documents of the Eighth NCCC) (Shanghai: CCC&TSPM 2008), 211-213.
frequent appearance of heresies and cults, outside infiltration and so on. To target this new situation, the Church Order too must be constantly strengthened.

2) A section on “Faith” was specially added to this revision of the Church Order. The 1996 revision was more of a document of administrative regulations, but based on the wishes of local pastors and coworkers, the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China should clearly state the substance of Christian faith. Local churches were subject to harm from heresies and cults as well as frequent incursions and harassment, which made it difficult for the majority of believers to discern (the truth). The Church Order should provide the majority of believers with a standard of basic faith that they might maintain a pure faith. Some outsiders also slander us, saying that the lawful church in China has no faith. By continuously shaping a foundation of common understanding, as well as continuously clarifying the basic doctrines and canons of Chinese Protestant Christianity through the Church Order and other means, we are also clarifying misunderstandings and slander, enabling more people to have a correct understanding of Chinese Christianity.

3) Our nation is constantly strengthening the construction of our legal system, issuing such laws as, for example, The Regulations on Religious Affairs, the Measures for the Registration of Religious Activity Venues, Measures for Putting on File the Main Religious Personnel of Religious
Activity Venues. The Church Order must dovetail and coordinate with these and related laws, regulations and documents.

4) The structure of the Church Order has undergone a rather greater change. The former order was structured around topics. This revision is organized in chapters, articles, sections. It is divided into 8 Chapters: General Principles, Faith, The Church, The Sacraments, Christians, Ministerial Orders, Organization and Management of Churches and Meeting Points, and Supplementary Articles, a total of 38 articles in all and a number of sections. This revised structure better meets the standard of such documents.

3 A Brief Introduction to the Content of the Church Order

The introduction below focuses on the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China, the revised version of 2008 that is in current use in the Chinese church.

Chapter 1 General Provisions

In the 1996 Church Order and the 1991 Order for Trial Use, the first section was titled simply “Preface,” setting out the process of formulating the Order. In the 2008 revision, the title of the first chapter was changed to “General Provisions,” expounded in four articles. In terms of content on structure and explanatory material, the current Order (2008) is closer to the standards required of such regulatory documents.

Article 1 clarifies the four-point basis on which this order was formulated, including: 1) following biblical teachings; 2) inheriting historical church traditions; 3)
in consultation with the substance of the life of faith of the ecumenical church; and 4) the realities of the Chinese church. None of these four can be dispensed with. Whether we speak of spreading the gospel to establish the church, establishing the substance of faith, or undertaking theological reflection and establishing any theological concept and thought, all must be founded upon the Bible. We must begin with the Bible, otherwise any concept of faith or theology will be as water without a source or a tree without roots: unsupportable. “To inherit historical church traditions” is of great importance in formulating the Church Order. The church in China is independent, self-governing and self-operating and though it is a church which emphasizes its selfhood and at times overemphasizes it, when all is said and done, it is a member and part of the two-thousand-year-old Christian Church, in the direct line of descent. Without this heritage it would not be a church of Christ. To be in consultation with the substance of ecumenical church life is essential. The relationship of the Chinese church to the ecumenical church is one of a part to the whole, the Chinese church is part of the ecumenical church. The ecumenical church possesses great stores of mature experience and fruit, and the church in China ought to take it as a reference. In many matters, relying entirely on oneself won’t do. On this basis, we must also integrate the actual experience of the Chinese church. Individual local churches have their own varied and concrete issues and circumstances. This Order is formulated for the present Chinese church and so we must consider the specific issues and actual circumstances of churches in China at present. Only then will this Order be operational, useful and focused; only then will it be effective.

Article 2 clearly sets out that the Chinese church upholds three-self principles, independence and self-government and furthermore that it is under this principle
that it seeks to run the church well. How, in a new situation, to maintain the three-self principles and run the church well is a huge topic and a huge project and is of course the goal of formulating this Order. In 1998, following the Jinan Meeting, strengthening Theological Reconstruction became a quite important ministry of the Chinese church. Theological Reconstruction is a deepening and development of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, whose goal is to better spread the gospel of Christ and better build up the Lord’s Church in our actual circumstances, but how to further advance Theological Reconstruction and make the Chinese church well run is a major and systematic project. This article sets out clearly that the church is a community of Christians as well as delineating the individual believer’s social role and function.

Article 3 says that this Order is a national order, meant as an example, and an Order based on principles. Circumstances of various districts and areas differ nationally and local churches may, on the basis of this Order, synchronize their actual circumstances to establish and improve their own local regulations, but these local regulations may not contravene this Order. Further, the Chinese church has embarked on the path of unity, it has entered a post-denominational phase, and local churches may not formulate independent, denominational-style regulations. This is a principle of the Chinese church in its post-denominational phase.

Article 4 clarifies that the CCC, in addition to its main duties and responsibilities to local churches in formulating, drafting and implementing this Church Order and other church affairs, also has a responsibility to carry out the provisions of this Order in relating to, serving, guiding and supervising local churches.
In the amendment process for the Order (2008), there were many seminars, discussions and even debates. Views and suggestions were heard from many quarters before it was decided to add this chapter on faith. Belief in God, “three persons in one,” is the foundation of our church. Before his suffering, our Lord Jesus said to his disciples while in Caeserea Philippi: “... on this rock, I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). According to the Bible, this “rock” was Peter, representative of all the disciples and their faith in Jesus Christ (Matthew 16: 13-20). The church is the people God loves and whose faith is in Jesus Christ. In doctrine and canon, the Church should confess its faith, clearly expounding its substance.

This chapter has only one article, but its content is extremely important and rich, covering a wide range of meaning. Its purpose and theme is made clear from the very beginning. The substance of faith of the Chinese Protestant Churches is based on the whole Bible and the Apostles’ Creed. The previous version of the Order said only “the Bible.” This is amended to read “the whole Bible” to prevent any propagation and teaching of unilateral interpretation or out-of-context quotations. The Nicene Creed was not mentioned in the previous version but has been added here, for these are the creeds recognized and accepted by the ecumenical church. This addition makes the statement relatively more complete.

After laying out the ground of the church’s faith, the Order sets out clearly and concisely the main points of the substance of faith:

1) Ours is a Triune God, everlasting and eternal. Our belief in the three-in-one God is an unequivocal belief that has come from the early church fathers
to the contemporary ecumenical church. God is everlasting and eternal. God's self-revelation was given in the Old Testament of the Bible (Exodus 3:14). This point concerns the Trinity.

2) God the Father, Doctrine of God. (1) The attributes of God are listed: God is loving, just, holy, trustworthy and almighty. (2) God is Spirit; God has no tangible existence. (3) God's relationship to the cosmos and all creation. This touches on creation theory.

3) God the Son, Jesus Christ, Christology. (1) Jesus Christ is the only Son of God. Christ is born, not made. Christ is the second person of the Trinity, wholly God, of one being with the Father, with the Father revered and glorified. (2) He is wholly God and wholly human. (3) To fulfill the Father's plan of salvation, he was incarnate and came into the world, to witness to God the Father and to preach the gospel, and was crucified. He showed forth the great love of the Father, fulfilled the work of salvation and was buried. After three days he rose again and ascended into heaven. He will come again to judge the world. In speaking of the work of Christ, we touch on eschatology.

4) The Holy Spirit. Not all the Spirit's function and work is mentioned here. The Spirit is presented as teacher, comforter, enabling people to know their sinfulness and to repent, bestowing wisdom and ability, leading us to know God and to enter into the truth, enabling people to lead holy lives. In the doctrine of the Spirit (pneumatology), the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity: the Spirit
is creator God, Savior God, persuading God. God is present with human beings and with his church in this person of the Trinity; and fills the cosmos. There is also the position, function, action, nature of the Holy Spirit and so on.

5) The Holy Church. The church is discussed in the next chapter.

6) The Bible. There are four main points here: (1) What kind of book the Bible is. The Bible has been revealed by God. Though written down by human hands at different times, this happened through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It is the word of God. (2) The Bible’s position and authority. The Bible is the highest authority among God’s chosen in the Old Testament and for Christian faith in the New Testament period. It is the most important standard of life for believers. (3) Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, people in different times and different places have been able to understand the word of God in the Bible and through the Bible; people have gained new light in their own times. (4) The Bible should be interpreted in accordance with the principle of rightly explaining the word of truth. It should not be explained by private interpretation or taken out of context. We should take the heart of Jesus Christ as our own heart and God as our center to be in all readiness to understand and interpret the truth and teachings of the Bible.

7) Humanity. Three points are given here: (1) Human beings are made by God; they are God’s creations. Though they are created in the image of God, they
must not equate themselves with God, even less
call themselves gods, as some cults and heretical
groups have done in the past. (2) Because of sin,
humans rejected God, yet relying on Jesus Christ,
human beings can be redeemed and saved and
granted resurrection and everlasting life. (3)
Human responsibility. God bestowed on human
beings the responsibility of dominion over
creation. Humans are not only to enjoy the whole
natural world, or only take from nature; humans
have a responsibility and a duty toward this world.

8) Eschatology. In light of an issue found in the
Chinese church and especially in grassroots
churches, here just one point is mentioned about
eschatology: in the last days, Christ will come
again, but no one knows the day of his coming. If
someone says Christ will come again on this or
that day, as the Eastern Lightning group does, this
is not according to the biblical teachings. There are
some local areas where people often appear who
try to cheat or mislead believers using some sort of
eschatological formula, causing people to go astray.

9) The mission and responsibility of Christians. In
light of past overemphasis on faith at the expense
of actions or works, here the unity of faith and
action is especially emphasized. A Christian’s faith
and actions are one. A person who truly belongs
to God, who belongs to the Holy Spirit, will surely
have the fruits of the Spirit; one who belongs to
Christ, will surely have the fragrance and manner
of Christ; a true Christian, who follows the
teachings of the Lord Jesus, will surely live a life
that glorifies God and benefits people.
The foregoing sets out the essentials of what forms the substance of faith. These nine points touched on the Trinity, God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, Humankind, Eschatology, and Christian mission and responsibility: core beliefs of Christian faith. This of course is not an exhaustive interpretation of Christianity, simply those nine points and their content. This awaits continued enrichment and substantiation, development and improvement.

Chapter 3 The Church

There are four articles in this chapter. These articles plus the added content on the church from the preceding chapter, show that the Chinese church already has a basic understanding and knowledge of “church,” though it may not be systematic or complete. In its treatment of church in chapters two and three, this Order states seven important aspects:

1) The relationship between Christ and the Church. According to biblical teaching, the Church is the Body of Christ and Christ is the Head of the Church (1 Corinthians 12: 27; Ephesians 1: 22-23). The biblical parables point to other relationships that parallel that between Christ and the Church, for example husband and wife (Ephesians 5:23). Additionally, there is the relationship between the Church and God the Father (the people of God), its relationship with the Holy Spirit (the Temple of the Holy Spirit), and its relationship with the Kingdom of God (Heaven), etc. All these are mentioned in the Bible. A question worth pondering regarding the relationship between the Church and Christ is how we as a church live out that relationship.
2) The four marks of the Church. The Order says: “The church is apostolic, one, holy, and catholic.” The Nicene Creed (actually that determined and reaffirmed by the Council of Chalcedon in 451) has: “The Church” is “one, holy, catholic and apostolic.” One version translates it as: “I believe in the church founded by the apostles, one, holy and catholic.”

One, holy, catholic and apostolic are the four characteristics or marks of the Church. (1) One. Because God is the one, true God, God’s Church is one. Christ is one and the Church, the Body of Christ, is one. No matter when or where, all God’s people are one Body in Christ. (2) Holy. The holiness of the Church does not come from within itself. The visible church on earth includes both the righteous and sinners. There is much in the visible church that is sinful and foul, but through the holiness of God, we are also purified. For, those who are not holy shall not see God. Therefore, the people of God are holy. (3) Catholic. Unlike “one,” or “holy,” “catholic” does not directly appear in the Bible. The use of the word comes from the early church fathers (beginning with Ignatius of Antioch). As they struggled with heresy and schism, the idea of “the catholic church,” was developed and enriched. The term includes geographical catholicity, catholicity of time and quantity. It also includes the sense of “orthodox.” “Catholic” and “ecumenical” are not entirely the same. The “Catholic Church” means the church

of all places, at all times and of the whole body of those whose faith is correct. It can also mean the church in a specific place, if it is catholic in nature. (4) Apostolic. Of the four marks, this is the most important characteristic. This is another term not directly found in the Bible and it also comes from the early church fathers (Saint Ignatius). The earliest meaning of the term is “having a direct link with the apostles of Christ.” The Church must be apostolic; it must be founded on the witness and teachings of the apostles. Only then is it a true Church.

With regard to the four marks of the Church, different churches have differing understandings and interpretations. The Catholic Church holds that only Roman Catholicism truly represents and embodies these four marks of one, holy, catholic and apostolic, but Protestant Christianity does not recognize this. For example, regarding apostolicity, the Roman Catholic Church holds the view that because Jesus gave authority to the Apostle Peter as the first head of the Roman Church, this authority was passed on through the ages by the laying on of hands. The Roman Catholic Church maintains and emphasizes office and authority coming from the apostles, while the Protestant churches emphasize the apostles’ belief in Jesus, their witness and message.

3) The visible and invisible church. The Order (2008) speaks of the visible church. This idea of the church as visible and invisible comes from the

time of the early church fathers. This does not mean there are two churches, one visible and one invisible, but that there are two layers, visible and invisible. Christ’s Church is one. The visible church means the concrete churches on earth that can be seen. These churches are not perfect, they include both genuine and false believers. The invisible church means the people of God, chosen, blessed and redeemed by God. Not all members of the visible church belong to the invisible church.

4) Ecumenical and local. The Order says that the church is both ecumenical and local. According to the Lord Jesus’ command, the disciples were to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth as witnesses to Christ (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19), bringing all peoples to Christ. God’s saving grace was for all people on earth, therefore the church too is ecumenical. Once the gospel was preached everywhere on earth, due to the fact that the nation, culture, society, historical background and political system varied in different places, so churches founded in different places had different characteristics and churches had their own local characters. Likewise, the early church recorded in the New Testament: The circumstances of the churches in different places, like those in Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus and Rome, varied. The ecumenical and the local supplement and complement each other, the universal in the local and the local in the universal. The more [a church] is local, the more universal it is and vice-versa.

The Order expounds on this: the church in China is a member of the universal or ecumenical
church with other churches, fellow limbs in the ecumenical fellowship, with friendly exchanges, mutual sharing, saints in communion, and moreover, in mutual respect. This is embodied in the CCC's membership in the World Council of Churches (WCC) as the representative of the Chinese church. Though the church in China is a self-governing, self-supporting, self-propagating and independent and self-operating church, in fact it has consistently maintained friendly, close and varied exchanges and cooperation with churches around the world. At the same time, the Order stresses that the Chinese church has no vassalage relationship with any church outside China, nor is it under their domination. This is also required by the Chinese Constitution and is not unrelated to the unique historical social background of the Chinese church.

5) The church is a spiritual fellowship as well as a community organization (see this author's doctoral dissertation, "The Church is both a Spiritual Body and a Community Organization"). Article 7 of the Order (2008) tells us that the church is a spiritual fellowship of Christians which should build up the Body of Christ according to biblical teachings; it is also a social group which must abide by the national Constitution, and the provisions of laws, regulations and policies, and fulfill its duties, such as legal registration. This point is especially stressed due to the actual circumstances of the Chinese church.

The Chinese church, especially the majority of churches at the grassroots, due to the influence of more conservative theological ideas, one-sidedly
stresses the spiritual and transcendent nature of the church. One can find a lot of material reflecting this view. These ideas cause many problems and can directly influence the effective preaching of the gospel and building up of the church in today’s context, affecting our ability to give a beautiful witness in our times. Evidence for these ideas can be found in the Bible, but these are not the whole gospel message, nor the complete biblical teaching. Christians with these ideas may ignore that the individual is also part of society, a citizen who with a social identity, role, responsibility and duties. In a case of this sort, we can imagine the outcome. If Christians have such views, what would be the view of the church as a community of Christians?

The church is both a spiritual fellowship and a community organization. This point serves to show that the church is spiritual and transcendent, as well as of the world and social. From a sociological view, the church is a social organization that enjoys certain legal rights and thus, corresponding social responsibilities and duties to perform.

6) To maintain unity. The order says that the church should build itself up in love, that it should be one in Christ. The whole of Article 9 explains that we should do our utmost to maintain the bonds of unity given by the Spirit. The Chinese church has carried out union worship since 1958, embarking on the path of unity. The former denominational organizations no longer exist and the Chinese church is a church in a post-denominational phase. In following the path of unity, the Chinese church is following biblical teaching. In the past decades,
the Chinese church has also taken an active part in the ecumenical movement toward unity.

For a number of years past, for a variety of reasons, internal separatist tendencies have been apparent in the Chinese church and denominational phenomena have appeared. All sorts of independent meetings and fellowships outside the CCC&TSPM have continued to emerge. The unity of the Chinese church has been seriously challenged. The Order says that with the prerequisite of upholding the three-self principles, and love for church and love for country, there should be mutual respect among different faith views and practices while reserving larger common ground, abstaining from attacking others who hold different views and engage in different practice. The real issue now is whether we can achieve this. How the Chinese church can both foster mutual respect between those with different faith practices and maintain its path of unity is an issue it is essential to tackle conscientiously.

7) The responsibility and mission of the church. All churches must uphold the three-self principles and unite believers with the support and guidance of the CCC&TSPM. With one heart and mind, churches must carry out all aspects of their ministry well, including the administering of sacraments, pastoral care for believers. They must support theological education, develop social service, promote social harmony, etc. Observing the teachings of the Bible, the church must also work to preach the gospel, build up the church, and give a beautiful witness to Christ in our times.
Chapter 4 The Sacraments

The sacraments hold the place of highest importance among the holy work of the church. The sacraments are indispensable factors and conditions of what makes the church the church. The sixteenth-century reformers who initiated the Protestant church tradition, Martin Luther and John Calvin, both said that the church is wherever the sacred Word is preached and the sacraments correctly carried out. We can see that correct preaching of God’s word and correct carrying out of the sacraments are indispensable constituent elements that constitute a church.

The Chinese church as heir to the Protestant tradition sets great store by the sacraments. It has only two: Baptism and the Eucharist because, according to the Bible and church tradition, these two are the only ones ordained and established by our Lord Jesus himself during his time on earth. Chapter 4 of the Order has four articles explaining the Sacraments.

1) Based on biblical teaching and church tradition, the Chinese Church principally administers two sacraments: Baptism and the Eucharist.

2) Baptism. First, baptism was ordained by the Lord himself. According to the Bible, before the Lord began his work while on earth, he accepted baptism from John the Baptist (Mark 1: 9-11; Luke 3: 21-22). In sending the apostles at last into the world to preach the gospel and make disciples of all nations, he commanded them to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28: 19). Second, the Order offers a theological explanation. Through baptism, the recipient dies, is buried and rises again with
Christ. This encompasses the work of the Holy Spirit in baptism which causes the recipient to repent, confesses their sins and put the old self on the cross with Jesus, after which the soul is reborn into new life. Following baptism, a person ascribe themselves to the name of Christ. Baptism is the initiating sacrament by which a person truly becomes a member of the church. After this, the Order explains that according to Chinese church tradition, the efficacy of both immersion and sprinkling is recognized, because the form is external; internally, baptism is the work of the Holy Spirit.

3) The Eucharist. The Eucharist was instituted by the Lord Jesus himself. According to the Bible, prior to his arrest, Jesus performed the Eucharist during the Last Supper, the Passover feast (Matthew 26: 26-29; Luke 22: 14-20). In receiving the Eucharist, we remember that the Lord died for us; after the Eucharist, the Christian’s relationship with the Lord is renewed, strengthening faith and enriching spiritual life. The Eucharist also strengthens the Communions of Saints and enhances the unity of the fellowship.

4) Who may receive the Eucharist. Only those who have been baptized may receive the Eucharist, for only those who have been baptized have life in Christ and have become limbs of the Body of Christ. Only they can share in Christ’s Body and Blood.

Articles 11-13 clarify who may administer the sacraments, where the sacraments may be held, etc. Only those who
have themselves received holy orders may administer the sacraments. This includes a bishop, pastor (including elders commensurate to pastor in certain traditions) and teachers (also called associate pastor) along with elders who have been commissioned by the bishop and pastor. The main reason for this is to guarantee the efficacy of the sacraments as well as their proper administration. Sacraments should be held in the church except in special circumstances, for example special consideration may be given for the very elderly or seriously ill. In general sacraments should be publically held in a church, because sacraments are a sacred liturgy; whether in their inner nature or their external ritual, they are highly sacred, solemn and important.

Chapter 5 Christians

Chapter 5 has four articles. Article 14 explains how a person may become a Christian in normal circumstances. First, one becomes an inquirer; that is, one participates in church activities to get an understanding of the substance of Christian faith. Those inquirers who wish to formally join the church and become Christians contact the clergy in charge who organize an inquirers’ class for them. Following Bible study and being found acceptable through examination on faith and morals, they may be baptized. They are then Christians and may become regular members of the church.

Articles 15 and 16 set out the responsibilities of Christians to the church and to society respectively. Christians must engage always in study of the biblical truth and continue to grow spiritually. They should respect the pastoral workers, abide by the rules and order of the church, serve gladly, support all aspects of the church’s work and fulfill their responsibilities to the church. In China’s grassroots churches we often find a lack of sufficient awareness of [the need to] donate to the church, and
participate in the ministries of the church. There is a lack of a sense of responsibility and many Christians in these churches seem to be merely observers. This is related to the church’s pastoral guidance. According to biblical teaching, every Christian is a limb of the Body of Christ and every limb has its function. Everyone has a role to play; there should be no functionless persons in the church. This should be the clergy’s attitude and awareness as well; they should encourage and guide every believer to realize their potential and do what they can for the church, together building up the Body of Christ. Then the church will full of life and vigor.

In addition to doing their part for the church, Christians should take up the social responsibilities of citizens. Article 16 specially emphasizes that a Christian should also be a good citizen, one who loves the church and loves the country, abides by the law, pursues harmonious relationships in the family and with neighbors, serves society, benefits others and fulfills their social responsibilities. For Christians, this is a basic requirement and also a rather high demand.

