

Christian Diversity in China during the Past 200 Years: Post-Secular Visions and Their Scholarly Significance

Earl A. Pope Memorial Lecture on World Christianity
Lafayette College, April 14, 2015

Lauren F. Pfister
Hong Kong Baptist University

ABSTRACT

Many reports about Christianity and Christian communities in the Chinese mainland, especially in reports presented in European languages, focus on current affairs and moments of political suppression. All of these have their particular value, but I will argue that they can be misrepresentative, and so limited in their characterizations, precisely because the actual diversity of expressions of Christianity within contemporary Chinese contexts is regularly eclipsed. If we look more carefully into (1) the remarkably complicated cross-cultural facets of foreign missionary involvement and indigenous missionary developments from the period of 1800 to 1949, based on recent scholarly documentation, and also consider (2) the increasingly significant roles of overseas Chinese Christian communities within “cultural China” as well as “civilizing missions” of various other Christian-inspired institutions, all of which are active in contributing to various sectors of mainland Chinese life and culture, we uncover important scholarly justifications for rejecting a simplistic “China-West” discursive framework for gaining an understanding of the history and contemporary importance of Christianity in China.

Many of these cultural and historical realities have been either hidden from view or interpretively refracted because of the dominance of discursive critiques of religion in general and Christianity in particular within mainland China during various periods across the past two centuries. Remarkably, these streams of critique have been significantly diverted, and in some cases effectively delegitimized, by informed post-secular intellectual achievements within academic circles in the PRC since the mid-1990s. The period of “reform and opening up” has notably included the authorization by the Chinese Communist government of “five great religions” (*wǔ dà zōngjiào* 五大宗教) in the PRC, two of which are Catholic (*Tiānzhǔ jiào* 天主教) and

Protestant (*Jīdū jiào* 基督教 or *Jīdū xīn jiào* 基督新教) forms of Christianity (which can be referred to more generally as *Jīdū zōngjiào* 基督宗教).

My intention here is to present an exploratory interdisciplinary essay based upon a particular understanding of a set of dialectical movements affecting cultural transformations during the past two centuries within China and “cultural China”, all of which seek to manifest the significance of the diversity found within Christianity (or “Christianities” as found in Chinese cultural contexts) and relocate them near the center of a post-secular understanding of religious life within our early 21st century, especially (but not exclusively) as it is manifest within the People’s Republic of China. My purposes in this lecture will involve highlighting four major themes informed by post-secular visions about Christianity in China during the past two centuries that I believe do justify a regular effort by scholars to underscore the diversity of Christian expressions in mainland Chinese contexts. These four themes include

- Revealing how recent scholarship has documented the remarkable diversity of the institutionalized denominational forms of Christianity that were involved in China in the period from 1800 to 1949.
- Reasserting the historical importance of the Tàipíng Rebellion – the Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace (*Tàipíng Tiānguó* 太平天國) – as an admittedly twisted form of Christian expression that became politically polarized, militarily energized, and religiously extremist, and parallels later sectarian and heterodox development of new religions in China.
- Exploring the diversity of indigenous forms of Christianity in contemporary PRC, which include multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Christian communities, minority people’s Christian communities among Chinese citizens, foreign national Chinese communities, and a growing number of foreign and indigenous “civilizing mission” parachurch organizations which are working in various sectors of PRC society.
- Characterizing the post-secular intellectual environment that has created new opportunities for Christian expressions in contemporary PRC as well as elsewhere in cultural China.

This lecture consists of six sections, and in the printed form it includes a bibliography and an important appendix. Within the first three sections I offer an account of the dialectical cultural transformation that will serve as a historical framework for our

discussion, and then take time to question certain commonplace notions about China (section two) and also elaborate the meaning of post-secularity and its relevance to our discussion (section three). Subsequently, I offer a general overview of four major dialectical cultural transformations that have occurred in China since 1800, indicating how these major cultural shifts have affected the nature and growth of Christianity in China and its impact on the diversity of Chinese Christianity in particular (section four). This leads to the fifth section where I will spend more time in elaborating the post-secular factors in the post-Máoist era, within China and in cultural China, emphasizing how the modern development of a post-traditional Chinese culture has supported Christian diversity and helped to mold a wide variety of Christian forms of life. I will argue that these serve as “living options” for contemporary Chinese citizens as well as Chinese persons living outside of the mainland.

The final section involves a number of concluding meditations which seek once more to underscore how the current post-secular environment has heightened Christian diversity in China, making these alternative forms of religious life quite attractive to many Chinese citizens as one option for personal transformation and new identity formation within modern post-traditional Chinese cultural settings.

I. Discerning Dialectical Cultural Transformations in China's Recent Past

During the previous two centuries the nature of Chinese societies and the political infrastructure of the traditional Chinese imperial state have been radically transformed, so that the standardized Ruist (“Confucian”)-inspired forms of traditional Chinese life¹ have been largely destroyed and replaced by what should be referred to as “post-traditional Chinese” forms of life and society. It is this basic transformative context that should frame our discussion about the Christian diversity manifest in China during the past two hundred years. It was Wolfgang Franke² who recognized the linkages between the Tàipíng Rebellion (1851-1864), the Chinese Democratic Revolution of 1911, and the Chinese Communist Revolution in 1949, each taking on a more and more devastating role in opposing and delegitimizing previous regimes and challenging as well as replacing, as much as it was possible, the changing forms of Chinese values and institutions that those previous regimes supported. I will argue that the roles of various forms of Christianity resident in China and elsewhere – where Chinese persons lived during these periods – engaged in dialectically intensified transformative movements within these cultural settings that set up

¹ Here I am thinking particularly of the Chéng-Zhū 程朱 School of Principle-centered Learning (*lǐxué* 理學), which was imperially authorized during the Qīng dynasty (1664-1911), so that its impact on all forms of education, on ritual life, and on upward mobility through civil examinations, was profoundly formative within traditional Chinese forms of life.

² See Wolfgang Franke, *A Century of Chinese Revolution, 1851-1949*, trans. Stanley Rudman (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1970). His original work was published in German as *Das Jahrhundert der chinesischen Revolution 1851–1949* (München: Oldenbourg, 1958). It was revised and published in 1980, but the English version reflects only the first edition of this work.

differing kinds of alternatives to the authorized Ruist-inspired traditional forms of Chinese life during the Qīng dynasty, and later on took up modern alternatives within post-traditional cultural settings, even as other alternatives in other religious, secular, and political circles simultaneously took part in these cultural transformations.³

Because these cultural transformations involved several military revolutions that promoted new “modern” alternatives to traditional forms of life⁴ – rejecting traditional values and institutions in excessive ways that created resistance among those who did not align themselves with militant social groups,⁵ and leading to periods of excessive violence and social breakdown that required a dialectical opposition to arise in order to correct these extreme cultural movements – the

³ My own first attempt to come to grips with such a complicated dialectical process promoting transformative change during the last two centuries was expressed in an unpublished essay entitled “Sublating our Pasts and Being Assured of Eternity: Cultural Dialectics within the Formation of Biblically-Based Chinese Christianity During the Past 150 Years.” It was prepared as a part of a larger book project in Taiwan that never came into being, but prompted me to consider these matters in great detail. See Pfister (unpublished).

⁴ Here I am indebted to the studies of modern European revolutions by Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, whose accounts have convinced me that the two Chinese revolutions occurring in 1911 and 1949 participated as revolutionary extensions of those European precedents through the influences of Chinese reformers and Chinese revolutionaries inspired by them. Consult Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy, *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man* (Providence: Berg, 1993), originally published in 1938. This latest version is introduced by the Harvard Law professor and Christian intellectual, Harold J. Berman, who himself had some important intellectual influences in the legal transitions that took place in post-Máo China.

⁵ The extreme political situations that reflect this excessive side to the 20th century Chinese revolutions include the warlord period during the Chinese Republic period (starting in the late 1920s and extending through the 1930s until the Japanese war of aggression required a coordinated response), and the experience of the “Great Cultural Revolution” (*wénhuà dà géming* 文化大革命) normally associated with the period from 1966 to 1976, the latter year being the time Máo Zédōng 毛澤東 died.

alternative forms of certain kinds of Christian life that served as viable spiritual transformative options⁶ became more and more attractive to modern Chinese citizens.

Here, once again, the diversity of expressions of Christianity within Chinese contexts requires us to be more precise about which kinds of Christian life served in this manner, and so can highlight how in our current age some forms of Christianity are now considered to be part of post-traditional Chinese forms of life, while others may still be considered “foreign”. Notably, it has not been so long ago that, on the one hand, major works on the history of Christianity did not include any section related to Chinese Christianity, and on the other hand, that studies of “Chinese religion” or “Chinese religious life” did not refer at all to Christianity. Now various scholars in these realms are realizing this is an inadequate account of past and contemporary Chinese cultural situations, and so are starting to correct these oversights.⁷ This

⁶ As explanation of “spiritual revolution” and one aspect of its Christian expression during the late Qīng period has been explored at length in Pfister (forthcoming), “Distinguishing Spiritual Revolution from Military Revolution: Meditations on the Impact of Chinese Literature by Protestant Missionary-Scholars in Late Traditional China”.

⁷ Where other histories of Christianity have remained Euro-centric in their interpretation and coverage, other works have extended beyond these limits, including two notable volumes on the history of Christianity in Asia by Samuel Hugh Mofett, the second volume being directly related to our topic (Moffett (2005). In addition, Willard Oxtoby included brief references to Chinese Christianity in both of his volumes on “Eastern” and “Western Traditions” of “World Religions” (Oxtoby (2002a) and (2002b), while more substantial accounts are presented in the discussion of “World Christianities” in *The Cambridge History of Christianity* for the 19th and 20th centuries (consult Gilley and Stanley (2006) and McLeod (2006).

With regard to “Chinese Religion”, it was the academic standard to not discuss Chinese forms of Christianity in earlier accounts (as in Thompson (1989), Paper and Thompson (1998)), while those that referred to the plurality of “Chinese religions” still may not include expressions of Chinese Christianity or Chinese Islam among them (such as Lopez (1996)). Changes in this realm of academic study have come about only fairly recently, with the studies of *The Religious Question in Modern China* and *Chinese Religious Life* that include discussions of both Chinese Christianity and Chinese Islam appearing in 2011 (consult Goossaert and Palmer (2011) and Palmer, Shive, Wickeri (2011)).

correction is also being done in Chinese scholarly works dealing with the history of Christianity.⁸ I will argue here that this process of identification with Christian traditions by Chinese citizens and Chinese persons living elsewhere participates in specific dialectical cultural transformations that took place at particular times in the past two hundred years, and that were profoundly significant in the sustenance of Chinese Christian communities. These cultural transformations and options for new identities have continued to occur in new and more diverse manners during the first decades of the 21st century.

II. Reconsidering Certain Terms of Reference for this Study

Having worked within American Chinese studies and European sinological traditions for nearly four decades, I have become progressively more aware of the significance of various terms of reference for China that may reflect different periods of its cultural presence, but also reveal something of the etymological influences at work within different linguistic corridors of those traditions.

