

Chinese
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CHINESE THEOLOGICAL REVIEW 25

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From the Editor

With this issue, the *Chinese Theological Review* (CTR) reaches a milestone: twenty-five issues since the first issue in 1985. Anniversaries are occasions for both celebration and reflection, for a look back at beginnings and a review of what has been accomplished.

The CTR began in response to a request from the China Christian Council to the Foundation for Theological Education in South East Asia (FTE) to facilitate and fund an English-language version of the Nanjing Union Theological Seminary journal, the *Nanjing Theological Review*. Following a discussion between Bishop K.H. Ting, Rev. Dr. Marvin Hoff, then Executive Director of the FTE, and Rev. Dr. Philip Wickeri, it was decided not to simply translate the seminary journal, which is in any case a quarterly, but to select essays from the four issues published each year, as well as from other sources, for an annual publication.

The intent of the CTR was to provide “to those outside China a vivid picture of Chinese Protestant thinking as it has been evolving over the past years.” It has never been wholly an academic publication, or entirely a popular one, though it has been used for both purposes. It has been cited in many books and scholarly articles and its readers include non-specialists interested in Protestant Christianity in China. Content is taken largely from the *Nanjing Theological Review*, but also from other Chinese seminary journals and church publications when available. CTR is a forum in which the China Christian Council and Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in

China (CCC/TSPM) speak from within their own context and in their own voice to the larger ecumenical community. Analytical or review essays by overseas scholars are not included for this reason.

Since its inaugural issue in 1985, the essays and documents translated in the CTR have encompassed the developing concerns of a Church seeking its role and contribution in the new era ushered in by the policy of Reform and Opening Up initiated by the reformist leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979. In addition to economic reform, the new policy re-implemented freedom of religious belief, bringing with it what authors refer to as growing space for religious activities in society. This has included a lively intellectual response, as a brief survey of the contents of our twenty-five issues indicates. Documents from the meetings every five years of the National Chinese Christian Conference, as well as important church statements appear regularly. Other topics have included the relationship between religion and culture; biblical bases of three-self; Christian values expressed in modern literature; religious elements in the arts; feminist perspectives, ecclesiology; Christology; the encounter between traditional Chinese ethics and Christian ethics; surveys of seminary graduates in Jiangsu, Protestant Churches in Hangzhou and religion in minority areas; running the church well; contextual theology; theological education; the adaptation to socialist society; Theological Reconstruction; historical studies; memoir; the encounter of traditional Chinese culture and thinking with Christianity; Christian social service; gospel and culture; as well as, more recently, explorations of the relationship between “Three-Self” churches and house churches. Artwork, fiction, devotional literature and sermons have also been included.

Recently, the Church has embraced the government’s call to work for a “harmonious society,” and this brings

us back to the current issue of the CTR, No. 25. The Theological Reconstruction initiative marked its tenth anniversary not long ago and the current trend has been in the direction of “translating” the results of studies and reflection into forms that can be applied in the life of the church—in preaching, for example, or in theological education. In some ways Theological Reconstruction has been about shaping a new and modern image of Protestant Christianity suitable to the possibilities of an expanded role in society. Christian faith needs to be presented in a way that is accessible, understandable and acceptable to the majority non-Christian populace. This is in part, in Chinese Protestant terms, an issue of self-construction or institution building, of identity and structure.

In this regard, the opening essay in CTR 25 on ecclesiology in the Chinese Church addresses the ongoing problem of creating a strong structure to support the internal unity, the inner oneness of the Church, as it reaches outward.

In his essay, Hai Jinhua looks into the biblical bases and ponders the thinking and examples of history. Given the non-institutional forms of Christianity that endured through the sway of extreme leftism and the Cultural Revolution, Hai also considers the interaction and adaptation between the Three-Self Church and a variety of house churches in the context of a rapidly changing Chinese society.

Chen Qirui writes that the late Bishop Shen Yifan was a pastor, scholar and theological educator, but has received relatively little recognition compared to other church leaders of his generation. The author’s main interest is in Shen’s theological thinking, which she approaches through the emphasis on Incarnation in the bishop’s writings on Christology. Chen finds that Bishop Shen’s focus on the Incarnation allows an affirmation of humankind and life in

this world that facilitates adaptation to the Chinese context. It also provides a theological underpinning for Three-Self. Chen Qirui puts Shen Yifan alongside K.H. Ting and Wang Weifan as a theologian for both the Chinese context and worldwide Christianity. She notes that Bishop Ting's theology has been termed a theology of love and that of Wang Weifan *shengsheng* (unceasing generation) theology. She would call Bishop Shen's theology a theology of life.

Chen Yongtao considers T.C. Chao's theology in light of his embrace of Anglicanism and focuses on its expression in his later soteriology, concluding that Chao's soteriology is less a response to Neo-Orthodoxy than to the influence of the Anglican tradition.

Bishop K.H. Ting passed away in November 2012 at the age of 96. His death was a great loss to the church universal. In the early years of his career as church leader and seminary president, he befriended a young seminarian, later theologian, popular preacher, author and Nanjing Union Theological Seminary faculty, Wang Weifan. It was a friendship and partnership that waxed and waned but endured over fifty years. Wang Weifan's remembrance of Bishop Ting is informal, touching and at times revelatory. Readers see a very personal portrait of both men, the writer and his subject, as well as a glimpse into the possibilities and limitations facing those who confronted the challenges of leading a church as it sought to re-establish itself in a rapidly changing China after the Cultural Revolution.

In "I Still Have Something to Say," Chen Zemin, outstanding elder statesmen of the Church in China, and a world-renowned theologian, looks back over the history of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) and the course of Theological Reconstruction. He calls for the formation of a "Jinling School" (Jinling is an ancient name for Nanjing) of theology, which he envisions as "seeking

in common a Chinese Christian theology and theory that is adapted to ‘the new image of China as a socialist society.’” He further urges his audience of seminarians and the Church they are to serve to remedy the situation in which the Church has “fallen behind” the trend of the times and the needs of believers.

The final selection is the Work Report of the Ninth National Chinese Christian Conference held in September, 2013. The Conference is a meeting of delegates from throughout the Church as well as the incumbent Committees of the China Christian Council and the Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China. The Conference is held every five years to elect new members and leadership, review the work of the past five-year period and chart the course for the next five years. The Work Report of the Ninth Conference was presented at the meeting by Elder Fu Xianwei, Chair of the TSPM. A listing of the contents of the *Nanjing Theological Review* 2012 rounds out this issue.

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

The occasion of issue 25 surely calls for an expanded recognition and personal appreciation of all those who have contributed the production of CTR since the first appearance of the journal with its stark white cover and red papercut logo of loaves and fishes first appeared. With the shift in volume numbers from years (last used in 1991) to numerals (beginning with vol. 8) the cover changed to a brilliant blue with the journal title in the fine calligraphy of NJUTS faculty Xu Rulei, graced with a small logo in white. The overall design was the work of Lois Cole.

It has been a pleasure and an honor to serve as the editor of this journal for these years, particularly because it has brought me into contact with so many contributors and readers. The list of colleagues and friends who deserve heartfelt thanks is long. In the early years, staff at the Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre in Hong Kong helped in typing and proofreading; Mr. David Thorne and others at the Asia Pacific Office of United Bible Societies shared their expertise in typesetting and format; volunteer translators gave invaluable help, though over the years both translation and editing devolved on this editor. None of this would have been possible without the kind permission and support of the authors of works that have appeared in these pages since 1985. Volumes 14, 15 and 16 benefitted from partial support from a three-year ecumenical project grant to the China Christian Council by the Council for World Mission. The journal is now based at the Ming Hua Theological College in Hong Kong, but has also been located at the Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre (Hong Kong) and San Francisco Theological Seminary.

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 encouragement and support.

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

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

Janice Wickeri
Editor
Hong Kong

Inherit and Renew: Ecclesiology in the Indigenous Chinese Church

HAI JINHUA

[Author's note] The 2010 *Report on China's Religions* noted that with the relatively rapid development of Christianity, China now had an estimated 23 million Protestants. The 2011 edition of this report stated that Chinese Christianity could make its contribution as a force in promoting "civil society." As the number of Protestant Christians rises, so does the pressure on the Church's ability to provide pastoral care, one of the worsening problems we face. As government grew more 'desensitized' in the matter of religion, "privately established meeting points," or "house churches" slowly surfaced as well. Thus, in order to run the Chinese Church well, there is an even greater need for us to understand the true meaning of church. Exactly what kind of church is ours and what kind should it be? What changes has it undergone? What kind of guidance and resources is it able to offer our present society? What sort of response shall we make to current issues? In this essay, I explore ecclesiology and the meaning of "church," by looking at the Bible, church history, and the indigenous Chinese Church.

[Editor's note] This translation is excerpted from Hai Jinhua's essay, "Inherit and Renew: On ecclesiology in the Bible, church history and the indigenous Chinese Church," totaling roughly half its forty-page length. There are four sections in the essay: (1) Introduction; (2) Ecclesiology in the Bible; (3) Ecclesiology in Church History; and (4) Chinese Indigenous Ecclesiology.

(4) Chinese Indigenous Ecclesiology

The Chinese Church has made no theological breakthroughs in “ecclesiology.” Prof. Chen Zemin 陈泽民 believes that when Protestant Christianity came to China, “up until the development of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, it never established a church that could genuinely be called the ‘Chinese [Protestant] Church’.”¹ He did not think inserting the word “Chinese” or “China” made a church that belonged to Chinese believers, for at that time all theological thinking was founded on that of the western churches. And though we could not exist outside the church universal, this was in no way appropriate to either the political environment or the believers’ spiritual experience of those days. But there was precedent for the renewal movements of the time, they did not appear out of nowhere. The Three-Self Manifesto itself noted that, “The movement for self-government, self-support and self-propagation advocated by Chinese Christianity already has had quite some success....”² The British Anglican Henry Venn is generally credited as the earliest to propose “three-self” as a concept for a policy of church establishment and his contemporary in the mission field, Rufus Anderson, called for an independent church with a local character rather than dependence on some “mother church.”³ Coupled with this were the huge changes taking place in Chinese society, such as the New Culture Movement, the May Fourth Movement, the Anti-Christian Movement, etc. Out of all this came the first

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- 1 Chen Zemin, *Seeking and Witnessing. Writings of Chen Zemin* 求索与见证—陈泽民文选 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2007), 3; 160.
 - 2 Ibid., 2.
 - 3 K.H. Ting 丁光训, *Writings of K.H. Ting* 丁光训文集 (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1989), 36; 119. See also *Writings of Chen Zemin*, 41.

generation of indigenous Chinese theologians, people like T.C. Chao 赵紫宸, Xie Fuya 谢扶雅 (N.Z. Zia), Jia Yuming 贾玉铭, Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗 (Wu Yaozong), Xu Baoqian 徐宝谦 and Wu Leichuan 吴雷川.⁴

1 First Generation Theologians' Views on Ecclesiology

The Ecclesiology of T.C. Chao (1888-1979)

In his early works T.C. Chao was more concerned about Christology and salvation. When he mentioned the Church it was with reference to the problems it faced at the time. He believed the Church was a spiritual fellowship and that one did not have to be baptized to belong to the Church. He did not place much emphasis on the organization of the Church. Not until the Anti-Christian Movement did he see it as influenced by the mode of traditional Chinese religious life. Then he strove to point out that attention should be paid to the Church's social and organizational functions. In 1935, he defined the Church as "fellowships of Christ's followers, having different organization and different centers, all meant to build and rebuild humanity. The Church must continue Jesus' work, doing as he did, to bring people to repentance and new life, in order to come into God's kingdom."⁵ Here, he upholds the view of the early Church on the visible form of "heaven," and the desire to reproduce it in history. This

4 Wang Weifan 汪维藩, "Characteristics of Chinese theological reflection" 中国教会思想思考之特色, in *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources* 中国神学及其文化渊源 (Nanjing: Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, 1997), 175. See also *Writings from Nanjing Seminary* 金陵神学文选, ed., Chen Zemin (Nanjing: NJUTS, 1992), 79-80.

5 Winfried Glüer 古爱华, *The Theology of T.C. Chao* 赵紫宸的神学思想 (Chinese edition) (Shanghai: CCC, 1999), 225.

has echoes of his Christology, the belief that the Church is established so that the word that has become flesh will continue to be carried on, in a vast expansion of its “flesh.” He upholds the social function of the Church— “the Church is society within the society,” a point he repeatedly stresses. Following the outbreak of the war of resistance against Japan in 1938, T.C. Chao reiterated that the Church “was the Word become flesh in society.”⁶ Therefore he stressed the Church’s role in society and indigenization of the Church.⁷ He believed that the Church must “establish its own identity, prove the reasonableness of its own existence, show forth its own life, engage its own experience, feel its own pain, see its own Gethsemane, discover its own cross, establish its own form and liturgy, declare its own faith and philosophy, and build its own system.”⁸

The ecclesiology of Chao’s later period (1940s and 50s) was limited to the biblical discourse on the Church, such as that in the theology of Paul and the synoptic gospels. He stresses the transcendent nature of the Church, first discussing the essence of the Church and then its function. This was a departure from his earlier period (1920s-30s) when he spoke only of the Church’s function. He held that the Church is the body of Christ, bought with Christ’s blood, the dwelling place of God. Where Jesus is, there is the Church, and there is no salvation outside

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- 6 Sun Shangyang 孙尚扬, “Between order and meaning: T.C. Chao’s choices, his gains and losses” 在秩序与意义之间：赵紫宸的选择及其得失, in *Religious Sociology* 宗教社会学 (revised edition) (Beijing: Beijing University Press, 2003), 287.
- 7 Tang Xiaofeng 唐晓峰, *Research on the Theology of T.C. Chao* 赵紫宸神学思想研究 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2006), 146-147.
- 8 T.C. Chao, *The Church in China and the Church Universal*, quoted from *Research on the Theology of T.C. Chao*, Tang, 148.

the Church. The Church is the body of Christ—here, *ti* means body (身体 *shenti*); *ti* is also a component of the ‘thing-in-itself’ or being (本体 *benti*). “If the Church is the Body of Christ, then this means that *benti* points to the God beyond form or body and to the eternal actuality of Christ. This actuality is inherent in the *benti*.⁹ The Church links heaven and earth, God and humankind together into one body, an idea that resonates in the way the Chinese concept concerning the relationship between the ways of heaven and human affairs does (天人之际). He held that the mission of the Church is “to be an agency of saving grace, conveying God’s action in the world.” Such witness [appears] first in the worship life of believers, because the word of Christ is there. When Chao changed his dismissive attitude toward liturgy and joined the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui 中华圣公会 (Holy Catholic Church of China), he also ascribed great significance to Communion, believing it to be a sign of Jesus’ presence, though he denied transubstantiation. He also placed special emphasis on the church attribute of oneness and Christ as the foundation of this oneness, though diversity can exist in its expressions. He therefore took an active part in the ecumenical movement, to complete the Church’s mission.¹⁰ After Liberation, to reconcile his ideological differences with the ruling Party, he called the Church “a fellowship of love,” considering it to be Jesus’ love established: love renews Christians and Christians renew the world. This Chao continued to be involved in social service, but as church property was appropriated [by the State], he reduced Christian faith to spiritual experience and gradually, his voice grew still.¹¹

9 Glüer, 230.

10 Ibid., 231-246.

11 Ibid., 263-264, 273.

The Ecclesiology of Xie Fuya (N.Z. Zia, 1892-1991)

In one of his early essays, Xie Fuya pointed out that “Churches require a professional clergy and teachers, along with men and women believers who come together to form the Church in order to have a place to 1) worship God; 2) [perform] the ceremonies of baptism, Communion and so on; and 3) preach the gospel,” and it was his belief that the Church was simply a product of western culture.¹² At this time, his definition of the Church was limited to the institutional and phenomenological level; he remained unconvinced about the then burgeoning indigenization movement. It was his opinion that the Chinese Church, having acquired a superficial understanding of Christian faith, before discussing indigenization, would be “blinded by the raging secularism of modern times and unable to break through to the development of a religious culture.” Furthermore, it would be reduced to nationalism. “Christianity in our country should be a Chinese (*Zhonghua* 中华) Christianity. This nationalism is egoism.”¹³

“In his later years, his ecclesiology was closely connected to the question of service.”¹⁴ These two concepts were taken from religious philosopher E.W. Lyman’s *The Meaning and Truth of Religion*. Xie

12 Xie Fuya 谢扶雅, “The Question of the Indigenous Church and the Future of Christianity in China” 本色教会问题与基督教在中国之前途, from “Xie Fuya’s dialectical theology” 谢扶雅辩证的神学, in *The Wisdom of Contextualization for Christianity in China* 基督教在中国处境化的智慧, Tang Xiaofeng, ed. Zhao Shilin and Duan Qi 赵士林, 段琦, vol. 2 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2009), 338-9.

13 Zhao Shilin and Duan Qi 赵士林, 段琦, eds., *The Wisdom of Contextualization for Christianity in China*, vol. 2 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2009), 339.

14 Wang Weifan, *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources* (Nanjing: NJUTS, 1997), 6.

Fuya too believed that these were two attributes of the Church. True service relies on a mystical source and true mysticism must be recorded in human service.”¹⁵ In his later *Christianity and Chinese Philosophy*, he continued to develop this thinking. He believed that the internal meaning of the Church lies in the closeness of a fellowship of people of faith; externally, the Church must actively take part in service to society. Service to society must constantly evolve to meet present needs, for the visible church is affected by its times and environment; the Church as institution, and its liturgy too, varies with time and place. In his view, extreme individualism was unlikely [to develop] in China, as was extreme collectivism; thus the Chinese Church could not develop the kind of Roman style “Catholic Church” (大公教会) or Schleiermacher’s “individualized church”. The Chinese “Golden Mean” way of life inevitably produced a culture of inclusivity; thus he proposed allowing each denomination in the Church to develop and change naturally, rather than obliging them to move in the direction of unity. He felt that the future of the Chinese Church lay in exploring the unique aesthetic talents of the Chinese, such as church architecture, poetry, painting, music, liturgy and so on and that there was much to be gained that would set the Chinese Church apart from the western Church.¹⁶

2 Ecclesiology from Liberation to the present

On September 23 1950, Y.T. Wu and others issued the Three-Self Manifesto, launching a unique and

15 Tang Xiaofeng, *The Religious Thought of Xie Fuya* 谢扶雅的宗教思想 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2007), 132. See also Tang, “Xie Fuya’s Dialectical Theology,” 339.

16 Tang, “Xie Fuya’s Dialectical Theology,” 341.

controversial approach to running the Church by applying the Three-Self principles (love country, love church, independent and self run). Both in China and overseas there are those who opposed these principles, calling them “Three-Self theology,” “United Front theology” or “political theology,” in the belief that Three-Self emphasizes close integration with the national political ideology and regime, putting “patriotism” at the forefront. In 2000, Bishop K.H. Ting gave a talk at the Community Church in Shanghai, in which he divided these first fifty years of Chinese Christian history into three stages: the first from the Three-Self renewal movement to the end of the Cultural Revolution, during which Chinese Christians stood with the masses of the Chinese people, uplifting anti-imperialism and patriotism, supporting Korea against America; the Church carrying out [a program of] independence and self-government, self-support and self-propagation; the second began with the establishment of the China Christian Council in 1980, with the goal of “running the church well.” This was a continuation, extension and supplementing of the content of the first stage; and the third began with the Jinan Meeting in 1998. This was “the highest, most crucial stage” of the fifty years, the advent of Theological Reconstruction—this stage was “a deepening of the first two stages and in theological terms an enhancement of them.”¹⁷ The main representative figure of the first stage is Y.T. Wu; Bishop K.H. Ting is the foremost figure of the latter two. “The initial aim of Three-Self was to solve the question of the sovereignty of the Chinese Church. In politics it demanded patriotism; in religion, independence; that is, self-

17 K.H. Ting, *On Three-Self and Building the Church, Theological Reconstruction* 论三自与教会建设，神学思想建设 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2000), 240-244.

government, self-support and self-propagation.”¹⁸ Y.T. Wu and the other members of the first group of pioneers during the new China period set down the blueprint for the path the Chinese Church would take, creating a church “with Chinese characteristics”; [spelled out in such statements as] Y.T. Wu’s “Three Witnesses and Ten Tasks,”¹⁹ which included the present Theological Reconstruction endeavors.²⁰ But given the changing times, they spent most of their time in pondering the social and political nature of Chinese Christianity and less in pondering the theological nature of the Church. Thus, in what follows I will mainly discuss the theological reflections on views of the Chinese Church of a later period, that represented by K.H. Ting and based in Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS). Participants in these reflections included NJUTS professors Wang Weifan, Chen Zemin, Luo Zhenfang 骆振芳, Xu Dingshan 徐鼎山 and Xu Rulei 徐如雷. Below, I will briefly discuss the views of the Church of K.H. Ting, Wang Weifan and Chen Zemin.

Ecclesiology of K.H. Ting (Ding Guangxun, 1915-2012)

In Bishop K.H. Ting’s view, thinking about the nature of the Church should proceed from its “universality and particularity.” “It is Bishop K.H. Ting who has done the most reflection on this issue.”²¹ He holds that

18 Ibid., 182.

19 Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗, “Report on the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement” 关于中国基督教三自爱国运动的报告, in *Essays on the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement: 1950-1952* 中国基督教三自爱国运动文选:1950-1952, ed., Luo Guanzong 罗冠宗 (Shanghai:CCC/TSPM, 1993), 68-82.

20 Ting, *Three-Self and Building the Church*, 57.

21 Wang Weifan, “Characteristics of Chinese theological reflection,” 174. See also *Writings from Nanjing Seminary*, ed., Chen Zemin, 95.

the universality of the church is not merely a matter of geography, but of cultural significance, and that only in this way can the Church's gospel shine forth in radiant splendor within the prism of a "particular culture" and thereby enrich the treasurehouse of the universal church. He likes to quote the biblical verses from Paul to the Colossians about all being called to the fullness of life in Christ (Colossians 2:9-10) and Revelation 2 and 3 concerning the 7 churches, as well as 21:9-27 on the new Jerusalem with its 12 gates, east, north, south and west, as examples to illustrate the breadth and depth of the church universal as well as its particularity; the two are complementary. From the same perspective, Bishop Ting proceeds to illustrate the necessity and reasonableness of the Chinese Church's implementation of Three-Self: "as the Chinese Church is increasingly able to better follow the Three-Self path, it is increasingly blessed and its contribution to the spiritual treasures of the universal church greater."²²

Another feature of his view of the Church is joined to his view of God and his Christology. His Christology does not only involve the intermingling of Christ's divine and human natures, but is connected to the attributes of God, further pointing out that God loves us with a Christ-like love, that God is love. A bit earlier on, he held that "the primary characteristic of the Church must be its holiness," for Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for it, cleansing it with the washing of water through the word, to make it holy (Ephesians 5:25-27). Thus, in order not to submit to sin, it is necessary to purify the Church.²³ But later he made the attribute of love most prominent,

22 Ting, *Three-Self and Building the Church*, 82-88, 101, 105-108, 121-123, 264.

23 K.H. Ting, *Writings of K.H. Ting* 丁光训文集 (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 1998), 128-131.

using the example of the church of Ephesus in Revelation, “but the Spirit also pointed out the debt of the church of Ephesus, that it had fallen from the love it had at first, the church is a body of people who love God, and also a body of sons and daughters of God who love each other.” Although he also recognized in the same way that the cleansing of the church was to make it holy, “yet, all in all, speaking of the overall work in China, today, ‘tearing down’ must give way to ‘establishing,’ struggle to reconciliation and destruction to construction.”²⁴ In this way, love becomes the sign of the Church.

Cyprian held the traditional view of the Church and has left us an ecclesiological axiom: Outside the Church there is no salvation. By the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church admitted that the view that only destruction lay outside the Church was wrong; the Catholic theologian Karl Rahner also felt that there were many “Christians” outside the Church. Bishop K.H. Ting addressed his view of the Church by placing it within the grand theory of the “Cosmic Christ,” making his view very close to that of Rahner.²⁵ In 1998 China experienced terrible floods. During an informal conversation with students at NJUTS, Bishop Ting said that after seeing many very moving photos from the scene and reading many reports, he felt that those who had sacrificed themselves for others or made active contributions [to the rescue effort] “may be outside the Church, but they are not outside God.”²⁶ Such a discourse is related to his view of sin. “The greatest word in the Bible is not ‘sin,’ but ‘grace’ ... we Chinese Christians strive to enable Christianity to take root in the soil of China; on the question of sin,

24 Ting, *Three-Self and Building the Church*, 7, 129-138, 224, 263.

25 Ting, *Writings*, 250-253.

26 Ting, *Three-Self and Building the Church*, 281.

we must avoid both the excess of optimism that leads to oversimplification as well as the flaunting of orthodoxy and over generalizing sin.”²⁷

When it came to specific issues concerning the Church, Bishop Ting’s principle was “differentiation” or making distinctions. For example, the warmth of universalism vs. unprincipled “love,” the relationship between Three-Self, the Church and the CCC, missionaries vs. western colonialism and imperialism, change vs. lack of change in theology, privately established worship gatherings outside Three-Self and so on: to all of these alike he applied this principle,²⁸ providing a relatively good environment for the Chinese Church in its post-denominational period.

Ecclesiology of Wang Weifan (1927-)

Professor Wang has pointed out that if we are to establish a theology with Chinese characteristics, three “returns” are needed: a return to the elder generation of Chinese theologians after May Fourth; a return to the Bible; and a return to the Chinese cultural texts.²⁹ Thus when he speaks of the ecclesiology of the Chinese Church, he follows this path, set out in depth in the “True Body” chapter of his *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources*. With regard to ecclesiology, Wang Weifan mainly discusses the question of unity in the Church, that is, the Church as body and limbs; the nature of the Church as both historical and eternal, which includes building the Church in history; the question of the spiritual position of the Church; of the

27 Ibid., 87, 131, 166, 202-204, 220-223, 286.

28 Ibid., 87, 131, 166, 202-204, 220-223, 286.

29 Wang, *Sources* (Nanjing: NJUTS, 1997), 125.

Church's essence and use, and so on.³⁰ In discussing the relationship of essence and use with regard to the Church, he quotes from T.C. Chao to elucidate the church's predicament of "having no body to use," and calls for absorbing the lessons of that time, pointing out that, "For the Chinese Church, indentifying the nature of the Church and the building up of its body remains the priority."³¹ As for the issue of "the one and the many," Wang Weifan analyzes the historical reasons for the Church's moving to a "post-denominational stage" and offers an explanation based on the Taoist concept of *taiji* 太极, how all things came into being, the 64 hexagrams of the *Zhou yi* 周易, the Chinese concept of "great unity" 大同 and other aspects of culture. He also expresses admiration for Xie Fuya's use of "great unity" thinking to deal with similarities and differences between the Chinese Church and the Church universal, pointing out that these remain "noble words" for the Chinese Church today (85-87). Wang uses Laozi's 老子 water metaphor in considering the Church's "life and death" or "death and life," (175; and Chen, 95) using it to illustrate how the Church can change its weakness or fragility to strength. During the Cultural Revolution, the Chinese Church passed through experiences similar to the passion and death of Jesus, with the result that, as Paul said, [the Church was] "always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:10). (88-89) On the Church's "particularity" and "universality" he quotes the "Tianyun" 天云 (The Turning of Heaven) chapter of the *Zhuangzi* 庄子: "When the springs dry up and the fish

30 Yuan Yijuan 袁益娟, *Shengsheng Theology: A Study of Wang Weifang's Theological Thinking* 生生神学—汪维藩神学思想研究 (Beijing: Jincheng Publishers, 2010), 116.

31 Wang, *Sources* (Nanjing: NJUTS, 1997), 85. [For following references to this work, see page numbers in text.]

are left stranded on the ground,”³² suggesting someone caught in a desperate situation, to illustrate the cultural source of China’s policy of Reform and Opening Up, as well as to show that Three-Self in the Chinese Church is not meant to achieve isolation but rather independence. Moreover this is an enrichment of the Church universal that can be concretely developed in the realms of the Chinese Church’s own theology, Christian literature, art and poetry. (89-90) Finally, speaking of “the Body and the Head,” he refers to the *Daodejing* 道德经: the “one” is the existence of the Dao or the Great Ultimate, existence that cannot be described or defined, and from this he elicits the transcendence of the Christian God. From the “one” in *de yi* 得一 (that is *dedao* 得到, attain) and *baoyi* 抱一 (stick to or hold to the Dao one has attained) and its unbreakable relationship with all creation, he points to the Church—only in Christ and all it has attained through the creation of all things in Christ, can it have stability and order; nothing, neither the Three-Self organization of Chinese Christianity nor the China Christian Council, can take the place of Christ. The former pair is the “scaffolding” for the latter pair and will one day be removed. (90-93) Or, the term “Council” in the present China Christian Council, will be removed, but must allow a Church of different opinions and voices to exist and build up a management system suitable to such a Church.³³ All these statements are the core of an ecclesiology for the Chinese Church.³⁴

32 Full passage: “When the springs dry up and the fish are left stranded on the ground, they spew each other with moisture and wet each other down with spit—but it would be much better if they could forget each other in the rivers and lakes!” in *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1968), 163.

33 Wang Weifan, *Walking Lonely for Ten Years* 十年踽踽: 汪维藩文集 (Hong Kong: CSCCRC, 2009), 338.

34 Wang, *Sources*, 93.

Ecclesiology of Chen Zemin (1917-)

In 1956, Prof. Chen Zemin made a statement on the role of the Church that was later popularized and quoted by everyone who has written on Chinese theology: “Theology is the Church thinking.”³⁵ The Church is a subject. He held that theology in old China was impoverished; the Church had no self. Theological reflection must be founded on experience. The experience that is the Chinese Three-Self Patriotic Movement woke up Chinese believers and enabled them to recognize the face of imperialism. Because this was a new road, Prof. Chen felt that “this experience demands that we make the necessary revisions to the traditional views to which we were formerly accustomed.” On the question of salvation, he felt that the Gospel should not stress sin, but rather should stress the nature of God as justice and mercy. The future of the Church is not human despair.³⁶

Chen Zemin always felt that ecclesiology was a weak point of the Chinese Church. (71,160) He liked to quote the Christology of Ephesians and Colossians to illustrate ecclesiology. On understanding Christ, he followed K.H. Ting’s theory of the Cosmic Christ. He felt that only within

35 Duan Qi and Tang Xiaofeng 段琦, 唐晓峰, “2008 Report on the Current Status of Chinese Christianity: on organizational diversity in the Chinese Church and its tensions” 2008年中国基督教现状及研究—兼论中国教会组织的多元存在格局及张力, in *Report on China’s Religions* 中国宗教报告 2009 eds., Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui 金泽, 邱永辉 (Beijing: CASS Document Publishing, 2009), 3 and Wang Aiming 王艾明 “Foreword,” in *Theology: The Church Thinking* 神学：教会在思考 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2010), 5-7.

36 Chen Zemin, *Seeking and Witnessing: Selected Writings of Chen Zemin* 求索与见证—陈泽民文选 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2007), 6, 18. [For following references to this work, see page numbers in text.]

this framework could one come to some understanding of Irenaeus' "All things are one in Christ." (All things are gathered together in Christ, the Head of the Church.) "The Church cannot be seen as having a "monopoly" on God's saving grace; at most it is an instance of God speaking and acting on earth or simply one pointing to the way God works on earth. The Church's mission should be seen as a commitment to the humanitarian cause in the world. Its most important goal is to bring all things in heaven and on earth together in Christ. "Gather together" in Greek is *anakenhalaiosasthai*, which means to summarize or to gather into the head. He uses Ephesians 4: 13 "come to the unity [of the faith]" to represent this; he feels it is easier for Chinese to understand the concept of "All things under heaven are one." (148, 259-262, 338-340, 410, 429) Thus God, through Christ, in this "Head," brings fallen humanity back into Christ's fellowship, reconciled with God. Thus the Church should preach one Gospel, should be one creation, the place where God is.

Based on the above understanding, he takes a negative attitude toward Cyprian's "outside the Church there is no salvation," for he feels that this idea has been replaced by the concept of universal brotherhood: the Church "is the fellowship of the presence of Christ, seen as the fellowship of the potential within humans, a higher common self-perception; a fellowship for the development of deep human relationships." He feels the distinction between "sacred" and "secular" is a narrow vision; moreover, he approaches the "broader masses" outside the Church from the view of God as the source of truth, goodness and beauty: "a person who does justice and is upright shows that in his/her heart there is an awe of God." Chen feels there is no sharp divide between the sacred and the secular in the thought of Martin Buber

because all truth, goodness and beauty comes from God. He also then corroborates Mencius' "goodness of human nature" and the Chinese stress on ethics and morals. He also says that the extremes represented by "original sin" and Acts 4:12, "for there is no other name under Heaven by which we must be saved," should be "contextualized" toward tolerance (he contrasts western "guilt" culture with a Chinese culture of optimism). Thus, he sees the Church as a "fellowship," a "Communion of saints" or the "Body of Christ," rather than as "the elect." (44, 71, 160-161) But, the Body of Christ, this entity, is not "Three-Self" and "CCC." The CCC/TSPM are not yet what theology or the Bible term a Church. When will there be a church that can be called the "Chinese Church?" We must wait for the leading of the Spirit." (258, 254, 260)

3 Ecclesiology outside Three-Self or Ecclesiology of the "House Church"

Some view the model of the house church that has developed in China as a long tradition in the development of Christianity in China.³⁷ Of course, this is also correct, and it is even characteristic of Chinese religion, because Chinese religion, such as the deeply rooted veneration of ancestors, has frequently formed around the unit of the family. The famous sociologist C.K. Yang 杨清坤 used the term "diffuse religion" to position Chinese religion, distinguishing it from "institutional religion." He held that

37 Shi Jinxiu and Yao Yuehong 史进修, 姚月红, "Reflections on the Existence of House Gatherings in Christianity" 基督教家庭聚会点存在之思考, *Religion*, No. 23 (1/1993): 46.

every traditional Chinese home was a worship site, where the ancestral tablets were kept, the home deities or idols.”³⁸

With regard to the Chinese Christian “House Church,” these generally indicate churches outside the Three-Self system. As the 2008 essay “The Situation of and Research into Chinese Christianity” pointed out, at present Chinese Christianity comprises: the Three-Self Church, the non-Three-Self Church, and the quasi-Three-Self Church. The Three-Self Church can be further divided into church-based, registered worship gatherings and fellowship gatherings subordinate to church-based or fellowship gatherings; the non-Three-Self churches can be divided into traditional non-three-self churches and emerging urban churches; quasi-Three-Self churches can be divided into independent churches and not yet registered churches.³⁹ According to the true meaning of “church,” Three-Self is not a Church, but a church organization. However, because in China the term has become a form of identification, especially with the emergence of churches in the non-Three-Self system, the term “Three-Self Church” has automatically emerged as well. “House Church” came about in the same way—strictly speaking these are just a form of gathering, quite common in early Christianity, but today [in China] they have become a regularized church type. Broadly speaking, in China the term “House Church” indicates what the 2008 essay referred to above calls the “non-Three-Self Church.” This model [in its traditional form] refers to those who were unhappy with the “Three-

38 Fan Lizhu 范丽珠, *Religious Sociology: Religion and China* 宗教社会学：宗教与中国 (Beijing: Current Affairs Press, 2010), 74. See also C.K. Yang, *Religion in Chinese Society: A Study of Contemporary Social Functions of Religion and Some of Their Historical Factors* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1961).

