

SEEK SCIENCE, MEET JESUS
KU CHINESE STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE
WITH LOCAL CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

BY

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ABSTRACT
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In “Seek Science, Meet Jesus,” I examine how Chinese students at the University of Kansas in Lawrence interact with local Christians and respond to conversion forces imposed by local evangelical churches. Being atheistic or non-Christian culturally and ideologically, most KU Chinese students reveal curiosity about the American Christian culture and show more responsiveness to American Christian influences than students from other countries. The educational process of Chinese students in Lawrence is characterized by not only the export of American academic standards and religious culture but also Chinese people’s longing for modernization. The students’ status as educated sojourners makes them different from immigrants and determines that they show resistance and autonomy to the host religious culture.

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Introduction¹

As a Chinese student of American studies, I always wondered how Chinese and American cultures meet and interact with each other.² My inspiration to write about Chinese students' experience with Christianity in the United States originated from my own experience of being invited, together with my fellow Chinese students and scholars, to local church activities in Lawrence where I go to the University of Kansas (KU). To most Chinese students and scholars, religion is not new. But Christianity differs from other religions as it is widely practiced in Western countries that represent wealth and power in today's world. If a culture has produced world powers, there must have been something that is particularly enabling in it. But is the Christian religion one of the enabling elements in the Western culture? What kind of religion is it? The general curiosity of Chinese students about Christianity has motivated them to learn more about the faith through local evangelical churches which are often mission-driven and ready to present themselves to non-believers.

Since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when European missionaries made their first evangelistic attempts in China, Christianity has been in search of an effective way of entering China. There were both pessimists and sympathizers with the early missionaries in China. Pessimists believed that Christian and Chinese traditions were too different to

¹ The thesis examines three local evangelical churches that have been active in spreading the Gospel among international students in Lawrence, Kansas. In the text, "Christianity" refers specifically to "Protestant Christianity" unless otherwise defined. There are both Catholics and Protestants in China, but through my interviews and participant observation with KU students and scholars from Mainland China I have learned that most of them have a very vague idea about the differences between Catholics and Protestants. Even some Chinese Christians can't tell much about Christian denominations or they don't want to bother with it.

² For convenience, "Chinese students" and "students from Mainland China," "China" and "Mainland China" are used interchangeably.

be compatible with each other. Even sympathizers who reacted with interest towards the Christian faith refused to convert.³ In fact, Christianity was once denounced as barbaric by Chinese emperor Kangxi.⁴ The Chinese relationship with western Christian countries was later characterized by exchange on unequal terms with China being the old beaten feudal empire and western countries being rising capitalist powers. While Christianity was rejected nationwide as a foreign and imperialist religion, scientific knowledge brought to China by western missionaries was pursued enthusiastically.⁵ With the rise of the United States as a new world power in the twentieth century, many adventurous Chinese students came since the turn of the century trying to find ways to save China from crisis. Their readiness to borrow from American culture reversed the direction of early European and American missionaries going to China to spread the “good news.” Some of them even experimented with Christianity briefly but dropped it eventually.⁶ Today’s overseas study movement in China has continued the early attempt to revitalize China and Chinese culture by learning the most advanced science and technology taught in western, particularly in American, universities. But how do today’s students view the Christian beliefs that they will certainly encounter while studying in the United States? Is the Chinese anti-Christian tradition⁷ still carried on by students of the new generation?

³ Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact: A Conflict of Cultures* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 2 & 5.

⁴ *Ibid*, 186.

⁵ *Ibid*, 5.

⁶ Timothy Tseng, "Chinese Protestant Nationalism in the United States, 1880-1927," *Amerasia* 22, no. 1 (1996): 33.

⁷ Jessie G. Lutz, "Chinese Nationalism and the Anti-Christian Campaigns of the 1920s," *Modern Asian Studies* 10, no. 3 (1976): 395.

International students including Chinese students are sojourners rather than immigrants,⁸ but they are not immune from American acculturation. Acculturation makes the home and host cultures reconcile or conflict with each other. However, the conflict does not necessarily end up with the prevailing of the host culture. Sojourners usually have less motivation and pressure than immigrants to get Americanized. But why do American Christians spread their Christian belief over the world through international students? Does the passion come from American religious exceptionalism or the moral righteousness and cultural superiority which have been the underlying discourse in Americanizing immigrants and formulating American foreign policies? How do local churches reach the international students? And how do Chinese students specifically react to the Christian influence?