For example, some of the key terms of reference for “China” appear to be quite disparate: there is the normal term used by many Chinese persons even to this day,

⁸ As found in Táng 唐 (1993) as well as Táo 陶 and Leung 梁 (2004). Yet it is notable that among those writing and publishing monographs in English about Christianity in China, it is seldom one finds a Chinese scholar among those who contribute to such volumes. This comes in spite of the fact that works within this field in the Chinese linguistic medium there are examples of those who include accounts of foreign missionary activities and Chinese Christianity as sections within their history of Christianity.

speaking of the “Middle Kingdom” or “nation in the center” (*Zhōngguó* 中國), and so reflecting a worldview that has actually become anachronous during the 20th century.

In Russian we find references to “Cathay” (Китай), reminiscent of a term of reference made prominent through Marco Polo and others during the Mongolian-led Yuán dynasty (1206-1368). In English we refer to “China” as if its identity is tied to being a source of porcelain ware; nevertheless, one can also find this term of reference in the Japanese use of *Zhīnà* 支那 (as opposed to *Chūgaku* or the “Middle Kingdom”).

Officially, the current name of the People’s Republic of China (subsequently PRC) does not use the term “China” at all, but instead relies on other terminology.

Zhōnghuá rénmín gōnghéguó 中華人民共和國, besides declaring its political alignment, also combines reference to the “middle” with a connection to the aesthetic term for what is “magnificent” and “brilliant” (*huá* 華). A notable Chinese-English dictionary published in contemporary China indicates that this phrasing reflects an ancient image of the Huáxià 華夏 dynasty (circa 2070 BCE – 16th century BCE),⁹ and so in some sense might be seen as seeking to identify itself as a new dynastic order under the Chinese Communist Party. My suspicion is that most persons who

⁹ Under the third definition for the term *huá* (in simplified form 华), the character is said to refer to “China” and then immediately following comes *Huáxià* 华夏, an “ancient name for China”. Consult 中國社會科學院語言研究所辭典編輯室 編《漢英雙語現代漢語辭典》*Hàn Yīng shuāngyǔ xiàndài Hànyǔ cídiǎn* [The Contemporary Chinese Dictionary (Chinese-English Edition)], 北京: 外語教學與研究出版社, 2002: 832. All this being said, the term *Hua Xia* can still be used in a popular sense for “Chinese persons”. In Beijing it is found in the name of a store *Huá Xià Liángzǐ* 華夏良子, which could be rendered as “a fine Chinese son”.

employ these (and the related) terms in their various contemporary languages are more or less unaware of their philological and etymological backgrounds, and so use them as mere “terms of reference”.

Yet it is the last first and the last reference terms that are found to be ubiquitous within the normal language of mainland Chinese persons and among ethnic Chinese persons; nevertheless, it is the first term more than the last that is found especially among those who are not PRC citizens. Both still have their impact in forming the consciousness of those who are citizens: Chinese persons generally conceive themselves as belonging to a “nation in the middle” of our contemporary world, and that they are a glorious and magnificent people.¹⁰ These more or less conscious dimensions of national identity have been harnessed by local, provincial, and national leaders at different times in history to incite anger against aggressors, pride in their “long history and traditional culture”, and promotion of various other kinds of national interests.¹¹ When these have been employed to prompt opposition against “foreign religions” during the late Qīng period, crowds of vigilanti-like patriots could be quickly formed to protest and attack those who belonged to such communities, including Chinese Roman Catholic and Chinese Protestant Christians.

¹⁰ Having underscored this point, it would be unfair to not indicate that among the nations of the world that Chinese persons speak about, Americans are from the “beautiful nation”, Germans are part of the “virtuous nation”, UK citizens belong to the “brave nation”, among some others.

¹¹ Perhaps the most recent international display of immense impact were the events associated with the 2008 Olympics held in different venues in Běijīng, Qīngdǎo and Hong Kong.

Secondly, in order to gain a more dynamic view of the diversity of Christianity among Chinese persons and communities, we also need to dislodge ourselves from having a simple “mainland” focus in discussing “China”. Because the last two centuries have been particularly difficult for common Chinese persons among all other Chinese citizens, many of them were caught between warring factions and immensely threatened, there are many stories of emigration from China into numerous other modern states. As a consequence, the existence of “China towns” are easily documented in many countries in Southeast Asia, the Pacific region, North America and Europe, among other places. It is not insignificant to add to this fact that due to their emigration from mainland China, many Chinese persons have also been contacted by other religious groups overseas, and so quite a significant number have become Roman Catholics or Protestant Christians.¹² In the case of Hong Kong, another kind of emigration occurred. It is well known that many who left the British colony before the 1997 assumption of PRC sovereignty there were middle-class Hong Kong Protestant Christians, constituting a much higher percentage of those emigrants than their numbers within the whole of Hong Kong society. These Chinese Christian emigrants self-consciously took their religions (as did those of other religious traditions as well) with them to the places where they immigrated. Among some

¹² There are a good number of references to these various kinds of Chinese Christian communities found in *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas* (consult Pan (1998)).

scholars in the last several decades a new term related to “cultural China” has consequently been employed to indicate those ethnic Chinese and other scholars who, living overseas, are competent Chinese speakers and study various aspects of Chinese worlds. Among these are also Chinese Christian intellectuals, many of whom have continuing interactive relationships with mainland Chinese persons and institutions. Beyond all these aspects of the “China” I want to address to a more or less degree here, I would want to underscore that there are a good number of ethnic minorities who are Chinese citizens in Taiwan and the PRC and who have also become Christians.¹³ This adds significantly to the Christian diversity among Chinese persons.

All this is to say that when I use the English term “China”, I would want to assume this larger range of references to ethnic Chinese persons and other persons who are Chinese citizens. At times in what follows I will underscore this emphasis by indicating a particular emphasis among these various Chinese cultural settings.

Complicating this basic conceptual framework about “China” and “Chinese people” is the fact that what many foreigners consider to be “Christianity” may not be what Chinese scholars and common Chinese citizens themselves understand by the

¹³ The most substantial interpretive work I am aware of in this regard, besides those important statistical efforts pursued by others in “global Christian studies”, is found in Covell (1995). I would guess that there have been even more works of this sort during the past twenty years, but I myself am not yet informed about them.

terms they employ for “Christianity”. In this regard, it is important for all of us to decipher distinctions and ambiguities in Chinese language about “Christianity” itself. From the political point of view in the PRC, two of the five nationally “recognized religions” are Catholic (*Tiānzhǔ jiào* 天主教) and Protestant (*Jīdū jiào* 基督教 or *Jīdū xīn jiào* 基督新教), the former *not* being necessarily identified with Roman Catholicism (*Luómǎ Tiānzhǔ jiào* 羅馬天主教).¹⁴ Though Russian Orthodox monks and parishioners have lived in China since the early 18th century, they are referred to as “Eastern Orthodox teachings” (*Dōngzhèng jiào* 東正教), and are not further identified with Greek, Russian or other cultural expressions of that form of Christianity.¹⁵ Many times the most inclusive term employed for “Christianity” is *Jīdū jiào* 基督教, which as I already noted above is normally also employed to refer to Protestant Christianity;¹⁶ for this reason, some have begun to adopt an alternative reference term for this most general word, that being *Jīdū zōngjiào* 基督宗教 (lit. “Christ Religion”). Another more abbreviated way to refer to “Christianity” is by the first character of the name of Yahweh and Jesus, or *Yējiào* 耶教, and sometimes in

¹⁴ See an older account of these basic matters from a late 20th century Chinese perspective in Luo Zhufeng (1991), and many articulate accounts of the diversities even among these two main trends are found in Táo and Leung (2004).

¹⁵ Find summary accounts of Eastern Orthodox Christians in China written by Alexander Lomanov at three points within the massive second volume of the Handbook of Christianity in China (Tiedemann (2010).

¹⁶ Obviously, this can be very confusing for the uninformed. For example, the history of Christianity written by Táng (1993) and the collection of articles produced under the editorship of Táo and Leung (2004) actually use the term with its most expansive meaning, while a volume by Gōng Yīngyàn 龔纓晏 entitled 《浙江早期基督教史》 *Zhèjiāng zǎoqí Jīdūjiào shǐ* [A History of Christianity in its Early Phases in Zhejiang Province] (杭州: 杭州出版社, 2010) actually only discusses various kind of Protestant Christian mission work and Chinese Protestant converts associated with those missions.

combinations such as *Rú Yē duìhuà* 兩耶對話 (intending to refer to “Ruist-Christian dialogue”). Nevertheless, this particular form of reference is not as often found, and sometimes may carry a pejorative sense of antagonism against Christianity in its use.

Similarly, the term employed for missionary (*chuánjiàoshì* 傳教士) could be used for any religious persons that seek to gain converts, usually as full time professionals devoted to this purpose, but it normally is employed without any further qualification for “Christian missionaries” of all sorts, although many times the reference is more strictly limited to Protestant missionaries.¹⁷

Foreign missionaries have formed the backbone of most Christian communities within China for many years, especially in the 19th century, but also in the first half of the 20th century. Some are notable as “missionary-scholars”,¹⁸ because they have become major cultural and academic figures related to the study of China; these served as examples for Chinese Christians especially among those who developed a form of Christian life we could refer to as “pastor-scholars”.

Having tackled some of the most basic conceptual problems that can arise when referring to “China” and “Christianity”, it is necessary also here to problematize the very commonly found expressions of “East-West” (*Dōng Xī fāng* 東西方) and

¹⁷ A counter-example to this claim is the book by Zhāng Xīpíng 張西平 (2005), which refers to “missionary sinology”, but by this is actually discussing only Roman Catholic foreign missionaries studies about China. Both Gù Chángshēng (1981, but more in the later versions of this work) and Wáng Xiǎocháo (1997) uses the term to refer to both Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries.

¹⁸ Consult Pfister (2010).

“China-West” (*Zhōng Xī* 中西) contrasts, expressions found often enough in works within European languages, but phrases which are ubiquitous in everyday Chinese talk as well as in Chinese scholarly publications. These phrases are actually part of a discursive simplification, often used for inciting political sensitivities, and many times also employed as camouflage for portraying a particular person’s biases about some facet of Chinese or non-Chinese cultures. One of the very good reasons for not adopting this form of expression and thought is precisely to highlight the diversity of Christian expressions within Chinese cultural contexts, rather than to suggest that “all forms of Christianity are the same” and are “essentially Western”.¹⁹ When taken from a historical perspective, it is quite easy to indicate how the term, “West”, or the phrase “The West”, is employed in Chinese linguistic contexts at different historical periods to refer to very different cultural, national and international settings. For example, for very many pre-19th century imperial Chinese contexts, the “West” in written works as well as speech referred most often to the Indian continent and subculture where the Buddha and Buddhists originally came from. By the time of the mid-19th century during the Qīng dynasty, the “West” obviously referred to European countries, and subsequently, especially after World War II, it was a means to refer primarily to the USA, and even more generally to nations associated with the United Nations (even

¹⁹ Consult also Pfister (2003a), where the discussion seeks to indicate how getting rid of such a polarized discursive frame of reference can have very positive impact on comparative philosophical themes within the history of Chinese philosophical traditions.

though many of them are not “Western” in any normal sense of that term). In common parlance, the “West” refers to almost anything that is considered to be “modern”, which is sometimes “foreign”, but may at times be something modern and Chinese in contemporary settings.²⁰ Oftentimes, these phrases are employed to emphasize how something is not suitably “Chinese”, but is considered to be part of some power opposed to some particular conceptual construction of “traditional Chinese culture”. It is precisely in this sense that these phrases can be employed to incite aggressive opposition against anything that is considered to be “unacceptable”.