Emphasis on the Christian’s social responsibility is mainly aimed at some who have one-sided and conservative ideas on faith and stress personal salvation without care for society. This article indicates that the Christian is both a spiritual person and a social person; both a citizen of heaven and a citizen of the nation; both a believer in the church and a part of society.

Article 17 is concerned with disciplinary actions toward Christians. Christians who have engaged in inappropriate behavior, or who adhere to heretical teachings, should be educated and admonished by the church. Those who refuse to mend their ways despite repeated disciplinary action, may, following appropriate procedures, be denied the Eucharist or even removed from the rolls of the church. Actual circumstances show that the majority of Christians are good. They follow pastoral guidance and biblical
teachings in their lives and actions, continuing to grow in the faith. But some Christians are not like this. Just as the church fathers Augustine and Martin Luther, among others, have shown, the church contains both the righteous and the unrighteous. The church on earth is not perfect, it includes both true Christians and false ones. This is an expression of the imperfect nature of the church on earth.\(^\text{15}\) In the early church, the Donatists, whom Augustine opposed, held that the church was the body of saints, pure and without flaw.\(^\text{16}\) But in fact it is not like this. In the visible church on earth, as Jesus says in the Parable of the Weeds, church members are like the seed sown in the field: there is the good seed [that produces wheat] and there are the weeds, both mixed up together (Matthew 13: 36-42).

\textit{Chapter 6 Ministerial Orders}

This chapter concerns Ministerial Orders. This is the longest chapter in the Church Order; every article and paragraph is quite detailed, illustrating the importance the Chinese church accords to the ministry. Over the last few decades, practice has proven that standards for the ministry play a very important role for the norms and order of the Chinese church in the post-denominational era.

Among churches in the Protestant tradition, including the Chinese church, there are some who do not much value ministerial orders. Some even feel that they are not really necessary, because Martin Luther, the initiator of the religious reformation in the Protestant tradition, formulated the “priesthood of all believers” as one of the basic principles

\(^{15}\) Roger Olson, \textit{History of Christian Thought}, translated by Wu Ruicheng 吳瑞誠 and Xu Chengde 徐成德 (Beijing: Beijing University Press 2003), 280.
\(^{16}\) Ibid.
of the Reformation. Although the concept of the priesthood of all believers holds that every Christian can experience God directly, since every Christian is naturally a priest or a minister, every believer is sufficient unto him or herself in matters of faith. Thus, some people are quite self-important and do whatever they want. If they gather a few people or a group of people they will set up on their own, for in their minds, they possess a more accurate truth, disdaining all others.

Martin Luther posited the priesthood of all believers in opposition to the clericalism and extreme Papalism of the Roman Catholic Church of his time. The Roman Catholic Church in Luther’s day made clerics into a spiritual class; they were sacred while the parishioners, the secular class, were not. What’s more, the Pope was God’s representative on earth and spoke for God on earth. Based on the Bible (for example 1 Corinthians 12: 12-13; 1 Peter 2: 9-10; Revelation 5: 9-10), Martin Luther argued that all Christians, including lay Christians as well as clerics, were part of Christ’s body and moreover, in Christ, they were fellow limbs—different in gifts, office and function, but alike in all other ways, for all had received one baptism, one gospel and one faith. The Church was not made up of clergy only, but of all Christians.

In the Old Testament, the office of priest was established to intercede for others and to offer sacrifice. In the New Testament, the priestly office also existed to serve others. “The priesthood of all believers” means that Christians must live out the model of Christ, demonstrating love for and service to others. It is not meant to be in opposition to the establishment of holy orders. Not all

17 Li Guangsheng, 李广生，一石激起千重浪——改革运动教会历史简介 (A single stone stirs up a thousand waves—the Reformation in church history) (Hong Kong: Daosheng Press 2009), 104.
18 Li Guangsheng, 105.
19 Ibid., 105-106.
members of a church are able to preach or administer the sacraments. Some, according to their gifts and the needs of the church, represent the whole congregation in reverential, accurate and efficacious preaching and administration of the sacraments. Therefore, Martin Luther always stressed the essential and important nature of the clergy and also stressed that the office of minister was established and ordained by God.\textsuperscript{20} Indeed, holy orders is established and ordained by the Lord (Ephesians 4: 11-13).

Article 18 states that there are four ministerial orders in the Chinese church: bishop, minister (pastor), teacher (associate pastor) and elder. Those who have received these orders are called clergy. Pastoral workers include a broader spectrum, referring to those with ministerial orders as well as evangelists (including deacons and lay workers who take part in preaching). Gender equality applies in ministerial orders.

Article 19 concerns the basic criteria for pastoral workers; Article 20 sets out the criteria for the four offices of clergy—bishops, ministers (pastors), teachers (associate pastors) and elders; Article 21 concerns the main functions of the ministerial orders; Article 22 focuses on the selection procedure for ministerial orders; Article 23 covers how the rite of ordination should be organized and undertaken, and how the newly ordained person, in accordance with relevant regulations, is to be entered in the records of the corresponding religious affairs department afterward. Article 24 concerns how evangelists are to be licensed and entered in official records. Articles 25-27 focus on what disciplinary actions should be taken against pastoral staff guilty of violations of church order, heretical preaching or gross acts of misconduct.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 105-106.
No further detailed discussion of these Articles will be given here. This summary provides a basis for further discussion of a few general ideas, or of the several points below that need attention or further effort:

1) We must continue to uphold the principle of gender equality. Some churches overseas have differing views on the ordination of women, or disputes and problems exist. On this issue, the post-denominational Chinese church is a rather good witness, but we need to make further progress. Women account for a rather large proportion of Christians in the Chinese church (around 75%) and women students make up over half of students in seminaries, but to date, only one-third of clergy are women. The Chinese church should do more to ensure women achieve their potential in the church.

2) We must continue to build up sound ministerial orders. The 1991 version of this Order, the 1996 Order for Trial Use, and this 2008 revised order, the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China, are all very clear that in the Chinese church four orders of ministry are in use: bishop, minister, teacher and elder. The text concerning these four church offices reveals that the elucidation of bishop and other offices (and especially the office of bishop) has become increasingly detailed. This illustrates the importance placed on these holy orders (especially that of bishop). Following union in the Chinese church, these four orders of ministry were formalized following wide-ranging and profound discussions among church leaders from various denominational backgrounds. To
abolish any one of these offices would be a highly
difficult matter. For at least the past decade, the
National CCC&TSPM has undertaken numerous
and thoroughgoing forums and discussions on
these ministerial offices (especially that of bishop)
and the Joint Standing Committees of the National
CCC&TSPM have held numerous (expanded)
meetings for deliberation. Consensus has been
reached on the necessity for and great importance
of these four ministerial orders. I will not go
into further detail here. In sum, to build up our
church as church, to enable the Chinese church to
be better established and developed, we should
continue to build up sound ministerial orders.

3) As we promote the work of ordination, we must at
the same time have strict criteria. In the past thirty
and more years, we have trained and graduated
over ten thousand theological students, but we
have ordained only a few thousand ministers,
including a few elderly ministers. On the one hand,
the church is short of ordained ministers; on the
other hand, in some areas, the work of ordination
faces restraints and difficulties. Overall, the Chinese
church still faces a shortage of clergy, so we must
continue to promote the work of ordination while
at the same time we must proceed on the basis of
the strict criteria of the church order.

4) We must continue to strengthen the clergy, and
strive to raise their overall quality and standard.
The current clergy of the Chinese church were
mainly trained in the previous three-plus decades.
In a period of rapid change in both society and
the church, the disparity between the quality
and standard of these clergy and the needs of a developing church and society is increasingly evident. Continued emphasis on self-strengthening among the majority of clergy is needed. We must strive to raise their overall quality and standards, training a clergy suited to the ongoing development needs of church and society.

5) We must continue to strengthen the force of discipline against ministers who violate their ministerial offices. In recent years, due to bad social influences and so on, some among the clergy have been corrupt in word and deed, violating church doctrine and canon, making a bad impression in society and in the church. They should be disciplined appropriately according to the church order; this cannot be ignored. We should constantly purify the ranks of the clergy.

Chapter 7  Organization and Management of the Church (Churches and Meeting Points)

This chapter covers church organization and management. There are those in the church who do not take much interest in the organization and management of the church, or are even opposed to it—they feel the church is the house of God, a spiritual fellowship that has no need of an organizational structure or a management system or any other human-made thing; in the church we should rely on the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and obey the Spirit’s guidance. Facts prove that this does not work.

The New Testament shows that the early church had organization and management systems, though in rudimentary form. The apostles were its early leaders. Once they had preached the gospel and established a
church in a place, they established elders or bishops and deacons (Titus 1:5-9), who were put in charge of the work of management, teaching and so on. The apostle Paul even set the qualifications and conditions for those who were to be elders or bishops and deacons (1 Timothy 3:1-13). The apostles frequently admonished the churches of their day that “All things should be done decently and in good order” (1 Corinthians 14:40), and to “admonish the idlers” (1 Thessalonians 5:14). The leading of the Holy Spirit and people’s involvement were not at odds in the early church, but were complementary (Acts 1:24-26; 15:28).

Articles 28 and 29 state the six conditions for the establishment of churches and meeting points, respectively. Articles 30 and 31 require city (region, prefecture, league) and county (city, district, banner) Christian Councils and Three-Self organizations to actively assist those that meet the conditions in establishing churches and meeting points, taking into consideration reasonable [geographical] distribution. Churches that meet the conditions should create the position of pastor–in-charge and define the main duties of the position. Articles 32-35 make clear that once a church or meeting point is formally established, the church or meeting point itself should set up a management system and set out the principles behind it, including the main scope of duties, every area of ministry, church service, property and finance and so on. Article 36 points out that a church or meeting point management organization should uphold the three-self principles and resist foreign intervention or sabotage.

I will not delve further into the provisions of this Order here. Every church should integrate relevant national laws and regulations such as the Regulations on Religious Affairs and so on, and following the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China, integrate local church realities, and establish a sound church management structure. Those
in management positions should be allowed to manage, enabling the running of the church to become more standardized and orderly. This will definitely benefit the sound and normal development of the church.

Chapter 8 Supplementary Articles

There are two Supplementary Articles, the aim of which is to make clear the promulgation and implementation of this Order and that revisions and interpretation are undertaken by decision of the Joint National Standing Committees of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China and the China Christian Council. These supplementary articles are a requirement of such a document.

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* Nanjing Theological Review Nos. 3-4, 2014: 3-23. 
CHAPTER ONE

Article 1 This order has been formulated on biblical teachings, the history and traditions of the Church, and the fundamentals of the life of the church ecumenical, integrated with the realities of the Chinese church.


Article 3 Local churches differ in their backgrounds and development, and thus local church councils in the various provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities may draft their own corresponding orders based on this one. However, these orders may not contradict this order, nor may they be formulated in the name of any denomination.

Article 4 The responsibilities of the China Christian Council in church matters visa à vis church affairs organizations in the various provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities include liaison, service, guidance, and supervision.
CHAPTER TWO: FAITH

Article 5 The Chinese church takes the contents of the entire Bible, the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed as the foundation of our faith, the main points of which are as follows:

Ours is a Triune God, everlasting and eternal.

God is Spirit. God is loving, just, holy, and trustworthy. God is almighty Father, the Lord who creates and sustains the cosmos and all that is in it, who keeps and cares for the whole world.

Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, born of the Holy Spirit, the Word made flesh, wholly God and wholly human. He came into the world to save humankind, to witness to God the Father, to preach the gospel; he was crucified, died, and was buried. He rose again and ascended into heaven. He will come again to judge the world.

The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, who enables people to know their sinfulness and to repent, who bestows wisdom and ability and every grace, leading us to know God and to enter into the truth, enabling people to lead holy lives, and to give beautiful witness to Christ.

The church is the body of Christ and Christ is its Head. The church is apostolic, one, holy, and catholic. The visible church is called by God to be a fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ. It was established by the apostles as Jesus instructed them. The mission of the church is to preach the gospel, to administer the Sacraments, to teach and nurture believers, to do good works, and to bear witness to the Lord. The church is both universal and particular. The Chinese church must build itself up in love and be one in Christ.

The Bible has been revealed by God and written down by human beings through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the highest authority in matters of faith and the
standard of life for believers. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit, people in different times have gained new light from the Bible. The Bible should be interpreted in accordance with the principle of rightly explaining the word of truth. It should not be interpreted arbitrarily or out of context.

Human beings are made in the image of God, but cannot become gods. God has given humanity dominion over all God’s creation. Because of sin, human beings have diminished God’s glory, yet through faith and the grace of Jesus Christ, human beings are redeemed and saved, and are granted resurrection and everlasting life.

Christ will come again. According to the teachings of the Bible, no one knows the day of his coming, and any method to determine when Christ will come again violates the teachings of the Bible.

A Christian’s faith and works are one. Christians must live out Christ in the world, glorifying God and benefiting people.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CHURCH

Article 6 Differences in culture, historical experience, and social systems exist among churches throughout the world. Faith is not received in identical ways, and this may produce differences in theological knowledge and interpretation. In its fellowship with the ecumenical church, the Chinese church is connected with the Saints of the Church in every place, as mutual limbs [of the body of Christ], in friendly contact, in mutual sharing and mutual respect. At the same time, it is an independent and self-run church, without a subordinate relation to any church beyond its borders, nor dominated by any outside church.

Article 7 The church is both a spiritual fellowship of Christians which should build up the body of Christ
according to biblical teachings, and a social group, which must abide by the national Constitution, and the provisions of laws, regulations, and policies, fulfilling its duties, such as legal registration.

**Article 8** Local churches, in accordance with the three-self principle, and with the guidance and support of Church Councils and Three-Self organizations, should unite Christians in voluntary observance of this order, to carry out all aspects of their ministry well, with one heart and one mind, to support theological education, to develop social service, and to promote social harmony.

**Article 9** The Chinese church maintains a union form of worship. At the same time it is aware that Christians differ in spiritual experience and needs. On the basis of the three-self principle, the church seeks the common ground in matters of faith and tradition and practices mutual respect and mutual acceptance, making no distinctions or attacks. The teachings of the Bible must be observed and every effort made to preserve the unity of heart received from the Holy Spirit.

**CHAPTER FOUR: THE SACRAMENTS**

**Article 10** Based on the teachings of the Bible and the various traditions of the church, the Chinese church administers two sacraments: baptism (sprinkling or immersion) and the Eucharist (also called breaking bread).

Baptism is commanded by the Lord Jesus as a sign that the one baptized has died with the Lord, been buried and has risen again. The Chinese church recognizes the efficacy of baptism both by sprinkling and by immersion, because the Holy Spirit works in baptism, creating a new Christian person.
The Eucharist was established by our Lord Jesus himself. The bread and wine of the Eucharist are signs of Christ’s body and blood. Christians receive the Eucharist in remembrance of the Lord. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, the Eucharist renews the relationship between the Christian and Christ, strengthens the faith and enriches the Christian’s spiritual life while enhancing the unity of the fellowship.

Only baptized Christians may receive the Eucharist.

Article 11 The Eucharist may be administered by a bishop, clergy (including here and in the following, elders commensurate to pastors in certain traditions), and teachers (also called associate pastors). Elders appointed by the clergy may also administer the Eucharist, but no one who does not have ministerial orders may be appointed to administer the Eucharist.

Article 12 The Eucharist must take place in a church as part of a specific liturgy and be carried out in a reverent manner.

Article 13 The church may arrange for elderly or seriously ill Christians to receive the Eucharist and baptism in their homes.

CHAPTER FIVE: CHRISTIANS

Article 14 Those who come to the church as newcomers seeking the gospel truth and those who participate in church activities are called inquirers. Inquirers who have attended churches or home worship gatherings for a given period, who voluntarily accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, who repent of their sins, whose actions are upright, and who are law-abiding, may enroll in an inquirers’ class and make
a systematic study of biblical fundamentals and what it means to be a Christian. Those who have been examined by the pastors on faith and morals and found acceptable, may be baptized. Following baptism, inquirers may be entered in the rolls of the church and become members.

**Article 15** Christians must abide by the teachings of the Bible and the rules and order of the church. They must show respect for the clergy, serve gladly, support all aspects of the church’s ministry, and fulfill their responsibilities to the church.

**Article 16** Christians should be good citizens. They should love the country and love the church, be law-abiding, and be in harmony in their families and with their neighbors. They should serve the society, benefit the people, and fulfill their social responsibilities.

**Article 17** Christians found to have engaged in seriously inappropriate behavior, or who adhere to heretical teachings, should be educated and admonished by the clergy. The management organization of the church or meeting point concerned may report those who persist in such seriously inappropriate behavior to the local church council. Upon examination and confirmation of the facts, such individuals may be denied the Eucharist or, as a final measure, removed from the rolls of the church.

**CHAPTER SIX: MINISTERIAL ORDERS**

**Article 18** Ministerial orders in current use in churches in China are: bishop, minister (pastor), teacher, and elder. Those who have received these orders are referred to as clergy.

Gender equality applies in ministerial orders.
Evangelists (including here and below, deacons and lay volunteers who have been involved in preaching) who have been approved by the local church council and clergy are also called pastoral workers.

**Article 19** Pastoral workers must meet the following criteria:

They must be in good physical and mental health and possess a pure Christian faith and lead a pious spiritual life witnessed by good moral character and conduct. They must have the experience of devotion to Christ and service to the church. They must love their fellow Christians and be held in high esteem among other Christians. They must be patriotic and law-abiding and enjoy a good reputation, both within the church and outside it.

They must uphold the three-self principle, unite with believers in loving the country and loving the church, and promote mutual respect in matters of faith.

**Article 20** Those seeking ministerial orders must meet the following criteria:

Bishops must have an undergraduate theological degree or above, be over 40 years of age, have served as pastors for over ten years, be profoundly versed in theology, be active in promoting Theological Reconstruction, have authored instructional theses or works, have rich pastoral experience, the ability to unite coworkers and believers, a lofty moral character, and be deeply loved and respected by believers.

Ministers (pastors) should have formal theological education as well as experience in pastoral work. Graduates with an undergraduate theological degree (4 years) or higher should have at least two years of pastoral work experience. Those with a diploma in theology or a Bible school education (2-3 years) must have at least three years of pastoral work experience.
Teachers (associate pastors) should have formal theological education as well as experience in pastoral work. Those with an undergraduate degree in theology (4 years) should have at least one year of pastoral experience. Those with a diploma in theology or a Bible school education (2-3 years) should have at least two years' experience in pastoral work. Those who have served as teachers for a year or more are eligible to apply for ordination.

Elders should have a high school education or the equivalent and over five years’ experience in church service. Preaching elders should have some theological education, or one or more years of lay training approved by the provincial, autonomous region or municipal Christian Council and Three-Self organization.

Article 21 The duties of the various ministerial orders differ:

A bishop's responsibilities lie mainly in the interpretation of Christian doctrine, in promoting theological reconstruction, regulating the work of ministry, guidance, and pastoral care for the spiritual lives of ministers, pastoral workers, and Christians. The bishop does not have any special administrative authority.

The main duties of a pastor include all aspects of the ministry of his/her church, management of the church and/or home worship gathering, administration of the sacraments, and the pastoral care and guidance of believers.

A teacher assists the pastor in managing the church and/or home worship gathering and in pastoral care and guidance of believers. A teacher may administer the sacraments.

An elder assists the teacher and pastor in church or home worship gathering management. His/her professional duties are limited to the church and its associated meeting points, to pastoral care and guidance of believers, and
administration of the sacraments at the request of the pastor.

**Article 22** Ordination procedure for ministerial orders:
Candidates for bishop are nominated by the CCC&TSPM executive committee. The candidate’s own views should be sought prior to nomination. The views of the candidate’s provincial (autonomous region, municipality) Christian Council and Three-Self organization must be sought, following which the Joint Standing Committees of the CCC&TSPM must elect the candidate(s) by a two-thirds majority vote.

Applicants for ordination to the ministry must apply in writing, be put forward by the church council of his/her church, recommended by the management organization of the local church and be approved by the city (locality, prefecture or league) Christian Council and Three-Self organization of the district in which the church is located, which then reports to the provincial (autonomous region or municipality) Christian Council and Three-Self organization. The provincial (autonomous region or municipality) level organizations should canvass a wide range of views and carry out its own investigation. Only when the candidate passes this check may he/she be ordained.

Teachers (associate pastors) applying for the ministry must pass the same procedures of application, selection, recommendation, and inspection as individuals applying for ordination to the ministry.

Applicants for elder must make a written application. They must then be nominated by the management organization of their church or meeting point, recommended by the local church council and approved by the church council of the city (locality, prefecture or league) in which their church is located, which then reports to the provincial (autonomous region or municipality) level council. This
provincial (autonomous region or municipality) level council may then request the city (locality, prefecture or league) church council to send an ordination team of three or more pastors and elders to perform the ordination.

**Article 23** Ordination to ministerial orders should follow the relevant provisions of the “Licensing Criteria for Chinese Christian Clergy.”

At least three bishops are required to take part in the laying on of hands for the investiture of a bishop. Ordained ministers of good moral standing and reputation may be invited to join in the laying on of hands. Ordination to the pastoral ministry requires joint laying on of hands by a bishop and at least two ministers, or at least three ministers. Ordination of a teacher (assistant pastor) requires the joint laying on of hands by at least three ministers. Ordination of elders requires joint laying on of hands by at least three ministers and elders, and the one administering the sacrament must be an ordained minister.

The rite of ordination to holy orders must be held openly in a church; ministerial orders may not be received in private. Following the liturgy, the newly ordained person must, in accordance with relevant regulations, be entered in the records of the corresponding government religious affairs department.

**Article 24** Evangelists should be licensed in accordance with the requirements of the “Licensing Criteria for Chinese Christian Clergy” and entered in the records of the corresponding government religious affairs department.

**Article 25** Gross acts of misconduct, violation of the church order, heretical preaching or violation of criminal law by a pastoral worker require disciplinary action following
investigation of the facts. Disciplinary action may include admonishment, suspension from church office, removal from church office, and revocation of ministerial orders.