39 Duan Qi and Tang Xiaofeng, “2008 Report,” 131-142.

Self Reform Movement” [of the 1950s]. In the Cultural Revolution, many Christians were forced “underground” and gathered in this kind of House Church. Up until 1979, with the opening up of religious policy [under the general policy of Reform and Opening Up] the activities of these house gatherings expanded rapidly, most notably in Henan, Anhui and Jiangsu. The majority were rural churches. In cities, due to the restoration of the [religious] policy, this type of house gathering was “coopted” and since in cities the law and policy were strictly applied, these churches moved toward villages and suburbs. They are called “traditional” because they have a historical tradition, as well as traditional theology—generally being more “fundamentalist”; the worship-gathering model in itself is more conservative.⁴⁰

The second type of non-Three-Self Church belongs to the emerging fellowships. Generally they establish churches or fellowships themselves because of cultural and political or group concept differences. They break away from the Three-Self fold. Their members are intellectuals, bosses, university students, migrant workers, etc. The former type [of non-Three-Self Church] bases itself on historical reasons, their opposition to Three-Self is quite strong, and they even have similar feelings for the government; their lifestyle is conservative and they don’t care about society, but seek only their own spiritual life. The second type is more open. They have some contact with Three-Self, but do not join the Three-Self fold. Instead they strive to find a path to legalize their status. Because this second type of non-Three-Self Church has a more enlightened and lively expression in terms of theology, church organization and social involvement, the term “house church” has been altered to “emerging urban churches.”

40 Ibid., 137-39.

Some see three types of Chinese urban house churches: the “Beijing model”—one or several full time evangelists from the same church leading a dozen or more meeting points, called a series; or several different churches cooperating, but working independently, called parallel. Members and pastors of this type are more highly educated and have more sophisticated resources. The second type is the “Wenzhou model”—with a strict organization and management system, as well as liquidity. These churches send out their own missionaries. The third model is the “Pearl River Delta model”—mainly for those from outside the area, so there are “migrant worker churches and domestic worker churches.”⁴¹ But in Liu Tongsu’s 刘同苏 opinion, the Beijing model is the strongest at present, such that Wenzhou is studying the Beijing model.⁴² As for their theology, Sun Yi 孙毅 thinks that “the theological system of the traditional house churches comes mainly from the pietists. The special characteristic of nineteenth century pietism was an extreme emphasis on the personal inner spiritual life and growth. The effects of this kind of theological tradition on the Chinese Church can be seen in preaching, with a greater emphasis on witness to the inner personal life rather than interpretation of biblical texts; in church governance, in the absence of a strong emphasis on the office and institution of the church and more of an inclination toward a non-institutional church; in their relationship to society, with more of a focus on personal salvation and little interest in

41 Zhang Lujia 张路加, “Returned (from overseas) Christians and Today’s Chinese House Churches” ‘海归基督徒’与今日中国家庭教会, http://wheatseeds.org/news/News_View.asp?NewsID=676.

42 Liu Tongsu 刘同苏, “Reasons for and Significance of the Rise of Urban House Churches” 城市家庭教会崛起的缘由与意义, at 海外校园网 [overseas campus network] <http://www.oc.org/web/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=4074>.

the church's responsibility to society and culture, etc.”⁴³ He believes that the current Chinese house churches should emerge from the old model of Church “hidden away in a house,” come out and be the “city on the hill,” fulfilling their potential. In terms of church or theology, they should seek resources for theological reflection and church governance in Reformation theology or Puritan thought.” This can be seen rather early on in the Wenzhou model—the overseas Chinese pastor who had the greatest impact on the Wenzhou model was Tang Chongrong 唐崇荣, such that numerous evangelists modeled themselves on him, from his “reformed theology” to his preaching style, including voice and gestures. Sun Yi also holds that in terms of church management, there must be a change from “point” [as in meeting point] to “congregation,” and that the institution must be strengthened: “building the institution is not only a matter of putting together a church charter, but is more concerned with the church's pastoring and governance, such as how to [encourage] functioning as a team. In fact the development of the institution is a further clarification of the team ministry, and naturally touches on the particular team's basic concepts and the arrangement of complementary relationships.” “Generally speaking, having a church institution indicates that the church has a clearly documented covenant, charter and church regulations along with a pastoral system, system of governance and ministry and mission consonant with these.”⁴⁴ In terms of the relationship between religion and the State, their approach differs from the “keep the faith without resorting to authority” model of the traditional

43 Sun Yi 孙毅, “To Be the City on the Hill: A Reflection on the Development of Urban House Churches” 作山上的城—对城市家庭教会发展的一点思考, overseas campus network, <http://www.oc.org/web/modules/smartsection/item.php?itemid=4075>.

44 Sun Yi, “To be the City on the Hill.”

house churches; their model is to “uphold both faith and authority,” promoting separation of church and state. Believing that government recognition and registration of house churches relates to the government symbol of building “civil society,” Liu Tongsu says: “the ‘registration’ issue is crucial to the issue of maintaining the right to [religious] belief and is a key issue in building civil society. ‘Independent registration’ implies that genuine civil organizations have appeared in China. Through independent registration, the church gains the needed legal form to impact mainstream society; for society, the emergence of civil organizations signals the building of a civil society.” In their eyes, the “Three-Self” Church is a conservative official body that will not survive as an organization because that is what civil society dictates. Thus, their goal from now on is to contact churches that are under the Three-Self organization because they think these are enslaved.⁴⁵ They also emphasize social service, and having changed their former conservative gospel view of personal salvation, also instituted a salary scale for missionaries and preachers. Zhuang Zukun 庄祖鲲 believes that the shift in models of Chinese house churches should institutionalize their governance, serve to create team pastorates, systematize their preaching and contextualize the gospel.⁴⁶

Conclusion

History is composed of ordinary people and events, but only a few representative figures make it into

45 Liu Tongsu, “Rise of Urban House Churches.”

46 Zhuang Zukun 庄祖鲲, “Toward the Future: The Diversification of Models of the Chinese Church” 走向未来：中国教会的模式转多, http://www.wheatseeds.org/news/News_View.asp?NewsID=388.

the history books. The above survey of ecclesiology in the Christian Church is a record of the thought of representative figures, because these are the people we can identify and remember. Of course, they represent the themes emphasized by the ordinary people of each specific period. The Church is forever the Body of Christ and Christ is its Head. There is only one Head, but many limbs. This is what the Bible teaches and what the elder generation has sought and maintained throughout several thousand years of church history. It is also the goal for which the Chinese Church has strived; today we see its fruits. The church is diverse, yet it is one.⁴⁷

In this way, we can see that the visible church, due to variations in place and time, or in its self-interpretation, shows distinctive theoretical paradigms and forms. Today, our Chinese Church is taking an active part in the ecumenical movement, but “we do not want to abandon the hard-won victory of the reformers for the sake of supporting a superficial ecumenism; we call for one Christianity because we take seriously the idea of the Church put forth by the reformers—*ecclesia semper reformanda*—not a church where reform takes place once and for all, but a church that is constantly reforming, a church that must further reform according to God’s word.”⁴⁸ We inherit the church’s unchanging truth and biblical teachings, we hold to the oneness, holiness, catholicity and saintliness of the church and we reform on the basis of changes in the times and place, in order that the Church in its place and in its

47 Wang Aiming 王艾明, “Unity in Diversity” 多样性中的统一性, *Nanjing Theological Review*, No. 66 (1/2006): 4-12. See also Chen Yilu 陈逸鲁, “The Chinese Church’s Ideal of Oneness with Diversity” 中国教会合一而多样的理想, *Nanjing Theological Review*, No.66 (1/2006):13-25.

48 Timothy George, *Theology of the Reformers*, trans. by Wang Li 王丽 (Beijing: CASS Publishing, 2009), 296-97. [Refers to Chinese edition]

time will be alive and mature, to the measure of the full stature of Christ (Ephesians 4: 13). “The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him” (Luke 2: 40; see also Hebrews 5: 12-14).

The Church is also a lamp, “the seven lampstands are the seven churches” (Revelation 1: 20). A lampstand guides one on his or her way to the light. Gnostics say that people are strangers in the vastness of the land, who must rely on “knowledge” to find the other shore, [for] this shore is evil. Though we do not agree with much of what they say, do not their insights on existence speak to our modern situation? Modern humans are alienated by the technological division of labor and their spirit has been impoverished in the process; many have been rendered “homeless”; home here meaning spiritual home. In its sixty years in new China, Chinese Christianity has established a unique system of “order,” from reform to Three-Self patriotism, from adaptation to harmony, all of which seems to be casting off its shameful “colonial” face and undertaking a political commentary, in an attempt to explain the church’s social role: an active functional shaping. Because of this, little attention has been paid to constructing a system of “meaning.” What kind of system of “meaning” can the Chinese Church transmit [to society]? Many Chinese Christian scholars believe that they must return to traditional Chinese culture, like Profs. Wang Weifan and Yan Xiyu, for example. Prof. Wang begins from the ancient Chinese Classic of Rites, the *Li ji* 礼记, explaining that the fundamental meaning of *li* is “do not forget to whom we trace our root.” (Tang Gong 1:27) This *ben* 本 or “root” is God, is one’s family home, one’s nation. Corresponding to this is the need to “return,” namely, “never forget to pay a debt of gratitude,” (lit. repay the source; return to the beginning). The greatest such repayment is a sacrifice, moreover, it is a genuine

sacrifice, in line with Leviticus.⁴⁹ Prof. Yan Xiyu holds that the basic attitude of Chinese theological reflection is veneration. Veneration takes place without regard to faith and without regard to theology.”⁵⁰ Everyone has the need to repay debts of gratitude, and furthermore, through veneration, we offer to God the sincerest sacrifice. Everyone must return “home,” and on this path, is the church able to light the way? Can it truly lead them to behold “...and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest” (Revelation 1:13)? Or does it simply lead them to some church leaders? Yet, “Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life” (John 8:12).

If in speaking of the first dozen or so years of development of the Chinese Protestant Church, we can for a number of reasons term this the “K.H. Ting era,” then we can say that now we have entered the “post K.H. Ting era.” In 2008, at the Eighth National Chinese Christian Conference, a new leadership team was elected: “the new leadership team was younger, almost none of them the type of respected persons that had preceded them, and so how to achieve the democratization of collective leadership was particularly important.”⁵¹ Gao Feng 高峰, president of the China Christian Council, also pointed out that the working principle of the CCC/TSPM would be that of collective leadership, democratic centralism and decisions

49 Wang, *Cultural Sources*, 95-103.

50 Yan Xiyu 严锡禹, “The Basic Attitude of Chinese Theological Reflection” 吾侪所学关天意—中国神学思考的基本态度, *Nanjing Theological Review*, No. 66 (1/2006): 111.

51 Duan Qi and Tang Xiaofeng, “2008 Report,” 113.

taken in conference.⁵² At the same time, he emphasized that leaders “must make efforts in terms of spirituality and image,” and moreover must become leaders who were also “learners,” studying social knowledge and knowledge of the law and theology.⁵³ The *Report on Religion in China (2010)* pointed out that the number of Christians had increased rather rapidly in recent years, totaling 23 million Chinese Protestants in 2010. Regionally, of the total Christian population, 42.5% were found in East China and 29.2% in Central China.⁵⁴ Clearly, Chinese Protestant Christians are concentrated in those areas that have urbanized more rapidly. Coupled with the disparity between the number of believers and the [smaller] number of highly qualified clergy, pastoral care now poses a problem. Therefore, the CCC/TSPM, while strengthening Theological Reconstruction, also focuses on institution building and personnel development in order to shift gradually from “rule by God” and “rule by man” to “rule by law (regulations).

How can the image of the CCC/TSPM among believers be improved? For a variety of reasons, this problem has continued to perplex the CCC/TSPM. In order to cast off the influence of the imperialist West, when new China was established the Chinese Protestant Church initiated the Three-Self Reform Movement,

52 Gao Feng 高峰, “Strengthen the Self-Construction of the CCC/TSPM” 加强两会自身建设 in *Album on the Eighth National Chinese Christian Conference* 中国基督教第八次代表会议专辑 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2008), 182.

53 *Ibid.*, 181-183.

54 CASS Institute of World Religion Task Force 中国社会科学院世界宗教研究所课题组, “Report on the Christian Household Survey Report,” in *Report on China’s Religions* 中国宗教报告 2010, eds., Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui 金泽, 邱永辉 (Beijing: CASS Document Publishing, 2010), 192-193.

which later became the Three-Self Patriotic Movement.”⁵⁵ Due to such a background, “Three-Self” naturally had a strongly political coloration, a situation that persisted until October 1980 when the Third National Christian Conference established the China Christian Council. “It was Bishop Ting’s fervent hope that the Chinese Protestant Church would finally be able to supplant the mass-type organization, the TSPM, with the China Christian Council. Therefore he stated that the TSPM was the scaffolding and that once its task was done, the scaffolding could be dismantled. Bishop Ting’s vision could not be accomplished because the times were not right. But how to strengthen the church-like nature of the TSPM/CCC was an abiding concern of Bishop Ting,”⁵⁶ as it was for the other members of the older generation of theologians like Wang Weifan and Chen Zemin. With the revision of the Chinese Protestant Church Constitution during the 2008 Eighth National Chinese Christian Conference, a Confession of Faith was added.⁵⁷ This section noted that Chinese Christians were heirs to a long tradition, from the Apostolic Age to the current worldwide church, of consistent adherence to a basic faith, and strengthened the basis on which the Chinese Protestant Church and the worldwide church constituted a “Communion of Saints.” Contextualized theological reflection was added to the article on “Church.” Dr. Huang Haibo 黄海波 believes

55 The name was changed in 1954. See “Letter to Fellow Believers from the National Conference” 中国基督教全国会议告全国同道书, in 中国基督教三自爱国运动文选:1950-1952, ed. Luo Guanzong 罗冠宗 (Shanghai:CCC/TSPM, 1993), 67.

56 Duan and Tang, 115.

57 The Confession of Faith may be accessed on the English page of the CCC/TSPM website: <http://www.bibleinchina.org/news/CHINESECHURCH/2012/9/10/12910154103JE2F7G5F7B19I2H2B14.html>.

that the Chinese Church in recent years has, in a variety of ways, shown its inherent “civil society elements” (2008 he sees as as “Year One of China’s Civil Society,” because that year’s Wenchuan Earthquake and the Beijing Olympics both embodied huge enthusiasm and the power of civil participation. Coupled with government development strategy planning, public disclosure of ministerial budgets, the spread and popularity of blogging, etc., all this brought the idea of “civil society” out of the study and into people’s lives), whether within the church’s own orbit or outside it. The concrete path by which the church enters civil society is social service and concern for society, including capacity training, AIDS concern, drug rehab work, medical services, services for the elderly and disabled, environmental and relief work, etc.⁵⁸ In February 2012, the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) and several ministries under it issued a document, “Views on Encouraging and Regulating Charitable Activities in Religious Circles” (SARA. No. 6 [2012]), giving policy support and legitimacy to this “path.” The Chinese Christian charitable experience exchange and commendation ceremony was held June 19 in Hangzhou in Zhejiang province. Awards were bestowed on 10 advanced groups and 12 advanced individuals; 6 outstanding groups and 7 outstanding individuals were also honored. The assembly also mentioned the difficulties and challenges faced by social philanthropy launched by the Chinese Protestant Church, including some ideological obstacles to the undertakings that remained to be overcome: regularization of these charitable

58 Huang Haibo 黄海波, “Toward a Civil Society in Progress: On Chinese Christianity’s Responsibility and Reflection in 2010” 走向构建中的公民社会2010年：中国基督教的责任与反思, in *Report on China’s Religions* 中国宗教报告2011, edited by Jin Ze and Qiu Yonghui (Beijing: CASS Document Publishing, 2011), 134-145.

undertakings needs to be improved; and the degree of specialization must be further enhanced.⁵⁹ Huang Haibo further believes that the foundation for the Church to move toward civil society is theology and church organization building; the international vision for moving toward civil society is promotion of overseas exchanges. Among these he mentions the activities around the Edinburgh 2010 Centennial World Missionary Conference and the Third Lausanne Conference on World Evangelization (2010) in Capetown, as resources to reflect on the holistic nature of the Chinese Christian mission to proselytize and how to promote theological education in China. Lasting power in the move toward civil society comes from self-awareness and reflection. Here he mentions undertaking reflection on and review of Three-Self and existing issues, including the model of church management, the model of pastoral care, the cohesiveness of CCC/TSPM, internal unity, the problem of denominations, the problem of believers outside the CCC/TSPM fold, etc.⁶⁰ Through solid effort in all aspects, the inherent ‘civil society elements’ in Chinese Protestant circles will be able to go further in using all effective ways to gain nurture and [ways of] presenting [itself], and thereby dedicate its strength to the formation of Chinese civil society and the overall goal of achieving a harmonious society.⁶¹

In short, the Church must be heir to its past, but must also renew [itself]. The development of Christian music, art, painting and literature within the unique Chinese aesthetic that Prof. Xie Fuya envisioned, is still in the exploratory [stages]. In order to express in its context the richness of Christ and the Church, we must constantly

59 <http://www.ccctspm.org/news/ccctspm/2012/619/12619947.html>.

60 Huang Haibo, 146-171.

61 Ibid., 172.

update our ideas. The church historian Jaroslav Pelikan has quoted the popular saying: “Tradition is the living faith of the dead, traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”⁶² We respect tradition, that is, we respect the Church as Church, or it becomes purely institutional, something technical. But we absolutely cannot maintain a type of “traditionalism”; if we do the Church can only be a pool of stagnant water, bogged down and unable to flow. The nature of Church lies in its role as God’s representative, as the Body of Christ, as the lampstand that shows people the way “home,” to the place where “there will be no more night; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever” (Revelation 22:5). Our times are filled with challenges, but also with opportunities. How we may be a beautiful witness to Christ in this time is the burden God has laid on us. May God grant us a full measure of wisdom to complete God’s mission.

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62 Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Vindication of the Living: The 1983 Jefferson Lecture in the Humanities* (Yale University Press, 1986).

Christ the Everlasting Lord

—Bishop Shen Yifan's Thinking on Incarnation

CHEN QIRUI

Introduction

Since the policy of Reform and Opening Up was put into effect in China [December 1978], the study of Chinese Christianity has gained increasing attention. In recent years, people have begun to focus on the study of the thought of contemporary Christian leaders or scholars, for example, Bishop K.H. Ting 丁光训, Professor Chen Zemin 陈泽民 and Professor Wang Weifan 汪维藩.¹ This elder generation of Christian leaders has experienced all the social vicissitudes of China's recent past: rejection of the old society, World War II and the establishment of new China, as well as the Cultural Revolution and finally the period of reform and openness. In the midst of a changing China, they have witnessed the way in which the Christian Church has put down roots, developed and grown. With deep national feeling and realization of their religious faith, they have given expression to the "Chinese identity" of Christianity and created a Chinese theology.

Bishop Shen Yifan 沈以藩 (1928-1994), another important Church leader and scholar of the same

1 Zhao Shilin and Duan Qi 赵士林, 段琦, eds., *The Wisdom of Contextualization for Christianity in China* 基督教在中国处境化的智慧, vol. 2 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2009); Yuan Yijuan 袁益娟, *Shengsheng Theology: A Study of Wang Weifang's Theological Thinking* 生生神学—汪维藩神学思想研究 (Beijing: Jincheng Publishers, 2010).

generation and experiences as these men, has received little attention compared to others. In the fall of 2010, a German scholar came to Shanghai gathering materials in preparation for writing a Ph.D. dissertation on Bishop Shen. This reminded me that Bishop Shen's wife had donated a number of books from Bishop Shen's collection to Huadong (East China) Seminary which included *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* by Philip L. Wickeri, a scholar of Chinese Church history. He writes: "Chinese Christian theologians and Church leaders have been saying for the past several years that they need to give more attention to the development of a distinctively Chinese theology. Numerous essays have been published on the subject since 1979, as Christians in churches all over the world have become familiar with the names of K.H. Ting, Chen Zemin and Shen Yifan, among others."² This has driven me to reflect on Bishop Shen's thinking. If outsiders were interested in Bishop Shen, why do our own people not care about him? This was the impetus for this essay.

In the course of reading Bishop Shen Yifan's writings, I found his discussion on Christology to be quite extensive and challenging to sort out in a clear and systematic way. I further struggled to interpret his Christology— a single essay will not suffice to give it clear expression. This being the case, I have narrowed my focus here to an attempt to identify the theology of Incarnation within Bishop Shen's Christology, analyzing how he brings the gospel teaching of Incarnation into people's lives and how he transforms the process of this incarnate life into theology, showing

2 Philip L. Wickeri, *Seeking the Common Ground: Protestant Christianity, the Three-Self Movement, and China's United Front* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 277.

that Christ is alive in our faith. Bishop Shen introduces his hymn, “Christ the Everlasting Lord” 基督永长久 by saying,

In writing this hymn I was profoundly moved by God’s spiritual leading of the Christians of new China for over thirty years, enabling us to break out of the narrow Christology that says Christ is only our personal savior and that he is only glorified through the Church. God has led us to enter more deeply into biblical revelation and realize that Christ is Lord, the pioneer and perfecter [of our faith].³

My use of “Christ the Everlasting Lord” in this essay is a way to embody Bishop Shen’s theological hermeneutics of Christ: “To express the Christian experience that Christ lives in our lives, Christ lives in our society and Christ lives in our cosmos.”⁴

We are now eleven years into the twenty-first century. Christianity has formed centers of development all over the world and theological research is increasingly diversified. As Chinese Christians, we look forward to our Church developing its own theology, one that bears the characteristics of our nation and our people, one that will raise the profile and impact of the Church in China in society and in the world Church, especially with the recent boom in socialist culture. Religion must also play an active role in cultural construction and, for Christianity, this is an era of opportunity for us to show who we are, a new stage in the historical development of the adaptation of the

3 Wang Shenyin 王神荫 ed., *A History of the New Hymnal* 赞美诗 (新编) 史话 (Shanghai: CCC, 1993), 87.

4 Shen Yifan, *The Writings of Shen Yifan* 论坛心声—沈以藩文集, vol. 2 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2004), 118. References to this work below will be given as “article title,” in *Writings* vol. no., page no.

Church and socialist society. Bishop Shen's thinking on incarnation can serve as a theological reference for us. At the same time we can appreciate the arduous efforts made by the elder generation as they strove to express a theology of the Chinese people that is in step with the times and keeps pace with social progress. The texts cited below are taken mainly from the two volumes of Bishop Shen Yifan's writings.

Bishop Shen Yifan's three identities

Before I begin my main discussion, it is crucial for us to understand Shen Yifan's life. Given the limitations of the data in hand, I will present a brief picture of Bishop Shen's life based on his three main roles; namely, pastor, scholar and theological educator. These three roles were deeply imprinted in Bishop Shen's thinking and influenced his theological approach and the characteristics of his theology.

Pastor

Bishop Shen Yifan was born in 1928 in Shanghai. As Ms. Hong Luming 洪侶明, Bishop Shen's wife, remembers it, in primary school and junior middle school, he shone in math. Though he was a sickly child he was diligent about his homework. He skipped grades and finished school early. He had three elder sisters and one younger sister. He was very close to his second elder sister who studied medicine. She was a well-known medical researcher, who once received the official commendation of Advanced Worker. Bishop Shen originally had planned to pursue science and engineering studies, particularly chemistry. But later he elected to study philosophy at Nanjing University. The event that triggered this change in his initial plan happened in 1943 during his senior middle

school summer vacation; he clearly heard the voice of God calling him, despite all the noise around. Bishop Shen had been born into a family that had been devoted Christians for three generations, a family with a strong background in faith and theological education. His father, Bishop Shen Zigao 沈子高, taught at the West China Seminary in Chengdu, Sichuan and was later transferred to the Shanghai Central (Anglican) Seminary as president. Shen Yifan said of his father: “My father devoted his life to Christianity; he studied theology, he was strong in his faith, and upright.”⁵ Under the influence and care of his father, Shen Yifan determined to devote himself to the Church and decided to study philosophy as a foundation for future studies in theology.

In his studies, Bishop Shen’s talent was obvious. Not only did he gain knowledge and ability, but by his devotion, he inspired other young people around him to the common pursuit of spiritual growth. After graduating from the Anglican Central Seminary in 1951, he served as a pastor at Shanghai’s All Saints Church, where he was in charge of grassroots churches. After 1958, he served at Xin’en Church and Community Church, both in Shanghai. He became the senior pastor at Community Church when the Church reopened in 1980 [following the Cultural Revolution].

Bishop Shen had extensive pastoral experience and was never negligent of the churches under his care. He went to the church every Sunday before 7 a.m., preached regularly and had friendly conversations with the believers. When he was consecrated Bishop in 1988, he said: “A bishop is simply a shepherd among shepherds, a

5 “Remembrances of my father Shen Zigao around the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War” 回忆我父亲沈子高在抗日战争爆发前后德一些事迹, in *Writings*, vol. 2, 353.

servant among servants.”⁶ He was indeed a shepherd to the believers. Volume One of his writings is a collection of sermons he preached as a pastor; within these pages are reflected the deep love of a shepherd for his sheep. The Rev. Cao Shengjie 曹圣洁 recalled Bishop Shen in 1995:

Bishop Shen and I were classmates at seminary and later we worked together for many years in the Shanghai Church and in the China Christian Council. I learned a great deal from him and I had the deep feeling that he practiced in his own life the truth he believed in and preached. He focused on the Church’s witness and made the interests of the Church his priority; he focused on love for others and actively cared for those in need through his actions; he urged humility, he was open-minded and democratic in style.⁷

Theology is the Church thinking; pastors must put this into practice. Bishop Shen devoted his life to service. His rich experience as a Church pastor meant that each of his theological themes are rooted in the Church, and serve to meet the needs of the Church.

Scholar

Bishop Shen was not only the shepherd who loved his flock, as believers saw him, but also a knowledgeable scholar. Bishop K.H. Ting once said, “As a scholar in religious circles, Bishop Shen is able to dialogue with those in Chinese intellectual circles. Too few of us in Protestant religious circles are capable of this.”⁸ In

6 The only one from Community Church since 1958.

7 *Writings*, vol. 1, ii.

8 Cao Shengjie, “From the editor,” in *Writings*, vol. 1, ii-iv.

1948, on his graduation from Nanjing University, Bishop Shen was awarded the highest honor, the “Golden Key” award for his thesis, titled, “The Greek Philosophy of Knowledge.” Covering the entire period of classical Greek philosophy, as well as the philosophy of knowledge of each and every school, he analyzed and criticized various views in charting the evolution of the Greek philosophy of knowledge, offering a perspective on the scope and development of modern western theories of knowledge.⁹ When the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences established the Institute for Religious Studies in 1981, Mr. Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风, then President of the Shanghai Federation of Social Sciences, suggested to Bishop Zheng Jianye 郑建业, a guest researcher at the Beijing Academy of Social Sciences, to recruit Christian researchers for the Institute in Shanghai. Bishop Zheng brought three Christian researchers to Shanghai, among them Bishop Shen.¹⁰ In 1986, Bishop Shen was transferred to the national CCC/TSPM, and also served as a distinguished scholar at the Institute for Religious Studies in the Shanghai Academy. He was appointed in 1992 to the Jury of the State Religious Affairs Bureau Research Teaching Series and as a member of the juried series committee.¹¹

During the course of his work as a researcher in the Institute for Religious Studies from 1981 to 1986, Bishop Shen published a series of research reports on religion as well as academic papers. These research reports were based on survey data and analysis of current religious phenomena based on a broad perspective on politics,

9 K.H. Ting, “Preface,” in *Writings*, vol. 2, 1.

10 *Writings*, vol.2, Appendix, 1-46.

11 The other two were Rev. Cao Shengjie and Rev. Yao Minquan 姚民权, later Bishop Shen and Rev. Cao were transferred to the CCC/TSPM, while Rev. Yao continued in his research position until retirement.

history, society, culture, religion and diplomacy.¹² Bishop Shen's solid philosophical foundation and academic attainments are apparent in his thesis at Nanjing University and in these research reports. Rev. Yao Minquan 姚民权, who worked with Bishop Shen for many years at the Shanghai Academy, described Bishop Shen as man of few words, rigorous, rational and with strong theological thinking. Indeed, all these characteristics provided him with the ability to establish a dialogue with academia. The Church is in need of this type of pastor-scholar. Bishop Ting said: "I would be delighted to see young and middle-aged church workers and seminary teachers and theological students make Bishop Shen Yifan their role model, and make his efforts [at intellectual dialogue] their own, in order to enhance the status of Christianity in society and guarantee its bright future in China."¹³

Theological Educator

Bishop Shen Yifan was also a theological educator, a role that incorporates both pastor and scholar identities. During his student days, Shen Yifan was active in promoting all sorts of student fellowship activities on campus, a reflection of his concern for theological education.¹⁴ He continued to devote himself to the cause of theological education throughout his life. While serving as the director of the Chinese Christian Theological Education Commission, he established a plan to standardize theological education nationwide, organized the publication of a theological education series, and established a theological education fund. Organizing the theological education series in particular cost him a great deal of effort.

12 *Writings*, vol. 2, back cover.

13 See *Writings*, vol. 2, 198-293.

14 Ting, "Preface," 2.

After the establishment of the Theological Education Commission in 1987, he invited church coworkers to write theological textbooks. In 1988 he called the Lushan Conference at which it was decided that the series would be called the *Chinese Christian Theological Education Series*, with Bishop Shen Yifan, Professor Chen Zemin, and Professor Wang Weifan as series editors. The series not only alleviated the shortage of theological teaching materials at seminaries, but also served as a theological reference on pastoral care for pastoral staff and lay volunteers. Bishop Shen not only organized the promotion of theological education, he was also personally engaged in theological teaching. From 1986 he taught at Shanghai Huadong (East China) Theological Seminary, founded in 1985. His courses included Systematic Theology (1986-1992), History of Christian Thought (1989-1993) and Liturgics (1992-1993). He trained many talented people for the Church in east China. He was invited to speak on “Theological Education in China” at churches in North America and Canada in 1993. He spoke of the current situation, the guidelines in use and the challenges faced by theological education in China. He pointed out that the challenges were imbued with issues of prospects and direction. Today, Chinese theological education is still trying to overcome these difficulties and striving to achieve these goals.¹⁵

In addition to these three identities, Bishop Shen also held other positions in ministry. For example, in the 1950s he participated in the work of the Shanghai city YMCA; he also presided over the Christian youth publication *Words of Grace*. In 1992 he was elected to the posts of vice president and general secretary of the CCC, positions that he held until his death.

15 See “Chinese Theological Education” 中国的神学教育, in *Writings*, 2, 124-127.

In the summer of 1994, when Bishop Shen's death was announced, Churches in China and abroad expressed sorrow at the loss to the Chinese Church of such a promising Church leader, scholar and pastor. His death was also a huge loss for the CCC.¹⁶ As Professor Wickeri commented: "An outstanding theologian and church leader, it was widely assumed that he would succeed Ting as CCC president."¹⁷ As members of a later generation, we can imagine that the Church in China would be quite different if Bishop Shen was still alive. Although we regret that he did not live to transform the history of Chinese theology, he has left us a theological heritage that will continue to remind and inspire us to commit ourselves to our Church, and dedicate ourselves to the mission of constructing a theology with its own [Chinese] characteristics.

Interpretation of the Incarnation

There are several key factors in Bishop Shen's focus on Christology. In terms of biblical doctrine, Christ is the core of the whole biblical revelation and also the center of our faith. "Exalt Christ" is the orthodox principle of faith for the Chinese Church. Hence the Church's traditional expression of theology generally unfolds around Christology. The Chinese, whose pragmatic ethics and humanism is shaped by their traditional culture,

16 Ting, "Preface," 1-2.

17 Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K.H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), 316. When the Chinese Protestant Church rejoined the World Council of Churches at the Canberra General Assembly in 1991, Bishop K.H. Ting, Bishop Shen and Mr. Han Wenzao attended as representatives. When they ascended to the stage to be presented to the full assembly, they were very warmly received. From then on, Bishop Shen was widely recognized as a leader of the Chinese Church.

cannot easily accept faith in a Triune God, but Christ with his incarnate human identity eliminates this obstacle, smoothing the Chinese people's entry to the core of the gospel faith. Looked at in the context of the development of social history, their suffering in the Cultural Revolution has left Christians with a negative and pessimistic view of human nature and the world. The Church must now find a means of theological communication to unravel this history of suffering and hurt. At the same time, Bishop Shen took a positive attitude to good people and good deeds in the new society that expressed the best of human nature, for he found a theological basis for this in the doctrine of the Incarnation. Christ's becoming flesh was an affirmation of humanity and the material world, and in this way Christians' past negative perception of the world and human life is changed. We can well understand why Bishop Shen focused on an interpretation of Christology.

The greater part of Bishop Shen's writing on Christ was done from the implementation of the policy of Reform and Opening Up until the early 90s. This was a period when the Chinese Church flourished and regained its vitality, when people once again enjoyed freedom of religion and worshipers crowded every reopened church. All this stimulated Bishop Shen to turn his thinking repeatedly to Christology. "In dealing with a people engrossed with their own destiny and future development, simply to dress Jesus Christ up in a typical mandarin jacket would not be enough to attract modern Chinese people. Unless we can develop a Christology that is relevant to the current reality of China, we cannot witness to Christ."¹⁸ In thinking about the concrete content of Christology, Bishop Shen focused the issue on the doctrine of the Incarnation:

18 "Christ in China: Reflections of a Chinese Christian on Christology"
基督在中国——一名中国基督徒对基督论德思考, vol. 2, 114.

“We are more concerned with the practical significance of the truth of incarnation in the life of our Church. We should ask ourselves what would happen if Jesus, the Son of God, was living in today’s China?”¹⁹

We can approach these issues through four of Bishop Shen’s discourses:²⁰

1. *Incarnation is identification with the people*

Bishop Shen used the examples of Christ’s identification with his own people, that He lived among them, shared their joys and suffered with them, as a way of thinking about the relationship between Christians and others in society. In his view, the fact that the incarnate Jesus Christ lived among the people and shared their joys and sufferings, inspires and motivates the faith of today’s Christian.

Inspired by the Incarnation of Jesus... the Church began to be engaged among the people it must care for and serve, sharing their joy and sorrow. The vast majority of Chinese non-believers and believers in other faiths are no longer seen as Gentiles by the Christian community, but rather as brothers and sisters...²¹

“Identifying with the people” refers to the spirit in which the incarnate Christ identified with his own people,

19 Ibid., 115.

20 These “discourses” are found in various places in Bishop Shen’s writings. I have strived to be faithful to his overall intent in formulating them into these four items.

21 “Christ in China,” 115.

his compatriots; it is also the shared historical experience of Chinese Christians and the whole Chinese people, a point Bishop Shen particularly emphasized.