III. Post-Secularity and Its Significance for the Study of Christianity in China

Modernity, argues the elderly Peter L. Berger and his philosophical collaborator, Anton C. Zijderveld, leads to the promotion of beliefs and values that support plurality, but oppose the principled skepticism inherent in philosophical pluralism.²¹ What distinguishes this claim from some form of secularism, as Jürgen Habermas has also underscored,²² is that it questions the moral neutrality and universal claims made in support of secular values.

In the context of a plurality of modern worldviews within which secular positions are no longer considered neutral and/or unbiased, post-secular

²⁰ So, for example, clothes worn by young Chinese professionals may have been made in China, and reflect modern styles, but are still referred to as “Western” (because they contrast with “traditional Chinese clothes” in the eye of the beholder).

²¹ Discussed in detail in Berger and Zijderveld (2009): 49-68, 89-120 and 121-146, and commented on in Pfister (2012a): 125.

²² As cited and explained in Wolin (2005)..

intellectuals recognize that these modern worldviews include those representing religious traditions, and so reevaluate them on the basis of their preferred interpretive position.²³

Not only is there no neutral secular position, there are in fact a plurality of secularisms that all must be reconsidered from the interpretive understanding that realizes that they can no longer be seen as “hermeneutically neutral or value-free interpretive orientation[s]”.²⁴ Certainly there are some secularists who find this situation abhorrent and confusing, and so they remain in principle unable to adjust their own preconceived worldviews²⁵ in the light of the new evidence related to the vitality of contemporary religious traditions that are not only “culturally constructive” but also “socially and critically engaged”.²⁶ Other secularists may not adjust their convictions, but do become involved with religious groups precisely because they are effective, and so are essentially “strategic post-secular secularists”.²⁷ Those like Habermas shift their previous secularist values and interpretive positions, and adjust to the point of displaying not only religious tolerance, but also “genuine sympathy for particular religious traditions”, even though they themselves do not adhere to any religious tradition.²⁸ These are considered to be “engaged post-secular intellectuals”, who may be further contrasted with “engaged post-secular religious intellectuals” precisely

²³ Quoted from Pfister (2012a): 123.

²⁴ Cited from Pfister (2012a): 129.

²⁵ These persons are consequently described and categorized as “resistant post-secular secularists” in Pfister (2012a): 126-127.

²⁶ Quoting from Pfister (2012a): 129.

²⁷ Described in Pfister (2012a): 127.

²⁸ Citations come from Pfister (2012a): 128.

because, unlike the latter, they are not associated with any particular religious tradition.²⁹ Because these post-secular trends are already manifest in philosophical, religious and political circles in the PRC, the context for discussing the diversity of Christian traditions in China is made ripe for new advances in understanding.

IV. *Christianity in China Passing through Four Dialectical Cultural Transformations*

At this point in our discussion I will seek to integrate the perspectives elaborated in the previous three sections in order to address within this overview the nature and extent of the Christian diversity extant within Chinese cultural settings. By focusing on four major dialectical cultural transformations that have occurred in mainland China since the early 19th century, with an increasingly felt impact on the more and more significant number of Chinese persons who emigrated from the mainland during the 20th century, I will seek to show how the search for a post-traditional and modern identity for Chinese culture stimulated a series of harsh repressive measures that were felt among many religious communities including those among various kinds of Christians. I will point out how, in the process of the harshest oppressions that occurred in the midst of the “Great” Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), a surprising indigenous movement of Protestant Christianity emerged that has now colored and

²⁹ Both of these categories of post-secular intellectuals are described in Pfister (2012): 127-129.

shaped the post-Máoist era in the PRC and elsewhere. By taking up here an engaged post-secular religious intellectual position,³⁰ I will be indicating how the harsh dialectical shifts in Chinese cultural transformations have made a new range of Christian roles and identities possible within contemporary Chinese cultural settings,³¹ but will elaborate most of those developments in the post-Máoist era in the next section.

The pre-1800 period does not involve one of these major dialectical cultural transformative shifts in relationship to Christianity, but it nevertheless should be

³⁰ Some explanation may be required here, for those who might wonder how I as an American citizen would identify myself as one among many who are engaged post-secular religious intellectuals within the larger contexts of China and cultural China. Having taught in Hong Kong Baptist University since 1987, I have had the privilege of working with many others in realms that involve inter-religious and cross-cultural philosophical research that has engaged Chinese philosophical (especially Ruist, with some Daoist and much more limited realms of Chinese Buddhist) and religious (especially Daoist, some Muslim, and broadly Christian) traditions. My special research interests in the history of European and North American sinology and the prolific output of missionary-scholars within China and those sinological circles has increased the international and polyglot adjustments that I have needed to prepare for in order to manage the wide-ranging materials that I and others have discovered especially in relationship to international missionary-scholar and sinological traditions. Due to the length of stay in Hong Kong, my family and I were able to obtain the status of permanent residents in Hong Kong, but since there is not yet a suitable treaty between the PRC and the USA regarding dual citizenship, we could not obtain any further affirmation of our cultural plurality within the current political climate. As a consequence, I have been privileged to work with my Chinese colleagues in Hong Kong and other parts of China as an internal colleague within our educational and religious institutions, using Cantonese and Pǔtōnghuà as our normal linguistic media (though English and other languages can be used in varying contexts), and serving as a leader (church council member and at times also a deacon) within a Chinese Baptist ecclesiastical setting in Hong Kong. Precisely because of these various relational ties and the networks that have developed over nearly thirty years of affiliation with Hong Kong Baptist University and the University Baptist Church that meets on its campus, I participate regularly and legitimately in the post-secular context within the PRC as an engaged post-secular religious intellectual. Nevertheless, having made all these claims, I want to underscore that this does not mean that what I am presenting here is comprehensive, absolute, or without interpretive limitations. Rather, what I offer here is an educated set of summaries based on a relatively well-informed background of active research and involvement in various kinds of Chinese institutions over the past 28 years.

³¹ Though I will be focusing on the Chinese Christian roles and identities in these cultural settings, it will become evident that there are also foreign Christian roles and identities that are also involved, including those like myself who would have what some sociologists refer to as “hybrid identities” or what I would prefer to call “transformative cultural identities” that are formed out of more or less symbiotic connections between various national and cultural dimensions within their lifeworlds.

mentioned at the outset that there had been previous forms of Christianity present within Chinese cultural spheres. Some of them did become established and endure through the period we are studying. Already within the 7th century CE there were communities of Persian, Syrian and Chinese Oriental Christians (regularly referred to as “Nestorians” in European studies and *Jǐngjiào* 景教 in Chinese studies) residing within mainland China during the Táng dynasty (618-907).³² Though this form of Oriental Christianity did have some cultural influences also in Mongolian cultural settings, they had apparently disappeared from Chinese cultural settings by the beginning of the Northern Song dynasty (beginning in 960 C.E.).

Roman Catholic missionaries from the Jesuit order arrived in mainland China in the early 1580s during the latter part of the Míng dynasty (1368-1644), being the first of a number of other Catholic orders to become long-term residents within imperial China.³³ The Jesuits established their presence in the imperial capital as well as elsewhere in various provinces, but from R. G. Tiedemann’s charts we learn (please see Appendix 1) that there were ultimately eight priestly orders of Roman Catholic missionaries and one order of Roman Catholic nuns residing in mainland China before 1800. Notably, their form of Christianity was based upon Latin Christian

³² See relevant sections of Standaert (2001) for many helpful details related to these Oriental Christians.

³³ From historical studies by Standaert (2001) and others we learn that there were earlier Roman Catholic Franciscan missionaries who visited some major mainland Chinese cities during the Yuán dynasty, but they did not become long-term residents.

cultural precedents, as well as vows of celibacy and submission to papal authority, so that their form of life paralleled other monastic traditions in China such as some Chinese Buddhists and Daoists. They were in principle reliant upon guidance from the Roman pontiff rather than from authorities from within China. They created Roman Catholic Chinese subcultures dependant on the spiritual orientations of the specific orders and their exemplars, built exclusively upon male priestly authority in ritual and spiritual realms. In spite of problems faced by the Jesuit order both in China and in Rome during the 18th century, these relatively small but vital Roman Catholic communities managed to endure intergenerationally by means of the continual provision of missionaries officially sent by Rome to China, as well as the gradual development of an indigenous Chinese clergy and a number of orders of nuns during the 19th and 20th centuries.

Notably, first decades of the Qīng dynasty, starting from the 1680s, certain foreigners belonging to the Russian orthodox tradition were captured during wars of expansion by the Manchurian-led dynasty and were forced to become residents of mainland China. Only after some special diplomatic effort was pursued between the Russian and Manchurian empires was it possible to arrange for Russian Orthodox ecclesiastical missions to begin to reside in mainland China by means of financial support from Qīng authorities. Because the monks who came with these missions

were primarily tasked with serving the spiritual needs of the Russian residents within China, there was no major effort to promote Russian orthodox forms of Christianity among Chinese citizens, even though these ecclesiastical missions continued to be sent well into the 20th century. Though Russian Orthodox monks showed scholarly interests in Chinese language, history and culture, these studies only began to bear fruit in the early 19th century under the stimulus of the prolific monk named Iakinf (1777-1853), whose secular name was Nikita Y. Bichurin.³⁴ The sinological texts created under his guidance set the foundation for a distinctively Russian form of sinological study, there were no significant efforts to promote this form of Christianity within Chinese settings until the last decades of the 20th century. The numbers of Russian priests and indigenous converts consequently remain very small even to this day.

Subsequently four major dialectical cultural transformations took place between 1840 and 1980 that have drastically transformed the values and institutions shaping various different expressions of post-traditional Chinese cultures.

The first occurred during the early 1840s with the end of the First Opium War. While some earlier Chinese Ruist intellectuals in the Qīng dynasty had attacked the values and institutions of Roman Catholic missionaries and their converts as being

³⁴ See the relevant chapters on Russian Orthodoxy written by Alexander Lomanov in Tiedemann (2010).

destructive of their particular vision of traditional Chinese culture, the military intrusions into key ports and cities within the Qing empire by European armies in 1840 confirmed in the minds of some Chinese scholars that those Christian missionaries were actually the *avant garde* of those foreign military forces.³⁵ These fears could only be confirmed by the further advancement of “unequal treaty conditions” included in the various treaties signed with different foreign powers by the Qing representatives after the second Opium War ended in 1860. Though the First Opium War identified specific treaty ports that were to be opened under conditions that favored foreign powers and set the stage for the initial groups of Protestant missionaries to enter into mainland China, the Second Opium War led to even more demanding conditions, and provided protection for both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries and their converts. During the period between the First and Second Opium Wars, Tiedemann has identified 36 Protestant missionary societies from a variety of different nations (mostly from Great Britain, the USA, and Germany) that sent missionaries to mainland China during those two decades. (Please see Appendix I.)

