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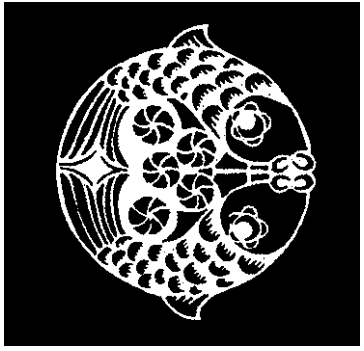

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From the Editor

For over two decades, the *Chinese Theological Review* (CTR) has sought to provide a forum in which Chinese Christians could speak directly to a wider readership. Since its inception in 1985, the CTR has presented English translations of theological essays and sermons from the *Nanjing Theological Review*, the journal of the national seminary Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS), sermons and reflections from the church monthly magazine *Tian Feng*, church statements and reports, and occasional relevant essays from secular academic journals. Other newsletters and journals provide news and opinion about the Protestant churches in China.The CTR aims to bring Chinese voices into a broader conversation. Drawing on a wealth of materials from a church in a rapidly developing and changing society, each issue of CTR includes a variety of topics rather than particular themes.

This issue opens with a remarkable essay on John Leighton Stuart (1876-1962). Born of Presbyterian missionary parents in Hangzhou, Leighton Stuart became a missionary, President of Yenching University, and U.S. ambassador to China (1946-1949). Zhang Hua, an academic at the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, discusses Leighton Stuart's many roles, both as an individual and as representative of the missionary movement in general, successes and failures that were deeply personal as well as very public. Zhang Hua sees the American's life and experience as giving insight into the missionary movement as a whole and his treatment of Leighton Stuart is more sympathetic and nuanced than

would have been possible in earlier decades. In the past, Zhang Hua concludes, Christianity and the missionary movement could hardly be separated from the colonial enterprise. At the same time, the past is now past and there has been a shift in the world situation. Considering that Leighton Stuart once featured in a famous satiric essay by Mao Zedong, "Farewell Leighton Stuart," in which the former ambassador served as a stand-in for a failed U.S. policy, Zhang Hua's reconsideration of the missionary movement as a more complex phenomenon is quite extraordinary.

In 1985, Chinese Christians joined with non-Christian supporters to launch The Amity Foundation. Amity celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary in 2010 and is today one of the largest foundations in China. The Amity Foundation was a breakthrough organization that greatly expanded the scope of activity for Christians in the areas of social service, development, and education. Today many in the CCC/TSPM and churches in China favor an expanded role for the churches in charitable works and social service projects. Rev. Dr. Lin Manhong, interim dean at NJUTS, looks at the historical background of charitable organizations in China and the factors churches should consider in developing their potential in this area.She finds particular reasons why China has been slower to develop charities than Western societies or even some underdeveloped Third World countries, and discusses the relationship between charity or social service and proselytization. "Christian organizations, as part of the Third Sector," she concludes, "should develop their philanthropic work to the benefit of society, and further, make their due contribution to the sustainability of China's economy and to building a harmonious society."

Rev. Chen Yongtao, like Lin Manhong, represents the new generation of church leaders and theologians. He has

taught at NJUTS and served as an editor of the *Nanjing Theological Review* and is now finishing his doctoral work in Finland. Chen's essay is an in-depth consideration of the contextual theology of Wu Yaozong (Y.T. Wu) a seminal and often controversial figure, the senior Christian leader who launched the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) in the early 1950s. Chen notes that Wu has been called "both 'a prophet of Chinese Christianity,' and 'an opportunist,' as well as a 'non-believer'; some even believed his thinking was colored by heresy or paganism. Such criticism, however, always arose from misunderstandings" of Y.T. Wu's ideas. Chen maintains that the thrust of Wu's theological endeavors throughout his life focused on a single goal: that of formulating a theology adapted to and rooted in the Chinese context. "Precisely for this reason," Chen writes,"Y.T. Wu's theological method was not top-down, nor was it a simple method of indigenization, or a translation model. Rather it was bottom-up, a defense of the reasonableness of the existence of Christianity within the real context of Chinese society."And "because of this, Wu's theology coalesced around the historical Jesus and not the Christ of faith. This arose from his concern for social reality and not from some interpretation of doctrine."

The "Resolution on Strengthening Theological Reconstruction" was passed at the Jinan Meeting of the Second Meeting of the Sixth National Christian Conference in 1998. In the intervening years, numerous essays and forums have explored what the concept means concretely in areas such as theological education. Following the Tenth Annual Symposium on Theological Reconstruction in 2008 a related symposium was held on enriching sermon content through use of the fruits of Theological Reconstruction. Rev. Dr. Cao Shengjie, President of the China Christian

Council from 2002 to 2008 and currently a member of the CCC/TSPM Advisory Council, provides an overview of the diverse reflections contained in the papers presented at the symposium, relating the views expressed to what she terms "a preaching ministry of self-propagation."

Prof. Chen Zemin is one of the outstanding elder statesmen of the Church in China, and a world-renowned theologian. Prof. Chen joined the faculty of NJUTS in 1952 andserved as Dean and Vice-president (1982-2002) over the course of his long career. Many of Prof. Chen's sermons and essays have appeared in the pages of the CTR: volume 22 includes a list of these as well as the foreword to his *Quest and Witness*, *Selected Writings of Chen Zemin*, published in 2007. Prof. Chen writes of the essay included in our current issue, "An Overview of the Theoretical Foundation and Practical Tasks of Building New China: The Contribution of the Chinese Church (Shanghai, 1939)": "This article first appeared in [the journal] *Truth and Life* 真理与生命 in 1939. At that time, [I] was a third-year student in the Department of Sociology, Hujiang University, Shanghai. I had long since thoroughly forgotten this piece of work. I had felt that although the piece was passionate, my thinking at that time was not very mature and extremely superficial; furthermore, with the rolling of the years, the political situation has greatly changed…" Prof. Chen greatly underestimates his essay, for it provides readers today a rare glimpse of the enthusiasms of the young theologian and of his analysis of the church situation in perilous times. Two of Chen Zemin's sermons are also included: the earliest (1954) from his *Selected Writings* as well as the most recent (2005).

Quite a number of memoirs or reflections and collections of writings by theologians and other leading church figures have been published in recent years.

Examples include *Selected Writings of Wu Yaozong* (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2010); *Essays in Honor of Mr. Liu Liangmo* (Shanghai: YMCA, 2010), which includes numerous photographs as well as Liu's own writings; *Collected Writings of Cao Shengjie* (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2010), and commemorative collections such as *In Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement*, a special issue of *Tian Feng* published September 2010, from which "Recalling the Later Years of Mr. Y.T. Wu," by Cao Shengjie is taken.

This remembrance of her years working in Y.T. Wu's office by Rev. Dr. Cao offers a moving personal portrait of Wu rarely to be found in more formal works. Her impression of Wu's character—focused, strongly opinionated, and resolute—rings true to the theologian depicted in Chen Yongtao's essay. Readers should note that it is often impossible to source quotations or clarify every reference in translating this type of material.

Rev. Dr. Cao's other reflection in this volume centers on the first meeting of the National Christian Conference in 1954, at which she was present. Her description of the circumstances for Christians of those early years of new China, the camaraderie of the emerging leadership, as well as the divisions among delegates again provide us with a personal and vivid experience of an important milestone in the Chinese Church.

I am grateful to the authors of these essays. Any errors in representing their work are entirely my own. Thanks to Don Snow and Katie Spillane for use of their translations and to the China Desk and Lawrence Braschi of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland for kindly permitting use of forthcoming material here. Thanks also to Philip Wickeri for consulting on various details of the contents of this volume.

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

Janice Wickeri
Hong Kong

Missionaries and the Missionary Movement as Seen through the Life of John Leighton Stuart

ZHANG HUA

[Author's Abstract] John Leighton Stuart was a typical modern missionary. During his life he did two important things that influenced Chinese society. The first was his education work, particularly the establishing of Yanjing (Yenching) University, which received acclaim both in China and in the United States. The second was serving as U.S. ambassador to China, a role that ended in failure. While his life involved a mix of success and failure, it is likely that through the twentieth century no other foreigner played such a long and profound role in Chinese politics, education, and religious life, and had such great influence.

Stuart had both special characteristics and special dreams that were distinctive to him as an individual and also common to missionaries as a group. He was a religious idealist, and yet also a typical missionary. Both his educational work and his service as ambassador had a common purpose: to reform China through the Christian spirit. He loved China, but loved America even more. He strove to merge Chinese and Western culture.

In Stuart's life we can see that the modern missionary movement was part of the expansionism of the Western powers, yet missionaries participated in it out of religious zeal. Today in an era when colonialism has collapsed, the global economy is increasingly integrated, and local cultures are increasingly pluralized, the "sending model of mission" has become a thing of the past and is being replaced by mutual exchange and cooperation. We can also see that while the intent of missionaries was to promote

Christianity, the reality was promotion of Chinese-Western cultural exchange.

Stuart's life of acclaim and censure, achievements and failures, and glory and bitterness form a portrait of modern missionaries, and all these were an inevitable result of the missionary movement in China. It is precisely in his typicality that Stuart's historical significance lies.

John Leighton Stuart (June 24, 1876 - September 19, 1962) was a typical Christian missionary of the modern period. He was born in Hangzhou; in his youth, he returned to the United States to complete his studies. There he was influenced by the Student Volunteer Movement, and then returned to China with his wife as a missionary of the Southern Presbyterian Church. He then remained in China for 55 years.

A life of acclaim and censure

During his life, Stuart did two things that had great influence on China. One of these was his work in education, especially his successful establishment of Yanjing (Yenching) University, which was acclaimed both in China and in the United States; the other was serving as U.S. ambassador to China, a role that ended in failure. One could say that although his career received a mix of acclaim and censure, in the twentieth century there was no other foreigner who so thoroughly and for such a long period entered into the political, educational, and religious life of China and had such a great influence.

A successful educator

Stuart taught in the United States, Hangzhou, and Ginling (Jinling) Seminary in Nanjing, and in 1919 was appointed president of Yanjing University. He began the university from nothing, and endured considerable hardship in building it, traveling to the United States ten times to raise funds, and also soliciting financial support from Chinese donors. In less than ten years he forged Yanjing University into an institution comparable to Beijing University and Qinghua University. By 1949, Yanjing University had graduated almost 10,000 students. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China, 56 of the students and faculty of Yanjing University were selected as members of the academic committee of the prestigious Academy of Social Sciences and Academy of Engineering. When Deng Xiaoping led a government delegation to visit the United States in 1979, seven of the 21 formal members of the delegation were Yanjing University graduates.

An important reason for Stuart's success in education lay in the fact that he promoted educational approaches that were in tune with the times: Sinification and internationalization. One aspect of this Sinification consisted of hiring Chinese faculty and giving them good treatment. Chinese and foreign faculty received equal treatment with regard to salaries, accommodations, leave, medical benefits, and so forth, and had equal educational duties. In the early twentieth century, this was unique. For this reason, many famous Chinese professors and scholars came to Yanjing University. In 1929, two-thirds of Yanjing University's Board of Trustees was Chinese. In 1934, out of 111 associate and full professors, 67 were Chinese. By the late 1920s, most departmental leaders were Chinese, and Wu Leichuan, the only Chinese Christian to attain a

jinshi degree in the traditional examination system, became university president, with Stuart moving to the position of administrative president.[1] A second aspect consisted of Sinification of the curriculum. The curriculum of Yanjing University suited the special characteristics of Chinese students, and was also suited to the needs of China's changing society. With regard to internationalization, one aspect was training students to be "patriotic Chinese who were citizens of the world." A second was academic exchange of graduate students and visiting scholars with famous international universities through establishment of long-term sister-school relationships with top universities in the United States, England, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Italy. The Harvard-Yenching Institute, established in 1928, cultivated many outstanding talents for both China and the United States, and helped Harvard lay its foundation as a world center for Asian studies. Essentially the core of Yanjing University's approach to education was increasing Sinification built on a Christian foundation. This was much like Yanjing University's architecture – Chinese exteriors with Western interiors.

What makes these achievements especially noteworthy is that they were accomplished amidst the chaos of a turbulent period. The founding of Yanjing University occurred during the Anti-Christian Movement in China (including the Chinese movement to recover educational sovereignty), and also during the rise of fundamentalism in America. In the limited maneuvering room between these forces he was able to thread his way along a viable route. To deal with the Anti-Christian Movement his strategy was to make Yanjing University

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1 According to Stuart's *Fifty Years in China – The Memoirs of John Leighton Stuart, Missionary and Ambassador*, both of these positions were normally referred to using the same term, "president."

"thoroughly Christian in atmosphere and influence while free from even seeming to be part of a propagandistic movement."[2] In 1922 compulsory attendance at religious services was eliminated, and the following year so was the requirement that students take courses in religion. Among faculty, students, and staff, only 10% were Christian. In 1926, Yanjing University registered with the Chinese government, becoming the first of the Christian colleges to do so. Stuart changed the goal of the university from training leaders for the church to training free-minded intellectuals who were steeped in the Christian spirit. Through measures such as the setting up of the Christian Fellowship, a Christian and American style of living was advocated, instilled, and put into practice. However, mission agencies historically felt that the responsibility of missionaries was – first, second and third – to evangelize, and that the sole purpose of running schools was to proselytize. In 1921 in the *Princeton Theological Review* fundamentalists cited Yanjing University as a prime example of anti-gospel propaganda in the Far East, accused it of being the source of the anti-Christian movement in the East, and suggested that Stuart's faith was heretical. For several years he was a prime target of attack as a representative of liberalism in China. The chairman of the Southern Presbyterian Church's China board, Walter Lowrie, even suggested eliminating financial support for Yanjing and removing the missionaries serving there. Stuart had no choice but to travel to East Hanover Presbytery to explain his basic theological views and respond to questions. The result was that the presbytery affirmed his loyalty to the church and adherence to the faith. Later they sent people on a special trip to China to investigate. It was not until 1926, with the weakening of

2 Ibid., 66.

the fundamentalist camp and changes in their leadership that mission agencies unreservedly supported Yanjing University.

A failed diplomat

After the Second World War, the United States adopted a strategy of opposing the Soviet Union worldwide. It hoped that China would become an alley in the Far East to check the Soviets, and viewed the military strength of the Chinese Communist Party and its leadership as belonging to the Soviet camp. In late 1945, George Marshall came to China as a special American envoy to mediate in the civil war, hoping to set up an American-leaning coalition government with Chiang Kai-shek as head. The Nationalist Party understood the American anti-Soviet strategy, and it also had clear military superiority, so was unreserved in repeatedly using its military power to pressure the Communists, with the result that Marshall's efforts at negotiation were stalled. At a point in July 1946 when civil war could break out at any minute, at the recommendation of Marshall, Stuart was appointed the American ambassador to China and walked onto the political stage. In the beginning he tirelessly strove to mediate between the Nationalists and Communists, and unflaggingly promoted Western freedoms and democracy to both parties. He hoped that the Nationalists would promote democracy, accept the Communists, and adopt elements such as a constitution and representative assembly to establish a "truly republican form of government."[3] He hoped that the Communist Party could compromise for the sake of greater interests, and – like the Chinese Democratic League – exist as an opposition party

3 Ibid., 289.

in the political life of the nation, sharing political power and working alongside the Nationalist Party to create a multi-party democratic nation. However, he was unable to soften the stance of the ultra-right wing in the Nationalist Party, which wanted to destroy the Communist Party, and was even less successful in persuading the Communist Party to put down its weapons of self-defense. The most massive and violent civil war in Chinese history erupted. In the process of all this, he at first unconsciously and then consciously betrayed his original intent of maintaining neutrality between the Nationalists and Communists, and advocated a policy of supporting the Nationalists against the Communists, a policy Marshall approved.[4]

In 1948, the American government revised its China policy, no longer urging the establishment of a coalition government in which the Communist Party participated, and resolutely supported Chiang against the Communists. On the one hand, Stuart actively worked to secure extensive military and economic support for Chiang Kai-shek, and on the other urged the Nationalist government to carry out reforms and establish an ideal nation. When it was no longer possible to reverse the military situation, at one point he dreamed that some enlightened individual within the Nationalist Party would replace Chiang Kai-shek and maintain control. However, on the eve of the People's Liberation Army's crossing the Yangtze River, he sized up the situation and refused the Nationalist government's request that he follow them as they moved to Guangzhou, staying in Nanjing and influencing the diplomats of other North Atlantic nations to do the same. He attempted to use his special status as long-term president of Yanjing University, the presence of many Yanjing graduates within the ranks of the Communist

4 Ibid., 178-9.

Party, and also his friendship with top Communist leaders Zhou Enlai and Ye Jianying to set up contact with the victorious Communist Party. He repeatedly appealed to the U.S. Department of State to establish a relationship with the Communist authorities. The Communist Party also considered establishing relations with the United States.[5] Because of changes in the political situation in America, particularly the rise of McCarthyism, he was compelled to follow the orders of the American government, give up on his efforts, and return as scheduled to America.

One reason for the claim that Stuart failed as a diplomat was his failure in negotiation. Another is that his political ideals could not be realized in China, and during his term America "lost" China. A third is that he was not able to remain on friendly terms with the various parties. During the Chinese Civil War, he strove to arrange a large American financial assistance package. However, this assistance did not go over well with either the Nationalists or Communists. The Nationalists complained that too little came too late, and the Communists were critical because they felt this assistance would impede peace efforts. After Stuart's return to the U.S., he was first taunted by the Communists. Mao Zedong published the essay "Farewell, John Leighton Stuart," in which he pointed out: "The Americans supplied the money and the guns, while Chiang Kai-shek supplied the men to kill Chinese on

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5 On April 4, 1949, the Chairman of the Communist Party Central Committee, Mao Zedong cabled front-line leaders such as Su Yu and Zhang Zhen, and Liu Bocheng, who was stationed in Nanjing: "Now America has appointed personnel to establish diplomatic relations with us, and England also really wants to do business with us. Our opinion is that if America (and England) can cut their ties to the Nationalists, we can consider the question of establishing diplomatic ties with them." See Zhongguo zhongyang wenxian yanjiushi (eds), *Mao Zedong nianpu* [Chronology of Mao Zedong], (Central Archives Press, 2002), 489-90.

behalf of the Americans. This was part of a war to make China a colony of America, which was one important part of the post-Second World War aggressive policy of American imperialism."[6] And as the representative of the American government, Stuart came to be the symbol of the failure of this aggressive American policy. This essay was included in China's new textbooks, so it was part of the public consciousness for a considerably long time. Several decades later, the failure of efforts to have Stuart's ashes interred on the Yanjing University campus was due in large part to the fact that he had been directly criticized by Chairman Mao. In reality Stuart was being criticized in place of the American government. Only two months before this essay was published, when Mao Zedong heard that Stuart planned to come to Beijing to explore establishing new relations between China and the U.S., he said "He would be welcomed as an old friend of many Chinese Communists."[7] America was also unhappy with Stuart. Even when he was lying in bed stricken by illness, McCarthy did not let him go, and sent two men to seek him out with the intent of asking him whether he was a Communist, and it was only the presence of mind and courage of his secretary that led to the situation being tactfully resolved. Even Chiang Kai-shek, with whom he had a deep friendship, abandoned him. Because he had become disappointed in Chiang Kai-shek and made clandestine overtures to the Communist party, Chiang Kai-shek was never able to forgive him, and publicly announced that he was not welcome to come to Taiwan.

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6 Mao Zedong, "Farewell, Leighton Stuart," (in Chinese) in *Mao Zedong xuanji* [The Selected Works of Mao Zedong]. (Renminchubanshe, 1964, 1967 pocket version), 1380.

7 Stuart, *The Diaries of John Leighton Stuart – Before and After the Period of Negotiations in the War between the Nationalists and Communists* (in Chinese) (Hong Kong: Wenshi chubanshe, 1982), 75.

Special characteristics and dreams

Stuart had both special characteristics and dreams, those of a particular individual who also represented common traits of modern missionaries.

Loving China, but loving America more

Stuart spent much more of his life in China than in the United States, and had a special affection for China. He himself said that he loved China no less than Chinese people did. Only four months after he returned to the United States he was stricken by illness. All of his work, life, friends, joys, frustrations, and concerns were in China. He had no home in the United States, and spent his final years as an invalid in the home of his ex-student and personal secretary Philip Fugh (Fu Jingbo); Stuart's parents, wife, and closest relatives were all buried in China. In his will he requested to be buried in Yanjing University, and it was only after forty-six long years of ups and downs that he was finally buried in the city of his birth, Hangzhou, on November 11, 2008. He opposed Western colonial control in China, strove to promote respect for Chinese independence and sovereignty, and urged the repeal of the unequal treaties. His desire was that Yanjing University "should establish itself in Chinese life independent of treaties with western countries or any extraneous factors, with only such protection as the Chinese people themselves possessed and wanted to share with us. I believed that imperialism and missions could be and should be divorced."[8] In his late years he wrote:

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8 *Fifty Years in China*, 71.

> My sympathies were early aroused against the humiliating terms of foreign treaties and the unfair privileges that the nationals of foreign countries enjoyed – including missionaries. In sharing the rightful national aspirations of the Chinese people, I revived my own latent beliefs in democracy, personal freedom, and social progress through applied science. I was brought almost unconsciously into such an understanding of Chinese grievances and ambitions as virtually to become identified with them in these sentiments, with the result that they have become dominant elements in my own life, coloring my attitudes and controlling my activities.[9]

With regard to Japanese aggression, his stance was the same as that of the American government, resolutely standing on the side of the Chinese people and holding to that position even when in personal danger.

Stuart's politics were basically American. In particular, after becoming ambassador, his standard was that of official American interests, and American interests in China. He candidly admitted: "National policy must perhaps be based primarily on self-interest, and we Americans have long felt it to be of great importance to us that China develop into a strong, united, progressive nation with a government acceptable to its own people, friendly to us and a stabilizing influence in the Pacific area."[10] His values were particularly American. He had an inherent sense of national superiority, and although he had a missionary's sense of humility, at times he unconsciously revealed a superior attitude of sympathy, concern, and love of the kind that one has for those who are below them.

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9 Ibid., 288-9.

10 Ibid., 179 (Subsequent page numbers in text).

Religious idealism

Stuart's religious ideal – or perhaps we could say his dream – was to use the spirit of Christianity to reform China. He felt that the United States was a model of a nation established in the Christian spirit. He said of America: "…we are a Christian people, our culture is a Christian culture, our country is a Christian state. Generally speaking, we order our lives individually and collectively, locally and nationally, in accordance with various commonly accepted concepts of morality, of legality, of propriety and of practicability" (311-12). All this he considered to be the American "way of life." His dream was that Chinese people would gradually accept this way of life, making China a nation "…peaceful, united and progressive, helped in this by American technical advice and financial grants or loans…" (212). And the route to accepting this way of life lay primarily in belief in Christianity. He said: "I believe that the more Christians there are and the more closely patterned are their lives to Christ, the better will be the world and the happier will be the lot of men, of nations and of all mankind" (300). After he left China in disappointment, he still did not give up this dream. He said: "My dream of China…failed. But I still believe that it was right and could have been realized. I base this partly upon the sterling qualities of the Chinese people as I have come to know them and their history and partly on my unwavering faith in democracy when practiced in a free society" (212).

Stuart's educational work in China and his service as ambassador were both carried out for the purpose of realizing this dream. His Yanjing University had four missions, and the main one was promoting Christianity. Even when he became ambassador he did not resign his position at Yanjing, taking instead a leave of absence. The

motto of Yanjing University was drawn from the Bible: "Freedom through truth for service." Through years of drawing out the implications of this motto, it became part of Yanjing University culture and became the philosophy of life for many at Yanjing University. Before becoming ambassador, such a possibility had never crossed his mind. However, when faced with this task, he accepted without hesitation because his dream and American policy in China were in accord with each other, and he felt that through the power of politics he could realize this dream more rapidly than was possible by taking a religious route. His estimation of Christian leader Chiang Kai-shek was high and he had great hopes for him, completely unlike Marshall and other diplomats. In the person of Chiang Kai-shek he saw hope for the Christianization of China. In the eyes of other diplomats, Stuart was not qualified as a diplomat. He even told Chiang Kai-shek he "wanted to treat him on the basis of our long friendship and not primarily in my capacity as an American official"(166). He resolutely supported Chiang and opposed the Communists in hopes of "hastening the end of the armed conflict" and "allowing the better system to win"(181).

A typical missionary

Stuart stated clearly that the Christian faith transmitted to him over the generations from his Scottish ancestors was lofty and unshakable, a great spiritual treasure which had self-evident influence on political freedom and economic prosperity (297). The mission of Stuart and all other missionaries was to make the existence and power of Christianity evident to society, and through social progress throughout the world to make its power manifest, instead of simply making people Christians and getting them to engage in the forms of Christian worship. His whole life

he pursued this ultimate value and he gave his life to this great task, striving to put the Christian spirit into practice. In the eyes of his life-long follower, Philip Fugh, he was an incarnation of Christ; the president of Beijing University, Jiang Menglin, called him a "true representation of Jesus' spirit"(96). He gave his life to the work of Christian mission; he also gave virtually all of his income to Yanjing University and throughout his life had no savings. With the exception of a few years as ambassador, he had not been employed in the United States, so in his old age he had no pension, and he was sunk in poverty. It was only when the United Board for Higher Education in Asia [sic] granted him a pension that he had income adequate to cover his living expenses.

Like the great majority of missionaries, Stuart instinctively opposed the philosophically materialist Communist Party. In 1954 he said:

> …every Communist regime seeks to destroy the principles and practices of human freedom, makes war on religion, and is employing every conceivable device of persuasion and coercion for the consolidation and extension of the atheistic and materialistic system which the Communist leaders intend to impose upon the world. No action helpful to the Communist cause can be other than harmful to the interests of the free world. With those facts and that conclusion in mind, I devoutly hope that, both on moral grounds and on political grounds, both for its own good and for the good of all mankind, the United States will continue in its refusal to recognize China's "People's Government," will continue to oppose admission of that government to China's place in the United Nations… [and] persevere in its policy of opposition to trading with Communist China" (310-11).