The interim status of Chinese students and scholars in American universities as sojourners makes them an ideal group to examine how intellectuals from Mainland China have borrowed selectively from the American culture while maintaining traditional Chinese values and practices. On the one hand, Chinese students and scholars are drawn to study in the United States because of advanced scientific and technological knowledge taught in American universities. On the other hand, when they live in the American social and cultural realities, they have a stronger sense of the cultural differences between China and the United States than before they came. And they tend to face material pressures from the host culture to assimilate, especially when they are pursued by American mission-driven Christians. The question for these Chinese students and scholars then is how to negotiate the pressure to convert with their atheist or non-Christian backgrounds.

⁸ "Sojourners" refer to those who stay in a foreign country for a length of time for specific designated purposes (e.g. studying, traveling, or doing business) rather than permanent settlement.

While the young Chinese intellectuals may have varied from each other in how they interact with the host religious culture, the variations have been insignificant so as to still allow the formation of some general patterns to be kept track of.

This thesis is a case study focusing on local evangelical churches in Lawrence and students and scholars coming to study at the University of Kansas from Mainland China. Due to the fact that social, political, and economic conditions in Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau have been different from those in Mainland China, the term “Chinese students” in this thesis does not include students from those areas. Also, those areas have had a longer history of coming to the United States for education after World War II, and they have cultivated a different pattern of interacting with local American religious culture.

I am an atheist. I was raised and have been educated not believing in supernatural beings. I never went to a Christian church in China and only visited Buddhist or Taoist temples as a tourist. In my personal circle, only one of my Chinese colleagues is a Christian. She converted when she studied in Australia, but she has never revealed her belief publicly. It was only accidentally that I learned she was a Christian. Despite my atheist background, I respect people who follow different religions in the world and believe that religion can play positive roles in personal and social lives. My atheist background only allows me to explore Christianity from a perspective different from that of a Christian, and I have tried to be neutral towards religion or Christianity throughout the thesis.

My work is largely based on materials that I collected through three major activities - participant observation, survey, and interview. I participated in church activities offered to international students by local American churches and the Chinese church during the

period from June 2007 to February 2008 – the Bible study program, fun trips, and English-enhancing programs. I observed the interaction between missionary Americans and Chinese students and kept detailed account of what I saw and heard. I talked to both sides on many informal occasions. I also conducted an anonymous online survey among Chinese students, scholars, and postdoctoral researchers at KU during the winter break of 2008 and collected some general information about the Chinese students and their attitudes towards the American life, American churches, and religions.

I interviewed twelve people. Three of them were representatives from local churches and the other nine were KU Chinese students and scholars. These nine students and scholars were carefully chosen from three groups classified on the basis of their relations with local churches. One group was composed of Christians. Another group included those who often visited churches, and a third group included those who avoided church activities. Other factors such as gender, age, and academic disciplines were taken into consideration in the selection of interviewees to ensure their representativeness. The interviews were conducted in Chinese if the interviewees were Chinese and in English if the interviewees were Americans.

Despite my attempt to write down all important information during my observation, I neglected some that I later found equally important in building my primary documents. That part of the information did not exist in my notes, but I tried to recall them when I organized materials four or five months later. Actually, all my observation notes were from memory. Only on very rare occasions did I take out my notebook while I was doing observation, because I did not want my subjects to feel that they were targets of my study. Therefore, I have to admit that most of my observation notes were taken from fresh

memory shortly after I finished the observation, while some neglected information was brought out after staying in my memory for longer time.

The fact that I am a Chinese student studying other students from China as my subjects enabled me to have easier access to Chinese students and scholars. I was also able to have an insider's understanding of their feelings and experiences with local church influence. However, the same factor might have kept me from acquiring an outsider's insight into the issue and also made some students refrain from revealing their different thoughts about religion because of the pressure to conform to the dominant religious policy in China. Also, the survey had over sixty questions, which might have been too many for students who are used to shorter online versions. The result was that not as many students as expected submitted their answers.