The experience of Chinese Christians can also be summed up as the identification of Chinese Christians with their own people. In these years, we have always shared with our compatriots in the joys and sorrows of life, and we understand that we are inseparable from them.²²

The historical experience he speaks of refers to the Cultural Revolution, when Christian and non-Christian alike bore the same trials and suffering. Their shared afflictions enhanced their mutual understanding and friendship. When the policy of Reform and Opening Up was ushered in after the Cultural Revolution, Christians rejoiced together with the whole Chinese people. Starting from Bishop Shen's view here, we can infer that differences in belief should not become the breach between Christian and non-Christian. The Christian attitude should be one of identifying with others based on shared experiences in real life. The interpretation of incarnation is identifying with others. That Christ became flesh and thus a creature, is an identification with all creation; hence should not Christians whom Christ has redeemed in grace identify with all those God has created?

Of course, "identifying with people" does not remove the difference between Christian and non-Christian; it does not ignore the uniqueness of Christianity. Bishop Shen clarified the meaning of identification in greater detail:

22 "Some theological reflections on doing pastoral work in grassroots churches in new China" 在新中国从事基层教会教牧工作的若干神学思考, vol. 2, 47-48.

“Identification is not reconciliation. We do not want to create a Christian socialism or a socialist Christianity, or some Christian Marxism or Marxist Christianity.”²³

In his view, Christianity differs from socialism or Marxism and it is not necessary to deliberately invent a new intermediate theory. To do so would not be identification; it actually seems quite far-fetched. It is easier to understand what Bishop Shen means by identification if we proceed from the gospel witness and dialogue with non-Christians. “Faith alone [*sola fide*] should fill us with God’s mercy, with readiness to communicate with others at anytime, and to serve others. If we do not love our people, we will be alienated from them and we will not be able to do effective evangelism.”²⁴ In other words, for Christians to identify with people they must love them, draw close to them and serve them; this is the way to do effective evangelism. “Love” is the best interpretation of identification and love is an extension of the Incarnation. ... we must love our compatriots and love our country, these grow out of our basic faith, from the love of God and from the incarnation of Christ and other basic doctrines. This is not only based on individual scriptures.”²⁵

How then do we practice this identification that is love? According to Bishop Shen, “the most realistic action is that Christians must follow the path of self-sacrifice—gladly making the burdens of others their own, the path of boundless love for the masses of the people, and in the service of God’s work among all people, strive with great

23 Ibid., 49.

24 “The mission of the church in China’s modernization process” 中国现代化过程中教会的任务, vol. 2, 84.

25 “How to be a patriotic clergy person” 怎么样做一个爱国的教职人员, vol. 2, 180.

effort and be willing to put forth all they have.”²⁶ This is a Christian life and is the only way to God.

The incarnate Christ teaches us to serve the people with love and contribute to others and to society. Incarnation has set the example for Christians, yet Christ is not a moralist just modeling for us how to do good, most importantly, through Him we meet God in our life. “In Christ we are not meeting a great moralist, nor philanthropist, nor politician, nor philosopher, nor religionist; but in Christ, we encounter God, and this is the true meaning of Incarnation.”²⁷ God himself became incarnate in human form, and through Christ, Christians encounter God and are changed, follow Christ in identifying with the people and serving them with loving hearts. This is the fundamental position of Bishop Shen’s “identifying with people.”

2. *Incarnation and traditional cultural identity*

Incarnation means identifying with people, as well as with the world of God’s creation; hence Christians should also identify with the traditional culture of China as an integral part of God’s world. Bishop Shen took Confucian thought as an example for a speculative discussion on Christianity and traditional culture. “There is a significant point of convergence between the doctrine of Incarnation and Confucianism. The Chinese Christian being nurtured by Chinese culture finds it difficult to accept ‘omnipresence,’ denying the concept of the revelation of God in nature. That sort of theological complete denial of reality, the disdain for reality and the [desire to] escape from the reality to pursue only the afterlife and

26 “The unity of priest and sacrifice” 祭司与祭品的统一, vol. 1, 287.

27 “We want to see Jesus” 我们愿意见基督, vol. 1, 524.

transcendence is incompatible with the Chinese tradition that focuses on reality.”²⁸ In other words, Incarnation brings “the omnipresence of God” into the real world, enabling us to see God’s precious revelation to the Chinese people. This point is the same as the pragmatic Confucian approach to ethics. Bishop Shen proceeded from the biblical statement that Jesus would fulfill the law and the prophets to the relationship between Christ and Chinese Culture.

Christ did not come to destroy, but to fulfill the law and the prophets. Thus, by extension, Jesus surely must fulfill, not deny, each nation’s and each people’s outstanding historical and cultural traditions. Reviewing two thousand years of Church history, there were already links between theology and the Greek philosophy popular in Paul’s time. As the Church spread worldwide, theology also merged with other cultures. This does not detract from the nobility of Christ, but allows us to see the fullness of Christ. Chinese Christianity must be integrated with the Chinese people and their culture in order to witness to the fullness and glory of Christ.²⁹

The incarnation affirms and completes traditional culture. Christians’ integration of theology and traditional culture manifests more clearly the glory of the Incarnation. We will discuss below what Bishop Shen has to say about how the glory of the Incarnation is made manifest through culture.

28 “Confucian thought and current Chinese theological reflection” 儒家思想与今日中国的神学思考, vol.2, 76.

29 “Thoroughly implement Three-Self in the grass roots churches” 把三自贯彻到基层教会中去, vol. 2, 167.

While Bishop Shen affirmed China's culture, he faced squarely the challenges culture posed for Christianity:

Our identification with Chinese culture should not mean idolization of the past; we must inherit our culture critically. ... The gospel also challenges Chinese culture. The gospel challenges traditional Chinese culture's over-optimistic view of human nature, its detachment and its lack of a pursuit of values, the belief that one can attain holiness through moral cultivation and that heaven can be reached through meditation and asceticism.³⁰

How then can Christianity deal with these challenges? Bishop Shen's response was: "Chinese theology must absorb the essence of traditional culture."³¹ The "essence of traditional Chinese culture" can be derived from three aspects: First, it is worthwhile for Christianity to adopt the Confucian approach of emphasizing the reality of interpersonal relationships. Chinese traditional culture's realistic attitude to being in the world can function to adjust escapist thinking [i.e., the Christian tendency to reject the "things of this world] with regard to reality; the world and the incarnational spirit of involvement in this world is the point of contact here. Second, Confucianism's positive affirmation of life can rectify the Christian over-emphasis on the dark side of human nature and its wholesale obliteration of its good side. He believed that the Word of Christ has been sown in the human heart, and that all humanity has the seed of the Word, therefore we

30 "The Gospel ministry in the Chinese Church" 中国教会的福音事工, vol. 2, 109.

31 "The Chinese Church reflecting theologically" 中国教会在神学思考中, vol. 2, 58.

should affirm humanity. Third, Confucianism advocates a harmonious relationship between nature and humankind, “human nature” is “nature”; to be human is to obey natural law. This Confucian tenet can also serve to rectify the Christian idea of opposition between humans and God as well as the Christian bias that all human effort is in vain.³² Bishop Shen believed that these three aspects reflect the deeper level of Confucian thinking and are the cultural essence of its more valuable significance. Thus for the Church to achieve indigenization, it must “explore Confucianism more deeply and seek those elements that are of more lasting value.”³³

But Bishop Shen reminds us that it is insufficient for Christianity merely to absorb the essence of traditional Chinese culture; it must move from the horizons of culture to the current reality of China:

No doubt it is vital that Chinese theology should absorb the essence of traditional culture; what is more critical is how Chinese theological thinking responds to the current situation in China from the perspectives of politics, society, economics, and the enormous cultural changes taking place.³⁴

During the 1920s, Chinese Christian thinkers sought to respond to the Anti-Christian Movement and the New Culture Movement by combining Christianity and Chinese culture and directed their efforts to the pursuit of the indigenization of the Church. Bishop Shen ascribed

32 See “Confucian thought and current theological reflection in China.” Of course, in this essay, Bishop Shen pointed out that Confucian thought also had its limitations, for example: “Confucianism lacks a purely speculative side, that is its weakness.”

33 *Ibid.*, 75.

34 “The Chinese Church reflecting theologically,” 54.

a certain degree of affirmation to their attempts, but he argumentatively pointed out that when Christian and Confucian thinking are combined the social context must be also taken into account. In his view, during this period following the May Fourth Movement, Confucianism was being severely criticized. If Christianity and traditional Chinese culture were to be combined in such circumstances without analysis and critique, then Christianity would find itself outside the trend of the times toward change and it would be difficult for theology to develop. Some Christian thinking of the time was constrained in this way. Bishop Shen believed that Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗 broke through these constraints:

He [Y.T. Wu] proposed that rather than critically evaluating and absorbing western theology or critically evaluating and inheriting traditional Chinese culture, it was more important for the Chinese Church to explore the theological significance of its context of social turbulence which would be of great significance in guiding current Chinese theological reflection.³⁵

Bishop Shen endorsed Y.T. Wu's view that while bringing Christianity and culture together, the concrete social context must also be considered. For him, the relationship between Christianity and culture was not one dimensional, but rather multifaceted and three-dimensional. Incarnation, Bishop Shen felt, is not just to do with culture, even more it embraces the turbulent social context of its times. This reflects his careful and dialectical thinking. He goes on to say:

35 "Confucian thought and current Chinese theological reflection," 72.

Theological reflection cannot separate itself from the real environment in which it is located, which means all theological thinking is contextualized thinking. There are similarities as well as differences between contextualization and indigenization. If indigenization emphasizes the combination of theological thinking and traditional culture, then contextualization, which incorporates indigenization, will focus more on its relationship to its actual social environment and the changes it undergoes.³⁶

It is clear that Bishop Shen understands contextualization to have broader significance than indigenization, and he was more inclined to the contextualization of theological thinking: “In terms of doing theology, contextualization is a beautiful word; I think it can be applied in every aspect of China’s modernization.”³⁷ The judgment by some that Bishop Shen’s thinking is contextualized theology is quite apropos,³⁸ for to Bishop Shen’s way of thinking, contextualization is more open than indigenization, and more suitable for the future development of the Chinese Church.

3. *Incarnation is the theological basis for Three-Self*

Bishop Shen used the letters of Paul to explore the relationship between Incarnation and Three-Self: “Incarnation [The Word become flesh], according to the Apostle Paul in Philippians Chapter Two is divine “self-

36 “The Chinese Church reflecting theologically,” 54.

37 “The mission of the Church in China’s modernization process,” 85.

38 See Ouyang Wenfeng 欧阳文丰, “On Bishop Shen Yifan’s Contextualized Theological Thinking” 浅析沈以藩主教的处境化神学思想, *Nanjing Theological Review* (2/2003): 116-122.

emptying” (kenosis), which means that Jesus Christ emptied himself, pouring himself out to share completely the common destiny of human beings. In the Three-Self Movement, Chinese Christianity is learning self-emptying, emptying its heart of all pretensions and striving to be like Christ, like its brothers and sisters in every respect (Hebrews 2:17).”³⁹ Bishop Shen’s linking of the famous kenotic Christology from Philippians with the Three-Self Movement is very convincing biblically and theologically. Jesus’ emptying of himself and engaging in human life in the world was identification with the great masses of people. Christianity too should put down its sense of superiority at being the people of God’s kingdom, take off its coat of western culture and be humble, seeing itself as it is in order to re-examine its Chinese self-identity—this is a major contribution of Three-Self. We realize that this point is closely related to his thinking on identification with the people.

He added another factor in talking about the relationship of Incarnation and Three-Self: when discussing the Chinese Christian Three-Self principles, he often explained things in combination with ecclesiology: “The Church, whose nature should be incarnational, provides the Three-Self principles treasured by Chinese Christians with a theoretical basis of theology.”⁴⁰ His reasoning here rests on three contentions. First, Incarnation is identification with people, and the Three-Self spirit is the Church’s self-identification with the “Chinese people” and “Chinese.”⁴¹ Second, the fundamental purpose of Three-Self is not just to get rid of foreign forces, but more

39 “Some theological reflections on doing pastoral work in grassroots churches in new China,” 48.

40 “Christ in China,” 115.

41 “Pastoral work at the grass roots,” 48.

importantly to mesh with the Chinese people's historical experience and with their reality: "The Church we build must incorporate the Chinese people's historical tradition and their real struggles; this is in fact the profound implication of Incarnation."⁴² Third, Three-Self spurs the Church to root itself in the land of China; the sense of identification in Incarnation can help the Church to realize development and prosperity: "The most basic reason for the existence of Three-Self lies in the fact that unless the Chinese Church is rooted in Chinese soil and adapted to Chinese cultural traditions and its current reality, it will be impossible for the Church to grow and prosper."⁴³ In other words, the theological foundation of Three-Self is built on the Incarnation and identification with the people, on integrating with the traditional culture and being linked to the actual situation. The premise is that we must truly understand that the Church is the incarnation of Christ. "The foundation of Three-Self lies in the true understanding of the incarnational nature of the Church. The Church is the body of Christ and the continuation of Incarnation."⁴⁴

Bishop Shen's ecclesiology is another of his major theological discussions, which length does not permit us to consider in detail here. But we can clarify his basic orientation toward the Church: the Church is the body of Christ; not only does it have the nature of a spiritual fellowship, but a visible body in its existence in society and in the nation. The Church's mission is to witness for Christ through serving the people.

42 "Thoroughly implement Three-Self in the grass roots churches," 162.

43 "The mission of the Church in China's modernization process," 85.

44 See note 41.

Today we must establish ourselves deeply among our people, breathing the same fate with our compatriots. With profound feelings for them as our kin, we come to build the Church in China. Only then will we be joined to our people in joy and sorrow, by flesh and blood. Only then will we be able to give a beautiful witness to the incarnate Christ in our homeland. I think this is the theological foundation of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement as well as the theological basis of the Chinese Church, whose sovereignty we are determined to safeguard.⁴⁵

Incarnation is the theological foundation of Three-Self and Three-Self is an expression of and witness to the Incarnation. In following the Three-Self path, Chinese Christians identify with the people, breathe and suffer with them; in all this the motivating spirit of the Incarnation leads Chinese Christians to emulate the incarnate Christ through their actions. Bishop Shen believed that the Incarnation was historically significant as the theological basis of Three-Self, in providing biblical and doctrinal theoretical support for Three-Self, and in safeguarding the Church's sovereignty and even the independence of the Chinese nation.

One aspect of adherence to Three-Self is safeguarding the independence of the Chinese Church, manifesting the love of the incarnate Christ for the people of China. Another aspect, from the perspective of the worldwide Church, is that Three-Self highlights the role of the Chinese Church among world churches:

For Chinese Christians, the Three-Self Movement is not an anti-foreign movement. As part of the universal

45 See note 42, 163.

Church, we are determined to maintain our friendly ties with other Churches in the world. The Church in China can only make its contribution to world Christianity if it maintains its own characteristics, not as a church subject to the Church of another country. The uniqueness and universality of the churches are not mutually exclusive, but complementary.⁴⁶

Speaking with foreign visitors about the Three-Self principles of the Church in China, Bishop Shen spoke with sincerity: “The Three-Self Patriotic Movement helps in building the self-image of the Church in China, but that does not mean that we stubbornly isolate ourselves. We want to strengthen our ties with the outside world, especially with our Asian brothers and sisters.”⁴⁷ The Word used the real context of China to become flesh, present in a specific Church. Three-Self is a kind of manifestation of this flesh and its witness. At the same time, if Word became flesh in China, the Word can also become flesh in other forms in other countries. Therefore we should share with each other, to complement our strengths and improve our shortcomings. Clearly, Bishop Shen’s overall understanding of both Three-Self and the spirit of Christ’s Incarnation is broad, open and universal.

4. *Incarnation breaks through the boundary between sacred and secular*

On the issue of sacred and secular, Bishop Shen is sagaciously creative and deeply insightful. First of all, he holds that since the Son of God took human form, this

46 See note 43, 85-86.

47 Chris Tremewan, ed., *Faith in Modernisation* (Singapore: CCA YOUTH/WCC YOUTH, 1985), 51.

would constitute a fundamental denial of the worldview that shows contempt for social reality or breaks away from one's nation. God sent his Son into the world, showing God's affirmation for the world. Christ came into the world to take away the sin of the world, not to eliminate the world itself. Thus "'Incarnation' breaks through the diametrical opposition between 'sacred and mundane' and between 'God, humans and the world'."⁴⁸

Incarnation enabled a point of contact between God and humans, heaven and earth. With this the binary opposition between sacred and secular, sacrament and mundane was completely eliminated. Christians have no reason to degrade or reject the real world or material life. Reclusion and escapism are concepts in opposition to the Incarnation. As Bishop Shen pointed out,

Since 'the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, it is full of grace and truth.' If we believe in the Incarnation, then we should reject the idea of the degradation of the real world and material life. We believe that Incarnation is incompatible with those who advocate anti-social, anti-national and anti-world thinking; this breaks through the idea that sacred and secular, God and humanity, God and the world are separate....⁴⁹

Inspired by Christ's Incarnation, Christians should engage more actively in real life, for "the incarnation of Jesus shows us that the body of flesh and substance can be tools that reveal God's will and manifest God's great

48 "Springtime for theology in the Chinese Church" 迎接中国教会神学的春天, vol. 2, 26.

49 "Theological Reflection in Chinese Christianity" 中国基督教的神学思考, vol. 2, 37

love. Word became flesh; the flesh shows grace, truth and glory of God.”⁵⁰ On this basis, flesh and substance can also demonstrate God’s grace and glory. Is this to say that everything in this world is perfect and worthy of affirmation? Bishop Shen goes on to give specific examples of those parts of the material world the Incarnation affirms: “Incarnation affirms all conduct in human life that is just, honest and in the spirit of self-sacrifice and makes them pleasing to God.”⁵¹ Thus, Incarnation affirms and recognizes the noble virtues of justice, honesty and self-sacrifice. This was also Bishop Shen’s positive assessment and approach to the secular through Incarnation. In his book *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity*, an introduction to contemporary Chinese theological thinking, Bob Whyte quotes this passage of Bishop Shen’s specially. He believes that the affirmation of human nature and of truth, goodness and beauty can inspire Chinese theologians to a deeper understanding of world history and cultures. This quote from Bishop Shen serves Whyte as a typical example.⁵²

Secondly, affirmation of the secular world should be the premise on which people change their view of the sacramental. Bishop Shen’s theory of sacred and secular reverses the original Christian concept of sacred and secular. In his opinion, what distinguishes the sacred from the secular is not the thing itself; anything in a Christian’s daily life can become sacred: “Our spirituality, worship, witness, and all the sacraments are of course sacramental. Upright and honest work, service, our struggles and even

50 “The Chinese Church reflecting theologically,” 58.

51 “Theological Reflection in the Chinese Church,” 37.

52 See Bob Whyte, *Unfinished Encounter: China and Christianity* (Collins: Fount, 1988), 477.

our sacrifices are also all sacramental ...”⁵³ In normal circumstances, Christians see devotions, Bible reading, meditation and the ministries of the Church as sacramental. While not eliminating the basic necessities of daily life, or work and service in society, they do not think of all these as sacramental. As his discussion here indicates, the standard for discerning what is sacred and what is secular is not that one takes place within the Church and the other outside it. Sacred ministries do not necessarily exist only in the Church but also in society. Christians who want to practice sacred ministry can also achieve this outside the Church. Bishop Shen proved this through examples of the parables of Jesus in the gospels, the sower and the seed, the shepherd seeking his lost sheep, fishermen catching fish and workers in the vineyard. All these serve as illustrations of “the incarnate Lord living among the most ordinary of people, drawing forth from their ordinary lives and labors the teachings of the kingdom of heaven, that is, seeing the sacred within the secular.”⁵⁴ In this way the sacramental and the mundane, the sacred and the secular complement each other to form an organic whole. The sacramental can be reflected from within the mundane, and the mundane may contain the truth of the sacred. Perhaps we may be a little skeptical—Bishop Shen speaks only of the relationship between sacred and secular; what is the criteria by which he measures the differences between sacrament and the mundane? This will be discussed below.

Third, according to Bishop Shen, glorifying God is sacred. Specifically, anything done for the glory of God is sacred, otherwise it is “mundane”: “in Jesus’ view, everything earthly, if done to the glory of God, is sacrament. And vice-versa, everything that is ‘sacramental,’ if done

53 “Springtime,” 27.

54 *Ibid.*

for selfish motives, becomes ‘mundane.’ In this way, Shen breaks down the traditional perception of ‘sacred’ vs. ‘secular’. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, there is a clear contrast between the Samaritan and the priests and Levites.”⁵⁵ Clearly Bishop Shen differentiated between “sacred” and “secular” behavior on the basis of purpose and motive. Even if an action appears secular, if it is done to the glory of God, it is sacred. And vice-versa, even something regarded as sacrament, such as devotion, prayer, or Bible study is mundane if done for selfish purposes. This provides a great deal for Christians to reflect on.

The story of the Pharisee who stands in the street to pray, for example, shows how sacramental prayer loses its inherent sacramental nature and becomes mundane if the motive is not genuine. In the Incarnation the sacred enters into the secular; it is an affirmation of the material, and more, the Incarnation provides the possibility for worldly matter to be elevated to the heavenly sacred, thus sanctifying the mundane. In this respect, Bishop Shen said: “‘Incarnation’ also consecrates all upright, good and honest efforts of human life on earth, enabling people to see their spiritual meaning.”⁵⁶ “The Incarnate Lord, by participating in secular life, does not degrade the Word, but consecrates secular life, making God’s glory manifest.”⁵⁷

This is one of Bishop Shen’s more original statements. Previously (above) Bishop Shen said that the Incarnation broke away from differentiating between sacred and secular, and that the mundane can also be reflected in the sacramental. This is his affirmation of the secular world, eliminating some Christian misconceptions about the mundane. His statement here that “the Incarnation

55 “The Chinese Church Reflecting Theologically,” 59.

56 “Springtime,” 26.

57 See note 55.

consecrates secular life” further reflects the profound significance that Incarnation bestows on the secular life. The secular life has been consecrated by the Incarnation; the sacred has already come into the world, into the mundane, and is present in all aspects of social life. This not only eliminates mistaken Christian views of the secular, but also elevates passionate and enthusiastic Christian engagement in the life of the world, Christians closely linking themselves to the consecrated world, so that the Church can more passionately engage in social life and better manifest the glory of God.

Incarnation Christology accounts for a relatively large part of Bishop Shen’s writings. In a detailed analysis, we can see the four points discussed above intersecting and overlapping, but each exposition has its own focus. Incarnation is identification with people, for Christ came into the world and lived with people, which broke down the boundary between sacred and secular. Christians identifying themselves with the Chinese people shows their self-identification as Chinese: these are the principles by which the Church becomes Chinese: principles of self-governance, self-support and self-propagation emphasized by Three-Self. The Incarnation came into the secular world and culture, becoming part of that world, which means that Christianity now has a point of contact with the world. It is through the Incarnation that the barrier between sacred and secular is crossed and that the boundary between the two is broken and the material world affirmed.

Christians take the incarnate Christ as their model, so they must also identify with the broad masses of the people, accept traditional Chinese culture, and make use of the culture to bring about the sinification of the Church. In this way, the Three-Self sense of identification and sense of mission is given a theological basis. Through further examination we can better appreciate that when Bishop

Shen led readers to the point where ideas of sacred and secular intersect with the social and material world, he was trying to turn our attention to the physical world, to highlight the fact that in the real presence of the incarnate Christ in our world, sacred and secular have become one in the Incarnation, and that God and humanity, each of us with others, humans and the world form a harmonious order because of the Incarnation.

Analysis of the Incarnation

Bishop Shen's theology is focused on Christology; the Incarnation constitutes a large part of it. In this section I would like to discuss historical and theological factors in his thinking.

*1. The doctrine of the Incarnation is the continuation and deepening of the Theological Mass Movement*⁵⁸

In 1956, *Tian Feng* launched a series of mass-based theological discussions, the inspiration for which can be found in the early liberation period when a number of arch-conservative anti-Communist fundamentalists, extremists in their theological views, shamelessly promoted dualism, the absolute separation of the body and soul. They held that the world lay in utter darkness, in opposition to God. They considered all non-believers as having no "Life" and as enemies of Christians. Any examples of truth, goodness and beauty found in society were seen as creatures of

58 See K.H. Ting, "The Theological Mass Movement in China" 中国的神学群众运动 *Nanjing Theological Review* (4/1986): 5-13.

Satan “dressed up as an angels of light.”⁵⁹ In initiating the discussion, *Tian Feng* made the following appeal:

Imperialists and their followers have misinterpreted the Bible and spread poisonous thinking, saying that ‘Christians should not love the world,’ attempting to make the great masses of our believers pessimistic and negative about socialist construction in China. In order to help our fellow Christians form a correct understanding of the biblical meaning of the term ‘the world’ ... it is the hope of this magazine that fellow Christians will participate in this discussion.⁶⁰

Subsequently, believers from all walks of life in Church circles actively participated in the discussions. The first manuscript to be contributed was “How should Christians deal with the ‘world’,” followed by “The relationship between Christians and others,” and so on, moving to clarify misunderstandings in faith. At that time, seminary leaders (i.e. Cheng Zhiyi 诚质怡, vice-president of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and Huang Peixin 黄培新, vice-president of Chongqing Theological Seminary), professors (i.e. Han Bide 韩彼得 of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary and Xie Shouling 谢受灵 of Yanjing Theological Seminary), pastors (i.e. Yang Jingqiu 杨镜秋 District Superintendent of Suzhou Methodist Church), preachers (i.e. Jiang Peifen 蒋佩芬, Nanjing Han Jia Lane Meeting) and lay Christians (i.e. Cao Fangtao 曹芳涛, Church of Our Saviour in Shanghai) took an enthusiastic part in the discussion. They criticized

59 Duan Qi, “The Construction of Chinese Christian Theology,” in Zhuo Xinping 卓新平, ed. *Christianity, Chinese Religions and Beliefs*, A Series of Contemporary Studies in China, 58.

60 *Tian Feng*, No. 5 (1956): 22.

the negative and otherworldly, lack of attention to morals, confrontational views from the angle of biblical interpretation and research and suggested how to correctly view society and others [non-Christians].

For Jia Yuming 賈玉铭 pastor and president of the Lingxiu Seminary in Shanghai, for example, “in life and living we must not be disconnected from others in the world, we must perform our duty among people in society. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke mostly about interpersonal relationships, saying first of all that we must do good works that others may see” (Matthew 5:13-16).⁶¹ Luo Zhenfang 骆振芳, then a teacher at Yanjing Union Theological Seminary inspired the believers through the teachings of Jesus: “The Lord Jesus called everyone His brothers; clearly, the Lord does not believe that there is not a brotherly relationship between people of different faiths. In the Lord’s view, differences in faith should not be an obstacle to mutual cooperation. In his teaching, the Lord always strongly advocates mutual love between brothers as the fundamental human relationship.”⁶² And Sister Jiang Peifen said: “Christ’s life is a life of love and Christian faith is filled with noble moral significance. God loves those who fear Him. The Lord Jesus said: ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’” (Matthew 22:37-39).⁶³

61 Jia Yuming, “The Relationship between Christians and non-Christians” 基督徒和世人的关系, *Tian Feng* No. 13 (1956): 12.

62 Luo Zhenfang, “Between Man and Man—a brotherly relationship” 人与人的关系—弟兄般的关系 *Tian Feng* No. 17 (1956): 16.

63 Jiang Peifen, “Christians and non-Christians” 基督徒与世人 *Tian Feng* No. 19 (1956): 25.

This period of mass discussion caused a huge reaction and a high degree of interactivity; for example the response from Bi Hanguang 毕汉光 to Jia Yuming's article published in issue 18: "The significance of 'Do not be yoked together'" [with unbelievers]⁶⁴ and the response from Dang Diping 党涤平 to Zhang Bohuai's 张伯怀 article published in issue 20: "Who does 'unbelievers' refer to in 2 Corinthians 6:14?"⁶⁵ and so on. This probing of related topics brought an unprecedented liveliness to theological discussion within the Chinese Church and both the quality of faith and the understanding of the Bible among believers was raised. Bishop Ting likened this theological mass movement to the European Enlightenment.⁶⁶ Professor Wang Weifan 汪维藩 called it the second peak of Chinese theological reflection.⁶⁷ Bishop Shen mentioned the significance of this theological discussion on a number of different occasions:⁶⁸ "It was a theological liberation movement that opened up the people's intellectual horizons and cast off some obsolete constraints."⁶⁹ If we examine *Tian Feng* for 1956, we will find that the content of the discussion revolves around the relationship between Christians and others, the unity of the sacred and the secular, serving the people with love, witnessing to the glory of God, etc.; topics similar to those in Bishop Shen's discussion of the Incarnation.

64 See *Tian Feng* No. 18 (1956): 15.

65 See *Tian Feng* No. 21 (1956): 15-16.

66 Ting, "Theological Mass Movements," 8.

67 Prof. Wang Weifan has pointed out that the first high tide of theological reflection took place in around the 1920s; the third followed the Cultural Revolution, and continues in the period of the policy of Reform and Opening Up. See his *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources* 中国神学及其文化渊源 (Nanjing: NJUTS, 1997), 156-168.

68 See *Writings*, Vol. 2, 19-21, 25-26, 33-35, 286-288.

69 "Springtime," 26.

But because of the errors of “leftism” and the historical fact of the Cultural Revolution, he was unable to take his theological explorations further.

Following the initiation of the policy of Reform and Opening Up, the policy of freedom of religious belief was thoroughly implemented, churches reopened and Christianity showed extraordinary vitality in its life and faith. At the same time, the Church had to contend with the persistence of conservative thinking from the 1950s. Despite the tremendous influence and changes in thinking the theological mass movement of the 50s brought to Chinese Christianity, it has been unable to continue into deeper and broader dimensions. The theological discussions of the time critiqued much but established little and there was no systematic theological and doctrinal construction of an inherent theoretical framework. Therefore, after the 1980s and 90s, some churches tended towards superstition and utilitarianism and there was over emphasis on the exclusivity of the Christian faith and maintaining social disharmony; all of which made it difficult to adapt to socialist society.⁷⁰ Given this, and reviewing the four points of the discussion of the Incarnation above, we will be able to appreciate why Bishop Shen placed such strong emphasis on Incarnation and proceeded to such a thorough discussion of its links to identification with the people, Chinese traditional culture, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement in the Church in the context of society, and the relationship between the sacred and the secular.

70 Cao Shengjie, “On some points of consensus in Theological Reconstruction” 有关神学思想建设的若干共识 in *An Anthology of writings of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement* (1993-2006), vol. 2 (Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2007), 227.

Bishop Shen took the very core of Christian doctrine—the Incarnation—as its basic theoretical framework in an attempt to overcome the legacy of conservative theological issues. This suggests that for Bishop Shen the Incarnation as a topic is the continuation and deepening of the theological mass movement. On the basis of epistemological questions that were raised previously, Bishop Shen established his methodology. As he stated in comparing the two eras:

Compared with the fifties, theological reflection in the 1980s was more constructive. It was not only critical in nature, but placed greater emphasis on the interpretation of theology and doctrine; it was not limited to discussion of scriptural interpretation or its principles, but placed greater emphasis on exploring Christology and the Trinity, nor was it limited to human nature or ethics.⁷¹

Bishop Shen himself was a leader in Theological Reconstruction since the 1980s.

2. *A new interpretation of the Incarnation is the consensus of the Church in the new era*

The conservative ideology that still existed in the 1980s caused unnecessary gulfs and barriers between Church and society, and between believers and non-believers that affected the Church's development as well as its image in society. Under the policy of Reform and Opening Up a new era in which mutual respect and pluralism coexist has gradually become the mainstream trend. If the Church continues to maintain outmoded ideas

71 "Theological Reflection in Chinese Christianity," 37.

and is unable to keep up with the spirit of times, this is bound to hurt the Church's gospel mission and hinder the healthy development of the Church. Therefore, we can easily understand why Bishop Shen was at such pains to use the truth of Incarnation to show that Christians should be closely linked to other people and to social reality and should actively and passionately participate in real life. In fact, Bishop Shen's contemporaries among Church leaders and pastors inadvertently reached a consensus with him in their understanding of the Incarnation. Bishop K.H. Ting once stated that:

The incarnation of God not only shows us God's great love by entering the world, experiencing human misery, and completing his work of salvation by dying on the cross, but at the same time, it tells us something of how we should regard the flesh and material things. Because they are channels by which God enters into the world, flesh and material things are not to be despised. They are worthy, and can become, indeed ought to become, vessels conveying holy love. We believe that God's love and concern for man is all-embracing. Bodily and material life, intellectual development, the socio-political sphere, ethics and morality, are all included within the realm of God's love and concern.⁷²

Professor Chen Zemin, in his "Christianity in today's China," tells us that: "Once a British theological educator asked us what would we consider the most important theological topic and our answer was the doctrine of the Incarnation: Our God, eternally creating, revealing,

⁷² K.H. Ting, *Love Never Ends: Papers by K.H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri (Yilin Press, 2000), 94.

redeeming and sanctifying, who leads us with him into his ultimate glory of God, became incarnate in the world and dwelt among us, ‘the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.’ ...⁷³ Professor Wang Weifan wrote:

In the body of the incarnate Jesus Christ, in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God became the Son of Man and by this process the Chinese Church resolves on the ontological level the contradictory relationships between God and man, Word and flesh, eternity and history, infinite and finite, absolute and relative, Life and everyday lives, faith and practice, spiritual and physical, heaven and earth, sacrament and mundane, [what is hidden] in the divine life of God is revealed in the earthly life of Jesus, and united and complemented in the Incarnation of Christ.⁷⁴

Professor Xu Rulei in his essay “Preaching the Incarnation” pointed out: “I feel ‘The Word became flesh’ is the important message of our era that we must spread... The first new revelation we receive in ‘The Word became flesh’ is: we cannot be complacent, we must open our hearts and be ready to accept the Lord’s light, listen to the Lord’s voice, learn the knowledge he sends us.”⁷⁵ Sister Jiang Peifen also addressed the Incarnation:

73 Chen Zemin, *Seeking and Witnessing: Writings of Chen Zemin* 求索与见证—陈泽民文选(Shanghai: CCC/TSPM, 2007), 155-156.

74 Wang Weifan, *Cultural Sources*, 167.

75 Xu Rulei, “Preaching the Incarnation,” *Nanjing Theological Review* (5/1986): 33.

‘The Word became flesh’ shows that man is very precious in God’s sight... ‘The Word became flesh’ is the Word combined with flesh and blood and with the physical body... The Word has been manifested in our life and everyday actions. The spiritual and the physical, Life and everyday lives, faith and conduct are inseparable, and should be consistent... The Word became flesh links God and man, the spiritual and the physical, what belongs to the spiritual and that belongs to the world, heaven and earth, this life and eternity.⁷⁶

The discussion here is strongly focused on the reality of Incarnation and the daily life of the physical Christ, ideas that were specifically targeted at the Church then with its conservative black and white dualism between the spiritual and the world. To move out of this Church dilemma, and resolve difficult theological problems, church leaders and pastors undertook a strong interpretation on the basis of theological and doctrinal aspects, especially from the center of the gospel—with the Incarnation as teacher. This sent a more convincing message to believers, enabling the Church to gradually rid itself of obsolete ideas and concepts that are not in line with biblical teaching.