Disciplinary action against a bishop must be proposed by the executive committee of the CCC&TSPM, which then informs the Christian Council and Three-Self organization in the bishop's province (autonomous region, municipality). Revocation of a bishop's ministerial orders must be done with formal deliberation and approval by the Standing Committees of the CCC&TSPM and passed by a two-thirds majority vote.

Discipline of a minister or teacher must be proposed by the Christian Council and Three-Self organization at the provincial-(autonomous region, municipality) level. Discipline of an elder must be proposed and declared by the city (district, prefecture, league) level Christian Council and Three-Self organization. Revocation of ministerial orders in these cases must be arrived at through deliberation and approval at a formal meeting of the provincial- (autonomous region, municipality) level Christian Council and Three-Self organization.

Article 26 Discipline of evangelists may follow methods outlined in Article 25, to be decided following deliberation and approval by a formal meeting of the city (district, prefecture, league) level Christian Council and Three-Self organization.

Article 27 Disciplinary action may be rescinded following the aforementioned procedures. The corresponding government religious affairs department must be informed of the implementation of disciplinary action and its cancellation.
CHAPTER SEVEN: ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CHURCH (CHURCHES AND MEETING POINTS)

Article 28 The following conditions must be present for the establishment of a church:
A requisite number of believers; a meeting place set aside for church use; ordained clergy in charge of pastoral care of believers; a management organization or preparatory management organization; church regulations; a reliable source of funding.

Article 29 The following conditions must be present for the establishment of a meeting point:
A certain number of believers; a set meeting place; a preacher approved by the local Christian Council and Three-Self organization; a management organization or a preparatory management organization; a meeting point management system; a reliable source of funding.

Article 30 The city (region, prefecture, league) and county (city, district, banner) Christian Council and Three-Self organization must conscientiously consider the meeting needs of believers, and based on the requirements stated in Articles 28 and 29 of this Order, assist churches and meeting points in the construction of a suitable venue.

Article 31 Churches and meeting points which meet these requirements shall install a senior pastor (or a serving elder as the equivalent). The senior pastor presides over church activities and pastoral care for believers, leads believers in resisting heresy and infiltration, and publicizes and implements all decisions of the CCC&TSPM.
Article 32 Establishment of church and meeting point management organizations.

A church shall establish a church management organization (comprised of at least 7 persons). A meeting point shall establish a church management team (comprised of at least 3 persons). A church management organization consists of the senior pastor, pastoral workers and the requisite number of representatives from the congregation, elected by a meeting of delegates from the congregation or through consultation. The period of service shall be three to five years. Re-election and continued service are allowed, in principle not to exceed two terms. The church or meeting point management organizations shall fully develop democracy, listen widely to the views of the congregation, proceed by division of labor and cooperation and govern the church with one heart and mind.

Article 33 The church or meeting point management organizations shall manage the ministry of the church, including:

Arranging all types of gatherings, worship, and sacraments to proceed decently and in good order, so that heartfelt worship of God may proceed and disorder be prevented.

Preachers shall be drawn from the ranks of pastoral workers to raise the quality of pastoral care and prevent the spread of heresy, divisions within the church, or illegal and unlawful activities.

Christians, especially lay volunteers, should undergo training to raise their knowledge of the faith and their awareness of abiding by the law, to guard against the invasion of heresy, and to strengthen their study and knowledge of relevant state laws and regulations.

A roll of Christians shall be kept and properly organized to preserve church and meeting point information and archives.
Sound and healthy church and meeting point management organizations and group decision making require regular meetings. Resolutions must be passed by a simple majority of the members of the church or meeting point management organizations. Decisions on important issues (such as large outlays of funds, recommending candidates for ministerial orders, etc.) must be passed by a two-thirds majority vote.

Retired clergy who enjoy good health may be invited to preach in the church or meeting point, if there is need.

The ministry of the church shall be guided and supervised by the local church council. The church council shall consult fully with the church or meeting point management organization on issues related to the church or meeting point, and conscientiously hear their views. Decisions reached following consultation should be implemented by the management organizations of the churches and meeting points.

Article 34 Management of finances by churches and meeting points.

Management organizations of churches and meeting points shall set up a finance committee to draw up a system of financial management and strictly adhere to it in their work, including procedures for opening the donation box, keeping accounts, issuing receipts, depositing cash in the bank and so on. Pastoral workers and others in charge at churches and meetings points and their families shall not count the money or serve as accountants.

Management organizations at churches and meeting points shall regularly report revenue and expenditure and accept oversight from the local Christian Council and Three-Self organization. When necessary the congregational meeting may request the local Christian Council and Three-
Self organization to examine the accounts or request relevant government department to carry out an audit.

A strict system of financial examination and approval shall be formulated. Large expenditures should be discussed and decided collectively by the church and meeting point management organizations.

**Article 35** Property and business management for churches and meeting points.

The property of churches and meeting points belongs to the church and no person may privately occupy or divide it. It is the responsibility of the church or meeting point management organization to maintain the property and there should be a designated person or team in charge, with a feasible and practical management system in place. Houses used for meetings, buildings, and residences for the clergy shall not be transferred, mortgaged, used as investment properties or given to others.

To do our general work well includes management and up-keep of property, utilities, and security.

**Article 36** Church and meeting point organizations shall uphold self-government, self-propagation, and self-support and resist all harmful outside interference of any sort.

**CHAPTER EIGHT**

**Article 37** This Order shall be effective on the date of its passage and promulgation by the National Conference of Joint Standing Committees of the CCC&TSPM. Revisions follow the same procedure.

**Article 38** This order shall be interpreted by the Standing Committees of the CCC&TSPM.

The Chinese text governs.
**Translator’s Note**

*Shangdi/ Shen* alternatives are given for each instance of the term God. This reflects historical usage for the name of God within the Protestant community of China. Both “Shangdi” and “Shen” versions of the Bible are published, so that individual Christians may read and use the term which is part of their inherited faith tradition.

Edited 2016 by CTR Editor.
From the entry of Protestant Christianity into China in 1807, different countries, denominations and mission boards established various systems of church organizations, each independent of the others. Since the late nineteenth century, farsighted persons in the church had begun to propose and explore union, and a unity movement gradually took shape. In 1922, the National Christian Council of China was established, with the important aim and task of creating a cooperative body. But up until 1949, this was no more than a loose coordinating mechanism. But among China’s dozens of denominations, only sixteen larger denominations took part; none of the evangelical groups joined. In 1927, the Church of Christ in China was established with the goal of uniting all denominations in a union church. Sixteen denominations joined initially and the number later increased to nineteen. In 1950, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China was launched, casting off foreign forces of control on Chinese Christianity: relationships with the former mission agencies were severed and former church organization systems were broken up, foreign missionaries left China, organizations became disorganized, foreign funds were cut off, and normal activities interrupted. In 1954 the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China was established (TSPM). In 1958, the denominations implemented union worship and religious activities were united and arranged by Three-Self, and the various denominational organizations basically stopped functioning. TSPM was compelled to take on some
of the functions of a church. In 1980, the China Christian Council (CCC) was established. From then on, the TSPM and the CCC were known as the “two committees,” organizing and arranging in common much of the ministry of Chinese Protestantism. From 700,000 adherents in 1949, the number of Chinese Christians increased to 23 million (23.05 million) in 2009 and has continued to grow in recent years. Christianity has become an important religion in China with a [continued] gradual increase in the number of Christian believers, a gradual rise in its influence in society and greater international attention, yet it has not established its own church institution!

1 What is a church? What is church polity?

In different spheres, “church” is explained differently. The Dictionary of Religion, a reference work for the social sciences, explains it thus: “The basic organization of Christianity.”1 The New Testament, Christian scripture, gives a religious definition: “the pillar and bulwark of the truth” (1 Timothy:15). The definition given in the “Church Order of the Protestant Churches in China,” drawn up by the CCC&TSPM, says: “the Church is the Body of Christ and Christ is the Head of the Church” ... The visible church is called by God to be a fellowship of those who believe in Jesus Christ. It was established by the apostles as Jesus instructed them. ... The church is both a spiritual fellowship of Christians which should build up the body of Christ according to biblical teachings, and a social group, which must abide by the national Constitution, and the provisions of laws, regulations, and policies, fulfilling its duties, such

as legal registration.”

The Regulations on Religious Affairs issued by the State Council neither mention nor define “church.” The document discusses the [conditions for] the existence of Chinese Christianity, and thus the CCC&TSPM is the subject of its discussion.

In the Bible, “church” also refers to particular, visible gatherings of Christians, like the church in Antioch or the church in Corinth. In China, what Christians at the grassroots call “church” always means an organization in a [certain] locality or a church. In fact, such local Chinese churches not only exist, but are developing rapidly, with lively ministries. For convenience in this essay, this kind of “church” will be called the “grassroots church(es).”

TSPM is the patriotic and church-loving organization of Chinese Christians. The relationship between TSPM and CCC is extremely close: in organizational terms, the “two committees” are one committee. The National Chinese Christian Conference, which they convene jointly is the highest authority for each committee. As for the Standing Committees, the leadership does not overlap, but Joint Meetings are regularly held. In practice, the CCC&TSPM already fulfill some of the functions of a united church. Examples are provision of the Bible and hymnals, the Church Order, ordination, etc. In 1991, the World Council of Churches (WCC) accepted the CCC as a full member. However, WCC membership is for churches, most church conferences are just affiliate members. Thus, China is a special case, because at the time there was widespread belief overseas that the CCC would very soon develop into a Church.

But neither TSPM or CCC is a church. Previous Constitutions of the TSPM have not dealt with the functions

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2 中国基督教教会规章 (Church Order of the Protestant Churches in China) (Shanghai: CCC&TSPM, 2011), 3-4.
of a church; only in specially designated historical conditions when there is no choice does TSPM take on some of the work that should be done by a church. When the CCC was first established, the chairperson of the two committees, Bishop K.H. Ting 丁光训 did envisage that the CCC would gradually morph into a church. The overall aim of its Constitution is to “unite all churches throughout China with Christ as our Head in developing together our role in building up the Body of Christ.”

“The aim” is “to unite and lead all patriotic and church-loving Christians in China who believe in and serve God and who acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord” in “running the church well.” Looking at it in another way, if not a church, it is certainly not the “Chinese Protestant Church (Union Church).” The TSPM has always been very careful in its handling of this issue. The title of the Order(s) that have been drawn up have all been tongue twisters: that adopted in 1991 was called the “Chinese Protestant Church Order for Trial Use in All Churches”; that revised in 1996, 2006 and 2008 was called “Church Order of Protestant Churches in China,” in order to avoid being seen as the “Church Order of the Chinese Protestant Church.” Its validity is relative: “The order for trial use” is a “model,” “meant as a standard of reference for local churches.” Local churches are just required to “voluntarily abide by” the “Order.” There is no established church to draw up a constitution nor to supervise its implementation.

3 中国基督教协会章程 (Constitution of the China Christian Council), in: Cao Shengjie 曹圣洁, 你了解《中国基督教教会规章》吗? (Do you understand the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China?) (CCC&TSPM 2008), 98.
4 Ibid.
5 中国基督教各地教会试行规章制度 (Chinese Protestant Church Order for Trial Use in All Churches), in: Cao, 84.
6 Church Order of Protestant Churches in China, 4.
The church must have its own organizing principle and management system to lead and carry forward all the work of the church. That is to say, there is an issue of church polity. Under a fixed polity there must be specific measures for implementation, such as drafting a church constitution, establishing a confession of faith, establishing a church administrative system and a system for the ordination of clergy, and so on. These are the essential preconditions for establishing a church.

Historically, the various denominations of the mainstream Chinese Protestant churches were established on the episcopal system, the Presbyterian system and the congregational system. The episcopal system was hierarchical with the bishop as the central manager of the church. The bishop was an internal church administrator of a diocese, with the authority to consecrate the president (minister) and deacons. Churches using the episcopal system include mainly the Anglican and a few Lutheran denominations. The congregational system is democratic; there may be no leader over the congregation, the church members possess all rights of governance. Using democratic methods, the congregation directly hires a minister to manage the church. An association formed of individual congregations has no higher authority over any individual church, it simply functions to promote friendship and cooperation. Churches using the congregational system include the Congregational Church/UCC, the Baptists and the Society of Friends (Quakers). The Presbyterian system practices democratic centralism with a body of elders governing the church. The congregation organizes the session and elects elders, pastors, associate pastors and deacons; sessions in a district form the presbytery/synod and these unite for a General Assembly. Examples of churches practicing the Presbyterian system are the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Christ in China.
In fact, many churches adopt some mixed form of these three models. The Church Order drawn up by the CCC&TSPM basically lies somewhere between the Presbyterian and congregational forms. The modernist theologian Chen Zemin 陈泽民, vice-president of the CCC, has offered this explanation: “For the church we have now, this type of governing structure is clearly the most feasible in nature. Though there seems to be insufficient biblical and theological evidence for it theoretically, in this current phase it is feasible and essential.”

In addition to these three polities, there are churches that adopt no system of church governance, proclaiming that no specific form of organization is necessary. They do not ordain pastors but have great reverence for spiritual authority, for the Spirit freely guiding the direction of the church. The Quakers and the “Little Flock” are examples of this approach.

2 Why Establish an Institutional Church?

Neither the TSPM nor the CCC is a church, but they have been operating for over thirty years. Can they continue to operate in this way? Or, we might ask, what are the benefits of establishing an institutional church?

The good image of Chinese Christianity will be enhanced internationally.

Christianity is a world religion, with many international relationships. Internationally, countries have their own institutional Christian churches; China alone has not formed its own church. Chinese Protestantism thus cannot take its

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7 Chen Zemin 陈泽民, 中国教会的变化与二十一世纪的前瞻 (Changes in the Chinese church and prospects for the 21st century), in: 求索与见证——陈泽民文选 (Writings of Chen Zemin) (CCC&TSPM 2007), 169.
rightful place among world Christianities. Chinese leaders can only appear as representatives of a quasi-church or a church in fact; they have no way to interact equally with leaders of Christian Churches internationally. Furthermore, with the passing of former denominational bishops (or other denominational leaders at the same level) in China, there are no longer bishops among our Christian clergy. In international gatherings, Chinese Protestant leaders seem at some disadvantage in terms of spiritual authority. In fact, the religious attainments and the pastoral burdens of some Chinese leaders are not less than those of foreign bishops. The establishment of an institutional church will strengthen the ability of Chinese Protestantism to deal with foreign churches and strengthen the confidence of its leadership at every level.

The fruits of union worship will be consolidated.
In 1958, influenced by unique external political forces, Chinese Protestant Christianity undertook to institute union worship among denominations. In this union of denominations, a goal for which Christian leaders in China had been working for over half a century was realized. Due to the impact of the “ultra-leftist” line and the Cultural Revolution, this was for a long period a situation of union in the absence of much worship, or, no worship. However, after over half a century of wearing away, denominational ideas did in fact fade. Now the majority of believers in the grass roots churches in the CCC&TSPM system were baptized into the church post-1979. They were baptized in a church practicing union worship and have engaged in union worship for many years. There are no denominational divisions, and a corresponding portion of independent meeting points do not stress denominations. But following reform and openness, foreign denominations formerly active in China have been striving to reconnect with Christians with
denominational backgrounds in China, and are gradually increasing their strength and seeing some results. If China remains long-term without its own institutional church, it is quite possible that denominations will step in to fill the gap and become active again.

*It will aid in uniting with believers in independent meeting points.*

The number of believers in independent meeting points has increased. If the CCC&TSPM want to broaden unity with them, and to become more representative, it must unite with this group of believers. This is a conundrum the CCC&TSPM are facing that urgently requires study and resolution. Work in various areas is necessary to achieve this. The CCC&TSPM must assuage these believers’ misgivings, and one very important area in doing so is to give them a religious sense of belonging. At present, the foremost and most important reason why many ordinary Christians participate in independent meeting points is because TSPM is not a church; they feel only they are the church.

*The holiness of Chinese Christianity and the cohesion of believers will be augmented.*

The “Church” is an important component of Christian faith. The Nicene Creed is the Christian confession of faith commonly recognized by all important Christian groups. It emphasizes “I believe in one, holy and catholic Church.” The Apostles Creed is the profession of faith adopted by both Catholic and Protestant Christianity, including the CCC&TSPM. It includes the statement, “I (we) believe in the Church.” As the Bible explains, only within the Body

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8 简明不颠百科书, 6 (Concise and All-inclusive Encyclopedia, vol. 6) (Chinese Encyclopedia Press 1986), 251.
9 Ibid., vol. 7, 312.
of Christ do believers join together as limbs. Without the church, Christians’ faith is incomplete. Without Chinese Christianity’s own, institutional, church, Chinese Protestantism cannot legitimately call itself a church and Chinese Protestant Christians have no spiritual “home.” Holiness is the most fundamental feature of religion. If holiness is lost, a religious body will become an ordinary social group and its expositions on doctrine will be mere interpretations of social mores in religious terms; religious activities will simply be ceremonial; and religion will lose its social meaning and value. Therefore, the CCC&TSPM constantly strives to establish an institutional church to truly bring believers together as one, and to bring its role as a bridge organization into full play. If Chinese Christianity continues long term without its own visible church, it is quite possible that other church systems will appear outside the CCC&TSPM.

3 Post-1949 Efforts at Establishing an Ecclesiastical Structure in Chinese Protestant Christianity

After 1949, the Chinese Protestant community made constant efforts to establish an institutional church, but the way was full of frustrations and dashed hopes.

In the early 1950s the church systems established by the denominational mission boards were still in existence and each church managed its own affairs. The Three-Self Movement only advanced (with) the anti-imperialist movement and did not manage internal church affairs at all. In 1954, once the national Three-Self Committee was set up, Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗, its chairman, with Bishop Zheng Jianye 郑建业, the general secretary of the Standing Committee of the Central Council of the Chung Hwa Sheng Kung Hui 中华圣公会, Bishop Zhang Guangxu 张光旭 of
the Fujian Diocese of the Chung Hwa Sheng Kung Hui, and K.H. Ting, President of Nanking Theological Seminary, consulted on issues involved in establishing a church. The movement flourished, but results were inconclusive. In 1956, at the Second Enlarged Plenum of the TSPM, Y.T. Wu in his “Report on the Patriotic Movement of Christian Churches in China (TSPM),” proposed on the macro level “Three Witnesses” and for the near future, “Ten Tasks.” The second of the “Ten Tasks” was to reorganize the church:

The mission board system has left behind it in the Chinese churches many irrational phenomena, and these phenomena are an obstacle to the advancement of the church’s ministry. Therefore, it is our hope that all churches involved will, based on actual circumstances, undertake an overall consideration and setting to rights of church organization, personnel arrangements, ministry and finances, and so on, in order to achieve a sound body, stronger leadership, an institutional system, and improvement in our goal for our work.\(^\text{10}\)

The overarching goal was to build the Chinese Protestant church into a church consonant with a great nation, “This church must be governed, supported and propagated by Chinese Christians ourselves: it should be under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, based on the Bible, and not on any foreign tradition or foreign custom or proposal of an individual foreign church leader.”\(^\text{11}\) When Shanghai churches united in 1958, each district set up a “Preparatory Committee for Union Worship,” hoping through


\(^{11}\) Zheng Jianye 郑建业, 关于教务机构问题的发言 (Speech on the question of a church affairs body), in 中国基督教第三届全国会议文件 (Documents of the Third National Chinese Christian Conference) (CCC&TSPM November 1980), 41.
a time of preparation to be able to officially establish a church institution with a common liturgy. But due to the increasingly “leftist” political situation in the country, this could not be realized.

In 1980, at the Third National Chinese Christian Conference, with the existing TSPM as premise, the CCC was established to serve in ministry all churches and Protestant Christians, laying the foundation and preparation to establish an institutional church. At the meeting, Bishop Ting drew a distinction between the responsibilities of each body: “... the TSPM and the national church affairs organization both have as their subjects Christians in China. One is a people’s organization made up of Chinese Christians as Chinese, the other is a Christian organization made up of Chinese Christians as Christians. If the TSPM is a patriotic movement on the part of Chinese Christians, then the church affairs organization will represent a Three-Self Patriotic Chinese Church Movement....”

The vice-president of the CCC, Bishop Zheng Jianye, gave a speech “On the Church Affairs Organization” at the same meeting, giving a clear definition of the nature and function of the CCC:

The church affairs organization is not another church, nor a supreme organization superseding local churches. It is rather a body serving all Chinese churches and Christians. It can attend to aspects of ministry difficult for individual churches to handle on their own, for example the publication and translation of the Bible, compilation, translation and publication of devotional literature, training clergy and running seminaries for theological researchers and so on. At the request of local churches, it may send staff to pay visits and look in on brothers and sisters in local churches.

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to strengthen contact and exchanges and share ideas. When necessary it may also organize discussion and study of issues of concern to all.\(^\text{13}\)

In 1982, Chinese Christian circles began a series of open discussions around the status of TSPM and the relationship between TSPM and the church as preparation for thinking about establishing an institutional church. At the Second Enlarged Plenum of the National Chinese Christian Conference, Bishop Ting delivered issued his “Another Look at Three Self,” in which he pointed out: “The Three-Self Committee and the China Christian Council are but temporary vessels, the scaffold of the building in the construction process. ... As soon as this building of the Body of Christ is completed, standing uniquely on the horizon, the scaffold will disappear.”\(^\text{14}\) At the closing liturgy of the Fourth National Chinese Christian Conference, Bishop Ting preached a sermon titled: “May God Strengthen the Work of Our Hands.” He focused on building up the church in love and handling the relationship between TSPM and the church well. “We must have a correct approach to the relationship between the TSPM and the church. The church is the body of Christ, the dwelling place of the Risen Christ and the fellowship of the saints throughout the ages; the church is not subordinate to Three-Self. The church is the main body, while the TSPM and CCC are products of certain concrete historical conditions. They are the servants of the church.”\(^\text{15}\) At the Meeting of the Joint Standing Committees of the TSPM and CCC, December 13, 1988, he delivered his speech “Three-Self and the Church: Re-Ordering the Relationship,” in

\(^{13}\) Zheng Jianye, 46.

\(^{14}\) K.H. Ting, 三自再认识 (Another look at three-self) in Love Never Ends, 106.