³⁵ Find this argument employed by a 21st century Chinese scholar (Wang (1997)) in retrospect as he reviewed the works of Roman Catholic missionaries and Chinese Roman Catholic intellectuals, couched in the ideological perspective of the belittling and inflammatory rhetoric of their 17th century contemporary Ruist opponents.

Undoubtedly these intrusive cultural conditions created great animosity against foreigners, even to the point of xenophobia, among the leaders of the Qīng empire as well as many Chinese citizens. The fact that treaty conditions also made it requisite that certain foreign military groups did join Qīng armies in defeating the forces of the Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace, or the Tàipíng Rebellion (1851-1864) – which some notable Qīng officials took to be essentially a Tàipíng expression of Protestant Christianity – added to the cultural tensions felt by foreign missionaries and their converts during this period. It was consequently far more difficult for them to seek out any concrete form of indigenized Chinese Christian expression as an acceptable way to embody their Christian faith.

As Wolfgang Franke realized, and others have confirmed from other interpretive angles, the Tàipíng Rebellion set the stage for a further revolutionary challenge to the traditionally-oriented Mancurian-led Qīng empire.³⁶ Even though the multitudes of Tàipíng forces were inspired by an usual charismatic leader who had by 1860 already lost control of some of the Tàipíng armies and could not manage the complexities of the religious, economic, and institutional development of his secessionist movement, there was a late attempt by his younger cousin, the Shield King, Hóng Rénghān 洪仁玕 (1822-1864), to reorient the whole movement along lines that would have been

³⁶ Besides Franke (1970), consult also Michael and Chang (1966), the last chapter in Paper (1995), and Reilly (2004).

both more like Protestants religiously and more modern in polity, education, and technology.³⁷ Even though this effort to redirect the Tàipíng Movement failed, it is still the case, however, that most Chinese and foreign scholars dealing with the Tàipíng Rebellion have not understood or studied the fact that Hóng Réngān had served as an apprentice evangelist working in Hong Kong with the Rev. Dr. James Legge 理雅各 (1815-1897) and Pastor Ho Tsun-sheen 何進善 (Hé Jìnshàn 1817-1871).³⁸ Certainly if this background information had been more fully understood by Qīng authorities at the time, one could imagine that an even more harsh set of policies against Protestant forms of Christianity might have been instituted. Nevertheless, as others have underscored over the past three decades in research on that massive civil war within the Qīng empire, the religious orientation of the Tàipíng leadership was not only sectarian in character, but was clearly determined to be heterodox in its doctrines by most Protestant Christian missionaries during the last years of the movement.³⁹

If the Tàipíng Rebellion could serve as a preamble for a greater cultural transformation, it would be the victory of the first Chinese democratic revolution of 1911 that was its fulfillment. Through that massive Chinese military effort the Qīng

³⁷ Described in detail, but with some errors in translation, within the study by Michael and Chang (1966).

³⁸ This line of interpretation is elaborated in the second volume of Pfister (2004). More about the Rev. Ho Tsun-sheen can be learned also from relevant places in the two volumes of Pfister (2004), and from an earlier essay by the same author (Pfister (1999)).

³⁹ As documented in Wáng Qìngchéng (1993) and Reilly (2004).

empire and many of its supporting institutions were violently deposed, leading to an unprecedented and vast transformation of Ruist-inspired traditional Chinese culture.

Notably, during the period from 1800 to 1911, there had been a very significant increase of Protestant missionary societies becoming involved in promoting their forms of Christian faith in mainland China. According to Tiedemann's account, there were a total of 140 Protestant missions who had sent their missionary representatives to China, while during the same period there had been 51 orders of Roman Catholic missionaries – 20 being priestly orders, 14 being female orders, accompanied by 17 indigenous orders of nuns established within Chinese cultural spheres during those years. (Please see Appendix I.)

This should be seen as the first stage of a post-traditional Chinese political and cultural climate, in which Chinese and other Christians had remarkable roles that were linked to both the principles of modernization that were transforming traditional Chinese society as well as hopes for a new kind of democratic government. In this light it is important to note that Sūn Zhōngshān 孫中山 (1866-1925) became a Methodist earlier in his life, and Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石 (1887-1975) later converted to Methodism; both men's wives were from the Soong family, which were also Methodists. Others have underscored the point that in the first national parliament elected between December 1912 and January 1913, sixty of the 274

members were Christians. Later in Chiang's government established in 1929, seven out of ten cabinet ministers were also Christians. All of this stood in stark contrast to the fact that only about one percent of the total population of the Republic of China at that time were Christians.⁴⁰

In fact, however, even though the Protestant Christian presence among the upper levels of officials within the Nationalist government were very notable, the military revolution did not succeed in either establishing a stable democracy or pursuing scientific developments.⁴¹ Subsequently, the breakdown of the Republic of China into regions led by warlords in the late 1920s, and the intrusions of Japanese military forces into various parts of mainland China starting in 1932 and expanding significantly after 1937, prevented any real development of these modern options within the Republic. Nevertheless, it is notable that during this period the number of Roman Catholic mission societies that sent their missionary representatives to China increased substantially. Tiedemann documents how in comparison to the 89 new Protestant missionary societies who became involved in China between 1911 to 1949, there were a total of 154 Roman Catholic orders initiating new works in China. These included 36 new priestly orders and 69 new orders of nuns, and in addition there were

⁴⁰ All these details are documented by Goossaert and Palmer (2011): 69-71.

⁴¹ As has been argued in Pfister (2008), the cultural transformations stimulated by European-style modern revolutions always failed to reach their stated goals, even though they did effect cultural transformations of other sorts.

five indigenous priestly orders and 44 new indigenous female orders created during this same period. (Please see Appendix I.)

Certainly the most devastating major dialectical cultural transformation for all religious traditions occurred after the success of the Chinese communist revolution in 1949. Having forced the Republican government and its supporters to flee due to their military losses and take up residence in Taiwan, the Chinese Communist leadership adopted initially a strong Stalinist-inspired form of Marxism that thoroughly rejected traditional Chinese culture and opposed in principle the value of all forms of religious life.⁴² The harshest forms of oppressions against Christian leaders and foreign missionaries were regularly meted out, with executions of numerous Chinese Christian leaders occurring during the first years of the PRC, including the incarceration of many others (both Roman Catholic and Protestant), as well as the expulsion of foreign missionaries from the country by forced expatriation.⁴³ By the early 1950s there were no legitimate foreign missionaries residing in China, and those who did remain were either imprisoned or executed.

Yet the extremism that is inherent in modern revolutions led toward the excesses of the “Great” Cultural Revolution, and in the midst of that terrible decade of cultural

⁴² A description of the earlier form of “destructive” philosophy of religion promoted in earlier periods of the PRC has been described and evaluated in Pfister (2003b).

⁴³ Presented within the context of this ideological opposition within Ying Fuk-tsang (2012). This is a revised version of this work that was first published in 2008.

demise, Protestant Christianity began to grow on the basis of the bold indigenous witness of numerous Chinese Christians. This is a fact that has bewildered many scholars, but has been given an important explanatory response by the German sinologist, Wolfgang Kubin.⁴⁴ Essentially, Kubin argues that when the secular form of salvation promised by Chinese Marxists failed to deliver its claims to a populace that has been subjected to many years of ideological manipulations, so that all levels of Chinese society desired this same hope – perhaps for the first time in Chinese history that such a vast ideologically-inspired hope had been shared by all Chinese persons in a particular era – the spiritual salvation offered by various kinds of Christianity became all the more attractive and sought out. These options became all the more desirable due to the innumerable inhumanities and injustices that were part and parcel of the “ten years of turmoil”. Once more, then, the dialectical transformations moved into a new stage, but only after Máo himself died, and his most adamant followers had been either silenced by death or incarceration.

The fourth and final major dialectical cultural transformation initiated what we will refer here to as the post-Máoist period. Historically speaking, it was initiated by the death of Máo Zédōng in 1976, but it was only realized in its culturally transformative form through the “reform and opening up” policies of Dèng Xiǎopíng

⁴⁴ As described and evaluated in Pfister (2007b).

鄧小平 (1904-1997). Subsequent political and cultural developments continued to indicate how previous Máoist standards for Chinese life (such as communes) had been superseded and replaced by alternatives forms of life (including in the first decade of the 21st century the renewal of private property rights and laws of inheritance).

Most of us will know that even during this period, there were no professional missionaries allowed to be active in the PRC, even though they had been active in ministries of various sorts in other parts of cultural China. As a consequence, it is not possible to offer the kind of statistics we have for earlier periods as documented by R. G. Tiedemann, but we can indicate some of the transformed roles that have been taken up by foreign and indigenous Christians during this period that have had a significant impact on the continued development of Christian diversity wherever Chinese Christians and their communities have been formed and sustained.

Notably, it was during this post-Máoist period that a series of intellectual challenges to the Marxist critique of religion were published by major Chinese intellectuals, the earliest one I am aware of being the seminal article on the nature of religion produced first in 1985 by the then Vice President of the Chinese Social Sciences Academy, the ordained Anglican priest and religious studies intellectual, Zhào Fùsān 趙復三 (1926-).⁴⁵ Subsequently, the “discovery” of Max Weber’s

⁴⁵ For a selection of the works in English translation produced by Zhao, including portions of this seminal essay presented first in 1985 and then published in 1986, see Pfister (2012b).

sociological accounts of religious forms of life and their varying relationships to economic developments⁴⁶ ignited further critiques of the Marxist critique of religion. These intellectual trends opened the door for the study of religious traditions on the basis of cultural studies and humanistic categories rather than grounded in a principled Marxist critique. This is the post-secular intellectual and cultural context which now prevails in the PRC, so that the study of post-traditional forms of life that have attracted millions of Chinese persons to adopt Protestant and Catholic identities in the past three decades should be understood within this interpretive framework.