Thus we can see that for Bishop Shen to place the Incarnation of Christ at the center of his Christology was in the mainstream of church thinking of the times. Insightful individuals within the Church were aware of the importance of the Incarnation in changing old ideas, and so a consensus arose regarding a new interpretation of the Incarnation. Bishop Shen’s explorations had their own

76 See Jiang Peifen, “The Word Made Flesh” 道成了肉身 *Selected Theological Writings from Nanjing Theological Seminary: 1952-1992* 金陵神学文选: 1952-1992 (Nanjing: NJUTS): 13-21.

unique elements, especially his idea of “consecration”: “That the Lord incarnate participates in secular life does not degrade the Word, but rather consecrates it, manifesting the glory of God.”⁷⁷ If other theological insights balance the relationship between spiritual and worldly, sacred and secular, then this statement of Bishop Shen enhances the status of the secular and humanity. What has been consecrated by the Lord—traditional cultural history and all human conduct that is just, honest and self-sacrificing—cannot be refuted or any longer denied by Christians.

Professor Wang Weifan quoted this passage from Bishop Shen in his summation at the “Third Reflection on Theology” in the Chinese Church.⁷⁸ Generally speaking, the theological discussion on Incarnation aims to explain the Chinese context and Chinese Christians’ unique historical experience provides a positive, not pessimistic, practical contextual theology for the development of Christianity. Additionally, in a political and cultural sense, the discussion seeks to encourage Chinese Christians’ enthusiasm for rebuilding the Church after the great disaster of the Cultural Revolution and to reduce the possibility of mistrust and even conflict that accumulated between Christians and non-Christians due to historical problems. “Incarnation” suggests a humble image of Chinese Christianity, so that the Church can integrate as quickly and as harmoniously as possible into society.⁷⁹

[This translation does not include point 3 on the influence of Bonhoeffer, Moltmann, Athanasius and Irenaeus on Shen Yifan’s thinking.]

77 “The Chinese Church reflecting theologically,” 59.

78 Wang Weifan, *Cultural Sources*, 167, note 49.

79 Chen Xun 陈驯, *Christian Theological Method in Contemporary China* 当代中国的基督教神学方法 (Beijing: Religious Culture Publishers, 2019), 109.

We have analyzed three aspects that contribute to Bishop Shen Yifan's Incarnation theology: 1) the Theological Mass Movement illustrates that Bishop Shen's approach to the Incarnation was grounded in history, but also continued and deepened the history of theology; 2) our exploration of the consensus of Bishop Shen's contemporaries among Church pastors and scholars illustrates that Bishop Shen paid attention to mainstream thinking about the Church in its era, in order to grasp ideological trends in contemporary society in a timely and accurate way; and 3) we introduced theologians from throughout Christian history to show how Bishop Shen used and transformed universal theological thinking, that it might serve the faith expression of the Chinese Church. It seems to me that these three aspects reflect exactly what we in this generation are striving to do. As the twenty-first century enters into its second decade, we stand at the crossroads of the era, inherit the wealth of ideas of the older generation; measure the pulse of the era; and draw from historical theological treasures east and west, transforming them for use in the Church. This is our current and future responsibility and mission.

Conclusion

Some have called the theology of Bishop K.H. Ting a "Theology of Love"⁸⁰; that of Professor Chen Zemin has been termed "Reconciliation Theology"⁸¹; and Professor Wang Weifan's thought "Shengsheng Theology (生生神学)".⁸² It has been my intention in this article to summarize the main characteristics of Bishop Shen's

80 Zhao and Duan, 528-586.

81 Ibid., 587-674.

82 Yuan Yijuan, *Shengsheng Theology*.

theology. Even a summary of a theologian's thought must be based on a comprehensive analysis of its various theological discussions; otherwise it becomes hasty and arbitrary. But I have attempted to summarize Bishop Shen's Incarnation thinking because it is not an isolated or simple point, but involves the doctrine of God (the creation of the world and culture), theological anthropology (the affirmation of human nature), ecclesiology (his view of Three-Self), and further, because the center of his theology is located in the Incarnation. Bishop Shen's Incarnation theology has several characteristics: the first is that it is embodied in life. Profound theological significance is expressed in the plain language and the style of ordinary life, so that theology is part of life. People's dread of it is then banished and they are enabled to find its truth and the rich revelations of God in our times. The second is the rich nature of Church and of society. Bishop Shen's theology is closely linked to the life experiences of both Christians and the broader mass of people in China; life experience is the basic point of his thinking. The third characteristic is his emphasis on sacred and secular life. Not only is secular life worthy of affirmation, it is able to manifest sacred truth; divine transcendence and earthly life are closely linked. To summarize these three points, we might call Bishop Shen's theology a "Theology of Life." The "Theology of Life" is built on biblical and theological tradition, draws from real-life experience, links to the specific context, uses everyday language accessible to everyone to interpret the faith and witness to the gospel. It is theology expressed in life terms. It brings Christ alive in the midst of life; it is full of eternal vitality. This expression of a "Theology of Life" is not yet fully mature, but the concrete expression behind it brings to theological reflection in our time a very valuable source of inspiration. In our era of cultural construction, that will help the Church establish a healthy image of positive and wholehearted engagement and the spirit of Christ.

Christ the Everlasting Lord

Have you ever known? From the first Christ was with God.
 Through him all things were created.
 God the Father works even now,
 Christ is also working still. Christ the Everlasting Lord!

So deep is Christ's love! God incarnate with humankind.
 Love beyond all depth, all time.
 Through the cross salvation shines,
 Lighting up the universe. Christ the Everlasting Lord!

Ever must we seek, Never will God fail to reveal.
 Living water ever flows. God's creation in bright hues,
 Painted by a single hand. Christ the Everlasting Lord!

Shen Yifan, 1982

Trans. Donald Snow, 1996

Hong Luming, music, 1982

Taken from: *The New Hymnal* (English-Chinese bilingual edition)
 (Shanghai: CCC, 1999), No. 45.

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T. C. Chao and the Sheng Kung Hui: With Particular Emphasis on Theology, as Exemplified by His Later Soteriology

CHEN YONGTAO

T. C. Chao (赵紫宸 Zhao Zichen, 1888-1979) was a widely known and deeply respected Chinese Christian theologian, religious philosopher, writer, poet, and Christian educator of the twentieth century. He also enjoyed great popularity and prestige in the ecumenical movement. Chao was baptized during his student years at Dongwu University, Suzhou and was for many years thereafter a member of the Methodist Church. In 1941, at the age of fifty-three, Chao converted to the Chung Hua Sheng Kung Hui (CHSKH). He was confirmed and ordained in Hong Kong by Bishop R. O. Hall (1985-1975); following his confirmation he was ordained first as *huili* (deacon) and then as *huizhang* (priest), all on the same day. It became the talk of Hong Kong at the time—that the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui could combine three rites in one morning and afternoon liturgy.

Research on T. C. Chao has been growing both in China and abroad since the 1960s and 1970s. Up to the present day, however, little has been done on the relationship between Chao and the CHSKH. Similarly, there is also little research that touches on impact of the Anglican tradition on Chao's theological thinking. As for his later theological re-orientation, almost all researchers attribute it to his prison experience and the influence of Karl Barth's Neo-Orthodoxy. It is this author's opinion, however, that, in addition to the influence of Neo-Orthodoxy, the impact of the Anglican tradition on Chao's later theology should be taken seriously. This chapter

attempts to explore the deeper theological relationship between Chao and the Anglican tradition as exemplified by his later soteriology.

T. C. Chao and the CHSKH: A Brief Retrospective

Chao was born on February 14, 1888 in Deqing County, Zhejiang Province and died on November 21, 1979 in Beijing. Growing up, his family life provided a strong religious atmosphere. From childhood, Chao had been influenced by Buddhism, Daoism and folk religion. His mother was a pious Buddhist believer before her conversion to Christianity late in life. Chao was fifteen when he went on his own to Suzhou to attend school. He first entered Cuiying Middle School (萃英书院),¹ which was run by the Presbyterian Church. One year later, Chao transferred to the Affiliated Middle School of Dongwu University and later entered university there. While studying at Dongwu University he was influenced by Dr.

1 According to Prof. Zhao Luorui (Chao's daughter) and Prof. Zhao Jingxin (Chao's eldest son), Chao at first entered Suzhou Taowu Middle School, run by the Episcopal Church. (See Zhao Luorui and Zhao Jingxin, "Our Father T. C. Chao," in *The Collected Works of T. C. Chao* (Works), vol. 1 (Beijing: Shangwu yinshuguan, 2003), 4.) If that was the case, then the relationship between Chao and the Sheng Kung Hui could be traced back as early as 1903. But, Chao himself never mentioned studying at Taowu Middle School. However, he did refer to being recommended to Cuiying School. (T. C. Chao, "My Religious Experience" ("我的宗教经验") (1923) in Works, vol. 3 (2007), 136.) Therefore, scholars accept that Chao studied first in Cuiying Shuyuan after he went to Suzhou. See Lam Wing-hung, *Too Highbrow to Be Popular: The Life and Theology of T. C. Chao* (《曲高和寡：赵紫宸的生平与神学》) (Hong Kong: Chinese Theological Graduate School, 1994), 5; Tang Xiaofeng, *A Study of T. C. Chao's Theology* (《赵紫宸神学思想研究》) (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2006), 64; Winfried Glüer, *The Theological Thought of T. C. Chao* (《赵紫宸的神学思想》) (Shanghai: The TSPM and CCC, 1999), 38.

David L. Anderson president of the school, and Professor Walter Buckner Nance as well as other faculty members, and began to appreciate Christianity. John R. Mott's visit to Dongwu University in 1917, especially, impressed Chao very deeply. As a result, the following year he accepted baptism and became a Christian and a member of the Methodist Church.

After his graduation, Chao taught at Dongwu University. From 1914 to 1917, he studied in the United States at Vanderbilt University. Chao received a bachelor's degree in theology and a master's degree in sociology. In 1917, he returned to Suzhou and continued teaching at Dongwu University. In 1925 John Leighton Stuart, President of Yanjing University in Beijing, invited Chao to join the faculty of the university, where he taught until 1952. For many years he served as Dean of the School of Religion. In 1928 Chao attended the Jerusalem International Missionary Conference (IMC) as a member of the Chinese delegation. During the conference he sat beside the Archbishop of York, William Temple, who later became the Archbishop of Canterbury. There is no material available which might reveal in what depth they spoke. However, they must have engaged in some kind of communication during the conference; according to a letter from Hong Kong Bishop R. O. Hall, from then on Chao demonstrated more and more interest in the Anglican tradition, its order, and its liturgical legacy.²

Chao spent a year (1932-1933) as a visiting scholar at Oxford University. Some scholars argue that it might have been during this time that Chao first encountered Karl

2 See R. O. Hall "Account of the Confirmation and Ordination of Dr. T. C. Chao, Sunday, 20th July, 1941, Saint Paul's College Chapel, Hong Kong," compiled by Michael Poon, <http://anglicanhistory.org/asia/skh/hall/ord1941.htm>.

Barth and Neo-Orthodox theology.³ However, I contend that, in addition to his encounter with Neo-Orthodoxy, Chao may also have had the opportunity to learn more about Anglicanism. Rather than asserting that Chao's later theology was inclined toward Neo-Orthodoxy, perhaps it is better to say it moved toward the Anglican tradition.

Bishop Hall's letter indicates Chao had the intention from as early as 1939 to become an Anglican. According to Hall, they met in Kunming in 1939 and had discussed the possibility of his conversion to the Sheng Kung Hui. Thereafter, Chao kept in close contact with Bishop Scott, a CHSKH Bishop in Beijing, and David Paton, an Anglican missionary; these contacts strengthened his conviction to become an Anglican. Soon after, taking advantage of his sabbatical, Chao went to Kunming and served in the Wenlin Church (文林堂) for one year. The Wenlin Church was a CHSKH parish, but as a Methodist layperson Chao received special authorization from the Anglican Bishop for his service. During his time there, he was in charge of the Sunday morning worship as well as a special gathering on Thursday evenings. The congregation of the church was composed mainly of the students, faculty members and staff at Xi'nan Lianhe Daxue (The United University in Southwest China, 西南联大).⁴

On July 20, 1941, Chao was ordained by Bishop Hall in the small chapel of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui's St. Paul's College. In the ordination ceremony, Chao was first confirmed, and then was successively ordained as deacon

3 See Lam Wing-hung, 214; Hui Hoiming, "A Study of T. C. Chao's Christology in the Social Context of China, 1920 to 1949" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Birmingham, 2008), 42.

4 See R. O. Hall "Account of the Confirmation and Ordination of Dr. T. C. Chao, Sunday, 20th July, 1941, Saint Paul's College Chapel, Hong Kong", compiled by Michael Poon, <http://anglicanhistory.org/asia/skh/hall/ord1941.htm>.

and priest. In his *Xiyu ji* (*My Experience of Imprisonment*), Chao recalled, “I converted to the Anglican Church and was ordained to holy orders. Three times during the ceremony I received the laying on of hands, the first time in being confirmed. When I received confirmation, Ms. Zeng Baosun (曾宝荪) introduced me, and was standing beside me.”⁵

Due to a dispute with John Leighton Stuart over the size and development direction of the School of Religion, Chao was removed from his position as dean in 1946. At that time, Bishop R. O. Hall invited Chao to Hong Kong, welcoming him to spend his remaining years in comfort while continuing to conduct research and write books. After several days of intense inner struggle, Chao declined Hall’s kind offer. However, the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui kept a position open for Chao.⁶

Chao was one of the initiators of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Chinese Protestant Churches, and also one of five representatives from the Chinese Protestant Church at the first Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). When the Denunciation Movement began in 1952, however, Chao was attacked for his close relationship with Western missionaries and forced to resign from his position as dean of the School of Religion, as well as from

5 T. C. Chao, “My Experience of Imprisonment” (《系狱记》) (1948), in *Works*, vol. 2 (2004), 441.

6 See Tang Xiaofeng, “A Nighthawk’s Ambition: T. C. Chao after 1949” (“夜鹰之志—新中国成立后的赵紫宸”), in *A Nighthawk’s Ambition: “T. C. Chao and the Sino-Western Exchange of Thought” Conference Papers* (《夜鹰之志—赵紫宸与中西思想交流”学术研讨会文集》) ed. Tang Xiaofeng and Xiao Xiaohong (Beijing: Zongjiao wenhua chubanshe, 2010), 46.

his professorship. His priesthood, according to some, was also revoked.⁷

The Sheng Kung Hui Tradition and Sources for Chao's Later Theological Thinking

According to the Anglican tradition, the authority or standards of faith are scripture, tradition, and reason.⁸ The Bible is the Word of God, the sacrament of the Word of God. The Bible has priority in the Christian life. The priority of the Bible means that the Bible is the central norm of faith, by which the other norms of faith, such as creeds, tradition, and beliefs, are judged. The Bible, so to speak, is the norm of norms. The Bible is also the norm of theology and Christian ethics. Christian tradition

7 On March 17, 1952, Bishop Ling Xianyang (凌贤扬), who was Bishop of the North-China Diocese of the Sheng Kung Hui, and also a friend of Chao's, declared that Chao's priesthood and all his posts in the Diocese had been revoked. See Xiejin (《协进》) (June 1952). See also Glüer, 40; Ying Fuk-tsang, *In Search of the Uniqueness of Christianity: Essays on T. C. Chao's Theology* (《寻索基督教的独特性—赵紫宸神学论集》) (Hong Kong: Alliance Bible Seminary, 2003), 209; Tang Xiaofeng, 74.

8 See Paul Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2000), 50-59. Unlike his early period in which Chao regarded religious experience as the source and norm of theology, he no longer regarded human experience as the foundation of theology, although he did not deny the role of experience in the process of theologizing. As to human religious experience, McGrath points out that although regarding human experience as the foundation of theology has a certain attraction, it is also problematic. Therefore, he introduces an alternative method for dealing with the relationship between human experience and theology: that theology interprets experience. For McGrath, what theology should do is to narrate experience, interpret experience, and then transcend and transform experience. See Alister McGrath, *The Renewal of Anglicanism* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK), 1993), 86-98.

includes the creeds, which are accepted by the ecumenical church: catholicity, the thought of the Church Fathers, the Ecumenical Councils, and the smaller tradition of Anglicanism. Though the Anglican tradition admits the mystery of faith, reason occupies an important place in the life of faith. On the one hand, faith is beyond reason; on the other hand, faith is in line with reason. The mystery of faith and its rationality are not contradictory.⁹ Chao's later understanding of the relationship between faith and reason echoes that of Anglicanism.

The early Chao recognized the particular significance of human religious experience, meaning both the Bible and the Christian tradition must be under the judgment of human experience and rationality. Identifiable in his later theology, however, is the Anglican tradition's three-fold authority of the Bible, Christian tradition, and reason, with the Bible as the norm of norms.¹⁰ We can also observe in Chao's later theology the four cardinal elements of the Lambeth Quadrilateral, namely, the Bible, the Creeds (Apostles' and Nicene), Sacraments (Eucharist and baptism), and episcopacy.¹¹ Revealing the influence of the Anglican tradition on his later theology, Chao highlighted the doctrine of incarnation, emphasized the significance of the church, and respected the episcopacy.

Chao's understanding of the sequential order of the importance of the Bible, Christian tradition, and reason is apparent in his discussion of theological themes and methods in his book, *Shenxue sijiang (Four Talks on*

9 See *The Study of Anglicanism*, ed. Stephen Sykes and John Booty (SPCK/Fortress Press, 1988), 79-117. See also Alister McGrath, *The Renewal of Anglicanism*, 74-78.

10 See Paul Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction* (London: SPCK, 1993), 86-89.

11 See Paul Avis, *The Anglican Understanding of the Church: An Introduction*, (London: SPCK, 2000), 57.

Theology). He writes that theological theme is God's revelation; the tool is reason. The work of theology is to explain the theme. Reason without revelation is not effective. Reason itself is unable to create something out of imagination as research object. It must come from revelation. Christianity is a religion; the religious truth, in the perspective of Christianity, should be God, who is both transcendent over and immanent in all things. God may transcend reason, but reason cannot exhaust the mystery of God. If God does not reveal himself, there is no religious truth, no theological theme. From the perspective of the classics, of church history, the experience of Christians in all generations, the theme of Christian theology is God's revelation in Jesus Christ. What reason can do is its interpretation of God's revelation in order that we may understand well our faith.¹²

Therefore, Chao now emphasized the importance of God's revelation. Without God's revelation in Jesus Christ, it is impossible to actualize human redemption, and theology will have no foundation. For Chao, theology must first "accept God's revelation, and then give its interpretation of revelation. In a comprehensive sense, God's revelation in Jesus Christ is namely Jesus Christ himself, which is our theme of theology. Its starting point is religion, is faith, and is our acceptance of faith."¹³ Moreover, God's revelation in Jesus Christ is "recorded in the Bible, demonstrated in the history of the church, and experienced by the saints."¹⁴ As the Word of God, the Bible is the testimony of God's incarnation.

12 T. C. Chao, *Four Talks on Theology* (《神学四讲》) (1948), in *Works*, vol. 2 (2004), 519.

13 *Ibid.*, 520.

14 T. C. Chao, *Christian Ethics* (《基督教的伦理》) (1948), in *Works*, vol. 2 (2004), 500.

Speaking of Christianity from the Perspective of Chinese Culture (《从中国文化说到基督教》), a small booklet written in 1946, reveals Chao's later emphasis on the Bible and Christian tradition. On the issue of Christian faith, Chao said,

Christianity is nothing more than Jesus Christ. Because of this, therefore, Christianity is the historical facts and revelation recorded in the Bible, the church that spreads and preserves this revelation, the faith that follows the Bible and also follows what the church has believed and spread. It is also the life produced by faith, the action led by faith, the movement promoted by faith, and the culture created by faith. Christian faith is to accept Jesus Christ. The faith that believes in Jesus Christ as Son of God, as God himself, is a faith that accepts God himself as a gracious gift bestowed upon humanity. We may then deduce that this faith is the faith contained in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.¹⁵

In his article "The Possible Development of the Dogmatic Theology of Chinese Christianity in the Next Forty Years" (1950), Chao emphasized God's revelation:

True theologians must have two kinds of qualities. One is spiritual, a devout and obedient faith; the other is intellectual, sincere thinking and the knowledge of growth. Faith comes from unlimited human enthusiasm on the basis of God's gift. Men and women can search knowledge on their own;

15 T. C. Chao, *Speaking of Christianity from the Perspective of Chinese Culture* (《从中国文化说到基督教》) (1946), in *Works* vol. 2 (2004), 402.

however, in their seeking for God, men and women can do nothing on their own...With regard to God, what humanity is able to do is but to wait, obey, believe, admire, and worship. Therefore, people like Schleiermacher, Bauer, and Ludwig Feuerbach are not worthy of being called theologians. They all looked for life in the tomb. They desired to find God in nature, in the human heart, and in human emotion, will, and rationality. Inevitably, deep despair awaits them at the end of their seeking. The departure point of a true theologian is the revelation of God; God's revelation must be accepted and obeyed by a true theologian with his/her fervent admiration and trust. However, he/she does not underestimate reason, nor despise scholarship. He/she attempts to interpret or explain with his/her intelligence the revelation of God.¹⁶

On the other hand, Chao also realized that practicing theology in the Chinese context must deal seriously with the historical, cultural, and social-political situation of China. As he put it,

when we speak of Christian thought and theology, we are not doing it in a vacuum. We have our own background and our own environment. We live in China. Because we live in China, we thus have the Chinese cultural background, and the social situation of China. Our theological interpretation must get in touch with this cultural background and with the society on the one hand; on the other hand, it needs

16 T. C. Chao, "The Possible Development of the Dogmatic Theology of Chinese Christianity in the Next Forty Years" ("今后四十年中国基督教教义神学可能的发展") (1950), in *Works*, vol. 4 (2010), 184.

to explain the nature of Christianity, complementing the deficiency of Chinese culture, in order to meet the needs of the society.¹⁷

Thus, although Chao was influenced by the Anglican tradition, his later theology remained contextualized. He harbored no intention to copy Western theology. With this brief discussion on the possible impact of Anglicanism on Chao's understanding of the sources and methods in his later theology as a foundation, I will proceed with a discussion on the possible impact of the Anglican tradition on Chao's thinking, as exemplified by his later soteriology.

Chao's Later Soteriology and the Anglican Tradition's Possible Influence

Chao's soteriology reveals the impact of the Anglican tradition as well as John Wesley and the Methodist understanding of salvation on his thinking. While Chao continued to express his dissatisfaction with the traditional interpretations of atonement, he proposed in his late thought his own theory of redemption (atonement) as *chengzhilun* and *tongyilun*. Both terms were fruits of his theological contextualization.

1. *Chengzhilun* (“成旨论,” literally, “Theory of Completing God's Own Will”)

Recognizing the corruption of human nature, in the late 1930s Chao also realized human impotence on the issue of salvation. He now accepted the concepts of original sin (the inherited sinful nature of humans) and actual

17 Chao, *Four Talks on Theology* (《神学四讲》), 520.

transgressions (sinful human deeds).¹⁸ Although he believed that sin had not entirely destroyed, but rather blurred, the image of God in humanity, he saw clearly that human salvation could only come from God. Human sin has broken the relationship between God and humankind, and humanity is unable to restore this relationship through its own effort.¹⁹ However, while holding this view of incarnation and creation Chao still maintained that it is possible for humanity to conquer sin and evil, and then to achieve the perfection of love through the work of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.²⁰

In his early period, Chao believed that God and humans shared a common divinity with a quantitative, but not qualitative, difference, and that sin was just a bad habit or lack of personality. Consequently, humanity could strive for a good personality, and everyone was able to be Jesus if he or she could learn from and follow Jesus.²¹ However, in his later period Chao recognized the inability of humanity to effect its own salvation and accepted the doctrine of original sin. Chao recognized the necessity for human salvation from above, the incarnated Word of God, as God's pure grace.²²

Chao's interpretation of salvation places the emphasis more on sanctification than on justification. However, for Chao, as a Chinese theologian, justification

18 Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie* (1947), in *Works*, vol. 2 (2004), 141.

19 See "Zhao Zichen boshi yanjiang lu" (1940), in *Works*, vol. 4 (2010), 309.

20 *Ibid.*, 112.

21 Chao, *Jidujiao zhexue*, in *Works*, vol. 1, 127. See also Chao, "Xue Yesu," in *Works*, vol. 4, 259-260. However, it might be problematic if we interpret Chao's early soteriology as purely human self-salvation. Hui may imply Chao's early soteriology as merely human self-salvation in his writing. See Hui, 158.

22 For example, see T. C. Chao, "Zhao Zichen boshi yanjianglu," in *Works*, vol. 4, 307.

and sanctification could not be entirely separated. He affirmed that after one accepts God's grace of salvation (justification) one must live a sanctified life, a life of perfect love, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Some Methodist influence (which theologically adheres to the Anglican tradition) may be concealed here, or Chao may have been influenced by an Anglican understanding of salvation and sanctification.²³

According to John Wesley, the supreme and overruling purpose of God's plan of salvation is to renew the hearts of men and women in his own image. The agent of human justification and sanctification is the Holy Spirit, who grants us the faith by which both the objective and subjective elements of God's salvation in Jesus Christ become ours. The gracious work of the Holy Spirit enables the sinful heart to respond in obedience to God's call to salvation. By this process of the work of the Spirit, we are gradually brought to the point of repentance and faith, by which we are born of God by the Spirit to new life in Jesus Christ. This new life in Christ not only brings us freedom from the objective guilt of sin through justification, but also, through sanctification, regenerates us and, through the Spirit, creates the subjective life of God and Christ in us.²⁴ In line with these ideas, and after revealing his disappointment with the various Western theories of atonement, in his *Jidujiao jinjie* Chao proposed his own soteriology of *chengzhilun* (成旨论). Chao indicated that *chengzhilun*, which he based on the Bible, is

23 Walter Klaiber and Manfred Marquardt, *Living Grace: An Outline of United Methodist Theology*, trans. and adapted by J. Steven O'Malley and Ulrike R. M. Guthrie (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001), 285-310.

24 Melvin E. Dieter, "The Wesleyan Perspective," in *Five Views on Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1987), 15-16.

the appropriate interpretation of Jesus' death.²⁵ According to this theory, human beings as sinners are unable to save themselves; the only way to human salvation is God's grace, for which God has a plan and a will to save humanity. *Chengzhilun* means that Jesus has completed the will of God for human salvation through his incarnation (infinite God entering a finite world and eternal God entering human history), life, death, and resurrection. Therefore, only in God can human salvation become actualized.²⁶

In his *chengzhilun*, Chao highlighted the idea that, because of the work of Jesus Christ, those who are in the Holy Spirit are able to conquer sin and reach perfect love. In addition, because of the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit in Christ, the sinner has the potential to turn away from his or her sinful way, and become a saint.

25 Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 146.

26 Chao interpreted this in five points: 1) the death of Jesus manifests completely God's unconditional and self-sacrificial love; 2) the death of Jesus has moral influence which can contribute to human morality. The death of Jesus can attract people return to God; 3) the death of Jesus indicates the fact that sin and evil have been defeated by the cross; 4) the death of Jesus has overcome the force of death. It proves that death can absolutely not destroy the highest value of the world. The death of Jesus has paved a way of life from death; and 5) the death of Jesus is the strong testimony of Jesus' personality, his words, deeds, and cause. In sum, by his death, Jesus Christ has completed the will of God for human salvation. Moreover, the death of Jesus also tells us that not only Jesus Christ, but everybody, can overcome in hope all evils because of his/her moral effort following his/her union with Jesus Christ. On the one hand it proves that Jesus and God are co-equal in reality. Because God is all-love, Jesus is all-love; on the other hand, the death of Jesus proves that he himself is the only way of human salvation. Only through him, and by him, can humankind be saved. Jesus is the way of humans' having life from death, and human beings' sanctification from sin. These five points can be summed up in one theory, namely, *Chengzhilun* (成旨论) which reveals the meaning of Jesus' death. See Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 146-147.

Accordingly, a new man emerges, promoting with Christ the actualization of the Kingdom of God.²⁷

The key idea in *chengzhilun* is Jesus' harmonious and unbroken relationship with God Father. Owing to Jesus' great love of God and of man, he gave the priority to the will of God, which is for human salvation.²⁸ The core connotation of *chengzhilun* is that through his obedience Jesus Christ has completed the will of God—human salvation—for our sake. We, as believers, must do our own part by following and imitating Jesus Christ. With the concept *chengzhilun*, Chao may have tried to maintain a balance between salvation as God's grace and human responsibility to respond to God's salvific grace.²⁹

It is perhaps because of this, as Winfried Glüer has rightly observed, that here we can see a rather strong moralizing orientation in Chao's interpretation of Jesus' death.³⁰ However, Chao now clearly understood that salvation is grace from outside. Only after we have accepted God's grace as a gift is our moral effort both possible and meaningful. This is why Chao repeatedly criticized the theory of moral influence as one-sided. Chao was confident that, because man is created as *Imago Dei*, "the actual purpose of human life is to manifest the glory of God, to build up one's own character and morals, and to complete the will of God which is for the cosmos and humankind."³¹

The focal point of Chao's *chengzhilun* is *cheng* (accomplishment, achievement, 成), which means that God's plan or will for human salvation has been "done"

27 Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, *Works*, vol. 2, 112.

28 Chao, "Chuangzao yu zaizao," in *Works*, vol. 4, 61-62.

29 This idea may be in accord with the Anglican concept of *Via Media*. See McGrath, *The Renewal of Anglicanism*, 99-104, 125-133.

30 Glüer, 221.

31 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 335.

or “completed” through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus as Christ has done his own work at the starting point, which is the starting point of human salvation, and humanity needs from then on to play our own part in our life of faith by walking with Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit. Here Chao emphasized that Christians must take moral responsibility after their acceptance of Jesus Christ as their personal savior.

This concept of “the starting point of salvation” refers merely to justification as the starting point of sanctification. Understanding human salvation as a process, Chao attempted to give a role for humanity in the actualization of salvation, which is human sanctification. Chao’s reference to justification and sanctification as a process may again be rooted in the Methodist or Anglican traditions, both of which emphasize sanctification.³² Through his *chengzhilun*, Chao extended his Christology to Christian life, by which both religion and morality were underscored. This may reflect the fact that he became aware of some misinterpretations within the Chinese church about faith and life, misinterpretations which made Christianity irrelevant to the modern Chinese mind and dangerous for China’s construction of a new culture and a new society. His emphasis on Christian life may have helped Chao avoid the risk of fideism and antinomianism in his theology.

According to Chao’s understanding, in a broader sense, human salvation is not a once-for-all event, but a continuing process. This is the reason that the Holy Spirit has been sent to the world following the ascension of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit works in the human heart and in the church as well. The Holy Spirit desires to lead humanity into all truths and to effect humanity’s sanctification.

32 Klaiber, *Living Grace*, 310.

Therefore, human salvation refers not only to humanity's passive deliverance from sin and death (justification), but also to humanity's own positive spiritual and moral development (sanctification). It is thus a process, which includes justification, sanctification, and glorification. According to Chao, justification must be followed by sanctification, and be aimed at glorification.³³ Therefore, it may be inappropriate to label Chao's *chengzhilun* as synergism, as some researchers do.³⁴

2. *Tongyilun* (“同一论,” the “Union or Identification Theory”)

Chao based his later soteriology, *tongyilun*, on his previous formulation of *chengzhilun*. As early as 1940, Chao raised the idea that one could walk with Jesus to reach salvation.³⁵ Though the idea of *tongyilun* began to appear

33 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 558.

34 See Hui, 159-160; Tang, 125, 143.

35 When, in his lectures, he touched on the issue of salvation, Chao said: “First, we believe in the personality of Jesus and believe also that the will of God was revealed in the personality of Jesus; there is then a great strength generated from our faith and flooded forward without ceasing. Second, if we start to walk on the same path that Jesus walked, have the spirit to save the world in sacrifice, and imitate Jesus at every step, it is the beginning of our salvation; the end of the way is then the completion of our salvation.” Chao, “Zhao Zichen boshi yanjianglu,” in *Works*, vol. 4, 309. Furthermore, in his article “The Pathway by which I Know Jesus,” written in 1936, we may also find clues to how Chao later developed his “union or identification theory.” See Chao, “The Pathway by which I Know Jesus” (1936), in *Works*, vol. 5, 387-388.

in his *Jidujiao jinjie* (1943)³⁶ and *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*,³⁷ Chao did not use the term *tongyilun* until he wrote his *Xiyuji* in 1947.³⁸ He developed the idea of *tongyilun* in detail in his *Shenxue sijiang* in 1948. For Chao, *tongyilun* has two dimensions or movements: first, God had come down and identified with humanity in Jesus Christ, and, second, humanity has to go upward, being identified with God because of God's grace in Jesus Christ. This mutual identification, or penetration, contains both downward and upward movements.³⁹ (We may find the similarity, or the same effect, between Chao's idea and Austin Farrer's concept of "double agency."⁴⁰) Chao believed that this theory of *tongyilun* has a strong biblical basis.⁴¹

At this point, Chao had made a clear differentiation between belief and faith. He held that faith is not a matter of belief, but a matter of trust in God, which is relational

36 He stated clearly that we Christians identically participate with Jesus to achieve the work of salvation. See Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 148.

37 Some clues to Chao's theory of *Tongyilun* can also be observed in his *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*. Chao argues that, for the sake of human salvation, God must at first identify with human beings in Jesus Christ who is the incarnated God, and then humans need to identify with Jesus Christ after accepting God's salvific grace. Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 293.

38 See Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 148; *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 293.

39 The theory suggests that the completion of human salvation is a two-directional movement, in which both Jesus Christ's identification with humans and human union with Jesus Christ are needed. See Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 556.

40 Farrer is an Anglican theologian. To maintain his idea of human free action in salvation, Farrer argues that while God as Creator works first for human salvation, he also grants humans the power to act in response. As a result, human action is also God's own action. See Austin Farrer, *Faith and Speculation* (New York: New York University Press, 1967), 52-67.

41 Chao, *Xiyuji*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 447-448, 461.

but not merely cognitive. For this reason, our trust in God must include a life in which we live our faith outwardly.⁴² In this way, Chao could integrate religion with ethics.

To address the question of how a finite human being could be united with the incarnate Christ, the Son of God, Chao argued that, although humans have to walk identically with Christ and be in union with him, a vast difference still exists between Jesus Christ and the rest of humanity. Though Chao strongly emphasized Jesus Christ as the only way for human salvation, at the same time he indicated that Christ does not take away humanity's responsibility—to walk with him in the process of salvation—to God's grace. Jesus Christ opens up the way for human beings, walks along with them, and gives them strength; however, humanity must still have its own work, which is identification with Jesus Christ.⁴³ In a holistic understanding, while giving law a place no difficulty shall arise in maintaining salvation as God's pure grace. Chao subordinated law to the Gospel, and held that the Gospel subsumed ethics (law).⁴⁴ Hence, human union with Christ is not due to human beings' own merits but still to God's grace. Only in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ can the love and grace of God be clearly and abundantly revealed to humanity.⁴⁵

Why, then, do believers need to be in union with Jesus Christ? On the one hand, according to Chao, because of God's love Jesus Christ must come into the world and into human life to be made flesh for the sake of human salvation. Jesus Christ must be identified with

42 Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 72.