He strove to support Chiang and oppose the Communists because: "This was the only way to overcome the Communist menace…" (163). He felt: "The Communist's insidious penetration, their whole totalitarian philosophy, their unscrupulous use of any methods, can only be guarded against by a populace convinced that their way of life has other values which they will defend at any cost"(212).

Working to combine Western and Chinese culture

Stuart felt that while Chinese culture and Christian culture came from different sources, mutual tolerance was possible. At an international missions conference in Jerusalem, he presented a paper called "Christianity and Confucianism," pointing out that criticizing Confucius was of no help to the work of Christianity and that the West should use the Christian gospel to supplement Confucianism rather than to destroy it, and also use Confucianism as a corrective to the flaws in Western civilization. Only in this way could Western religion be broadly and fully understood in China. He was a firm advocate of Wang Yangming and Wang Yangming's concept of "unity of the universe and humankind," and he especially identified with Wang Yangming's philosophy of education, that the highest goal of education was that "scholars become holy sages." This was a goal toward which he himself strove. He also praised Wang Yangming as one who "combined the life of an active administrator with that of a teacher and thinker of rare spiritual insight"(85), and this was the kind of life he practiced. In short, he advocated the idea that Confucianism and Christianity should contribute to each other.

This reminds us of the Catholic missionary 300 years ago, Mateo Ricci. With the assistance of Xu Guangqi and

others, he called for mission strategies of "completing Confucianism" and "drawing on Confucianism."[11] They sought and borrowed the concepts of Confucian thought and translated and interpreted them as Catholic doctrine, so that Catholic doctrine and Confucian thought matched and even seemed similar, for the purpose of making Catholic doctrine easy to understand and accept. However, they strongly affirmed early Confucian thought from the pre-Song/Ming period, and severely critiqued Wang Yangming and his ideas of the "unity of the universe and humankind."

Stuart advocated the indigenization of Chinese Christianity. He felt that Christianity must develop into a Chinese religion if it was to have influence in China. The route toward indigenization he designed included: 1) missionaries studying Chinese culture and gaining a deep understanding of the national state of mind; 2) training of Chinese religious leaders. His greatest dream was that Yanjing University would establish a school of religion where more and more students would become deeply familiar with the great cultural achievements of their country, and also learn true Christianity from Chinese professors who had received the best Western theological education. This kind of Christianity, rooted in their own religious experience, would be in accord with twentieth century knowledge, match the spirit of the Chinese people,

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11 Mateo Ricci once said: "As to those points of Confucianism that are hard for us to affirm, we can use a method of annotation that is beneficial to us. In this way, our people will win a significant degree of positive response from those among the literati who do not worship idols. See the preface of *Jidujiao yuanzheng Zhonghua diguo* [The march of Christianity to the empire of China.]. Cited in Jean Charbonnier (Chinese translation by Geng Sheng and Zheng Deji), *Zhongguo jidujiao shi* [The history of Christianity in China] (Zhongguo kexueyuan chubanshe, 1998), 135.

and also be free of all useless explanations that were only relevant to a Western historical setting.[12] Actually, he soon made this dream a reality.

Viewing the missionary movement through Stuart

We can draw some generalizations about the relationship between missionaries and the modern Christian missionary movement in China from Stuart's life.

The modern missionary movement was part of the expansion of the Western powers, but missionaries participated in this out of religious zeal.

The modern missionary movement occurred and developed in step with the development of Western capitalism. Dr. Ronald J. Sider of the World Evangelical Alliance candidly stated that in the last two thousand years the gospel movement has always been tied to colonialism; no matter how the relationship between these two movements is explained, it is obvious that the expansion of Western political power and the expansion of the church occurred in the same times and places.[13] In China, large-scale introduction of Christianity followed the Opium War and took place under the protection of the unequal treaties. On May 12, 1985, the National Council of Churches approved a statement on policy toward China which recognized that

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12 Stuart, "The Future of Missionary Education in China," *The Chinese Students' Monthly*, Vol. 21, No. 6, April 1926.

13 Cited in Mou Zhongjian (ed.), *Zongjiao yu minzu* [Religion and nationality], Vol. 6 (Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2009), 292.

> looking at the western mission movement from the negative side, Chinese government officials and many other Chinese people, including Christians at many levels of society, feel that the western missionary movement was a part of a western effort to exert influence to control China and its society…to a degree, western missionaries and the churches they belonged to were protected under the flags of the foreign powers. In this hearts of many Chinese people, this caused the gospel of Jesus Christ to be associated with the power and strength of the western powers.[14]

American officials have also strongly affirmed the contributions of missionaries. Charles Denby, who served as an envoy in China for thirteen years, stated: Over the last hundred years, male and female missionaries strove to bring our prestige, language and commerce into China. Without them, the reputation of our country would be much dimmer. Beyond doubt, without them, our commerce would suffer great loss and our diplomacy would lose an important pillar of support.[15] Just as missiologist David Bosch has pointed out, from the beginning of the sixteenth century, the concept of "missions" had already become equivalent to colonialism. No matter whether missionaries themselves shared this view, they played the role of pioneers of colonialism.[16]

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14 Cited in Luo Guangzong (ed.), *Qianshi bu wang, houshi zhi shi* [Do not forget the past – it guides the future] (Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), 437.

15 James Barton, *The Missionary and His Critic*, 98. Cited in Luo Guangzhoung (ed.), Qianshi bu wang, houshi zhi shi [Do not forget the past – it guides the future] (Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2003), 437.

16 David Bosch, *Transforming Missions: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis), 303-395. Cited in Yu Guoliang, *Chaihuile zhongjian geduande qiang* [Tearing down the wall that divides] (Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2007), 211.

However, if we look at the paths the hearts of missionaries took, the great majority came to evangelize with hearts full of religious fervor. Even missionaries like Stuart who became deeply involved in Chinese politics came with the purpose of reforming China through the Christian spirit; all his efforts throughout his life were aimed at putting into practice a method he thought would be effective. His involvement in politics was for the purpose of creating a country that manifested the ideals of the Christian spirit as rapidly as possible. He opposed colonial rule, yet was called by Mao Zedong a key figure in the "American war to colonize China." Many modern missionaries were like this. They lived in an era of the expansion of the colonial powers, and consciously or unconsciously became involved in the aggression of colonial nations.

All of their studies of China's condition were carried out so that mission agencies could set missions policies and encourage believers to contribute money, but in reality these studies often became the source of information for military, political, and commercial circles that was first to be used, most accurate, and most important. For example, the large-scale report published in 1922, *The Christian Occupation of China*, was completed by missionaries in China over a ten-year period, and published in both English and Chinese editions. The first part of the report gives a detailed description of each Chinese province's geographic, climate, language, population, economic, social, religious, and cultural situation, and this was used not only by churches but also by Western governments. Because of the deep understanding missionaries had of China, and because of their linguistic advantages, some early missionaries participated in the finalizing or drafting of the unequal treaties or participated directly in aggressive wars as staff members of Western armies,

interrogating prisoners. On a number of occasions Stuart himself was called to the White House to answer inquiries by American presidents Wilson and Roosevelt. While he was ambassador, he wrote many detailed investigative and analytical situation reports, serving the government directly. In his late years, recalling the experiences of his life, he said: "I realize…how many of my significant choices have been made in the face of outer restraints and inner reluctance. It seems that once and again a force not my own has urged me forward to experiences and adventures that I did not seek or anticipate."[17]

Because missionaries were familiar with the situations in the countries in which they resided, they would offer some suggestions that were practicable, but these were not accepted either because they were harmful to the practical interests of their countries or because they were not acceptable to the mainstream of political power. For example, from early on missionaries urged the abandonment of the unequal treaties, but this encountered scorn in military, political, and commercial circles. During the late phases of the Chinese Civil War, Stuart advocated recognizing the new political authority that was about to be established; however, as noted above, this suggestion was offered from the perspective of American interests, rather than being his intent as a missionary. Looking back sixty years later, this suggestion was reasonable and practical, but not only was it not accepted, it also caused him to be suspected of sympathizing with the Communists.

Today enormous changes have come about both in the world situation and in the distribution of believers. The colonial system has collapsed, the ex-colonial nations have become independent, and we are now in an era of increasing unification economically and increasing

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17 *Fifty Years in China*, 9-10.

pluralization in terms of regional cultures. "The whole world has already entered an era of mutual dependence… and the only practicable route to handling international relations in this new age is trust and cooperation."[18] The distribution of Christianity in the world has experienced a dramatic change: there are now more believers in the southern hemisphere than in the northern. Evangelical Christian groups even call for "evangelizing the West." In 1996, Korea had more than 4,400 missionaries in 138 countries and regions around the world. We can foresee that the colonial system of "mission sending" has already become a thing of the past, and what has replaced it is exchange and cooperation. Missionaries can no longer rely on the protection and special privileges of their nations, and must learn an attitude of equality in their interactions with local people, must cooperate with local governments, and must respect local cultures.

Missionaries saw their work as evangelism, but they actually promoted cultural exchange between China and the West.

In the process of cultural exchange between China and the West in the modern era, missionaries played a very important role. Most of the early Westerners in China were soldiers, merchants, or missionaries. Soldiers and merchants were rarely involved in cultural dissemination, so in this regard missionaries were the main force. With the dawning of the twentieth century, an increasing number of people came to China, and roles became ever more

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18 Hu Jintao, *Xiwang Meiguo jinkuai chengren Zhongguo shichang jingji diwei* [We hope America will soon recognize the economic status of China's market], http://www.zaobao.com/cninvest/page3/cninvest_zong091118b.shtml.

clearly demarcated; there were more and more specialists, but missionaries were still an important medium of cultural exchange. Even at Yanjing University, opened in 1919, the core of the staff was composed of missionaries and Chinese church personnel.

Missionaries promoted Western studies in the East. The primary mission of missionaries was evangelism. Within the church, education, medicine, sports, publishing, and social work were all seen as vehicles for evangelism and a part of the work of the church. For a long time, Stuart's mission as a missionary was the running of Yanjing University; in other words, American mission agencies sent him to run Yanjing University in order to evangelize. On a number of occasions, mission agencies threatened that if he did not evangelize, they would not give money. However, in the modern period, because China was far behind the West technically and culturally, this aspect of the church's work was in reality the dissemination of advanced Western culture. Furthermore, in order that they might be more effective in evangelism, some missionaries were given excellent education and training in the West, so they brought with them many advanced cultural forms, technical equipment, and arts, and these often served a cutting edge role in modern China, opening the eyes of intellectuals in China and providing a window from which to observe and a source of dissemination to Chinese people who had never had reason to set foot in the West. The Christian colleges, including Yanjing University, were all new-style modern universities in their approaches to education, organizational structure, management style, curriculum, teaching methods, and so forth.

Missionaries also facilitated the spread of Chinese civilization to the West. In order to ensure that their countries understood them and gave more support, many missionaries tirelessly introduced China to their

countries. In this process, Chinese culture was gradually exported to the West. The English missionary James Legge, with the help of the Chinese scholar Wang Tao, spent twenty-five years translating important Chinese classics into English one by one and introducing them to the West. To this day these are standard translations in the West. In 1848 American missionary Samuel Wells Williams published *The Middle Kingdom*, which was used in American universities for a century in Chinese history courses. There were many publications put out by missionaries, and for a long period the letters and reports sent back to their countries by missionaries were both reliable and numerous. These materials not only helped Western countries understand China at that time, but remain precious materials for the study of China. The aim of the Yenching-Harvard Institute was the promotion and preservation of Chinese culture, and in the twenty years after its establishment it edited and published sixty-four indexes (in eighty-one volumes) of Chinese ancient works, covering the classics, histories, and philosophy, as well as Buddhist and Taoist classics, poetry, biographies, and fiction. To this day these indexes are important reference tools for the world's Sinological research. The Yenching-Harvard Institute also supported American scholars who came to China for study and research, including John King Fairbanks, who wrote many research works on China and also translated a number of Chinese books into English. In the process of promoting Chinese culture, such scholars also became influential Sinologists and China experts, became the foundation for American Sinology, and served in all the renowned universities in America.

Stuart's life of acclaim and censure, achievements and mistakes, glory and bitterness, serves as a portrait of Christian missionaries in modern China, and also a necessary outcome of the Christian mission movement in

China. It is precisely in this typicality that Stuart's long-term historical significance lies.

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What is Needed for Church-Run Social Service in China

LIN MANHONG

Since ancient times, Chinese people have always been Good Samaritans. Though a whole range of public charities also operated in traditional Chinese society, a philanthropist once pointed out that traditional Chinese charities were only quasi-public welfare undertakings. Public charities—philanthropic organizations—in the strict sense of the term, emerged in modern times with the coming of missionaries and foreign capital to China.[1]

No matter what its subjective motivation, in objective terms, Christianity in modern China did in fact engage in and develop a variety of philanthropies that contributed to the improvement and development of Chinese society in their time. The study of this era of public welfare history has very positive significance and can help us to gain a more complete knowledge of the role and function of Christianity in modern China. However, with regard to Christianity in China today, it may be more significant in practical terms to show concern for and reflect on how present-day Christian organizations, as part of the Third Sector, should develop their philanthropic work to the benefit of society, and further, to make their due contribution to the sustainability of China's economy and to building a harmonious society.

For Chinese Christianity to develop social welfare services naturally requires that a whole range of conditions be present. Based on my preliminary reflections on the

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1 "A Chat with Cui Naifu on Philanthropy in China," *The Philanthropy Times*, Jan. 24, 2004.

matter, I would like to posit three essential requirements for the development of Chinese Christian philanthropy.

Adjust theological thinking, so that the public spirit of gratitude and giving back to the community may be spread throughout the church.

Although there have been charities in the strict sense of the term throughout recent times, present-day Chinese charitable enterprises basically began in the 1980s.[2] Since the 1980s, charities in Chinese society have been maturing; for example, as of the end of 2007, there were 212,000 social organizations nationwide; of these, 174,000 were civil non-commercial organizations. There were 1340 foundations; of these, 904 were public offering foundations and 436 were non-public offering foundations.[3] Compared with developed countries, however, there is still a huge way to go. Premier Wen Jiabao said on a visit to the U.S. that it would take at least one hundred years for China's economy to reach the level of that of the U.S. And when Mr. Cui Naifu, former Minister of Civil Affairs and first head of the China Charity Federation, was asked how far the federation had to go to catch up with the developed nations of the U.S. and Europe, his response was, at least fifty years. Some people believe that his answer was overly optimistic.[4] From this it can be seen that China's public welfare organizations are still rather backward.[5]

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2 "Christianity and Philanthropy: First Symposium on Religion and Philanthropy Held in Beijing," *Chinese Religion* No. 7 (2007): 31.

3 "2007 Report on Development Statistics for Civil and Government Enterprises," see website of the Ministry of Civil Affairs www.mca.gov.cn .

4 See footnote 1.

5 Huang Dan and Yao Jianjian, "On the strategic developmental path for Chinese Charities," *Social Science* No. 8 (2003).

Why are charities in Western societies and even in some underdeveloped Third World countries able to develop? Scholars who study charitable organizations point out that the development of public welfare institutions is related to the Christian sense of gratitude. This is a concept of giving back to society, a grateful attitude. Public welfare organizations are founded on this value concept among the whole people, the concept of giving back to society.[6] This is a concept that was not prominent in traditional Chinese society. In the traditional Chinese way of thinking, there is the idea of repaying debts of gratitude, but that is based on moral precepts centered on loyalty and filial piety. The concept includes things like loyalty to country and repaying one's parents for one's upbringing, and seldom touches on giving back to society.

This may be related to what the famous sociologist and anthropologist Fei Xiaotong (1910-2005) called traditional Chinese society's "differential mode of association." Fei Xiaotong held that a society with a differential mode of association, was centered on the "self" (己 *ji*) with the stress on personal relationships. These relationships are like the ripples that spread out from a stone cast into the water: at the center are individual "selves." The "self's" closest relationships are with immediate family, compatriots, relatives, and friends. Working outwards, we can perhaps add relatives of relatives, friends of friends, and finally at the farthest point, strangers. In this differential mode of association arrangement, the relationship between the "stranger" and the "self" is distant indeed, shallow, or even non-existent.[7]

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6 See footnote 1.

7 Fei Xiaotong, *Xiangtu Zhongguo* (From the soil), Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 2006, 23, 30.

In traditional Chinese society founded on such an arrangement, love for strangers is lacking because interpersonal affections are completely defined by the distance of the relation to oneself. The self can be completely indifferent to an abstract stranger with no relationship to itself. Thus the old saying: everyone sweeps the snow in front of their own door and ignores the frost on their neighbor's roof. People generally find it very difficult to summon love or gratitude toward strangers. And so the mentality to give back to a society made up in the main of strangers is rather weak. Fei Xiaotong felt that it would be difficult to discover a general concept of ethics and ethical conduct based on the close or distant relationship of the object of that behavior to oneself in a society arranged according to the differential mode of association. Moreover, one would have different ethical expectations of people with whom one had different relationships. Thus, no universal standards function, because a person (the object) and that person's relationship with the self must be clarified first, before one can decide which standard to apply.[8] This may be one of the main reasons why traditional Chinese society lacked a modern public spirit, for public spirit seeks the full benefit of society—and the object of this full benefit is the public, including the unspecified majority.

Fei Xiaotong believed that the Christian spirit of undifferentiated love was something the Chinese should esteem. Mr. Cui Naifu feels that given the Chinese national essence, it is not necessary to advocate a religious spirit, but that it is urgent that the idea of giving back to society be established; it is nourishment that modern social civilization cannot do without.[9] If, however, within

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8 Ibid., 23.

9 See note 1.

Christianity Christians wish to esteem Christ's spirit of universal love, that is entirely reasonable and permissible. We can say that churches throughout China frequently preach the principle of Christ's love, and so Christians in China do not lack instruction in Christ's universal love, but the number of those who engage in the practice of public welfare as an embodiment of the spirit of universal love is very small indeed. This demonstrates that in the church too there is still a relative lack of the public spirit of gratitude and of giving back to society. An adjustment in theology would be helpful in bringing about a return to public spirit.

Due to the influence of fundamentalist theology 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 is rather conservative and their moral ideas rather narrow. Theirs is an ethics centered on personal salvation, with the hope of the life to come as its goal. This is my own, rather bold, characterization. Guided by this ethics, many Christians think that personal salvation—the soul going to heaven, and proselytizing to convert people in order to gain a greater reward in heaven—are the Christian's greatest mission in this life. Everything else—work, life, and helping others—should all revolve around this goal; otherwise, what one does is just work made of hay and straw. Though there are some Christians who come to the help of strangers, and some churches that have charity projects, these are not founded in a desire to give back to society, but in hopes of bringing those they help into the church.

I am not saying that Christian charity cannot have this sort of goal. Preaching the gospel is ever a Christian responsibility that has been entrusted to us; but the question is, what is the Christian's true mission? And how should the Christian understand the gospel? Is the goal of

doing good simply to draw people into the church? And if our do-gooding does not bring people into the church, should we continue to do good? What should the real motive for doing good be?

To be a Christian is actually to be Jesus' disciple, and to be a disciple means to identify with this man Jesus and his mission. When Jesus was on earth, he preached the Sermon on the Mount, and talked about eternal life with Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman; but he also he healed many people suffering from all sorts of diseases, and he fed the hungry. All these were part of Jesus' mission on earth, and he bequeathed them to us. He wanted Christians to continue to be engaged and strive for them, to persevere unremittingly in putting this trust into effect. The Incarnate Christ left a model for his followers: he did not seek his own benefit; his own personal salvation was not his goal; rather he was willing to sacrifice his life for the salvation of all. While he was preaching the message of the Kingdom of God and bringing people the hope of the life to come, he was also meeting the needs of the poor, the sick, and the hungry in this life. Thus, the Gospel of Jesus Christ includes the two-fold salvation of the human soul and the body. The fact that Jesus served people is in itself a part of the gospel. Therefore, Christians cannot make serving others and benefitting society into mere tactics for preaching the gospel; these are in themselves an integral part of Christ's gospel.

Furthermore, the spread of Jesus' gospel cannot by any means be completed by Jesus alone, he needs the unremitting effort of disciples through the ages. This is to show that Christians must be co-workers with God and that God hopes that people will be God's co-workers. If the church can continue to pass on this kind of message, then there is no fear that Christians will lack the motivation to do good and be involved in public welfare organizations.

In this way, not only will we be able to fulfill the vision "all for the gospel," we will also be able to gradually extend the public spirit within the church. At the same time, because people must be co-workers with God, Christians must not only be thankful to God, or simply be thankful to other Christians, they must also thank the strangers in society, for they may also be God's co-workers in their own different ways. If Christians have this kind of awareness, the idea of giving back to society, the sense of gratitude, will definitely not be lacking in the church. With this value concept of giving back to society, there should be great potential for initiating public welfare projects.

Expand the space for the church to engage in public welfare as part of the Third Sector.

American scholar T. Levitt was the first to use the idea of the "Third Sector." In the past the only distinction made among social organizations was whether they were public or private. Levitt says this distinction is too crude, because it ignores a large group of social organizations located between the government and private enterprises that are engaged in what these two groups "are not willing to do, do poorly, or do irregularly." He calls such organizations the Third Sector.[10] In other words, the Third Sector refers to non-governmental, not-for-profit, civil organizations, also known as the third force. According to this definition, the church and all religious groups should be classified as Third Sector.

Chinese intellectuals began to pay attention to the issue of the Third Sector beginning in 1995 when the World Conference on Women was held in Beijing.

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10 Wang Shaoguang, *Enlightenment of the American Progressive Era*, Zhongguo caizheng chubanshe, 2002, 115.

Through study of the Third Sector and through "non-governmental organization forums," academics and other Chinese gradually recognized that many things that government should do, could be done by social forces. Scholars pointed out that in the past, in the eyes of the common people, public welfare such as "caring for the vulnerable, aid to the poor and those in difficulty, and environmental protection" were matters for the Party, the government, and the state. Individuals and society were powerless, neither were they allowed to do these things. The formation of associations among the people had not only been clearly forbidden by the state, even ordinary citizens paled at the thought, avoiding such involvement like the plague. In thousands of years of Chinese history, there is no lack of examples of civil forces resisting, rebelling, and even overthrowing dynasties; the court was constantly oppressing and putting down civil forces.[11] Therefore, power outside the government has long been seen by people as a bad thing.

Perhaps for the same sort of reason, for quite a long period of time, it has not been easy for some charity-conscious churches to think of engaging in social service projects. Some responses on the subject received by *Tian Feng*, the church monthly, from churches and individual Christians, called for the elimination of bias, saying that they should be allowed equal opportunity to become involved in social service.

Christianity has done a great deal of charitable work in contemporary China, but the motive behind it has often been held suspect. Of course we cannot just look at the results and not at the motivation, for then we would be guilty of pure utilitarianism, ignoring the moral behavior

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11 Wang Jianqin, *The Third Sector—zhongguo hou shichang jingji lun*, Zhongguo zhengfadaxue chubanshe, 2002, 40, 39.

of the person. But as far as charity and public welfare are concerned, if we simply inquire into motivation, we may fall into what philanthropists term "mistakes." Mr. Cui Naifu says that we always think "there is no unconditional love in the world," or "No free lunch"; "Manna doesn't fall from the skies." So when others contribute funds, or do volunteer work, when they become volunteers, we are instinctively suspicious and we always question their motives and goals. Cui believes that engaging in public welfare work, especially fundraising and soliciting contributions is all good, even if it only causes people to think about contributing. People's motives should not be questioned; otherwise a lot of international aid would be blocked. He even thinks that this blind questioning of motive reflects an out-of-date consciousness that will put obstacles in the way of developing China's public welfare enterprises.[12]

Today, the Chinese Church, a church that loves country and loves church, should not be burdened by the "motive question" if it wants to engage in social service work. And not only should it not be troubled by this, but church groups should be given greater space in which to do non-governmental, not-for-profit Third Sector social service. Currently, charitable activities centered around disaster relief, assistance for education, the disabled, the ill, and orphans and widows have become the main work of religious social service bodies, including the church. However, religious circles have a fine tradition and great potential in the areas of environmental protection and culture, education, and health. Religious circles are filled with enthusiasm, but this potential has not yet been tapped.[13] So there has been a call from some scholars

12 See note 1.
13 See note 2.

who say that the role of religious groups is not simply to solve problems for the government or remedy defects, nor is it simply to share the work and cooperate with the First and Second Sectors, but rather to become one means by which social values become reality. It is entirely possible for religious concern for and service to society to include poverty elimination, crime prevention, anti-drug and alcohol work, assistance to the vulnerable, providing medical and health assistance, developing culture and education, and so on. Religion should return to public social space and social life, becoming a social pillar equally as important as those of government and business.[14]

If the church is to expand its own space as part of the Third Sector engaged in public welfare, there must be effort by the church, calls from scholars, community acceptance, and government support.

Strengthen the church's self-construction in developing philanthropy.

To develop public welfare work, the church must work harder on many fronts, such as self-construction. To do this, I feel that we can begin with the following three areas:

Personnel training for public welfare work

Public service work relies on volunteerism and loving hearts, but it is not purely a moral undertaking. Public service is a product of the social division of labor, of constant development of the social enterprise. In order to

14 Gao Shining, "The function of religion in modern society in light of the Wenchuan earthquake," *Chinese Religion* No. 6 (2008): 53.

develop a cause or project, we must rely on a great number of specialized personnel. Such human resources must not only have the will for love and empathy, they must be dedicated and happy to help others, they must have analytical, organizational, and marketing skills, etc. They must discern and analyze well what sort of aid projects are needed by society, and they must have the capacity to plan concrete public service projects, project implementation, and project management.

Those involved in public service must know how to solicit contributions and arrange contributions in money and in kind appropriately and with a high degree of effectiveness; at the same time, they must have vision and a forward-looking position with regard to the public service they engage in. To achieve these things, the church cannot rely solely on a group of enthusiastic retired Christians; this is far from adequate. The church must train a team of professionals who are knowledgeable about public service and enthusiastic about carrying it out.