V. Indigenous Diversity of Christianity as Portraying Living Options within Contemporary Chinese Cultural Settings

In the previous section I have set out a dialectical pattern of cultural transformation within China that was articulated in four major stages across the historical period of the last two centuries. Along with an account of those general watersheds in cultural change I have added a few brief statements about the ways some Chinese Christian persons responded to those major cultural transformations. Part of my intention in offering these kinds of generalization along with accompanying cameos about various Christian experiences within those cultural context is to indicate how the living options for Christian identity among Chinese persons changed over these periods of

⁴⁶ Mentioned briefly in the first portions of the article of Pfister (2005).

time. Initially, Chinese Christian identities were framed in the context of contested international treaties that were unfavorable to the Qīng. Those identity options opened up substantially during the second stage which was initiated by the 1911 Chinese democratic revolution. Nevertheless, they were even more harshly restricted under the rubric of being “counter- revolutionary” elements within the third stage, when Máoist doctrines reigned supreme. Yet as Chinese citizens and Chinese persons elsewhere were able to adopt a more modern form of life within post-traditional Chinese cultural settings, the nature of the forms of life adopted by Chinese Christians could shed many of the “unacceptable features” criticized by non-Christian Chinese elites in previous periods; at the same time, a diversity of Christian expressions was made all the more manifest. The diversity of Christian forms of life has sometimes been left unarticulated because of the overriding discursive options set against “Christianity” in the name of the prevailing Chinese ideology (such as Ruist teachings, Chinese secularism, and Chinese Communism during different historical stages of those dialectical cultural transformations). Those ideological critiques suggested that both Christianity and the reigning Chinese ideology of a particular period which opposed it were absolutely separate entities, completely unified and organized as independent cultural options. What I have argued is that within the new intellectual context informed by the post-secular consciousness of Chinese and other intellectuals,

there is in fact a plurality of positions within each of these cultural spheres – whether with regard to Christianity or the forms of life supported by the reigning Chinese ideology. Here now, I will highlight the fact that in the post-Máoist period Christian forms of life, particularly among Chinese Protestants of various sorts, but not only among them, have become what the American pragmatist and Christian philosopher, William James (1842-1910), called “living options”. I will argue here that the cultural landscape among Chinese persons has opened up a wide range of living options within various expressions of Christianity, reflecting the post-secular realities that are now continuing to be worked out in numerous cultural settings among Chinese citizens and within cultural China.

So, for example, there is no question that foreign representatives of Christianity were the first to bring their religion to China, even as the first representatives of Buddhism came from Indian and Central Asian cultures. Up to this point there is some parallel or likeness, but the very nature of these two major religious traditions defies any further attempts at historical comparison, particularly in questions related to sinification, indigenization, cultural and political accommodation, and other similar themes. As we learn from R. G. Tiedemann’s helpful summaries, persons from over 450 different mission societies – just over 200 Catholic orders and more than 250 Protestant missionary organizations – came to China between the period from 1800 to

1950, representing up to as many as 29 different countries.⁴⁷ (Please see Appendix I.)

Such a wide-ranging array of denominational and national differences were bound to reproduce their own special forms of Christian expression in styles of worship and sacred rituals, forms of prayers and sacred music,⁴⁸ institutional hierarchies, as well as languages commonly employed besides the Chinese languages used locally.⁴⁹

Even in the context of the post-denominational theological orientation of the authorized Chinese Protestant churches in contemporary PRC, special worship services will be occasionally arranged where liturgies reflecting past denominational linkages are employed.⁵⁰

These expressions within the current Chinese churches in the mainland are generally not seen as aberrations, but rather as enrichments to the more standard form of worship and community life. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that many Chinese citizens during the 20th century emigrated into other countries, and in those

⁴⁷ Tiedemann does not provide an explicit number for the nations represented, so that from the countries mentioned explicitly in his charts, there are at least 26 different nations. One other account by Wu Xiaoxin, the contemporary Chinese scholar who revised Archie Crouches scholarly guide to archival resources dealing with Christianity in China, told me that he had documented the number of countries represented by those foreign missionaries to be 29.

⁴⁸ An interesting example of both the diversity as well as points in common appears in the production of Christian hymnals in Chinese. See Hsieh (2009). Of great importance here is also the development of indigenous sacred hymns, with some of the most recent developments coming from unauthorized churches in the form of the “Songs of Canaan” that are not mentioned in Hsieh’s otherwise very informed work.

⁴⁹ Here I am thinking, for example, not only of Bibles produced in various languages and dialects still spoken and read among Han Chinese, such as in Cantonese, Fujian or Shanghai “dialects”, but also of those translated into various minority languages of people resident in mainland China and cultural China. Examples that come to mind are those produced in Miao and Lisu languages by China Inland Mission missionaries and their indigenous fellow workers.

⁵⁰ So, for example, I experienced in a major Shanghai church in the Spring of 2008 a special evening service was planned, where an Anglican liturgy was read in Shanghai dialect.

settings some who were previously unassociated with Christian traditions converted to become Roman Catholics or Protestants of various sorts.⁵¹ In these cultural settings, then, the denominational forms of Christianity of their new home countries set the conditions for their acceptance and adaptation of a Christian form of life. What needs to be added here is that many who belonged to these overseas Chinese Christian communities, including foreigners who were former missionaries or had cross-cultural training as Christian intellectuals, developed new ways to reengage Chinese persons both within their own home countries and in innovative forms of Christian engagements within mainland China and elsewhere. So, all these kinds of situations – both within mainland China and in cultural China – suggest important hints about the form of modern plurality within Chinese Christian expressions that in fact does exist in our own age. How this Christian diversity appears within both the authorized and not-yet-authorized or unauthorized church communities in mainland China, and how engagements with foreign and overseas Chinese Christian groups has been reinitiated and maintained during the post-Máoist period, will be worked out in greater detail here in the following discussion.

⁵¹ It would be important to add here that there were also other emigrants who established their preferred Chinese religious temples and rituals in those foreign contexts

A. Complicated Forms of Church Life

Though there has been a standard categorization of Christian church communities along lines of the “authorized” and “unauthorized” churches in the PRC, based upon their alignment with the current structures of the Chinese Communist Party, these churches have all existed within a still broader post-secular cultural setting that has left more or less pervasive influences among these communities. So, for example, the “reform and opening up” period has involved in many places political arrangements where former sanctuaries and churches have been “returned” to appropriate church leaders, so that they can hold public services of worship in buildings that many times were first built by foreign mission societies and their earliest Chinese converts. Some church communities within the larger cities have proceeded to build new and very modern Chinese church sanctuaries funded by donations of their parishioners and arranged legally with local authorities; some have also become prolific in their religious publications as well as online presence.⁵²

In the light of our focus on Christian diversity, it is important to note that within mainland China there are authorized churches designated for “international Christians”, that is, those who carry foreign passports, where worship is held in a

⁵² With regard to official leniency related to online Christian materials and videos, there was an official declaration in September 2013 by Chinese Protestant leaders that affirmed the legitimacy of “unauthorized” churches and their involvement in normal Chinese society. Subsequently, a whole range of more or less sophisticated forms of online religious teaching – including Christian movies, recorded sermons, and choir singing, among many others – began to appear in Chinese cyberspace where it had not been previously permitted to be aired.

language other than Chinese. Most of these churches and their worship services have been restricted only to these foreigners. Nevertheless, it is the case that foreign guests who are overseas pastors or Christian leaders are also sometimes invited to preach to authorized Chinese church congregations, normally using sequential translation in Chinese as a way to communicate with the Chinese Christians who attend those services. In other urban settings within the PRC foreign Christians who are working or studying in a particular city and have become competent in Chinese language have become regular attendees in Chinese Protestant and Catholic churches. Here what I intend to point out is that there may not be as strict a delineation between ecclesiastical categories that some might assume do exist because of certain ideological standards. In fact, the categories are more flexible and are not considered to be absolute restrictions applied within all mainland cultural contexts.⁵³ As we have already noted earlier, there are also many Christian church communities among minority groups, using their own languages for worship and developing their own institutional expressions of Christianity, which still should be seen as part of the Chinese cultural setting of Christian diversity. Too often these forms of Christianity are not recognized or described in accounts of “Chinese Christianity”, but in our post-secular setting there diverse expressions should be underscored.

⁵³ There is a temptation to assume, for example, that the Russian Soviet style of atheistic communism as described by Solzhenitsyn is also found in the contemporary PRC, but this is generally not the case in the post-Máoist period.

There is now a new range of studies of what may be referred to as “sectarian” or “extreme” religious groups that have changed doctrines and forms of life so that they are no longer recognized as Christian churches. These have been designated by the Chinese government as “evil cults” (*xièjiào* 邪教). Studies by David Palmer, Vincent Goossaert, and their colleagues have brought some of these to light.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, since many of them stem originally from some form of Protestant Christian expression, they should be recognized sociologically as expressing other kinds of religious diversity, even though they may be considered “heterodox” by both the official Protestant church and other Chinese Christian churches.

Another phenomenon that may surprise those interested in these matters is that there are many of those who are current involved in “unauthorized” churches who also have been occasionally joining in worship within “authorized” churches, and so are personally known by the religious leadership of the latter communities. This “amphibian” style of interaction has increased in recent years, due to the relaxation of what has been at times a very tense political distinction between those communities that are registered with the government and those which are not. Once again, the assumption that there are absolutely strict lines of demarcation between these varying forms of Christian life can be challenged by numerous examples; the differences are

⁵⁴ See appropriate sections of Goossaert and Palmer (2011) and Palmer, Shive and Wickeri (2011).

there, and sometimes strictly held, but they have become more and more porous in various parts of the PRC in recent years.

Within house church settings, those that are still found in the countryside are determined in character primarily by the resident villagers, but since the beginning of the internal migration of workers from those villages to the urban centers, many of these church communities have become depleted. Some “house churches” or “unauthorized” church communities are structured around an extended family system, using radio broadcasts or even online videos of sermons as their main source for Christian teaching and community. More recently, within the urban settings there are new expressions of “house churches” that are built around young professionals, those with university degrees, and those who have returned from overseas where they initially converted to some particular form of Christianity. Until very recently, there has been a general concern among all of these groups that the Chinese Communist Party controls the “authorized” churches and so makes them vulnerable to ideological control as well as to religious restrictions that are not conducive to their preferred form of Christian worship and life. These fears appeared to be lessening in recent years, but then there was a cataclysmic series of destruction of church buildings and/or large crosses that were built on those buildings in the area of Wēnzhōu 温州 in April and May 2014 that has manifestly shocked Christian communities of all sorts in

China and abroad. Here again, the potential for a further stage in a dialectical cultural transformation might threaten those who are PRC citizens, though there are some good reasons to expect that these kind of political oppressions will not become an ideological trend in the near future. What is currently evident is that there remains a wide-ranging diversity of Christian expressions within the PRC, and that the denominational identities of Chinese Christians now living in other national contexts is maintained, even while they find ways to reengage and sustain relationships of mutual support with those in mainland China. Some of those ways that engaged post-secular intellectuals as well as these other Chinese Christians have supported and maintained engagements with church communities in the PRC will now be indicated in the following paragraphs.

B. “Civilizing Missions” and their Religious Interests

As the “reform and opening up” policies began to have impact in the post-Máoist cultural setting in the PRC, new opportunities arose for creating businesses to cater to perceived needs among various places and institutions. Among these one of the most prominent realms was in the education sector, especially in university level education. So, as Niwa Hirono describes these institutions with an obvious critical intention,⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The following descriptions are relying on accounts found in Hirono (2008).