\(^{15}\) K.H. Ting, 愿主坚立我们手所作的工 (translated as “Building Up the Body in Love”), in Love Never Ends, 255.
which he held that: “As we know, the goals of the Three-Self Movement are only to promote patriotism and to promote self-government, self-support and self-propagation within the church. Its aims are quite limited. The TSPM has always been seen as an organization of a rather marked political nature. It is not within the boundaries of its goals and responsibilities to manage or direct the church. No version of the constitution of the Three-Self organization ever stated that its task is to run the church.”16 “Three-Self does not interfere with faith, and does not run the Church. It only promotes selfhood and independence, to open up a future for the Church. Therefore Christians could rest assured.”17 He went on to offer a further analysis: At its inception, it was repeatedly stated that Three-Self was not to lead or manage the church. But later changes took place in the functions of the Three-Self organization. “…it [moved to] a position side by side with, or even above the church. It became a management department, like a church and yet not really a church; like a government yet not really a government.”18 As he saw it, “The leadership provided by church affairs bodies to their subordinates and to grassroots congregations should be churchly and pastoral, and not administrative control with abuse of power. It should provide direction and assistance on theological bases and principles.”19 In fact between the two bodies, the TSPM has a longer history. Often the leadership is older and more qualified and the organization is livelier. In 1989, Bishop Shen Yifan 沈以藩, writing in Tian Feng, in an essay titled “Some observations on the question of re-ordering the relationships,” introduced

17 Ibid., 341.
18 Ibid.
19 Ibid., 345.
the origins of the situation in which “TSPM leads the church,” along with the force of habit it shaped, such that TSPM and CCC were unable to better share work, and CCC could not realize its full potential. He further pointed out: “Relationships between government and the church should also be re-ordered.”

In 1987, CCC&TSPM began the work of establishing a church order, with the goal of “governing the church well.” At the Second Enlarged Meeting of the Standing Committees of the Fourth TSPM and the Second CCC, Rev. Cao Shengjie, in her speech “To Run the Church Well, Formulate the Necessary Church Order,” pointed out: “A system of Church Order must begin with the church. It must be “of the Church (教会化)” (NB: this means it cannot be held to requirements for the constitution of an ordinary social group), if it is to gain the support of believers and reach its goal of governing the church well.” As stipulated in the Order, on June 26, 1988 the CCC&TSPM consecrated Sun Yanli 孙彦理 and Shen Yifan as bishops, making the holy orders of the church more complete. Bishop Ting stressed: “We will have bishops, but we are not choosing the episcopal system of church government. Our bishops are not diocesan and not administrative: they have their authority, but their authority does not base itself on any written constitutional stipulation or any executive position, but on their spiritual, moral, theological and pastoral ministration, on their service to others.”

In 1990, Wang Weifan 汪维藩, in an essay titled “Forty Years of Chinese Christianity,” published in the journal

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21 Cao Shengjie, Do you understand the Church Order?, 2.
22 Ting, 走出一条新路来 (Taking a new way), in Love Never Ends, 309.
Studies in World Religions, bluntly pointed out that the issues awaiting resolution in Chinese Protestant Christianity included the entity construction problem. “...‘union worship’ eliminated the original structures, but did not succeed in setting up new structures, and this led to Chinese Christianity becoming a religious body in which each does things in his or her own way.” He further pointed out that after 1980, it was difficult for higher levels to achieve their guiding function for levels below them. “The Chinese Christian church cannot return to any structure from the period of domination by Western mission boards, for these are unavoidably marked by capitalism. But the question of which structure of Chinese Christianity a socialist society should adopt can perhaps be one of the important questions for the next decade.”

At the CCC&TSPM executive committee meeting in October 2004, Bishop Ting proposed that the ecclesial character of the church must be strengthened and that the Chinese church should establish bishops. For a time the CCC&TSPM ruminated on how bishops could be established: should there be a few? Or a class? Should there be gender restrictions? Was the former episcopal system background a constraint? How would the authority of the office be defined? Should a house of bishops be set up? And if so, how should the authority of the group be defined? And so on. Since consensus was difficult to achieve, nothing came of it.

23 汪维藩, 中国基督教四十年 (Forty years of Chinese Christianity), in Chinese Theological Review: 8: 62.
24 Cao Shengjie, 中国基督教加强教会性的理论和实践意义 (The theoretical and practical significance of strengthening the ecclesiasticality of Chinese Christianity), in 境遇中的思考——曹圣洁文集 (Writings of Cao Shengjie) (CCC&TSPM 2010), 68.
4 How is an Institutional Church Established?

It is this author’s opinion that a vertically organized (or top-down), united “Chinese Protestant Church” can be established; it must be clear about its church structure; assume the organizing system needed to establish a church; carry out functions such as establishing norms of faith and liturgy, training clergy, pastoring believers, managing personnel, finances and other matters; and represent the Chinese Protestant Church overseas. Chinese Protestantism must produce its own organizing system, establishing various levels of church organization in every province, autonomous region, directly administered city, county (municipality), village and church; the various levels of church organizations must respect and fulfill the church order and set regulations; higher levels of organization have the authority to oversee lower levels and these must abide by the higher decisions. As for why a vertically organized, united church should be established, studies have expounded on this. Once the Chinese Protestant Church is established, the CCC&TSPM will have fulfilled their historical task.

When the Church of Christ in China was in preparation, the missionaries of the various boards had different views: The Anglican Church proposed that the episcopal system should serve as the foundation of the Chinese Church,25 the London Missionary Society held that the differences among churches in organization, doctrine and structure should be preserved.26 Actually, most of the denominations joining in the Church of Christ in China

were from the Presbyterian Church and only a very small number from the Congregational and Baptist faiths. Following the establishment of that church, the participating denominations agreed to adopt the Presbyterian system. But the constitution of the new church stated: “Toward local church governance, there are no rigid strictures, the goal is that, in terms of church organization, a great deal of strength should be retained, to give enthusiastic Christians, opportunities to be ‘bold in experimentation.”’

The subtext here is: what comes under church union is the name, organization, spirit, and certain ministries; personnel and finance are still to be handled by the individual councils, and former relationships with the mission boards have not changed. Obviously, the organization of this church was not at all united and it did not have a high level of organization. In this regard, the first General Secretary of the church, Asher Raymond Kepler (高伯兰), gave this explanation in *An Overview of the Central Council of the Church of Christ in China*: “Looking into church history, the truth of Christ is unchanging. As for church organization, this has not gone unchanging. In reforming, the goal lies in finding a more efficient and effective organization to spread the doctrine of Christ.”

Here, we can detect the attitudes of resignation, compromise and accommodation among the organizers at the time. Today, based on national essence, religious essence

27 Asher Raymond Kepler 高伯兰, 教会合一运动 (The unity movement in the church), Council of the Church of Christ in China, *Church of Christ in China Yearbook*, no. 11, Part 3, 6. Asher Raymond Kepler (1879-1942), American, missionary of the Presbyterian Church, USA, came to China in 1901 and worked forty years in the areas of Nanjing, Ningbo, Xiangtan, Beijing and Shanghai. During a long period in Shanghai, he concentrated his energies in promoting movements for Chinese Church unity and indigenization.  

and tradition, we can also blend the three mainstream church systems of organization to take the CCC&TSPM-formula, proven to be reasonable and effective through years of practice in grass-roots churches, along with these articles of the Church Order which have gained a high degree of approval and fix them in the form of a church constitution, to shape [Chinese Christians’] own church structure. This new structure can appropriately strengthen the component of democratic election of leaders at all levels, which will strengthen the cohesion and vitality of the church.

At the national level, a number of bishops can be created with spiritual, but not administrative, authority. Provinces, autonomous regions, and directly administered cities that meet the criteria can create one or two. These bishops are different in nature from bishops in the episcopal system and would exercise the responsibilities of a bishop outlined in the provisions of Chapter 6, Article 21 of the Church Order of Protestant Churches in China [2008]: “A bishop’s responsibilities lie mainly in the interpretation of Christian doctrine, in promoting Theological Reconstruction, regulating the work of ministry, guidance and pastoral care for the spiritual lives of ministers, pastoral workers and Christians. The bishop does not have any special administrative authority.” If a number of bishops are established, then a house of bishops should be established as well. For the relationship between the house of bishops and the church, we can refer to the relationship between the China Catholic Patriotic Association (一會 yihui) and the China Catholic Bishops College (一团 yituan) (below: yihui-yituan) in the Catholic Church, which is self-regulating.

No matter what the structure of the church is, no matter what the responsibilities of the bishop are; having structure and bishops is better than having none.

29 Church Order of Protestant Churches in China (CCC&TSPM 2011), 9.
5 The Present Opportunity for Establishing an Institutional Church

*It is the common desire of all sides*

Corresponding to the further expansion of the policy of openness, is the implementation of the strategy in the religious realm of “going out”; this is bound to increase interaction between Chinese Christianity and world Christianity, [thus] the urgent need to improve the international image of the church. In 2004, the relevant government departments encouraged and supported discussion in the Christian community of the establishment of bishops. A vertically organized or top-down national church system would in no way impact management of Christian affairs according to law by all levels of government. The Catholic *yihui-yituan* is a classic vertical church organization; to date it has had no impact on management according to law by all levels of government of Catholic Church affairs. The source of the complexity in Catholic Church affairs is primarily outside China, in its hierarchy and religious leaders.

Establishing a church has been the dream of the Chinese Protestant community for over half a century, and is today the pressing, common desire of members at all levels of the church. Having a complete church with an institutional structure will effectively strengthen the holiness, authority and cohesion of the church organization nationally and at all [local] levels, improving its degree of organization; it will strengthen guidance for those at lower levels and supervision of those at higher levels, and will help to ameliorate the current tendencies toward becoming too administrative, mechanical and bureaucratic.
Difficulties in establishing a church have basically been resolved

Chinese Christianity has experienced over a century of a movement toward unity, and over half a century of common worship and exploration into establishing a church institution. It has basically resolved the difficulties in establishing a united church: a common faith and mutual respect for special faith characteristics.

Thirty years of discussion passed between the motion put forward by the Presbyterian Church to the official establishment of the Church of Christ in China. The difficulty lay in different denominations, or with persons of different theological persuasions within the same denomination who could not come to a consensus regarding common articles of faith and order. In October 1901, the Presbyterian Church took the initiative and established the Chinese United Presbyterian Church in Shanghai, and adopted a resolution “On the Union of the Chinese Protestant Churches”: “It is resolved that churches of the Presbyterian Church will be first to proceed.”

The National Christian Conference of 1913 passed a resolution on “Preparation for Chinese Church Unity,” determining the use of “Church of Christ in China” as the name of the united church. Afterwards, the denominations all joined, one after another. But internally in the Presbyterian Church, the modernists and the fundamentalists were at daggers drawn, and this had a dampening effect on progress toward unity among Chinese churches. In the fundamentalist view, the modernists were actually nonbelievers, based on the biblical injunction “Do not be mismatched with unbelievers” [2 Corinthians: 6:14].

In 1917, twenty thousand fundamentalist believers parted

ways with the modernists in North China.\textsuperscript{31} At the time the Presbyterians had about 80,000 members. This means that a quarter of the Presbyterians broke away from their church.\textsuperscript{32} The fundamentalists who had separated set up the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of China \textsuperscript{33}中华基督教长老总会 in 1929. In October 1947 its name was changed to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in China \textsuperscript{33}中国基督教长老总会 and by 1950 it had grown to 30,000 members with Jia Yuming 贾玉铭 as leader. In the end, the Confession of the Church of Christ in China was extremely simple, stating: This is not the whole of what every Christian or group believes, “what we want to express is simply several doctrines adhered to in common.”

Beginning in 1981, the then vice-president of the China Christian Council, Bishop Zheng Jianye, accomplished three important ministries: 1) He compiled \textit{Curriculum for Lay Volunteers}, enabling local churches to have something on which to base explanations of doctrine. 2) He compiled a \textit{Catechism of Chinese Christianity} as study material for inquirers prior to baptism. 3) He edited \textit{Hymns of Universal Praise (New Edition)} for use in the churches. These concrete actions progressively solidified the intellectual foundations for seeking the common ground in faith traditions and liturgy, mutual respect and mutual acceptance and provided rules for the practice of united worship in the church. Today, all forms of baptism and the Eucharist are included and accepted, confession and other special rites may take place, and different calendars for Sundays and holy days are respected. Most typical was the consecration of Sun Yanli

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  \item[31] Albert Dodd 道雅伯, \textit{中国基督教长老会史略 (A brief history of the Chinese Presbyterian Church)} (Shanghai Archives, file no. U110-0-6, no. 3, 6.
  \item[32] Chen Chunsheng 陈春生, \textit{本年教会大事概论 (Church events of the year)}, in \textit{Church of Christ in China Yearbook}, No. 5 (1918), 8.
\end{itemize}
孙彦理 and Shen Yifan as bishops, when representatives of all denominational backgrounds joined in the laying on of hands, which was calmly received by clergy and laity alike. The seven persons taking part belonged to different denominational backgrounds with different polities: four from the Anglican Church (episcopal system), K.H. Ting, Xue Pingxi 薛平西, Wang Shenyin 王神荫, Mao Kezhong 毛克忠; one Baptist (congregational system) Qi Qingcai 戚庆才; and two from the Church of Christ in China (Presbyterian system), Wu Gaozi 吴高梓 (born into the Church of Christ in China) and Yin Jizeng 殷继增 (a graduate of the fundamentalist North China Theological Seminary who had worked with the Quakers and from 1950 served as pastor of the independent West Gulou Church of the Church of Christ in China).

From 1987 to 2008, the process during which the CCC&TSPM formulated the Church Order, in fact became a process of consultation with differentiation shaping a common understanding of faith. The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China for Trial Use was adopted in 1991: the first section was a definition of “church”; other sections included Christians, sacraments, ministry, the organization and management of churches (home worship gatherings). The Church Order of Protestant Churches in China, adopted in 2008 was an extensive revision of the Order adopted in 1996, adding a section on Faith. For this section, a CCC&TSPM Committee on Church Order met, some faculty of NJUTS met, and a symposium of representatives of the all provincial, autonomous region, and directly administered city CCC&TSPM and personnel were sent to Shanghai, Beijing, Fujian and Zhejiang to gather a broad spectrum of views from persons of various denominational backgrounds. There were about 200 persons taking part in meetings, with the text undergoing over five revisions. The ultimate wording was a common understanding acceptable
to all. Though only a general outline, it is fundamental and significant, but it is not the entirety of the Christian faith. The article, which reads “[the Chinese church] takes the contents of the entire Bible, the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed as the foundation of our faith”;\textsuperscript{34} includes nine fundamental points of faith from systematic theology: the Trinity, creation, redemption, the Holy Spirit, ecclesiology, the interpretation of the Bible, the doctrine of man, eschatology, Christian ethical responsibility, etc. Now, though the differences in faith traditions and liturgy based on denominational background have not disappeared, there can basically be a common understanding: “[The China Christian Council] advocates mutual respect in matters of faith, and the principle of ‘forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace’ in the relationship between the members.” \textsuperscript{35}

\textit{Changes in church staff}

In the 1980s some people radically stressed their own denomination’s understanding of “church” and declared that if the CCC&TSPM removed the word “Council” from the name of the China Christian Council, they could take the initiative to break away from the CCC&TSPM. In 2004, the discussion was about creating bishops; those who stressed that to a certain extent an episcopal system could be carried out, have now passed away. Of course, Christian denominations and differing theological propositions are part and parcel of the characteristics of Christianity. It is not possible nor even desirable to impose unity on everyone’s thoughts and actions. At present and in future, new spokespersons will continue to emerge, but I am afraid that for the time being it will be very difficult to find representatives like those of

\textsuperscript{34} Church Order, 2.
\textsuperscript{35} Constitution of the China Christian Council, 27.
former times, people with the energy and ability to have a direct impact on the process of establishing an institutional church.

*New ideas in religious management*

Since the Eighteenth Chinese Communist Party Congress [2012], religion management departments have constantly strengthened ideas in managing religion according to law. Within the larger context of governing the nation according to law, this is indeed a trend that cannot be reversed. Accordingly, a church structure should be established, on a foundation of self-management standards and order, so that government management can be standardized. In addition, the Chinese Communist Party is constantly consolidating and improving its governing capability, leading a constant improvement in the capability of religion and socialist society to mutually adapt. This is, perhaps, an effective external impetus at present toward the establishment of an institutional church.

To summarize, though Chinese Christianity has not yet established an institutional church, in fact, the issue has been explored and tried out for many years and we already have the answer: the leadership of Chinese Protestantism should grasp the opportunity, take up the responsibility history has conferred on this generation, boldly carry forward a high-level design, and speedily bring forth the “Protestant Christian Church of China.”

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It is my great honor to stand before you this evening to deliver the Cato Lecture. Prior to the 2013 “One Flock, One Shepherd” consultation jointly hosted by the China Christian Council and National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China with the Uniting Church in Australia, I never imagined that I would visit Australia, let alone visit twice in one year. I would like to thank the Assembly, especially President Stuart McMillan and the Rev. Terrence Corkin for this invitation.

My topic this evening is “Being a Marginal People of God: A Chinese Christian Understanding.” My lecture will consist of two parts. In the first part, I will address the significance of following Christ as a marginal people of God by drawing some insights from the theology of marginality and new perspectives on missiology. In the second part, I will share with you some salient virtues that have sustained God’s marginal people to be a church in China.

My first visit to Australia was last summer to attend the conference “Basis of Union: Catalyst for Renewal” held in Sydney. In his keynote address, Prof. Dr. Andrew Dutney made a statistical comparison between the Methodist Church of South Australia in 1972 and the South Australia synod of the Uniting Church in Australia in 2013, which drew people’s attention, including mine.

- In 1972, 77% of Methodist circuits in South Australia had memberships larger than 100 people. In 2013, only 8% of Uniting Church in Australia congregations in South Australia had more than 100 attendees.

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the membership of 4% of Methodist circuits in South Australia was smaller than fifty people. In 2013, 72% of Uniting Church in Australia congregations in South Australia had fewer than fifty attendees.

- In 1972, the median size of Methodist circuits in South Australia was 167 people. By 2013, the median size of Uniting Church in Australia congregations had dropped to thirty-five people.
- Further, in the 1976 Australian Census, 14% of Australians identified as Congregational, Methodist or Presbyterian. In the 2011 Australian Census, only 5% of Australians identified as Uniting Church in Australia. Professor Dutney noted that “the church today is as small as the church of the 1970s was large, and we are as marginal to the dominant culture today as we were central to the Australian society a century ago.”

The words “small” and “marginal” sound very familiar to me, for this has been the situation of the Chinese church, in spite of the fact that it has been growing fast in recent decades. Prof. Dutney didn’t comment on the nature of the church’s being small and marginal, but just stated that God calls this kind of church into being for mission in our time. I shall claim that a church being marginal and small opens the possibility of becoming the marginal people of God, which has great significance, and is a concept with which Chinese Christians can fully identify. Here I will just point out a few layers of significance of being a small and marginal church.

When it is at the margin instead of the central place in society, the church is more likely to read the Gospel from a different perspective. Jung Young Lee, a Korean American theologian who advocated a theology of marginality, argued

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that when the church seeks to be at the central place, it tends to put more emphasis on Christ as the King of kings and Lord of lords. The church then is interested in the power and majesty of Christ, and is more interested in his lordship than his servanthood, and more interested in his resurrection than his death. Christians from this kind of church forgot that it was his weakness that made him powerful, and his humility that raised him to be the Lord of lords. Jung Young Lee pointed out that this trend of understanding belongs to the centralists. Influenced by the centralists’ viewpoints, the church has wanted to be a part of the central authority to rule and dominate the world. Many examples can be found in the history of Christianity in Europe and North America, as well as from the old missionary movement. Even in present times, the success of a church is always measured by the size of its membership and its budget.

However, if we read the Gospel from the perspective of a theology of marginality, we will realize that the stories of incarnation witness to us that Jesus Christ was the marginal person par excellence.

Jesus was conceived by an unwed woman, born far from his hometown, sheltered in a manger, visited by Eastern wise men instead of the elite of his nation, and fled into Egypt, which made his childhood doubly marginalized: politically from Roman authority, and culturally and ethnically by living in a foreign land. His life in Nazareth was certainly humble. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth” implied that Jesus’ life as a Nazarene marginalized him in the eyes of the larger community.

Furthermore, Jesus was an outsider, rejected by his own people, as written in the Gospel of John: “he came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him”

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(John 1:11), and in the Book of Hebrews: “Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. Let us, then, go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured” (Hebrews 13:12-13). Jung Young Lee argued that, being outside the camp, Jesus became a friend of marginalized people, including tax collectors, Gentiles, women, the poor, and the oppressed, by teaching them, healing them and comforting them. Jesus was rejected by the Pharisees, Sadducees, and the Romans, but accepted by the marginalized people, because he was one of them, a marginalized person and even a homeless person. As Jesus himself put it, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head” (Matthew 8:20).

Dying on the cross was the perfection of Jesus’ marginality. The theology of marginality opposes kenosis being considered part of Christ’s divine nature, rather, they argue that emptiness is a process in which the divine nature becomes human, and takes on the form of a servant. Jesus “humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8). The incarnation is that God became human through emptying the divine nature. It is the process of God’s transition from the nature of God to the nature of a servant; and therefore, incarnation is the divine marginalization.

If Jesus Christ, the incarnated God, was a marginal person, we Christians are definitely called to be the marginal people of God, for as H. Richard Niebuhr put it, to be a Christian is to follow Jesus Christ, to have the incarnated Christ influence and modify one’s person, life and destiny,

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3 Ibid., 71.
4 Ibid., 81.
and to identify oneself with the cause of Jesus Christ. Moreover, the theology of marginality argues that the whole history of Israel recorded in the Bible was the history of God’s marginal people, for people like Abraham, Moses, and the prophets who were the leading figures of the Israelites were all marginal people, let alone the ordinary people of Israel. Even the kingdom of David was not situated at the center of the then historical time.

The stories of incarnation and the New Testament passages, along with the history of the Israelites, have always been in the Bible, but only when the church is in a marginal position is it more likely to pay closer attention to them and to allow them to encourage and to adequately impact the lives of Christians and the church. It is more likely that a small and marginal church will not measure the success of a church by the size of its membership and its annual budget, because Jesus never paid attention to the size of the crowds that followed him and he never judged a person’s status on the amount of his or her wealth.