There are three parts in this thesis. Part one reviews books and articles devoted to the history of Chinese students coming to study in the United States. It examines major considerations on both American and Chinese sides that brought/sent Chinese students to American campuses and how the Chinese educated elite reacted to American influences, particularly scientific, political, and religious influences. History shows continuity over generations of American-educated Chinese students in their overwhelming interest in scientific and technological knowledge taught in American universities. With regards to Christian influences, most students were not affected or only were affected in a limited way.

The second part gives a detailed account of how local churches have been working with KU international students, particularly those from Mainland China. Local churches have designed various services and activities to attract international students to

understand Christianity and become Christians. Among all the international groups at KU, Chinese students have been regarded by local missionaries as the most responsive to church influence. Having no religious background and being intellectually curious are two major reasons for their responsiveness. Born out of the pervasive American Christian influence, the Chinese church has played a special role in connecting the Chinese identity and the Christian culture.

Chinese students' response towards local Christian influence constitutes the third chapter. I have found that when the initial curiosity of Chinese students is satisfied and when they have other places to go where they can relax and have some fun after a week's hard work, they will quit going to church activities. Despite the fact that some Chinese students have converted, Christians account for only a very small proportion of the KU Chinese population. The Chinese Christian students often try to seek pragmatic needs out of their belief and their understanding of Christianity has been synthesized with Chinese traditions. Therefore, American churches' goal of spreading their belief in China through American-educated students and scholars is compromised, and their greater goal of influencing the future development of China is even harder to achieve. However, local Christian influence has made Chinese students gain a better understanding of religion by looking back at their home culture and reflecting upon similarities and differences between American and Chinese belief systems.

Part I

1. Making the Chinese like Us

美国的月亮比中国的圆。

The Moon Is Rounder in the United States.

----- Anonymous Chinese author

Chinese students have a long history of coming to the United States for education, and the recent formation of closer Sino-U.S. relations necessitates a better understanding of the educational exchange programs between the two countries. This chapter of my thesis will look at how academic literature has viewed the dynamic interactions between American cultural and religious influences and the resistance and autonomy exhibited by Chinese students educated in American universities.

Studying in American universities, Chinese students and scholars become living bridges between China and the United States. They witness the display of American values; they experience the American way of life; they also selectively embrace American thoughts and practices. At the same time, the presence of Chinese students on American campuses allows them to exhibit various aspects of Chinese culture and social life, which facilitates the understanding of China by Americans. However, the main flow of cultural communication via these students is one-way, from the United States to China. The Chinese students on American campuses are open to new ideas and knowledge,

which is one of the reasons they come to the United States. It has been this feature that gives incentives to the assimilatory power of the American culture to make a vehicle out of them for transporting American ideas and practices to China, to Americanize or even to Christianize China through the flow of intellectuals.

The strong assimilationist power of American mainstream culture comes from a sense of Manifest Destiny discourse which is embedded in American identity and reflected in American foreign policies. The United States is often motivated by a sense of mission to show other peoples how to live by the American model.⁹ The attainment of American interests in military and economic fields has also been accompanied by cultural expansionism and moral righteousness. It is in this moralization that “the United States shows a this-worldly activism that both perplexes and stimulates the rest of the world.”¹⁰ According to William McLoughlin, Americans hold a firm belief that they are “God’s chosen leading the world to perfection.”¹¹ With the emergence of the United States as a superpower after World War II, the expansion of its cultural influence throughout the world was almost inevitable. Liping Bu compares and draws similarities between the United States and Louis XIV’s France and China’s Tang dynasty. Both France and China saw the wide-spreading of their cultures in the world during the peak time of their national power.¹² American culture itself may not be as aggressive and expansive as it looks, but the incomparable economic and military strength of the United States and the strong modernization demands of third-world countries have brought American presence

⁹ Gerald Lee Gutek, *American Education in a Global Society : Internationalizing Teacher Education* (White Plains, N.Y.: Longman, 1993), 39.

¹⁰ Edward A. Tiryakian, "American Religious Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 527 (1993): 47. 1993

¹¹ William Gerald McLoughlin, *Revivals, Awakenings, and Reform : An Essay on Religion and Social Change in America, 1607-1977* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 19.

¹² Liping Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, Perspectives on the Twentieth Century, (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2003), 1.

all over the world and have helped to sustain the myth of an exceptional and superior American culture.