Chinese Christians from outside of the PRC began to create new institutions conceived as “civilizing missions” informed by Christian values and reliant on Christian persons to respond to these situations. Among these are the charitable Christian international organization known as World Vision, and the vastly successful Jiàn huá 建華 organization created by a small group of Hong Kong businessmen in 1981 that seeks to “build up China” by means of providing qualified university teachers to work in designated universities. In spite of the skepticism Hirono brings to her account of these organizations, because they are obviously created from Christian motivations to respond to particular needs with “civilized” Christian concerns, these institutions have gained the appreciation and respect of both the political leadership and the general public in the PRC due to their consistently constructive cultural impacts on the lives of those they seek to help. From the perspective of the major dialectical cultural transformations that have framed our discussion of the living options which Chinese Christians can create and sustain within the PRC, these are forms of Christian “soft culture” that have proven to be important and sustained ways of engaging Chinese people in particular sectors of mainland Chinese society. At the same time they nurture new possibilities for community engagements among Chinese Christian churches. So, for example, new kinds of Christian bookstores have been created by local Chinese Christian institutions to serve a larger and interested public,

and in recent years new levels of charitable donations and supports for needy families, orphans, and children with special needs have been created by indigenous Chinese Christian leaders and business people. Some of these have been inspired by the civilizing missions created by other Chinese and foreign Christians in the earlier period of the post-Máoist era, and some have been generated out of creative and bold efforts to become relevant to the larger public.

C. Expressions of Engaged Post-secular Intellectuals in Support of Christian Diversity in China

Starting sometime around 1995, the Roman Catholic journal, *China Heute* (China Today) began to document how there was a great surge in books published on Christian themes, amounting to hundreds of volumes each year. This is a statistical indication of a principled openness to religious traditions, and of Christianity in particular, pointing out how the standard Marxist critiques of religion were no longer the dominant or only interpretive trend related to religious studies permitted within the PRC. Having stated this, nevertheless, it does not mean that the Marxist critiques of religion have disappeared. Especially with regard to foreign Christian missions, there has been a continuing critique of “imperialistic” and “colonial” forms of Christian life that “invaded” China during the post-Máoist period. Among the most notable of these critiques of foreign missionaries were the volumes produced by Gù

Chángshēng.⁵⁶ Intriguingly, subsequent revisions of his most prominent work in this realm did not essentially change those criticisms, but simply added new chapters at the end of the book that manifested an ameliorating and less critical form of cross-cultural interpretation.⁵⁷ A similar attack on early Roman Catholic missionaries and their converts has been produced by Wáng Xiǎocháo.⁵⁸ In this light it is important to point out that a good number of scholarly journals devoted to studies of Christianity have also come into being and maintained a significant intellectual impact, producing articles primarily by Chinese intellectuals and sometimes also translated articles by foreign scholars, many of whom would be understood to be engaged post-secular intellectuals or even engaged post-secular religious intellectuals. Here below I will list a number of titles of these kinds of scholarly journals,⁵⁹ and focus on details of one particular journal among them that is published in the PRC and has now been confirmed as a top-ranking national academic journal

Among the earliest journals devoted to the study of Christianity are those produced and published in Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan,⁶⁰ including the Chinese

⁵⁶ See Gù Chángshēng (1981) and (1985).

⁵⁷ This is the case with Gù Chángshēng (1981), which had subsequent “revisions” published in 1991 and 2004, with a Taiwanese version published in 2006.

⁵⁸ Also mentioned previously, see Wáng Xiǎocháo (1997).

⁵⁹ This is an arbitrary list that reflects my own collection of materials, and is intended only to be representative of the range of titles and scholarly interest that prevails in contemporary religious and philosophical studies within the PRC.

⁶⁰ There are a good number of these journals including the Roman Catholic journal, *Tripod*, and Protestant journals produced by the Chinese Missionary Alliance Seminary and the Chinese Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong. There are also university journals such as *Ching Feng* produced in English by the Chung-Chi College at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and other similar journals in

journal published by the Tao Fung Shan Institute in Hong Kong entitled *Logos and Pneuma Chinese Journal of Theology* (道風漢語神學學刊 *Dàofēng Hànyǔshénxué xuékān*).⁶¹ During the last two decades it has been promoting claims about a Sino-Christian form of theology, or what might be asserted as a contemporary set of indigenous theological approaches that are explicitly associated with Chinese Christian theologians and intellectuals, some from the PRC and others from Hong Kong and overseas. This in itself suggests the search for a modern Christian intellectual and theological identity within a post-secular environment heightened by the modern concerns manifest in the post-Máoist era.

Another important journal of the earlier 1990s was one produced by the Chinese People's University in Beijing, entitled *Christian Culture Review* or 基督教文化評論 *Jīdūjiào wénhuà pínglùn*. Published in a series of eleven tomes after the first volume was produced in 1990, this journal was one of the first of its kind published in post-Máoist PRC that was not published by a Christian seminary or other Christian institution, but was in fact produced within the context of the Chinese Communist Party's most prominent university. The editor of this journal, Prof. He Guanghu 何光

Taiwan published in Chinese.

⁶¹ Here the title reflects an old rendering for *Dào* 道 ("Tao") and *Fēng* 風 ("Fung") as interpreted by the Norwegian Lutheran founder of the retreat center, Karl Ludwig Reichelt 艾香德 (1877-1952). In his comparative religious perspective, the *Dào* was equivalent to the theologically enriched New Testament term, *logos*, and the *Fēng* was an early rendering of the term for the "spirit", or in New Testament Greek, the *pneuma*. This is a semi-annual journal initiated in 1994 and continuing to publish issues up through at least 2006.

滄 (1950-), is a notable engaged post-secular religious intellectual supporting these studies as a critical Christian advocate.

Another kind of scholarly journal that reflects more direct academic interests of overseas Chinese scholars is the *Regent Review of Christian Thoughts* [sic], which is given the Chinese title 基督教思想評論 *Jīdūjiào sīxiǎng pínglùn*. While it is edited by a Chinese faculty member of a Canadian Protestant seminary named Regent's College, located in Vancouver, it is published in Chinese for a Chinese readership, and is putatively a semi-annual journal published in Shanghai.⁶² Though there are not too many journals of this sort, they do exist. Presumably, they are a sign of further cooperation between Chinese engaged post-secular intellectuals and overseas Chinese Christians.

Other titles of journals published since the beginning of the 21st century in the PRC include *Christian Scholarship* 基督教學術 *Jīdūjiào xuéshù*, *Study of Christianity* 基督宗教研究 *Jīdūzōngjiào yánjiū*, *Christianity and China* 基督教與中國 *Jīdūjiào yǔ Zhōngguó*, and the *Journal for the Study of Christian Culture* 基督教文化學刊 *Jīdūjiào wénhuà xuékān*. The last journal mentioned here is also produced by scholars from the Chinese People's University, and by 2011 had already produced 26 volumes in its series. Notably, it has been listed among the Chinese Social Sciences Citation

⁶² Whether it has maintained its semi-annual publication schedule is unclear to me, but I have found documentation for at least 15 separate volumes published so far in this journal series.

Index since 2006, suggesting that it is ranked highly among Chinese scholarly circles, and has produced thematic issues that have included “Secular Theology” (Vol. 8), “Theology and Hermeneutics” (Vol. 10), “Option for the Poor” (Vol. 16), “Sinology and Theology” (Vol. 17), “Aesthetic Theology” (Vol. 20), “Critical Theory and Theology” (Vol. 22), “Western Marxism and Theology” (Vol. 24) and “Missionaries and Chinese Classics” (Vol. 26). Here we have a journal that is serving a large range of academic appetites, and is operating in a post-traditional Chinese cultural milieu that appeals to not only engaged post-secular intellectuals but also those who might be strategic post-secular secularists.

Whether we refer to these Chinese intellectuals as “cultural Christians”, a term that Lo Ping-cheung developed in the mid 1990s to speak about those who I have referred to as engaged post-secular intellectuals (and so do not have any explicit commitment to a particular religious tradition),⁶³ or as “Christian intellectuals”, which may not be true for all who are involved, or as merely “researchers of Christianity”, the post-secular importance of these persons and their publications cannot be overstated. Through their publications they provide further legitimization and cultural affirmation of the “vital options” that Christian forms of life provide in post-traditional Chinese cultural settings.

⁶³ Lo subsequently dropped this term and argued that it was no longer helpful or applicable in describing Chinese intellectuals involved in studies of Christianity during the first years of the 21st century.

D. Ecumenical Interests and Collaborative Opportunities in Overseas Chinese Christian Communities

Another aspect of the development of Christian diversity in China and within cultural China is the involvement of Chinese Christian leaders in ecumenical councils and inter-denominational movements.⁶⁴ This is an interesting development not only from the sides of Chinese evangelical Christian associations which coordinate for evangelistic purposes, but also in the involvement of Chinese Christian leaders from “authorized” churches who attend the World Council of Churches, and interact with other kinds of Christianity that represent the current global extension of the Christian faith. Since the PRC government has essentially delineated a clear distinction between “Catholic” and “Protestant” churches, and does not mention Eastern Orthodox traditions or any other kinds of Christians among the lists of their “five great religions”, the tolerance given Christian leaders to engage in international convocations of Christian leaders from many forms of Christianity world-wide is welcomed and salutary. Within the post-secular context this can be seen as a positive encouragement for overcoming some of the dichotomized ways of thinking about “Christianity and Chinese culture”, “East and West”, and other similarly discursive ways of polarizing and simplifying accounts of Chinese Christian communities. It also

⁶⁴ As described diachronically in portions of Koshy (2004).

highlights the many forms of modern Chinese identities which Chinese and other Christians can choose within a post-secular setting in the PRC or elsewhere in cultural China.

VI. *Concluding Meditations: The Scholarly Significance of a Post-Secular Vision of Christian Diversity in China*

What has been presented in the preceding discussions is an argument supporting an emphasis on the Christian diversity actually present in Chinese cultural settings as informed by a post-secular vision of our age. Grounded on a dialectical reading of cultural transformations that have been experienced in Chinese cultural settings in four stages since 1800, I have argued that the reality of Christian diversity in China and the vital options for varying kinds of Christian forms of life that are now available within contemporary Chinese cultural settings are justified within post-traditional Chinese cultural settings by this post-secular vision. However one might otherwise interpret these cultural phenomena, it should be underscored that already in the early 20th century particular forms of Protestant Christianity were already linked to one of a number of modern forms of life that formed alternatives to a Ruist-inspired traditional Chinese cultural matrix. Nevertheless, I have argued that the steps taken in the dialectical cultural transformations moved through successive periods of openness and oppression, so that we should see the current post-Máoist stage as a period of

cultural openness that provides enfranchisement for the Christian diversity found to be present in contemporary China.

In the light of this interpretive framework one should at least ask whether there should be another turn toward an oppressive period in the foreseeable future. Not being a historical determinist or a futuristic prophet, I would demur from making any firm predictions, but I would want to highlight various features of the interpretive approach I have taken in this discussion as hints toward an inchoate response.