A second layer of significance for the church in being small and marginal is to help it better understand the Christian mission from a new perspective, from the perspective of mission from the margins.

Throughout the century from Edinburgh 1910 to Edinburgh 2010, a great deal of change took place in the understandings of mission. One of the significant changes is from “mission to the margins” to “mission from the margins.” According to the WCC’s new affirmation on Mission and Evangelism, mission to the margins assumes that mission is a movement taking place from the center to the periphery,

6 Jung Young Lee, Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology, 101.
from the privileged to the marginalized, and from the rich to the poor. Mission from the margins recognizes that the marginalized are agents of mission and exercise a prophetic role, which resonates with the biblical witness that God chose the poor, the foolish and the powerless (1 Corinthians 1:18-31) to further God’s mission of justice and peace on earth. Mission to the margins is a centralist approach, which is motivated by an attitude of paternalism and superiority. Mission from the margins does not simply move people from the margins to centers of power but confronts those who remain at the center by keeping people on the margins.7

Mission from the margins was the story of the early church. Mission to the Gentiles started not with the Jewish Christians in Jerusalem, but with the Hellenist Christians in Antioch. The understanding of those in Jerusalem was “to the Jew first, then the Greek” (Acts 13-14), and it was the Greek or non-Jewish Christians that represented the margins. The Antioch community was a dynamic element in early Christianity, and mission transformed their self-definition into “extraordinarily assured, open, active, pneumatic, city-oriented, Greek-speaking Jewish Christian heirs of Stephen,”8 in church historian Ben Meyer’s words.

Moreover, the early church was a marginal church, oppressed by Romans and rejected by various religious and cultic groups. Only after Constantine did the church gradually become a dominant group, imitating the practice and structure of the empire to become a pyramidal,

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hierarchical, and male-dominant institution. Church historians often judge the greatness of a church by the power, wealth and glory it wields over state and various socio-political orders. But if we read the Gospels from the perspective of the theology of marginality, we shall realize that Jesus Christ is not the fulfillment of David but the fulfillment of the Suffering Servant, who is the true symbol of God’s marginal people.

When the church is in a position of being at the margin, it will be more likely to be like Jesus Christ, relating to and embracing those who are marginalized, because the church itself is one of them, as Jesus Christ was; it will be more likely for the church to join the voices from the margins and not just to listen to and speak for them from a distant, central and privileged position; it will be more likely for the church to be a more active agent of missionary activities to counteract injustice, inequality, and exclusivity that have kept people at the margins; it will be more likely for the church to remember its original nature and what it ought to be.

Being more willing to seek change and renewal in the church is a third layer of significance for a small and marginal church. Philip Wickeri, a contemporary missiologist, argued that revolutionary change is more likely to take place in a church when it is in a marginal position. Wickeri quoted Thomas Kuhn, using Kuhn’s analogy to explain that revolutionary change, comes not from the center of a discipline but at its boundaries, where existing paradigms are not held onto as strongly, where prevailing orthodoxies can be questioned, and where individuals and

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communities are freer to be experimental and creative.\textsuperscript{11} The theology of mission from the margins also somehow shares such features. Wickeri pointed out that the theology of mission from the margins can emerge in imperfect and ambivalent forms, but it presents the gospel in ways that are receptive to empowerment by the Holy Spirit, and so, more easily open to further correction and change.

Wickeri suggested that this kind of change and renewal of the churches requires the church to have a re-engagement with people at the margins of our society, to be ready to embrace the disestablishment of the church, and to see the church’s relative “powerlessness” as a creative opportunity for change and renewal, as does Douglas John Hall.\textsuperscript{12}

In sum, the significance of a church being small and marginal is that it helps the church re-read the gospels from a perspective of marginality instead of a centralist point of view, and to do so with the strong reminder that we are called to be the marginal people of God because Jesus Christ was the pioneer of the marginal people of God. Furthermore, mission from the margins and innovative changes are more likely to be generated in a small and marginal church. The experiences of the Chinese church also witness to such significance. For the second part of the lecture, I shall share with you how the Chinese church is sustained by some virtues of being a marginal people of God.

The Chinese Protestant church has been small and marginal since its beginnings. Protestant Christianity was first introduced to China in 1807, and for a number of


reasons, it was not well received among Chinese people for a long time after its arrival in China. Missionaries and Chinese Christians, as well as all kinds of mission activities, were protected and secured by a set of unequal treaties that put China in a semi-colonial status. Apart from associating itself with the Western powers, Protestant teaching and its followers’ behavior irritated Chinese people. Even Kenneth S. Latourette, a missionary historian, recounted the fact that “missionaries condemned local religious practices that formed an integral part of the guild, community and political life” of China; “Christians, therefore, appeared to their neighbors recreant to moral, social, economic, and political obligations and to be attacking the foundations of society and civilization.” When it came to the 1920s, Christianity and its church became the target of nationwide criticism in the May Fourth Movement and the Anti-Christian Movement, both of which were highly influential in China, especially during the first half of the 20th century. Christianity as a religion was considered by the May Fourth Movement as somehow similar to the stagnant Confucian tradition and was accused by the Anti-Christian Movement of collaborating with imperialism. For the three decades after 1949, the understanding of and attitude toward religion among the Chinese people and of the government, were influenced by Leninism, which considered religion a tool of modern capitalist countries to confuse the working class; it was viewed as an opiate for the people, not simply an opiate of the people.

Since the reform and opening in 1979, China has undergone tremendous changes in all aspects of people’s lives. The understanding of and attitude to religion of the Chinese government and among ordinary Chinese people have gradually changed from antagonism to allowing the existence of religion and now to encouraging religion to participate in society. The Christian population has grown
rapidly. These two charts show the growth of Protestant Christianity in China in the past three decades.

However, even though the Christian population of China has increased greatly, Chinese Christians are still in a small minority when compared with the total Chinese population, and the church is still located at the margins of society as it has always been. The chart illustrates this. Although the
Chinese church is small and marginal, still carrying some of the heavy burden of history, but also facing new challenges both internally and externally, it keeps developing and growing. The goal of the church is not to develop into a powerful or influential force at the center of society or to grow into a social majority, but to witness to Jesus Christ by following Christ’s example in a land whose major population remains non-Christian. In the process of reaching this goal, being willing to suffer and eager to love are important virtues of the Chinese Christians.

In February 1980, some Chinese pastors and church workers were able to meet for the first time in public after the Cultural Revolution, and it was presumed to be a time for them to pour out the difficulties and sufferings they had gone through during the Cultural Revolution. During that chaotic period of time, the gospel was accused of being a poisonous weed, no church or seminary remained open, the Bible and hymnal along with many theological books were burnt, and pastors and church workers were sent to factory, farm, or even worse places to labor. As Bishop K. H. Ting recalled in several speeches, the Cultural Revolution was neither cultural nor revolutionary. During that time the Chinese people suffered so much, and Christians suffered so much with them. It seemed that Chinese Christianity was breathing its last breath. However, at the first church meeting in February 1980, none of the pastors mentioned the hardship they had endured during the Cultural Revolution, rather they rejoiced in tears at being able to meet again as Christians and discuss how to reopen the church and the seminary and how to begin printing the Bible and hymnals. They had a similar joy and enthusiasm to that the exiled Jews had when they returned to Jerusalem.

There were many moving stories of Chinese Christians leaving their personal sufferings behind and devoting themselves wholeheartedly to the restoration of Chinese Christianity. Here I will share with you two brief examples. In 1981, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary was reopened and started to recruit new students. When an old dying pastor woke from a coma, and learned that his son had been admitted to the seminary, he joyfully urged his son to leave for the seminary on time without staying for his funeral. He told his son, “As long as you can succeed in ministry, I will die happily without a single regret.”

Another pastor, who was already very ill, continued to help a young woman prepare for the seminary entrance exams by reading the Bible together and going through materials with her. When he saw her off for the exams, he leaned on his cane and said to her, “Before my life ends, if I could see some young people able to take over the church work, it would be the greatest comfort of my entire life.” It is this kind of passion and love of Christians for the church despite their hardship in life that made Christianity in China grow.

In 1980, there were less than a handful of churches that had reopened after 1979 and no open seminary in China. Today, after 30 some years, there are 22 seminaries and Bible schools in China, and over 60,000 churches and affiliated congregations with around 40 million Protestant Christians. In 1981, there were only 47 theological students in China enrolled in the only seminary in Nanjing. Today, there are nearly 4000 full-time students studying at the 22 theological schools annually, and the annual new student enrollment of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary is 120 out of over 400 prospective students. Even though we have trained many church workers of different levels, such as over 3000 pastors, over 6000 elders, around 50,000 evangelists and over 190 thousand lay leaders, the number of church
workers cannot keep up with the growth of the church. So a local church worker has to work many hours. I will just show you a one-week schedule given by a young local church worker, a recent graduate of our seminary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday: home visiting</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday afternoon: Bible study; group leader fellowship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday evening: singing groups getting together</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday morning: staff and clergy meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday afternoon: church gathering for seniors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday evening: Prayer meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday morning: lay leadership training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday afternoon: testimony sharing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday evening: business fellowship; Bible study</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday: women's fellowship (2 sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday evening: couples' gathering; prayer meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday morning: discipleship training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday afternoon: 2 weddings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday morning: 2 services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday afternoon: special group sharing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday evening: evening worship</td>
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</tbody>
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Most of the church workers in China have to work so hard, and many of them have to endure poverty, because many churches are located in rural areas of China where the economy is still undeveloped. Some get only a few hundred yuan per month and have to do additional farm work in order to earn a living to support the family, including their old parents and their children. Most of the church workers in rural China do not have health insurance. On the one hand, it is wrong for the church to allow many church workers to suffer from poverty even though the church cannot do much to improve the situation; on the other
hand, the spirit of willingness to sacrifice and to suffer is praiseworthy, because they do it out of a great love for the church and their commitment to serve Jesus Christ. This can be a manifestation of being "into the fellowship of Christ’s sufferings and to be the disciples of a crucified Lord," as is written in Basis of Union. This also reminds us of the dynamic relationship between love and suffering. As the theology of marginality argues, suffering and love are inseparable; suffering is a part of love, for God loves and God suffers. God so loved the world that God suffered for us by giving his only Son to us. Christ’s suffering was redemptive because it embraced love. Suffering can be a negative experience and even a destructive force if there is no love; but if it embraces love, it can be a positive element of creativity and even have a redemptive value.

At the closing of a national meeting in 1983, when the Chinese church had reopened for two years, Bishop Ting urged the Chinese church to take the new road ahead of them. In order to do so, the Chinese church had to buy gold refined by fire to be rich, white robes to clothe it and salve to anoint the eyes, quoting from the Book of Revelation chapter 3, verse 18. Ting believed that the Chinese church already had gold refined by fire owing to its experience of suffering during the Cultural Revolution. What it lacked was white robes and salve for the eyes, for the church had to be rebuilt, kept clean and holy, and it had to be guided by the Holy Spirit into a new vision, in order to know more about the truth. For the church to gain this new vision, Ting put much emphasis on the virtue of inclusiveness, calling on the church to engage with the world.

14 “Basis of Union,” paragraph 4.
15 Jung Young Lee, Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology, 161, 94.
Due to the influence of the fundamentalist theology brought by the missionaries in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as the unrest that marked the mid-twentieth century, the theological thinking of many Chinese Christians was rather conservative and their moral ideas rather narrow. Many Christians found no meaning in engaging in the world, for they were convinced that Christians did not have much to do with non-Christians, just as Tertullian believed that Jerusalem had nothing to do with Athens. Their ethic was centered on personal salvation, with the hope of the life to come as its goal. They believed that they were elected and called by God to withdraw from the world and that devoting themselves to soul-saving was their only mission on earth. The reality they lived in also helped to prove what they believed, for there was not much room for Christians to participate in society or engage in the world for quite a long period of time.

Bishop Ting tried to correct such theology and ethics by introducing the concept of the Cosmic Christ. For Ting, Christ is not so small as to concern himself only with religious or spiritual or ecclesiastical things, or only with believers. Christ is the one who sustains the universe by his word and power (Hebrews 1:3), the one who existed before all things, and in whom all things are held together (Colossians 1:15, 17). In Ting’s words, the significance of knowing Christ’s cosmic nature for Chinese Christians is to help them understand both the universal extent of Christ’s domain, concern and care and his love as the essence and foundation of this universality. This is to say that God’s love revealed in Christ extends all over the world to all of God’s people, and therefore, correspondingly, as Christ’s disciples, Christians should also learn to interact with and love others with God’s all-inclusive love, as reflected in the

17 K. H. Ting, ”The Cosmic Christ” in Love Never Ends, 411.
life and death of Jesus Christ. Ting’s notion of the Cosmic Christ has broadened the theological horizon of Chinese Christians. It helps them understand that the work of the Holy Spirit is not limited to the church. The society and even the whole world is also a place where God’s work is manifest, and therefore, they should have the strength and courage to carry out their responsibilities in the world and to live up to the ethical dimension of Christian faith in their daily life.  

A good example of the church engaging in the world is its providing social services for the community. As religious circles are given much more room to participate in society, and especially as they are encouraged to engage more in social work, Chinese Christians should seize this opportunity. Doing social work has special significance for the Chinese church. Theologically, it will be a good demonstration of the way Christians follow Christ’s example to serve the poor, the needy and the marginalized, so as to bear Christian witness in society. Practically, it will be an effective way for ordinary Chinese people to see the good works of Christians, and seeing them, get to know more about Christians and then about Christianity as well. As a renowned scholar of religious studies, Prof. Zhuo Xinping posits, Christianity usually has two important social roles to play, the prophetic role and the servant role. In the current Chinese context, Zhuo suggests that if Christianity wants to play the prophetic role in society, it must start with serving people around them. Personally I totally agree with Zhuo’s suggestion. In fact, doing social service will definitely change the attitude of ordinary Chinese towards Christians from “one more Christian, one less Chinese,” prevalent during

semi-colonial times, to “one more Christian, one more good citizen,” and “one more Christian, one less criminal.”

In terms of doing social service, there is much for Chinese church to learn from the Uniting Church in Australia, especially from Uniting Care. Although public charities in the strict sense of term were brought to China with the arrival of Western missionaries, and Christianity in modern China did engage in and develop a variety of philanthropies that contributed to the improvement and development of Chinese society, at present charitable work engaged in by either secular society or Chinese Christians cannot compare with what has been done in many other countries in the world. The Chinese church has appreciated so much that what Uniting Care and Uniting World have done for us in helping with the development of church-run social service in China.

In fact, both our two churches share the same understanding of the church’s engagement in the world, as it is stated in the “Joint Commission on Church Union 2008, 89”: on the one hand, Christians are withdrawn from the world by God; but on the other, this withdrawal is for the purpose of being equipped for their participation in the mission of Christ in the world. Dr. Andrew Dutney also argues: “As Christ existed in history for others, so the church exists for others. As Christ was sent, so the church is sent. As Christ’s lordship was expressed in servanthood, so the church’s life is to be expressed in servanthood.” “The ministry of the church must be exercised through its members’ participation in the ordinary life of the world.” And in President Stuart’s words, “it is to go and bear fruit of the Holy Spirit, and to have a red heart being massaged by goodworks.”

Another important virtue that helps the Chinese church is to trust God’s loving wisdom and the work of the Holy Spirit. As mentioned before, during the early
years of the church’s reopening, Bishop Ting stressed the importance of relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit to bring the Chinese church a new vision, because the church was embarking on a new journey. Although the Three-Self Movement (self-government, self-support and self-propagation of the gospel) begun in 1950, marked the independence of the Chinese church and although the church entered into a post-denominational era when most Christians of different denominations came to worship together in 1956, due to successive political movements, the Chinese church did not have good opportunities to develop much further in all areas until the early 1980s. As a Chinese theologian reflected in the 1980s, “In our experience we lack maturity; our vision is narrow and shallow, and we do not dare pretend that our ignorance is wisdom, but we firmly believe that a road leading to a higher truth lies before us. With a pious and humble attitude, relying on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and God’s loving wisdom, and with hearts full of confidence, we should run the race set before us.” It is with such confidence in relying on God’s loving wisdom and the work of the Holy Spirit that the Chinese church has developed so much. A more recent example is a local church in a southeastern city which just celebrated its tenth anniversary recently. In 2005, the church had nearly 2000 members with 300 lay volunteers, but today, has over 9000 members with nearly 2000 lay volunteers. This reflects the new understanding of mission theology as stated by Prof. Kirsteen Kim, who gave the last Cato Lecture: “Missionaries do not convert us; the Holy Spirit does that.”

What the Holy Spirit has done is much more than adding to the number of those who are being saved. Here I will just share with you a story about the local church I just

mentioned. Ten years ago, when the congregation did not fill the old church building which was in disrepair as well, they prayed for a piece of land to build a new and bigger church. After twists and turns, they found a piece of land available in a newly developing area. So the senior pastor and his team immediately started the process of applying to buy that piece of land. But soon they were informed that their application had been turned down. The reason was that the site could be used for a better purpose, such as building a resort, or even a factory, which would enhance the income of the local government, something a church could hardly do. No matter how the church negotiated with the local officials, their heartfelt pleas failed. They were told only that they would be eligible to purchase the land only if they could prove that a church could make a direct financial contribution to the local economy.

It might have been possible for Uniting Care to meet such a requirement, but there was definitely no way for a Chinese church to do it. What could they do in order to get that piece of land to build their new church? The senior pastor asked his whole congregation to pray earnestly every day for God’s loving wisdom and for the work of the Holy Spirit. After about two weeks, during an early morning prayer, the senior pastor got an idea, and on that very day he went to talk to the local officials; not long after, their application was approved. Now what was the turning point? The senior pastor shared that during his prayer that morning, he was suddenly reminded of the fact that there was a huge shopping mall with grocery stores under construction across from that piece of land. Then he knew what to do. He told the local officials that there were two thousand members in his church and the number would certainly grow. Apart from Sunday services, other weekly activities were held. If his church members were to go shopping in that big mall only once a week after church or
church activities, his church would make a good contribution to the economy in that developing area. And the local officials were convinced! Whenever asked how his church was able to get that piece of land, the senior pastor would always say that it had all depended on God’s loving wisdom and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit through earnest prayers.

The faith of Chinese Christians in the Holy Spirit is truly embodied in their intensive prayer life, and because they trust the work of the Holy Spirit, they believe the promise that the prayers of the righteous are powerful and effective. They also believe that the Holy Spirit can guide them into knowing the higher truth through reading the word of God, and therefore they treasure the Bible very much. Chinese Christians trust that the word of God is a lamp to their feet and a light to their path, and thus, they respect the Bible as the true authority for their faith and life. In interpreting the Bible and applying biblical teachings to their actual life, they focus more on the “hermeneutics of faith,” rather than the “hermeneutics of doubt.” Hence, they are able to pay closer attention to the biblical stories of incarnation; they are more willing to read the Gospel from the perspective of the theology of marginality, and they are more content with being marginal people of God.

A frequent quote from Bishop Ting regarding the Bible for the Chinese church is: “the Bible unites us.” This is because the common attitude of Chinese Christians towards the Bible has served as an essential basis for the older generation Christians of different denominations in coming together into a post-denominational church. Furthermore, being post-denominational is a form of “spiritual and ecclesiological poverty,” which reflects Chinese Christians’ willingness and readiness to give up confessional pride and to see good in Christian traditions outside their own, in order to promote the unity of the church. This kind of humble attitude is definitely a witness to the Holy Spirit
at work in Chinese Christians’ heart. I believe that the Chinese church was moved by the same Holy Spirit that the Christians of the former Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches in Australia were in coming together to form the Uniting Church in Australia; and moved by the same Holy Spirit thirty years ago, the Uniting Church had communion with Congress and became a multi-cultural church.

In fact, both our churches have much that gives witness to the Holy Spirit working among us. For the Chinese church, it is the Holy Spirit that has worked in the hearts of the Chinese Christians so that they are willing to make sacrifices and eager to love; they can be convinced to engage in society by following Christ’s example of serving, to broaden their understandings of mission, and to renew the church in a Chinese context.

I am not in a position to say much about the experience of the Uniting Church in Australia, especially before you all, for I dare not pretend that my ignorance is wisdom. But what I do know, from the theme of the Assembly, “Hearts on Fire,” and from President Stuart’s address, is that the Uniting Church in Australia wants to pray for a stronger presence of the Holy Spirit in church life, and calls for the revival of the church by keeping alive the fire on the altar in the hearts of every member of the church.

Let this be our joint prayer: that the sacred fire kindled by the Holy Spirit on altar in the hearts of Christians in both our churches and in our partner churches as well, will continue to burn and burn more prosperously, so that on the faith journey ahead of us, we can keep adjusting our perspectives in reading and understanding the scripture, reminding us to return to the foundation of our faith, in doing mission more inclusively, and in seeking changes and renewal for our churches, guided by the light of the Holy Spirit.
In his invitation letter, Rev. Corkin expressed his expectation that this evening’s lecture reflect the theme of the Assembly and create a platform for theological reflection in dialogue with the growing experience of the Chinese church. I hope this task has been fulfilled, at least in part.

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Introduction

Christianity had its origins in Asia. At its initial stage, it was seen simply as a branch of Judaism. As it began to spread outward it met with Greek culture, the dominant culture of the Roman world. Its collision with and its assimilation to Greek culture are readily apparent in the early Christian documents. In fact, the spread of Christianity in the Western world is a process that moves from clash or conflict to assimilation or fusion. In this process, Christianity, on the one hand, renewed and rebuilt Western society and culture, while on the other, Christianity itself underwent a process of Hellenization, Latinization and Westernization.

Jesus Christ and the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is the core of Christianity.¹ Strictly speaking, Christianity is not a culture, but must express itself through a given cultural form. Early Christianity interpreted its faith and doctrine through Jewish religious culture. When Christianity entered the Greek and Roman world, it repeated this interpretation in terms of

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Greek culture. When Christianity spread to Europe and other places, a process of localization again took place. We can say that the history of Christianity’s outward spread is a process of indigenization.