Build up needed institutions, improve organization, and enhance public trust

The regulatory problems found in civil charities and public organizations have always been problems of oversight, and China is no exception. In some Chinese civil organizations, there is also "public corruption," "public inefficiency," and "public alienation."[15] For the most part these are due to a lack of good institutions to guide and regulate the duties, rights, and obligations of the staff of civil public service organizations. Nor are there oversight mechanisms for their leadership. This hugely impacts the

15 Shen Yaping, "Analyzing Ethical Standards of Chinese Civil Society Organizations," *Theory and Modernization*, September (2006): 82.

public trust for some civil public service organizations. I have heard that some churches hesitated to develop public service projects because they feared that once they did, problems such as those described above would erupt. There is certainly corruption in the church and sometimes this is even more hidden from view, because the church's oversight mechanism is imperfect. Some people are against too detailed a system, because they feel that divine oversight is enough, but it is always the case that facts are far from wishes. Therefore, for the church to develop public service work it must depend on institutions and on improving organization building, including monitoring mechanisms of all types.

Organize study of public welfare and undertake exchange activities

The church already has a rather long history of engagement in public service in contemporary China, though there have been interruptions. The history of Christian public service in China should have much that is worthwhile in informing development of social service work today. Thus we need to organize research and study. At the same time, we need to understand and familiarize ourselves with research that already exists. Of course, previous Christian welfare work was done in times very different from our own. So, to develop our welfare work well, we also need to undertake industry-wide research and study of current domestic and foreign, church and secular successful experience in running welfare work. Such study, research, and exchanges will aid Christianity in China in developing contemporary welfare work better.

Conclusion

Just as Chinese welfare work today is still in its initial stages, for Chinese Christianity to develop welfare work will naturally be a heavy load and a long road, needing support both from within the church and from outside it. Theological readjustment and improved self-construction is needed in the church; at the same time the church needs more space and support from government and society.

This is the golden age for the development of Christianity in China. The church should take the opportunity of the prevailing east wind— "giving scope to the positive role of religions and religious believers in economic and social development."* It should equip itself to bear witness to Christ through active engagement in society and in serving people, pouring out its strength in developing welfare work for the betterment of society and as a means to building a harmonious society.

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* Quote from the Work Report presented by Chinese President Hu Jintao at the 17th Party Congress in October 2007.

Y.T. Wu's Contextual Theological Method

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In the first half of the twentieth century, a group of very influential church leaders, theologians, and Christian thinkers emerged as a force in Chinese Christianity. They made their own contributions to the development of Christianity in China and each has a place in Chinese Church history and in the history of Chinese Christian thought. They were numerous as the stars in the sky: T.C. Chao (Zhao Zichen), Xie Fuya (N.Z. Zia), Wu Leichuan, Y.T. Wu (Wu Yaozong), Xu Baoqian, Cheng Jingyi, Liu Tingfang (T.T. Lew), Wang Zhixin, Wei Zhuomin, Zhang Yijing, and Jia Yuming, among others. The most controversial figure among them, due to his special relationship with the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, along with what commentators call the question of his stance, was Y.T. Wu. He was called both "a prophet of Chinese Christianity," and "an opportunist," as well as a "non-believer"; some even believed his thinking was colored by heresy or paganism. Such criticism, however, always arose from misunderstandings. Ng Lee-ming noted that of all the outstanding figures of modern Chinese Christianity, Y.T. Wu may be the one who aroused the most controversy, criticized by some because of his role in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. What we can be sure of, though, is that a great deal of the criticism and censure aimed at Y.T. Wu rests on the assumption of the mutual incompatibility of Communism and Christianity. Through all the intervening years right up to the present, it seems that no one has ever tried to understand Y.T. Wu's position.

And in fact, Ng states, many contemporary Chinese

Christian works have an extremely limited understanding of Y.T. Wu. Considering that Wu was the most important Christian leader in new China, most people do not have adequate knowledge or understanding of the man. A situation has arisen in which he has become the object either of a kind of dogmatic criticism or a groundless sympathy, both extremely unfortunate. Additionally, Wu's view of the role Christianity should play in a rapidly changing society cannot be ignored.[1]

Ng Lee-ming published his observation in the 1980s, over twenty years ago. Some subsequent studies published in Hong Kong and Taiwan also focused on Wu's thinking; for example, Liang Jialin's *Three Treatises on Y.T. Wu,* Xie Longyi's *A Biography of Y.T. Wu and Study of his Thought, etc*. These studies did not simply proceed to consider Wu's politics or his role in Three-Self, but attempted to study Wu's Christian thinking. Still, errors persisted in such works. Y.T. Wu was indeed the object of much misunderstanding, not only due to bias, but also because his critics did not make an objective and fair assessment of his Christian thinking and instead based their assessments of Wu on their own categories.

In a 1947 response to his Canadian friend Jim Endicott (1898-1993), who asked how he combined Christian faith with his confidence in the Chinese Communist Party and its program for ruling the country, Wu said: "As for Christianity vs. Communism, my experience is this: I have not, like you, been a Christian since childhood. I entered the church as an adult. So I do not have that emotional attachment that comes from learning lessons and behavior in the church as a child. I can without the least

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1 See Ng Lee-ming, *Christianity and a Changing Chinese Society* (Hong Kong: Chinese Christian Literature Society, 1990), 73-74.

difficulty choose those eternal and universal truths that are appropriate to our times."[2] On this basis, Liang Jialin felt that from the first, Y.T. Wu never planned to accept Christianity whole-heartedly; what he accepted were what he identified as "universal truths" in the Western Christian tradition, using what was "appropriate to our times" as his criteria by which to evaluate those universal truths.[3]

Because Y.T. Wu was not born into a Christian family, and did not study in a church-run school, he did not have that first-impression-is-strongest childhood knowledge in his acceptance of Christianity. He only began to know Christianity through taking part in YMCA activities. Later, reading the Sermon on the Mount, and being moved by the person of Jesus, he determined to follow Jesus. Still later, he decided to become a Christian at a revival of Dr. Eddy's. It took him eight years to make this decision (1911-1918). During these eight years, he was no passive recipient but took the initiative in his seeking; his was a rational choice, not a case of unquestioning acceptance based on an emotional response.

According to my understanding, quite unlike what some other scholars have written, Y.T. Wu had no intention of establishing a new religion. The aim of his theological reflection was to interpret Christianity in a way suited to the context of his time. Although in reality he opposed liberalism, Wu was a theological liberal. Adhering to a liberal standpoint, his efforts were concentrated on making a new interpretation of Christian faith in the context of China at the time. That is to say that what he did was the work of contextualization. This essay is an attempt to discuss Y.T. Wu's method of theological contextualization.

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2 See *Remembering Mr. Wu Yaozong* (Shanghai: TSPM/CCC, 1982), 14.

3 Liang Jialin, *Three Treatises on Y.T. Wu* (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 1996), 78.

Sources of Y.T. Wu's Theological Thinking

Prior to discussing Wu's method of theological contextualization, let us first consider the sources of his theological reflection. Major sources include:

The Fellowship of Reconciliation: The theology of reconciliation was a pacifist trend with a Christian background that emerged around World War I, advocating love as the highest principle by which to treat persons and events, and opposed to military might as a method for solving social contradictions and conflicts. Thus, in a broad sense, reconciliation meant applying Jesus' gospel of love to every aspect of life. In this sense, every Christian can to a greater or lesser extent have a reconciling view. Dr. Henry T. Hodgkin founded the organization that demonstrates reconciliation, the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), in 1914 at the start of World War I. The major tenets of the FOR are: (1) God is the Father of all humankind; his will, revealed in Jesus Christ, is universal love, therefore Christ's gospel contains the belief that good will triumph over evil; (2) The cross reveals God's method of dealing with those who do evil; therefore Christians should follow the way of the cross; (3) Since war uses evil to overcome evil, the use of war is a denial of the way of the cross; (4) the church too should follow the way of the cross and oppose any form of war. A main tenet of reconciliation is the affirmation of human worth and human dignity. Thus, besides a negative opposition to war, FOR also advocates positive action to work for reconciliation and harmony among races, nations, and classes in bringing about world peace. Y.T. Wu was deeply affected by reconciliation and by the nonviolence of Gandhi; he was for a time the leader of the FOR in China.

But later because of changes in China's domestic situation, especially the full-blown outbreak of the War of Resistance against Japan in 1937, he found that reconciliation was not a practical possibility and gradually abandoned it.

The Social Gospel: Most missionaries who came to China in the nineteenth century had been influenced by pietism and the U.S. evangelical movement, a movement that emphasized the corruption of the world, personal salvation, and the hope of eternal life. In the view of these missionaries, Christianity had no great responsibility toward society. But as the nineteenth century became the twentieth century, quite a few of the missionaries coming to China had been influenced by the American social gospel, and felt that the gospel should have direct significance for people's physical well being as well as for their souls. The social gospel advocated Christian involvement in the work of social reform, putting greatest effort into education. It proposed to change people's hearts through education, and thereby, to change society.

Y.T. Wu's decision to finally embrace Christianity was linked to his close relationship with the American revivalist Sherwood Eddy. At the time, Eddy's revivals were welcomed by national-salvation-minded young Chinese intellectuals. Eddy himself acknowledged the social gospel advocate Walter Rauschenbusch, who stressed the social significance of the gospel, as an influence. Eddy once said that [our] ministry is not concerned simply with winning or changing individuals, but with the spiritualization of the whole of life.

Rauschenbusch's social gospel was founded on the doctrine of the "Reign of God." In his explanation, God's Reign includes not only religious life, but economic, social, and political life. And God's Reign will be realized when all human issues are reasonably resolved under the rule of

the spirit of Christ; that is to say, the Christianization of the whole social order. Rauschenbusch differentiated between "prophetic religion" and "priestly religion." The prophets transmit God's word and call people to repentance; their goal is to establish love, cooperation, and justice, and a social order that accords to God's will. They are little concerned with issues of personal salvation but rather with issues of the salvation of a whole society or a whole people. Thus, prophets are frequently religious reformers who emphasize social action. Priests are different; the priestly model of a religious leader is one who takes religion as a profession. Priests emphasize established rules and rites, and pay little attention to real social issues.

Social gospel thinking had a great impact on Y.T. Wu. We could say that the social gospel idea of "God's Reign," along with the social gospel concept of care for society were the starting points of Y.T. Wu's theology and where its center lay. No matter how his theological reflection changed direction, these two remained its focal point and theoretical basis for action. Wu was a Christian thinker and activist with a prophetic cast of mind; his entire life was a search for how to effectively use Christian truth to rebuild Chinese society. It is precisely in this sense that it is no exaggeration for us to call him a prophet of the Chinese Church.

Western Liberal Theology: Y.T. Wu spent two periods in the U.S. (1924-1927; 1936-1937), studying theology and philosophy at Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University in New York City. By the late 1930s, the theological debate between "fundamentalism" and "modernism" was nearing its end. Theological liberalism had a relatively broad influence and Union Theological Seminary was the bastion of liberal theology. Wu later recalled that he had studied theology and

philosophy in the U. S. for over three years and gained a rough outline of all aspects of Christian thought.

> The seminary where I studied was thought at the time to be the most progressive school. Twenty years before there had been a fierce debate in the U.S. between the 'modernists' and the 'fundamentalists.' The so-called fundamentalists focused on faith and were not concerned about reason; they thought every word in the Bible had been revealed by God. The so-called modernists advocated a scientific approach and historical method, critiquing and scrutinizing traditional Christian faith. The school where I studied theology belonged to the 'modernists.'[4]

The stress liberal theology placed on science, reason, and the historical method are evident in Y.T. Wu's theological reflection.

Benedict de Spinoza: In his "Wu Yaozong and the Philosophy of Spinoza," Xie Fuya (N.Z. Zia),[5] mentions a personal conversation he had with Wu in Shanghai in December 1948. He says that during that conversation, Wu mentioned that he had recently become extremely interested in the philosophy and theology of the Western thinker, Spinoza (1632-1677). Spinoza was a seventeenth century Dutch Jewish philosopher, the main representative of modern Western rationalism and pantheism. The distinctive characteristic of Spinoza's philosophy was non-dualism, the non-separation of mind and body (neutral monism). God had two attributes: material and spiritual—

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4 Y.T. Wu, "Christianity and Materialism—a Christian's Confession," which originally appeared in *University Monthly*, July, 1947.

5 Xie Fuya, *Xie Fuya's Later Writings in Christian Thought* (Hong Kong: CCLC, 1986).

the two are parallel and identical. His view of God was pantheistic, but if pantheism were to be pushed a step further, it would become atheism.

Spinoza's pantheism was not rationalism, nor was it atheism, for though he said that God was Nature and Nature God, his concept of Nature was not the same concept we have of Nature today. Because he was fearful that others would misunderstand his thinking in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (A Theologico-Political Treatise, 1670), he added a special note explaining his concept of Nature, asking his readers to please note that what he called "Nature," refers not only to the material and its state, but to that unlimited something outside the material.[6] Later in a letter to a friend he went further, saying that

> the view of God and Nature I have adopted is completely different from that ordinarily held by late period Christians, because I propose that God is the inner determining system of which everything is a part and not an external reason. I say that everything is in God; everything lives in and moves in God. What I am proposing here is perhaps similar to St. Paul and all ancient philosophers, even though different in method; but some think that my goal … is to say that God and Nature are one—the latter word they understand as matter with form—but they are wrong, that is not my meaning.[7]

Spinoza's intense stress on the immanence of God

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6 Spinoza, *A Theologico-Political Treatise*, tr. Wen Xizeng (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1963), 91.

7 Spinoza, *Collected Letters of Spinoza*, tr Hong Handing (Beijing: Commercial Press, 1996), 283.

allowed Y.T. Wu to see the happy possibility of reconciling Christianity and materialism. Thus, in the late 1940s, it was entirely natural that he should be enamored of Spinoza's philosophy and theology. It can be said that Y.T. Wu's efforts in the late 1940s to reconcile Christianity and materialism are inseparably entwined with influence of Spinoza's pantheistic thought.

Christian Realism: Christian realism is linked with Reinhold Niebuhr. In 1927, Niebuhr published *Does Civilization Need Religion?*, a book which pays little attention to the Christian pastoral mission, being more concerned with effective Christian witness in the world. Though this work contains many idealized hypotheses of the Christian social gospel, Niebuhr sees Christian faith as a practical source for solving the problems of a modern industrial society. He even introduces Marxism into his Christian realism, not simply as a social science, but as a social movement, a social movement that can arouse some sort of near fanatic "religious zealotry," and thereby move the masses to struggle for social justice. But some years later, he broke away from Marxist influence. In *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (1935), Niebuhr loudly proclaimed that the distinctive feature of Christian realism was to oppose both liberalism and orthodoxy in theology. To effectively deal with the complex problems of social conflicts, Niebuhr saw the importance of establishing a link between political involvement in struggles for justice and peace and the "Law of Love," and through this he promoted human selflessness and social justice. Niebuhr was greatly concerned with the practical application of Christian faith; his most fundamental goal was to "reveal the link between Christian faith and modern problems." Niebuhr was not an ivory tower theologian, but an activist Christian. He brought the light of theology to bear on every kind of social category, critiquing modern social life from

the standpoint of Christian faith. He wanted to express the idea that Christian faith could provide meaning to life. He strove to establish a correlation between Christianity and the world.

Christian realism recognizes that contextualization is the inner character of all theology. In this sense, so-called contextualization is in fact a kind of sense of reality. If this sort of sense of reality leads Christians to adopt a realistic attitude in treating social issues, this is Christian realism. This is what distinguishes Christian realism and Christian liberalism. The basic attitude of Christian realism toward contextualization is one of being oriented toward reality while using transcendence to guide reality. This is why Y.T. Wu maintained a theological liberalism but criticized liberalism in practice.

Nurture from traditional Chinese culture: Not only was Y.T. Wu quite well versed in Western theology and philosophy, he had a profound grounding in traditional Chinese culture, and this was also an important source of his thinking. Professor Wang Weifan has said that Y.T. Wu "not only received a Western theological education, he had a solid foundation in traditional Chinese culture."[8] As a Chinese Christian thinker, Wu was definitely nourished by traditional Chinese culture. The elementary education in Chinese classics such as the *Three Character Classic* he had received as a boy, had given him a fairly optimistic view of human nature. His understanding of sin was quite unique, and the Confucian view of the cosmos also had a great influence on his view of God.

Y.T. Wu believed that though traditional Confucian thought was in essence humanism, and not a religion,

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8 Wang Weifan, *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources* (Nanjing: NJUTS Press, 1997), 125.

there were many religious elements in its view of the cosmos. The Confucian view of the cosmos could (just as religion) give one the sense that there was in the universe a supporting power that was the standard for one's life. And this power, which brought into being and maintained the universe, Wu saw as God.[9]

The teachings of Jesus and the prophetic spirit: Finally, and most importantly, it could be said that the teachings of Jesus and the prophetic spirit run through his whole theology. These are the sources for his theological thinking and the real motive force for his social action. Y.T. Wu's acceptance of Christianity is closely linked to the personality of Jesus that he saw in the Sermon on the Mount. He described what he gained from his first reading of the Sermon on the Mount this way:

> Eleven years ago at the home of an American friend, I read Matthew chapters 5, 6, and 7—what is commonly called the Sermon on the Mount—and suddenly there was a great light within me, and I was beside myself with joy and hardly knew what I was doing, my heart was filled with an inexpressible happiness, and I felt that what I had been searching for so painfully for over a decade, but in vain, was revealed to me in its entirety in those three chapters. As for what is was that was revealed, I had no time then to analyze it. I simply felt that what was written in those three chapters, every sentence of it, had authority, and every word pierced to the very depths of my heart. At the same time, I seemed to make out dimly between the lines a speaker: his appearance was dignified and kindly, courageous yet silent; his countenance was lit by love. I was always an emotional person; here our two personalities experienced such a warm encounter,

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9 See Wu Yaozong, *No One Has Seen God* (YMCA Press, 1950), 8, 21.

> and I could not help the hot tears—remorse for the past, present comfort, future hope all welled up in that instant and I was overcome with admiration, exclaiming to that radiant image: 'Lord, you are my Savior!'

From this we can see that it was the personality of Jesus Christ that moved Y.T. Wu to accept Christ. As he later said, "I was his (Jesus') captive; I could not escape." Of course, it was not only Jesus' personality that Y.T. Wu saw in the Sermon on the Mount. He found at the same time "what I had been searching for so painfully but in vain for over a decade." It was an understanding of life and the universe. We can say that the Sermon on the Mount is the center of Y.T. Wu's understanding of Christianity.

Wu once said:

> Our standpoint on reforming society is a Christian standpoint—to put it a little more appropriately, it is a Jesus-ism standpoint. Jesus did not engage in idle talk about mysticism, but with the resolve to do what is necessary to bring about the Kingdom. Jesus focuses on human beings: human worth, human meaning, human possibility. This is a huge and crucial difference between Jesus-ism and other isms. But this is only on the surface. The most fundamental difference between Jesus-ism and other isms lies not in their view of human life, but in their understanding of the cosmos. In his *Does Civilization Need Religion?* Niebuhr writes: "The contribution of religion to the task of an ethical reconstruction of society is its reverence for human personality and its aid in creating the type of personality which deserves reverence. Men cannot create a society if they do not believe in each other. They cannot believe in each other if they cannot see the potential in the real facts of human nature. And they cannot have the

> faith which discovers potentialities if they cannot interpret human nature in light of a universe which is perfecting and not destroying personal values." This is exactly right. This is the substance of the social gospel.[10]

Jesus' teachings contain the true essence of love, while the spirit of the prophets is to champion justice. In Wu's thinking, love and justice are not two separate entities, but rather two sides of the same coin.

Beginnings of Christian Reflection on Contextualization

In 1938, the Chinese war of resistance against the Japanese entered its second year. In that year, Y.T. Wu published a small book in Hong Kong, *Religious Faith in an Age of Decision* (Da shidai de zongjiao xinyang 大时代的宗教信仰). In this little book, he gave this definition for the (Chinese) title: "The July 7 Marco Polo Bridge Incident and the August 13 (1937) Battle of Shanghai led to the outbreak of total war. This was unprecedented in Chinese history; due to the current stage of the world situation, this has also constituted China's era of decision. There is one other reason it has become so, and that is because the current war is key to the very survival of the Chinese people." Thus, he is making the national salvation project the mark of this era. This being the case, all of Y.T. Wu's theological reflection prior to the establishment of new China is theological reflection during this era of decision, the war years, and its fundamental distinctive characteristic is contextualization.

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10 Wu Yaozong, "The Meaning of the Social Gospel," in *The Social Gospel*, 21-22. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: "Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

The 1926 *China Christian Year Book* carried an essay by its editor, "Characteristics of the Christian Movement." The essay pointed out that the Chinese challenge to Christianity caused Chinese Christian intellectuals to formulate two self-examination-style questions: What does the Christian religion mean? and What is the place and function of the Church in the life of China? Some people felt that these two questions summed up the direction in which Chinese Christians should invest their efforts. In the China of the time, Christianity had been accused of being a superstition, anti-scientific, and against reason. Thus the questions for Chinese Christians were: What is Christianity? What is its core belief? What is the essence of Christianity? What kind of relationship does it have with the essence of imperialism? What significance does Christianity have for China now? The twentieth century was the scientific age, all signs and wonders were denied by May Fourth intellectuals; add to this the vogue in the West at the time of liberal theology, which no longer stressed the supernatural parts of the Bible, and the answer to "What is Christianity?" in the main was one that supported liberalism and historicism, focusing attention on the moral significance of Christianity. It was thought that the essence of Christianity was actually Jesus Christ's spirit of universal love and that this spirit of universal love, in whatever circumstances, was one that Chinese society urgently needed. As for the answer to the second question, "What is the place and function of the Church in the life of China?" this led to Christian intellectuals' reflection on and practice of social rebuilding. Against the larger background of the times, Christian intellectuals strove to face the suffering of Chinese society, to resist imperialist oppression, to involve themselves in the social reality. They attempted, in theory and in practice, to witness to the value and reasonableness of Christianity.

The Life Fellowship, a contemporary Chinese Christian intellectual fellowship, both reflected this quest, and did much to pursue it. The Life Fellowship was founded in 1919 by Hsü Pao-ch'ien (Xu Baoqian;1892-1944), Beijing YMCA secretary and Yenching (Yanjing) University professor. Its members comprised missionaries teaching at Yenching and Chinese Christians. Y.T. Wu was a member. The fellowship had originally been called the Peking Apologetic Group, but the name was changed to Life Fellowship in the spring of 1924. Its earliest aim was to "spread Christianity," and its main task was to protect and spread the faith. The members believed first, that Christianity's influence in China was growing and that both Christians and non-Christians were interested in Christianity and wanted to study and explore it; second, that Christianity could adapt to the needs of Chinese society and that in adapting it should use the "language of the times"; third, since China's customs differed from those of the Israelites of 2000 years ago, they were different from those of the contemporary West as well and therefore new methods should be employed in explaining Christianity to the Chinese people, methods based in the special circumstances of China; and fourth, members of the Life Fellowship deeply believed that modern science and Christian doctrine were not fundamentally at odds, and that Christians should use the latest scientific knowledge to interpret their religious faith.

Members of the Life Fellowship were clear about the fact that they lived in a China headed toward some historical juncture. They firmly believed that "survival of the nation is everyone's duty." Their goal was the transformation of Chinese society. They felt that human consciousness was the starting point of social transformation, and they wanted, on a foundation of individual consciousness, to transform society on Christian

principles. They belonged to the May Fourth generation [The term encompasses aspirations for both cultural (The New Culture Movement, or Chinese Renaissance) and political change (student protests on May 4 1919)-ed.] and they had strong patriotic sentiments. They attempted to dialogue with the non-Christians of their generation. They were concerned with this life, not the next; with social engagement, not the pure gospel; with realizing the kingdom of heaven on earth, not awaiting a future heaven. The members of the Life Fellowship not only saw the "spirit of Jesus" as a "subjective experience" but made it into a social gospel that they introduced to Chinese intellectuals. In their view, Christianity advocated patriotism, and Christianity could save the Chinese people. In their view, China's "national salvation program" included fostering the human personality, and Christianity was helpful in this regard. When Y.T. Wu worked in the student department of the Beijing YMCA, he called on Chinese Christians to pay the price for achieving the Chinese revolution. This spirit of sacrifice was part of the new personality. Those who possessed the new personality were those who could think and could act, and could make their thinking and action one. Only they could accomplish the work of transforming society and saving the nation.

In the late 1940s, Y.T. Wu pointed out that his thinking had undergone two huge shifts over thirty years (1910-1940): first when he accepted Christianity—from doubt to belief in religion; and second, when he accepted anti-religion social-scientific theory, following which he strove to bring materialist thinking and Christianity together.[11] Between these two huge shifts, other smaller shifts took place in his thinking. But what did not change

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11 See Wu Yaozong, "Christianity and Materialism—a Christian's Confession," *Daxue yuebao* (July, 1947).

were his efforts to find in the spirit of Christ a way out for China. In the first half of the twentieth century, faced with the political reality of imperialist aggression against China, faced with an unjust society, Y.T. Wu did all he could, in thought and in action, to find a way out for China. For him, concern for national salvation was all consuming. And because of this, he constantly adapted Christian views, such as the question he raised in 1929: "At present the most important questions for Christianity are: What is basic Christian faith? What is the relation of Christianity to a China in the midst of construction? How should a Christian develop his religious life?" (*The Future of the Chinese Christian Student Movement*). He joined personal faith and personal understanding of Christianity to the rebuilding of society, and from this base undertook his reflection on the contextualization of Christianity.