First of all, I do see a kind of helix-like movement in the series of dialectical cultural transformations that continues to move beyond the previous cultural stages, so that I do not anticipate, for example, a return to something like a Qīng imperial renaissance. The revolutionary character of several of the dialectical stages we have described have made a number of the basic features of Ruist-inspired traditional Chinese culture anachronous, including its political support for an imperial authority and its attendant traditional Ruist worldview. International and national institutions supporting Ruism itself are having to adjust to the post-secular conditions of our current age. Notably they are learning how to rearticulate Ruist values and institutions (what more skeptical scholars will refer to as “reinventing themselves”) within the actual plurality of worldviews that currently exist within the PRC and elsewhere in cultural China. Among the genuine alternatives that have been worked out in this

realm, and have not been discussed in this essay, are those who I refer to as “Ruified Christians”, that is, those who adopt a particular form of Ruist way of life as a foundation for their articulation of Christian spirituality and its attendant values and worldview. This is done and can continue to be done in the same way that earlier Christians in Mediterranean and European cultural settings employed Platonic, Aristotelian, Aquinaian, Calvinist, and Lutheran ways of life to their particular expressions of Christianity. Here I would underscore that this would not be the only option for Chinese Christians in our age, but it is one of them that is being taken quite seriously by some.

These claims related to the post-secular emphasis on Chinese Christian diversity have been justified by reference to new statistical evidence produced by R. G. Tiedemann and others related to the immensely complicated scenarios of foreign Christian missionary societies that took up residence in mainland China from 1800 to 1949. I have argued that these more than 450 foreign Christian institutions from nearly 30 different countries did leave distinctive influences upon Chinese converts; nevertheless, these religious and cultural distinctives have been reshaped by, and sometimes disappeared, during subsequent dialectical cultural transformations. Still, I have also pointed out that while these cultural transformations were at work within mainland China, there have been Chinese persons who emigrated to other countries,

and were converted to particular denominational forms of Christianity in their new home countries, some of them reengaging Chinese mainland persons and institutions during the post-Máoist period. Many of these persons, along with others who were residing in colonial Hong Kong and Macau, or the estranged Taiwan, have become involved with “civilizing missions” after the period of “reform and opening up” became the official policy of the PRC in the early 1980s. This is not to deny that there have been new and creative developments within Chinese Christian circles during the post-Máoist period, but it is highlighted to emphasize how a rich variety of Christian spiritualities could be supported within a dynamic cultural context where indigenous Chinese Christians, overseas Chinese Christians, minority Christians in China, and foreign Christian professionals were and are simultaneously involved in various cultural spheres within China.

In the context of the discussion of the first stage of dialectical cultural transformation, I have mentioned what may be a troubling but nevertheless significant historical concern that I believe should be integrated into our understanding of Christian diversity in China. This involves the historical presence and destructive impact of the Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace, or the Tàipíng Rebellion. Whatever else this militant religious movement continues to represent to historians of the late Qīng empire, I have argued that it represents a particularly refracted and

ultimately distorted version of Protestant Christianity that parallels later developments of other sectarian new religious groups that are considered to be heterodox by many Christians both within and outside of China. This too is part of the dialectical twist of cultural transformation that should waken our scholarly interests to understand how these new religions could be developed from what was originally associated with or indirectly influenced by various kinds of Christian traditions resident in China during different periods of the last two hundred years.

From a post-secular view of the current diversity of “Christianities” in China, a number of questions are generated about the future development of these differing cultural expressions of Chinese Christianity and Christianities in China. One continuing set of concerns that should be expected to be addressed involves how current political policies affect the freedom of religious worship and the further development of innovative forms of cultural relevance among Christian communities. These include forms of institutionalized charity, indigenous forms of “civilizing missions”, forming collaborative relationships with other religionists within and outside of China, and providing substantial and systematic forms of leadership training for Christian leaders, Christian intellectuals, and Christian professionals. All of these are ongoing projects within varying forms of Christian communities, some

relying more on internal resources, and others dependant more or less on foreign sources of inspiration and support.

Some might ask whether or not there could be another era such as that which occurred in the newly established Republic of China, where Christian intellectuals and professionals were manifestly involved in the modernizing project of a newly established post-traditional Chinese cultural setting. Once again, I would want to emphasize that I see these series of dialectical cultural transformations as moving toward a more open future rather than returning to a past cultural paradigm, and so I would not anticipate that something of the sort of unusual situation experienced in the first national assembly in 1912 and 1913 would occur again in the near future.

Nevertheless, I would also want to restate the fact that the post-secular intellectual climate within the PRC allows for more flexibilities in the identity formation of Chinese citizens that would be expected under a more principled Marxist ideological framework, such as what occurred during the Máoist era. What I have tried to argue in the above account is that the Christian diversity in China provides a number of “living options” for alternative ways of life within modern and post-traditional Chinese cultural settings. These are not the only alternatives available, but they are taken very seriously by many sectors of contemporary Chinese society. Precisely in this sense, then, I expect that the diversity of forms of Christian life will continue to flourish in

the coming decades, and may well be involved in helping to create a new kind of civil society within contemporary Chinese cultural settings that will provide some timely and new responses to some critical questions that continue to trouble post-traditional Chinese cultural communities.⁶⁵

HKBU Staff Quarters

The “Pink Palisades”

Easter 2015

Main Bibliography Resources

Gù Chángshēng 顧長聲 (1981). 《傳教士與近代中國》 *Chuánjiàoshì yǔ jìndài Zhōngguó* [Missionaries and Modern China]. 上海: 上海人民. Two later revised versions appeared in 1991 and 2004, with a Taiwanese version published in 2006.

_____ (1985). 《從馬禮遜到斯圖雷登 – 來華信教傳教士評傳》 *Cóng Mǎ Lǐsūn dào Sītú Léidēng – Lái Huá Xīnjiào chuánjiàoshì píngzhuàn* [From Robert Morrison to Leighton Stuart: Critical Biographies of Protestant Missionaries Who Came to China]. 上海: 上海人民.

Táng Yì 唐逸 (1993). 《基督教史》 *Jīdūjiào shǐ* [A History of Christianity], 北京: 中國社會科學出版社.

Táo Yàfēi 陶亞飛 and Leung Yuen Sang 梁元生 編 (2004). 《東亞基督教再詮釋》 *Dōngyà Jīdūjiào zài chuánshì* [Reinterpreting East Asian Christianity]. 香港: 香港中文大學崇基學院宗教與中國社會研究中心.

Wáng Qìngchéng 王慶成著 (1993). 《太平天國的文獻和歷史 – 海外新文獻刊布和文獻史事研究》 *Tàipíng Tiānguó de wénxiàn hé lìshǐ – Hǎiwài xīn wénxiàn*

⁶⁵ The problems I have in mind include (1) the relatively high rate of suicides in university settings, the elderly, and among wives in the countryside that have been left by their husbands to tend the farm and take care of children, (2) the breakdown of family life through divorce and familial violence, (3) the imbalances in values created by materialistic cravings nurtured by the new economic environment, and (4) the intrusions and distortions caused among the younger generations due to internet usage, including the compulsive-obsessive disorder of internet addiction, and (5) the continuing allowance of free-lancing vigilanti-style online “human flesh search engines” that have created some very inhumane conditions for Chinese citizens in the contemporary age.

kānbù hé wénxiàn shǐshì yánjiū [Literature and History of the Heavenly Kingdom of Supreme Peace – Studies of New[ly Discovered] Printed Literature and the Factual History of [That] Literature], 北京：社會科學文獻出版社。

Wáng Xiǎocháo 王曉朝著 (1997). 《基督教與帝國文化》 *Jīdūjiào yǔ dàiguó wénhuà* [Christianity and Imperial[ist] Culture], 北京：東方出版社。

Ying, Fuk-tsang 邢福增著 (2012). 《基督教在中國的失敗？ - 中國共產運動與基督教史論》 *Jīdūjiào zài Zhōngguó de shībài? Zhōngguó Gōngchán yùndòng yǔ Jīdūjiào shilùn* [Christianity's Failure in China? Essays on the History of the Chinese Communist Movement and Christianity], 香港：漢語基督教研究所有限公司。

Zhāng Xīpíng 張西平著 (2005). 《傳教士漢學研究》 *Chuánjiàoshi hàn xué yánjiū* [A Study of Missionary Sinology], 鄭州：大象出版社。

Berger, Peter L., ed. (1999). *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics*. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

_____ and Anton C. Zijderveld (2009). *In Praise of Doubt: How to Have Convictions without Becoming a Fanatic*. New York: HarperOne/HarperCollins Publishers.

Covell, Ralph R. (1995). *The Liberating Gospel in China: The Christian Faith among China's Minority Peoples*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

de Vries, Hent and Lawrence E. Sullivan, eds. (2006). *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Edwards, David L. (1987). *The Futures of Christianity*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Franke, Wolfgang (1970). *A Century of Chinese Revolution, 1851-1949*. Trans. by Stanley Rudman. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press.

Gilley, Sheridan and Brian Stanley, eds. (2006). *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Volume 8. World Christianities c. 1815 - c. 1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goossaert, Vincent and David A. Palmer (2011). *The Religious Question in Modern China*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Hirono, Miwa (2008). *Civilizing Missions: International Religious Agencies in China*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Hsieh, Fang-Lan (2009). *A History of Chinese Christian Hymnody: From its Missionary Origins to Contemporary Indigenous Productions*. Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press.

Koshy, Ninan (2004). *A History of the Ecumenical Movement in Asia: Volume I*. Hong Kong: World Student Christian Federation Asia-Pacific Region, Asia and Pacific Alliance of YMCAs, and Christian Conference of Asia.

Küng, Hans and Julia Ching (1989). *Christianity and Chinese Religions*. New York: Doubleday.

Lopez, Donald S., Jr., ed. (1996). *Religions of China in Practice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Luo Zhufeng, ed. (1991). *Religion under Socialism in China*. Trans. Donald E. MacInnis and Zheng Xi'an. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, Inc.

McLeod, Hugh, ed. (2006). *The Cambridge History of Christianity. Volume 9. World Christianities c. 1914 - c. 2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Michael, Franz and Chung-li Chang (1966). *The Taiping Rebellion: History and Documents. Volume 1: History*. Seattle: The University of Washington Press.

Moffett, Samuel Hugh (2005). *A History of Christianity in Asia. Volume II, 1500-1900*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Oxtoby, Willard G., ed. (2002a). *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

_____, ed. (2002b). *World Religions: Western Traditions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Palmer, David A., Glenn Shive and Philip L. Wickeri, eds. (2011). *Chinese Religious Life*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pan, Lynn, ed. (1998). *The Encyclopedia of the Chinese Overseas*. Singapore: Archipelago Press and Landmark Books.

Paper, Jordan (1995). *The Spirits are Drunk: Comparative Approaches to Chinese Religion*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

_____ and Lawrence G. Thompson (1998). *The Chinese Way in Religion*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Pfister, Lauren F. (forthcoming). “Questioning the Modern Emergence of ‘Zòngjiào’ 宗教 and ‘Zhéxué’ 哲學 in Modern Chinese Language and Cultures – Beyond Historical Genealogies to Matters of Legitimization within the Transformation of Cultures”. In *Shèjiè Hànxué tōngbào* 世界漢學通報 [Newsletter of World Sinology] Vol. 1 (Shànghǎi Jiāotōng University, scheduled for 2015).