43 Chao, *Xiyuji*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 448.

44 See Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 559-563.

45 See Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 293, 328, 330.

sinful humanity.⁴⁶ On the other, it is then necessary for humanity to identify or be in union with Jesus Christ in his or her life of faith. While Christ and humanity are united, humanity possesses the power to conquer sin and evil, completing good works so that humans may lead lives acceptable to God. In one's union with Jesus Christ, one needs first to die with him and then to live with him. In this mystical union, one can have his or her union with God in Jesus Christ.⁴⁷ It is "only when man is united with the risen Lord, sharing life with him, can man have power to conquer sin and death."⁴⁸ This theme of human union with Christ is also underscored by the Anglican tradition.⁴⁹

According to *tongyilun*,

Salvation is based on creation, started from incarnation, achieved in the crucifixion, revealed in the resurrection, completed in the ascension, and perfected in the advent of the Spirit at Pentecost, and in the declaration of Judgment.⁵⁰

What did this statement mean to Chao? For him, the aim of salvation is "to recreate a new heaven and a new earth," "to recreate a new life, new society, and new humankind." The salvation of Jesus Christ is then "the

46 Chao, *Shenxue siji*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 561.

47 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 293; *Xiyuji*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 447-448.

48 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 265; *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 123.

49 The Anglican tradition emphasizes that believers may be united with Christ through sacraments. For example, the Anglican Reformers like Richard Hooker, Thomas Cranmer, and John Jewel, all posited a close relationship between baptism and justification, between Eucharist and sanctification.

50 Chao, *Shenxue siji*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 556.

salvation of the wholeness and entirety which contains all things.”⁵¹ For this reason, Chao insisted that Jesus Christ had to be a man and to be identified with humanity. Christ also demands that humans be identified or in union with him. In a broader sense, therefore, for Chao human salvation has a future dimension which will be completed in the actualization of new creation and new humanity.

Chao interpreted soteriology as both human reconciliation with God and human sanctification in light of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Therefore, Chao’s soteriology includes the perfection of the Christian life. It was Chao’s contention then that soteriology is a continuous process, which requires a dual identification between Jesus Christ and humanity. Indeed, Chao had attempted in his entire system of theological thinking to integrate religion and morality. In his *tongyilun*, this attempt can still be observed. However, Chao now recognized the limits of human knowledge, will, and power, and human inability to escape from suffering and sin to reach human salvation. While he continued to emphasize the importance of morality in human life, he now recognized that humanity was unable to live out a moral life without God’s grace.

Chao made a clear distinction between justification and sanctification. In a broad sense, Chao maintained that justification, sanctification, and glorification constitute a progressive process of salvation. According to Chao, sanctification is the process of change in a believer’s life from sinfulness unto holiness. It includes good works, which require human endeavor. Human salvation consists not only of justification but also sanctification, and moreover, reaching glorification through sanctification.⁵²

51 *Ibid.*, 558.

52 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 558.

He also emphasized the necessity of regeneration in sanctification, which may reveal the impact of John Wesley's idea of justification and sanctification and/or the influence of the Anglican tradition on Chao's understanding of justification and sanctification.⁵³

Through this emphasis on sanctification, Chao's interpretation of God's grace moves from a justifying grace to a sanctifying one. According to Chao, God bestows on humanity not only justifying grace, but also sanctifying grace. Sanctification is thus the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. In the process of sanctification, sanctifying grace precipitates the maturation, both moral and spiritual, of Christians. Chao held that, in Christian life, our love of God is always inseparable from our love of our neighbors. Because of the work of the Holy Spirit, Christians have the capacity to grow up in love.⁵⁴ Continual growth for Christians is at the heart of Chao's soteriology.

In order to make Christianity relevant to his own context, Chao refused any dichotomist view of justification and good works. He regarded good works as a consequence of justification, but not its prerequisite. Chao maintained that God has bestowed on us the judicial status of righteousness, but he also desires to make us

53 According to John Wesley, salvation, overcoming original sin, begins with justification, continues in sanctification, and ends in glorification. Wesley observed that justification is the pardoning of our sin. It is making us righteous and just before God. It is only possible by an act of God through the atoning blood of His son, Jesus Christ. It is something God does for us. Justification can only be known by faith. It is not earned, nor can it be attained in any way outside the mercies of faith. Justification relates to that which God does for us, and sanctification (including regeneration, or new birth) is that which God does in us.

54 Chao, "Yong aixin jianli tuanqi," in *Works*, vol. 4, 164; *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 563.

righteous in our nature. In this sense, sanctification means actualizing what has already been declared by God to us in justification.

According to Chao, sanctification is the work of God's sanctifying grace, which is the continuous internal work of God's Spirit, but is not an external aid given by God. Good works in sanctification are not owed to human merit but are the fruits of the Holy Spirit. In this sense, human cooperation with the work of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit does not aim at the completion of human salvation. Nor is it a prerequisite of salvation, but a fruit of God's justifying and sanctifying grace. Moreover, sanctification has a future orientation, which is our future hope. Merely in this sense, Chao referred to human perfection as the completion of salvation.⁵⁵ God does not make our effort unnecessary, but rather makes it effective.⁵⁶

Glüer contends that Chao failed to make a clear distinction between justification and sanctification, and that Chao's soteriology is unbalanced because of his interest in sanctification, such that attainment of human salvation is finally based on sanctification and that sanctification nullifies the meaning of justification.⁵⁷ I both agree and disagree with Glüer here. In a broad sense, Chao made no strict distinction between justification and sanctification. It is not necessary, in his view, to make a rigid distinction between these two in terms of a holistic view of justification and sanctification. Chao declared that justification is the starting point of sanctification and sanctification is a process by which salvation can be

55 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 556, 558.

56 Jerry Bridges, *The Discipline of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1994), 133.

57 Glüer, 221, 223.

completed. They are not two different coins but two sides of the same coin.⁵⁸

However, similarly to Anglican Reformer Richard Hooker,⁵⁹ Chao did indeed make a clear distinction between justification and sanctification. In a narrow sense, Chao repeatedly maintained that salvation as justification and reconciliation was completed in Jesus's death and resurrection. Moreover, owing to his emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in human salvation,⁶⁰ Chao had little difficulty in making sanctification his major concern. For him, sanctification is the work of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit. Therefore, as Glüer articulates, stressing sanctification may fulfill the meaning of justification, but not empty it of meaning.⁶¹ Although Chao made sanctification the core process of human salvation, he did not downplay the doctrine of justification by faith. Moreover, he set the doctrine as the departure point and foundation of human sanctification.⁶²

Chao highlighted the significance of sanctification in humanity's union (or, in Chao's own term, "identification") with Jesus Christ, and then with God. How then, can the

58 Chao, *Shenxue sijiāng*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 558.

59 According to Hooker, those who believe in Jesus Christ may obtain a glorifying righteousness in the world to come. However, they are able to have a justifying and sanctifying righteousness in this world. The glorifying righteousness is perfect and intrinsic, while the justifying righteousness is perfect but not intrinsic, and the sanctifying righteousness is intrinsic but not perfect. See Richard Hooker, "Of Justification," in *The Folger Library Edition of the Works of Richard Hooker*, vol. 5: *Tractates and Sermons*, ed. W. Speed Hill (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1990), 109.

60 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 212-213, 226.

61 Glüer, 223.

62 As Chao says, "the disciples of Jesus should be those who are justified by faith (*Yixinweizhi*, 以信为直). They should be saints." Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 313.

process of sanctification take place in Christian life? Chao mentioned several elements clarifying that, although he made an emphatic appeal to sanctification, he had no intention of downplaying the doctrine of “justification by faith.”⁶³ For Chao, sanctification is impossible without justification by faith.

In his *Shenxue sijiang*, after pointing out “the problematic element” in each classical theory of atonement, Chao put forward six points upon which he believed Chinese Christians could better understand the

63 First, men and women should ask Christ in sincerity for the ability to repent and return to God so that they may depart from all sins and offenses in order to obtain God’s forgiveness. Second, man should have faith in God. Man enters the life of Jesus Christ through faith, and then in God’s eyes man is the man who has been justified by God. This is God’s grace. Third, man should attend the fellowship of believers, being a member of the Christian church. In the early 1940s, Chao began to emphasize the function of the church in Christian life. Fourth, man should serve society and the crowd, preaching the gospel to the world. Man should also bear his own cross, following his Lord every day. Fifth, man should enter deeply the realm in which man can be sanctified, participating in the resurrected life of Jesus Christ, and walking in his steps. Owing to the necessity of man’s union with Jesus Christ, Chao now gives great significance to sacraments, especially baptism and the Eucharist. Chao believes in the certainty that Christians can be united with Jesus Christ, and then with God in a mystical way through the sacraments. See Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 148. See also Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 328.

meaning of the death of Jesus Christ.⁶⁴ Chao attempted his own interpretation of the term “substitution,” interpreting the biblical phrase “the righteous taking the place of the unrighteous” in both its negative and positive aspects. In a negative sense, Chao insisted that Jesus Christ cannot substitute for us, building up our own virtues for us. More positively, he maintained that Jesus Christ did indeed substitute for us in doing those things that we were absolutely unable to do. He revealed to us the way by which sin and evil have been conquered, and death has been defeated.⁶⁵ In Chao’s understanding, the “union or identification theory” reveals not only the mutual

64 The six points are listed as follows. First, we should know that God is fully present in Jesus Christ and the Father and the Son have the same mind, and that the death of the Son is the death of God and the sacrifice of the Son is the sacrifice of God. Second, God is filled with anger toward sin. Sin is the cause of death, and death is the result of sin. In this cause and effect relationship, we see the anger of God. If this cause and effect relationship is not broken, the anger of God will not cease. Third, the death of Jesus Christ reveals the love of God taken to its climax. Jesus Christ could disclose the true love of God without his death on the cross, but he could not disclose the true love of God in its finality. Fourth, the death of Jesus Christ unveils the sin of man at its deepest and most rotten level. The crucifixion of Jesus Christ who is the most holy, most good, and absolute love reveals clearly the hatefulness and ugliness of man’s sin. Fifth, the death of Jesus Christ demonstrates the fact that it is Jesus Christ’s will not to compromise with sin and evil even a little, and that he attacked sin and evil with his all his heart, all his strength, and all his life. The death of Jesus Christ is seemingly the failure of holy goodness, and essentially the victory of sin and evil. Sixth, Jesus Christ is the source of the holy goodness, the basis of kindness; neither holy goodness nor the holy kindness can be in any way rotten. Therefore, he died on the cross and was raised from the dead three days later. He has defeated sin and evil with his death, opening up the door of eternal life, and building up for man a way which is “both a new and living way.” See Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 552-553.

65 *Ibid.*, 553-554.

identification between Jesus Christ and humans, but also the true meaning of God's grace.

Influenced by the Anglican tradition, Chao's later soteriology is Incarnation-centered. Chao discovered in Incarnation not only salvation as God's sole grace, but also the veneration of moral virtue in Jesus' own deeds. Therefore, human salvation must have an effect on human moral behavior. The redeemed individual and the redeemed community must have moral life and moral deeds. Here Chao establishes again the connection between Christianity and ethics.⁶⁶ According to Chao, because of the truth of Incarnation and God's grace in Jesus Christ, it is possible for humans, as both redeemed and sinful, to obey the commandments of God, that is, moral law. Moreover, one's obedience to moral law means following one's redeemed nature.⁶⁷

In his *tongyilun*, Chao kept a balance of humanity's impotence and humanity's potential to be "co-workers" in God's action. No matter how much he concentrated on the human response to God's grace, it is clear that human salvation is merely God's grace.⁶⁸ As Glüer has rightly pointed out, since the late 1930s Chao had accepted the Reformers' idea of *sola gratia*.⁶⁹ Moreover, although he regarded salvation as a process and focused primarily on sanctification, as I have analyzed above, when Chao said that sanctification is the completion of salvation he in fact insisted that salvation was entirely the work of God's grace. According to Chao, the work of perfection of the Christian life is still the work of God's grace, the work of Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit.

66 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 559.

67 *Ibid.*

68 Chao, *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 176; *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 330; *Jidujiao de lunli*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 497; *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 556.

69 Glüer, 214.

3. “Yixin weizhi” (“以信为直”): Chao’s Interpretation of “Justification by Faith”

Yixin weizhi (以信为直), Chao’s Chinese translation of justification by faith, is an important concept in his later soteriological thinking. Based on his understanding of Christology and soteriology, Chao saw the necessity to translate justification by faith (*yinxin chengyi*, 因信称义) as *yixin weizhi* (以信为直, “having faith in order to be regarded by God as upright”). According to Chao, the word straight (*zhi*, 直) is a legal term which means “upright and honest” in Chinese; the word righteousness (义) is a moral term which means “morally just.”⁷⁰ Righteousness refers to one’s inner initiative, which is in accordance with one’s own personality. Therefore, God is unable to call a morally unrighteous person righteous.

However, owing to his love, God regards sinners who believe in Christ as straight (or upright), that is, sinless. Chao’s translation of “justification by faith” as *yixin weizhi* might disclose an intention to maintain an ethical concern in his soteriological thinking. According to Chao, against the background of traditional Chinese culture, the concept *yinxin chengyi* includes the meaning of moral causation. Thus, it is easy for Chinese Christians to misunderstand. For many Chinese Christians, to not yet have been justified by God as righteous (in a moral sense) means that we can do whatever we wish, regardless of whether our actions are morally good or bad. Therefore, in order to avoid the danger of fideism and antinomianism, Chao suggested that “justification by faith” be translated as *yixin weizhi*.⁷¹

In his *Shenxue siji*, Chao gave a further interpretation of *yixin weizhi*. In order to complete the

70 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 325-326.

71 Chao, *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 326-327.

way of salvation, Jesus Christ did what he had to do for our salvation, such as his Incarnation, building up his own virtue, his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to the heaven, and his sending of the Holy Spirit. This is the grace of God. However, we must also respond actively to God's grace, such as by our faith, our repentance, our spiritual cultivation, our witness, our service to others, our victory over sin and death through suffering, temptations and trials, and the working-out of our salvation. This is an action in non-action, letting Jesus Christ work in us.⁷²

Philip L. Wickeri claims that justification has never been prominent in Anglican theology, and did not define the Anglican position on Christian faith, although it is a part of the Thirty-Nine Articles.⁷³ Anglicanism has always emphasized a sacramental understanding of the Incarnation rather than a forensic understanding of salvation. Some strands of Anglican theology have at times been tempted to overemphasize the doctrine of the Incarnation and to treat it as though the Incarnation were in itself salvific.⁷⁴ This preoccupation with the Incarnation principally guided Anglican theologians between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.⁷⁵

When Li Jieren discusses K. H. Ting's teaching on de-emphasizing justification, he relates it to an Anglican understanding of the Incarnation. Li gives the following reasons for this: first, Anglicanism interprets the

72 See Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, 554; *Xiyuji*, 461; "Yong aixin jianli tuanqi," 164.

73 Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K. H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (2007), 349-350.

74 Reginald Fuller, "The Incarnation: More Than Affirmation," in www.reader.classicalanglican.net/?=57. (accessed August 21, 2006).

75 See Li Jieren, 343-344.

Incarnation as the basis of justification, which involves sanctification. According to Anglican tradition, salvation through the grace of God by faith in Jesus Christ involves not only the forgiveness of sin, but also the call to a holy life; second, Anglicanism interprets social action as part of sanctification. In Anglicanism, sanctification as the fruit of salvation-justification indicates that the acceptance of God's grace is not merely an internal and mental activity but is also visibly manifested in the transformation of the Christian lifestyle.⁷⁶ These reasons may also apply to our explanation of Chao's interpretation of justification, which is within the framework of Anglicanism.

Within the Anglican framework, Chao attempted, with his translation of justification by faith as *yixin weizhi*, once again to maintain salvation as God's sole grace by faith in Jesus Christ, while giving ethics a place in his soteriological thinking – an approach relevant to the Chinese context. For Chao, it is only in the process of sanctification that it is possible for justified Christians to become moral (*yi*) through their efforts.

In any case, Chao indicated that a living faith could only be demonstrated through living a Christian life. In a 1950 article, Chao pointed out that Chinese church should pay attention to five focal points in undertaking reform. Chao emphatically indicated in the first point that a living faith was based not on one's words, but on what one lived out. Therefore, Chao reminded his readers that "Chinese Christians should inscribe the two characters *shi jian* (praxis) in their hearts, and should also bear in mind that

76 Li Jieren, 344-345.

an authentic faith is alive and moving, not dull and dead.”⁷⁷

Undeniably, Chao later made Christian faith based solely on God’s grace the foundation of Christian life. Only by God’s grace can we have faith and can we grow in that faith. For Chao, faith contains active and passive aspects, both relying only on God’s pure grace and our own positive response to God’s grace.⁷⁸ Moreover, in light of his emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the process of sanctification, Chao, realizing their significance in Christian life, now added a great concern with the sacraments.

Chao thus related the sacraments to Christian union with Christ. For him, the sacraments are the medium through which believers and God can be united in a mystical way. The sacraments are signs or symbols, by which it is possible for Christians to actualize mystically their union with Christ, and then with God

77 Chao, “Zhongguo jidujiao jiaohui gaige de tujing,” in *Works*, vol. 4, 136. Chao’s idea here is similar to the Anglican Reformer Thomas Cranmer’s idea of “the lively Christian faith.” Although faith is not due to human merits, faith and human merits cannot be totally separated. Faith is not only the acceptance of traditional doctrines as orthodox, but also the living out of a righteous life. This outer life includes conversion, sanctification, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit. These are the result of justification. See Thomas Cranmer, “A Short Declaration of the True and Lively Christian Faith,” in *Miscellaneous Writings and Letters of Thomas Cranmer*, ed. John E. Cox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1946), 135-141. According to Cranmer, though the doctrine of justification by faith means that we have to declare the giving-up of our own “righteousness,” which itself is insufficient for us to be regarded as “righteous,” we must still have a “living faith.” Because of this “lively faith,” it is possible for those who have been regarded by God as “righteous” to bear the fruit of holiness. See *Ibid.*, 136.

78 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, 554-555.

himself.⁷⁹ ⁸⁰ Herein, we may perceive Anglicanism's impact on Chao's thinking.⁸¹ In Anglican tradition the sacraments are regarded as the outer signs of inner grace (faith). Therefore, both faith and sacraments are radically necessary in the Christian life. In our faith, baptism and the Eucharist can be the outer medium by which our life can be connected and united with the life of the Resurrected Jesus. In the Anglican tradition, baptism is thus regarded as the intermediary material cause for justification, while the Eucharist is regarded as the intermediary material cause for sanctification. Without faith, however, the effect of baptism and the Eucharist will be nullified.⁸²

In a broad sense, Chao rightly captured the threefold meaning of justification as revealed in the Bible. The Bible speaks of justification as having already occurred, justification as though it is presently occurring, and a future time at which we will be justified (glorification). It is thus a past event, a present reality, and a future hope. Therefore, there is a future dimension of justification. In our glorification, we will be made righteous in our very nature. For this reason Chao regarded justification, which is closely related to sanctification, as the starting point—the core—of human salvation.⁸³ While justification is God's sole grace, sanctification is truly and intrinsically a transformation of humanity. Therefore, as Charles Moeller and Gerard Philips asserted, "sanctification is real and intrinsic. Justification and sanctification are in fact

79 See Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, 555; *Jidujiao jinjie*, 154-156; *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, 316.

80 Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 555; *Jidujiao jinjie*, in *Works*, vol.2, 154-156; *Sheng Baoluo zhuan*, 316.

81 See Sykes and Booty, 253-255, 272-283.

82 William G. Witt, "Anglican Reflection on Justification by Faith," 14.

83 Chao, *Shengbaoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 331. See also Chao, *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 554, 556.

inseparable. They are the two mutually complementary... aspects of the same thing, both the outer and the intrinsic.”⁸⁴

According to Alister McGrath, a contemporary Anglican theologian, it is better for us to interpret “righteousness” as the change or renewal of our relationship with God and our identity, instead of as moral “righteousness.” In justification, God has declared that those who believe in him have a brand new relationship with him. The “righteousness” of God is an extrinsic “righteousness,” which is in faith regarded as our own “righteousness.” Justification is thus our acceptance of God’s grace, but not our own achievement or merit.⁸⁵ Chao now well understood that justification was something we receive as a gift, not something which we deserve. This understanding then provides a place for human moral responsibility or effort in sanctification.⁸⁶

Chao further explored the doctrine of justification by faith in a 1950 discussion on the issue of reform in the Chinese church. He articulated this doctrine not from the perspective of soteriology, but from the perspective of ecclesiology. Chao pointed out that the Chinese Church could not asymmetrically uphold the doctrine of justification by faith, and he rightly indicated that

84 Charles Moeller and Gerard Philips, *The Theology of Grace and the Oecumenical Movement*, trans. R. A. Wilson (London: A. R. Mowbray and Co., 1961), 33.

85 According to McGrath, a theologian nurtured by Anglican tradition, justification is a past, completed reality. We do not strive to continue to be justified. Justification is a declaration of the Christian’s righteousness, not the process of becoming righteous. It speaks of our status before God, not our nature. See Alister McGrath, “Justification by Faith,” in *Studies in Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1997), 396.

86 Chao, *Shengbaoluo zhuan*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 325-326; *Shenxue sijiang*, in *Works*, vol. 2, 554.

the Chinese church could not regard this doctrine as an independent principle.⁸⁷ The doctrine of justification by faith carries a necessary historical significance. However, when the Chinese Church needs to be liberated from the malpractice of denominationalism, we should emphasize building up the fellowship with love as the fundamental principle for reform of the church,⁸⁸ which may rectify the deviation of liberal individualism.

Concluding Remarks

From the above analysis, it is not difficult for us to see the impact of the Anglican tradition on Chao's later theological thinking. Both the early Chao and the later Chao had, as always, demonstrated concern for ethics and morality. In the cultural and social context in which he lived and theologized, Chao believed that religion and ethics were inseparable. Religion without ethics is dead; ethics without religion is empty. In his early period, Chao had found a method of dealing with the relationship between religion and ethics in such Western trends of thought as Liberal Theology, the Social Gospel and the philosophy of Personalism. In his later period, as the result of his theological re-orientation, it was God's special revelation in Jesus Christ, but not human religious experience, which became the major source and norm of his theological thinking. Because of his historical and social situation, however, Chao maintained a place for morality in his soteriological thinking.

87 However, Chao emphasized at the same time that we as Protestants could not abandon this doctrine, which contains the truth of individual salvation. Chao, "Yong aixin jianli tuanqi," (1950), in *Works*, vol. 4, 162.

88 Chao, "Zhongguo jidujiao jiaohui gaige de tujing," (1950), in *Works*, vol. 4, 140-141.

Chao likely found a similarity between the theological approach of *Via Media* in the Anglican tradition and his own theological approach. Chao's Methodist background and his theological purport and interest gave him little difficulty in his acceptance of the Anglican tradition. In his soteriology, when he discussed the issue of human salvation, he both emphasized God's sole grace and gave human moral life a role in human sanctification. As a scholar, Chao knew the Anglican tradition would allow him to both accept the doctrine of Incarnation, and at the same time provide a necessary place for the Christian life in his thinking. Chao converted to the Anglican Church in 1941, and was ordained *huizhang* (priest) on the same day.

Rather than assess Chao's later theology as a response to a turn to Neo-Orthodoxy, future research on Chao should pay more attention to the impact of the Anglican tradition. Further examination of the influence of the Anglican tradition will lead to a better and deeper understanding of Chao's later soteriology.

Chen Yongtao 陈永涛 from *Nanjing Theological Review* No. 92-93 (3-4/ 2012): 3-32.

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Remembering Bishop K.H. Ting ¹

WANG WEIFAN

Early Days in Nanjing Union Theological Seminary

I first met Bishop K.H Ting 丁光训 in the summer of 1952, in Shanghai at the meeting chaired by Mr. Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗 on theological education in the Huadong (East China) area. Since foreign funding had been cut off, all of the seminaries found themselves in extreme financial difficulties. The theme of the conference was how personnel and material resources could be pooled. The discussion focused on merging the twelve seminaries in the East China area and opening a (new) seminary that would be of considerable size and strength. As the chairman of the Hangzhou Seminary (originally a CIM institution) Student Association, I accompanied the seminary representative, the Rev. Han Bide 韩彼得 to the meeting, where I met the director of the East China Bureau of Religious Affairs, Mr. Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风, as well as Mr. Y.T. Wu, the (future) Bishop K. H. Ting, Rev. Ding Yuzhang 丁玉璋, Rev. Cheng Zhiyi 诚质怡 and other senior leaders.

The seminaries were either “modernist” or “fundamentalist,” based on theological views and views of the Bible, though the modernists held a certain edge. To guard against any impact of a proposed merger on the faith of the different seminaries, some representatives suggested

1 Originally published with detailed notes providing background on persons and events mentioned by Professor Ying Fuk Tsang 邢福增, which have not been included here. Publication information is given at the end of the essay.

that two seminaries be created; one modernist that would be located in Nanjing Seminary and one fundamentalist to be located in the Huabei (North China) Seminary in Wuxi. I was one of the supporters of this suggestion. The two views were at loggerheads during the meeting. It was Director Luo Zhufeng who resolved the issue from the high ground of policy: "Under the premise of anti-imperialism, all theological views enjoy freedom and the government will not get involved. No faction of Chinese theology will be favored over any other. In other words, since there is freedom of religious belief, there is of course freedom of theological thinking."²

The principle of mutual respect at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) emerged from this thinking. The school policy or principle was quadripartite. As far as I know, these four parts were all the work of Bishop Ting. And in fact, on November 2, 1952, following the opening ceremony of the school, the Dean's Office set strict rules stating that students from (former) fundamentalist seminaries could take classes only with fundamentalist professors and those from (former) modernist seminaries must study with modernist professors. Guided by such a principle of "mutual respect," NJUTS experienced five years (1952-1957) of stability and unity.

During my three years of study at NJUTS I had frequent opportunities to discuss theological questions with Bishop Ting, especially questions of modern Chinese theology. For example, he had a strong reaction against the wording "the class nature of theological views," a very popular phrase at the time. He asked: What is the class nature of the Trinity? Another example: When

2 "A successful meeting for unity," *Tian Feng*, No. 330 (6 September 1952): 2.

foreign visitors came to a church that did not have a pool for immersion baptism and asked: “Why don’t you perform immersion baptisms,” our people would always answer: “We don’t perform baptism by immersion, so we don’t have those facilities.” Ting said: “This is the most superficial sort of reply of someone who has no understanding of theology.” And again: in the 1950s, you had sermons that lumped the new society with the heavenly kingdom, new heaven and new earth all in together. I even wrote a piece called “The Gospel of Heaven” that was neither a biblically based sermon nor a reflection of insights from political study. Bishop Ting penned a few lines beneath my conclusion: Pay attention to “transitions.” This helped me understand that direct use of politics to interpret the Bible is inappropriate, as was direct use of the Bible to interpret politics.

One evening, it was probably in the first half of 1953 in the conference room on the ground floor of the administration building, Bishop Ting asked me to speak to three instructors about Evangelicals. In addition to Ting himself, Chen Zemin 陈泽民 and Xu Rulei 徐如雷 were present. I spoke about Jia Yuming 贾玉铭, Yang Shaotang 杨绍唐, Ni Tuosheng 倪柝声 and Wang Mingdao 王明道, and explained their similarities and differences. As we were shaking hands afterwards, I couldn’t help feeling overcome with gratitude—at the time I was just a second semester second year student in the bachelor’s course.

In my third year I compiled a Chinese-Greek-English Interlinear Philippians in an exercise book. In my fourth year I wrote a thesis on Medieval mystics that I handed in to Prof. Chen Zemin, who taught History of Christian Thought. Chen Zemin gave it high marks in a comment sixteen characters in length, but I have forgotten exactly what he said. In the 1950s era NJUTS, a thesis was not required of the graduating class. But the topic of my

thesis had an impact on my whole life—mysticism can and should be linked to and interact with scholarship, self-cultivation and service. I also asked Bishop Ting to critique my work. He made no comment after reading it, but asked me whether it was an assigned topic or one I had chosen myself. I told him it was my own choice.

The Fate of Shengguang 圣光 (Holy Light)

Not long before graduation, I was called to Bishop Ting's office and he said he hoped I would stay on to teach at the seminary. After the school let out, I went happily to Shanghai, where my wife and I stayed in the home of my classmate Lin Shengben 林声本, while I waited for the letter from Bishop Ting. I waited until the latter half of September, and I still remember what he said in that letter: "There's a problem with your being hired by the seminary. I hope you'll forgive me for not keeping my word." He also said there was a small church in Zhenjiang³ that needed an evangelist. It could not afford to pay a salary, but the seminary would provide 25 *yuan* a month. He wondered if I was willing to take the position. Without further ado I hurried back to Nanjing and then on to the Runzhong Baptist Church in Zhenjiang. Every month NJUTS paid me 25 *yuan* as well as 2.5 *yuan* donation.

In late 1956, Bishop Ting recommended that the Nanjing Three-Self Organization publish a devotional magazine, by way of implementing one of the resolutions taken at the Second National Christian Conference in 1954. Rev. Jia Yuming was asked to choose a name for the publication and he chose *Shengguang*. It was tentatively decided that the publication would appear bimonthly. As

3 A prefecture-level city on the Yangzi River in Jiangsu, not far from Nanjing.

editorial staff, in addition to Rev. Li Chenzhong 李晨钟, Bishop Ting, again through the Nanjing Three-Self, had me reassigned from Zhenjiang to Nanjing. In 1957, we had over five thousand subscribers, a lot in those days. In my free time, I frequently went to the Ting home to discuss theology with Bishop Ting. Once we talked until past midnight about the New Jerusalem—the future of the Chinese Church.

But [these pleasant times] did not last long. Beginning in early summer of 1958, the Anti-Rightist Movement began to impact religious circles in Jiangsu. The *Shengguang* bimonthly published only seven issues before it fell by the wayside and I was wrongly labeled a Rightist. My separation from the Church lasted a full twenty years.

An early spring for Religious Studies following the Cultural Revolution

In early 1979, Bishop Ting and Kuang Yaming 匡亚明, the president of Nanjing University, decided after studying the situation to set up the Religious Studies Institute of Nanjing University on the site of NJUTS. This was likely the first Religious Studies Institute to be set up by any university in China. The Institute's project plans included a retranslation of the Bible, translation of American theologian Justo L. Gonzales' *A History of Christian Thought* and publication of a journal, titled *Religion* 宗教 (*zongjiao*).

With the fall of the Gang of Four, Nanjing, like the rest of the nation, saw people celebrate by parading through the streets. Looking at the dais from the crowd, I caught a glimpse of Bishop Ting, and on my return home, I wrote him a long letter. He responded with an invitation to visit him at home. As for the matter of correcting my "Rightist" label, he advised me not to bring it up [with the

authorities]; he would handle it. Before going to his house, I had written a piece of calligraphy to give him: “To my mentor, K.H.” He smiled and said, “You do me too much honor.”

Not long after, the Nanjing Municipal United Front Office sent an official letter to the factory where I was working in Nanjing correcting my wrongful status as a “Rightist.” And not long after that, Bishop Ting asked Mr. Han Wenzao 韩文藻 to undertake the paperwork under the aegis of the Nanjing Peoples Consultative Conference to have me transferred to the Religious Studies Institute of Nanjing University. With this, the embers of human dignity were rekindled in the depths of my heart.

In 1976, the founding meeting of the Association of Chinese Religious Studies was held in Yunnan. The head of the Association, Ren Jiyu 任继愈, presented the association’s mission: “To study religion and critique theology”; “To use the campaign against Lin Biao to attack religion”; “To unmask the never-changing nature of religion as an opiate.” This aroused the ire and antagonism of attendees Zhao Puchu 赵朴初, Luo Zhufeng and K.H. Ting. A debate ensued over whether religion could be considered an opiate during the socialist era. By those in the know, the debate was humorously referred to as the Third Opium War, though historically there were only two. Perhaps following consultation, Bishop Ting launched the journal *Religion* in Nanjing, a journal of theory with contributions from researchers at the Nanjing University Institute of Religious Studies and the Shanghai Academy of Religion. Whether the contributors were believers or not, as long as they followed the principle of “Seeking truth from facts” in their exploration of religious issues, they could use this platform to participate in the discussion. Mr. Zhao Puchu set up an integrated study center in Beijing in the Chinese Buddhist Association and

published the periodical *Research Trends* 研究动态, giving timely updates on developments in research on religion and on the ongoing debate. The Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences Institute of Religion, under the leadership of Mr. Luo Zhufeng, addressed two topics with gusto: how can religion still exist in a socialist society? And, what after all is the role of religion?

Within the space of two years, Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing mustered some Party and government officials, scholars and religious personages into “three teams.”

Cooperation in Literature Ministry

Originally, *Religion* was edited from its inception in 1979 by Xu Dingxin 许鼎新; later Bishop Ting became editor. In addition to editing and writing contributions, I was asked to write an editor’s note for each issue. Ting and I co-wrote only two essays: a translation of William Fletcher’s *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy*, a long work that was basically Bishop Ting’s translation. Since he was travelling overseas at the time, he asked me to check the translation and add some short subheadings into the very long piece for the sake of the readers. When it was published, Bishop Ting put my name first. He used a pen name, Zhu Boming 朱波明 and placed it second. That was how indifferent he was to fame. Actually, he was just as indifferent to the trappings of life. Those who were not close to him will find this hard to believe, but his study was only ten meters square, and he wore the same old padded jacket with tassels for years.

We wrote another essay together: “Recent Developments in the Study of Religion,” written around the time of the second Forum on United Front Theory.⁴

4 See *Chinese Theological Review* (1988): 69-83.

At the time, Bishop Ting was ill in hospital and asked me to write it for him. I spent three days going through the prefaces and forewords of over three hundred works, because that is where one finds the author's aim in writing. It took me another three days to write the ten thousand characters of our essay. When I brought it to the hospital for Bishop Ting to look over, he was lying down in his hospital bed. After reading it over twice, he propped himself up on one elbow and changed a few words with his pen. And that's how the essay was published in June 1989.

He also wrote a preface for my *Chinese Theology and its Cultural Sources* and included this preface in his own collected writings. Additionally, he quoted one of my meditations in another essay, "Chinese Christians' Approach to the Bible."⁵ It can even be said that he called on my cooperation in the publication of his *Writings of K.H. Ting*. He asked me what sort of preparations one must make to have a book published and I told him he needed an editor and then a printer for the manuscript. For the editor, he took my advice and asked Tian Tongxin 田童心. To type up the manuscript, Wenzao Han lent the services of Ms. Jiao Jie 娇捷 of the Nanjing office of the CCC/TSPM. As she progressed, every time three to five essays were in typed form, Bishop Ting sent an assistant to bring them over to me, so I could look them over in case any essay or parts of essays were unsuitable for publication. Thinking of how much of my time this would require, he had his assistant run errands for me as well. That summer was a particularly busy one for me, with my own work and a lot of outside commitments. I had agreed to go to the city of Jilin (Jilin province), as well as to Chengdu and Chongqing (Sichuan province) to lead services and preach.