Ng Lee-ming observes that, like T.C. Chao (Zhao Zichen) and other liberals, Y.T. Wu also began with the feeling that the Christian task in China was to become the spiritual foundation for social reconstruction. In order to accomplish this, he expressed his support for indigenization in order to facilitate Christianity becoming one with Chinese culture to create a kind of new spiritual force striving for social reconstruction. But Y.T. Wu's accomplishments in the work of indigenization were limited, because although theoretically he knew the importance of psychological rehabilitation, at the same time he certainly believed that Christianity could become the foundation for social reconstruction, and his attention was actually taken up by Chinese political and social issues of the time.[12] To counter the claims of many who call Y.T. Wu an opportunist, Ng Lee-ming says that it can be said with confidence that the stance Y.T. Wu later

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12 Ng Lee-ming, *Christianity and Chinese Social Change*, 82-83.

adopted toward Communism was in no way the decision of a moment, but one he came to over a long period of reflection on a whole range of issues. In this process, he considered issues such as the essence of Christianity, its social significance, political issues, and the society and the economy in China and the world, along with every sort of different social theory. When we understand his views on these issues and his thought process, it may be that we should no longer see him as an opportunist.[13] Whether as an advocate of social improvement in the 1920s, or of social change in the 1930s and 40s, all these were in fact the inevitable consequence of his undertaking to interpret Christianity in the context of the China of (his) time.

Y.T. Wu's Methods of Contextual Theology

How then, did Y.T. Wu go about his contextualized theological understanding?

Scientific and Rational Christianity: Y.T. Wu was part of the May Fourth generation of Christian intellectuals; his concern was with science and reason, and so his interpretation of Christianity had to be held up to the twin mirrors of science and reason. This was also related to his own experience. His acceptance of Christianity was in fact the result of a rational search. In "A Christian's Confession" in his 1948 book *Christianity and Materialism*, he spoke of his conversion to Christianity and his subsequent personal religious experience. He mentioned how moved he was upon reading the Sermon on the Mount at the home of an American friend in the spring of 1917. In the early summer of 1918, he was baptized a Christian (see above). Shortly following this, in

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13 Ng Lee-ming, *Christianity and Chinese Social Change*, 117.

1919, the May Fourth Movement broke out. Then in 1922, the anti-Christian Movement began and Christians were accused of being running dogs of Western imperialism and Christianity of being the opiate of the people. The first criticism did not disturb Wu at all. He was very clear that he was a Christian and that he did not support imperialism. And, very obviously, many other Chinese Christians could hardly be said to be imperialist running dogs. But the second criticism kept bothering him. It was constantly before his mind's eye until he had to ask: Was Christianity superstition? Was Christianity the enemy of science?[14] Such questions impelled him to constant investigation of the meaning of Christianity, and the question of the existence of God. His *No One Has Seen God* reflects his searching on these issues. It explicates the Christian God from a new angle. In fact, his early thinking is quite clearly an effort to make a science of Christianity and to rationalize it. On the one hand, he believed that God is the truth of the cosmos unified, imbued with emotion, and personified, and that because of this we can come to know God and know God's will through objective material observation and understanding.

But at the same time he recognized that we cannot fully know God simply from visible phenomena, for, besides being within the cosmos, God is also outside it, transcending creation. Wu said that to see God only as the immanent principle and truth in creation was the pantheist view of God and the materialist view of the cosmos. To see God as immanent, and at the same time as transcendent, in the way we would see a close friend, seeing not only the friend's outward appearance but finding a spiritual accord or mutual understanding with our friend—only this was

14 Ibid., 97.

the Christian view of God.[15] Seen in this way, at the same time that he understood Christianity scientifically and rationally, Wu preserved Christianity's transcendence, but spoke about it less.

Seeking a balanced theological method: With regard to the interpretation of Christianity, Y.T. Wu always took aim at certain types of extremes that existed in the church, and attempted to find a way to bring about a balance. Of course, such a search was inseparable from his persistent tendency toward social concern. From 1924-1927, Y.T. Wu studied in the U.S. for the first time. When he returned to China, his social standpoint had been formed. In 1929, the National Conference of the Christian Council of China launched a "Five Year Movement," whose goal was to double the quality and number of Christians within five years, the so-called "*beizeng yu beishen*" 倍增与倍深 goal (lit. "double and deepen"). When this movement was launched in 1929, Y.T. Wu was fiercely critical of its goals and program. First of all he declared that he did not entirely oppose the goal the movement wanted to reach. He perceived the importance of personal repentance and the contribution an increase in church membership might offer to spiritual reconstruction. But he also believed that to make church revival the goal of the movement, while emphasizing the work of personal salvation, seemed to reveal the church's self-centeredness, and at the same time represented a kind of misunderstanding of Christianity and concern for life. The result of such an approach was frequently to separate human spiritual life from humans' material life, which would lead to the meaning of religion being relegated to the spiritual life.

In Y.T. Wu's view, this was a mistaken notion because

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15 Wu Yaozong, *No One Has Seen God*, 22.

life is a whole. If religion were to enable the fulfillment of human life, then it must give its attention to both human spiritual life and human material life. In addition to this, "love," the central thinking of Christianity, was not simply a principle for action, but action itself. At the same time, "love" included a demand for "service." Therefore, a life of love had definitely to include action to transform society. Wu said that formerly the weakness of the Christian movement lay in its lack of a religious concept of human life, with the result that it was not possible to enable religion to pay attention to the whole of life.

He went on to say that if we

> intentionally then make religion the goal and human life the means, in the extreme case some will separate the two. For them, religion is religion and life is life; that is, those who can practice what they preach will make the personal life their main sphere of action, and pay little attention to the social environment as a whole. Christianity's greatest need at present lies in understanding the significance of religion, enabling faith to be built on a foundation of reason and life as a way of seeking renewal of the whole society, so that religion may be fully expressed in human life. Then the goal of religion lies in human life, human life is the stuff of religious life, and religion is the approach taken to life. Christianity past has tended to emphasize religion and the church itself, as well as personal cultivation; Christianity present should stress the contributions [one] can make in life to society. These two aspects have always been essential, one for the other; neither could exist alone. I do not propose to substitute one for the other, but to take the latter as the standpoint, the root, the goal and the former as the thread that weaves them together, that gives religion its 'content' and the church its 'raison d'être,' infuses personal cultivation with energy to prevent its withering away. This view it not at all some abstruse

> theological theory, but is in fact basic knowledge our Christian movement in China should possess.[16]

Because of this, Y.T. Wu thought that the Five Year Movement should make "realization of God's Reign" its goal, rather than "religious revival." The meaning of "the Reign of God" is in no way a spiritual realm detached from this earth, but an ideal society realized in this world, a society that can enable human beings to attain freedom and material contentment, and at the same time be free from political oppression and the threat of social inequality.

Of course, Y.T. Wu was not saying that revival of the church and personal salvation are unimportant. Quite the opposite, both should have the realization of the Reign of God as their ultimate goal. In Wu's early thinking the church not only had a spiritual mission but a social one as well. The church's mission in society should not be limited to the realm of spiritual reconstruction. Under the large principle of bringing about the coming of God's Reign, the church's mission should be decided based on the needs of society in a certain time.[17] Seen in this way, Wu's theological reflections were not church-centered, but God-centered, especially centered around the Reign of God. His theological method was not one of moving from one extreme to another, but was rather an attempt to find the balance between church and society, the personal and the collective, the material and the spiritual, and between life and death.

In 1934, Y.T. Wu published *The Social Gospel*. His efforts to find a theology of balance can be seen in this work. The first chapter is on the meaning of the "social gospel"; the second is on the relationship between the

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16 Wu Yaozong, "Thoughts and Hopes on the Five Year Movement," *Truth* 4/5: 17.

17 See Ng Lee-ming, *Christianity and Chinese Social Change*, 86.

"social gospel" and the "personal gospel." The central idea of the whole book is in fact the question of where Chinese Christianity is headed. He stressed that "the original motivation for the religious life comes from the personal gospel." The personal gospel is the seedling of life, and a life must blossom and bear fruit in its surroundings—that is the social gospel. Thus the personal gospel and the social gospel interact; the personal gospel and the social gospel should be a continuum. The reason Wu advocated the social gospel, in his own words, was because "Christianity's persistent flaw lies in ignoring society in favor of the individual." Y.T. Wu felt that the church and Christians do not live in a vacuum. And because of this we cannot evade the environment and society where we are. The environment and the individual impact each other; the personal gospel is a one-sided principle. Wu believed that he himself was biased in favor of the social gospel. His argument here sounds like a corrective.

Knowing is doing; take proper action: In one of his essays, Wu said that [we] do not agree with the statements of some shallow idealists who believe that China's problems are just problems of morality and personality, and that if we can raise the moral and character standards of the Chinese, China's problems can be solved. We believe that morality and character cannot be separated from the social material environment. If the material environment does not change, changes in the human heart, psychological changes, will not have much staying power.[18] Love is an extremely important principle in Wu's theological reflections. He holds that there are two sides to the principle of love. Love is a dynamic principle:

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18 Wu Yaozong, "Christianity and the Reconstruction of China," *The Chinese Recorder* 67: 212.

We should resolve social and interpersonal problems through love. Love is also "service." The mission of Jesus is our mission. Love means attending to needs and serving. Wu had his own view of attending to needs. He believed it included the betterment of society, enabling human suffering to be eliminated, enabling human dignity and freedom to be preserved. Thus, attending to needs means being engaged in society and transforming it. His Christianity was an active, dynamic Christianity.

Y.T. Wu stressed acting on the basis of knowledge. Precisely based on this "knowing is doing" approach, he was sharply critical of the mainstream churches of the time, those that held to a liberal theological standpoint.

> Our church is a bunch of people who are neither extremely evil nor extremely good: it is a perfunctory body. Our slogan is 'China for Christ,' growth in adherents, increasing spirituality; it doesn't matter that these goals are difficult, even if they are reached—if our traditional ideas haven't changed—it is nothing more than a little excitement; not the least remedy for the life and death issues facing our people now.[19]

And it was this "knowing is doing," this "unity of knowledge and action" thinking that enabled Wu to see that the social transformation Christianity advocated must be a thorough transformation of the social environment. Thus, what the Chinese Church needed to do was not simply "social service"; rather it should commence a genuine repentance, not a repentance simply of emotion, but one expressed in concrete action. The church had first of all to once again gain a new understanding of the

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19 Wu Yaozong, "The Cost of Peace," in *The Social Gospel*, 100. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: "Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

meaning and demands of love; at the same time it must also understand how to implement "love's" demands in its society. "In what Christ asks of us, the meaning of love is to better the masses' living environment … the meaning of love is not limited to the personal realm. Changes in an individual's life will not necessarily bring about social change. Devout longing, formulaic prayers, or church revival will not bring about the coming of God's Reign."[20]

Y.T. Wu's gradual acceptance of socialism and Communism beginning in the 1930s came about because he came to see that socialist revolution was most capable of improving the lives of the Chinese people, and so he proposed that the church should join its ranks. "Of course we want to be part of the revolution, because the present situation is one of revolution, because the religion we believe in is a religion of revolution."[21] Y.T. Wu's "knowing is doing" was inseparable from his concern since childhood for human life in the cosmos, as well as his own unique religious experience and understanding.

A Christianity for human life: For Y.T. Wu, God was in no way a human fabrication. Humans could not but believe in the existence of God, because of a variety of experiences, facts, and knowledge. Further, for him personally, belief in God was a unifier in his fragmented and complex life, giving meaning to his life: this was his religion. Something he said in speaking of the future of religion illustrates that, first of all, he believed in the existence of God, not an illusory God, but a God that

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20 Wu Yaozong, "Let Christianity be full of vitality in society," *The Chinese Recorder* 65: 10.

21 Wu Yaozong, "The Meaning of the Social Gospel," in *The Social Gospel*, 18. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: "Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

could be proven through reason and experience. Secondly, belief in God enabled humans to have an appropriate view of human life and could bring meaning to life. Third, a new view of life was not a simple matter of seeking personal salvation, but more a being engaged in social transformation: this was the meaning of the social gospel. This was the internal logic of Y.T. Wu's theology and his thinking on social salvation. The reason Wu could become interested in Communism academically was first of all because Christianity and Communism, or we might say Christianity as Wu understood it, had, to a certain extent, the same view of life. Wu felt that though material life was not the ultimate locus of human life, it was yet a basic part of that life. When material life ended, all other goals of life, whatever they were, lost their meaning. To put it another way, material or economic life, though not the whole of human experience, could not be done without. This sort of human approach to seeing material life as fundamental was not, in Y.T. Wu's view, unique to Marxism, but could also be found in traditional Chinese thought as well, and in the Bible.[22]

Besides their perception of human life, Christianity and Communism had another common goal, and, to a certain extent, they shared a common plan of action. "Some people have begun to realize that although we cannot yet completely accept the methods and tactics of Communism, the goals of its ideals are the same as ours."[23] The goals Wu was referring to were the fulfillment of human material life. Of course, this was not the ultimate goal of Christianity or of the church, but one aspect of the

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22 Wu Yaozong, "The Way Out for Youth," in *The Social Gospel*, 50. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: "Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

23 Wu Yaozong, "May Christianity….," *Chinese Recorder* 65: 11.

Christian principle of love is that we serve the masses, and one aspect of the object of this service is humanity's material life. Thus to fulfill this mission, Y.T. Wu felt that the church should not simply be engaged in the work of spiritual reconstruction, but should actively eliminate all social forces that were obstacles to it. To bring about the coming Reign of God, we must first of all build an equal and just ideal society. Wu said: "The view of materialism toward social issues always begins with the law of the evolution of social material life, while Christianity begins from God's love and the justice, freedom, and equality this love demands. … Seen in this way, what is important is not where we begin, but whether the methods we employ to reach the goal toward which this beginning points are correct ones." [24]

In Y.T. Wu's view, Christianity has both a flat and a vertical perception of the cosmos. In addition to being able to glean the immanent will of God through observation of the cosmos, humans could recognize the transcendent will of God, and this transcendent will was that human dignity and worth should be retained and fulfilled. This could only be achieved through the principle of "love." Therefore, human beings should not be treated as tools only capable of performing one task, or as objects to be sacrificed for some other goal, because humans themselves or the fulfillment of human character is the ultimate goal. But this was in no way meant to say that those who accepted the principle of "love" could not struggle for social justice. "Some people believe that the gospel of Jesus is a message of peace and that we should not therefore advocate social struggle. This is a misunderstanding of Jesus' ethics. Jesus does indeed represent peace, but he also represents justice, so he would in no way succumb to the social evils of the

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24 Wu Yaozong, *No One Has Seen God*, 40.

day. This is a social struggle. At the same time, it was for this reason that he was killed. Genuine peace can only be built on justice."[25]

It is very clear that for Y.T. Wu, Christianity was not simply concerned with the world to come, or with human blessings after death. Quite the opposite, Christianity is a religion for people. Wu said:

> Our faith is in a religion for human beings, religion should be expressed in every aspect of human life. We believe in human life, in every aspect of that life and with religion, human life is further enriched, more rational. The religion we believe in—the essence of religion—is, like the air … something people cannot do without. Those who have the name of religion do not necessarily have the substance of religion. Contrarily, those who have the substance of religion do not necessarily go by the name of religion.[26]

A bottom-up theological method: We can say that the goal of Y.T. Wu's theology was to provide a foundation for an apologetic for Christianity in a society in an age of decision. He found a point of connection between the realities of a Christianity assaulted on all sides and a Chinese society in the midst of upheaval in such an era; that point of connection was the contribution Christianity should make to social reconstruction in China. That point of connection was also inseparable from his concept of the Reign of God.

Precisely for this reason, Y.T. Wu's theological

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25 Wu Yaozong, "Christianity and the Reconstruction of China," *Chinese Recorder* 67: 213.

26 Wu Yaozong, *Religious Belief in an Age of Decision*, 1938. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

method was not top-down, nor was it a simple method of indigenization, or a translation model. Rather it was bottom-up, a defense of the reasonableness of the existence of Christianity within the real context of Chinese society. He felt that "God made a plan for this cosmos and humanity. This plan was that all people should develop in an ideal environment. … And this ideal environment is the will of God."[27] The goal of prayer is not to change the will of God, but rather to get to know it and at the same time to summon enough strength to follow it, or to cooperate with it. "What we call prayer opens our souls to this infinite, unending truth, allows it to transform and subtly change us, make us able to free ourselves from the prison of the self, from our narrow vision, able to absorb its truth and goodness and beauty, make it our center, become one with it, make us no longer ourselves, but new people, transformed in the truth, washed clean, and refined."[28]

Y.T. Wu held that God's plan was that creation should develop within an ideal environment. With regard to humans, the ideal environment is love. Our experience has already shown us, to a greater or lesser extent, that love is the power most able to hold human society together. So "love" is God's will for people, and from a human standpoint, God is "love." This love finds its most complete realization only in the life of Jesus Christ. In the life of Jesus Christ we first of all see the conflict between "love" and "self-concern" eliminated. For in Jesus' life, and especially in his death, he reveals that love is God's will for humans, that love is the goal of human existence. And for this reason, Jesus Christ becomes the revelation of

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27 Wu Yaozong, *The Jesus I know*, 82. See the electronic resource in the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary Library: Chinese Church History Full-Text Database.

28 Wu Yaozong, *No One Has Seen God*, 61

God and at the same time, our savior.

Precisely because of this, Wu's theology coalesced around the historical Jesus and not the Christ of faith. This arose from his concern for social reality and not from some interpretation of doctrine. Because he was a close observer, he cared about the people's suffering. From the 1920s on, Y.T. Wu thought that the greatest need in Chinese society was for material reconstruction, or the improvement of material life. If China wanted to strengthen itself, it must at the same time eliminate foreign aggression, and seek material and scientific improvement. He felt that China's problem at the time was a "problem of people's livelihood."[29] In this situation, the church's primary mission should be to relieve the people's suffering, an idea similar to that later espoused by Liberation theologians. This bottom-up theological method meant that Y.T. Wu could not but be concerned for social problems and the people's suffering. And this made his theology quite radical.

Conclusion

From the foregoing description of Y.T. Wu's contextual theological method, it is easy to see that he was not a theologian or Christian thinker who sat musing in his study, but a thinker and practitioner who immersed himself in the tides of society, and who, from a Christian standpoint, undertook active reflection. His thinking constantly changed direction, changes of direction that were neither "compromises" (Xie Longyi) nor an attempt to use "Christian sources" to annotate a theory of social revolution (Liang Jialun). His understanding

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29 Wu Yaozong, "The enterprise facing the Chinese student movement," *Truth* (4/14): 7.

and interpretation of Christian theology came from his constant seeking after truth. His search for and genuine love of the truth meant he could do no other. His life could be called "a constant quest, a search for an effective path to the transformation of society. In this process, which he maintained for decades, all his actions, including all he did in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, arose from his understanding of Christianity." [30]

We could say that, facing the church's context in his times, Y.T. Wu made use of the Bible, reason, experience, trends in contemporary thought, and traditional culture as sources for his thinking in his efforts to undertake a contextual interpretation of Christianity. Whether or not there was distance between his contextual interpretation and a traditional Christian understanding, or how great the distance might have been, his efforts were apologetic in nature, expanding the space for Christianity in Chinese society.

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Nanjing Theological Review, 1 (2009): 155-177.

30 See Ng Lei-ming, *Christianity and Chinese Social Transformation*, 74.

Deepening Theological Reconstruction and Welcoming a New Aspect of Self-Propagation:
Gleanings from the "Symposium on Preaching and Theological Reconstruction"

CAO SHENGJIE

On November 11, 2008 the China Christian Council (CCC) and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM) held the "Tenth Annual Symposium on Theological Reconstruction," at which the Rev. Gao Feng, chair of the symposium, presented "Continue to Strengthen Theological Reconstruction: Work hard to run the Chinese Church well," a report summarizing a decade of Theological Reconstruction.[1] The Report reflected on the course of Theological Reconstruction since its launch, and reflected on the achievements of the past decade in the spirit of seeking truth from facts, summarizing past experience, and prospects for the future. One of the fruits mentioned was the "enrichment of sermons"; among the prospects for the future was "taking a step forward in promoting Theological Reconstruction in sermons." Both topics clearly noted that the work of the pulpit is best accomplished by advancing the important agenda of Theological Reconstruction.

We must continue to develop Theological Reconstruction. Overall the Report stresses two primary concepts that must be grasped in order to develop and strengthen Theological Reconstruction: "deepening" and "popularization." "Deepening" requires continued

1 See *Tian Feng*, December/1 (2008).

reliance on seminaries and Bible schools as well as local CC/TSMs in organizing faculty, students, and clergy; in connecting with Chinese culture, ethics, and morality; and in undertaking contextualization of theological inquiry and discourse. "Popularization" requires that current and future fruits of Theological Reconstruction be disseminated for use in the pulpit in a timely manner, where they may blossom and bear greater fruit, enabling the healthy pastoring of believers. It should be said that while "deepening" is a fundamental requirement, it is "popularization" that will serve as the anchor for the ultimate goals of Theological Reconstruction: "helping Christian believers to develop a pure faith, a lively spiritual life, and a positive attitude towards life, promoting better development of the Chinese Church, enabling the mutual adaptation of Chinese Christianity and socialist society, and enabling the church to give a beautiful witness to Christ in the midst of building a harmonious society" (Report).

Self-Propagation is one of the Three-Self principles. In referring to self-propagation, Mr. Y.T. Wu made it clear that this principle did not simply solve the question of "who" "propagated" but also "what" was propagated. Of course, the church propagates the Gospel of Jesus Christ as Savior of the World, but "Chinese Christians themselves must go out to spread the treasured teachings of Jesus' gospel, casting off the fetters of Western theology, exposing and critiquing ideas which do not address reality, and creating a theological system for Chinese believers themselves."[2] The "Theological Mass Movement" of the 1950s developed around this question of "what should be propagated."

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2 *Selected Documents of the Three-Self Patriotic Chinese Christian Movement 1950-1992* (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM), 22.

Following the implementation of the policy of Reform and Opening (1978), Bishop K.H. Ting clarified this on several occasions, as when he wrote concerning the Theological Mass Movement: "[Christians'] main recourse had to be the Bible which, when re-read, gave them 'new lights' or 'new insights,' …."[3] "Through our experience of Theological Reconstruction, our interpretations of our basic faith have become more tempered and reasoned; such that our believers thereby have more understanding and more confidence in their own basic faith, and friends outside of the Church are more willing to hear the gospel."[4] Knowledgeable church leaders have all along emphasized the importance of transforming profound theological concepts to popular use as sermon topics. Bishop Shen Yifan's sermons, collected in *Serving through the Pulpit*, give clear interpretations of Incarnation, being in the Spirit, and sanctification. In late 1996 the work report of the Sixth National Chinese Christian Conference emphasized the importance of self-propagation, creating a Self-Propagation Research Group (later renamed the Self-Propagation Research Committee). From November 18 – 20, 1997, this working group held the "Self-Propagation Symposium" in Shanghai to investigate the three topics of "who propagates," "what is propagated," and "how propagation is done," emphasizing that evangelists must become faithful and knowledgeable servants; must improve spiritually, morally, and in their educational level, must earnestly study the Bible, and must provide (spiritual) nourishment as needed. The Committee no longer met following the Resolution to

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3 K.H. Ting, "Theological Mass Movement in China," in *Love Never Ends: Papers by K.H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri. (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2000), 139.

4 *Selected Documents*, 231.

launch Theological Reconstruction at the 1998 Jinan Meeting because Theological Reconstruction embraced the goal of solving the issue of self-propagation, and would necessarily push forward this work. This point was further illustrated by the "Symposium on Preaching and Theological Reconstruction" held following the "Tenth Annual Symposium on Theological Reconstruction."

The majority of those attending the two symposia were young and middle-aged, and included theology faculty as well as grassroots pastors, those who had just assumed their posts, as well as senior pastors with extensive pastoral experience. They published many articles addressing the dissemination of the fruits of Theological Reconstruction, the building of a harmonious society, social concerns, and traditional culture, including theoretical treatises, practical introductions, step-by-step explanations, and contextual analyses. It should be said that this was the first time a symposium was held to explore the relationship between sermons and Theological Reconstruction. I was very excited to be invited to attend.

Theological Reconstruction Orients the Work of the Pulpit

From the statements made by those attending the Symposium, I was delighted to discover that the following three points have already gained a place in people's hearts:

Christianity is a preached religion; we must stress the role of the pulpit in Theological Reconstruction.

Chinese Christianity (Protestantism) has always emphasized preaching. In his essay "A Preliminary Consideration of the Contextualization of Sermon Theology," Geng Weizhong, positing Jesus as the "preacher

of the gospel," and the Acts of the Apostles as "the document preached" goes on to discuss the preaching of the Gospel as "the cornerstone of the Church," and "the Church's barometer." One of the reasons the Middle Ages were called "the Dark Ages," was due to the poverty of the preaching of the time, while the Reformation was partly expressed in the recovery of the ministry of preaching.[5] In his essay "Theological Reconstruction and the Theological Dimensions of Messages from the Pulpits of Chinese Churches," Pu Jun expressed his opinion that preaching "feeds the soul with the Word," and that "the spiritual condition of the Church is grounded in the vigor of its preaching of the truth."

Preaching bridges the gap between the world of the Bible and the world of today, enabling Christians to understand how to live according to biblical truth today.

Geng Weizhong's essay draws on the work of English theologian John R.W. Stott, who summarizes a preacher's duties as "bridge building"—building connections between the unchanging Word of God and the ever-changing world we live in—connecting the truth of the Bible and the needs of our times. He also drew from Karl Barth's injunction to "read the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other," as the basic attitude necessary for preaching. He compared Barth's ideas with the imagery of Bishop Neal, who believed that preaching may be compared to the weaving of a cloth. The Word of God is like the warp, unchanging; but the weft is an ever-flowing chorus of people and places. Only when the warp and weft are joined do we have a finished product. "Preachers cannot simply be faithful to the Bible without being in touch with

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5 See *Nanjing Theological Review*, No. 4 (2008).

the times. Likewise, they cannot keep up with the times without being in touch with the Bible." Even if a sermon is in accord with the Bible, if it is too remote from its time and place, people will begin to feel that "the Word has nothing to do with me."

We must preach according to the Bible, but a sermon must not be divorced from a preacher's own theological reflection and understanding of the times.