There is no question that the Christianity Western missionaries brought to China was an already westernized form of Christianity. Because of the specific historical background, this form of Christianity was not only seen in China as a tool of imperial aggression, but was seen by many as “foreign religion.” The Three-Self Patriotic Movement has already achieved a great deal. But it goes without saying that Christianity in China today remains, to a large extent (especially in theology), the presentation of a Western Christian form in China. It is precisely in this sense that the Sinicization of Christianity is not only necessary but urgent.

The Sinicization of Christianity is a vast topic replete with implications. In this paper I will attempt to discuss my own preliminary ideas on Christianity and the Chinese context; the Sinicization of Christianity and “Three-Self” in the Protestant church in China; Sinicization and Theological Reconstruction in the Chinese church; and Sinicization and the engagement of the Chinese church in society. I hope other scholars and colleagues gathered here will offer critiques of any shortcomings.

**Christianity and the Chinese Context**

Christianity is not an abstract concept. There is no unadulterated or abstract Christianity. Christianity always takes concrete shape within a specific context. “Christianity” as a concept has different connotations and referents within different language environments. In the over half century since the founding of New China, there have been quite large changes in the appearance of Chinese Protestantism, but we cannot deny that Chinese Protestantism remains
to a large extent a presentation in China of a Western form of Protestantism. Therefore, when we speak of Protestant Christianity, people always, and very naturally, believe that Christianity is a Western religion and that becoming Christian means being Westernized. Today, the environment in which Chinese Christianity exists has long changed; understanding and interpretation of the religion must also change. Change brings development; development leads to permanence.

Some ninety years ago, facing the challenges to Christianity from the May Fourth–New Culture Movement, and a rapidly transforming Chinese society, T.C. Chao 赵紫宸 (Zhao Zichen) wrote:

When the environment changes, religion too must change. ... Today as China is feeling the impact of the New Thought Movement, the country’s intellectual and social circles differ greatly from those of the past. Those of us in religious circles should know that this environmental change is already upon us, giving rise to all sorts of religious questions which require solutions of us. Will we continue to turn away and stick stubbornly to old habits? Or shall we bring about renewal in the Christian enterprise, adapt to the new contemporary context, so that we can bring China to Christ? ... Today's China is the church's golden opportunity, it is also the church's crisis; it rests with us and no one else how those in religious circles respond. A religion that is responsive to its environment can be said to have life, a religion unable to respond to its environment has absolutely no reason for being! I deeply believe that Christianity can enter into every environment and survive and flourish as before, for Christianity has within it true life. But the pace of progress depends on our actions; so I say that the future of the church depends on how people in the church respond to the current new environment.²

² Chao, 宗教与境变 (Religion and contextual change), Wenji, vol. 3, 16-17.
The issue Chao raised here still resounds for the Chinese church today. His “When the environment changes, religion too must change,” can be understood to mean that as the context changes, theological interpretation of religious doctrine must change with it; it does not mean that the substance of religion must change as the context changes. The essence of religion does not change, nor does the substance of Christian faith. In every place and time, the church must adhere to the basic faith accepted in common by the ecumenical church. But confronted with the impact and challenges of a new environment, the church must make a suitable response in biblical interpretation and theology, establishing a local church in conformity with the substance of Christian faith as commonly adhered to by the ecumenical church, that can also respond to contextual challenges and adapt to the local culture and society. This is the work of Sinicization of Christianity.

Chinese Christianity does not exist in a vacuum and thus the discussion of the Sinicization of Christianity must face the historical and present contexts of Chinese Christianity. Due to the unique historical contexts of Christianity’s entry into China, we cannot deny that Chinese Protestant Christianity bears a heavy historical burden. This heavy historical burden makes the present of Chinese Christianity even more difficult. But no matter what, it has a future filled with hope. This future hope lies in how we lay down our historical burdens and face the present, and hinges on whether we make a success of the Sinicization of Christianity.

Looked at historically, the historical burden borne by Chinese Christianity is as former Peking University president Jiang Menglin 蒋梦麟 (Chiang Monlin) wrote in his *Tides from the West: A Chinese Autobiography* (西潮: 蒋梦麟回忆录) when he compared the conditions under which Buddhism and Christianity entered China. He held
that the Buddha rode into China on a white elephant, while Jesus rode in on a cannonball. This metaphor, “Jesus on a cannonball,” excellently reflects two major impressions Chinese have of Christianity: Christianity is a religion from outside; and this foreign religion came into China relying on military might, constituting a threat to Chinese society and its national sovereignty. In addition, in the spread of Christianity in China, the overwhelming majority of missionaries maintained a kind of “Western (cultural) centrism,” along with a strong “exclusivist mentality.” This led to endless clashes between Christianity and Chinese culture and society. Thus, Christianity in China has been tagged with the longstanding epithet “foreign religion.” Even today, in the eyes of many, Christianity remains a “foreign religion.” This is the unfortunate historical burden of Chinese Christianity. If Christianity wishes to develop in China, it must rid itself of this burden and the way to do it is the establishment of a genuine Chinese Christianity; this is the goal of the Sinicization of Christianity. If Chinese Christianity “does not eradicate Western-Christian-tradition-centrism along with its exclusivist mentality, Christianity cannot take root in the soil of China, or assimilate into mainstream Chinese society, it cannot genuinely achieve indigenization, localization, contextualization or Sinicization.”

Looking at the present reality, there are several questions today’s Chinese Christians must contemplate. 1) Chinese Christians do not live in a vacuum, but in the midst of a cultural tradition with a long tradition and great vitality. As twenty-first-century Christians how do we speak of Christ in the context of our own culture? And how should we regard the relationship between Christianity

3 Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, 基督教与中国文化处境 (Christianity and the Chinese cultural context), (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2013), 5.
and Chinese culture? 2) Like some other Asian nations, China is a multi-religious nation with a plurality of religious traditions. Confucianism, Buddhism, Taoism and Islam are highly influential in Chinese society. Then how should an exclusivist Christianity co-exist with these other religions? How shall it work together with other religions as a force for social stability and development? 3) Chinese Christians live in a social reality in which atheism is the dominant ideology. The TSPM brought new life to Chinese Christianity, enabling it to make great strides in development, and especially since Reform and Openness, the number of Christians has grown more rapidly, but Christians are unquestionably only a sub-culture group, an absolute minority. Christians account for only about 3 percent of the population. Then how shall the Chinese church extend the space in which it exists? How can the Chinese church have an impact on the society in which it is located? How shall it witness to Christ in this society?

For its future development, if Chinese Christianity wants to genuinely become a positive force for renewal in Chinese society and culture, it must first assimilate into society, become part of the culture. There is no doubt that Sinicization of Christianity is an extremely effective path to this end. Through efforts at Sinicization, Chinese Christianity can change the “fixed” negative image it has and become a Chinese Christianity people can accept and identify with. Therefore, Chinese Christianity must face up to its history squarely, have a foothold in the present, and look to the future.

As a system of belief Christianity was born in Asia and has its source in Eastern culture. As a cultural system, Christianity is a crystallization of two civilizations, Hellenic and Hebraic. It influences the whole of Western civilization and was strongly colored by Western culture. When Christianity spread to Europe, from the very beginning, the professed universal nature of the Christian faith and the
local nature of Western culture became singularly combined. Therefore, in the Sinicization of Christianity, its universal features should receive as much attention as its contextual elements. The Sinicization of Christianity is not just a novelty; even less is it a case of an attempt at innovation; rather the aim is to enable the universality of Christianity to present itself concretely in the unique context of China. The Chinese Christ should belong to China, but should also belong to Christianity. In this aspect, a Sinicized Christianity should have both its “new meaning” and also accord with ecumenically accepted faith.

Professor Wang Weifan 汪维藩, in speaking of the reconstruction of Chinese theology, specially emphasized “bringing new meaning from within the law.” He held that this “law” was the framework of our basic faith; the “new meaning” referred to new theological thinking when faced with a new historical era. If there were no “law” then Christianity would transmute into “non-Christianity. Such “transmutation” he felt came about mainly in two ways: one reduced Christianity to ethics: discussing only ethics and morality and not the truth of Christianity. An even more dangerous aspect is the erosion of the church through feudalism and superstition: this is the theological cause of certain chaotic phenomena in the rural church at present. The construction of Chinese theology should bring “new meaning” out of “the law,” bring out new theological meaning with Eastern characteristics, bring out new theological meaning that reflects Chinese Christians’ faith and spiritual practice, bring out new theological meaning that is adapted to socialist society.⁴ This author feels that the Bible and the Creeds as the core of Christian faith not only constitute the “law” of Chinese theology, but are the “law”

⁴ See Wang Weifan, 中国神学及其文化渊源 (Chinese theology and its cultural sources), (NJUTS, 1997), 117.
for the Sinicization of Christianity. Without this “law,” the Sinicization of Christianity or the construction of Chinese theology would become water without a source or a tree without roots—nonsense.

**Sinicization of Christianity and the Chinese Church’s “Three-Self”**

Undeniably, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) has its political aspects. In supporting TSPM, Christians should not expunge its political content. But I think that at its beginning the goal and original intention of the TSPM was to establish a Chinese identity for Christianity, to establish in a brand new social and political context a genuine Chinese Christianity, which is a Sinicized Christianity. “The TSPM not only stresses the unity of the church, it puts down roots for the growth of the church in its own unique context and provides a guarantee that removes the image of Chinese Christianity as a ‘foreign religion.’”

The Sinicization of Christianity has a bearing on the self-identity of the Chinese church and on its development or decline. Bishop K. H. Ting believed that Three-Self first of all had a bearing on the survival of the Chinese church. As early as the 1980s he said:

> We are not relaxing our efforts to make the church in China Chinese. This is a question of “to be or not to be” for the church of Jesus Christ in China today. It is evident that as long as our Chinese people think there is no way to show that at

5 Theresa Carino 张素玉, 丁光训主教对基督教中国化的贡献: 从普世运动的亚洲视角 (Bishop Ting’s contributions to the Sinicization of Christianity: An Asian ecumenical perspective), in 纪念丁光训主教诞辰一百周年暨基督教中国化研讨会论文集 (Papers from the Conference to Commemorate the Centennial of the Birth of Bishop K.H. Ting and Consider the Sinicization of Christianity), 2015, 67.
its center there is the universal and absolute claim upon all men and women of Jesus Christ as Lord. At the same time, if we do not cherish our identity and selfhood, we will have nothing to give to the church universal.  

He also said,

For Christianity to continue to exist in China and to serve as a witness to Jesus Christ, it would not have been enough to rely only on the national policy of religious freedom. It was also necessary to develop much more of a common language with the Chinese people, so that a foreign religion could be transformed into one which was China’s own.

This was the task of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China.

The Chinese Protestant church has already followed the path of TSPM for sixty-five years. Today, it can still be said in summarizing the work of the TSPM: “The accomplishments of the TSPM have been great; the mission of the TSPM is not yet finished.” As early as 1980, Bishop Ting raised the prospect of moving from “three-self” to “three wells”; that is, from self-governance, self-support and self-propagation to being governed well, supported well and propagated well. Looking at it from the standpoint of Three-Self, the


8 Ibid.,293 (Chinese); 55 (English).
Sinicization of Christianity is a task “accomplished, yet not completed.” In terms of self-governance and self-support, Chinese Christianity is undeniably already Sinicized. Chinese Christianity has long had Chinese themselves governing and supporting themselves. But in terms of self-propagation, Chinese Christianity is far from achieving Sinicization; there is still a long road ahead to achieving being well-propagated.

In 1926, in his preface to his work, *Christian Philosophy*, T.C. Chao wrote:

“As believers in Jesus Christ, we are undergoing hardships in present days so that the foundation of our faith has been shaken. Many of us are like clouds from a cave, which are not allowed to return to peaks in the sea, or like water, separated from a mountain, and not allowed to return to being a clear stream in a valley. In a word, many of us are living a rootless or faithless life. But, can anyone have no battle or struggle in their heart if they truly believe in Jesus Christ? Rationality fights with faith, and good teaching fights with egocentrism. This inner fighting puts us into a state of utter stupefaction, in which we are losing the goal of our life and the courage of our existence. Is not this the situation that makes us distressed? My questions are: What kind of rationality allows us to believe in Jesus Christ? What have we to preach to today’s China? How can we preach this Word? And how can we have strength to preach this Word? These questions are also the questions of many Christians in our days....”

At the time T.C. Chao was facing a rapidly changing society. The May Fourth-New Culture Movement brought intellectual enlightenment to Chinese society, democracy and science were seen by May-Fourth era intellectuals as the cure-all for China’s ills. And Christianity was then seen

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as unscientific and undemocratic and increasingly called into question. The outbreak of the anti-Christian Movement in 1922 went further, seeing Christianity as a running dog of imperialism and an instrument of aggression against China. In that stormy era, many who believed in Jesus had the “foundations of their faith shaken.” It was also because they faced an era of such challenges that the indigenization movement arose in response, amid increasing calls for the establishment of an indigenous church and indigenized theology. A group of intellectuals with a Chinese church self-consciousness began to attempt the construction of an “indigenous” church and an “indigenous” theology.

“What have we to preach to today’s China?” This was a question not only for T.C. Chao in the 1920s, not only for many of Chao’s Christian colleagues, it is one for those of us today who care for the Chinese church and for the construction of theology in the Chinese church. We live today in an entirely different historical, cultural, social and political context and the challenges facing the church today are vastly different, but we still must respond to the question: “What have we to preach to today’s China? How can we preach this Word?” This is a question very closely related to the Sinicization of Christianity.

“Self-propagation” is not simply a question of who [propagates] or what [is preached], it is also a question of how [propagation should be done]. Thus “self-propagation” also involves the question of how the Chinese church interprets missiology.

This author believes that in the process of Sinicization of Christianity the Chinese church must give attention to and ponder missiology. Objectively speaking, for a long time, a good part of the clergy and lay people of the Chinese church have had a biased understanding and interpretation of the concept of evangelization. They either simply never speak of it or they dither among old approaches to the subject, seeing
it as simply the conversion of others, and fail to see the richness of the concept as well as the significance current new understandings of missiology in the ecumenical church can have for the witness to Christ of those of us in China. Actually, the understanding of many Chinese Christians toward missiology remains that popular in the nineteenth century or early decades of the twentieth century brought by the missionaries which is entirely unsuited to the present day. It is founded on Western missionaries’ biased perception of the society, culture, and religion of the lands they came to evangelize, a superficially “Christ-centric” product, which was in fact “Western-centric.”

Bishop Ting was aware early on of all the misconceptions Westerners held about Asia. In an essay written in 1949, he points out clearly that in the West people were often inclined to understand Asia in terms of over-population and poverty. Bishop Ting went on to say: “The true Asia is its people. To understand the true Asia, we must ever more closely identify with our people—know their suffering and their needs, their aspirations and their struggles, their frustration and their heroism, as well as their yearning and their outrage.”

Those who bring a new interpretation out of old missiological concepts, the advocates of the “new missiology,” adopt a reflective attitude, proposing a critique and corrective to the old missiological thinking that began from a Western-centric position. They advocate a missiology that is

10 K.H. Ting, “Asia, China and the Chinese” (1949). See Theresa Carino, 2015, 69; Edward Said’s Orientalism provides a very illuminating discussion of Western perceptions of the non-Western world. Though Orientalism engendered a lot of debate, Said’s view, which takes an Eastern outlook, is not without merit. In addition to Said, the works of other scholars from long-colonized nations and regions (for example India or Africa) are also very worth reading.
11 Ibid.
“for the world,” not “to the world,” emphasizing Christianity’s witness and service of love. K.H. Ting perceptively saw that the TSPM in China had already made its contribution to the development of “new missiology” in ecumenical theological circles. Though Bishop Ting did not specifically introduce missiology, he saw clearly the contribution made to it by the Three-Self Movement in the Chinese church. I was happy to see that Dr. Theresa Carino mentions in her paper Bishop Ting’s understanding of mission in the Chinese context. According to Carino, Bishop Ting saw Christian engagement in society as an inherent part of mission. Dr. Carino further points out that this understanding on Bishop Ting’s part was influenced by the ecumenical movement. Her insight is not only correct, but is extremely helpful for a new understanding and enrichment of the concept of mission in the Chinese church. I think that for the Chinese church’s ministry to witness to Christ and serve society to better develop, the Chinese church’s own missiology is a necessity. In order to remove the differences between Christ and Chinese culture, Christianity and Chinese society and Christians and non-Christians and the conflicts that may arise from them, missiology provides theoretical support, by which we can genuinely achieve the goal of seeking the common ground while reserving differences, a harmonious society, pluralistic co-existence and common development.

Besides this, the Sinicization of Buddhism can serve as a reference for the Sinicization of Christianity. There are two very important points in Buddhism’s process of Sinicization: translation of the scriptures and the emergence of a group of eminent monks. This is instructive for the Sinicization of Christianity. At present, scholars have made a great

13 Theresa Carino, 67.
contribution in the translation of Christian classics, but the Chinese church should also have a part in this project, employing methods in keeping with a Chinese mode of thinking, concepts easily understood by Chinese in their translations or in interpreting difficult Western Christian concepts. Even more importantly, the success or failure of the Sinicization of Christianity hinges to a large extent on the appearance of a group of Christian individuals who are politically up to the mark, religiously and theologically accomplished, firm in the faith, spiritually lively, immersed in traditional Chinese culture, and at the same time, open-minded with broad vision, highly respectable, and with a strong sense of the church’s mission and social responsibility. These are what Xie Fuya 谢扶雅, Wang Weifan and others called “Christian gentlemen.” Truly in this way, a Sinicized Chinese Christianity is not some formulaic novelty. The Sinicization of Christianity, along with the construction of Chinese theology absolutely relies on the emergence of a group of Christians dedicated to Christ, with love for country and church, deeply rooted in traditional Chinese culture. Therefore, the Sinicization of Christianity and the construction of Chinese theology will not be like Jingjiao 景教 (what is often, erroneously, termed Nestorianism) in the Tang dynasty that used Buddhist terms and doctrines to spread and translate Christian religious precepts. Even less will it be like ethicizing Christianity or making Jesus Christ into a Chinese sage. Rather, Sinicization requires those who are Chinese to the core, who possess innate and genuine Chinese tradition, to study to become true disciples of Christ, not Westernized Christians. Therefore, the future path of

14 See Xie Fuya (N.Z. Zia) 谢扶雅, 巨流点滴: 中国本色 (Drops in the stream: Chinese indigenization), (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Council, 1970); and Wang Weifan, Chinese Theology and Its Cultural Sources, 172.
Christianity in China, depends first of all on the emergence of a group of Chinese Christians who feel a connection with the Chinese people, who love their country and their church, who uphold the three-self patriotic direction, who possess a sense of social responsibility, a sincere faith and profound spiritual experience.

The Sinicization of Christianity and Theological Reconstruction in the Chinese Church

Christianity always assumes a contextualized form. Apart from a specific context, Christianity will cease to have any vitality. Therefore, the concept of the Sinicization of Christianity is itself a contextualized concept. There is no static or immutable “Sinicized Christianity.”

The highest priority in the Sinicization of Christianity should be the Sinicization of Christian theology, which means exploring and building China’s own theology within the context of China itself. Otherwise, Christianity can never be truly “China’s.” If the Chinese church wants to truly bring about the shift from “self-propagation” to “propagation done well,” Chinese Christians “must cast off the fetters of Western theology and themselves proceed to discover the treasures of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and create their own theological system.”\(^{15}\) Theology is “faith seeking understanding,” but it is not an abstract believing individual or believing group seeking understanding. It is always a specific believing individual or a special believing group seeking understanding. Theology is “the church in the act of thinking,” but it is not an abstract church or a conceptualized church thinking. It is always a concrete church thinking in a specific place, a specific context. Apart

\(^{15}\) Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, 基督教与中国文化处境 (Christianity and the Chinese cultural context), 9.
from a concrete context, there can be no genuine “faith seeking understanding”; apart from a concrete context, there can be no “church thinking.”

Chinese Christian theology is interpreting, seeking understanding, thinking about ecumenical Christian faith in a specific context. It must not blindly copy Western theology, nor can it “live in a vacuum.” Thus, to deepen Theological Reconstruction, we must in all seriousness deal with our present historical-cultural and socio-political context, and undertake our thinking in our context. Apart from a specific context, there can be no genuine Theological Reconstruction. For “all theology is ultimately ‘contextual,’ that is it arises from a specific historical context and it addresses that context. The questions which it asks and the answers it seeks to give, are determined by its specific historical situation.”\textsuperscript{16}

For this reason, as a Chinese theological worker and a teacher of theology, I have become strongly aware that what is termed the Chinese “church thinking,”— this Chinese theology— is profoundly determined by its culture, history and socio-political context. And so Chinese theological thinking cannot disregard the dramatic changes in Chinese society, it cannot disengage from the specific cultural, historical, religious, social and political context it faces. Like every other theology, Chinese theology must address “this time, this place,” and it must have something to say, it must be able to respond to all the various challenges posed by this context if it is to have life within it. As Stephen B. Bevans understands, theology must be contextual.\textsuperscript{17}


\textsuperscript{17} Stephen B. Bevans, Models of Contextual Theology (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2002), 1.
However, at the same time that we take the context seriously, we must take the Bible and Christian tradition even more seriously. Any theology that separates itself from the Bible and living Christian tradition is not a genuine Christian theology. As Paul Tillich observed, “On the one hand, the foundation of theology is eternal truth, on the other, it is necessary to accept this eternal truth in the context of an era and theology shuttles between these two poles, but theological systems which can perfectly balance these two demands are few, most either sacrifice the element of truth or cannot respond to the questions posed by the context, moreover there are some which fall prey to both failings.”18 Therefore, while Chinese theology must effectively respond to the questions of its context, at the same time it must not sacrifice the truth of the gospel of Christ. Chinese theology must try to use its own unique ways to express an ecumenical Christian faith. That is to say, as a local theology, Chinese theology should be ecumenical.

Therefore, in some sense, Theological Reconstruction in the Chinese church is not simply a kind of consideration of theological constructs, it is more a kind of struggle to commit to faith. This kind of dedication is precisely Chinese Christians’ search for self-identity. As Chinese, we cannot but face our nation’s cultural traditions and present context; as Christians, we cannot deviate from our religious faith and theological understanding. The Sinicization of Christianity requires our striving between these two. The Sinicization of Christianity does not mean breaking with Christian tradition, even less changing Christian faith into something else, rather it means striving for the Sinicization of Christian theology on a foundation of accepting the authority of the

Bible and inheriting Christian tradition. At the same time as we recognize and accept the authority of the Bible, we also recognize the importance of interpreting the Bible. Here, the Chinese church should have its own exegesis. Traditional Chinese hermeneutics will have something to contribute here.