5 See *Love Never Ends: Papers by K.H. Ting*, ed. Janice Wickeri (Nanjing: Yilin Press, 2000), 378-391.

When all of the essays had been typed and sent over to me, I was on the verge of leaving. Except for a couple of essays that I was able to revise in detail before leaving, I had to bring over three hundred pages with me, several cabbages in weight, as I went from Nanjing to Jilin, Jilin to Chengdu and on to Chongqing, and finally by boat down the Yangtze and back to Nanjing. For two weeks and more, I didn't have time to read more than a few essays. Once back in Nanjing, I told Bishop Ting the whole story with apologies and prepared to finish the job. But Bishop Ting said, "Forget it, you're not getting any younger either." That was in 1997. I was seventy and Bishop Ting was eighty-two at the time. Today I still have those over three hundred precious pages stored with my books. It's been fifteen years already.

Retranslation of the Bible

As for the retranslation of the New Testament, when I returned in 1979, several professors were already reading over and drafting a translation of the Gospel of Luke. Presiding over the work was Bishop Wang Shenyin 王神荫 from Shandong, along with our own Chen Zemin. Chen Zemin asked me to be part of the Luke group as well as to translate the letters of Paul. Bishop Ting said: "The language of our translation should be as accessible as the People's Daily newspaper, while remaining faithful to the original." I remember once, in order to translate the word "pondered" in Luke 1:29, we consulted various English versions and finally all agreed that 'ponder' was closer to the meaning of the original than "consider." Mo Ruxi repeated "ponder" out loud several times. The translation of the Pauline letters did not take me very long to draft and then it awaited revision. But as autumn made way for winter in 1979, the State Administration for Religion

implemented a policy and hoped the seminary could reopen in its original campus as soon as possible. There was nothing for it but to halt the retranslation of the Bible, and reassign people to preparing to open classes. The unfinished draft translations were later lost.

In the late nineties following the reopening of the seminary, we held at Jinling a preparatory meeting on translating the New Testament. Bishop Ting presided and an editor from Yilin Press (Nanjing) took part, along with Yang Huilin 杨惠林 from Beijing, and from NJUTS, Mo Ruxi, myself, Zhang Xianyong 张贤勇 and others. It was decided at the meeting that each participant would do a trial translation of two fairly short passages: everyone would translate the passage on love from First Corinthians 13 plus another passage of their own choosing. These draft translations were collected but again there was no follow-up. These drafts were in my office for years and after my retirement I gave the dozen pages to a colleague who taught the history of the Chinese Church.

Bishop Ting twice inaugurated a Bible translation, but a new translation was never published. A tremendous amount of work rested on the shoulders of Bishop Ting and his colleagues. Those who knew him might be familiar with his “two [things] in small doses”: eat less; sleep even less.

The Correspondence Course

Following the policy implementation, what the believers needed most was Bibles. But the Bible of course could not be printed so rapidly. Bishop Ting decided to start a publication similar to the *Shengguang* of the 1950s that would put the scriptures, Bible study and sermons into the believers’ hands. At the time, however, each religion was allowed only one publication and Christianity already

had *Tian Feng*. So Bishop Ting gave this new effort the name *Correspondence Course Materials* or *Jiaocai*, saying these were [study] materials sent out by the seminary and not another “publication” of the Church. Rev. Han Bide was director of the Correspondence Course Department and I was vice-director. The first issue of *Jiaocai* was published in the latter half of 1980, six months earlier than the reopening semester of the seminary in 1981. The establishment of the Correspondence Course Department took place four years later with the secondment of Kong Xiangjin 孔祥锦 as a halftime student who could help with the work the other halftime. Bishop Ting adopted this original approach to meet the needs of believers and the Church.

While setting up the Correspondence Course Department, Bishop Ting got into a disagreement with Shen Yifan. To set up NJUTS’ department, he had the seminary office prepare a report which was sent to Beijing, asking the [then] Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB) under the State Council for approval. I wrote the report at Bishop Ting’s request, and the office submitted it. The RAB saw this as a good thing that would expand theological education and quickly gave its approval. Then Shen Yifan of the CCC/TSPM unexpectedly sent Bishop Ting a letter in which he expressed the opinion that it was inappropriate for the seminary to approach the Religious Affairs Bureau directly, that it should first have sent the report to the CCC/TSPM, who would then send it on to the RAB for approval. Bishop Ting was furious. At least three times, I found him sitting on the sofa in the seminary reception room mumbling and grumbling. I half knelt beside the sofa, as if I were pleading on behalf of Yifan, who was a year younger than myself: “He’s still young, don’t pay him any attention.” And Bishop Ting said: “If there’s another Cultural Revolution, he’ll attack me!”

That was the first time I'd seen Bishop Ting so angry and his anger lasted a long time. I can understand it a bit—for an older man of such high prestige, when his pride and dignity receive a blow, it is especially painful, hard to bear. But still I don't entirely understand. Many years later, I repeated Yifan's errors and provoked an even greater anger in Bishop Ting.

The Yellers

Around 1983-84, there was a nationwide attack on the Yellers.⁶ This necessitated helping believers to discern the truth; yet at the same time one could not label someone a Yeller just for praying in a loud voice. Tang Shoulin 唐守临 and Ren Zhongxiang 任钟祥 co-wrote an essay using biblical evidence to uncover the heretical nature of the Yellers as well as to draw the distinction between Yellers and non-sect members who were simply praying in loud voices; thus we rescued some believers and protected others.

The shouting of the Yellers grew out of a misunderstanding of the exhortation to “call on” the name of God found in Romans 10:12-13. The biblical Greek for the phrase “call on” used here suggests “entreaty,” and they mistakenly interpreted calling on the name of God as shouting. At the same time, we cannot label all who call loudly on God's name in prayer as Yellers, we must determine whether they confess God's name, confess that our Lord Jesus is the Son of God. I recommended to Bishop Ting that he append Tang and Ren's essay safeguarding true faith and discerning heresy to *Jiaocai*.

6 A group that had broken away from the Little Flock, founded by Watchman Nee. They emphasized simultaneous prayer in very loud voices.

The response was unexpectedly strong and many letters came requesting copies. With Bishop Ting's approval, I went three times to the Jiangsu Military Regional Printers, printing a total of over 200,000 copies, sent free of charge to those who wrote to request a copy. Relying on hearts to spread the true Word, we had won a battle and rescued some simple-hearted brothers and sisters.

In the spring of 1984, Rev. Cai Wenhao 蔡文浩 of Zhejiang province held a spring conference, the first revival for church co-workers to be held since the end of the Cultural Revolution. He invited Sister Jiang Peifen 蒋佩芬 to lead daily morning prayer and me to lead the revival meetings. My theme was "The Heavenly Vision," actually very close to Sr. Jiang's topic. During the meeting, the news came that a young follower of the Yellers from Yiwu had been sentenced to death. At the time the factions were complicated. The Yellers had a group of people sitting in silence outside the prison seeking to be executed in his place and farmers of the village had surrounded the prison, saying that this was a child they had seen grow up, a fine boy who does not deserve the death sentence. In addition, the Yellers started a rumor that "Three-Self has borrowed the [government] knife to carry out its killing." I told Bishop Ting that "This time Three-Self must save this [boy's] life." He agreed and had me draft a report. Rev. Cai wrote to Bishop Ting and Ting expressed our determination to save this young man at the meeting. The upshot was that the sentence was reduced and with good behavior he was released after twenty years. Upon his release, this brother came to see Bishop Ting and myself.

Another example, this one from Tianshui in Gansu. Elder Jing, was a math teacher who was labeled a Rightist in the Anti-Rightist campaign. During the Great Famine (1958-1961) he was sent to the Jiabiangou Labor Camp where a thousand "Rightists" died. Elder Jing did not die

in that tragedy and wanted to serve the motherland, but having endured so much, he was now accused of being a Yeller. There was a student in Tianshui named Zhou Baozhen 周宝珍 who had studied in the class of 1983 at NJUTS. When she heard this, she quickly told me about it and I hurried to inform Bishop Ting. Elder Jing's situation was thus quickly remedied. A few years ago I went to Pingliang in Gansu for the dedication of a church and met Elder Jing there and mentioned the incident. We had a simple meal together and glorified God.

Religious affairs officials and religious policy

When the subject of officials and their management of religion and churches came up, Bishop Ting was always unhappy. He had a kind of natural aversion to it that might have been due to his life, study and work in the West. Once he took two graduate students, Li Yading 李亚丁 and Zhang Xianyong with him on a fact-finding trip to Wenzhou. The director of the religious affairs bureau there put his name on the list of members of Bishop Ting's entourage. Ting asked him bluntly, "Since when did you become part of my staff? You're the director of the local religious affairs bureau." It was a mess, but the cadre couldn't back down. The cadre also drew up a schedule for Bishop Ting, but Ting paid no attention to it. In the afternoon he took Li Yading and Zhang Xianyong off to see local church workers, ignoring the official's arrangements.

There is a regulation regarding overseas visits [by religious figures] that religious affairs and government cadres not be part of a combined group with religious figures. Also, religious personages' speeches and messages are not subject to examination or censorship by religious affairs and government cadres. Once on a visit to Germany,

a religious affairs official was part of the group and became more or less group leader, representing the group. On one occasion, before Bao Jiayuan 包佳源 was to speak, this cadre demanded to have a look at his speech, and this left a really bad impression with the German Christians present. Bishop Ting and Zhao Puchu complained about this to the central government authorities. Before long, this official stepped down.

The religious authorities once tried a “registration certificate” program. There was a pilot program in Dongshan in Guangzhou and a report was issued. Bishop Ting gave it to me and I immediately wrote a critique. I began by criticizing the phrase “comprehensive management” of religions. Generally “comprehensive management” is applied to public nuisances. As for getting registration certificates, I said, Nanjing had received letters from believers in Guangzhou who said you could get a registration certificate for 400 *yuan* all over Guangzhou.

Then Dongshan Church in Guangzhou invited me to lead a revival meeting there. I fired off a few shots at this issue during the revival. One day, Rev. Liang Fuhuan 梁福寰 said to me “Take a few more shots!”

Following the revival, some of those in charge asked me to dinner. Present were a number of pastors, including Liang Fuhuan, Huang Guangyao 黄广尧 and others, as well as a religious affairs official from the Dongshan area. I debated ruthlessly with him: Anybody can buy a registration certificate for 400 *yuan*, what’s unusual about that? He said the official price was only five *yuan*. So I said that the Religious Affairs Bureau under the State Council says they don’t know anything about what you’re doing here. The official got upset and grumbled, “They’re the ones who told us to do the pilot project!” Everyone laughed at the irony of it for a while, then picked up their chopsticks and concentrated on the delicious Cantonese food without another word.

The question of management of religion is one that was then being explored in the reform of the political system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Not only did civil affairs departments have to register, even the religious affairs bureau, as well as local Christian Councils and Three-Self organizations—these “second governments—did.” These situations have come with the deepening of reform within the Chinese political system and can be solved. But Bishop Ting was one who raised the question somewhat earlier, at a meeting in the Tianlin Hotel. He raised the issue of re-ordering relationships, re-ordering the relationship between Three-Self and the churches, re-ordering the relationship between religious affairs departments and the churches.⁷ The reforms now taking place are the direction Bishop Ting foresaw, but at the time, these were criticized by some co-workers as “Tianlin Restorationism,” a scary hat to push onto Bishop Ting’s head.

Evangelicals

In 1984 Bishop Ting decided to revive the *Nanjing Theological Review*. When the second issue called for contributions in 1985, Bishop Ting asked me to write an essay titled: “Changes in Theological Thinking in Chinese Evangelicalism.” But while the issue was printing, Bishop Ting [decided on] discretion and the name became “Changes in Theological Thinking in the Church in China.”⁸ He said at the time that the modernist school in China had no theology to speak of, save for “God is father and we are all brothers and sisters.”

7 K.H. Ting, “Re-ordering the Relationships,” *Chinese Theological Review* 1989: 12-20.

8 *Chinese Theological Review* 1986: 30-37.

After the Cultural Revolution, Bishop Ting quoted Rev. Cai Wenhao's observation a number of times: "Mainstream theology in the Chinese Church is Evangelical." This assessment of the real situation in the Chinese Church guided Bishop Ting's ministry for many years, including theological education, personnel arrangements, the focus of ministry, etc. But he advised a co-worker, "You used to be a modernist, don't model yourself on the Evangelicals." This is maintaining the principle of mutual respect from another angle.

A publication of the Yunnan provincial [People's] Consultative Conference carried an essay whose tone harked back to that of the Cultural Revolution. Bishop Ting was furious when he saw it and passed it on to me. I wrote an article called "Put down your whip!" and prepared to publish it. But I wasn't allowed to use that title. When I asked Bishop Ting for advice, he said it was fine. Bishop Ting had a kind of visceral distaste for any Cultural Revolution leftist remnants, whether in the church or outside it.

In 1995, when Bishop Ting turned eighty, I wrote a piece I called "Loving her, I often cry; Thinking of her, I often pray." At the end of this piece I added a "portrait" of Bishop Ting:

He seems to be musing, his hair now flecked silver-gray.
 I recall it silky black from my student days.
 He shoulders heavy burdens, unflinching,
 Yet his is still a loving mother's smile.
 His eyes, bright with perception,
 Search for signs of spring.⁹

9 Translation by Janice Wickeri and Philip Wickeri. See "A Portrait of K.H. Ting," in Philip L. Wickeri, *Reconstructing Christianity in China: K.H. Ting and the Chinese Church* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2007), xxiii.

This poem was written in 1987; the last two lines refer to the destiny of the Chinese Church.

NJUTS Publishing

Bishop Ting put those of us in the literature office in charge of the publication work of NJUTS. In addition to the *Nanjing Theological Review*, *Jiaocai* and *Religion*, we published a series of about a dozen books, such as Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God* and *The Little Flowers of St Francis*, as well as a number of books done by the CCC/TSPM. Since we published the CCC/TSPM *Catechism*, we also published Bishop Zheng Jianye's 郑建业 six lectures on lay training. In 1988, Bishop Shen Yifan's Theological Education Series was also a logical addition for us. Due to the quantity and size of the task, the pressures of the work gradually increased, it became difficult to maintain the quality of the proofreading, and errors crept in.

In 1988, Mrs. Ouyang, a very God-fearing and patriotic woman, came to Nanjing to see us, wishing to donate 15,000 *yuan* for publication of Rev. Jia Yuming's *New Lectures on the Book of Romans*. When I sought the advice of Bishop Ting and Han Wenzao, they both agreed to the project. But when the proof was ready in May of 1989, I discovered that the text contained phrases such as "government corruption" ... "the darkness of present society" and so on. Even though the book had originally come out in the 1930s, still, to bring it out again today might give rise to suspicions of "making oblique hints [at criticism]." I got in touch with Comrade Guo Wei 郭伟 at the State Religious Affairs Bureau, intending to make some modification without changing the author's original intent. Guo Wei sent me a letter expressing agreement with this and suggesting two further small changes. I got in

touch with the printer and when the book came out, it was the modified version.

At a meeting in 1989, the head of the Jiangsu Provincial Religious Affairs Bureau, a copy of the unrevised *New Lectures on the Book of Romans* in hand, scolded me: “What’s all this talk of social darkness and government corruption, even today?” I had a copy of the revised version with me, so I answered him, “Please have a look at this, it’s been revised.” The Seminary leaders made a decision then that they would put the ten-thousand-copy print run into storage rather than offering them for sale. Then the leadership discovered that several thousand copies had already been sold. When they sent someone to ask me about it, I said it was quite simple. We found the receipt for the first copy sold, which was dated August 8 1989. At the time I had been in Fuzhou leading a revival. Han Wenzao said, Forget it! With Bishop Ting and Han’s involvement, the issue was closed.

In 2000, Mr. Shen Derong 沈得溶 held a meeting on the work of Christian publishing in Wuhan. He chose Wuhan because it was the site of the earliest Christian publishing. There was some criticism of Nanjing by various individuals at this meeting. One issue was the publication by the two provincial CC/Three-Self organizations of Jiangsu and Zhejiang of a *Psalms* for house churches. Some co-workers from Shanghai pointed to this as “fostering denominationalism.” The Zhejiang representatives at the meeting felt wrong had been done and initiated a review. But Rev. Han Bide of Jiangsu argued plausibly that the publication of this *Psalms* did not foster denominationalism but instead strengthened unity with the house churches and meeting places. Another co-worker from Shanghai scolded us for promoting negative writings through our publication of *The Little Flowers of St. Francis*, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis,

Brother Lawrence's *The Practice of the Presence of God*, etc. I refuted this saying that these works should be read dialectically, that one must see in these books their positive influence on human souls and virtue, good and moral conduct, etc. As long as we did not violate the Four Basic Principles, I argued, we could publish these titles.¹⁰ An official present said that for Christian publications, it's not enough to simply agree with the Four Basic Principles. My loud retort to this was: "Do you mean to say there's a Fifth Basic Principle?" No resolutions were passed at the Wuhan meeting. Shen Derong should be thanked, for it was due to his holding to the principle of mutual respect that "leftist" elements were not allowed to interfere with the publications work of the Chinese Church.

NJUTS during June 1989

On June 5 1989, the seminary students heard some rumors. That was on a Monday with a prayer service scheduled for that evening that I was to lead. The text I chose was a prayer for peace, Psalm 122: "Peace be within your walls, and security within your towers." The hymn was "O Come O Come Immanuel," another prayer for peace (Isaiah 8:8). Finally everyone joined in the Our Father, the words resounding like the shouting of troops. This was the single time in my life when I have prayed to God the Father shouting and pleading from my heart.

After the service, another rumor surfaced, I don't know from where, saying that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) was going to occupy all universities that

10 The Four Basic (or Cardinal) Principles, introduced by Deng Xiaoping in 1979, are (1) Keep to the socialist road; (2) Uphold the dictatorship of the proletariat; (3) Uphold the leadership of the Communist Party; and (4) Uphold Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought.

night, including the seminary. The students were, after all, children, and they suddenly panicked. Some rushed away to their relatives, some left for trains and buses or boat docks, planning to get home. I phoned Bishop Ting to apprise him of the situation, and he said, “Don’t stop anyone who wants to leave; don’t assemble those who stay.” I found several of the male students and we got rid of the big character posters on the dorm and then I went from room to room in the women’s dorm, reassuring people. “Don’t be afraid. The PLA won’t come. I’ll stay downstairs here tonight in the main hall.” A male student and I did in fact spend the night there. We heard two gunshots during the night, but for the rest of the time it was peaceful. Later, during an inquiry, one of the teachers said, “Wang Weifan chose the hymn ‘Hark the Herald Angels Sing’ as a way of attacking so and so.” And another co-worker said, “Wang Weifan said that when the PLA came he was going to take them on.” To protect me, Bishop Ting got Gu Yuese 顾约瑟 and other students to track down the source of these claims—they were all just disinformation in an attempt to frame me. Once Bishop Ting had clarified the truth of the matter, I was not asked [by the authorities] to come for “a conversation.”

Moreover, seminary students had been shouting slogans at Gulou [a main Nanjing landmark]. They got thirsty and sent someone back for water. I was in charge of the student cafeteria at the time and I not only sent back a big barrel of water, but some glasses—“seconds,” not good ones—and asked a worker to take a few steamers full of steamed buns to them by cart. So later someone looking to discredit me said that I had aided student rebellion. I said, “In a situation like this, what mother or father would not take food to their child?”

Our only real study Modern Christianity

In the late 1990s, the contemporary division of the Institute of World Religions at the Beijing Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) held a seminar on the present situation of religions. At the time, Ren Jiyu had already been transferred to the position of director of the Beijing Library and had been replaced at the Institute of World Religions by Dai Kangsheng 戴康生; the director of the contemporary office was Peng Yao 彭耀. Their research method was “Seek only the truth and the facts, not career advancement.” This research path, paired with the line at the Shanghai Academy (SASS), “Seek truth from facts” formed a North-South alliance of forces and at the same time energized a group of young scholars such as He Guanghu 何光沪, Gao Shining 高师宁 and Zhang Zhigang 张志刚.

At the 1990 meeting, participants were first given the opportunity to speak in small groups, after which one person from each religion summed up their issues for the general meeting. Christianity was represented only by Shen Yifan and myself. Given his status, it was not suitable for Shen Yifan to do the speaking, so I gave a general airing of views type of talk, and a summary disclosure of places where many grass roots general policies were not being implemented. My talk caused a stir. One of the comrades at the CASS said he was crushed by what I said. Comrade Li Pingye 李平晔 of the United Front Work Department (UFD) said jokingly, “You should be attacked as a Rightist again!” After the meeting my speech was published in *Religion* with the title: “On Current issues in Christianity.”

Unexpectedly, the Hong Kong publication *Bridge* got hold of a recording of part of my speech, drawing the attention of a cadre in the Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB).

When the contemporary [religion] office applied to hold the next forum in 1991, that cadre brought out the issue of *Bridge* that quoted my speech, claiming that Wang Weifan spread rumors and the meeting did not go ahead. Only when the group applied a third time, did it receive permission for the forum. But the UFWD and RAB were sent to form a team that met at the end of each day to do an assessment of the day's speeches; if "errors" were found, they would organize a "counter criticism" session. They were to pay special attention to Wang Weifan. When Bishop Ting learned of the situation, he consulted the UFWD cadres concerned and asked that Vice-director Zhang Shengzuo 张声作 invite me to dinner, so we could clarify our views at the dinner table. As I was about to set out, Bishop Ting told me: "If you don't go, you're not Wang Weifan; if you go and don't speak out, that's not Wang Weifan either!" The night I arrived in Beijing, I passed through Tiananmen Square on my way from Zhaojialou to the UFWD on Fuyou Street. Li Pingye was waiting for me at the gate. She put out her hand in the shape of a gun and said: "I've got you in my sights!"

In the UFWD dining room, Director Zhang Shengzuo and Ye Xiaowen 叶小文 were waiting for me. After Director Zhang and I spoke for half an hour, he suddenly said in a loud voice, "And you don't agree with just going all out to increase the number of believers?" I said, "When did I ever say that? At present we only have 600 pastors, but six million believers; that's one pastor for every 10,000 members. What pastors do we have that are capable of dealing with that?" After dinner, we had tea in another room. I said, "Thank you for inviting me, Director." He said, "I wanted to get to know you." "I said, "My problem is that if I have a viewpoint, I have to express it. Because Chairman Mao said that the party in power fears the silent parrot." Zhang said loudly: "Right: where there is silence

there is thunder.” After a good talk, they sent me home in a UFDW car.

The next day, a three-day Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) forum began (the end of December 1991). Close on its heels the Fifth National Chinese Christian Conference was held. The CASS invited two people from outside Beijing to attend the forum. One was Mr. Luo Zhufeng, a “Buddha” well able to hold his ground; the other was me. The next morning the first speaker was a representative of the Ministry of Public Security, who began by showing clips of Christian groups infiltrating and smuggling Bibles. The first clip showed some members of the Children of God being detained on a street in Guangzhou. The second was of a woman taking several Bibles from inside her trousers. The second one especially caused a lot of laughter. The scholars’ reaction was very unlike what that of most believers would be. About the first clip they said: “Even in the U.S. the Children of God are considered heretics!” On the second, they said: “The Bible is a good book, let it be imported and this will stop. Why force people to stuff it in their underwear?” When the clips were finished, the cadre from the Public Security Ministry first read out a speech, but prefaced it by saying this was a speech read and approved by the Ministry leadership. When he finished reading, the cadre said, “Now I’ll give my own view. First, We need a law on religion. If we are instructed to detain people today and tomorrow told to release them, this makes things difficult; it’s better to do things by the law. Second, religious circles should strengthen themselves and take care of their own business.” In his final speech, Luo Zhufeng affirmed these two points as programmatic in nature.

I was next to speak after the cadre from the Ministry of Public Security. At the time, Comrade Jiang Zemin 江泽民, speaking at the seventieth anniversary of the

CCP celebrations, had just mentioned how to deal with issues in the new government, new economy, and new culture during the early stage of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This reminded me of something Mao Zedong 毛泽东 had early on said in his “On New Democracy” where he also mentioned the issues of new government, new economy and new culture in the period of new democracy. Fifty years separated the two (1940-1991), but there was a red thread running through these two periods of Chinese history. And I was reminded that in the point about “new culture” Mao mentioned policy issues and linked them to what policy there should be toward religion in the current early stage of socialism. I said: “Chinese religion, as part of Chinese culture, cannot cast off the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. We cannot take a dogmatic approach and method as our policy toward religious work.”

I said goodnight to Luo Zhufeng. After dinner he was going to a friend’s house and I was going from Zhaojialou to the Fengtai Hotel to register for the National Christian Conference. After I registered, Bishop Ting surprised me with a visit. He said that since I was not too busy with the conference, there were some issues here that he’d like me to write a response to so he could send them to Sha Guangyi 沙广义, section head of the Provincial RAB, to clarify matters for the Jiangsu Religious Affairs Bureau. Bishop Ting had written the title; the issues had been raised by a cadre in religious work in Jiangsu province: Wang Weifan incited students to stop eating (not to eat in the school cafeteria); Wang published books with reactionary contents (meaning Jia Yuming’s book on Romans); Wang supported student demonstrations, and so on, all unfounded claims. I answered them one by one.

On my return to Nanjing, Sha Guangyi, came to apologize in person, and to urge me not to pay any

attention to the cadre. Of course I did not deign to have anything to do with him. Not long after, the provincial RAB had a new young section chief surnamed Li as liaison. He listened in meetings and did not say much.

Run the Church well according to Three-Self principles

A team was formed to draft the Work Report for the 1996 Sixth National Christian Conference: from Shanghai, Luo Guanzong, Cao Shengjie and others; from Nanjing, Bishop Ting nominated me. Bishop Ting hit the nail on the head: “In the nine-character phrase ‘Run the Church well according to Three-Self principles’, Shanghai focuses on Three-Self principles, while Nanjing focuses on ‘Run the Church well’.” Mr. Han Wenzao highlighted the word “run” and proposed a more practical approach.

In the summer of 1995, I went to Shanghai with Bishop Ting and Han Wenzao, mainly to take part in the Work Report drafting team, and continued my advocacy on the question of whether or not to mention “according to three-self principles.” Ting and Han went to the meeting of the heads of the two organizations to study relevant matters. On the train to Shanghai, our car held only the three of us—Ting, Han, Wang—and a bodyguard. We got out at Shanghai, not from the regular stop, but further on where cars waited at a crossroads. There a car took us to a French-style hotel. Sun Xipei 孙锡培 also came from Hangzhou and we shared a hotel suite. Ting and Han each had their own suite. We were trying to persuade Sun Xipei to become president of the CCC, but he was adamant that he would not and the upshot was that it was decided that for the time being Han Wenzao would be CCC President with Deng Fucun 邓福村 as Secretary-General. Su Deci 苏德慈 had asked to be released from that position in order to devote himself to putting Huadong Seminary in

order. Luo Guanzong would be chair of the TSPM and Cao Shengjie General Secretary. Han Wenzao was to be president of CCC.

On the train home, Bishop Ting and I began to discuss the issue of the principle for building up the church. Ting said: “There are many principles for building up a church; Three-Self is just one among many.” I said: “The Three-Self principles can be subsumed under the principle of independence or self-administration.” Ting said: “There are also biblical principles, principles of faith, democratic principles and others.”

Back in Nanjing, I wrote “On a Chinese Christian slogan for self-construction—with a critique of the slogan “running the Church well according to Three-Self principles.” I sent the essay for Bishop Ting to look over, thinking that it could be published in *Religion*, but the associate editor did not agree, so I revised it according to Bishop Ting’s suggestions. I did fourteen full revisions, one after the other, which just about wore me out. Bishop Ting suggested that since we couldn’t publish it in *Religion*, we could print one hundred copies and distribute them to the Standing Committees of the CCC/TSPM as food for thought. But just at that time, Ye Xiaowen, head of the RAB, used “Running the Church well according to Three-Self principles” in his speech in Qingdao. Han Wenzao quickly phoned the seminary’s distribution department and the article was not sent out. And of course *Religion* did not carry it.

Ting read all fourteen revisions of that article and pointed out how my stance had changed for the worse, a step backwards. But I also discovered that Bishop Ting was not all that interested in the controversy between Shanghai and Nanjing; he was preoccupied with some other issue. In the summer of 1995, Shanghai sent over a draft Work Report that Bishop Ting and Han Wenzao gave

me to look over. I found that it still focused on “following Three-Self principles.” I spent two days drafting an alternate Work Report, with the emphasis on running the Church well. Ting read mine and said: “We’ve checkmated Shanghai this time.” Han Wenzao integrated the two drafts into one that emphasized both “Three-Self” and “run the Church well.” This was the Work Report Han Wenzao gave at the general assembly of the Sixth National Chinese Christian Conference in 1996, but in the second volume of *Documents of Three-Self* the name of the presenter was omitted. That year, Bishop Ting stepped down from his leadership posts. Luo Guanzong became the chair of TSPM and Han Wenzao president of the CCC. Bishop Ting formed a Theological Reconstruction group with himself as convener. The result was the publication of a number of essays not helpful to Bishop Ting and actions that were not helpful to his prestige. This made me quite sad.

Affection

In 1997, because I was feeling pressured and overburdened, I went to the Nanjing Mental Hospital to convalesce. The next day Bishop Ting came to the hospital to urge the doctor to take good care of me. He told him that Wang’s work at the seminary was very important. This was the second time during all these years that he took charge of my health. The first time he sent his car to take me to the People’s Hospital to see the doctor, as though I were one of the family. In the summer of 1996, I was very excitable. Bishop Ting made a special phone call to my elder daughter in Shanghai, asking her to come back to Nanjing to see me. When I had calmed down, I went to the National Conference and gave a speech to the assembly. I am against the kind of theology that “makes belief and

unbelief the axis,” meaning that people and issues of faith are judged solely on a conservative assessment of whether they meet the standard of Christian belief. These issues must be resolved from a stance of respect for the authority of the Bible, the sanctity of faith and the feelings of the faithful.

After 1998, Bishop Ting was a bit more cautious in his public statements, to the extent that it opened up differences between us. He published an essay in the *Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) Report* titled, “A call for adjusting religious views.” In *Research on World Religions*, I published a piece called “Cautious Religious Reform,” and another in *Research Trends*: “Reform of Religious Ideas: What would Marx and Engels say?”

Bishop Ting said to a co-worker: I hear that Wang is organizing material about me. He wants to criticize me; he’s rattling his sabre. I said to that co-worker: I love my teacher; I love the truth more. If this remark came to Bishop Ting’s ears, it would surely be met with the same furious response that Shen Yifan had received years earlier.

But I cannot believe that the teacher-student affection that Bishop Ting and I built up for over fifty years in spite of our age difference could be destroyed in less than a year. I had made him happy, but I had also made him angry. Still, I can only say that Bishop Ting was one of the great men of the Chinese Church.

I retired from NJUTS in 1999. In the summer of 2006, Ting invited me to his home. When we saw each other, the first words he said were: “A lot has passed between us, let’s let it all go.” I replied: “Of course.” He sat on the sofa. My wife and I sat on either side of him, each holding his hands. Then he stood up, though not very steadily. We had a photo taken together and we ate dinner with him.

This made me think of 1954, of the lunch we had at the Tings' home in Shanghai after my wife and I were married there. It was the first wedding at which Bishop Ting presided. His wife (Kuo Siu-may 郭秀梅) braided my wife's hair and Bishop Ting had someone buy wedding candies. Today, though Bishop Ting has passed on, for all we experienced together, I can't help but recall my revered teacher Bishop Ting—a great man of the Chinese Church!

Wang Weifan 王维藩 (1927-) is professor emeritus, Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. A popular preacher and prolific author, his writings include sermons, devotional literature and theology.

“*Remembering K.H. Ting*” 追忆丁光训主教, with notes by Prof. Ying Fuk Tsang appeared in the newsletter of The Centre for Christian Studies and the C.S.C.C.R.C. 基督教中国宗教文化研究所, Chinese University of Hong Kong, No. 18 (3/2013).