China has been the opposing side of the United States and Europe in modern world history. As a declining empire in the East, old China was challenged by the rising Euro-American powers since mid-nineteenth century with the outbreak of the Opium War.¹³ Since then, the modern Sino-U.S. and Sino-European relations have been dominated by discordance and confrontation with China being the weak and victim.¹⁴ Longxi Zhang uses the notion of the Other to criticize the irrationality of Euro-American powers' China policy.¹⁵ Zhang asserts that the rationale for "making the Chinese like us" comes directly from the assumption that Chinese civilization is incompatible with those of Euro-American origin and that Oriental culture is a threat to the Western value system.¹⁶ Communism and the Cold War have reinforced China's image as the Other. Similar to the image of the Other, another image of "bad guy" is raised by Shiping Zheng who argues that in Sino-U.S. relations, China represents an unpredictable potential threat to world peace and stability.¹⁷ China expert David Lampton believes that China is both a "problem" and an "opportunity" in the sense that China is large and significant, and can not be easily pushed around by the United States. China's role in the future world, Lampton says, may be unpredictable and harmful to the national interest of the United

¹³ The United States and European countries, American culture and European cultures are distinct from each other in many ways, but in Chinese minds, they overlap more than they diverge. They are often lumped together as the West, Western countries or Western culture in China if there is no clear reference to the United States or American culture.

¹⁴ Ming Yuan, "Chinese Intellectuals and the United States: The Dilemma of Individualism Vs. Patriotism," *Asian Survey* xxix, no. 7 (1989): 651-52.

¹⁵ Longxi Zhang, "The Myth of the Other: China in the Eyes of the West," *Critical Inquiry* 15, no. 1 (1988): 108-31. 1988

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 110.

¹⁷ Shiping Zheng, "Sino-U.S. Educational Exchanges and International Relations Studies in China," in *Bridging Minds across the Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-2003*, ed. Cheng Li (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 133-54.

States.¹⁸ Then, one conclusion is that if the United States wants to secure its national interest and security in the world and from Sino-U.S. relations, China cannot be allowed to develop on its own. It must be brought into the Western cultural orbit. The fact that China can hardly modernize itself without the support of Western countries makes the job of assimilating China a lot easier.

The concept of “melting pot” may not be sufficient to generalize the diverse experiences of present-day immigrants in the United States, but the Americanization process has never stopped working. Student sojourners from Mainland China are not immigrants, although a sizable proportion of them do seek job opportunities and permanent residence in the United States.¹⁹ However, it does not mean that they are less subject to American assimilatory influences than immigrants. Instead, the students’ potential to return after their education in the United States makes American political and religious assimilatory forces show particular interest in them, because the students are supposed to take home American influence on their return.

How much American influence can be accepted and internalized by Chinese students and then taken back to China is dependent on not only how they value the American influence but also how much Chinese identity they want to retain. Chinese American sociologist Paul C. P. Siu defines foreign students as sojourners who are “very likely” to be agents of “cultural diffusion between his homeland and the country of his sojourn.”²⁰

¹⁸ David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams : Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 377-78.

¹⁹ Vid Mohan-Ram reported on October 6, 2000 in "Empire Exodus: How Many Chinese Students Flock to the United States and What Are Their Plans" that 85.5% of Chinese citizens receiving doctorates from U.S. universities between 1988-1996 said that they planned to stay in the United States.

www.sciencecareers.sciencemag.org. Also, an article "China Fears Brain Drain as Its Overseas Students Stay Put" by Jonathan Watts reported on June 2, 2007 that seven out of ten Chinese overseas students did not return since 1978. www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/jun/02/internationaleducationnews.highereducation

²⁰ Paul C. P. Siu, "The Sojourner," *The American Journal of Sociology* 58, no. 1 (1952): 35.

The sojourners have no desire for full participation in the community life in the host country, according to Siu, and their activities are “either matters relating to his job or matters concerning their homelands’ social welfare, politics, etc.”²¹ Chinese students and scholars have already been acculturated on the behavioral level before they come to the United States. With graduate students being the majority of the Chinese student population at American universities,²² all of them have passed the admission requirements of standard tests of Test of English as Foreign Language (TOEFL) and Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and acquired some amount of behavioral and cultural knowledge about the host society. This process is conducted outside the U.S. borders; and when they arrive, out of practical adaptation needs, they engage themselves in extensive activities in their new life. They need to improve their English and gain more knowledge about the host society. They start to construct their impersonal and even personal relationship with local communities. However, unlike immigrants who usually have stronger incentives to assimilate to the mainstream society, the students and scholars are allowed options over to stay or to leave. Therefore, their incentives for accepting assimilation are discounted.