In what follows, I want to make special mention of the relationship of the Sinicization of Christianity to Christian tradition, which touches on issues of continuity and discontinuity. In Eusebius' usage, the terms orthodox, ancient and church are interchangeable. Eusebius touches on the nature of the concept of Christian tradition. That is to say that Christian tradition is the faith that has been passed down from ancient times, which the church regards as orthodox. The source of Christian tradition is the remote past. Tradition includes the acceptance of doctrine. Doctrinal guidance is not the only and not even the most important of church activities. However, without doctrine, the church would not survive. Without doctrine, the church would have nothing to believe in, to teach, to confess. Therefore, without doctrine the Church of Christ would not be a church.

When we talk about Christian doctrine and its relationship to the early church, we should give serious consideration to two questions. First, from its beginnings, the early church was a confessing and preaching church. Everything that happened in the early church illustrates that it saw itself as the unique bearer of God's salvation history. What they believed was the Gospel of Christ and this gospel formed the early church. Second, the characteristics of the apostolic documents prove this hypothesis. The New Testament was written entirely for the goal of mission. The Gospels themselves contained certain dogma-like beliefs regarding Jesus Christ. In doctrinal history, the development of doctrine is gradual, but stable. The development of doctrine suggests that doctrine itself is not a static form.
The most central element in Christian tradition is the “creeds.” “Creeds,” “confessions” and “formulas” and other such terms have been used to describe the proclamation of a common faith. For thousands of years, Christians have used the term creed to understand a fixed formula of belief that sums up the essence of Christian faith. The creeds have been established by the authority of the church, containing in concentrated form the faith handed down from the apostles and universally accepted by the catholic church. This is one function of the early Christian creeds. Another was their use as a test of orthodoxy. They were seen as a touchstone, used to test the purity of the faith of clergy and church leaders. Most scholars hold that early creeds were local in nature; the earliest appeared in the mid-second century, or slightly earlier. Prior to this, there was only a simple confession of faith at baptism, such as “Jesus is Lord,” or “Jesus is the Son of God.” The point here is that the creeds were produced through a process, whose goal was to establish the orthodoxy of faith.

“Tradition” comes from the Latin traditio. The literal meaning of tradition implies something continually passed down from the beginning. Today, the term “tradition” in the church refers to the bulk of orally transmitted doctrine or such doctrine passed down through the ages that is distinct from the Bible. But we can observe the sources of Christian tradition in the Bible.¹⁹ Tradition is the stream whose source is the Bible. In early Christianity, the church fathers regularly

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¹⁹ For example, St. Paul: “Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which you also stand, through which also you are being saved, if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed to you—unless you have come to believe in vain. For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures” (1Cor.: 1-4).
used tradition as a substitute for doctrine and this doctrine was transmitted to the church by the Lord himself or by his disciples, whether orally or in written form. Iranaeus said: “We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.”

Tradition is often seen as ancient, sacred and unchanging. In fact, tradition is formed in history and is intimately related to it. But tradition is not equivalent to traditionalism. As Jaroslav Pelikan said, “Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”

Robert J. Schreiter posited three models for constructing local theologies: the translation model; the adaptation model; and the contextual model. Through these categories he hoped to be able to address the mode of encounter between faith and context, and through all these modes address how faith is able to insert itself into the local when faith in Christ and the missionary locale meet, and how it is able to maintain the truth of Christianity itself. The Sinicization of Christianity and reflection on and construction of Chinese theology, must both treat the essence of Christianity seriously (including the authority of the Bible and the basic faith expressed in the creeds) along with the spiritual and theological legacy of two thousand years of various traditions of ecumenical Christianity and also reflect seriously on the relationship between

Christianity and Sinicization (including China’s traditional culture and its modern culture).

The Sinologist Nicholas Standaert believes that in the process of religious propagation, as soon as the religion being propagated and the culture in the locale where propagation takes place come into contact, two types of phenomena may occur: “The new religion may gradually change the original cultural system, reflection or mode of expression with the result that a kind of profound cultural disaffection or cession may be produced; the other occurs when “a religion coming from outside experiences some changes and takes on an entirely new appearance in the receiving culture.” These two phenomena reveal the relative strength and weakness of the religion and culture of the evangelization locale. But the meeting of Christianity and Chinese culture was a meeting of two powerful cultures, each wanting to displace the other to reign supreme. This created confrontation between them, conflict, exclusion and rejection. Prof. Zhuo Xinping correctly points out that Christianity and Chinese culture even now are sunk in “cultural confrontation” and “cultural stalemate”; both lack the necessary mutual appreciation.

We must recognize that Christian faith and Chinese traditional and modern culture are heterogeneous; a situation difficult to ignore. This heterogeneity led to the historical clashes and conflicts between Christianity and Chinese culture. Scholars have done a great deal of research on this heterogeneity. I will briefly mention three points here. First, it cannot be denied that Chinese culture is humanistic or humane. It lacks the differentiation that should be made between the divine and the human. But

23 Zhong Mingdan 钟鸣旦, 本地化 (Indigenization), (Taiwan: Guangqi, 1993), 30-31.
24 Zhuo Xinping, 10.
a humanistic Chinese culture and Christianity are not necessarily in conflict. I will return to this question later on. Second, humanism stresses full and optimistic affirmation of human potential, and this results in a great difference between the concept of inner transcendence in Chinese culture and that in Christianity of outer transcendence. This [Eastern] difference is, moreover, embodied in the three great traditions: Confucianism (becoming a sage), Buddhism (becoming a Buddha) and Taoism (becoming an immortal). Therefore, when Chinese intellectuals were faced with Christianity, they often interrogated its concept of individual grace that relies on an external God. The question lies between the self-redemption of Chinese traditional culture and the other-accomplished redemption of Christianity. Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism have the same concept of self-redemption. The heterogeneous approach of Christianity and Chinese culture on this point is very clearly expressed. From a Christian standpoint, a human being must admit his or her helplessness to redeem themselves, a human being cannot rely on their own moral character or behavior to earn redemption. Yet all three great Chinese traditions believe that humans can be redeemed through their own efforts, that through their own efforts they can gain self-inner transcendence. Many think that the Christian concept of redemption negates the value of morality and good behavior: a philanthropist who does not believe in God receives the worst punishment, but, just the opposite, a bad person need only convert at the last moment, their bad deeds will be pardoned and they will be saved. This is a misunderstanding. In fact, Christianity’s outer transcendence can complement the inadequacies of the inner transcendence of Chinese culture, and the inner transcendence of Chinese culture can aid Christians in better understanding human duty and responsibility. Third, there is no corresponding concept in Chinese culture for
the Christian concept of original sin. The Chinese theory of the goodness of human nature is indeed very different from the Christian theory of the sinfulness of human nature. Christianity is a culture of guilt while Chinese culture is a culture of shame, or an optimistic culture. Chinese culture has no concept of what Christianity calls sin or original sin. But, the clashes or conflicts this heterogeneity leads to are certainly not irreconcilable. The Orthodox understanding of sin has something to contribute here.

Bishop Ting proposed the two “C”’s of Chinese Christianity (Christ and China)— insightful indeed. These two “C”’s could also be stated as Christianity and Chinese culture.

Generally speaking, Chinese culture puts man at the center, it is humanist or humane. But to understand Christianity purely as theism might be biased. We can easily see from the Bible and the history of Christian thought, that the God has not been the sole actor on stage in the drama of sacred history and theology, but that God and man have been co-stars. In spite of the fact that during the long historical era prior to the Reformation, humans gradually exited the common God-human stage, the Reformation rediscovered humanity. Especially following the Enlightenment, there was even more Christian theology of this kind: humankind, not God, became the norm of theology, this was liberal theology. We can say that the tide in twentieth century theologies of all sorts was to seek a balance between God and humankind and between the transcendence and immanence of God. Founded on the special characteristics of Chinese culture, the Sinicization of Christian theological reflection should be an ellipse with two centers (God and humanity), not a concentric circle with just a single center (God or man). In this sense, a Sinicized Christian theology ought to and moreover can break out of the theological debates that perplex many modernist and fundamentalist Christians. As
T.C. Chao said: Chinese theology should not be God-centered, nor should it be man-centered; it should be God and man centered.\textsuperscript{25}

\textbf{The Sinicization of Christianity and the Social Engagement of the Chinese Church}

The Sinicization of Christianity also touches upon how Chinese Christians may better live out the principle of love for God and love for neighbor. Christianity is a missionary religion. In the “Great Commission” (Matthew 28: 19-20) Jesus Christ gave his disciples the mission to spread the gospel. But in the gospels, we can see in the same way that becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ is not a matter of verbal acknowledgement, but an act of self-sacrifice in following him. What concerns Jesus Christ is not whether a person becomes a disciple in name, but whether one genuinely “follows” him, whether one lives a life of love and practice. For Chinese Christians, the commandment to “love God” expressed in acts to “love thy neighbor” is indeed both a challenge and an opportunity.

If the Chinese Church is to grasp this opportunity, then the commandment to “love thy neighbor” must be lived out. First of all, through its social involvement, the Chinese church should strengthen the sense of social responsibility of Chinese Christians. Chinese Christians can carry forward the spirit of Christ, taking part in social service. This requires us to have a new understanding of the evangelizing mission of the church. As mentioned above, in the Sinicization process, the Chinese church must reflect appropriately on the Chinese context with regard to missiology, correcting our biases in understanding mission. In fact, the mission of the church is not only outer-directed,

\textsuperscript{25} Chao, \textit{Christian Philosophy}, vol. 1, 74.
it is also inner-directed. Through inner mission, the quality of the church is raised, the sense of social responsibility of the church is strengthened and the commandment to “love thy neighbor” can be better practiced. This is the church’s fitness program. The Inner Mission Movement in nineteenth-century Germany provides an example. This movement in Germany and Scandinavia had an important impact. The problems the movement was aimed at solving were domestic German problems, thus, some people termed it the “domestic missionary movement.” Its mission differed from the concern of overseas missionary movements to bring non-Christians to Christ; the inner mission movement was mainly concerned with how to realize in the church the biblical call to love one’s neighbor and how the church could better serve others. Though within the movement the emphases of advocates and promoters differed, there was a point of similarity in the stress on the church’s serving role, its service to society and its service to others.

26 The 18th century Industrial Revolution wrought tremendous changes in European society. Advances in industrial technology undoubtedly brought rapid growth to the European economy, but widened the gap between rich and poor at the same time, giving rise to all sorts of social problems. The 19th century confessional awakening in German Lutheranism was born against this social background. The confessional awakening movement was centered in the University of Erlangen. An exemplary church in the movement was that of Rev. Wilhelm Löhle (1808-1872) in Neuendettelsau. Rev. Löhle organized a service organization in the city and its residential areas, hospitals and educational institutions. As a new Lutheran minister, he joined the ecumenical substance of the Lutheran confessions to a call for evangelization at home and abroad. For him, “missionary work [was] but a movement within the body of the one church of God.” The Inner Mission Movement was born in Germany under the impact of the confessional awakening, and especially with the continuing concern for the practice of Christianity.

Second, the Chinese church should witness to Christ in love and service. Through love and service, the Chinese church can realize its mission to “be the church,” and thus find acceptance among its compatriots. Theology does not need to, and indeed cannot, provide answers to all practical problems, but theology can help the church to better care for the needs of others and to stand together with the whole society. The Christian theology of social life should be a theology of love and a theology of service. Augustine placed special emphasis on the importance of love in human life; for him, the phenomenon of “love” was a more basic element of the human reality than the phenomenon of “knowledge.” Love is a strong force in life; humans cannot see through or control it. Love shapes human reality more deeply than anything else. Augustine proposed that: Man is what he loves; man is the things he loves and not the things he knows and these determine his goodness or evil . . . the appropriate ordering of love is the foundation of the correct ordering of everything in life, and its opposite: when this order is overthrown, it is the source of all evils in human life. A happy life can only come through love and not through knowledge; the proper order of love is first to love God humbly, to make God to be our highest good; and this love of God is the foundation of all other forms of love. For Augustine, “to love God and love one’s neighbor in God is the constitution of the harmony and peace of the order of nature among rational beings. Such a harmony shall be a reality in the heavenly peace. . . . ‘for this peace is the perfectly ordered and completely harmonious fellowship in the enjoyment of God, and of each other in God.’”

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28 Luo Mingjia 罗明嘉, 奥古斯丁：《上帝之城》中的社会生活神学 (Theology of social life in Augustine’s De Civitate Dei), Zhang Xiaomei 张晓梅, tr. (English original,1993) (CASS Press, 2008), 56.
29 Ibid., 61.
The value orientation of Christianity is an orientation filled with love, a personally exercised orientation. Guided by this value orientation, Christians are those who express God’s love through their own actions, those who make the spirit of service of Jesus Christ a reality. God’s Dao is not only speech; God’s Dao is also action. It is God’s love put into action, the fulfillment of Christ’s sacrifice and serving spirit.

Third, the Chinese church should perform a Priestly Role. Jesus Christ has a threefold office of King, priest and prophet. In the same way, the church as the body of Christ also has this threefold office. But in different contexts, the focus of this threefold office should be different. I highly commend the view of the Director of the Institute of Religions at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS), Prof. Zhuo Xinping. He believes that due to historical reasons and the context of Chinese Christianity, if the Chinese church chooses to highlight its prophetic spirit and critique society in terms of religious belief, its actions will have the opposite effect. Not only will this not garner a positive response from society, its actions will lead to antagonism and tension with society. “At present, the Chinese church approaches society in the spirit of ‘not to be served, but to serve, and to give its life as a ransom for many’ (Matthew 20:28), coming as a servant to serve and adapt to modern society and thereby to reflect its faith in the value of human life and the meaning of present existence.”

The Chinese church needs a prophetic spirit, and it needs to be able to denounce the scandals of society and to enhance truth, goodness and beauty. But compared to the prophetic spirit, priestly service is more constructive for Chinese society. In the present Chinese context, priestly prayers of intercession certainly have a

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30 Zhuo Xinping, 金融危機下的信仰重建 (Restoring Faith during Economic Crisis), see China Social Science (CASS) Website, October 9, 2014.
more positive meaning than prophetic denunciation and destruction. For historical and present reasons, there are many wounds in Chinese society; through its loving service, the Chinese church can heal society's wounds, as a priest would.

**Conclusion**

The Sinicization of Christianity is the contextualization of interpretation of Christian faith, faith practice, church liturgy, ecclesiastical institutions and regulations in China. The goal of the Sinicization of Christianity is to establish the selfhood of Chinese Christianity, witnessing to Christ in its unique context. In the process of the Sinicization of Christianity, we must reflect on how we may do our best to keep the true Word handed once to us by the apostles, and moreover to use the most appropriate methods of contextualization or Sinicization to preach and witness to the gospel truth in the context of China. In this Christian's view, this is the meaning of the Sinicization of Christianity. Thus, the Sinicization of Christianity does not mean creating a non-Christian new religion or some new syncretistic belief, it does not mean a course toward syncretism of any religion, even if that might be what M.M. Thomas termed "Christ-centered syncretism."

Finally, based on the various critiques of the Sinicization of Christianity that I have seen or heard, my response is as follows: 1) the Sinicization of Christianity is not a political slogan, but rather involves the question of how Christianity can survive and develop in China. "Theology is a kind of refined politics" (Bishop K.H. Ting). In this sense, the Sinicization of Christianity is not a politicization, but it is also not a withdrawal from politics; Chinese Christians must have a clear political standpoint.

2) Sinicization of Christianity is neither a nationalized or an ethnic interpretation of Christianity. Therefore, it
is not, as one scholar would have it, “the ‘Sinicization’ of Christianity and the ‘globalization’ of China; ‘globalized’ is a difficult alternative.” Christianity is universal, but one cannot categorically use the universal nature of Christianity to negate the necessity for the Sinicization of Christianity. The Sinicization of Christianity does not mean taking a universal Christianity and transforming it into a regionalized non-Christian Christianity. Quite the opposite, the Sinicization of Christianity involves the question of how to balance the universality and particularity in Christianity. 3) The Sinicization of Christianity is not some kind of cultural interpretation of Christianity, it does not mean using Chinese culture to deconstruct Christianity and even less does it mean “Confucianizing” or “Buddhizing” or “Chinese-culturizing” Christianity. Some scholars think that “‘indigenized,’ ‘contextualized,’ or ‘Sinicized’ theology emphasizes beginning with ‘actual national conditions.’ This in fact embodies a misinterpretation and distortion of genuine Christian faith and contains an inappropriate compromise with, acquiescence in and accommodation to reality. This fundamentally confuses belief and unbelief, religion and secularism...” Such an understanding is a misreading of “indigenization,” “contextualization,” or “Sinicization.” 4) The Sinicization of Christianity is also not a simplistic ethicization of Christianity. Christianity is an ethical religion and the Bible is rich in ethical teachings, but Christianity is not a system of ethics. In the process of the Sinicization of Christianity, as we draw out and elucidate the ethical sources and values of Christianity, we should also keep firmly in mind Christianity’s religious characteristics and it quests for transcendence. Considered at this level, Christianity needs both “disenchantment” (removing Christianity’s coloration of superstition) and at the same time “re-enchantment” (maintaining Christianity’s transcendent dimension).
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Chen Jinyong and the Nanjing Theological Review*

YAN XIYU

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Today the Nanjing Theological Review continues in publication as the journal of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS). People tend to assume, wrongly, that the publication was launched in 1953. Even the seminary’s most senior Professor, Chen Zemin 陈泽民 has written: “the Nanjing Theological Review first appeared in September 1953, and by August 1957 had published seven issues. It reported on teaching, research and fellowship at the seminary and published essays on self-propagation and theological exploration.”

In fact, publication of the Nanjing Theological Review began in 1914, nearly one hundred years ago, under the name Theological Review. In 1927 when the Northern Warlord armies caused the shocking “Nanjing incident,” forcing great numbers of foreigners to evacuate the area along the Yangtze River, the Theological Review was compelled to cease publication. It resumed publication in 1932 under the name Nanking Theological Review. In

* Paper presented at the October 2012 conference on “Christian Publications and Media and Modern Chinese Society” held at Sichuan University. It is published here with the approval of the Nanjing Theological Review editorial department, in memory of Mr. Chen Jinyong 陈金镛, a founding editor of the journal.

1942, due to the tense situation around the war with Japan, publication again ceased. Publication resumed in 1947 and continued until 1950.

For historical reasons, in 1952, twelve seminaries and bible schools united to form Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Given the historical situation at the time, the new seminary did not claim any continuity with Nanking Theological Seminary. Thus the Theological Review that [re-] appeared in 1953, was considered to be a new publication, the *Nanjing Union Theological Review* and was published until 1957, publishing seven issues in all. In 1984, with the reopening of NJUTS, the journal resumed publication, continuing under the name *Nanjing Union Theological Review*. In 1986, the name was again changed to *Nanjing Theological Review*, and continues today under this title.

Recently, two views have appeared regarding the history of NJUTS. One asserts that NJUTS is a continuation of the pre-1952 Nanking Theological Seminary; the other view holds that the two are entirely separate entities. Happily, proponents of the first view are growing in number, and this includes Professor Chen Zemin, mentioned above, who has expressed this view to the author a number of times.

This author has always held the view that Nanking Seminary and NJUTS are a continuous development and I have stated this in writing to the Seminary Board as well as to the CCC&TSPM.

On this question of the relationship between the two, I agree with the view of Frank Wilson Price, who holds that the relationship is one of continuity. “The name ‘Nanking Theological Seminary’ was first used in 1917. Though other names were used prior to this, and though from 1952 on the name in Chinese was changed to ‘Nanjing Union Theological
Seminary, [the institution] had a continuous history from 1911 on."

We can understand this continuity on two levels. First, though NJUTS was formed through a union of eleven seminaries, its name retained the core element “Nanjing Theological Seminary.” Second, it continued to be located on the campus of the Ginling (Jinling)Bible Teachers’ Training School for Women, which was closely related to Nanking Theological Seminary. Actually, just a year before the founding of NJUTS, in the autumn of 1951, Nanking Theological Seminary had already merged with the Bible Teachers’ Training School, retaining the name Nanking Theological Seminary.

Having determined the continuity between Nanking Theological Seminary and NJUTS, we can of course determine that this institution’s theological journal has the same continuity. The journal underwent several name changes and, for a variety of reasons, experienced a lengthy publication hiatus several times: from 1927-1932; 1942-1947; 1950-1953; and 1958-1984. However, it stood with Nanking Theological Seminary (now NJUTS) through thick and thin, witness to the seminary’s hundred-year history. Reflecting on the past in light of the present, and as a current faculty at NJUTS, I cannot forget those, Chinese and foreign, who possessed the vision to undertake this enterprise. This essay serves to introduce one of these founders: Chen Jinyong 陈金镛. His name may be quite unfamiliar to those in Christian and academic circles today. But just on the basis of his founding of the Nanking Theological Review, along with his later editorship at the Christian Literature Society,

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3 Interview with Chen Zemin, September 18, 2003 (unpublished draft).
we must see him as an indispensable figure in Chinese theological education and publication.

Based on this, from 2007-2009 a graduate student under my direction at NJUTS pursued research on Chen Jinyong for a Master's thesis titled “A Study of Chen Jinyong.” This student received a great deal of support from Chen’s descendants, who provided some valuable materials. The thesis gives a comprehensive introduction to Chen Jinyong and it is a pioneering achievement, laying down a sure foundation for later research.

Chen Jinyong began to serve the Protestant church in China around 1888. Until his death in 1938, he worked mainly in two areas: theological education and publications, two endeavors that deserve our diligent study. This essay will mainly deal with Chen’s teaching at Nanking Theological Seminary and his publication work during his tenure there, focusing on his founding of the Nanking Theological Review.