Names mentioned in the text

Bao Jiayuan 包佳源 CCC/TSPM leader in Nanjing and Shanghai

Cao Shengjie 曹圣洁 (1931-) president, CCC 2002-2007

Chen Zemin 陈泽民 (1917-) Dean of NJUTS from 1980s to late 90s; prominent theologian

Cheng Zhiyi 诚质怡 (1898-1977) Vice-principal of NJUTS from its founding in 1952

Dai Kangsheng 戴康生 (1937-2003); Official; deputy director of the Institute of World Religions, Beijing

Peng Yao 彭耀 (1937-) Official; director of the contemporary office, Institute of World Religions, Beijing

- Deng Fucun 邓福村 (1929-) Chair, Zhejiang TSPM
- Ding Yuzhang 丁玉璋 (1895-1975) Principal of Huabei Seminary, 1950; Vice-Principal of NJUTS, 1952
- Gu Yuese 顾约瑟 1990 graduate of NJUTS, later taught at Zhejiang Seminary
- Guo Wei 郭伟 Cadre at the State Religious Affairs Bureau
- Han Bide 韩彼得 (1919-2010) Pastor and faculty member at NJUTS
- Han Wenzao 韩文藻 (1923-2006) TSPM/CCC leader in Nanjing, first General Secretary of Amity Foundation and CCC President, 1997-2002
- Huang Guangyao 黄广尧 (1915-) Guangdong CC and principal of Guangdong Union Seminary
- Jia Yuming 贾玉铭 Prominent evangelical associated with the TSPM in the 1950s
- Jiang Peifen 蒋佩芬 (1914-1995) Prominent evangelical and NJUTS faculty member in the 1980s
- Jiang Zemin 江泽民 (1926-) General Secretary, Central Committee, Communist Party of China (1989-2002); President of China (1993-2003)
- Kuang Yaming 匡亚明 (1906-1996) President, Nanjing University, 1963-1982
- Kuo Siu-may 郭秀梅 (d. 1995) Spouse of Bishop K.H. Ting; faculty member, Nanjing University
- Li Chenzhong 李晨钟 Pastor
- Li Pingye 李平晔 (1949-) Official at the United Front Work Department
- Li Yading 李亚丁 Graduate of NJUTS
- Liang Fuhuan 梁福寰 (1919-1996) Chair, Guangdong TSPM; pastor, Dongshan Church
- Lin Biao 林彪 CPC military commander killed in a plane crash following failed coup attempt in 1971
- Lin Shengben 林声本 (1927-) 1954 Graduate of NJUTS
- Luo Guanzong 罗冠宗 (1920-2011) 1997-2000 Chair of TSPM

- Luo Zhufeng 罗竹风 (1911-1996) Director, East China Religious Affairs Bureau (RAB)
- Mo Ruxi 莫如喜 (1929-) Faculty member, NJUTS
- Ni Tuosheng 倪柝声 Founder of the Little Flock, prominent spiritual writer, imprisoned in 1950s
- Ren Jiyu 任继愈 (1916-2009) Prominent religious scholar; head of Association of Chinese Religious Studies at its founding
- Ren Zhongxiang 任钟祥 (1918-1997) CCC/TSPM
- Sha Guangyi 沙广义 (1942-) Official; Christianity section head of Jiangsu RAB
- Shen Derong 沈得溶 (1922-) TSPM/CCC leader in Shanghai, editor of *Tiang Feng* in 1950s; TSPM secretary general in 1980s
- Shen Yifan 沈以藩 (1928-1994) Elected Bishop in Shanghai, 1988; also served as CCC vice-president
- Su Deci 苏德慈 (1933-) Huadong Seminary president, 1995-
- Sun Xipei 孙锡培 (1928-2011) CCC/TSPM leader from Zhejiang
- Tang Shoulin 唐守临 (1906-1993) Little Flock leader associated with TSPM/CCC
- Tian Tongxin 田童心 (1967-) Editor
- Ting, K.H. 丁光训 (Ding Guangxun, 1915 -2012) Prominent theologian and church leader; president, CCC; chair of TSPM; principal, NJUTS; standing committee member, CPPCC; delegate and standing committee member, National People's Congress (NPC)
- Tsai, Peter W.H. 蔡文浩 (Cai Wenhao, 1913-1993) CCC/TSPM leader from Zhejiang
- Wang Mingdao 王明道 Fundamentalist from Beijing, imprisoned in 1955 for 23 years
- Wang Shenyin 王神荫 (1915-1997) Sheng Gong Hui Bishop from Shandong; CCC/TSPM leader

- Wu Yaozong 吴耀宗 (Y.T. Wu, 1893-1979) Christian leader who founded TSPM in 1954 and served as its leader
- Xu Dingxin 许鼎新 (1926-2012) Biblical scholar, faculty member at NJUTS , first editor of *Religion*
- Xu Rulei 徐如雷 (1923-) CCC/TSPM leader; faculty member NJUTS
- Yang Huilin 杨惠林 (1954-) Scholar of religion
- Yang Shaotang 杨绍唐 (1900-1966) Revivalist preacher from Shanxi with close ties to Wang Mingdao
- Ye Xiaowen 叶小文 (1950-) Director of RAB/SARA 1996-2009
- Zhang Shengzuo 张声作 (1932-) CPC official; director of the RAB 1992-1996
- Zhang Xianyong 张贤勇 (1959-) Graduate of NJUTS
- Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (1907-2000) President of China Buddhist Association; CPPCC vice-premier
- Zheng Jianye 郑建业 Sheng Gong Hui bishop in Shanghai; first general secretary of CCC

I Still Have Something to Say¹

CHEN ZEMIN

A Historical Retrospective

There has been a flurry of recent essays on sixtieth anniversaries. There is a definite need to recollect past events, and I will focus here on several different “sixtieth’s.” Most of you here today were born in the post-1970s and post-1980s, and may not have a very clear picture of the history of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS). I want to take advantage of this opportunity to briefly introduce the seminary’s history, for this can also serve as a retrospective of the past sixty years of Chinese Christianity.

We can divide the seminary’s history into several periods. The first runs from its founding in 1910 to 1950, the forty year period of “the old Nanking Seminary” (老金陵).² When I arrived in Nanjing to serve at the seminary in 1950, the old Nanking Seminary was located at the crossroads of Hanzhong Road and Shanghai Road, occupying the whole campus of what is today the Nanjing Medical School campus, along with the area now occupied by the later established Provincial Academy

1 A lecture delivered at NJUTS in 2010, with revisions by the author. Please note that the incumbents of various church and seminary positions mentioned were current at the time of first writing.

2 See Cheng Zhiyi 诚质怡 “The Nanking Seminary I Knew” 我所知道的金陵神学院 in my *Seeking and Witnessing* 求索与见证, 182; the historical documents relating to the “old Nanking Seminary” in Xu Yihua 徐以骅, *Scholarship on Christianity* 基督教学术, vol. 1; and Bi Fanyu 毕范宇, recorded by the Board of Trustees of Nanking Seminary (Chinese translation from the English).

of Chinese Medicine. Two dormitories of the original seminary still stand behind the present Dental Hospital of Jiangsu Province, preserved as historical heritage sites. A commemorative volume on the fortieth anniversary of the seminary contains a number of essays discussing its varied achievements over forty years and its prospects for the future. This volume can be found in our library and it is worth a look.

With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1951, the students and staff of Nanking Seminary were engaged in patriotic studies and initiated a “reform” movement; in autumn of that year, the “old Nanking Seminary” (a co-educational institution) joined with the Jinling Women’s Theological College and moved to the campus of the latter institution, i.e., No. 17, Dajianyin Lane, which became the campus of Nanking Theological Seminary. This is the campus where I have spent sixty years.

The second period, from 1951 to the present, completes this sixty years. Roughly speaking, we can divide the sixty years into two thirty-year periods. The first thirty years commences with the Conference on Theological Education in the Huadong District held in Shanghai under the leadership of Mr. Y.T. Wu 吴耀宗, at which it was decided to amalgamate the twelve theological schools in the Huadong district into Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS) which opened in Nanjing on November 1 of that year with Bishop K.H. Ting as principal, and the principals of the former Huabei Seminary, the Rev. Ding Yuzhang 丁玉章 and the former Nanking Seminary, Dr. Cheng Zhiyi 诚质怡, as vice-principals. The curriculum included biblical studies, undergraduate and graduate studies and pastoral training. This curriculum was in force for six years. Several current leaders in the CCC/TSPM, including the Rev. Cao Shengjie 曹圣洁, Elder Ji Jianhong 季剑虹 and the Rev.

Shen Cheng'en 沈承恩, were students in the seminary in those days.

Some students and professors were labeled “rightists” in the Anti-Rightist Movement of 1957. Classes were halted for three years (1958-1960) following the movement and some professors were sent to Xixiashan to do manual labor in the Hongyelin timber yard.

Classes were resumed in 1961. When NJUTS reopened, the curriculum was limited to B.Th. students (20), graduate studies (two students: Shen Cheng'en and Sun Wuchun 孙务纯) and a “pastoral training class” of two semesters, each a year long (100 students). This curriculum was in place for five years. Then in 1966, the Cultural Revolution began and in August of 1965, classes were halted for a second time, this time for fifteen years. Some professors, students and pastoral workers were sent to Xinjiang to do non-religious sorts of work. Some of them remained in Xinjiang, though a minority returned [to Nanjing].

These two openings and closings both took place under the influence of the “extreme leftist” political line that gradually permeated the whole country after 1957. These attacks on the seminary took place under extremely abnormal circumstances. Religious circles throughout the country met with much adversity and many ordeals. Following Reform and Opening Up, beginning in 1980, all of those labeled as Rightists were exonerated. In June 1981 with adoption by the Sixth Plenary Session of the Eleventh Communist Party of China of the “Resolution on Certain Questions in the History of Our Party Since the Founding of the People's Republic of China,” a line was drawn under the problems caused by the previous thirty years of erroneous political line, especially the many miscarriages of justice during the Cultural Revolution, and order was restored. During this period Chinese Christianity

experienced many ups and downs, both forward movement and loss of ground, even at times nearly disappearing. Understanding and analysis of this period in our seminary's work, the ups and downs and other ordeals, awaits conscientious study and review by church historians.

The second thirty-year period, that of Reform and Opening Up, begins with the Third Plenum of the Eleventh CPC in November 1978, when the country entered a new era. The "restoration of order" in religious circles lagged somewhat behind. In this period, with consultation between Nanjing University President Kuang Yaming 匡亚明 and Bishop K.H. Ting 丁光训, it was decided to bring the seminary professors into the university staff, establishing there on January 1 1979 the Institute of Religious Studies. In the spring of that year, Bishop Ting, Dr. Han Wenzao 韩文藻, Rev. Xu Rulei 徐如雷 and myself went to Kunming to represent the Institute of Religious Studies at the first Conference on Religious Studies. From its first batch of doctoral students, the Institute graduated four classes of scholars. Then, with the re-implementation of the religious policy, religious activities were restored nationwide and NJUTS resumed classes in March 1982, with the emphasis of its work on "running the seminary well." The Institute of Religious Studies stopped admitting graduate students in 1984, but retained a cooperative relationship with Nanjing University: Bishop Ting, as president of the seminary was one of the vice-presidents of the university and some seminary professors taught classes in the university. Under the leadership of Xu Rulei as vice-director of the Institute, the journal *Religion* 宗教 was published. This was one of the earliest journals on religious issues to be published following the Cultural Revolution. In the fifteen years from 1979 to 1994, twenty-four issues were published. In 1995, the NJUTS publications office published *Selected*

Essays on Religion. Only when Nanjing University set up its own Department of Religion, did the seminary, at the university's suggestion, separate from the university. But it was not until November 2001 that the nameplate "Nanjing University Institute of Religion" was removed from the seminary premises. No doubt many of you here today are unaware of this history.

In August 1980, at the Third National Chinese Christian Conference that met in Nanjing, the China Christian Council (CCC) was established, forming, together with the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Protestant Churches in China, the two national Chinese Christian organizations, or Christian *lianghui* 中国基督教全国两会, generally referred to in English as the CCC/TSPM. Bishop Ting served concurrently as President of the CCC and Chair of the TSPM for three terms, a total of fifteen years. During the three terms from 1996 to the present, Bishop Ting continued to serve as honorary president and honorary chairperson of the two bodies. Here I want to make an emphatic addition to my original remarks: Bishop Ting's fifty-nine-year tenure as principal of the seminary since 1952 makes him the longest-serving seminary president in the world. The history of Chinese Christianity since the founding of the People's Republic of China can be said to run parallel with Bishop Ting's history; NJUTS [from its founding as the national union seminary in 1952] and the CCC/TSPM are nearly the same age. At the Third National Chinese Christian Conference in 1980, at which the decision was taken to reopen NJUTS, the slogan "continue to run [the seminary] well" was also proposed. This was the second time classes had been resumed. At the time, Christianity had lain dormant in China for over a decade. Following a period of meticulous preparations, the seminary reopened in March 1981. The first semester

was a preparatory “probationary” period; September was to be the beginning of the new academic year and the formal opening. Many of our current teaching staff,³ including vice-principal Gao Ying 高英, instructors Liu Meichun 刘美纯, Sun Meici 孙美慈 and so on, began their seminary studies in 1981.

It is thirty years from 1981 to the present and fifty-nine years since the seminary’s establishment in 1952. Next year we can celebrate the seminary’s sixtieth anniversary and most of you will be part of those activities, witnesses to this worthy achievement.

The seminary underwent many important changes in these thirty years, but I need not go into these in detail here. I would just like to mention the most decisive change, that is, Theological Reconstruction, which can be said to be the achievement and development in both Chinese Christianity and NJUTS most worthy of notice in these thirty years.

As background to understanding the significance of the task, I would like to begin by explaining the events surrounding its emergence.

1. We can say that it began at the Sixth National Chinese Christian Conference held in Beijing in late 1996 with Bishop Ting’s call to “construct a Chinese Church commensurate with the image of our nation, strengthen theological education and establish theological thinking.”
2. In August 1998, a symposium was held in Xi’an on “Using the lens of the internal reconstruction of religion to see how religion can adapt itself to socialism.” At this meeting, Bishop Ting issued the call to “adjust religious ideas,” pointing out that current Chinese theological thinking had fallen behind

3 At the time of Prof. Chen’s speech.

- the times and should “renew its thinking and strive to adapt to socialist society.”
3. In September 1998, *The Writings of K.H. Ting* was published.
 4. In November 1998, the Jinan Meeting—the second plenary session of the new (sixth) CCC/TSPM—signaled a new phase: the beginning of Theological Reconstruction. Prior to this meeting, a “Xinde⁴ Meeting” took place in Nanjing (November 10–12), a preparatory meeting for the Jinan Meeting. At the Jinan Meeting, Bishop Ting delivered his speech “God’s Self-Revelation in the Bible and Our Slowness in Grasping it,”⁵ in which he expounded on the way in which God’s self-revelation took place gradually in the Bible. God is love, he said, and this is God’s most prominent attribute and the pinnacle of human understanding of God. “When love reaches many people, the just nature of love will be made manifest.”⁶ “God is the cosmic Lover. With a heart of merciful love, he is constantly creating and redeeming.”⁷ These two theses later became important parts of Theological Reconstruction. The meeting adopted the “Resolution on Strengthening Theological Reconstruction.”
 5. On November 25, a book launch was held in the hall of the Chinese Peoples Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) in Beijing for Bishop Ting’s book *The Writings of K.H. Ting*. Leaders of the CPPCC were present for the occasion, along with Zhao Puchu 赵朴初 (Head of the Buddhist

4 Referred to by the name of the building where it took place.

5 English version in *Chinese Theological Review* 14 (2000): 32–37.

6 Note 4: 35.

7 Note 4: 36.

Association) and other figures from academic and religious circles. Bishop Ting spoke. The occasion marked the development of public awareness and support for Theological Reconstruction from its beginnings. Within the Church, however, it had not yet attracted much attention.

Important Developments following the Jinan Meeting

From December 1998 to June 1999 a six-month assessment or evaluation was undertaken at NJUTS, during which a series of events took place that were later referred to as “the first three” and “the latter three.” These events were expressions of misunderstanding and antagonism to Theological Reconstruction on the part of a small number of students. They also acted to point up the suspicions, misunderstandings and antagonism toward this new movement on the part of some believers. After the fact, many people have little understanding of these events and they are not much discussed. I do not have time to go into details here either. This “evaluation” was concluded June 13 1999 with a review meeting. Afterwards, the seminary made some personnel adjustments that were announced at the July 9th graduation ceremony by Dr. Han Wenzao on behalf of the Board. President: K.H. Ting; Vice-Presidents: Chen Zemin, Peng Cui’an 彭萃安; Director of the Nanjing University Institute of Religion: K.H. Ting; Vice-Directors of the Institute: Han Wenzao, Xu Rulei. Bishop Ting then announced the Seminary leadership. Academic Dean: Peng Cui’an (on two years study leave in the US, with Wang Aiming 王艾明 appointed Acting Dean); Vice-Deans: Wang Aiming, Sun Meici; President’s Assistant: Gao Ying; Dean: Sun Meici; Director of the Graduate program and research department: Wang Aiming.

6. The “Qingpu Meeting” was held July 26-31 1999 in Shanghai. Formally titled “Forum on *The Writings of K.H. Ting* and Theological Thinking,” the meeting was hosted by NJUTS with colleagues and co-workers from across the country invited to attend.
7. The “Huangshan Meeting” was held October 20-24. This was a CCC/TSPM organization-building forum on *The Writings of K.H. Ting* and Chinese Christian Theological Reconstruction, further preparation for Theological Reconstruction.
8. The CCC/TSPM (Enlarged) Preparatory Meeting was held at the Guangda Hotel in Shanghai, December 6-12 1999 (known as the “Guangda Meeting”), where the “Theological Reconstruction Promotion Group” was set up.
9. In January 2000, the first meeting of the Promotion Group was held in Nanjing.
10. The “Qingdao Meeting” (Meeting on How to View the Bible) was held in Shandong August 7-12 2000. This is generally regarded as the “second battle” in Theological Reconstruction, or simply the call to “get it off the ground.” How to view the Bible is not an issue that can be resolved with a single meeting. But it was a way to begin to highlight the importance of theology.
11. “The First Seminar on Theological Reconstruction in Shanghai and Jiangsu” was held in Shanghai June 6-7 2001 with forty-seven co-workers from Jiangsu and one-hundred-ten from Shanghai participating. It could be said this was the pilot meeting for this type of seminar. It was a meeting of great significance; its aim was “communication, sharing, discussion and mutual encouragement.”
12. From August 29-30 2001, the “Theological Reconstruction Promotion Group (Enlarged)

Meeting” was held in Nanjing to review the uneven development of Theological Reconstruction since its inception, and (why) some praised while others misunderstood, criticized, opposed or resisted; it was necessary to go deeper and gain a deeper understanding. Some believed this was a task only for the seminaries and bore little relationship to the clergy in general or to ordinary believers, so they paid it little attention.

13. On October 9 2001 the “National Christian Seminar on Promoting Theological Reconstruction” was held in Nanjing at the Xinde Building. Secretary Ma Yuhong 马宇红 of the State Administration for Religious Affairs (SARA) brought greetings and advice on behalf of the Head of the Administration, Ye Xiaowen 叶小文 and Comrade Wang Zhaoguo 王兆国, observing that for us to undertake Theological Reconstruction was not the same as a western approach to “theology building”; our approach would have to be appropriate to our Chinese national conditions, in line with the times and adapted to socialist society. They raised several points: why we needed to do this, how we would go about it and what exactly it was.

We want to erect an ideological foundation conducive to the adaptation of Chinese Christianity to socialist society and for the theoretical foundation of theology; one that would be beneficial to the strengthening and development of Three-Self Patriotic Movement; one that would be beneficial to running the church well according to the Three-Self principles, and so on. (I have detailed notes.)

After November 2001, we can say that Theological Reconstruction entered a phase of comprehensive promotion. Following on from the initial proposal of

Theological Reconstruction at the Jinan Meeting in 1998, through three years of publicity and pilot efforts, the Work Report of the Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference made “great efforts to publicize the Jinan Meeting, promote Theological Reconstruction as the focus of the work of the CCC/TSPM, and as the most important task among all other tasks.” At this meeting, Director Ye Xiaowen’s speech raised the idea to “in the spirit of the times, make further efforts to promote Theological Reconstruction.” He summed up the past few years of effort, saying: “For over three years now, the CCC/TSPM and the majority of its provincial and municipal bodies have held forums in a variety of formats and carried out publicity. The level of understanding of Theological Reconstruction among the masses of clergy and pastoral workers and believers has clearly risen; a backbone group is taking shape around a core of leaders of the CCC/TSPM and its provincial and regional bodies, teaching staff at seminaries and clergy and pastoral workers. ... Essays on Theological Reconstruction have been published. ... We can say that Theological Reconstruction is showing excellent momentum, even now moving from thought to action, from its initial stage to greater depth.”⁸

On the “Jinling (Theological) School”

We are now eleven years into Theological Reconstruction. Is the task finished?

Vice-President of the seminary Wang Aiming, has edited a book titled *The Church Thinking—Theological*

8 *Conference Album of the Seventh National Chinese Christian Conference*, 35. Essays and other materials relevant to this stage of Theological Construction are collected in *Papers of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement* 三自爱国运动文选, volume 2.

Reconstruction and the Chinese Church 教会在思考—神学思想建设与中国教会 (hereafter: *The Church Thinking*). The thirty-five chapters all expound on this title. I wish to sincerely recommend this collection, in hopes that all seminary students and those interested in the study of theology will conscientiously read and learn from it. This is an important book continuing in the [path of] Bishop Ting's own *Papers*, a quite systematic theological treatise. It develops the historical task of Theological Reconstruction proposed by Bishop Ting in a very rich, rigorous and profound way. Reading this book brought together for me my over sixty years as one who participated in theological research and pedagogy, from 1941 when I went to NJUTS (from Shanghai) to study in the graduate department for three years and then in 1950 began my teaching career.

Among the current leadership, clergy and pastoral workers of the Chinese Protestant Church are many who have direct or indirect relationships with NJUTS. I feel I am honored to be able to witness to such an event. Today NJUTS graduates are to be found all over the country, serving in local churches everywhere, playing an important role in important positions of service. If we add those who are part of the faculties of seminaries, quite a large number of these are also graduates of NJUTS. In this way, the graduates of all these seminaries too have a direct or indirect apprentice relationship with NJUTS. I hope we may, through common effort with all of these theological workers related in this way to NJUTS, bring forth a group of theological scholars who love country and love church, care for society, are mindful of the world and have an eye to the future and that these will develop into a "Nanjing (Jinling) School" 金陵学派 of those with a sincere willingness to explore and seek truth and commit themselves to be witnesses to the truth.

These theological scholars, loyal to Christ and devoted to scholarship, will be truly rich. In the words of Philippians 1: 9-10 (words once used by Bishop Ting in morning prayers): “And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be blameless....” These will then be part of what our school motto calls “Jinlingren 金陵人” or “NJUTS people,” and in the near future become a group truly willing to devote themselves to building up a “Jinling School” for the Chinese Church, and work tirelessly to develop and enlarge it!

Theological “schools” are not unknown to us. In the history of the ancient church we have the Alexandrian and Antiochian schools as well as that of Asia Minor. In modern times the West has all sorts of such schools associated with various locales and seminaries/universities, such as Tuebingen, Chicago, Yale and Princeton (and in some cases these are further divided by earlier and later periods). NJUTS is already one hundred years old, and can be divided into the pre-Liberation, early Jinling School and the post-Liberation contemporary Jinling School. The objective existence of these schools is not a result of some unconventional human doing or gathering of supporters to create splits. These schools all arose according to their own distinctive theological thinking, and followed a course of inception, development, transmission and even division. I think the present “Jinling School” can be seen as an entity over the sixty years since Liberation, with Bishop Ting as a representative and NJUTS as its base, with a community of faculty and students seeking in common a Chinese Christian theology and theory that is adapted to “the new image of China as a socialist society.”

The basic characteristics of the Jinling School are those special characteristics Bishop Ting enumerated in

various places eleven years ago in proposing Theological Reconstruction. Over the course of its gradual deepening and development as discussed above, we can use the first chapter, part three of Vice-President Wang Aiming's book as told to American friends in a speech given in Pasedena in September 2009: "Fifteen Basic Propositions (or "program") that may represent Theological Reconstruction." These have been summarized as follows:

1. God is love and all God's attributes, such as justice or compassion, are rooted in love, God's paramount divine attribute.
2. Christ is cosmic in His nature; or, we might also say the nature of His Lordship over all creation is cosmic.
3. God's revelation is gradual and progressive, as is human understanding of God.
4. God's work of creation is ongoing.
5. Seek a proper understanding of "justification by grace through faith" that does not lead to the nullification of good deeds or morality.
6. Affirm that Truth, Goodness and Beauty created by God exist not only in the visible church (the Chinese Church), but also outside it.
7. Human beings are a work-in-progress in the process of God's creation. Martin Luther says we are all in an unfinished state.
8. To establish a correct understanding of the Bible requires us to anchor ourselves in the supreme authority of the Scriptures and in the two basic Creeds of the Church (Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed), and to study and to preach the Word of God in response to the context of Chinese society. In other words, the most important ministry of the Chinese Church and the most important study of the Gospel ministry in China is how to establish a proper view of the Bible.

9. At China's current stage of social development, it is imperative that the moral aspect of Christianity be amplified to its greatest extent.
10. It is insufficient to expound the Three-Self Principle merely in light of the historical background of imperialism and the corresponding Western missionary movement. Our understanding of the Three-Self Principle shall be grounded in biblical and doctrinal evidences, with reference to its profound meaning in the history of Christian faith as a whole.
11. The positive contributions of many Western missionaries to China should not be denied. It is unacceptable to brand all Western missionaries as imperialists and dismiss their contributions.
12. Efforts shall be made to adjust religious viewpoints and actively bring about the adaptation of Christian faith with socialist Chinese society. The aim is to bring the Church in China out of its marginal position and into that of a moving force contributing to Chinese social development.
13. In administration, the direction should be toward a democratically run church. The Church is seriously concerned with avoiding the patriarchal and autocratic models prevalent in the Church and is determined to change this situation to bring about healthy development.
14. Theological reconstruction in China is founded on the following principle: the fundamentals of our faith are unchangeable, but theological thinking can be adjusted.
15. Theological reconstruction in China shall follow three basic principles: a) Upholding the Bible and its supreme authority, and a better understanding of the fundamentals of our faith; b) Prevention of factionalism in the Chinese Church—no one shall be permitted to use theological reconstruction to belittle

those who hold different views; and c) Effective mobilization of the work of evangelism in China.⁹

It should be noted that not one of these fifteen items is Bishop Ting's own innovation or discovery. We can find similar ideas in Christian works, both through the ages and today. What is precious here is that in the new historical period of new China, Bishop Ting has chosen these theological propositions and emphasized their potential, adapted them to socialism, and at the same time critiqued or discarded some unhealthy, backward or reactionary elements of thought, prompting Chinese Christianity to be more in line with our nation's image. This is Christianity's effort, with emphasis, toward "contextualization" in new China's new stage. This is Theological Reconstruction. This type of theology is consonant with the spirit of Reform and Opening Up, and it is only in the new period of that policy that it could be promoted and flourish. It is innovative, open, and open or liberal in the religious sense. It can accommodate different views. It can continue to develop. [In Anglicanism there is high church, low church and broad church, or latitudinarianism.] It is not "set" or autocratic or conservative; it can allow different interpretations and elaborations. These fifteen propositions are simply a general direction.

Academic or theological "schools" are formed of many persons or members with common faith and commitment. They are called schools because this is a kind of academic group that "comes together" through academic activities. There is an issue here of identity, but we cannot go into that here. The school must achieve something, in scholarly terms. Besides pedagogical activities, in

9 Wang Aiming, "Understanding Theological Reconstruction in the Chinese Church; A Hermeneutical Approach," in *Chinese Theological Review*: 16 (2002): 139-149.

the summer of 1988, several NJUTS faculty gathered at Lushan to write a curriculum and later published a theological textbook for general use. Others of the faculty spent many years of effort in translating American theologian Justo Gonzales' three volume work, *A History of Christian Thought*, a work adopted and commended by academics here and abroad, which is now in its second (Chinese) printing. NJUTS is already recognized as an academic organization, with publication and distribution rights. Our publications office publishes the *Nanjing Theological Review* 金陵神学志, a journal with a history of nearly one hundred years. *Jiaocai* (a periodical and later a bimonthly) has a long publishing history at NJUTS as well, a popular publication with a very widespread influence. The NJUTS publications and distribution office is still a very lively component of the seminary.

A "school" should have an "organ" or mouthpiece, a publication or media tool and for us this is the *Nanjing Theological Review*. As I noted above, 1950 saw the publication of the *Special Issue Commemorating Forty Years of the Jinling Theological Review*, a publication of the "old Nanking Seminary"; in 1952, NJUTS was founded and in 1954, the journal resumed publication as the *NJUTS Theological Review*. Later at Bishop Ting's suggestion, this was changed to *Nanjing Theological Review*. The journal ceased publication several times due to political movements and was not revived in a "New Series" until 1983. It is now in its 80th issue since this resumption of publication. (I hope Prof. Wang Peng and the publications office staff will set down this history.) There were other publications in this period: *Collected Writings from Nanjing Seminary* (1992); *Writings of K.H. Ting* (November 1998; available in two English editions); and Wang Aiming's forthcoming collection, *The Church Thinking*. He has two other titles currently in production as

well: *Martin Luther and the Study of Protestant Ethics and Calvin's Theology and the Chinese Church*.

Dr. Wang Aiming's work here deserves further comment. From 1993-1999 and 2003-2008, Dr. Wang was in the birth place of the Protestant Reformation, Geneva, where he spent over a decade in his studies of theology, receiving his doctorate from Basel Seminary in 2008. *The Church Thinking* is a deep and thoughtful exposition of the significance and role of Theological Reconstruction considered from many aspects; hermeneutics, Christian ethics, Chinese theological education and so on. It also explores, researches and considers the prospects for ecclesiology in China and further indicates that theological research should be structured and expanded around a focus on three aspects: Bible, tradition and the modern world. This is a theological book everyone should read. Its most remarkable feature is that, based in China and Chinese Christianity and in line with the Bible, Dr. Wang's book references the two thousand year tradition of Christianity, especially patristics and the theology of the Reformation theologians and makes an important attempt to explore the building of a truly Chinese Church.

In *A Study of Martin Luther and Protestant Ethics*, Dr. Wang starts from an internal church-based approach to research to make a detailed study and analysis of Luther's important theological thinking, the historical background that formed his thinking and related important events in church history. He further combines this with a deep reflection on the actual conditions of the Chinese Church. It can be said that this is the first such book and an important theological study in the Chinese Church to present a comprehensive, in-depth and detailed introduction to Martin Luther's theology and to the Reformation. It gives readers an "authentic taste" of the Reformation principles and Protestant theology. This is indispensable learning

material for those of us who are “Protestants” and even for those who know no more, or perhaps only slightly more, of Luther than his name.

Dr. Wang’s third work, *Calvin’s Theology and the Chinese Church*, begins with firsthand materials—the theologian’s French theological writings. This is a profound analysis of the great reformer Calvin’s theology and combines Calvin’s theology with the development of theology in the Chinese Church, offering profound theological insight on building a genuine Chinese Church in the present context.

These publications are part of the voice and witness of the Nanjing School. It will continue to develop and flourish.

I wondered whether I should mention the “Jinling/Nanjing School” here, whether it was not too bold an idea, whether I should wait until someone else discovered the existence and impact of this “school.” But several teachers encouraged me to do so, to offer it for wider discussion and comment, thinking it might play a role in promotion and cohesion. I hope that by making a start here today, everyone will be led to discuss it. My recommendation would be to change “Nanjing School” to “Nanjing Style,” which seems a little better and less likely to seem to promote “factions.” “Style” is more flexible, more suitable. (Addendum, April 2013).

I still have much to say, but I’ve used a lot of time already. Let me conclude with the following.

We have fallen behind and we should hurry to catch up. Press forward!

Who are “we”? We could point to all of us here today, or to those “Jinling” people Professor Mo refers to, or to the members of that Nanjing School mentioned

above; or we could extend it to the so-called “Three-Self Churches” represented by the CCC/TSPM at the national and local levels. (This is a not-very-accurate term and it has been pointed out already that there is no so-called “Three-Self Church.” That term refers generally to those church bodies that have registered and been recognized by the government as opposed to the “house churches” or “meeting points” that have not registered.)

“Fallen behind” implies a comparison, of both quality and quantity, or of speed. In order to compare we need a reference or standard. Who are we being compared to and in what areas have we fallen behind? Furthermore a comparison must be made within a time frame. I think here we should use since “Reform and Opening Up”, i.e., the thirty years since the restoration of normal church activities in China. In this period, we have fallen behind!

In 1998, I gave a speech at the Jilin Meeting in which I pointed out that our Chinese Church had fallen behind in numerous areas. (See my collected writings, *Seeking and Witnessing* 求索与见证, 135-138). I’d like to emphasize these points again:

1. Compared to the “house churches” or “unregistered” meeting points.

There is a great deal of controversy on various issues here: What is the “house church”? How big is it, how many members are there? Is it bigger or smaller than the “Three-Self Church” or the “registered churches”? And so on. We may refer to two essays by Yu Jianrong 于建嵘, “Whither China’s Protestant House Churches—Dialogues with house church leaders,” and “Desensitizing [the issue of] [Chinese] Christian House Churches,” a lecture given in December 2008 in Beijing.) We should at the least admit that the fact that the appearance and development of house

churches over the last thirty years is one that cannot be lightly denied or ignored. [Here I can add that in the last twenty-three years, so-called “village churches in cities” (都市里的乡村教会) is a phenomenon and issue that is worth emphasizing. (See Huang Jianbo 黄剑波, “Village Churches in the Cities.” (Hong Kong Christian Studies Centre, 2011.)

2. From the controversy that arose (1997) over K.H. Ting’s “culture Christians” to the “theology in Chinese movement” represented by the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies in Hong Kong to the “academic theology” of today, has been less than twenty years. There has been research and achievements with regard to Christianity in intellectual and academic circles, including all sorts of Christian student fellowships at many universities. Compared to these newly rising phenomena, we are indeed fallen behind! And we are particularly, greatly fallen behind when compared to the impressive achievements of academic circles in Christian studies and theological studies over the past decade or so.
3. The approach and policy toward religion on the part of Party and government in the last thirty years has gradually changed, as have their expectations of Christianity. Bishop Ting’s call and hope was to “build a Church in conformity with the image of the nation.”

Compared to these changes and expectations, we are once again greatly behind.

Here I have not compared us to changes and developments in world Christianity, but just in comparison with the three areas mentioned above. Are we or are we not already far behind? This is worth our serious reflection.

If we admit that we are seriously fallen behind, then we should press forward and strive to catch up. At the

beginning of the 2010 academic year, this task has fallen on our shoulders. This is why I was asked to be here today, the impetus for my talk and its goal.

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This essay was originally a lecture delivered at NJUTS in 2010. It has been expanded by the author.

Nanjing Theological Review, No. 95 (2/2013): 3-15.

Focus on Building a Harmonious, Healthily Developing Chinese Church

Work Report of the Joint Standing Committees of the Eighth Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China and the Sixth China Christian Council¹

Since the eighth meeting of the National Chinese Christian Conference five years ago, all nationalities in China, under the correct leadership of the Party and government, have unified and worked hard, achieving brilliant results in all our nation's undertakings. The national economy has seen continued growth, people's lives have clearly improved and our overall national strength has continued to rise, while our international standing has improved significantly. The successful meeting of the Eighteenth National Congress of the Communist Party of China portrayed a comprehensively well-off society, accelerated the great blueprint of socialist modernization and greatly encouraged our people's grand ambition to strive to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation embodied in the Chinese dream.

In the last five years, Chinese Christianity has marked a decade of Theological Reconstruction and the sixtieth anniversary of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) and has become more determined to follow the path of loving country and loving church. Its faith in running the Church well according to Three-Self principles, has further promoted the social witness of Christianity and every ministry of the Church has further developed. These achievements are due to the blessing and leading of our

1 Delivered by Elder Fu Xianwei 傅先伟 at the Ninth National Chinese Christian Conference in Beijing, September 8 2013.

Father God, as well as to the care and support of our Party and government, and even more to the joined hearts and efforts and enthusiastic service of our clergy and pastoral workers, brothers and sisters. For this, we must thank and praise our God! To those leaders at all levels and persons in various circles who have supported and helped us in our work all along, I would like to express our sincere thanks. To all the delegates here today and all clergy and pastoral workers, brothers and sisters who have long held us in prayer and served as one with us, we send our cordial greetings and heartfelt thanks!

At this time, we especially remember the passing of Bishop K.H. Ting 丁光训 (1915-2012), honorary chair of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Protestant Churches in China, honorary President of the China Christian Council, honorary President of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, former chair of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Protestant Churches in China, former President of the China Christian Council and former President of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary. Bishop Ting held to a pure faith throughout his life and devoted his strength and mind to running the Church well according to Three-Self principles, initiated and advanced Theological Reconstruction, and worked tirelessly for the advancement of the country and the society. He ardently loved his country and the Church, cared for the believers, and won the respect, love and esteem of people in and outside the Church. At the same time, we deeply miss the honorary head of the CCC/TSPM Advisory Committee, former Chair of the TSPM, Mr. Luo Guanzong 罗冠宗, as well as Sun Xipei 孙锡培, Deng Yugui 郑玉桂, Yin Jizeng 殷继增 and others of the elder generation of the Church who have gone to rest in the Lord. During their lives, they spent their dedication and hard work to consolidate and deepen the

Three-Self Patriotic Movement and to advance Theological Reconstruction and running the Church well, and laid an excellent foundation for the healthy development of the Chinese Church.

And now, on behalf of the Eighth Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China Committee and the Sixth China Christian Council, I would like to present the Work Report for your deliberation.