Even for those students and scholars who consider seeking American citizenship before or during their study in the United States, their educational background and prospective occupation and status in American society will substantially reduce their motivation to become assimilated. The “strategic assimilation” theory developed by

²¹ Ibid, 36.

²² Hey-Kyung Koh Chin, ed., *Open Doors: Report on International Educational Exchange* (New York: Institute of International Education, 2004), 30.

Karyn Lacy may shed some light on the process.²³ The upward-oriented African Americans in Lacy's research chose not to fully assimilate into the mainstream in order for their children to take advantage of both the mainstream and African American societies. Andreas Wimmer introduces other dimensions as alternatives to ethnicity in influencing the processes of assimilation. According to Wimmer, political, economic, cultural, and educational dimensions all complicate the process.²⁴ Both Lacy and Wimmer are helpful in understanding Chinese intellectual sojourners' selective and utilitarian responses to the assimilatory forces from the host culture. Agreeing with the economic and political dimensions of assimilation, Herbert Gans also proposes that instead of a straight-line process, new immigrants in the United States follow the pattern of rapid acculturation but slow assimilation, or more retention than acculturation.²⁵

Unlike immigrants, Chinese students and scholars in American universities bear double expectations – both home and host governments hope that the students can help them in the fulfillment of their national agendas. Chinese students come to American universities for education and training. Some people may argue that American universities educate the international students the same way as they do domestic students. They do not have a separate curriculum designed specifically for international students. Therefore, the assimilation, if there is any, is not intended. It happens unconsciously. But knowledge and skills have never been offered and received independent of their

²³ Karyn R. Lacy, "Black Spaces, Black Places: Strategic Assimilation and Identity Construction in Middle Class Suburbia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 27, no. 4 (2004).

²⁴ Andreas Wimmer, "How (Not) to Think About Ethnicity in Immigrant Societies: A Boundary Making Perspective," in *Center on Migration Policy and Society* (Oxford University: 2007).

²⁵ Herbert J. Gans, "Toward a Reconciliation of 'Assimilation' and 'Pluralism': The Interplay of Acculturation and Ethnic Retention," *The International Migration Review* 31, no. 4 (1997): 875-92.

sociopolitical context.²⁶ Students come and go. But when they leave school, they are not the same as when they come. China's history of study abroad movements reveals a close relationship between the destinations of Chinese students (be it Japan, France, the United States, or Soviet Union) and China's political orientation.²⁷ Today's students' education in American universities opens a door for China to make scientific and technological advances to improve Chinese people's wellbeing. On the American side, the original motivation for accepting Chinese students in American universities was to build closer relations with China to offset the growing power of Soviet Union.²⁸ To Washington, the students were China's future leaders who could help "alleviate and eliminate various kinds of crises and problems" in Sino-U.S. relations.²⁹ Educating the future leaders of the world will make the rest of the world identify itself more with American ideologies, thus reducing the potential for confrontations.³⁰ American universities' foreign students have also been expected to spread American ideologies of freedom and democracy far and wide.³¹ China's being communist, exotic, and a little bit magical always arouses a sense of mission in American evangelical religious colleges.³²

²⁶ Cheng Li, *Bridging Minds across the Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-2003* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2005), xix.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 69-109.

²⁸ Richard P Suttmeier, "Academic Exchange: Values and Expectations in Science and Engineering," in *Educational Exchange: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. Joyce K. & Denis Fred Simon Kallgren (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987), 227.

²⁹ Hongshan Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2008), 184.

³⁰ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 5.

³¹ Mary B. Bullock, "American Exchange with China, Revisited," in *Educational Exchange: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. Joyce K. Kallgren & Denis Fred Simon (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987). Ning Qian and T. K. Chu, *Chinese Students Encounter America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2002). Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*.

³² Patrick G. Maddox, Ann F. Thurston, "Academic Exchange: The Goals and Roles of U.S. Universities," in *Educational Exchange: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. Joyce K. Kallgren & Denis Fred Simon (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987), 125.