Even though preaching must connect the truth of the Bible to the real world, it absolutely should not be something "highbrow" and beyond believers' grasp; rather, it should be something all the believers can understand and accept. On the one hand, it derives from the preacher's accurate knowledge of the biblical text, including his/her own experience in receiving the light of the Lord and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, an accurate understanding of the times and of the needs of the believers is equally important. Geng Weizhong's essay says that the "three elements of a sermon—the text, the preacher, and the congregation, are all contextual," and this requires a "carrying out three-self patriotic education": "fostering in preachers a sense of social responsibility and national pride, increased social participation, service, and ethical awareness," all of which make the Word incarnate in our real context.

In my "Theological Reconstruction and Self Propagation" I wrote, "Regardless of whether a preacher is conscious of it or not, everything she or he says reflects his or her theology." "Different theologies, conveyed to believers from the pulpit, will produce different effects."[6] The essay "Transmission of the fruits of Theological

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6 *Selected Writings*, 239.

Reconstruction through the Pulpit," written by Wang Xuerong of Xuzhou, Jiangsu province, provides a fresh example. In a church of 365 parishioners divided among 25 villages, the church led the way with the scripture, "Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone" (Rom.12: 17). This encouraged the members of the congregation to take an interest in science, that in turn quickly brought a period of prosperity when the congregation began to cultivate edible fungi—a project which increased the average yearly income from 300 *yuan* to 1, 800 *yuan*. The parishioners profited financially, the church improved its social standing, and a beautiful witness was given to the Lord.

Among those who spoke at the Symposium, there were some who also spoke about aspects of planning, methodology, and techniques of preaching work, including how to undertake the organization of revivals, fellowships, and multimedia presentations in conveying Theological Reconstruction, the use of analogies in sermons, etc. These all reflected our colleagues' focus on means of transmitting the fruits of Theological Reconstruction. I feel, however, that the most important aspect of the sermon message is the message itself and that the content of the message bears a close relationship to the fruits of Theological Reconstruction. That is to say, one must master the crucial point of the orientation of preaching as Gu Yuntao's essay points out, "clear reasoning, proper perspective, and varied forms will obtain fine results." First we need ideas and perspective. Putting together our thoughts means sorting through the fruits of Theological Reconstruction, and then considering which perspectives and methods are most useful in conveying the message to believers.

Focusing on and Improving Sermons

Given the focus of the content of the essays presented by our colleagues at this Symposium, I feel that the four issues below clearly warrant our attention and will be very helpful for our colleagues at the grassroots as entry points for further developing Theological Reconstruction:

Correct exegesis is key.

Tang Shiwen's essay "Biblical Interpretation and Sermons" underscores the necessity of correct exegesis in Theological Reconstruction. The basic process he proposes—grounded in the Bible, exegetically correct, theologically established, by which the sermon is enriched, the church built up and society served—is richly significant. The Bible is the highest authority of our faith, and it is also the standard for our faith lives. Sermons are an elaboration on God's Word—they are not a platform for introducing theological theory. "But, different people can preach wildly different, even contradictory, messages from the same Bible. This is, principally, the result of different methods of exegesis." To preach good messages, we must emphasize biblical research in Theological Reconstruction, emphasize exegesis and establish correct principles for exegesis. For example: "letting the Bible speak as a whole," "grasping the gradual nature of revelation," "grasping the main theme of the Bible," "grasping the essence of the Bible," and "understanding the original Biblical texts, historical background, literary genres and rhetoric and composition." "Connecting with our present context and allowing the Bible to speak to us today," is particularly important. It is only by mastering the work of exegesis that those who preach the Word can rightly parse its truth.

Using the theme of "reconciliation" to guide Christian lives in this secular world.

Reconciliation with God and reconciliation among people are the Bible's everlasting themes. The two cannot be separated. Facing the rather deep impact on Chinese Christianity of the separation of spiritual life from daily life, many of the essays coming out of this Symposium have taken up the traditions of the Reformation by investigating the relationship between the lives of Christians in this world and their hopes for eternity. Huang Fengxiang's "Transmitting the Fruits of Theological Reconstruction through Sermons," extrapolates from John Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion" as follows: "God is the creator and keeper of all earthly things," "Christians must do the work of God in this world to honor God's glory and to protect his creation." Christians cannot become overly attached to this life because attachment can lead them to stray from God's will and plan. Instead, they should make this life a "Manifestation of God's grace an arena where Christians can practice following God's will." They must "pass through life in this world with a heart that looks to life in heaven." To this end, she proposed several points: using wisely all that God grants, admiring the beauty of all creation, and maintaining a positive attitude towards all truth goodness and beauty existing beyond ourselves. "Doing this work well honors God."

What role should Christian ethics play in building the harmonious society in China? Wang Yuangang's essay "A Brief Discussion of the Social Role of Christianity in China's Current Context," proposed that Christian ethics should exert a positive influence on "enhancing morality," "easing tensions," "promoting economic development," and "promoting scientific culture and preventing blind superstition." Christians cannot demand perfection of

society, but they can promote changes that make the world more harmonious and beautiful. These ideas are all worth exploring.

Do not reject Chinese culture in spreading the gospel.

The Church must spread the gospel, and yet in the process of leading people to the Lord, we can't forget that these people are our brothers and sisters who have grown up in Chinese culture. If the content of the gospel we preach simply reflects "Christian culture" as synonymous with Western culture, it will surely clash with our listeners' sensibilities. This has been true since ancient times. For example, although the Jews originally required Gentile believers to be circumcised, Christians quickly broke through the fetters of Judaic Law at the Council of Jerusalem and brought the gospel to the world. Ni Guangdao's proposal that Chinese Christianity and Chinese culture should "coexist in a complimentary win-win relationship," in his essay "Avenues for Christian Efforts in a Harmonious Culture," is certainly worth pondering. In his essay "Theological Reconstruction in Constructing the Church's Identity," Pei Lianshan proposed that, "Chinese tradition emphasizes a 'harmonious and measured' culture," and that "Western civilizations certainly do not represent universal values. We need to build our theology upon our own cultural traditions." If while spreading the gospel we denounce our nation's ancient culture as a "pagan" or "idolatrous" culture, and in the home of this culture we preach that Christianity should be at war with such cultures, it will be very difficult to achieve any positive results.

Given that the content of the gospel is unchanging, how are we to express and even require integrating this content with the virtues so highly esteemed in Chinese

culture? The following example is taken from the essay by Gu Yuntao. In some villages Christians have been under the influence of extreme theologies, resulting in their being unwilling to lend a hand at the marriages and funerals of their neighbors or to loan their tools to others once they become Christians—how can the gospel meld with Chinese culture in such circumstances? On the other hand Pu Jun spoke of the events following the earthquake in Sichuan (June 2008). Evangelists in Sichuan preached on "The Establishment of God," bringing comfort to victims of the earthquake. Their message of comfort and hope through reliance on God was welcomed by Christians and non-believers alike.

Concern for society is the organizing principle of the gospel.

Tu Zhijin's essay, "Thoughts on the Chinese Churches' Involvement in the Ministry of Social Care," brought to light an enormously important question: many Christians believe that the church's most important mission is spreading the gospel—meaning personal salvation—whereas social concern is fine, it is not a necessity; or it can simply be a means of spreading the gospel. This kind of thinking is related to older strains of Western theological thought. The author believes we should "return to the Bible" and look at God's care for creation for those caught in disasters: the lessons of justice in the books of the prophets. The mission taught by the Incarnate Jesus includes social care and concern; moreover, actions we take with concern for society are linked to the final judgment; all of which shows that social concern is clearly "the way of grace," which "comes from the power of the gospel," and that "wherever there are people in need, there Jesus is."

In her essay, "On Earth as It Is in Heaven," Chen Qirui, in analyzing the social ministry of the German Pietist Movement, found that Christian social responsibility and spiritual "piety" are inseparable, demonstrating that the true intent of "piety" can only be realized in the responsibility to care for society.[7]

People have been influenced by Western churches' terming those who hold a theology of personal salvation "Evangelicals," while those who stress social concerns are termed "liberals" (or even "unbelievers" by some). The Chinese Church has absolutely no need for these kinds of divisions. As Pei Lianshan has pointed out, "Both kinds of theology should complement each other. Personal salvation and social concern are both important and are not mutually antagonistic. People need to accept the gospel of salvation of Jesus Christ, but this gospel embodies a concern for society and a response to those in need." If the message we preach can correctly expound upon the relationship between the gospel and a concern for society, it will certainly benefit the church by making it better able to bear a beautiful witness in society.

A Sense of Responsibility for Pastoral Work is the Basic Motivation for Improvement in Self-Propagation

In the course of Theological Reconstruction over the past ten years, many of our colleagues have conscientiously engaged in the discussions and much has been gained. But the case remains that little sermon content reflects the fruits of our discussion on Theological Reconstruction. Clear and logical essays have been written, but sermons are another "kettle of fish." This phenomenon gives us much food for thought.

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7 See *Tian Feng*, December/1 (2008).

As for the importance of Theological Re-construction, many of our colleagues already have a deep understanding of that. Yet if the fruits of Theological Reconstruction are to reach their "ultimate goal," the length of the journey and the difficulty involved in changing thinking may be greater than those of our colleagues who are impatient for success envisage. Since the founding of new China, many Christians have cherished the hope for a contextualized theology that would suit the realities of the context of their lives. But change in theological thinking is much more difficult than the liberation of other kinds of thinking. Theology and faith are not one and the same. But this is a truth not everyone can understand. For when most people accept faith, it already encompasses a definite theological understanding, and they are very quick to see this kind of understanding as an "unchanging" faith. To undertake theological reflection without influencing faith will cause misgivings in some people, and we should have empathy for them.

According to the Report, after ten years of hard work, the number of colleagues and co-workers who still harbor doubts or take a wait-and-see attitude has greatly decreased. But in the church (particularly at the grass roots) extremely conservative views surface from time to time. Precisely because of this, some colleagues who are particularly adept thinkers can hardly avoid being misunderstood or even censured. Conveying the fruits of Theological Reconstruction to believers through sermons with enthusiasm and confidence requires that colleagues who actively engage in Theological Reconstruction have a high level of pastoral responsibility.

First, we must be fully confident in recognizing that God's truth is unchanging, and that we undertake theological reflection in order to better carry forward the truth of the Bible. This is beneficial in building up

the Church and it is necessary to lead believers to grow spiritually. Only when we have attained such realization can we engage in Theological Reflection with unwavering fortitude. We must also:

(1) Be brave, and dare to use appropriate language to express what we know;
(2) Give full consideration to the believers' ability to accept new ideas, continually deepening our study of the Bible, and improving our own views to render them more persuasive;
(3) Be ever prepared to engage in discussions with others in a spirit of good will. Faced with different perspectives, we must appear neither too rigid nor tossed by the winds. Rather we must embrace a sincere desire to seek the truth, to continuously enrich our own thinking, and to move forward together with our colleagues and fellow believers.

In order to accomplish the points above, we must have a basic motivation. That basic motivation should be to engage in Theological Reconstruction—not out of a desire to become famous or to establish our own prestige—but to seek the truth, to better serve the Chinese Church, and to allow the Church to develop in a genuinely healthy way in the Chinese context. For a preaching ministry of "self-propagation," we must take responsibility for the pastoral care of believers. In feeding his/her flock, a good shepherd considers whether what he/she is giving them is good grass—fresh, pure, and rich in nutrients. We must help our flocks grow to spiritual maturity, to be a generation healthy in heart and mind, to be active witnesses and not be misled by extreme and erroneous theologies to stray from the right path of faith. May God raise up more devout servants of the Lord, those who count not personal gain or loss, but

whole-heartedly engage in Theological Reconstruction and open up a new phase of "self-propagation" in the Chinese Church.

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An Overview of the Theoretical Foundation and Practical Tasks of Building New China:

The Contribution of the Chinese Church (Shanghai, 1939)

CHEN ZEMIN

Introduction

If we carefully study and analyze all the great religious, political, or social movements of history we will see that the substance of these movements cannot be separated from theory and practice. As to theory philosophical foundations determine the basic meaning and directions of the entire movement and guide its practical work, establish its ideal goals, and serve as the springs of its power. As to practice, concrete plans and organization turn empty theories into actuality, turn faith into actual strength and work, and turn ideals into realities. Ideals that are divorced from reality become irrelevant abstractions and empty talk and offer no benefit to human life; practice that lacks theoretical foundation becomes blind and sluggish floundering that even at best can lead to only partial success. In the interaction of these two elements we can see the nascent form of a philosophy.

In volume 9, issue 2 of *Truth and Life*, Mr. Wu Leichuan's article "What contribution can Christianity make to the renewal of the Chinese people?" seems intended to be the embryo of a philosophy. Many other important church leaders have also voiced similar calls. But these theories were all voiced some years ago and were all focussed on particular movements, such as those to improve life in the countryside, to build human character, and so forth. Today every aspect of of life in China–

political, social and all others–is experiencing dramatic changes, and in this special and critical era, the mission and responsibility of the Chinese church in building a new China has become great and pressing. Now we have special need fo a theory of construction that is complete and suits this special situation, and that can guide us in this important task of construction. We have even greater need for a realistic and effective plan and organization that is both all-encompassing and concrete so that we can realize our hopes and ideals, so that we can bring this war of resistance to the completion of its mission, and so that the special hopes of Christians in this war–hopes for the full revival of China, the Christianization of China, and the arrival of God's kingdom in China–can be realized through the faith and efforts of compatriots in China.

The present article is the author's weak but heartfelt and sincere call, stimulated by the needs of these times. My hope is that it will bring forth a response from China's passionate and capable Christian compatriots, so that united under the banner of Christ we can complete this great task of building our nation, bringing in the kingdom of God as it is in heaven.

The Theoretical Foundations of Construction

In the Christian theory of building a nation, the most basic issue is that of faith. Within this issue, what we need to study is whether or not the Christian faith is suitable to the task of constructing China. Let us examine this first by looking at several basic Christian beliefs.

Christian faith in God is the foundation of Christian theology, and serves as the compass for all the work of the Christian church. As we Christians construct a new China, we should take this article of faith as a pre-condition. The God in the heart of Christians is an all-capable and

all-benevolent God, the creator of all creatures and ruler of the entire universe, for everything in the universe he has a wise and complete plan; the stars in the heavens and the creatures on the earth all move and exist within a great system of which he is the master. All the turmoil in the world is also under his supervision, and it is the lot of Christians to discover his great plan and will and to act and live according to it; a meaningful life is one in which Christians do this to the utmost. This is the simple yet lofty Christian philosophy of life. Furthermore, while there are a great many unresolved disputes that make Christian philosophy complex and deep as theory, if we clean away all the loose ends and remove the disputed points, what remains are these essential truths on which the great majority agree. These are the truths that guide Christian act and thought, and they also serve as our goals in constructing a new China. If the Christian church is to fulfil its responsibility in constructing the nation, faith in God is the starting point for all of our work. In our vision of the future, a new China is one part of the universal plan of a fully good and all-powerful creator, a part that is in harmony with the rest of creation; it is a country under the control of this all-benevolent God, and a channel though which the kingdom of heaven is realized on earth.

In Christian theology God is a spiritual reality. This point of faith determines our important characteristic of our ideal new China. In this era of transition during which material civilization is developing and overtaking spiritual civilization, people sometimes come up with a mistaken understanding and estimation of material and spirit. One extreme development is materialist philosophy. Though this school of philosophy contains an element of truth in its reaction to older views' over-emphasis on spirit, it has missed the center and veered too far to the left. This is the basic reason why it opposes Christianity, and why

Christianity opposes it. Here we do not wish to enter into the endless debate between idealism and materialism. We simply stand on Christian faith, and state that our ideal new China is not a materialist country that ignores spiritual life; rather it is a country that emphasizes the spirit while not overlooking material life. It is spirit that drives the material, rather than the material governing the spiritual, because the entire establishment of the nation is built upon a part of the great plan of an all-sufficient God who is spirit.

The God of Christianity also loves peace, justice, purity, and truth. The building of new China shall take these four virtues as goals. We must steer clear of the violent contention of fascist nationalism, rid ourselves of all material and spiritual impurities and immortality, and end hypocrisy and ignorance in human society. Establishing peace, justice, purity, and love of truth in new China may seem to be too idealistic, but this is in fact the goal of Christians. We should take that which is highest as the goal of our striving, rather than pursuing goals that are lower and easier to reach and establishing a baser society and country.

Finally, the God of Christianity is love, and our method is to rely on this ultimate love to construct a new China. This idea—taking the establishment of a new China of love as our goal—will be explained in detail below when we discuss the spirit of Christianity. The Christian understanding of God is as stated above, and the Christian understanding of everything else follows and develops from this understanding. The world is the garden in which God's plan is worked out, and the physical world is the outer shell through which the spiritual world is expressed. So the view of life of the citizens of a new China is definitely not a hedonistic view in which the meaning of life is to serve the body, nor is it a self-sacrificing stoic

view; even less is it a totally materialist and mechanistic view in which the spirit is totally destroyed or denied. Instead, it is a view of life in which God's plan is realized, in which a proper relationship is established between the material and the spiritual, and in which true happiness is established. The ideal new China is a practical embodiment of the kingdom of heaven in which all kinds of conflicts are reconciled.

Christianity takes God as the loving father of the entire human race, so that all people on earth are compatriots, brothers, and sisters. In this unified and great family all of us as God's children should love each other and cooperate with each other in order to create a great fellowship. The construction of a new China should take such a view as its foundation.

Christian faith gives us proper guidance in building our nation, and gives us a nation-building goal. We also need the Christian spirit to determine our nation-building method and give us the strength for nation-building, so we should now discuss the Christian spirit. The greatest aspect of the Christian spirit is love. Broadly speaking, love is the entirety of the Christian spirit. Here let us leave aside onerous discussion and take a passage from the Bible to serve as our explication of love:

> "Love is patient; love is kind; love is not jealous or boastful or arrogant, nor does it do that which is shameful. Love does not seek its own benefit, is not quick to anger, does not keep track of the evil actions of others, does not rejoice in injustice, and loves truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Love never ends."[1]

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1 Translator's note: I have translated this passage from I Corinthians 13:4-8 directly from the Chinese text in Prof. Chen's article, using the NRSV translation as a point of reference.

If we analyze this passage of Scripture, we see that Christian love includes ten aspects: persistence, tolerance, kindness, grace, forbearance, humility, uprightness, sacrifice, love of truth, faith, and hope. If we analyze these ten virtues and seek general patterns, we find that they cover three general groupings of attitudes—those toward oneself, toward others, and toward God. With regard to self, there are four attitudes: persistence, tolerance, humility, and uprightness. With regard to others, there are three: kindness, forbearance, and sacrifice. With regard to God and truth there are three: love of truth, faith, and hope. These constitute the core of Christian moral teaching, and serve as the driving force behind the development of the church today, and they should also be part of the spirit in which we build new China. These ten attitudes or virtues form a system that can be put into practice, rather than being empty phrases. The three attitudes toward God and truth serve as the foundations for the other seven, and the source of their strength. Love of truth gives birth to faith, faith gives birth to hope, and faith and hope give birth to the strength for the carrying out of the other seven virtuous attitudes toward self and others. This is the foundation of the system of Christian love.

The four attitudes toward oneself involve an effort of cultivation, and are necessary conditions for strong character. In Mr. Wu Leichuan's article, "What contribution can Christianity make to the renewal of the Chinese people?" we find that his conclusion is that "[Christianity] can create all the leadership talent needed for the present times." In fact, in the movement to construct a new China that we are presently discussing and building, what we need is not only leadership talent; we need all kinds of talent for planning and building. We need leaders, but even more we need front-line talents who will follow the direction of leaders and carry out the actual hard

work. The cultivation of such human resources cannot rely on the revival of old China's high civilization as called for by Mr. Liang Shuming, because China's old culture and morality is only a product of the past and has the traces of feudal society. While it appears to have some points of similarity with Christian love, what Mr. Liang sees is the shell of a dead culture; in contrast, Christianity's spirit of love is vital and alive. This is the key difference between the two. (For a more detailed critique of Mr Liang's theories, see another article by the author, "A critique of Liang Shuming's theories of rural reconstruction.") Cultivation of human talent also cannot rely on the spirit of competition and progress of western material civilization and individualism for its nurture, because these are completely based on a system of individual profit. If this didn't lead to China's becoming even more divided, it would lead to imperialism. To raise up the talent China needs today, only the spirit of Christian love is suitable and efficacious. So we should expand Mr. Wu Leichuan's conclusions, and take the Christian spirit of cultivation of personal character as our principle for cultivating all the people for constructing the nation.

Building on the cultivation of personal character as mentioned above, we need to consider the attitude people take as they deal with each other. Kindness, forbearance, and sacrifice are virtues and terms distinctive to Christianity. Kindness leads to forbearance, leading to sacrifice as its highest point. This spirit of dying on the cross is a historically unique example of the highest expression of love, and is the most praiseworthy virtue of Christianity. The building of new China absolutely requires many people who are willing to cooperate sacrificially, and the cultivation of such character is a big contribution of Christianity.

In addition to the spirit of Christian love discussed above, there is one other absolutely precious and valuable asset Christianity has for the work of constructing the nation—a spirit of bravely entering the world and engaging in hard and difficult work. Perhaps this spirit can be included within that of sacrifice, but it is worth special mention because it is easy for people to overlook it among the other attributes of love. The great difference between Christianity and other religions is precisely this spirit of entering the world. Christianity is a practical religion and one that is fully one with life. If we discuss Christianity but ignore the world, it becomes the Christian metaphysics of the Middle Ages, and lacks meaning and value. We need only look at the words and actions of Christ's life, see how diligently and self-sacrificially he served among the people, see what he commanded his disciples when he left the world! We should use this kind of spirit to replace the Buddhist renunciation of the world and Confucian refinement that have influenced the hearts of Chinese people. The greatest mission of Christianity is to change society and the world, and in the special situation of China today, that means constructing a new China.

Above we have already briefly discussed Christian beliefs and the Christian spirit. Here we can conclude the theory section of this article by discussing how Christianity decides directions and methods for building a new China. Christianity's direction and method for building a new China should be determined based on three criteria. These are: 1) Christian faith and spirit; 2) the conditions in China; 3) the past experience and accomplishments of the Christian church in China. We have already examined the first two of these above, so there is no need to examine them again. The third of these is the most complex and difficult, so let us give it special attention here.

Submitting all the past work of the Christian church in China to a detailed and penetrating review would be a very difficult task. Much would need to be based on specialized academic knowledge. The American *Layman's Foreign Missions Inquiry* is a work specifically devoted to such questions, but since its vantage point and goals differ from ours, it cannot fully meet our needs as a source of reference. All we have at present is a miscellaneous set of reports, incomplete statistics, and empty and uncertain superficial judgments. At present, all we can do is, on the one hand, gather these miscellaneous data and documents, make a tentative overall evaluation, and to the extent possible—ascertain the directions and effectiveness of the church's past work to serve as a guide to our present nation-constructing efforts; on the other hand, we should actively urge the central organizations of all the nation's churches to quickly set up an investigative group to examine the work of the churches, a group which gathers especially qualified and experience experts in all areas, including evangelism, education, rural construction, and literacy work, to produce a detailed and penetrating account of the past work of the church, and to investigate the actual situation and challenges, the possibilities for future development, and best means of promotion for all areas of the church. This group should produce a concrete and definite overall plan for all the nation's churches to use and refer to. We shall come back to this idea later.

What the author wishes to do in the present article is the first of the two kinds of work mentioned above, that is, to do my best with the materials at hand to make a preliminary evaluation and examination of what our nation-building work and method should be. This is discussed in combination with the practical work of constructing the nation below, so here I will not discuss it separately.

The Practical Work of Constructing the Nation

Above I have discussed the Christian church's philosophical and theoretical foundation for building a new China. This serves as the basis and compass for the practical work discussed below. The explanatory notes to the title of the present article include the following words: "Emphasize the practical and avoid empty talk." So what follows is the most important part of the article, the part which the author most hopes fellow Christians will give their attention to, offering criticisms and corrections, and providing mutual encouragement in its implementation.

When examining the practical work of building the nation, there is one thing that we definitely should not forget—as we as the Christian church wish to construct a new China, we should stand on a solid and united foundation, and hold to a shared faith, and goal in our efforts. So, this work is comprehensive rather than fragmented, and takes the Lord Christ as its head. While it has many facets, they cannot be separated from each other. For the sake of convenience, many people separate this work into spiritual and material work. This is correct if we see these as two different kinds of work within one unified plan and project, but it would be a great mistake to see these as two as separable and independent. Some people whose work focuses on the spiritual even go to the extreme of thinking that spiritual work is the entirety of Christian work, ignoring the link between religion and life. Overlooking the fact that human life cannot be separated from its material conditions leads to a decadent and narrow "personal gospel" in which individual spiritual cultivation is the only impact of religious faith. The result is detachment from the world, which threatens the nation and the entire world. On the other hand, some view the material work of Christians as everything, with the result

that they lose the real meaning of the spirit of religion and fall away from religion, becoming materialist social reformers. This also is not what we should do. These two camps even attack each other and tear each other down, which is the most regrettable thing in Christian work. Now what we should see clearly is that spiritual civilization is the soul of material civilization, and material civilization is the body of spiritual civilization. These two are inseparable, and as we discuss various aspects of the Christian work of construction, this is a point we need to frequently remind ourselves of. Take, for example, the task of rural reconstruction. This task combines both spiritual and material work, and we cannot distinguish which takes the bigger part, so the epistemology of our philosophy of construction is not entirely idealist, even less is it mechanical dualism, and it is also not entirely materialist. Instead it is a Christian philosophy with love at its core that harmonizes the spiritual and material. We have discussed this above.

However, in practical terms, with a view toward making our work more convenient, we have no other choice than to divide our work between separate departments, because the task is far too great and this is not something that can be completed by an individual or small group working alone. So, in order to complete the task, we need an organization, and we need the work to be distributed appropriately by the organization. As we discuss this kind of work, we need to discuss according to how the task is divided according to the system of organization. But we should understand that what we are discussing is different aspects of one whole task.

Let us start by discussing the task of spiritual construction. With regard to this, there are at least five tasks the Christian church can do, divided according to their nature and degree of progress. The lines separating

these tasks are not entirely clear and they overlap each other to a considerable extent, as is often unavoidable with the social sciences. Now let us look at these five.