A Review of Our Work in the Five-Year Period

In these last five years the national TSPM and CCC have conscientiously carried out the spirit of the Eighth National Chinese Christian Conference, actively and steadily carrying out every facet of ministry and gratifying change has taken place in the building up of the Church. Partial statistics show that at the end of 2012, there were nearly 2,400,000 newly baptized Christians, 5,195 new or renovated churches, 94 new city, county (regional) Christian Councils and Three-Self Associations, 3 new seminaries, 1,057 newly ordained ministers, 482 new teachers (associate pastors) and 1,443 elders. A large number of clergy and pastoral workers from CCs and TSPMs received commendations as national advanced groups and individuals “creating harmonious temples, mosques and churches,” as advanced groups managing sites for religious activities, and as advanced groups in religious circles engaged in charitable activities. Christians across the country in their various areas have made outstanding contributions to economic and social development, and some have become model workers and moral exemplars. In 2010, the national CCC/TSPM received the designation of “national outstanding social organization” from the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

1. We have persisted in loving country and loving church, enriching the meaning of Three-Self through practice

Over these five years, the national CCC/TSPM and the CCs and Three-Self Associations took the celebrations for the thirtieth anniversary of the policy of Reform and Opening Up, the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of the People's Republic of China and the ninetieth anniversary of the Communist Party of China as opportunities to hold forums and memorial meetings. By holding a variety of activities around the theme "One heart, one action," we raised the sense of identification with the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics among clergy and believers. In June 2011, the Chinese Christian Patriotic History and Heritage Exhibit, the Harbin, Heilongjiang province Nangang Church, and the Changting chengguan (Fujian) Zhonghua Church became the first bases for religious patriotic education. Until June 2013, the Chinese Christian Patriotic History and Heritage exhibit had been visited by 70 groups from around the country for a total of over 2000 individuals. The national CCC/TSPM proposed that all Chinese Christians pray for the 2008 Beijing Olympics and the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai, and also provided 100,000 free commemorative Bibles for the Olympics. Five pastors were among the Olympic torchbearers. Beijing and Shanghai churches helped in receiving visitors for the events and sent volunteers to offer religious service. Their contribution was praised by all concerned.

In these five years [we opposed the] unprovoked accusations made by the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom concerning the status of China's religious policy and religious freedom. The national CCC/

TSPM issued an open letter rebutting their charges in strong terms. Following the violence on March 14 2008 in Lhasa and on July 5 2009 in Urumqi, the national CCC/TSPM issued a statement strongly condemning this type of ethnic splittism. When the “Almighty God” cult [also known as Eastern Lightning] and other heretical sects used “doomsday” predictions to terrify people, the national CCC/TSPM uncovered these lies and publicized its finding through media outlets, alerting churches all over the country to be vigilant against heresy and safeguard the purity of faith and social stability.

In September 2009, the national CCC/TSPM held a celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the TSPM in the Great Hall of the People in Beijing and published a report titled: *Carry On the Outstanding Tradition of Loving Country and Loving Church and Take up the Historical Mission of TSPM in the New Period*. The report was a comprehensive retrospective and review of TSPM, positing that the task for TSPM in the new period was the construction of a harmonious, healthily developing Chinese Church. They also edited and published *An Anthology of Writings by Y.T. Wu*, a special commemorative issue of *Tian Feng* and a new printing of *K.H. Ting's Views on Building up the Church*. Further, they held a “Recognition Ceremony and Experience Sharing for Advanced Chinese Christian Contributions to Economic and Social Development,” and conducted the forum “Three-Self and Theological Education.” Through these activities, loving country and loving church thinking was carried on and carried forward. The meaning of Three-Self was enriched through practice.

2. We focused on the application of the results of Theological Reconstruction and moved the initiative to a new level

In November 2008, the national CCC/TSPM held a Meeting to Commemorate the Tenth Anniversary of Chinese Christian Theological Reconstruction and published a report titled *Continue to Strengthen Theological Reconstruction and Strive to Run the Church Well*. A nationwide essay activity was organized and forums held, including “Theological Reconstruction and Theological Education,” “Theological Reconstruction and Sermons,” “Theological Reconstruction and the Creation of Harmonious Churches.” All these promoted theological reflection among clergy and pastoral workers and lay volunteers.

While strengthening theoretical discussion, the national CCC/TSPM set up publicity teams to promote ways and means of practical application of Theological Reconstruction that would promote their use. The “Five Year (2013-2017) Plan (Interim) for Chinese Christian CCC/TSPM Theological Reconstruction Promotion Teams,” was drafted, a “Chinese Christian Preaching Seminar” held and a video produced and posted on the Chinese Christianity website as a demonstration of applying and popularizing the results of Theological Reconstruction. This garnered a positive response from CCs and Three Self Organizations in all provinces (autonomous regions and directly administered cities). Many established their own promotion teams and created a planning department to launch the work.

3. Social service was advanced, practicing the biblical injunction to “be light and salt”

Over these five years, charitable activities initiated by Chinese Christianity have grown to include efforts in many areas: health, care for the elderly and nurseries, assistance for the disabled and poverty-stricken, school

funding for the needy, disaster relief, construction of public facilities, environmental protection, etc. Funds donated by churches nationwide in response to the Wenchuan earthquake in Sichuan, the Yushu earthquake in Qinghai, mudslides in Zhouqu, the extreme freeze in the south and the Ya'an earthquake in Sichuan, along with aid to the affected, exceeded 3.5 million *yuan*, directly benefitting 68 million people. During the “Religious Charities Week” in 2012, in Shangqiu (Henan), Baoshan (Yunnan), Hefei (Anhui), Zhenyuan (Gansu), etc., the national CCC/TSPM supported school funding, free clinics and aid to the indigent, provided wheelchairs and built irrigation projects, benefitting over 8000 people. Through conducting training in capacity building in social services, in disaster and emergency management, geriatric care, HIV-AIDS prevention knowledge and training in AIDS care, and autism rehabilitation center teacher training, we helped churches throughout the country to raise their capacity for social service, guiding them to continually broaden the scope of their charities and enhance the quality of their social services.

In June 2012, the Chinese Christian Philanthropic Experience Sharing *cum* Advanced Commendation Meeting was held in Hangzhou and issued its report: “Link Hands! Courageously Take up this Charitable Work—Retrospect and Prospects for Chinese Christian Philanthropy.” Advanced projects and people were commended, experience shared and the “Proposal for Chinese Christianity to Vigorously Involve itself in Philanthropy” was sent to all churches and believers. The national CCC/TSPM, through *Tian Feng*, its website and other channels, announced donors and use of funds, voluntarily inviting oversight.

4. A draft Training Plan raised the level of theological education and training

The CCC/TSPM is drafting a “Mid to Long Term Plan for Chinese Christian Theological Education,” as a plan for theological education in the coming period. The new board of directors of NJUTS met in March 2010 and revised the “Charter of the Board of Directors of NJUTS” and formed a new leadership team. In November 2012 the seminary held a celebration of its sixtieth anniversary and thanksgiving for the completion of the new campus. The Guangdong Union Theological Seminary, Zhejiang Seminary, Shandong Seminary and the Jiangsu Bible School have been upgraded to religious institutions of higher education. Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (NJUTS), Dongbei Seminary and Fujian Seminary have or will soon have built new school buildings. Faculty salaries are constantly being improved, and the total number of full-time faculty now stands at 292, of whom 15 have doctorates (including those currently pursuing doctoral studies) and 117 have M.A. degrees (including those currently pursuing the M.A.). In the last five years, we have produced 4,369 graduates. Currently enrolled students number 3,702.

The CCC/TSPM and its counterparts are gradually introducing various training methods for clergy and pastoral workers and lay volunteers. Partial statistics show that at the end of 2012, provincial (autonomous region, municipality) CCs and TSPMs, along with the Urumqi CC, conducted 2,187 training courses of all types, with 172,600 attendees. The national CC/TSPM held three “Central and Western China Training Courses for Grass Roots Church Pastors” along with “Provincial (autonomous region, municipality) CC/TSPM Secretary Generals and General Secretaries Training Courses,” “Sharing Seminars on Theological Education Management,” “Course Seminar(s) in Modern Chinese Church History,” “Sharing Seminars on Old and New Testament Courses,” as well as various sorts

of training courses for writers, composers and musicians, courses in overseas relations, and courses for librarians. An examination for overseas study is organized annually and altogether 42 persons have been sent overseas or to regions such as Hong Kong, etc.; 97 persons have been organized to attend short training courses regionally. The national CCC/TSPM invested 1.5 million *yuan* to assist seminary libraries in buying books and hardware facilities and provided 2.5 million *yuan* for books for new students and graduating students, as well as providing aid to one thousand students in need for a total amount in excess of one million *yuan*.

In 2010 the national CCC/TSPM began a textbook writing project for seminaries and bible schools. The first products, *Introduction to the New Testament* and *History of the Chinese Church* are already in manuscript form. In 2011 we began a textbook project for a series for grassroots lay training; *Three-Self Principles and Running the Church Well* and *Easy Preaching Method* are in manuscript form, while *Church and Meeting Point Management* and *Discerning Heresy* are being written.

5. Close contact with the grass roots has been maintained; service to churches has been enhanced

In these five years, the national CCC/TSPM leaders have visited the CC/TSPM in twenty-six provinces (autonomous regions, municipalities), over fifty city and county CC/TSPMs, every seminary and bible school, and over one hundred churches, meeting points and training centers, conducting research and guidance on Three-Self education, Theological Reconstruction, church management, personnel training, social service, church property implementation, uniting with privately established house churches, and working on basic social security

for clergy and pastoral workers. They have provided a basis for decision-making for the national CCC/TSPM, have reflected important and difficult issues to related departments and received positive feedback.

The national CCC/TSPM organized thematic research groups on church governance, training for clergy and pastoral workers in central and western China, recognition for clergy of former denominations, ethnic minority church development and the situation of ethnic minority clergy and pastoral workers in training programs regionally as well as students studying in Hong Kong, etc. These groups have conducted field research in Guangdong, Guizhou, Shaanxi, Fujian, Yunnan, and Hong Kong and produced research reports. In order to write the general reports on the tenth anniversary of Theological Reconstruction and the sixtieth anniversary of TSPM, they consulted far and wide. In 2009, a pilot survey was carried out with the Hubei Provincial CC/TSPM on the basic conditions of Christianity in the province. Numerous surveys have also been carried out on issues such as church development, training, social service and other issues of concern to grassroots churches. In dealing with over nine hundred letters, receiving nearly seven hundred visitors and over three thousand phone calls, they play an active role in keeping contact with believers, reconciling contradictions and getting feedback.

In these five years, the national CCC/TSPM has published and distributed 17.5 million Bibles (from the reopening of the churches to the end of 2012, the total stands at 62.17 million). The editions and formats are constantly being enhanced and increased. We have also printed Bibles in minority languages including Miao, Lisu, and Jingpo, as well as audio Bibles. The grand total of our published and distributed titles is 227, for a total of 3.68 million books, including titles in theology, exegesis,

spirituality, and the life of faith; new products include 51 kinds of audio and electronic products, totaling 530 thousand items; the *New Expanded Edition of the Hymnal* has been completed.

Tian Feng magazine maintains its correct editorial policy and guidance of public opinion, enriching and training its editors and writers. Its columns reflect the real interests of its readers. At the end of 2012, there were 72 thousand subscribers and it had been named “Outstanding publication in the East China region.” An electronic version was introduced in 2011. The Chinese Christianity website has been redesigned twice, with a new and updated look and enhanced news. Daily hits surpass ten thousand, and its influence grows. With *Tian Feng*, it has become an important media platform for people in China and overseas to understand Chinese Christianity.

6. Self-Construction has been strengthened; bringing the organizational functions of the CCC/TSPM into play

The national CCC/TSPM has always stressed strengthening self-construction, establishing and improving various rules and regulations and has paid attention to learning and improving. Conscientiously and thoroughly implementing the Regulations on Religious Affairs, in combination with “Study policies and regulations month,” we publicized and promoted co-workers and believers throughout the country to study every policy and regulation and held a “Seminar on Studying Policies and Regulations” with full attendance by the entire National CCC/TSPM. We constantly work to improve our internal system of regulations—over twenty drafts and revisions including “National CCC/TSPM co-workers conference procedural rules.” We need to undertake democratic evaluation of department responsible persons, promoting staff posts

and grading, further strengthen internal management and improve our working style. We must eliminate waste and extravagance and make calendar line savings in the purchase of office equipment, travel arrangements, conference reception. Financial software upgrades are needed for a sound financial system, constantly improving the work force, recruitment and training with the focus on self-construction. In 2009, we began public recruitment.

We have further improved the conference system, to effectively protect democratic decision-making. As of June 2013, the national CCC/TSPM had convened fifteen business meetings of the (joint) leadership—President and Chair—six meetings of the (Joint) Standing Committee and two meetings of the full membership, as well as many meetings of the leadership of provincial (autonomous region and municipality) Christian Councils and TSPMs and meetings of all specialized teams. We follow democratic procedures, implement teamwork and promote all aspects of ministry.

The national CCC/TSPM has formulated and worked to improve “Licensing Criteria for Clergy in the Chinese Protestant Church” and “Duties of various ministers in the Chinese Protestant Churches.” The various CC and TSPM also formulate detailed rules, regulation and implementation measures locally in line with the situation of churches in their area. Initial work on criteria for clergy has been completed and “clerical licenses” issued.

7. Overseas exchanges have been expanded, witnessing to God’s grace for the Chinese Church

As of June 2013, the national CCC/TSPM has received 680 visits from Christian groups and individual Christians, totaling 3,379 persons from nearly 40 countries and regions, including the World Council of Churches,

the World Evangelical Alliance, the United Bible Society, the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the World Baptist Alliance, the Christian Conference of Asia, and church leaders including the Archbishop of Norway, the Archbishop of the Swiss Church, the Presiding Bishop of the American Episcopal Church, and the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church. We have sent 126 groups totaling 433 persons to take part in international meetings, exchange visits, discussion of project cooperation, taking part in extensive foreign exchanges, and taking an active part in world church activities.

From September to November 2011, we successfully held in the U.S. the “Forum of Chinese and American Church Leaders” and the Second Bible Ministry Exhibition, enhancing mutual understanding between Chinese and American churches, expanding new channels for Chinese-American Christian exchanges, and maintaining the international image of Chinese Christianity. In June 2012, the World Council of Churches Commission of the Churches on International Affairs (CCIA) held its fifty-first meeting in Nanjing. This was the first international meeting conducted by the national CCC/TSPM. The vitality of the Chinese Church received full recognition by the nearly forty church leaders from over thirty countries who attended. Chinese representatives are also involved in international meetings including the WCC Central Committee, the Commission on Faith and Order and the Continuation Committee on Ecumenism in the 21st Century, fulfilling the active role of the Chinese Church in the ecumenical church. In November 2012, the Symposium of the publication of the six millionth Bible of Chinese Christianity was held in Shanghai; invited attendees included the United Bible Societies and officials of the United Bible Societies in sixteen countries and regions, who discussed their further cooperation.

On the basis of the “three mutual” principle, the national CCC/TSPM actively pursued cordial relations with churches in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, promoting contacts among churches “across the straits and in four regions.” Close exchanges took place with churches in Hong Kong and Macao in the areas of publication and distribution, theological education and training and social service. Contact was strengthened with Christianity in Taiwan; we received three consecutive delegations of pastors from Taiwan. Recently, the national CCC/TSPM successfully held a joint conference with Taiwan churches in Taipei, titled “Cross Straits Christian Symposium,” turning a new page in cross straits exchanges between Christians, enhancing friendly feelings among compatriots.

The national CCC/TSPM played an active part in the overseas activities of the Chinese Religions World Peace Committee, took part in the Euro-Asian Interfaith Dialogue, the Fourth World Religious Leaders Summit, the delegation to the U.S. of the Chinese Young and Middle-aged Religious Leaders, the “China-Singapore 2009 Religious Culture Exhibit,” and received the Joint Delegation of U.S. Religious Leaders, all to promote China’s people-based diplomacy and contribute to preserving world peace.

Experience and Understanding

1. To maintain harmonious, healthy development of the Church, we must hold high the banner of Three-Self Patriotism from beginning to end and strive to promote Theological Reconstruction

In the new historical period, the Spirit guides us to make “Build a harmonious and healthily developing Church” the important mission of Chinese Christianity.

This is both an objective requirement for the Church's self-development and the common hope of all sectors of society. To realize this objective we must constantly deepen and develop Three-Self and promote Theological Reconstruction. Over sixty years of history and reality have proven that the Three-Self Patriotic Movement is the common destiny of Chinese Christians and their nation and an important spiritual link with their people; the Three-Self patriotic path is the correct choice for running the church well under the conditions of socialist society. Three-Self Organizations and Church Councils match each other in service; they are 'combined utensils' in the promotion of ministry. Chinese Christianity must improve in manifesting Christ in its context, giving a beautiful witness among our fellow citizens. They must have the confidence to keep to the path and theory of Three-Self principles and confidence in the theory. Of one heart with the people, in step with the times: this is what gives Three-Self patriotism its vitality; focus on running the church well, dedicate ourselves to serving believers: this is the source of its cohesiveness.

Throughout the development of Chinese Christianity, God has bestowed on the Chinese Church much special light and this has been the source of its vitality all along. Theological Reconstruction is a deepening of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, it is the added strength when the Church in the fullness of its "stature," prays for "wisdom." It also provides important ideological guarantees, theoretical guidance and intellectual support for the harmonious and healthy development of the Chinese Church.

2. To establish and safeguard the fine image of the Church, we must realize the potential of the positive role of Christianity and consciously assume the responsibilities of the times

For Chinese Christianity to be truly “pleasing to others,” we must clarify our sacred trust and our mission in these times, and bring our positive energy into play in real life. In recent years, the Party and government have frequently indicated that they wanted to bring into play the positive role of religious figures and the believing masses in advancing economic development, social harmony and a flourishing culture. This opens the way for Christianity to play a positive role. It is in such a fine climate that Chinese Christians take up their great mission of the times, strengthen the sense of civic responsibility, preserve the integrity of the law, safeguard the people’s interests, safeguard ethnic unity and national unity. Handling properly all relationships, we strive to protect social stability, carry forward our excellent tradition of being light and salt, of glorifying God and benefiting the people, exploring effective ways for the Church to engage in philanthropic work, actively developing social service, recovering and cultivating the Church’s culture of charity, striving to expand the realm of social service and bring into play Christianity’s positive role in humane care, ethics and morals, spiritual solace, social responsibility and other areas, thus establishing a fine image of Christianity and garnering the approval and affirmation of all circles in society.

3. To strengthen cohesion in the national CCC/TSPM, we must constantly enhance our awareness of service and conscientiously strengthen the building of our church style

Christian Councils and Three-Self organizations everywhere and at all levels bring into play their organizational functions of service, coordination and guiding churches and meeting points, and at the same time

serve as the loving country and loving church organization that is the bridge and link between Party, government and the believers, as well as shouldering the important duties of helping to promote the implementation of religious policy and safeguarding the legitimate interests of the Church. Practice proves that whether the national CCC/TSPM can unite the majority of believers and pull together the power of the Church will have a direct effect on whether local churches can develop harmoniously and healthily.

Service enhances identification and recognition, ministering (to) enhances confidence. To increase its cohesiveness and extend its influence, the national CCC/TSPM must raise its level of service and enhance its coordination; it must strengthen its “servant” consciousness, improve its working style and enhance its self image. Leadership of the CCC/TSPM must take the lead in strengthening and creating the church’s style of doing things, keep close contact with the grass roots, listen to the voices of believers, observe every law and regulation, do things strictly according to its charter, advocate running the church thriftily and put an end to corruption. These last five years of our work have taught us that only by wholeheartedly and humbly serving the Church can the two Church organizations exercise influence; only by uniting believers to the greatest possible extent, can they achieve cohesion; only by constantly challenging and renewing ourselves will the two Christian organizations remain vital.

4. To create a new situation in the Church’s ministry, we must strengthen self-construction and emphasize personnel training and use

Strengthening of organizational construction will guarantee that local CC and TSPMs can perform their

functions. Currently, in some places the two organizations are not yet robust enough. Some even now do not have a budget or office space or staff and this seriously affects their ability to perform. Practice proves that where the organizations are sound, there the churches tend to be more noteworthy in terms of uniting clergy and believers, creating harmonious churches, initiating social service, preserving social stability and other aspects of their work. The opposite also holds: in places where the two organizations are all but useless, the churches easily descend into confusion.

Personnel development has become one of the most pressing matters in the overall development of the Chinese Church. Training a corps of country-loving and church-loving, godly and devoted clergy and pastoral workers—shepherds—who will protect their sheep, has a bearing on whether the Chinese Christianity-Three-Self Patriotic Movement enterprise will have successors, as well as on the rise or fall of the Chinese Church. Thus, all CC and TSPM bodies, churches and meeting points must establish a firm concept of “personnel are our number one resource.” We must do everything possible to train personnel and construct an environment conducive to their growth.

We must also take a clear-headed look at the road ahead and its development. Chinese Christianity still faces numerous challenges, such as: some clergy and pastoral workers are indifferent to an independent awareness and the concept of loving country and loving church; some are lax in promoting theological education or have inadequate knowledge of current hot spots and difficulties or ability to deal with them; some churches and meeting points are not institutionally sound or do not have adequate oversight and management; some face serious internal contradictions; individual leaders of some CCs and TSPMs, churches and meeting points have cut themselves off from believers or

are even corrupt; in some places there has been a serious drain of clergy and pastoral workers or the quality of lay volunteers urgently needs improvement; the faith of some believers has become utilitarian and a tendency to superstition remains; all sorts of heresy or cults masquerading as religion are still on offer; in some places foreign infiltration is still a problem; denominations are on the rise; in some places there are still ideological barriers to the church being engaged in charitable work or those social services now in place are rather fragmented, and not professional enough. We must attach great importance to these problems and challenges, study them carefully and strive to meet them.

The Next Five Years

In the coming five years, everyone from all ethnicities in the nation, guided by the spirit of the Eighteenth Party Congress, will fully build a moderately prosperous society and seize the critical period to win new victories of socialism with Chinese characteristics. This is also an important period for Chinese Christianity to fully strengthen its self-construction. The current international and domestic situation is undergoing profound changes, and the mission of Chinese Christianity in the coming period is to grasp the opportunity, face the challenges, pull together, and build a harmonious and healthily developed Chinese Church, a Church that can lift up Christ and safeguard the one Church, a Church filled with the fragrance of Christ, a Church that witnesses to everlasting Life through its life, a standard of self-construction, interconnected and influential, a Church that is loyal to the truth of the Bible, rooted in Chinese culture and with a contextualized theology, a Church with the courage to take up its social responsibilities, a Church whose ethical practice is love,

one that is part of the communion of saints with all other churches in every place and a Church that can make a unique contribution to the world Church. In order to make this vision a reality, we ask that every worker in the house of God dedicate themselves anew, redouble their efforts and be loyal, good and knowledgeable servants. In this way will they receive God's grace; they will also receive the believers' trust.

We believe there are six important aspects for our work in the coming five years that we must do well:

1. Strengthen Three-Self theory and research in theological theory, accelerate the application of the results of Theological Reconstruction

The national CCC/TSPM, on a foundation of continuing to widely promote Three-Self Patriotic education, bringing into play the important role of seminaries and bible schools as bases of Theological Reconstruction and learning from the form of research done in China's universities and research institutions, is studying questions such as "how to deepen the meaning of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement"; "how to explore an ecclesiology that both abides by church tradition and is adapted to the context"; "how to advance and realize the sinification of Christianity"; and "how to provide a theological dynamism to engagement in charitable enterprises." Inheriting the theoretical explorations and practical experience of the older generation of church leaders in the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, actively responding to the real issues faced by the Chinese Church and with a deep understanding of the relationship between the universal nature and the contextualization of the church, exploring the Chinese Church institution within the framework of the two national Christian organizations,

we must consolidate the united liturgy, and further promote the oneness of the Church; be rooted in Chinese culture, strengthen contextualization and study indigenization, advance Theological Reconstruction in the direction of deeper development, and gradually establish a system of Chinese Christian theological thought. To this end, we must increase our investment both in personnel and finances and in theoretical research, exhort our seminaries and bible schools to conduct research and gradually train a group of research personnel in theoretical research, normalizing and regularizing research work.

We must continue to translate the results of Theological Reconstruction to practical use. We must progressively advance and implement the draft of the “Five Year (2013-2017) Plan (Interim) for Chinese Christian CCC/TSPM Theological Reconstruction Promotion Teams (2013-2017),” especially its theme of “Harmony & Dedication” as well as the promotional tasks for each year. The national CCC/TSPM will hold at least twice annually regional preaching seminars and timely national preaching seminars, thus playing an exemplary role. Local and regional CCs and TSPMs will draft similar plans, making this part of their daily agenda. Through organized writing, seminars, promotion and exchanges, they will bring this promotion work to the grass roots, into the pulpit, and into seminaries and bible schools, actively promoting the new results of Theological Reconstruction in lively formats with accessible content, combined with practical ideas to solve real problems. To further consolidate the foundations of believers’ faith, expand the theological vision of clergy and pastoral workers, oppose paranoid frenzies and resolutely resist all fallacies and heresy that people may have inner tranquility, social harmony and world peace and that they may live out a more dignified and positive life, we must offer strong theological support. The Chinese

Church will take up social responsibility and make new contributions by playing an active role.

2. Strengthen the self-construction of the national CCC/TSPM; earnestly improve cohesion

The national CCC/TSPM and CCs and TSPMs throughout the church must strive to learn the administrative laws of China, improve quickly, refine its personnel and finance systems, effectively enhance building of the church style, implement a democratic spirit in running the church, progressively implement openness in personnel, finances and church affairs, and intentionally accept oversight by clergy and pastoral workers and ordinary believers. The CCC/TSPM and those in charge of churches everywhere must always abide by the Lord Jesus' new commandment: "Love one another", take the overall situation into account, practice self-discipline, abandon their own rigid views, eschew competition for fame, continually improve themselves spiritually and in moral cultivation and be alert to opposing all sneak attacks by unhealthy tendencies. "Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock" (see Acts 20:28), and "Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Timothy 4: 12). No one may, for their own benefit or convenience, split the body of Christ, or harm the image or unity of the CCC/TSPM. In keeping with the principle of mutual respect and by practical actions we must safeguard the fruits of united worship, defend the oneness of the Church against any danger; patiently and carefully work for unity, and especially contact and unite with those meeting points and believers who are not linked to the CCC/TSPM, allowing them to experience the service of the CCC/TSPM and thereby know better that the object of Three-Self is to

run the Church well. In line with the needs of the Church we must develop in the new situation and make further modifications, improve the Chinese Christian Church Constitution, and conscientiously carry out the charter of the CCC/TSPM, and strengthen the guidance and supervision of the national CCC/TSPM over all CC and TSPM meetings and church work.

3. Strengthen the pastoral ministry of the Church, each one doing their job to build the body of Christ

The national CCC/TSPM must be closely linked with the grass roots, do in-depth investigation to discover new problems in a timely way, study new countermeasures, and earnestly help grass roots churches to solve the common issues they meet with in the course of development. At present, with the acceleration of China's urbanization, with rural churches experiencing the departure of young and middle-aged members to urban areas for work and their elderly left behind to take care of things, we must support urban churches in strengthening their help to rural churches, encourage the support of churches in relatively wealthy areas for churches in poor areas, and provide timely aid and guidance in training, pastoral care, and church and meeting point management. We should care for and help our co-workers on the frontlines of the church. Besides the rapid growth in believers in urban churches, changes are also quietly taking place in the makeup of believers there. The church must face how to cope pastorally with the pressures of a variety of groups of believers—migrant workers, intellectuals and entrepreneurs. The urban church must pay attention to pastoral models that are diversified, targeted and flexible, must actively seek out the relevant departments to achieve a rational distribution of churches and meeting points and

the greatest possible scope of unity of believers on the love country, love church path.

The national CCC/TSPM must organize people to research, regularize and perfect the Chinese Church's liturgy and system of Holy Orders, establish models of holy orders, liturgy and pastoring appropriate to the spirit of the Chinese Church. Attention should be paid to the challenges present in the current weakness of pastoral care and the dearth of diverse models, to the exchange of experience, to developing specialized training, and improving capacity in pastoral care. We must continue our work in publishing and distribution of Bibles and periodicals, audio, video and electronic products, make further improvements to *Tian Feng* and our Chinese Christianity website, and make use of modern technology products to expand our publishing and media ministry. We must work hard to create a good environment of public opinion, encourage clergy and pastoral workers and believers to engage in the creation of original, indigenous literature and art and pay attention to the theological guidance of all they produce, strengthen awareness of copyright and reject pirated goods. All special committees must draft work plans, organize and coordinate ministry to carry out their roles effectively.

4. Strengthen personnel training and support; build a higher quality corps of personnel

Through thirty years of effort, the Chinese Church has formed an initial training configuration centered on the seminaries and bible schools for every level and type of training, supplemented by overseas study and training. In future, on this foundation, we will clarify our training objectives, focus on designing top-level training models, coordinate and integrate our limited theological education

resources, build a platform for all kinds of talent to emerge, expand training channels and expand the scale of overseas study and continuing education, in order to create a wide variety of personnel as quickly as possible.

We will undertake thorough implementation of the spirit of the National Conference on Religious Educational Institutions and active promotion of theological education institutions and educational reform, strengthening the implementation of the “Methods of qualification verification and professional review for teachers in institutions of Religious Education” and the “Granting of degrees in religious education institutions,” as well as give close attention to formulating the “Chinese Christian Theological education mid to long term development plan.” We will make the objectives and tasks set out in the plan a reality, establish a vision for the development of theological education centered on improving the quality of teaching, a model based on step distribution and long term effectiveness. According to the present situation and needs of the Chinese Church, we will adjust the teaching plan and content at theological institutions, encouraging each institution, based on its own character, to gradually establish courses and disciplines based on its own characteristics and strong points. We will support NJUTS in its explorations of pedagogical reform as it strives to complete the task of establishing a Ph.D. program as soon as possible. We will encourage the rational use of resources from institutions of higher learning other than religious ones to supplement weaker areas and effectively speed up the pace of diversification and professionalization of personnel training. We will speed up the production of course materials, striving to produce two texts per year and introduce them for use in the classroom, in order to improve the present situation in which we have a dearth of texts or the quality of texts is uneven. We will continue

to provide books for new students and graduating students and pay attention to ongoing education and care for graduates.

We must do a good job of analyzing training needs in the Church, designing training programs and defining training objectives, to gradually establish a national CCC/TSPM and local CC and TSPM administered system of training that is three-dimensional: coordinated, interactive and complementary. The national CCC/TSPM must take on the needs of the grassroots churches that are beyond local reach in terms of high-level specialized training, such as Holy Orders, media, church and meeting point management. We must continue to do well in the ministry of training clergy and pastoral workers for central and western China. In the coming five years, we intend to continue conducting five such training courses, each accommodating around one hundred persons, and to further enrich their content and improve the quality of training.

CCs and TSPMs as well as responsible persons in churches and meeting points must be able to spot talented persons, have the ability to use them and the heart to allow them their mistakes. We must define and improve job descriptions, ordination, salaries and benefits, and social security systems to avoid cronyism and envy. CCs and TSPMs must, through means such as strengthening of their capacity for self-support, joining forces with others and making grants, continue their support of needy seminary students and evangelists, enabling them to serve the church with tranquil hearts. We must raise the salaries of serving pastors as feasible and care for the needs of those who have already retired.

- 5 Strengthen social service; practice Christ's teaching to "Love others as oneself"

This entails continuing our fine tradition of developing Christian service to others and benefitting the community and striving to guide believers to practice the spirit of devotion embodied in Acts 20:35: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” Under the guidance of the spirit of “Views on encouraging and regulating religious circles engaging in charitable activities” issued jointly by six Ministries, and in line with the principles encapsulated in traditional sayings such as “bringing coals in winter” and “making up omissions and deficiencies,” encourage local churches to pool their resources, expand projects, enlarge the breadth and depth of social service ministries and make them more professional, orderly and sustainable as they develop healthily.

The national CCC/TSPM plays a guiding, coordinating and exemplar role. Not only in opening up channels for the collection of donations, improving all regulations related to social service ministries; communicating with professional bodies and scholars at home and abroad; promoting qualifications and certification for church social work; providing skilled training and guidance as an online platform for certified charitable services; in enlarging senior care, health care and the prevention and care for HIV/AIDS, treatment of autistic children; expanding the means of professional communication for Christian social service ministries; establishing a base for charitable service that can serve as a model, building the Chinese Christian social services brand, and spurring the overall development of Christian social service ministry.

6 Strengthen foreign relations planning; actively develop overseas exchanges

As a limb of the body of the Church universal, the Chinese Church, on its foundation of independence and

self administration, and following the principles of mutual respect, equality and friendship, will actively carry out international exchanges, take part in activities in the worldwide Church, enhance its fellowship in the Lord with churches overseas, and improve the position and influence of the Chinese Church in global Christianity. We want to promote a high degree of people to people diplomacy in achieving success in our work of international exchanges. We want to take the initiative in introducing overseas churches, believers and others to the real situation of Chinese religious freedom, introducing the results of China's policy of Reform and Opening up, enhancing trust and defending our national integrity. We will actively publicize Chinese Christians running the Church well according to Three-Self principles and the results of Theological Reconstruction, showing the worldwide Church a maturing Chinese Church and sharing our witness of God's blessing.

On the basis of new situations and new issues that appear in international exchanges, we should research the drafting of relevant regulations and stress discipline in international relations. We must study and analyze current trends in the development of international Christianity, have a clear focus, develop plans for international affairs, and strengthen the programmatic aspect of our work in this area. We must give attention to the development of a corps of personnel for international work, organize policy study and business training, conscientiously strengthen the comprehensive quality of personnel in this area, improve and coordinate their business capacity, as well as their capacity, in an era of openness, to resist infiltration. The national CCC/TSPM and its subsidiaries must have close coordination and collaboration and enhanced communication links in shaping the Chinese Church's international work.

This year, the national CCC/TSPM will prepare a group to attend the World Council of Churches Tenth Assembly in Busan, South Korea, and is preparing to hold the second Chinese-American Christian Leaders Forum in China. These activities will further advance the sharing and cooperation between the Chinese Church and the ecumenical Church, and aid in adding the Chinese Church voice to the international stage, furthering Chinese unity and world peace.

Our great era has bestowed on us a mission for the times, and a beautiful future urges us forward with greater courage. The great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is entrusted to the ideals and prayers of countless individuals of lofty ideals, including the older generation of patriotic Christian leaders. Today, the Chinese nation with its over five thousand year history and culture towers among the forest of world nations with a brand new stance; 1.3 billion people have assembled on the high ground of the great Chinese dream, standing on the cusp of a new history. Chinese Christians have a long way ahead. May we, under the leading of the Holy Spirit, continue to hold high the banner of Three-Self: with firmer conviction, follow the path of adaptation to socialist society; with higher ambition, play an active role in economic and social development; and with greater enthusiasm, construct a harmonious and healthily developing Chinese Church, that will make the new contribution to the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation proper to Chinese Christians.

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