_____ (forthcoming). “Distinguishing Spiritual Revolution from Military Revolution: Meditations on the Impact of Chinese Literature by Protestant Missionary-Scholars in Late Traditional China”, *Ching Feng* (scheduled for 2015); Chinese version in 陶飛亞 賴品超 主編《第六屆「基督教與中國社會文化」國際年青學者研討會會議論文集》，頁 36 至 56 (other details not known).

_____ (2012a). “Post-Secularity within Contemporary Chinese Philosophical Contexts”, *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* Vol. 39, no. 1 (March 2012): 121-138.

_____ ed., (2012b). *Expanding Horizons of Religion and European Culture for China: Selected Essays by Zhao Fusan*. Trans. Curie QU Li. Produced as an issue of *Contemporary Chinese Thought* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Spring 2012). 89 pages.

_____ (2010). “China’s Missionary-Scholars”, in R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China. Volume Two: 1800 to the Present: 742-765*.

_____ (2008). “Philosophical Explorations of the Transformative Dimension in Chinese Culture,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* Vol. 35, no. 4 (December 2008): 663-682.

_____ (2007a). “In the Eye of a Tornado: Lessons Learned from Critiques of Christian Missionaries”, *Ching Feng* 8:1-2 (2007), pp. 91-116.

_____ (2007b). “Brothers in the Spirit”, in Marc Hermann, Christian Schwermann, and Jari Grosse-Ruyken, eds., *Zurück zur Freude. Studien zur chinesischen Literatur und Lebenswelt und ihrer Rezeption in Ost und West. Festschrift für Wolfgang Kubin*. Sankt Augustin: Steyler Verlag: 55 - 82.

_____ (2005). "Protestant Ethics among Chinese Missionaries, Problems of Indigenization, and the Spirit of Academic Professionalization." In *Journal of Classical Sociology* Vol. 5, no. 1 (May 2005): 93-114.

_____ (2004). *Striving for 'The Whole Duty of Man': James Legge (1815-1897) and the Scottish Protestant Encounter with China*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang. Two volumes.

_____ (2003a). "The Creative Potential and Philosophical Importance of Going Beyond a "China-West" Philosophical Focus in 21st Century Chinese Philosophy", in Fāng Kèlì 方克立, ed., *Chinese Philosophy and the Trends of the 21st Century Civilization*. Běijīng: Commercial Press: 603-624.

_____ (2003b). "20th Century Contributions in Chinese Philosophy of Religion(s): From Deconstructive Contradiction to Constructive Reconsideration," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* Vol. 30, nos. 3-4 (September/December 2003): 541-553.

_____ (1999). "A Transmitter but not a Creator: The Creative Transmission of Protestant Biblical Traditions by Ho Tsun-Sheen (1817-1871)" in Irene Eber, Sze-Kar Wan, Knut Walf, and Roman Malek, eds., *Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact*. Sankt Augustin and Jerusalem: Institut Monumenta Serica and The Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem: 165-197.

_____ (unpublished). "Sublating our Pasts and Being Assured of Eternity: Cultural Dialectics within the Formation of Biblically-Based Chinese Christianity During the Past 150 Years." 97 pages. Completed in 2009.

Reilly, Thomas H. (2004). *The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom: Rebellion and the Blasphemy of Empire*. Seattle: The University of Washington Press. Chinese version: (美) 賴利 著《上帝與皇帝之爭: 太平天國的宗教與 政治》，上海: 上海人民出版社, 2011 年.

Rosenstock-Huussy, Eugen (1993). *Out of Revolution: Autobiography of Western Man*. Providence: Berg.

Standaert, Nicolas, ed. (2001). *Handbook of Christianity in China – Volume One: 635-1800*. Leiden: Brill.

Thompson, Laurence G. (1989). *Chinese Religion: An Introduction*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Tiedemann, R. G. ed., (2010). *Handbook of Christianity in China – Volume Two: 1800 – Present*. Leiden: Brill.

Walls, Andrew and Cathy Ross, eds. (2008). *Mission in the Twenty-first Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*. Maryknoll: Orbis Books.

Wolin, Richard (2005). “Jürgen Habermas and Post-secular Societies”, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* Vol. 52, no. 5 (23 September 2005): B16.

APPENDIX I

STATISTICS RELATED TO CHRISTIAN DIVERSITY DRAWING ON DETAILS ABOUT MISSIONARY SOCIETIES IN CHINA FROM 1800 TO 1950

For those works dealing with the modern era of Christian missions in China, one cannot but be impressed with the huge amount of new information that should be considered and digested from the two thick volumes edited by Nicolas Standaert and R. Gary Tiedemann and published by E. J. Brill as the first and second volumes in the *Handbook of Christianity in China*.⁶⁶

Though both volumes are very substantial, the detailed lists of Roman Catholic and Protestant missionary societies appearing in the second volume are particularly impressive. They appear in ten tables, part of which I will summarize in the following paragraphs. It is this statistical information that should stimulate some of our reflections about Christian diversity in China during the period from 1800 to 1950. From the outset, it should be indicated that these statistics cannot come anywhere near to telling the whole rich picture of the cross-cultural and multi-functional roles of missionaries in relationship to the Chinese Christians and other Chinese persons they related to, but they do provide a new basis for considering a number of interpretive problems that deserve being weighed very carefully in any 21st century effort to comprehend Christian diversity within mainland China and elsewhere in cultural China during that 150 year period.

⁶⁶ Cf. Nicolas Standaert, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China – Volume One: 635-1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2001) and R. G. Tiedemann, ed., *Handbook of Christianity in China – Volume Two: 1800 – Present* (Leiden: Brill, 2010). In what follows I will refer to the former as HCC1 and the latter as HCC2. The first was just over 960 pages in length; the latter, just over 1000 pages in length.

At the end of the second volume edited by Tiedemann we have the following ten tables:

- Table 1: Catholic Religious Communities of Men (1800-1950)⁶⁷
- Table 2: Catholic Religious Communities of Foreign Women⁶⁸
- Table 3: Catholic Religious Communities of Chinese Women, pre-1950 (including Associations of Diocesan Right)⁶⁹
- Table 4: Protestant Missionary Societies⁷⁰
- Table 5: Statistics of Protestant Mission Work in China for the Year Ending 1905⁷¹
- Table 6: Catholics in the Qing Empire, 1911⁷²
- Table 7: Roman Catholic Jurisdictions 1924-1946⁷³
- Table 8: Catholics Statistics by Jurisdiction – 1940/41 (Arranged by Ecclesiastical Region)⁷⁴
- Table 9: Heads of Catholic Jurisdictions – 1949/50: Archbishops, Bishops and Prefects Apostolic (Arranged by Ecclesiastical Province)⁷⁵
- Table 10: Statistics of Protestant Missions and Churches in China, ca. 1950⁷⁶

The statistical sums of the first four tables provide information that can prove to be startling for those who previously have not considered these matters in such detail.⁷⁷ Notable is the fact that even though these tables appear in the second volume which is devoted to the period from “1800 to the present”, they cover information that begins in the 16th century.⁷⁸ Some basic summaries of their content reveal some unusual facts which we will further analyze in the subsequent paragraphs.

Table 1: Catholic Religious Communities of Men (1800-1950)

- Involves 56 different missionary communities
- Includes five indigenous Chinese missionary communities
- Includes missionary communities from 12 nations other than China, the

⁶⁷ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 915-922.

⁶⁸ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 922-932.

⁶⁹ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 932-937.

⁷⁰ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 938-957.

⁷¹ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 958-961.

⁷² Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 962-970.

⁷³ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 971-976.

⁷⁴ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 977-986.

⁷⁵ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 987-996.

⁷⁶ Tiedemann, HCC2, pp. 997-1004.

⁷⁷ These also include some basic assumptions taken up in these first four tables, including the fact that missionary societies or communities would continue to be present after they first arrived in China, which was not always the case.

⁷⁸ That is, with the arrival of the Jesuits in southeastern China in the 1580s.

highest number of these communities coming from one country being from Italy (having 12 missionary communities), followed by those from Germany and China (both with five communities), and then others from the Canada, France, Spain, and the USA (all sending four communities)

- Includes 11 foreign international missionary communities (and so not limited to a single foreign national identity)
- In spite of the period of time noted in the title of this table, it also includes those missionary communities which arrived in China before 1800, pointing out that there were eight such Roman Catholic missionary communities
- Notably, there were 36 new missionary communities which came to China from 1911 till 1949 (64% of the total number of Roman Catholic male missionary communities working in China during the period under consideration)

Table 2: Catholic Religious Communities of Foreign Women

- Involves 83 different missionary communities
- Includes female missionary communities from 18 foreign nations, the most number of these communities being from the USA (having 19 missionary communities), followed by those from France and Italy (both including twelve female religious communities), with the next numerous stemming from Spain and Germany (having nine and six communities respectively)
- Though the vast majority of these foreign female Roman Catholic religious communities came from Europe or North America, there was also one community coming from Japan
- Includes four foreign international female missionary communities, and so not able to be associated with any single country or its religious orders
- Only one female religious community arrived in China before 1800, while from 1911 till 1949 there were 69 new foreign female Roman Catholic missionary communities which came to China (just over 80% of all those working in China during the period under consideration)

Table 3: Catholic Religious Communities of Chinese Women (pre-1950)

- Involves 61 indigenous female Roman Catholic missionary communities
- There were 17 Chinese female religious communities established in China between 1869 and 1911, while from 1911 till 1949 there were 44 new communities established (just over 70% of all those working in China during the period under consideration)

Table 4: Protestant Missionary Societies

- Involves 266 different missionary societies
- Includes one indigenous Chinese missionary society
- Includes missionary communities from 16 nations other than China, the most number of these communities being from the USA (there being 121 missionary societies stemming from that country), followed by those from Britain and Germany (with 33 and 23 mission societies respectively), and then followed numerically by Norway, Canada and Sweden (which had 16, 13, and 12 missionary societies sent to China during this period), with a smaller but notable number of missionary societies coming from Japan (six), Finland (five), Denmark (four), and Holland (three), along with Switzerland and Korea (both with two)
- Includes 13 foreign international missionary communities, the most notable in terms of the numbers of missionaries belonging to its society during the 19th century being the China Inland Mission 內地會
- There were 36 missionary Protestant societies who came to China between 1800 and 1861, with another 104 being added between 1862 and 1911
- In the case of the Protestant missionary societies, there were an additional 69 new missionary communities which came to China from 1911 till 1949 (25% of the total number of Protestant missionary societies working in China), while an additional 23 societies did not have a certain starting date recorded in these charts

In terms of the basic numbers of ordained persons – depending on the period of time considered and whether one limits these numbers to only foreign ordained missionaries or includes others (including non-ordained foreign missionary staff and indigenous Chinese ordained persons, for example) – the number of relevant ordained persons identified in the 1940s (and so *not* accumulated over the whole 150 year period) would range from 3992 ordained foreign persons and up to 4293 ordained Chinese persons. If foreign and indigenous lay missionaries and workers are included, this figure would extend to 7149 foreign missionaries (in this broader sense of the term) and 13,852 indigenous workers (ordained and lay persons). These are sums arrived at by adding the totals for foreign ordained missionaries and ordained indigenous persons (priests, pastors, and missionaries) found in Tables 8 and 10 in Tiedemann’s volume.