1. Evangelistic work

In all work that is presupposed by the task of constructing the nation, evangelistic work should be distinguished to some degree from "preaching the gospel" in the ordinary sense in terms of their significance and methods. Here we are concerned with evangelistic work, in other words, active rather than passive evangelism. The purpose of this evangelism is to make people firmer in their faith so as to give correct guidance to their lives, so this kind of evangelism is not overly concerned with issues of sin and rewards, but rather with giving people a Christian love outlook in their daily lives, with giving them hope and creating proper and perfect ideals and–with such ideals as their goals–with helping them set high moral standards, build new habits of life, and prepare for the coming of the kingdom of heaven. Here we should refer to the experience and achievements of past evangelistic work. In the past, evangelism made up most of the church's work, and in some places all of it. This is the work to which most church human effort and funds were devoted, and in which achievements were most evident and most worthy of our attention. But if we examine this carefully, we will see that in much past evangelistic work, most attention was given to teaching doctrine, the Bible, and church governance, and that less attention was given to the practical aspects of living out Christian doctrine in daily life and using Christian teachings to develop a progressive view of life. In other words, in the past evangelism was quite successful with regard to form and organization, but our ideal results—building a new view of life, setting new standards,

and forming the basis of a new Christianized society–have not yet been reached. This is like the revival movement that has been popular in the last few years. Superficially it appears to be a very positive phenomenon, but in fact many wonder whether those whose who are moved have a fundamental change in the way they approach life or permanent changes in the way they live their lives. Various kinds of travelling gospel teams, "boat and cart" evangelistic bands, "new spring" evangelism teams and so forth do only the work of introducing the gospel, but probably too few can thoroughly inject the Christian spirit into the lives of the audience. There are various kinds of fellowship group movements that have deeper impact, and such efforts are very hopeful, but because of issues such as geographic limitations, limited time, and narrowly focused interests such fellowships can rarely become widespread movements. Also, fellowships have a natural tendency to become cliques, which is an inherent feature of group psychology, and if we are not careful this could become an obstacle to evangelism efforts.

In general, it has been common for past evangelistic work to place too much emphasis on promotion and to neglect deeper study. Too many people only see the form of Christianity and the outline of its doctrine, but their real understanding of it is all too shallow; so Christianity doesn't have much impact on their lives or give them any strong guidance. This is a lesson from the past to which we should pay much attention in our work of construction.

In order to correct the mistakes of the past and make up for weaknesses, we should thoroughly re-evaluate our evangelistic work, and should invest a little more effort and time in ensuring that those who accept Christianity see the implications of Christianity for their lives. From the Christian faith, we should seek out truths that fit into our nation-building goals; we should hold onto Christian faith

as the rudder of life, as the ideal for life in new China, and as our goal in living, so that out of this grows hope and strength. This is the most basic task in constructing a new China, and what is most effective in shouldering this task is not temporary evangelistic and revival meetings but rather a church that has become integrated with its society; the most essential people for this kind of work are pastors and evangelists because it is they who have the deepest interactions with both believers and the common people, and are hence able to show Christian spirit and faith through their lives and give the people a powerful challenge. What we should now give the most attention to is this basic construction, strengthening the evangelistic work of all the churches so that they may spread the spirit of Christianity at the most fundamental levels of society, building strong faith among the people and serving as a base for constructing a new China.

2. Educational work

In the past the educational work of the church has been its most fruitful. From the perspective of the average person who doesn't pay much attention to evangelism, the educational efforts of the church have made the greatest contribution to China. Church schools have made an undeniable contribution in China's modem cultural history. But in the past ten years, like other aspects of church work, church school work has been gradually giving ground to a trend to emphasize other church organizations. Educational institutions are among the most important institutions in society, and in the work of constructing a new China the use of education as a tool is very important. So we should research how to use education to best effect in this great movement to build the nation.

The noun "education" is very broad, so in order to avoid repetition for the moment we should narrow our definition. By the term "education," here we mean only three kinds—church schools, education in the home, and Christian education. Ten years ago, church schools were the leaders in contributing to education and cultural circles in China. They introduced Western academics and use of Western methods, establishing the foundation for a new culture in China. At that time, many of the schools in China with the best equipment and highest standards were church schools, and many outstanding people in cultural circles were graduates of church schools. If the same trend had continued to the present the situation of churches in China today would probably be very different. However, the voices protesting the cultural imperialism of the foreign powers became louder, and people became more suspicious of Christian education and schools. Also, both private and public education in China advanced rapidly, and in many respects surpassed that of church schools, so now church schools are experiencing decline. This is something we should pay attention to and take seriously in our work of construction.

Church schools are the institutions through which the church cultivates talent for society, which is the greatest contribution of the church to society, something on which almost all both inside and outside the church agree. But, in the process of building China, the question now becomes: what is the special responsibility of church schools? Now many state and private schools have disbanded or suspended their work and temporary schools with special missions have sprung up in the rear areas of China. Those church schools which have not been ravaged by war should recognize the needs of the times and work effectively, so that the work of building the nation is not undermined

by the closing of schools, and so that our nation building ideals are not diverted by the current special situation. Producing educated and talented people for the needs of constructing the nation is a most important work. But it is even more important to train such people so that they have noble ideals and goals, great character, and will definitely use their talents and learning to serve the nation and the people. In the past there was one failure of church schools that we must admit; many students who underwent "religious molding" were not obviously any better than students who did not undergo "religious molding," and some were actually worse. In this War of Resistance, many people see that China's past education was a failure and, in the past, most education was in the hands of church schools. Thus, the failure of Chinese education is the failure of church education, and as we undertake the task of constructing a new China this lesson of past experience is worth our attention. Therefore, in church schools, religious and character education plays a very important part.

If we tie the Christian spirit and faith to this question we are discussing, the contribution of church schools to constructing the nation is even greater. Church schools are the institutions that give the Christian spirit to the people to make them effective workers in constructing the nation, and are the places where Christian faith is passed on to most people. If they are well run, church educational institutions will be the places where personnel for the construction of a new China are produced.

The work of Christian education in the home is as important as the work of Christian schools. In the past, the achievements of Christian education in the home have not been so visible because this is a relatively personal matter. However, the Christian family movement flourished for a time, and this was a beneficial effort. In the process of

building a new China, this is an indispensable link. The family is the smallest among society's social units, and is the most important among society's primary groups. We cannot say that ideal individuals can form an ideal society, but ideal families are the main factor in organizing an ideal society. The Christian family movement is an aspect of social education—a very fundamental one—and is the foundation of a new China's society. For education in the home, there is no education that is more perfect and efficacious than education in Christian love, and this is also one of the greatest contributions of Christianity to the constructing of a new China.

Religious education is slightly different from the two kinds of education mentioned above. The religious education referred to here consists of the work of religious education groups other than schools and families. These groups are often attached to churches, voluntarily organized by children or young people and guided and trained by religious education staff of the churches. These are the best organizations for training young people for service work, and they include youth fellowships, YMCAs, Sunbeam Bands, and so forth. These are all bodies for after-school activities, organized around the interests of young people, and can help young people develop many valuable virtues, train their talents for service, and cultivate their spiritual lives. For some young people, the benefits they gain from these organizations are greater than those from school or family The church can mold many precious workers in this way, and also give them religious training. The uncompleted work of realizing the kingdom of heaven in China is waiting in large part for such organizations. Such religious education fits people's lives, and is precisely the kind our churches should have.

3. Publishing work

Christian publishing, like church schools, has contributed greatly to China's new culture movement. In a recent article, Zhu Weizhi of the University of Shanghai has discussed this point. In the past, Christian publishing was quite extensive. When the new culture was in its beginning stages, Christianity exerted no small efforts to cultivate and nourish it. But now we are falling behind. Every year the Christian Literature Society for China, the Association Press, and other such organizations produce quite a few new books, but in comparison to the total number of readers in China the numbers are too small, and most of these books tend to be relatively theoretical. ln the constructing of a new China, we also need to start a new movement in publications. ln bookstores there are too many books that obstruct the task of construction, and too little of practical value to constructing the nation is published. This is an opportunity for revival in Christian publishing, and this is the time for Christian writers to arise and make their voices heard. Just look at the confused state Chinese literature is currently in. In both its thought and form, time and again we can see evidence of naïveté and weakness. Occasionally a few writers strike out and call for raising the quality of literature or for other special literary movements, but among both opponents and supporters there is a lack of powerful writers and high-quality readers. So far there are few literary works of real value, and within Christian literature such quality works are even rarer. In the West, Christianity has an important place in literature. There are many famous works by Christian authors, and these have served as guides for many social reformers and inspired many valuable social movements. Our new China needs this kind of new and valuable literature, and in the process of constructing a

new China we even more need such literature to inspire the enthusiasm of citizens in constructing the nation. Christian writers should view such a responsibility as very important. Christian publishing organizations should also make haste to encourage young writers to write. Among young Christians, there are many talents that have not yet been discovered, and churches and church leaders should take up the responsibility of finding and digging out such talents so that they are not buried and so that the garden of Christian literature is not neglected and barren.

Using Christian literature as a vehicle for evangelism is very effective if we can really produce good literature. This is a relatively new ministry with a very bright future. The cultural climate and mood of a nation is sometimes greatly influenced by special literature of its age, and as we engage in the task of construction it is necessary to have several powerful literary works; we long for several new books that are filled with the spirit of Christianity. May the leaders of the church no longer neglect this kind of ministry and may bright flowers soon spring up in the garden of a new China's literature.

Cooperative writing between Christian authors is another effective new ministry. A few years ago we had organizations like the association of young Christian authors, and this was a very hopeful development. We hope that the church can again encourage this kind of movement, so that Christian writers working toward a common goal can produce collective works, works of genuine literary merit, to serve as a source of guidance and strength for constructing new China.

4. Medical work

The "medical work" referred to here is quite broad. In the past the medical work achievements of the church,

especially with the assistance of western mission agencies, have been considerable, and in medical circles in China they still play a guiding role. However, we believe that the church can do even more. Simply treating diseases is definitely necessary in a poor China, but we have even greater work and hopes, and medical work in future China has an even greater mission.

At present, nursing wounded soldiers and refugees is a task calling for all our efforts. Our nation has many inadequacies in medicine and medical equipment, and has experienced many serious losses, and this is definitely something that we should work on. But after the war, treating diseases and accumulating medical equipment and training is a big task in national construction. There are ways in which church organisations and people can presently make a contribution in this regard. We only need to unite our doctors and nurses together in a large organization, mutually encouraging each other with Christ's love, and working together to research, to plan, and to carry out plans, and the people of China will be spared many innocent deaths and much pointless wasting of strength in struggles with disease and weakness. An ideal healthy China depends much on our efforts!

5. Social work

This is a relatively vague term because we use it to cover all the kinds of work not covered by the terms above, such as the work of the YMCA and other social service organizations. In the past Christianity has already invested much effort in such work. However, in this time when the old social system has been shattered by war and chaos and the new system is already under construction, the responsibility of Christian social service is even more pressing and urgent. Evangelistic, educational,

publication and the other kinds of work mentioned above are all foundation-laying long term efforts, and the accomplishments we hope for do not depend on immediate realization. However, before these accomplishments materialize, tens of millions or hundreds of millions of our compatriots will have lost their social ties due to war. Amidst poverty and disorder, if there is no good way to provide relief to them and help them resolve the serious problems in their lives, they may well generate very negative consequences for society. These problems are very immediate, and pose a great challenge to us. While such work is not the basis on which to build a new China, it is the start of building a new China. These are not tasks that pre-existing social work organizations are capable of handling on their own, but rather a cross that the whole church needs to bear. Whether or not the church has the strength to contribute to the construction of a future new China will be seen in such work now.

So far our discussion has journeyed from spiritual culture to social life. Next we should examine what kind of contribution Christianity can make to the economic structure of a new China. From a materialist perspective, this would be most fundamental. Here we have placed it at the end not because it is secondary or unimportant. We acknowledge that economic organization is a most important part of society, and if Christianity only exerts itself with regard to spiritual culture and ignores material life, then our overall Christian theory of nation building cannot be put into practice and would instead be only empty imaginings.

Christian "economic construction" is a relatively new work, and many people have harbored doubts about such a term. This has been a mistake, one that we should now strive to correct. If our religion is one that is integrated into life—indeed, if our religion is life itself—then we should

give attention to every aspect of life, and not ignore the material aspects of life. Dr. Stanley Jones' book *Christ's Alternative to Communism* is a powerful challenge to Christian over-emphasis on the spiritual. Christ's answer in the wilderness when tempted by the devil was "Man should not live by bread alone" not "Man does not live by bread." When Christ raised the widow's son from the dead, the instruction he gave us was "Give him something to eat." Furthermore, we can find much evidence that would lead us to believe that if Jesus lived in today's China, he would definitely call for more than what the church has done in the past. Real Christianity is a religion of life, and addresses every aspect of life.

So we need to raise the slogan of Christian economic construction, and let all the people of the nation know that we are not empty idealists. In the work of constructing new China, we need to strive to set up a new Christianized economic structure to serve as the foundation for the other kinds of construction.

However, the issue of economic construction in today's China is difficult and complex. There are many different views and parties, and many disagreements and conflicts. Even if we only look at rural economic construction, there is a huge range of divergent views among scholars. Now with the war, much is being heard of the so-called Chinese Industrial Cooperative movement. Ultimately, faced with such the massive problem of economic construction, how much can our church do? What can we do? These questions go to the heart of what is discussed in this article, and are the questions to which the author wishes to call the attention of co-workers in Christ.

Let's start from rural reconstruction. If we remove the spiritual culture elements of the rural reconstruction movement, what remains is within the domain of economic

construction. Above we have already briefly discussed spiritual culture construction, so here, in order to avoid repetition, we will focus on the economic aspects of rural reconstruction.

Over the last ten years, the call for rural reconstruction has been increasing daily, though it has fallen off somewhat recently due to the war. If we investigate the rural reconstruction work and theory of each place and organization, we will see that with the exception of the Rural Reconstruction Institute of Mr. Liang Shuming in Shandong, neither Christian or non-Christian rural reform has been tied to construction of the nation. Many who carry out this kind of work simply feel that in rural areas bankruptcy is too severe and life is too bitter, so that there is no choice but to provide relief. The successful cases of Ding County and Ping Church, of the well-known Li Chuan rural reconstruction project, and cases of bank loans to rural areas - all are related to concerns of relief. Only Mr. Liang Shuming's rural construction theory is a systematic and visionary nation-building philosophy. Even though his proposals and ours as Christians differ somewhat in purpose and principles, and we cannot fully agree with his epistemology and methodology, his rural construction philosophy definitely provides the nation constructing efforts of the church with valuable guidance and stimulation.

In the constructing of a new China, we should give much effort to rural reconstruction, and there is no need to spill much ink explaining the reasons why this is true. China's historical background, China's current situation, and China's geography all make the rural reconstruction movement the most pressing one in China. Even though rural reconstruction cannot solve all of the problems facing China at the moment and cannot achieve much on its own,

and even though there are many other important tasks for us, rural reconstruction is without a doubt an indispensable part of constructing a new China. Most important is that the church should see this clearly, and place rural reconstruction and national construction together in a single unified plan, and also take this as a responsibility of the church.

Even though the rural reconstruction movement was a fairly late development, and most of its work has been experimental in nature, these experiments have already given us much important and valuable knowledge and guidance. Until the outbreak of the war there were already almost 200 rural reconstruction sites, and of these more than twenty were managed by churches or church organizations. Of these the rural reconstruction project in Li Chuan was the most successful. Also, many Christians have served at sites not associated directly with the church; Dr. James Yen in Ding County is an important example.

In the past rural reconstruction organizations nationwide held three conferences, leaving us with three thick and valuable books of conference reports. In 1933, the National Christian Council of China also held a rural reconstruction conference in Ding County, with more than 100 participants representing 14 provinces and 15 organizations, and this conference also published a rural reconstruction conference report containing many precious presentation papers, work reports, and practical work plan outlines. These events and records now provide us with at least the following points of guidance:

1. Christian rural reconstruction work is an important part of our work of constructing a new China, but this work is somewhat behind that of organizations outside the church, so we should quickly make efforts to catch up.

2. Christian rural development work should not be done for the narrow goal of evangelizing; the purpose is rather rural reconstruction work itself. This is part of building the kingdom of heaven on earth. So in planning such work, we should pay attention not to put evangelism in the domain of rural development work. It is best that evangelism and rural development work are carried out by two separate bodies, working in cooperation but without one being administered under the other. In other words, the church's social gospel and individual gospel should proceed parallel to each other, each supporting the other.
3. All previous rural reconstruction work has seemed to have an experimental flavor, or seemed to be a mix of relief work and experimentation. Now we should expand this work, turning the results of past experiments into a large-scale plan and carrying out positive construction work. Many of the inefficient methods tried in the past, such as excessive expenditure of money and human investment, should now be avoided, and we should use the Christian spirit to encourage many young people to undertake training and become directly involved in rural reconstruction.
4. We should set up national guiding and supervisory bodies to be responsible for overall management and planning of rural reconstruction work. This is a need that was felt commonly by several hundred representatives at the third national conference on rural reconstruction. In this conference that was not purely a conference, many complicated relationships prevented a unified national plan from being realized. Even though Dr. Xu Baoqian presented such a suggestion, and it received the sympathy of most of the representatives, in the end it didn't succeed. In the meetings called by the National Christian Council

of China, such a proposal has also been made, but it has not been realized due to issues of personal relationships. However, as rural reconstruction work becomes increasingly developed, the need for such unity is increasingly pressing. Especially now as we need large-scale construction efforts to replace small-scale experimental projects, this unity is needed. It is easier to unify the work of Christian organizations working toward a common goal, rather than the current situation of different church organizations working toward different goals, so we should call on the sympathy of the existing experimental projects to work toward the achievement of a united rural reconstruction movement.

5. Improvement and sharing of technical skills is an important part of rural reconstruction work, and we should invest effort in this, rather than placing all of our efforts into organization and evangelism. Dr. Xu Baoqian has noted that "We are putting ample spirit into evangelism but not enough into daily practical work." This is a serious indictment of our past Christian work. In the future we need to emphasize the improvement and sharing of techniques, and especially emphasize the effectiveness of practical working methods, so that the rural reconstruction work of churches will not consist mainly of research edited into reports.
6. With an eye to avoiding bureaucratization of rural reconstruction work and other malpractices, Christian rural reconstruction work should not rely on political support for its implementation. The only effective method in our work is the love of Christ. Relying on political power will result in rapid but temporary advances in the impact of our rural reconstruction work, but the end result is often that reconstruction

work that was filled with vitality becomes rigidified with rules, killing our spirit of creativity. It is best if we cooperative with the government in a spirit of friendship, working toward common goals, but not be organizationally tied to the government.

7. The rural reconstruction conference report of the National Christian Council of China contains many concrete plans and proposals. While some of these have now lost their original value because time has passed and the social situation has changed, others can still be implemented, and we should do so promptly. Otherwise, we not only disappoint the efforts and hopes of participants in the conference but also lose a ready-made source of assistance.

The above addresses rural reconstruction, one aspect of national construction that the church has already begun to recognize the importance of. Two additional aspects to be developed are industry and commerce.

With regard to the question of the church's work in constructing industry and commerce, many people would have doubts, because it seems more reasonable for the nation to develop industry and more effective for commerce to be either private or a combination of national and private. After all, the church generally doesn't like to engage in material works for profit. However, we should note this: The task of the church in constructing industry and commerce is not direct management of industry or business by the church, but rather something different in purpose and method. According to political economists, heavy industry should be managed by the state, and this is a principle we accept. However, in the past, for a variety of reasons, the church has taken an opposing stance toward the state (though not an antagonistic one), and had an attitude of unconcern for the government. In

the past, the deepest involvement of the church with the nation and government consisted of prayer. So as soon as it is acknowledged that many kinds of work should be managed by the state, the church no longer talks about them and lets the state handle them by itself, as if such matters were completely unrelated to the church. This is an erroneous attitude that we should correct, and here lies the significance of our industrial work in economic construction.

At present, as everyone knows, China needs extensive industrial facilities. ln the past because our economy was backward, even though China had rich natural resources we had no way to develop them. Every year we suffered great losses as they were developed by our low-efficiency labor under the dominance of the foreign powers. To rectify this situation, the most effective strategy is to develop our industry However, in a country as large as China, even if the government had deep financial resources and the most effective administrative power, it would be hard to be successful in immediately starting a big project to develop industry without the devoted cooperation of most of the people. The responsibility of Christianity consists of calling on citizens both in and outside the church to respect the government's plans for industrial construction, and in every area—including human resources, capital, and administration—give the utmost cooperative support.

With regard to human resources the church can help more than in other areas. In the process of developing industry we need technicians who have good character, a spirit of sacrifice, and high degrees of professional training, and churches can serve as important bodies for training such people, especially with regard to spirit and character.

However, because in the past the church only paid

attention to building character and the spirit, we seem to have neglected technical training to some extent. Here we only need to look at professional training bodies established by the church such as colleges and research institutes. Outside medical training, which is associated with charity work, achievements in areas of technical training seem relatively weak. This is a result of the incorrect attitude mentioned above, and something we should start trying to correct.

The situation described above is just a generalization. Amidst the special situation facing China the government is occupied with prosecuting the war and maintaining social order, so the responsibility on the shoulders of the church for training specialized personnel is heavier. In this area the church should make greater efforts to move forward!

There is one more point we cannot overlook. In the midst of developing industry China should avoid the dangerous road taken by capitalist Western nations. The taking of this road by China is something about which many people have doubts, and is something that we Christians should give special attention to. The dead end the industrial nations of the West have now reached is not an inherent result of developing industry but rather represents an unnatural situation resulting from extreme individualism and liberalism. If we can use the Christian spirit and faith to drive the process of industrial development, keep watch at every step to prevent selfishness from seeping in, and take the realization of the kingdom of heaven as our goal, we can certainly avoid this unfortunate result.

Finally, the Chinese Industrial Cooperative Movement, which is currently being promoted, is a plan that is worthy of study by the church. Here it is not necessary to provide a detailed introduction to this project. Our hope is merely

that the church will pay a little more attention to industrial development. With regard to business, our hope is the creation of a new commerce system so as to eliminate the defects of the profit system. We should recognize the fundamental impact of commerce on society, and fill the majority of the people with the Christian spirit so that they realize the kingdom of heaven on earth in their commerce. Perhaps religious work, educational work, and social work are ways to realize this hope. In any case, at present we have no promising concrete plan, but through faith and hope, we feel that the establishment of this new commerce system is an area in which the church can contribute to China. And this is something which we should be able to achieve in the future.

Now we have already generally discussed all the kinds of work the Christian church can do for the construction of a new China. Here we should again state that these individual works areas are the individual parts of one large movement, driven by a single force toward one ultimate goal. This is one holistic Christian movement to build the nation, one that draws on Christian faith as its strength and takes the realizing of the kingdom of heaven as its goal. This is because each of these parts are tied together to produce a complete overall impact. In order to reach our goal, we must have one central organization to serve as the overall plan designer and promoter of this movement. So the "overall mind" of Mr. Liang Shuming is a necessary part of this movement.

Concrete Organization

Above we have already seen that a unified nation-wide organization is greatly needed in the rural reconstruction movement, and lack of such an organization is a serious problem. Similarly, if we wish to promote our Christian

movement to build a new China we must also study how to create a well-structured and strong national organization, and also find ways to avoid or solve the difficulties and malpractices faced in past church unification movements. Here we need to understand a distinction. The unified national organization spoken of here is not the same as the united national church of which we often speak, in other words, the elimination of denominations. Instead, our purpose is, in the process of carrying out a responsibility shared by all churches in China, to establish one massive cooperative effort based on a shared mission, shared needs, and a shared faith. There have been many examples of this kind of thing in the past, but most relate to one particular area of work. These existing joint organizations could unite into the ideal large organization of which I speak, but they could not shoulder the heavy task of building a new China in its place.

In the past, the issue of church unification has given rise to a great deal of controversy. Because at present all the churches realize that the mission of the Christian church in China faces them with shared needs and a shared situation, the feeling is growing that the unification of the churches is an indispensable part of church progress. However, this is only a shared feeling. In practice, due to differences in mission agencies, economic support, faith, and organization, the church unification movement has encountered many difficulties. Now our Christian movement to build a new China is actually a vehicle for dissolving many of these differences. We are not advocating this movement of national construction in order to unify the church; however, for the sake of the nation constructing movement, we simply must have a considerable degree of oneness in spirit, work, and organization. In the process of advancing this movement, for the sake of shared work and a shared mission, the

church is naturally uniting, so that the church in China is becoming one family in the Lord. This is a natural outcome, and a necessary aspect of the realization of the kingdom of heaven.

But what form would a unified organization for the building of a new China take? Given the present situation of the church, the National Christian Council of China would be an appropriate and solid organization to serve as a starting point, because it presently has the strength to call on all the churches of the nation it has strong human resources, and is viewed as a leading organization by churches all over China. So we hope that the Christian Council can carefully consider this movement, and then summon representatives from church organizations and different churches to hold a large-scale conference to discuss an overall church nation-constructing body and also choose staff for the overall body (such as board members). It would be best if these representatives were leaders within different churches and church organizations in different areas so that they could represent the views of different churches, organizations, and regions, carry out the plan nation-wide, and recommend experts from different churches. This is the first step of organizing. Next, the chosen representatives should set up a tightly structured central body according to the outline plan decided by the representative conference, and gather different kinds of experts from across the nation to serve as the staff of the central body. It would then be up to these experts in the central body to decide the next steps of carrying out this movement's plan. This is the second step.

The third step involves grassroots-level work. Under this unified organization, each church, church district, and church organization would, in the spirit of Christ, carry out the concrete work following the plan of the central body and—with strong faith and hope—complete the plan.

This organization and plan would not be experimental in nature. This would be a practical general mobilization so, in order to avoid large-scale mistakes, it would be very important for the central body to gather many specialists to carry out research and supervisory work.