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Regarding details of Chen Jinyong’s life, I will first quote a brief account by his youngest son, Chen Mengxiong 陈梦熊. In a letter to my graduate student, Chen Mengxiong divided his father’s life into five periods:

My father’s life can be roughly divided into several periods: (1) childhood and youth (1869-1894), mainly his years as a student; (2) life in Ningbo, where he taught at Chongxin[Middle] School and Chongde Girls School as teacher and principal concurrently (1894-1907); (3) life in Nanjing (1907-1919), mainly at Nanking Theological Seminary; (4) life in Shanghai (1919-1930) at the Christian Literature Society; and (5) a period of medical leave in later life (1930-1938).  

Except for one or two dates worth considering, this framework is substantially correct.

Chen Jinyong, born in Shangyu County, Zhejiang, referred to himself as “Shangyu Baiguan Town Chen Jinyong.” He was born in the eighth year of the Tongzhi reign (1869), midday on April 21 in Baiguan, Shangyu County. His father was Chen Yulan and his mother was surnamed Qian, of Cao’e Town in the same county. At that time, the American Presbyterian Church was doing missionary work in Cao’e and Chen’s maternal grandmother had become a Christian. A missionary had opened an elementary school in Cao’e, enrolling local students. The local people were wary of Westerners and few would send their children to the school. Though Chen Jinyong’s father was not a believer, he was more open-minded and did not believe the rumors about Westerners. He was willing to accept the missionaries and sent his seven-year-old son to the boy’s grandmother in Cao’e to study at the missionary school. Chen’s grandmother was extremely happy about this, telling the boy: “If you learn to be an evangelist like your teacher, my wishes will be fulfilled.”

According to Chen’s own account, he didn’t stay long at the school, but his main studies were closely related to Christianity. Those that left more of an impression on him included: Truth Three Character Classic and Questions and Answers about Jesus. To encourage students in their studies, the missionaries were in the habit of giving money or monthly magazines as prizes. Chen Jinyong was fond of the monthly magazines and so he was quite hardworking.

5 Chen Jinyong, 自序 (Author’s preface), in: 中国的宗教观 (Chinese religious views), reprint, (Shanghai: Chinese Baptist Bookstore, July 1949), 4. See also 余之少年史 (My youth), Unpublished ms. Sent to the author in digital form by Chen Mengxiong.
6 Chen Jinyong, “My Youth.”
7 Chen Jinyong, Chinese Religious Views, 1.
He gained a good deal of knowledge from this reading, including one item he mentioned: the difference between the dromedary and the Bactrian camel. This was the beginning of Chen’s contact with modern newspapers and periodicals, and may have played an important part in his later appetite for editorial work. His studies in Cao’e continued off and on for two years.

In the winter of his ninth year, his father Chen Yulan, fell ill and died and he had to quit his schooling and return home. He was fortunate in his teacher, a Presbyterian missionary who had taken a liking to him and thought he showed promise. This teacher repeatedly pressed his [maternal] grandmother to allow the child to attend the Hangchow Presbyterian Boys School. At the time, Chen was only eleven and his grandmother was unwilling to let him go 200 kilometers away to Hangzhou to study. But with the missionary’s support, his grandmother finally agreed and asked an uncle to accompany him to Hangzhou.

The Hangchow Presbyterian Boys School was a precursor to Hangchow University 之江大学. Founded in Ningbo in 1844, it moved to Hangzhou in 1867. In September 1880, the school welcomed one of the most important presidents of its early history, Junius H. Judson. Judson’s main contribution was to transform the school from a traditional family-run private school model to a modern type of high school, adding classes in philosophy, algebra, geometry, history and geography and changing the school name to Hangchow Presbyterian College. Chen probably came to the school during Judson’s tenure. He later recalled: “In my eleventh year, introduced by my missionary

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8 He describes this in “My Youth”: “With father’s death, I had no interest in study. I was deeply saddened for some time.” In another short piece, “My Childhood, (unpublished ms) he mentions specific dates and details.
teacher, I began studies at the Hangchow Presbyterian Boys School, which later became Presbyterian College and later still, Zhijiang University (Hangchow Christian University). Today it is called Jiangwen Academy.”  

Chen studied at the Presbyterian College for nine years; his best subjects were composition and the Bible, forming a quite substantial foundation for his later service to the Chinese church.  

Under the continued influence of this missionary, Chen Jinyong was baptized during his studies and joined the church at sixteen, becoming a member, entitled to receive the Eucharist. At age nineteen in 1888, Chen finally obtained permission to graduate. At the time of his graduation, the principal wanted to recommend him to continue his studies in Shandong and asked him to consider it, but Chen, considering the matter from all sides, expressed a willingness to evangelize. Chen’s work and life were rather unsettled from 1888-1894, while he was mainly engaged in missionary work and teaching. Because he had not received formal theological training, while he was working he studied theology on the side by himself. After 1894, he went to the church school in Ningbo to teach, and his life became more settled.  

Chen Jinyong came to Nanjing in 1906, not in 1907 as Chen Mengxiong stated. In 1906, Northern and Southern missionary areas of the American Presbyterian Church  

10 Originally, Chen could have graduated at age 18, but a teacher felt he was too young and physically too small, making it difficult for him to hold a position, so he continued his studies at the school. (See “My Youth.”)  
11 See Chen Mengjia 陈梦甲, 梦甲室存文 (Mengjia’s study), (Beijing: Zhonghua Books, July, 2006), 92-94. [Chen Mengjia 1911-1966, was a scholar, poet, archaeologist and expert on oracle bones. In his youth he was a member of the Crescent Moon Society, a group of romantic poets. He committed suicide at the beginning of the Cultural Revolution.]
in Jiangsu and Zhejiang were joined together and the various seminaries run by both groups were united. The Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary was founded in Nanjing to train evangelists. This was one of the most important precursors of Nanking Theological Seminary. On October 5, 1906 the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary formally opened its doors with thirty-four students, ten in the undergraduate theology course and twenty-four in the Bible training course. Chen Jinyong may have been in the first group, for his name is in the record as being among the first graduates in 1908. According to Chen Jinyong himself, he was “part-teacher/part-student,” with the concurrent status of teacher and student.

I was keenly aware of the importance of theology, so at twenty-three I made my case to the church authorities and was given permission to study on my own. During this time of self-study, I wrote my book, *Xingdao zhiweiche* 行道旨味车. Two years later, the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary opened, with Dr. Joshua Crowel Garritt as principal, who invited me to serve as professor of Chinese, and I gave up my present work to accept. The campus was in a beautiful location and they allowed me to be part-teacher/part-student. So it was I went to the Seminary. Students that year were scarce as early morning stars and of a low educational standard. That winter, the Seminary awarded me a diploma, and held a graduation ceremony at which I spoke on the topic “The urgent need for evangelists.” In 1908, I became a regular member of the Seminary faculty, and travelled around universities and middle schools in Jiangsu, Zhejiang,

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12 See *金陵神学志* (Nanking Theological Review) No. 15, issue 6 (June 1933): 41.
Anhui, Jiangxi and Shandong, promoting evangelization as the highest vocation students might choose.\textsuperscript{13}

In 1908, Chen graduated from the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary and took up a teaching post there, becoming the first Chinese on the faculty of Nanking Theological Seminary. In 1910, as Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary was about to unite with the Methodist-Episcopal Fowler School of Theology and the Disciples Bible College and Training School to form Nanking Theological Seminary, the Presbyterian institution had four faculty: three Americans (John W. Davis, Joshua Garritt and John Leighton Stuart) and one Chinese, Chen Jinyong.

In 1919, because of internal contradictions among staff at Nanking Seminary, Chen was forced to leave Nanjing and take up a position at the Chinese Christian Literature Society in Shanghai. In volume 5 issue 4 of the 1919 \textit{Nanking Theological Review}, Chen wrote somewhat heatedly: “In the winter of 1906, I accepted the invitation of the Board of the Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary to join the faculty there. When this institution later became Nanking Theological Seminary, I continued on the faculty and I have now been there thirteen years.”\textsuperscript{14}

During Chen’s tenure as editor at the Christian Literature Society, in addition to his heavy responsibilities as editor, he travelled frequently, publishing and lecturing. He retired from the Christian Literature Society in 1930 and died in 1938. His remains are buried in the Hongqiao Cemetery in Shanghai. During the Cultural Revolution, the grave was destroyed. In 1997, the family erected a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Chen Jinyong, 二十五年来之中国教会概况 (The situation in the Chinese church over the past 25 years), in 真光 magazine, No. 26 issue 6 (1927):3-4.
\item Chen Jinyong, 陈金镛启示 (Chen Jinyong’s bulletin), in: \textit{Nanking Theological Review}, No. 5 issue 4 (November 1919): 7.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
tombstone dedicated to his memory in their old homeplace of Shangyu.

Father, Chen Jinyong, style name Kouying, of Xiao Taoyuan, Baiguan Town, Shangyu, and Mother, Cai Ling’en, of Jiangbei’an, Yin county, were both pious Christians. Father graduated from Hangchow Christian Academy in 1887 and taught at and was principal of Chongde Girls School and Chongxin School in Ningbo, served as Professor and director of publications at Nanjing Theological Seminary and editor at the Shanghai Christian Literature Society. All his life he advocated for the independence movement in the Chinese Protestant church. He was a prolific author, famous educator and theologian. He raised ten children, all of whom were highly educated and involved in educational affairs, of whom, Mengjia was a famous scholar of ancient texts, and Mengxiong a geologist and member of the Chinese Academy, both making their contributions to society. Father, Mother and some of their deceased children were buried in Shanghai Hongqiao cemetery, but this grave was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, so this memorial was erected in his home place to honor his memory.

Erected October 1997
Renovated May 2009

Nanking Theological Seminary was opened September 13, 1911 under the name Bible Training School. The following year the name was changed to Nanking School of Theology, but was customarily called Nanking Theological School and the name was changed to reflect this usage in 1917. In 1929, the name was formally changed to Nanking Theological Seminary. For convenience, I will use Nanking Theological Seminary throughout this section.
Chen Jinyong spent a total of thirteen years at the seminary, from 1906 when he joined the faculty, to 1919 when he was forced to resign and leave. According to his own telling, when he first arrived there, he taught part-time and studied part-time. He was officially hired as an instructor following his graduation in 1908. He was primarily hired to teach Chinese, which may be understood as being responsible for teaching Chinese composition and culture. Thus, Chen’s teaching at the seminary mainly focused on the Chinese language and the development of Chinese culture. His time teaching at the Seminary coincided with the rise of the indigenization movement in the Chinese Protestant church, therefore, his teaching attracted unusual attention.

Following his graduation from Hangzhou, Chen taught for a long time in church-run schools and even presided over the work, thus forming a habit of paying attention to education. At Nanking Theological Seminary, because he was directly engaged in theological education work, he followed with interest theological education in the Chinese Protestant church. In a 1914 essay, “Theology,” he clearly expressed this interest:

If our church in the Republic of China does not speedily establish a proper theological seminary, not only will our citizens be at risk of falling prey to an atheist tide, our Chinese church will have no hope of unity. This plethora of denominations is already ingrained in Europe and America and would be extremely difficult to eradicate. Only our Chinese church, though over a hundred years old, is still in its gestational period. Thus in my view, the power to promote church unity in future lies with the church of the Republic of China.  

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15 Chen Jinyong, 神学 (Theology) in: 中华基督教会年鉴 (China Christian Yearbook) (1), 1914, 40.
He had gathered some statistics showing that, in the Republican era, the number of Chinese Christians was 360,000. There were fourteen schools of higher education from which students could be drawn for theological study, yet among graduates only twenty or thirty percent expressed their willingness to work in the church. And there were only nine theological schools at the time; theological graduates amounted to fewer than 500 persons and of these only 80-90 had higher education.\footnote{Ibid., 41.}

Because of his occupation, Chen Jinyong was greatly concerned for the work of theological education in the Chinese Protestant church. In his view, there were three difficulties in running a theological school well: hiring faculty, selection of students and curriculum design. In hiring of faculty, he proposed that “theological faculty for the Chinese church should rely on Chinese faculty as the core, with visiting Western faculty.” Chen was extremely worried that if Western teachers dominated, students would “gradually lose their Chineseness [national character]” which would not be beneficial to evangelizing in China.\footnote{Ibid, 42.}

With regard to student selection, Chen set five norms: “(1) in receiving God’s grace, they cannot keep silent; (2) in receiving new life, they must obey; (3) in learning, they must work hard; (4) in seeing the country’s plight, they must save it; and (5) in receiving God’s call, they must follow.” \footnote{Ibid.}

Speaking of curriculum design, Chen Jinyong had sought the view of the second principal of Nanking Theological Seminary, Joshua Garritt, and recorded Garritt’s verbal account of the Seminary curriculum, originally publishing it in the \textit{Chinese Christian Intelligencer} 通问报 and later in the second issue of \textit{Nanking Theological Review}. “In outline
it included six courses: Bible, religion, apologetics, ethics, practicums and history.” In the summer of 1914, the China Continuation Committee met [to] discuss the issue of theological curriculum design and Chen was invited to take part. From this we can see the influence of his thinking in this area.  

Due to a lack of source material, I am at present unable to provide a detailed outline of Chen Jinyong’s curriculum for Nanking Theological Seminary, but from his own extant essays and writings, we can come up with the essentials. After leaving Nanking Theological Seminary, Chen published two works closely related to theological education: Jiangfan 讲范 and Chinese Religious Views 中国的宗教观.

In his “Author’s Preface” to Jiangfan (1927), Chen explains how his book is related to Nanking Theological Seminary: “My approach is to adapt a book from Nevius, Bryan and Davis. More importantly, I add my own views; these are insights from my own experience. The last several chapters contain discussions I have had with students and colleagues at Nanking Seminary where I teach. I put all these together as (Jiangfan) Part 1. In recent years, my sermons have appeared in various publications and I select the best of these and collect them as (Jiangfan) Part 2.”  

Clearly, at least part of the book comes from the content of his teaching at the seminary and this tells us that while he was teaching there he taught a course on homiletics. After leaving the seminary, Chen was often involved in training courses for evangelists in which he taught courses on preaching. In 1920 for example,

19 Ibid., 43.
20 Chen Jinyong, 讲范 (Homiletics), (Shanghai: Shanghai Christian Literature Society: May 1927), 1.
On the morning of July 5, 1920, I took the express train from Shanghai to Hangchow University, for a retreat for pastoral staff from Jiangsu and Zhejiang, during which I lectured on evangelism for ten days.” And again in August 1929: “In March 1929 three commissioners of the Methodist Episcopal Summer Evangelists Conference, Pastors Jiang Changchuan 江长川, Lei Yuehan 霍约翰, and Hu Jianong 胡稼农 wrote asking me to speak at the Summer Conference. I felt this was my vocation, while I still had breath I could not refuse, and so gladly agreed.

The second work was Chinese Religious Views 中国的宗教观 (1939), a book that was written, on one level, as a response to the demands of the era of indigenization and on another level, was probably another topic that Chen expended much effort on while at Nanking Seminary. In his “Preface” to Chinese Religious Views, he writes: “Based on my thirteen years of teaching at Nanking Theological Seminary, in philosophical thinking, evangelical methods, etc., I found one thing most lacking—Chinese were unfamiliar with Chinese sources. ... Writing this book was extremely important, it was vastly suitable for use in a modern seminary, as a reference text for a semester of studies in Comparative Religion.”

Since I have not yet been able to examine a copy of the inaugural issue of the Nanking Theological Review 神学志, I cannot provide any more details on its founding. However,

21 Chen Jinyong, 余之生活观 (My view of life), (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society), 32.
23 Chen Jinyong, Chinese Religious Views, 2.
the first Chinese president of the Seminary, Li Handuo 李汉铎 (Handel Lee), writing for the resumed publication in its (first) January 1932 issue, said this: “Since missionaries entered China, individual churches went their own way absent cooperation, to the extent that many difficulties arose in the ministry of the church. Therefore, the church proceeded to build theology in Nanjing, with theologians from each church coming together in that city and forming an institution of sacred learning. In 1914, Chen Jinyong founded the *Nanking Theological Review*, and by spreading the wind of truth it became recognized as an instrument for spreading the gospel....”24

This comment makes clear that the *Nanking Theological Review* was founded by Chen Jinyong in 1914. At its founding the *Review* was a quarterly publication, appearing four times a year. Commissioning and editorial work was done by Nanking Seminary, printing and distribution by the American Presbyterian Mission Press in Shanghai. From its inaugural issue in 1914 to 1919 when he left the seminary, Chen Jinyong directed the editorial work of the *Review* for six years, publishing five volumes for a total of twenty issues. Of these twenty issues, this author has seen only twelve to date. From these twelve issues, one can see that in his last few years at Nanking Theological Seminary, Chen Jinyong put the greater part of his energy into editing and manuscript preparation for the journal. In its first two years, perhaps because relatively few manuscripts were submitted, Chen wrote quite a few himself. In addition to his own writing, he collaborated with foreign faculty at the seminary, making notes from the foreign faculty member’s verbal input from which he later created a written manuscript to be published in the *Review*. Sometimes essays created in this fashion made up [as much as] a third of an issue.

The high stress level of the work took its toll on Chen’s health. Due to a long period of working until very late, he suffered from an acute sleep deficit that brought on liver disease and he was bedridden for a month, unable to work as normal. Luckily Chen’s wife, Cai Ling’en 蔡灵恩, took good care of him and he gradually recovered. Chen Mengjia recalls: “At that time Father exhausted himself editing the theological journal; this journal was quite well known in the church. He went to bed very late every night, and as a result of lack of sleep he developed serious liver disease and nearly died. Then Mother showed her talents, never leaving his side for a month as she cared for him.”

Since the editor-in-chief was confined to bed and, added to this, there was a shortage in fees for manuscripts, the seminary was compelled to consider ceasing publication. Luckily, through various efforts, the publication was retained in the end. *Nanking Theological Review* was probably the only seminary journal in the Chinese church at the time. Volume 3 Number 1 of the journal, published April 1, 1917 carried this announcement: “The Nanking Seminary Journal ... has grown rather quickly since it began publication. The editor, Mr. Chen Jinyong, has fallen ill due to the press of work and is recuperating in hospital.” The journal then announced it would cease publication. “We had no alternative but to greatly disappoint our dedicated readers and cause students to have no place to express the spirit of the seminary. And so we make a special appeal to the Board of the seminary to find funding to continue the journal. And we ask that Professor Chen continue as editor-in-chief and through a reduction in his teaching hours, lessen his load to allow him to concentrate his energies. Moreover, twelve students should be selected to serve as an editorial department ... and do their best.”

25 Chen Mengjia, 100.
In this way, Chen Jinyong once more continued to support the Nanking seminary journal for two years, up to 1919. A variety of indicators show that Chen and his family were reluctant to leave Nanking Theological Seminary. Looking back at this event a decade later, Chen Mengjia still felt aggrieved, expressing his regret in highly lyrical strokes of his pen:

What we most hated to leave behind was our wonderful garden—ancient pines, tall plane trees bare from our climbing, a canopy of grape vines, a small lawn of holly and in front of our western-style house on a low rise, two stone benches where one could lie and count the stars, peach trees whose fruit ripened in Spring, flowering almond trees and those always beguiling wisteria, seduced our departing eyes. And once gone, never again to hear the odd tune single-wheeled carts made as they ground their way into the city every morning, or the piccolo-playing vendor selling sugar for old stuff. And toward evening the bugle call in the hills behind (we heard it every day, but never saw the bugler—that made it the more mysterious!). All of it is deeply etched in our hearts.26

Chen Jinyong’s departure had a huge impact on the seminary journal, to such an extent that the faculty association of Nanking Seminary that had intended to shut it down asked Chen to draft a cessation of publication statement. Later, after some consideration, the seminary abandoned the plan to close the publication and asked Chen to complete the editing of the final 1919 issue. Though Chen accepted the faculty request, he published the cessation announcement in No. 4, volume 5 (not the final issue), the last issue he edited. Chen’s indignation comes vividly from the page:

26 Ibid., 109.
Since the *Nanking Theological Journal* began publication in 1914, with a one-year hiatus, 5 volumes for a total of 20 issues have been published. Its light shines from East Asia to Europe; its worth is beyond precious gems and it enjoys great popularity. These facts need no vindication. So why cease publication? Lack of funds? Not so. Lack of material? Not so. Editor sick? Even less so. The case was not that it could not stop, but that it must stop. Because there are difficulties they would rather not mention; they will not tolerate it continuing, not stopping is not permitted.

Chen’s doting affection for the Theological Review cannot be stymied, but must out:

Because while what may stop, that is, the paper the Theological Review is printed on [the physical journal], it is not the spirit of the Review that will stop. And so, the Theological Review may stop, but will not end. ... The small part of the Theological Review that is Jinling may stop, [but] who is to know [whether] the whole of the Theological Review in China, might not thus rise to prominence.... I have left no stone unturned, I owe nothing to the Theological Review. The Theological Review flutters into the clouds and it owes nothing to me.

In his statement, Chen Jinyong revealed some of the reasons behind the cessation of publication, that is, some among the faculty felt it did not have much value. “One female faculty member was unwilling to subscribe, feeling that the journal wasn’t worth it; this can be verified.” About 500 copies of each issue of the *Nanking Theological Journal* were published, with about 300 subscribers and the rest complimentary copies. Even if these figures are guesswork, the journal required a subsidy from the institution for every issue and that may have become the main reason for the cessation of publication.
It is interesting that Chen Jinyong included in the same issue (his last as editor) an old photo taken in December 1908. There were four persons in the photo, John W. Davis, Joshua Garritt, John Leighton Stuart and Chen Jinyong. The photograph included a caption: “Prior to the changes that brought about the Nanking Theological Seminary, this photo of four faculty present when the American Presbyterian Union Theological Seminary opened, was taken in December of the 34th year of the Guangxu reign of the Qing dynasty (1908). Beneath the photo and its caption Chen also gave particulars of how each of the four departed the Seminary:

Prof. Chen Jinyong resigned this semester to take up an editorial position in the Shanghai Christian Literature Society;

Prof. Joshua Garritt was fortunate enough to take medical leave in the US in May;

Prof. John W. Davis resigned in 1910 to serve the Suzhou church, but died before taking up the position;

Prof. J. Leighton Stuart resigned last semester and now serves as President of Yenching University.

This casts an interesting light on the closing of the journal. We can rejoice that, following Chen Jinyong’s departure, the Nanking Theological Journal lived on and is still in print today.

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