This idea is only a very general opinion. Specific and practicable methods would need to be determined by those with special expertise who are in charge of administering and organizing. What is described above is only the author's ideal for the great movement; I also point out that the work of national construction cannot succeed without systematic organization.

Finally, within all the plans and work, the condition that determines the success or failure of the entire movement is the source of our effort and our strength. The entire work of Christianity is built on faith, and the source of strength for our work lies in our faith and in our leader Jesus Christ, to whom no one can compare. Why can't we achieve even greater works than others? Christ has already promised us that we can do even greater things than he did. Christ has already picked up the cross, blown the first trumpet call of the movement for the kingdom of heaven, and laid the foundation for this movement. Fulfilling the implications of his death on the cross falls to us as Christians. Completing the great task of building the kingdom of heaven on earth falls to us as Christians. Making China into a Christianized country and making it a model of the kingdom of heaven on earth falls to us as Christians!

Conclusion

The plea above is not a new one. It represents rather the thoughts, desires and strength found in the heart of many Christians. I have already heard similar sighs, and

sensed a similar growing of Christ's life in our hearts. In the midst of cruel war, in the midst of Christ's blood flowing on the cross, we need to gather such desires together, uniting scattered strength into a great movement, and bringing the spirit of the great movement Christ began in Palestine into the chaos of China today, to serve as comfort to those who are disappointed, to serve as a gathering of strength, to serve as a revelation of hope, and to serve as light in the darkness!

Watching the bodies of our compatriots shattered, watching the achievements of centuries torched into ashes in the blink of an eye, watching our burdened motherland gradually disintegrate, how can our young hearts be still? How can we keep our lips tight together? Watching the budding of new hope, watching the twinkling light in the darkness, watching the work of God's saving grace in this turmoil, watching the glory of the heavenly kingdom promised by Christ, how can we not call out the hope and passion in our hearts even more loudly!

This is but a weak call from the heart of a Christian, but I believe that in the hearts of many compatriots across the country it will find an echo, and my hope is that these echoes will combine into a loud roar calling forth the sympathy of Christians across the nation, inspiring great power, and bringing the hoped for heavenly kingdom into reality in China, so that all glory be given to the all-holy, all-powerful, and all-loving Father in heaven!

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Translated by Don Snow.

God is with Us

CHEN ZEMIN

Text: Matthew 1:23: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," *which means*, "God is with us."

"Which means": This short phrase is easily overlooked. Without it, however, the term Emmanuel is indecipherable. Recording what the angel of the Lord said to Joseph in a dream, the writer of Matthew's Gospel used the words of the prophet Isaiah. But in transcribing the name the angel gave Joseph for the name of the son who would be born to him, the writer was moved by the Holy Spirit, and felt he had to translate the meaning of the Hebrew word "Emmanuel" used in the book of the prophet.

There are some words in the Bible that, if they appear only in the original language and are not translated, remain no more than distinctive or unusual terms, terms we use without really understanding them. Once they are translated, however, the character of the people these words represent, their lives and significance, come to life before our eyes. For example, Cephas means a rock or stone and is the name given to Peter, the rock; Barnabas translated means the Consoler; Melchizedek translated means King of Righteousness, King of Peace. Emmanuel, our Lord Jesus Christ's name, translated, means "God is with us," and this is the promise of the gospel of Christ.

There are other words in the Bible as well that the biblical writers have not immediately translated, or even have kept in the original throughout, and the thing or sense the original evoked has become obscured to the point of

unintelligibility—words such as Urim and Thummim. Biblical scholars and archaeologists can only speculate or simply guess what these are or what they signify, because they were never translated.

Judges Chapter 12 tells of the war between Ephraim and Gilead. Ephraim was defeated and driven out. As the Ephraimites fled, the Gileadites, knowing that Ephraimites could not pronounce certain sounds clearly, would ask them to say "shibboleth." The Ephraimites could not say the "sh" sound, pronouncing the word "sibboleth" instead, and were thus unmasked as they attempted to flee. "Shibboleth" originally meant an "ear of grain" or "river," but that meaning has been lost and it has come to mean a password or catchword. Though meaningless in itself, a password and the ability to repeat it on demand is proof of whether a person belongs to a certain group or denomination. The actual meaning of the password is unimportant.

Shibboleth is not translated and the original sense of the word has been lost, but it does not matter in the least. But if the meaning of Emmanuel had been lost, if Emmanuel were treated as some sort of shibboleth, that loss would be great indeed.

Sometimes, when we write letters, we use "Emmanuel" as a greeting; we don't want to translate it. This reminds me of the words *zu xia* (足下), used in old-style measurements. The people using the phrase had long forgotten its origin in the story of Duke Wen of Jin and his advisor and friend Jie Zhitui. If Emmanuel were to go the same way as *zu xia*, it would really be too awful.

And there really is a danger that Emmanuel would go the way of shibboleth, so it must be translated!

When Christmas comes around, many people like to decorate the church with paper cutouts of the characters for Emmanuel (*Yimaneili* 以马内利) or write them on

New Year's banners. Actually there is nothing wrong with this. But it must be translated. And Emmanuel, translated, means "God is with us."

Religion is spiritual life. It is both very precious and very mysterious. Religious believers are frequently unwilling or unable to use everyday words to explain or describe their religious life. They must have recourse to symbolic language or objects to express the loftiest and most abstract experiences of the religious life. But these religious symbols have religious and spiritual value only when their experience and meaning can be expressed. Over the course of time, the original meaning frequently becomes overlooked or forgotten. It is in danger of becoming a shibboleth. When a religious symbol retains only its external form and loses its links to the experience, spirit, and meaning of what it represents, it becomes a kind of ornament, an idol, a slogan.

The cross expresses God's great love and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ's redemptive sacrifice, the believer's precious experience of being united with the Father through faith by relying on Christ. But many people make the cross into a kind of ornament—even Hitler made it (the iron cross) something to bestow on those who distinguished themselves as assassins. The true meaning must be made plain.

Religion is Life. Jesus said, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10: 10). But some people make "life" into a shibboleth that they use to judge whether some others belong to some denomination or group. They should tell the real meaning of life. Yes, we should translate "religion," and life, not only in language or writing, but through our lives.

A symbol is simply a tool, a method. Along with other activities of the religious life—prayer, Bible reading, worship, sacraments, etc.—it exists to reach the goal of the

most sublime, most genuine religious life. We use these various ways and practices to enable us to achieve the true life in abundance that the Lord has promised. This life is by no means a kind of subjective imagination or feeling, but a concrete expression of real life. It is not a label that we fix to some part of our life, even less a shibboleth—life—that we shout from time to time. One who truly believes in Christ, must speak out "Emmanuel" plainly in his or her own life, so that others who see may know that God is indeed with them, whether or not they have hung a golden cross round their necks, whether "they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long" (Matt. 23:5), whether they appear to be in a sorry state, so that others may know that they have been fasting and praying for many days, whether or not they carry around a Bible and the knees of their trousers are worn through—all this piety and seeking is good and "necessary" but much more important, most importantly, is that all this be translated into the language of life that can be understood by anyone. It cannot be just a matter of religious signs and symbols, which, though they evoke feelings of veneration, remain quite mysterious.

"If anyone speaks in a tongue…let one interpret; But if there is no one to interpret, let them be silent in church and speak to themselves and to God"; "Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret" (1Cor. 14:27, 28; 14:13).

May our Emmanuel not simply be an interpreted tongue.

One who does not simply say Emmanuel in Hebrew, but speaks that name in gestures and actions, expressing the truth that God is with us, is a more genuine Christian than one who always uses "Emmanuel" as a greeting in letters. Jesus says it is not the one who goes around mumbling Lord, Lord, but the one who reveres the will of

God in real life that will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

It may be that a person is unable to memorize the Nicene Creed or the Apostles Creed, yet lives out the command to love God and love one's neighbor, interpreting the contents of the Creeds in action—that person is more righteous in Jesus' eyes than the Pharisee or scribes.

It may be that a person is not adept in observing the doctrines or practices of some denomination, or cannot roll religious jargon off his or her tongue, but expresses devotion and adoration through his or her life for God's truth, justice, holiness, and love. Then we know that one has life more abundantly, and is more pleasing to God than one who is nominally Christian.

"The word made flesh and dwelt among us, filled with grace and truth." If the word was not interpreted in the flesh—if the term Logos, beloved of theologians and philosophers, was all the truth we had—then it could not be "filled," and even less could it dwell among us. Christ Jesus interpreted that "in the beginning was the Word," through his own life. And only then could that God whom no one has ever seen, take shape through the life of Christ Jesus. Jesus asks us to interpret him also, to use our life to make our faith plain!

"Emmanuel, which means God is with us."

Nanjing, 1954

Quest and Witness, Selected Writings of Chen Zemin. Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2007, 81-83.

To Unite All in Christ, That We May Become One

CHEN ZEMIN

Text: Eph. 1.9-10; 4.13

"With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to this good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, to gather all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. … Until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ."

The topic of my sermon this morning is "to unite all in Christ that we may become one", or in Chinese, "同归于一." It is a sermon that I had preached in America, about nine years ago, when I was invited to attend a Global Mission Conference. The focus for the conference was on the church in China. The planning committee had chosen Ephesians for the Bible study sessions. At the end of the Conference I was asked to preach at the auditorium of the Conference Center, and I tried to share our experience in Bible study in China to our American friends. The text of the sermon was taken from Ephesians 1:9-10 and 4:13.

I began my preparation by first studying the Epistle in Chinese and then compared it with several English versions with the help of some commentaries. I used the Chinese Union Version of 1919, which has been accepted as the "standard" version and used by almost all Chinese Christians. One expression in four Chinese characters 同归于一 appearing twice in the Epistle struck my eyes as standing out conspicuously. The translator of the

Chinese Bible in 1919 chose to use this phrase to express the idea of "[all] returning into one" in a way that is easy to understand to every reader. It has an allusion to one of the Chinese Confucian tenets of Universal Harmony 天下大同, first recorded in the *Book of Rites*, 礼记(c 300 BC) and reiterated and developed by the reformist scholar Kang Youwei in his *Book of Great Harmony* 大同书 (1897) and then by Dr Sun Yat-sen, the founder of the Republic of China (1924). I have been pondering on this idea of "coming into one" as a theological theme in Bible study. By comparing with various English versions, I noticed that this particular Chinese expression, found only in the Epistle to the Ephesians, is used to convey two different aspects or dimensions of "unity" in the Pauline teaching on the mission of the church.

The first occurrence of this Chinese phrase 同归于一 is in Ephesians 1:10 used to translate the Greek word *anakephalaiothasthai*. This is an infinitive meaning "to sum up," as in arithmetic or in rhetoric. In the English Bible it is translated in a number of ways: "to gather together in one" (AV), "to unite" (RSV), and "to gather up" (NRSV).

In the Anchor Bible Markus Barth suggests another [translation], as "to be comprehended under one head" (vol. 34, p. 89). To me it is still hard to comprehend. Many exegetes think it is difficult to bring out the full force of this verb by translation. In the second century the Greek church father Irenaeus of Lyon had elaborated this verse theologically and developed a "theory of recapitulation" (from *capitulation*, which is a literal translation in Latin), and imbued this difficult word with rich Christological and soteriological content. It comprises both the restoration of alien humanity to communion with God (reconciliation) and the consummation and completion of the entire salvation history, until according to God's good pleasure

and plan in the fullness of time, all of creation, including all things in heaven and things on earth, are "summed up in unity with Christ as the head." Perhaps this is what Teilhard de Chardin calls the *Omega Point*! This is what some Christians in China, including those we call "culture Christians" have been trying to understand by the expression 同归于一 in this passage. I propose to translate it more literally in Chinese as 复归于元首 (to return to the prime head). The Chinese character 元, like the English "prime" expresses the ideas "the chief" and "the original." Both are compatible and suitable to translate the meaning of *anakephalaiothasthai* (*ana* means again, *kephalaios* means head or chief or the first or original, and *–iothasthai* is a grammatical construction to express a verb in the infinitive). Understood in this way, it helps us to see, tiny and mean and weak and ignorant as we are, somehow *there is meaning and purpose in the whole universe and in the history of humankind, and that we ultimately are to be summed up and subsumed under the prime head*. To take the whole divine cosmic unfolding of creation, redemption, sanctification, and final consummation as according to the wise counsel and plan of God gives meaning to our own lives. That there is a divine *telos*, an end and purpose, in the whole universe, and that we all have a part to play in the fulfilling of this final end in Christ, gives value to our lives. "In Christ we have also obtained an inheritance" 通得基业 (v. 11). It gives us a sense of responsibility, honor, and hope. Although our lives are short and trivial, we will be gathered up into One in Christ, cosmologically and eschatologically.

This same phrase 同归于一 appears again in 4.13 in a different context, and refers to a unity of a different order, but is closely connected with the previous one. It is about the unity of the church. According to the theology of Ephesians, the divine drama described in the first two

chapters is to be unfolded and realized in Christ, embodied in the Church, as is continued and developed in the following chapters (chs. 3-6). One American writer has explicated this theme under four theses: (1) the mission of the church as God's mission, (2) the church as the goal of the mission, (3) the church as the instrument of the mission, and (4) the eschatological fulfilment of the mission. As the final fulfilment of the mission, or the plan of God, is to "gather all things into one," the church as the goal and instrument of the mission, *must also be one*.

From the Apostolic Age in the first century the church had begun to "split," not just by geographical dispersion, but unfortunately by doctrinal and practical or constitutional differences. Soon cultural and socio-political factors came in and intensified and aggravated the division. It is a scandal now that the *Church Universal* (which means "the one whole church" is divided into an increasing number of churches, denominations, sects, cults, etc., in defiance of the Biblical commandment that the church should become one. In the Intercessory Prayer Christ prays "that they may all be one" (Jn. 17.20-21); and Paul had admonished us *to become one* repeatedly in this Epistle. In 3:6 while the English translations reads, "the Gentiles have become *fellow heirs, members of the same body, and sharers in the promise* in Christ Jesus through the Gospel," the Chinese version brings out the force in the original Greek by thrice repeating the adverb 同 (which means "together" or "in the same way") as 同为后嗣, 同为一体, 同蒙应许. In 4:3-6, the idea is more emphatically spelled out by repeating the character meaning one (一) a total of eight times: 合而为一, 一个身体, 一个圣灵, 一个指望, 一主, 一信, 一洗, 一上帝. It is in this context that in 4:3-6, the second 同归于一 is used to sum up: "the gifts given to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ."

This is not the time to go into the past history of the divided churches in China, and how we have been striving to achieve unity through the present so-called "post-denominational stage." Many foreign visitors and observers have expressed, in guarded tones and perhaps with some misgivings, their sympathy, appreciation or even admiration for the preliminary and experimental steps we are taking towards church unity. We must be frank to say that we have by far not come to the unity as taught by Christ and Paul in the Bible. Ours is in a precarious situation. We are aware of the difficulties and testing challenges facing us. This is how the texts I have taken from Ephesians are being read and studied by Christians in China, as illumination, inspiration, admonition, warning and challenge. May God bless us and guide us, and help us in our common prayer that we will be coming into one.

Amen.

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Recalling the Later Years of Mr. Y.T. Wu

CAO SHENGJIE

Mr. Wu Yaozong (Y.T. Wu) was an outstanding Chinese Christian leader, and the main initiator of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China.

Born in 1893 in Shunde, Guangdong province, he graduated from the taxation school in Beijing in 1913 with an exceptional record and went to work for the Customs Office. After encountering Christianity through the YMCA, he became a sincere believer and was baptized in 1918. Later he unexpectedly gave up his "golden rice bowl" at the Customs Office to work for the YMCA. He also studied theology and philosophy at Union Seminary and Columbia University in New York City and was awarded an M.A. In 1927, at the request of the National Association of the YMCA in China, he became the director of the YMCA Press.

From childhood, Mr. Wu had the national affairs of China at heart; he was a patriot. As a young man, he accepted Western notions of pacifism and reconciliation, held Gandhi in high esteem and opposed the use of armed force. Japanese atrocities following the Mukden Incident in 1931, roused his sense of national outrage and he gradually gave up his allegiance to reconciliation. He became involved in the "National Salvation Party" led by Shen Junru (1875-1963) and in Tao Xingzhi's "Mass Education Movement" and dedicated himself to the anti-Japanese movement. He had many conversations with Communist leaders including Zhou Enlai, Deng Biwu, and

Deng Yingchao. These fed his determination to fight the Japanese and gave him further insight into the Communist Party's treatment of religion. After the victory over Japan, he took an active part in the struggle against civil war. Wu was once nominated by the Shanghai Federation of People's Organizations to join with democratic figures Ma Shulun, Kan Baohang, and Lei Jijing in petitioning Nanjing [seat of the government—ed.] This earned him a beating,* but he refused to give up and drafted a memorandum in English, which he put into General Marshall's hands. This action was affirmed by the patriotic forces.

In 1949, as a democratic person in religious circles, Wu took part in the first meeting of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and in the Founding Ceremony of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. In 1950, he spoke ofthe difficult situation facing Christianity at the time of the Central People's Government, and following three frank conversations between Chinese Christians and Premier Zhou Enlai, he came to the realization that Chinese Christianity had to set down its historical burden and take the initiative to express its support for new China, shake off foreign control, and follow the path of independence (self-government, self-support, and self-propagation) in running the church. He joined forty other Christian leaders in issuing the Chinese Christian Manifesto†, gathering signatures from Christians across the nation, garnering their broad support, and a warm welcome from the wider population. The September

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* It is not clear from the text who delivered this beating—ed.

† In her remembrance of the First National Chinese Christian Conference, Rev. Dr. Cao also refers to this as the "Three-Self Manifesto"—ed.

23, 1950 issue of People's Daily carried the Manifesto with a list of the first group of signatures and an editorial. In 1954, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China was established with Y.T. Wu as chairperson, a post he retained until his death in 1979.

Tireless in study and reflection.

It was some time after 1959 (I cannot remember the precise date; I formally began work with the TSPM Committee in 1962) until 1965—the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution—that I worked as a secretary in Y.T. Wu's office, and was lucky enough to encounter him on a daily basis for part of that time. He was nearly seventy by then and because he was extremely near-sighted, reading and writing were difficult for him.The national TSPM colleagues repeatedly urged him not to come into the office, saying that if anything came up, they could easily come to his home. But unless he was ill, he arrived punctually at the office every day. The TSPM offices were at No. 169 Yuanmingyuan Road then and the daily paper, the *Wenhui Bao*, had its offices next door. Y.T. Wu's office was in the southeastern corner on the third floor; I could see the offices of the newspaper through his window. We didn't have a dining room in our offices and at noon Mr. Wu's family would send over his lunch in one of those tiered metal boxes ordinary people used at the time. After lunch he took a short rest on the bed in a small room next to the office. He lived very simply.

I hadn't known him very well before. Sometimes I heard him speak in meetings and my impression of him was that he was quite stern and serious. And so when I first came to work for him, I was nervous and afraid of doing something wrong. The work of a secretary is not

very onerous. Because Y.T. Wu was a careful scholar, he never wanted me to write essays or articles in his name. At the very most he would dictate sentence by sentence and I would note down what he said. Most of my day's work consisted of reading documents and newspapers, Chinese and foreign publications for him. His demands were strict, but that rose from his real loving concern for young people. He never scolded me for a mispronounced or misspelled word, but if I got the tone wrong for a Chinese character, he would make me look it up in the dictionary and correct myself. Essays had to be carefully proofread. This training has helped me my whole life.

Mr. Wu was very concerned with domestic and international affairs and read a number of newspapers everyday. Whenever something important had happened, even if the articles or editorials about it were quite long, he strove to read them all that very day. Sometimes he was tired and would rest a bit before continuing to read. He would concentrate all his hearing powers when listening to something. He would ask for some important points to be repeated, until he had a good grip on the gist. But he didn't just take things in without understanding, he reflected while listening and after an article had been read through, not only could he repeat the salient points, he could quickly write down what he had gained from it. He spoke truth and facts; he didn't care for small talk. He was good at analyzing issues and so his speeches were always open and substantial. I remember that Chairman Mao, after hearing one of his speeches, praised him for his powers of analysis.

He was a patriotic figure. From the first meeting of the National People's Congress until his death, he was a member of its Standing Committee. The leaders had a great deal of respect for him. During the sixties the Central

United Front Department (UFD) gave him an imported car. On his seventieth birthday, the Shanghai committee of the UFD gave him a birthday banquet and he was very happy and very moved. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, when the director of the central UFD Li Weihan came to Shanghai, he made a special appointment to speak with Mr. Wu. According to what one comrade who was there at the time told me many years after the fact, Li said to him: "You're a member of the NPC Standing Committee, so you're part of the national leadership (the NPC Standing Committee was not very large then). I hope that in addition to religious matters, you'll give your opinion on national affairs more often." This illustrates that the leadership at that time was anxious to hear his views.

Y.T. Wu was very diligent in studying, he wanted to keep abreast of things, but he was a person of an analytical cast of mind, and it wasn't easy for him to casually follow the crowd. During the Great Leap Forward when everyone was a bit crazy, he was baffled by the propaganda about one *mu* producing 10,000 catties. He praised the idea, but sometimes he "couldn't get his mind around it." Because of his position, he would raise it with the leadership, with leaders he trusted, or would pose it as a question, seeking answers. Luo Guanzong, who was General Secretary of the YMCA in Shanghai at the time, told me that in 1964, as democratic persons, members of the Shanghai People's Consultative Conference went to the city suburbs to observe the Four Cleanups Campaign (Socialist Education Movement). Leftist thinking of the day held that the majority of village cadres were all "rotten." Most such cadres were seen as "targets to be struggled against." Mr. Wu had grave doubts about this. He said: "If the majority of rural cadres are no good, how is it that a good harvest is produced year after year? Given that the great leadership

of the Party is correct, how shall we understand the achievements of the socialist revolution?" A question like this certainly could not get a satisfactory answer at that time, and given the tenor of public opinion, for him to dare to raise it publicly, needed exceptional courage.

Wu Yaozong and Luo Zhufeng, former member of the East China Political and Military Committee Culture and Education Committee and Director of the Shanghai Religious Affairs Bureau, were long time acquaintances. In his commemorative article "Remember Y.T. Wu, Uphold the Three-Self Path," Luo called Wu "Pure and selfless, concerned for the bigger picture, an independent thinker, a courageous explorer. He was not wedded to his own view, nor did he simply repeat what others said. He subjected everything to deep consideration, after which he made his own judgment." This seems a very accurate assessment to me.

He never wavered in his commitment to the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party, or the socialist path.

In the 1960s, China went through an exceptionally difficult time of natural disasters. Many people were very pessimistic and disappointed about the future of the nation. But Y.T. Wu felt none of this. He often said: "These temporary difficulties are not so terrible, as long as we understand what rules govern them, we can move forward." I wasn't very sure what he meant by "rules that govern them," and where that might lead. Later I read essays he wrote during the anti-Japanese War and War of Liberation periods; it seems he had long ago mastered the dialectic viewpoint; in looking at things one must see through the appearance to the substance, see all sides, see developing trends. To those who were anxious over the

Japanese attacks, he said firmly, "My inner reason tells me that this is no more than the last gasp of the Fascist aggressors." When the civil war broke with a vengeance, many felt that everything pointed toward disaster, but he said, "The dawn of the new era is breaking and the strength of the slavers is in decline." In late 1949, he published a book of essays with the title *Darkness and Light*, stressing that "where there is hope, there is light; and light casts out fear." "Light and darkness are eternal opposites, but the final victory belongs not to the darkness, but eternally to the Light."

In the Christian monthly magazine *Tian Feng*, Nos. 4-5 for 1962, he published an article, "Take the long view and move forward with the times," in which he wrote: "Though the path of the people's revolution is full of twists and turns, human history still moves forward according to objective rules." He firmly believed that China could certainly extricate itself from its temporary difficulties and follow the broad road into the light. When the vast and wonderful picture of new China is before us, this picture enables each one to see the whole, to see the world in the local, to see the future in the present. In this way we will discover the source of the strength which will encourage us onward and begin to be liberated from the narrowness of vision that is individualism and selfish departmentalism. Indeed, "Take the long view" describes Wu's own thinking.

Wu's understanding of the Chinese Communist Party underwent a tortuous and continuous process of deepening. He wrote an article for the December 1959 issue of *Tian Feng*, "What I know of the Communist Party." This was not a paean born of the times and situation, nor some sort of self-serving bombast. Rather it was a conscientious look back over his own path of understanding the Communist

Party, moving from critique to sympathy to loving respect. He had criticized the Communist Party's aim, saying that though it was good, it "unscrupulously" "treated people as objects." After years of contact he not only understood the scientific nature of the Communist Party's theoretical foundation, but had especially personal experience of four areas of its practice: the united front line, the mass line, its analysis of world forces, and criticism and self-criticism. Because of his personal experience of these four areas, his thinking underwent a real change.

In March 1962, he took part in the Third Session of the Second National People's Congress and heard Chairman Mao and Premier Zhou's speeches in which of their own initiative they took the blame for the huge losses caused to the people of the nation during the period of natural disasters. He was very moved. When he returned, he said to us, "That Communist Party leaders would do this further illustrates that the Communist Party is a Party that serves the people." His final published article, "A firm and clear-cut position; a simple and approachable style," was written to commemorate Zhou Enlai's eighty-first birthday and appeared in the March 5, 1979 issue of *Wenhui Bao*. With deep feeling, he wrote, "The reason it has been possible for me to follow the Party for decades and do my bit for the people, is entirely due to Premier Zhou's help."

Remaining faithful to the core of Christian truth

After 1958, especially in the first half of the 1960s, the leftist line increasingly came to the fore within the Communist Party; attacks on religion grew more serious. During the Great Leap Forward, the numbers of those taking part in religious activities noticeably shrank, and

there was a rapid decline in Christian activities. Some Christian leaders and responsible cadres who promoted the thorough implementation of the policy of religious freedom came in for criticism one after another. Public opinion gradually warmed to the criticism of religion; religion and superstition were lumped together and later were thoroughly negated. Around 1964, Y.T. Wu returned from a meeting in Beijing and told us that Mao had said to him, half jokingly, "Your God doesn't work!" And he didn't know how to respond. During that period also, the head of some department in the central people's government said (publicly): "Catholicism (*Tianzhu* or Lord of Heaven religion) is the Landlord (*dizhu* or earth lord) Party and the Protestants are secret agents of imperialism." He was implying that religion's fate was to be obliterated. Not long before the Cultural Revolution, in some places groups of Christians were mobilized to leave the faith. Y.T. Wu was not only a pious individual, he was the responsible person for the whole of Chinese Christianity. One can imagine the effect on him as a stream of these unconfirmed reports came in. Prior to the Cultural Revolution, he more than once described his own mood "as if on the edge of the abyss, skating on thin ice." It is said that on March 11, 1964, he wrote in his diary "I couldn't settle down last night, but after a long period of prayer, my heart recovered its calm and I had a revelation: Put your trust in God and everything will work out for the best for you."

The crux of the matter is that Mr. Wu was a true patriot, determined to follow the socialist path ofthe Communist Party. At the same time he truly felt that Christianity was a religious faith that benefitted people. He could not deny socialist society because that made it difficult for the church and he could not be indifferent to the difficulties of the church because of his support for

socialist society. Faced with the dilemma between loving country or loving church, he felt an inner pressure difficult to express, but he continued to respond positively. Below I will discuss several events that made a lasting impression on me personally.

Following the realization of "unified worship" in 1958, the TSPM, in August 1959, held a small-scale forum involving the responsible persons from around the country. I was not present at this meeting, but later I read the manuscript of Mr. Wu's speech in which he stated that he affirmed the way things were developing and the various Christian initiatives, but that he had a sense of unease about the future of Christianity. In the circumstances of the time, his forthrightness met with criticism and he was obliged to examine his own "egotistical" attitude.

I have heard that around 1960, a small internal criticism session directed at Y.T. Wu was held in Chongqing at which he was criticized for his Christian faith. This was something he never mentioned to me, I only heard that the central government promptly put a stop to it and the high cadre who held the session was removed from his position in religious work.

In 1962, after the central government held the Seven Thousand Cadres‡ Conference, the state's policies toward intellectuals were relaxed across the board. Y.T. Wu was very excited by this and expressed his view of a wonderful future for Christianity. Once he went to see scholarly colleagues in the National Association of the YMCA, and Dr. Jiang Wenhan of the TSPM historical materials group came to his office to speak with him,

‡ A central work conference held in early 1962, so named because of the very large number of attendees—ed.

asking him to draw up a five-year plan for Christian publication work. As I recall, Y.T. Wu proposed that Christianity should stress historical research, writing not only a history of imperialist manipulation of Christianity in (foreign powers') aggression against China, but also a history of Chinese Christianity. These two were different things, the latter being an instance of self-construction of (Chinese) Christianity. These plans, however, never came to fruition. At the time I was still doing some welfare work for Huai'en Church (Grace Church) in Shanghai, as well as working for Mr. Wu. Y.T. Wu was very supportive and often asked me how things were at the church, advising me to give special care to the growth of younger believers.

When there was fierce criticism in society of Christianity as a Trojan horse of imperialism, he didn't try to cover up Christian shortcomings. Quite the opposite, he admitted that imperialism was still making use of Christianity, and that we should heighten our vigilance. In 1959, his speech at the first session of the second National Peoples Congress (NPC) was mainly focused on unmasking a new plot by U.S. imperialists to use Christianity as a tool for aggression. And in 1962 he wrote an article in *Tian Feng* based on the materials he had seen and his knowledge at the time, uncovering actions by hostile forces and making it clear that Christians stood with all Chinese on the same battleline. When the TSPM began it made anti-imperialism one of its tasks and there was no change in his attitude, in spite of the harsh assessment of Christianity current in society.

At that time, the Communist Party emphasized that intellectuals had to undertake thought reform and not only reform their standpoint, but also thoroughly reform their worldview. Christian clergy had been defined as (part of) the exploiting class and were objects of reform.

In all venues, Y.T. Wu sincerely spoke of his own self-reform as essential. In 1960, in his remarks at the second session of the second NPC, he called upon Christians to work hard to undertake self-reform. But he had his own understanding of "reforming worldview." He said plainly that the standpoint, view, and methods of Marxism-Leninism in historical research, economics, and society were beneficial and that Christians should study and master these, but if "reforming one's worldview" implied abandoning Christian faith, he would have a problem with that. His acceptance of Christianity had not been a casual choice; he had had a deep spiritual experience as well as extremely profound rational reflection. He held that Christianity indeed had its "core of truth," which he could get nowhere else. His understanding of the theology of Christian faith helped some intellectuals for whom the emphasis was on rationality to draw nearer to Christianity. In order to introduce Christianity to those seeking progress in their thinking, he once advocated that Christianity and materialism could be reconciled. He said in the 1940s "after the passage of a considerable period of time—perhaps once the social revolution is complete—the teachings of Jesus will be appreciated a new and be treasured and will enable many one-sided forms of knowledge and theories to reach a new integration and completion because of this." After the founding of new China, he spoke little of "the theory of reconciliation," but he never glossed over his own viewpoint, and frequently suggested to national leaders that they look into Christianity. At the "moment of transformation" in the 1960s, his position was still "I can accept 99% of Marxism-Leninism, but when it comes to the question of whether there is a God or not, I keep my own counsel." Some higher cadres criticized him for this. Some others expressed respect for his individual beliefs,

but said he could not publicize them. He, however, was still determined to go his own way.

Just before the Cultural Revolution, Christian activities had nearly been brought to a halt. Luo Guanzong recalls that Y.T. Wu once said, "There are fewer and fewer people in the church, and the numbers may continue to dwindle. But as long as there are fifty like us, Christianity will revive one day." I appreciated his confidence. It came partly from his deep knowledge of the basis on which the Communist Party formulated its religious policy; i.e., as long as there were religious believers, they would be protected. More than this, however, it came from the fact that the Christian truth he adhered to was unchanging.

His determination to love country and love church survived the Cultural Revolution.

In 1966 when the Cultural Revolution broke out in Shanghai, the staff of Christian organizations were all brought together in the YMCA on Xizang Middle Road to begin (political) study. This included Y.T. Wu. He gave up his car and at noon would lie down on the floor for a rest. Once the Red Guards were stationed there, and it happened that there was a struggle session held on the ninth floor of the Y at which Y.T. Wu was labeled the "head monster" and compelled to make a self-examination. After that he was separate from us. I heard that his house was ransacked, his Bible confiscated, and his salary frozen for four years; later he was sent home to write his self-examination. After 1970, he was beset by illness. He kept silent. He was physically and mentally tormented by his inability to understand the Cultural Revolution.

In 1975, Y.T. Wu was informed that he should go to Beijing to attend the Fourth National People's Congress.

Prior to the meeting, longtime colleagues Luo Guanzong, Li Shoubao, and Shi Ruzhang, went to see him. He said, "The Constitution guarantees religious freedom, but all religious activities have been stopped, what kind of religious freedom is that?" He said he was going to Beijing to put that question to Premier Zhou. At the time, Premier Zhou, seriously ill, was writing his final work report for the government, and there was no way for Y.T. Wu to achieve his purpose.

It was at that meeting, under the control of the Gang of Four, that some articles of the Constitution were amended. Article 88 of the 1954 Constitution, dealing with the freedom of religious belief of citizens of the People's Republic of China, was amended to read: "citizens have the freedom to believe in religion or not to believe in religion and to propagate atheism." It was clear that the intent of this was to create a legal basis on which only propagation of atheism was to be permitted while propagating religion was not. In fact it violated the basic human right to freedom of religious belief. Y.T. Wu was extremely dissatisfied with this. He could do nothing about it other than put the issue he had come to ask Premier Zhou about down on paper and hand in a written statement. This incident illustrates that although Y.T. Wu had been through the Cultural Revolution, he did not have a negative attitude, but remained faithful to the religious enterprise, and moreover, still raised issues with the interests of the people at heart. He continued to work resolutely to correct this erroneous article.

Y.T. Wu was extremely saddened by the death of Premier Zhou in 1976 and was concerned about who would succeed him. To Luo Guanzong and others he said, "To me there is only Deng Xiaoping. He's achieved a lot this year in all aspects of his work in the central

government. It's there for all to see. Of course there are others who want it, Wang Hongwen, for example, but in my opinion he's too young, he doesn't have the confidence of the people. Zhang Chunqiao is ambitious, he can't be premier." That same year, Zhu De, chairman of the NPC, died. When talking about the choice for his successor, Wu said again, "Zhang Chunqiao is overly ambitious, he won't do, the best would be to get someone with some prestige, what about Commander Ye?" The Gang of Four was still in power then; even though he was speaking in private, this fully reflected Y.T. Wu's sense of justice and keen political sense.

Prior to the first session of the Fifth NPC in 1978, a forum to solicit views on amending the Constitution was held in Shanghai. Y.T. Wu was then already hospitalized, but he wrote out his views himself and asked another delegate from religious circles, Liu Liangmo, to read them in the meeting. His statement requested that the article on freedom of religious belief be returned to the wording of the 1954 Constitution. But leftist thinking had not been completely eradicated at the time and that article could not then be changed.

Following the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Party Congress, at the second session of the Fifth NPC in 1979, Y.T. Wu was already seriously ill and could not attend. When Liu Guanzong and others went to see him in the hospital, he repeatedly urged them to put forward (his) views on amendment. Later, with the efforts of K.H. Ting, Zhao Puchu (head of the Buddhist Association), Luo Guanzong and others in religious circles among the delegates to the NPC and the CPPCC, at the fifth session of the Fifth NPC in 1982, this provision was at last amended and became Article 36 of the Constitution. Comrade Peng Zhen, in "A Report on the draft amendments to the

Constitution of the People's Republic of China," pointed out "In accordance with our historical experience and the lessons of the Cultural Revolution, the stipulations of the draft for each basic right of citizens, not only restores the content of the 1954 Constitution, but stipulates these in a clearer and more substantive way." After the revision, the Article read: "Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy freedom of religious belief. No state organ, public organization or individual may compel citizens to believe in, or not to believe in, any religion; nor may they discriminate against citizens who believe in, or do not believe in, any religion. The state protects normal religious activities. No one may make use of religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the educational system of the state. Religious bodies and religious affairs are not subject to any foreign domination." Both religious believers and non-believers were satisfied with this and it is still in use today. Though Y.T. Wu was not able to see this result with his own eyes, all that he did to uphold religious believers' political rights proves that the sufferings of the Cultural Revolution could not erode his ironclad determination to love country and love church, and could not halt his forward march.

In June 1979, the Shanghai Christian Council and Three-Self Organization held its first (enlarged) meeting following the Cultural Revolution. Y.T. Wu, as the Chair of the (national) TSPM, was invited to attend. He was hospitalized at the time in Huadong Hospital, but he persisted in asking time off from the doctor so he could attend the meeting and see his church co-workers. During the Cultural Revolution, I had been compelled to leave my post working with the church and at the time I was teaching English in the Leather Research Institute. That

was the first time since the end of the Cultural Revolution, and also the last time, that I saw Y.T. Wu. He was in a wheelchair, pushed by his son, Wu Zongsu, and they made a slow circuit of the room amidst enthusiastic applause. Though he looked ill, and could not speak much, his spirits rose on seeing everyone. We all surged forward, vying to shake his hand. He only stayed about fifteen minutes and then had to be whisked back to the hospital. Watching as his thin, sickly shadow receded and thinking of how he had been in the office, along with all that the Cultural Revolution had wrought on us, my heart overflowed and I had to slip away to the Ladies Room to wipe away my tears.

In September 1979, Mu'en Church in Shanghai was reopened for worship. Y.T. Wu longed to go, but because his illness was at a serious juncture, the doctor would not allow it. According to Shen Derong, who was Secretary General of the TSPM at the time, when he gave Y.T. Wu a brief report on the reopening, Y.T. was extremely happy and expressed his hope that he could take part in the Christmas worship that year. Unfortunately, on September 17, Y.T. Wu passed away. He was 86.

On September 24, 1979, Y.T. Wu's funeral was held in Shanghai. Zhang Chengzong, director of the Chinese Communist Shanghai Municipal United Front Department delivered the eulogy, saying, "Mr. Y.T. Wu's life was the life of a patriot. For decades, he followed the path of the Chinese Communist Party without faltering. This is extremely difficult and praiseworthy. We are extremely saddened at the loss of such a longtime friend." On September 27, a memorial worship service was held in Mu'en Church, at which Chopin's Funeral March was played. Several hundred of us believers sang the hymn "Rest in the Arms of the Lord," bidding farewell together to our beloved Mr. Y.T. Wu.

Y.T. Wu's remains were originally interred in the Shanghai Longhua Revolutionary Martyrs Cemetery, but in response to a request by the family, in 1997 he was reburied together with his wife Dr. Yang Sulan in the Beijing Xibeiwang Christian Cemetery. In 2006, both were brought to Shanghai's Fushou Cemetery. On the tenth anniversary of his death and the centennial of his birth, the TSPM held solemn memorial ceremonies.

Y.T. Wu lives forever in Chinese Christian hearts. May our people not forget his outstanding contributions to religious circles.

In Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, a Special Issue of *Tian Feng*, September, 2010, 17-22. Originally written in 1982 under the title "Remembering Y.T. Wu at Work in his Later Years" this article was revised in 2010 and published in *Century* magazine, No. 5 (2010).

My Recollection of the First National Chinese Christian Conference, 1954

CAO SHENGJIE

Following my graduation from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary in 1953, I began working in a clergy position in Shanghai. In the summer of 1954, I was sent to attend the first meeting of the National Chinese Christian Conference in Beijing to work as a recorder. At the time I was just happy to be going to Beijing. Only later did I realize just what an important meeting this was. I may be the only person under 80 now alive who was a delegate to or staff for that meeting.

Chinese Christianity had been a religion established by foreigners.

Chinese Christianity used to be called *yangjiao*, "a foreign religion," not simply because it was spread to China from the U.S. and Europe in modern times, but because foreign churches controlled it—organizationally, economically and in terms of personnel. Strictly speaking, Chinese Christianity was still a Christianity established in China by foreigners, not a Chinese Christianity. After 1913, the foreign churches pooled resources to undertake a large-scale survey of Christianity in China, and the results were published as *The Christian Occupation of China* (published in Shanghai, 1922 by the China Continuation Committee; Chinese title: *Zhonghua gui zhu* [China for Christ]).

In the nations of Europe and America, Christianity had become divided into denominations and self-contained systems. The various denominations in different

countries formed different mission boards to evangelize overseas. Given this background, the Christianity that was brought to China was divided and subject to these same denominational or mission traditions. Relationships among denominations in China could be strained because of this. Many had almost no communication with each other and in some cases relations were hostile. The foreign churches divided and ruled them within their own spheres of influence. In 1949, there were nearly seventy denominations in Chinese Christianity under the aegis of over 130 (foreign) mission boards.

On the eve of the establishment of new China, democratic figures in Christian circles, including Y.T. Wu (Wu Yaozong), (Ms.) Cora Teng (Deng Yuzhi), T.C. Chao (Zhao Zichen), Zhang Xueyan, and Liu Liangmo were invited to attend the first meeting of the Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). Following the meeting, Y.T. Wu led a "Christian delegation" throughout East and North China publicizing the Common Program [a preliminary Constitution promulgated by the CPPCC in 1949], and looking into the situation of the churches. Wu's delegation shared its findings with the central people's government. Following three in depth conversations with Premier Zhou Enlai, Y.T. Wu realized that Christianity should take the initiative in eliminating the influence of imperialism within its ranks. Together with forty Christian leaders he initiated "The Path of Chinese Christianity in the Construction of New China" Manifesto, known as the "Three-Self Manifesto" (or more commonly, the Christian Manifesto—ed.) with the stated aim of upholding new China and achieving an independent and self-governing Christianity. (Three-Self means self-governed, self-supported, and self-propagated.) The group requested that Christians throughout the country sign the Manifesto, an action that gained an enthusiastic welcome from the whole Chinese people.

On September 23, 1950, the *People's Daily* carried the entire text of the Manifesto along with the list of the first 1,527 signatories, signaling the start of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement (then called the "Three-Self Renewal Movement" and referred to in this essay as the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM)). In the "Meeting on the treatment of Christian groups who accepted U.S. subsidies" in April, 1951, the Christian personages in attendance set up a Chinese Christian Anti-U.S. Pro-Korea Three-Self Renewal Movement Committee Preparatory Committee (referred to below as the Three-Self Preparatory Committee), to promote the Three-Self Movement. By 1954, the number of Christian signatories to the Three-Self Manifesto had reached 417,389, or nearly two-thirds of the total Christian population of China at the time. This illustrates the broad support for the growing movement both within the church and outside it. Conditions were becoming riper for holding a national Christian meeting.

A milestone meeting.

The first meeting of the National Chinese Christian Conference took place from July 22 to August 6, 1954 at the Dengshikou Congregational Church in Beijing (sadly this church was demolished following the Cultural Revolution). Compared to any of the Christian meetings held prior to the establishment of the PRC, this was an unprecedented meeting, a milestone.

First of all, this conference was held under the major premise of anti-imperialism and love country, love church. In the past Christians had a lot of connections with foreign churches, but few with churches in their own country. What's more they were deeply influenced by anti-Communism within foreign Christianity and their doubts

about the survival of new China. The first five-year plan of the PRC had just been undertaken and all was going smoothly; Premier Zhou led a highly successful Chinese delegation to a meeting of the U.N. in Geneva; and new China's first Constitution was about to be promulgated in which freedom of religious belief would be clearly guaranteed.

To help the delegates to this Beijing meeting gain a broader overall picture, Qian Junrui, the Secretary General of the Commission on Culture and Education of the State Council of the central people's government, and Zhang Bojun of the Standing Committee of the Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Committee (CPPCC) were invited to give reports on the national situation and the draft Constitution of the People's Republic of China. This enabled many of the delegates to meet leaders of the central government close up for the first time. The presence of He Chengxiang, the Director of the Religious Affairs Office of the Commission on Culture and Education of the State Council of the central people's government, was especially appreciated. He was a sincere old revolutionary cadre and his talk resonated with the realities of Christianity, further illustrating that the government encouraged and supported the goals of the Three-Self Movement to enable Chinese Christianity to become a completely self-governed religion for Chinese Christians. His remarks did much to reassure many delegates.

I remember going out with my fellow delegates to a Beijing suburb to see an area of "new Beijing" construction. Though it would hardly compare to Beijing today, at the time it impressed us favorably and came as a breath of fresh air. Our sense of pride in being Chinese and our determination to build a Church that belonged to Chinese Christians was greatly strengthened.

Secondly, the National Christian Conference was entirely organized and attended by Chinese Christians and pastoral co-workers. It was not subject to any control by foreign church groups or missionaries. In 1877, 1890, and 1907, missionaries serving in China held three big missionary meetings here. At the first two, all participants were foreigners and everything was discussed from the point of view of Western missionaries evangelizing in China: how to join forces, improve their methods, and promote Western culture more effectively. In May 1922, a National Christian Conference had been held in Shanghai, which was in fact jointly organized behind the scenes by the large denominational mission boards. All the reports, speeches, and statements were given in English, yet only two-fifths of the Chinese delegates understood English so their participation was obviously limited. The Chinese Christian Preparatory Committee, established at that 1922 meeting, was in fact a coordinating body with the foreign mission boards; although the conference chair and general secretary were Chinese, foreign missionaries remained in charge of the real work. In contrast, our 1954 meeting was the first in Chinese Christian history at which the decision-making power and power to act were in the hands of Chinese. The meeting summarized the achievements of the TSPM in its four years of existence. For this process the delegates were organized into fourteen smaller groups where they could participate in discussions of the future direction of Chinese Christianity and the guiding principles and tasks of the TSPM.

Thirdly, and what I feel is most important, the 1954 meeting achieved an unprecedented unity within Chinese Christianity. Most so-called national Christian meetings of the past were held by single denominations or by several joining together. The 232 delegates at this meeting came from all across the country, representing

62 churches and groups, including the "independent churches," who described themselves as not belonging to any denomination. The meeting was broadly inclusive; something that could hardly have been imagined in the past.

The path to a bright future is the love country-love church path.

At the time the TSPM had a definite base of support, but to achieve a true unity within Christianity would not be easy. The influence of Western thinking— for example, that "theism and atheism were (absolute) opposites"—was great within (Chinese) Christian circles. As a result people thought that Christians who accepted the leadership of the atheistic Chinese Communist Party had an "impure faith," and there had long been in the church denominations and theological differences that were hard to reconcile. No one could publicly oppose patriotism, and so some people used "faith issues" to stir up controversies. This became an undercurrent of opposition to the TSPM, with a negative impact among the broader masses of believers.

In Beijing at the time, there was a pastor who used his sermons and publications to attack church leaders who took part in the TSPM as "fake believers" and "Judases." The rumor spread at the U.N. meeting in Geneva that this person had been executed by the Communist Party. This was untrue, but he was actually emboldened by this and did nothing to deny the rumor. On the eve of the National Christian Conference, five highly esteemed elderly pastors (over 70 years old)—Bishop Chen Jianzhen, Chen Chonggui, Xie Yongqin, Cui Xianxiang, and Zhu Guishen went to his home to invite him to attend the meeting. He refused to see them, saying there were irreconcilable differences.

To deal with the concerns of some clergy and laity about how the TSPM might affect Christian faith, Y.T. Wu and the other leaders, after deliberating together, suggested that the name "Three-Self Reform Movement" be changed to the Three-Self Patriotic Movement. To my knowledge, some members of the Three-Self Preparatory Committee couldn't come to terms with such a huge change at first. Reform in the church was a good thing, why change the name? After repeated deliberations, a consensus was reached: To achieve a broader unity, the utmost effort should be undertaken to eliminate the misconception that some had; namely that reform meant "removing" faith. The new name would not be tangled up with "faith issues" and would make it clear that the basis of unity was anti-imperialism, love for country, and love for church. When Y.T. Wu, presenting the work report at the meeting on behalf of the Three-Self Preparatory Committee, raised this suggestion, the delegates at the meeting got a big shock. Subsequent developments attest to the fact that this was a decision with far-reaching impact.

There was a lack of harmony within the meeting itself as well. The schedule included daily worship and I played the piano to accompany the hymn-singing. Some individuals wanted to parade religious differences and did what they could to be uncooperative. When everyone was at worship together, they would go for a walk rather than participate, or deliberately not close their eyes during prayers, looking all around. I was taking notes in our small group and found it odd to discover that some Shanghai delegates, when they spoke, had in their hands material attacking Y.T. Wu as an unbeliever. My roommate during the meeting was an elderly church lady. One day I found a piece of paper on the table in our room that said, "no participation in the organization"; no breaking bread together," and the like, the rest of which I no longer

remember. It seemed that some individuals had their plans laid long before and used methods like agreeing to meet after the meeting or writing down "tips" to draw those delegates with similar theological leanings to speak and act together.

However, the majority of delegates, looking at the flourishing progress of the nation and the clear decision by the state to guarantee religious freedom, realized that Christianity could only have a bright future by following the path of love country, love church. The members of the Three-Self Preparatory Committee also did a great deal of work toward promoting unity at the meeting: Y.T. Wu for example explicitly requested those who were already involved in the Three Self Movement to help those who were not to overcome their backward "denominational" tendencies. K.H. Ting gave a detailed introduction during the meeting of the successful integration of the eleven seminaries in the East China region to form Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. He also spoke about the effective implementation of "mutual respect" for differing faith practices (actually theological views), through which individuals could maintain their original views and practices, without rancorous debate and through according one another harmonious treatment. This enabled the delegates to understand that the TSPM leaders had sincere aspirations to unity and were embarked on the path to this goal. A warm atmosphere of honest views and democratic discussion gradually emerged in the small groups. Once a normal atmosphere had been established unity quickly emerged. Finally the meeting unanimously passed four resolutions on a basis of anti-imperialist love of country and love of church, and upholding the Constitution of the Peoples Republic of China; moreover, a new institution was formally established that would unite all Chinese Christians to love country and love church—the Three-Self

Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China. Y.T. Wu was elected chairperson; six others, including Bishop Chen Jianzhen (Ms.)Wu Yifang, Chen Chonggui, Bishop Z.T. Kaung (Jiang Changchuan), Cui Xianxiang and Ding Yuzhang, were appointed vice-chairs. The first Committee consisted of 139 members, and even that delegate with the remarkable views was elected to the Standing Committee. Eleven seats were kept open, to be filled in future as the scope of unity increased. This organization, along with the later China Christian Council, together formed the CCC/TSPM that has been active and continues to be active today.

T.C. Chao, well known theologian of the older generation, in reflections on the meeting published afterwards, described his past involvement in national and world conferences thus: "At which of them was the meeting not completely split?" He made a penetrating analysis of why this meeting achieved great unity—because "there was a common, clear, three-self patriotic goal."

The meeting ended at a time when there was unprecedented flooding of the Huai and Yangtze Rivers. The People's Liberation Army amazed people with their efforts at repairing the rails, such that travel on the Beijing-Shanghai rail corridor was not completely cut off. I remember that during the trip back to Shanghai, the train kept skidding on places where there was (standing) water, and progress was stop and go. Because tickets were hard to come by, except for the elderly, the Shanghai Three-Self leadership, including Liu Liangmo and Luo Guanzong, all travelled with the ordinary delegates in the hard seat compartments and everyone took care of everyone else. I remember that Luo Guanzong, who was really worn out, stretched out on the floor of the compartment, in the aisle. That trip took three days and three nights altogether and

when we got to Shanghai, our legs were swollen from all the cramped travel. But our spirits were inordinately high, because Chinese Christianity, with its brand new approach of great unity, was now part of the great ranks of our people throughout the country building a new China.

Though there have been twists and turns and reversals on the path of Christianity's enlarged unity over the last sixty years, in the end there was no blocking the main trend of the times of loving country and loving church. This is the deep impression left with me by my attendance at the first NCCC, fifty-six years ago. I will never forget it.

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