In a pluralist country such as the United States, private and national interest might diverge to some extent, but there has been a consensual agreement to see China evolve towards Western traditions. American philanthropists Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller both saw the value of cross-cultural education decades ago. In the 1920s and 1930s, they provided financial support for educating foreign students and making American culture more accessible to foreigners, especially in the Midwest and the West of the United States where there were strong isolationist beliefs.³³ American philanthropic foundations such as the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the China Medical Board, the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, and the Trustees of Lingnan were active in funding training and exchange programs. The Ford Foundation has been found very active in funding China's recent government reform. American schools of public affairs including the Maxwell School at Syracuse and the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard have all been involved in educating Chinese government officials.³⁴ Those foundations are known to have sought tangible results with the achievement of international understanding simply as "a kind of hoped-for fringe benefit."³⁵ It has been American philanthropists' tradition to do "important things" toward "large objectives."³⁶

Fighting communism became another important motivation for the United States to sponsor educational exchange in the Cold War years. It was suggested immediately after

³³ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 85.

³⁴ Caroline H. Tong, Hongying Wang, "Sino-American Educational Exchanges and Public Administration Reforms in China: A Study of Norm Diffusion," in *Bridging Minds across Teh Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges 1978-2003*, ed. Cheng Li (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005), 155-75.

³⁵ Francis X. Sutton, "American Philanthropy in Educational and Cultural Exchange with the People's Republic of China," in *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. Joyce K. Kallgren, Denis Fred Simon (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987), 112.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 116.

the fall of the Nationalist Party in China that the United States should not miss the opportunity to bring Chinese to the United States to “study American institutions and American ideologies.”³⁷ “Every foreign student should be given the opportunity to visit American homes and to see how the ordinary worker benefits from the technological advances of the country.”³⁸ Being charged by Senator Joseph McCarthy for bringing communist student- and scholar-spies to the United States, Senator J. William Fulbright did not give in. He insisted on his belief in international engagement as an effective means to achieve American triumph over communism.³⁹ And the program named after him has persisted for over half a century bringing thousands of foreign students and scholars every year to the United States including over a hundred from China.⁴⁰ The passage of the Fulbright-Hays Act in 1961 marked the maturity of the policy of using educational exchanges for foreign policy purposes.⁴¹ Meanwhile, colleges and universities were urged to play their roles as “new frontiers” to spread American influences.⁴² President Eisenhower also initiated a People-to-People Program to show people from less developed areas of the world American aspirations for freedom, progress, and peace and to further expand American influences abroad.⁴³ Educational exchange was considered by American government as the fourth dimension of its China policy.⁴⁴ After the Cold War, when a new tide of isolationism emerged, the United States

³⁷ Theodore His-En Chen, "The Guidance of Foreign Students: Problems Involving More Than Hospitality," *The Journal of Higher Education* 21, no. 3 (1950): 126-31+66.

³⁸ *Ibid*, 131.

³⁹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 222-23.

⁴⁰ Institute of International Education, <http://www.foreign.fulbrightonline.org/>

⁴¹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 233.

⁴² *Ibid*, 236.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 228.

⁴⁴ Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*.

was urged to increase its presence in the sphere of third world countries' higher education.⁴⁵

Although China would always modify what it borrowed from Western countries to meet its own needs, American education did bring about changes to Chinese society through educating its youth. Most Chinese students returned on the completion of their study and served the country with what they learned in American universities. Throughout the twentieth century, American ideas and the school system taken back home by Chinese students laid the foundation for revolutions as well as reforms in China.⁴⁶ In the 1920s, American-trained Chinese political leaders were responsible for a shift in China's foreign policy from pro-Japanese to pro-American.⁴⁷ Intellectual returnees of the age introduced American ethos into the fledgling modern Chinese educational legislature.⁴⁸ Recent decades have also seen the loosening of the Chinese Communist Party's social control, increased autonomy of technical personnel, and interdependence between political power, technical expertise, and economic management.⁴⁹ In traditionally sensitive fields such as international relations and public administration, Western (largely American) concepts and vocabularies are popular in academic literature. American ways of thinking are used to express Chinese concerns on major issues and to solve Chinese problems.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Fred M. Hayward, "International Opportunities and Challenges for American Higher Education in Africa, Asia, and Latin America," in *International Challenges to American Colleges and Universities: Looking Ahead*, ed. Katharine H. Hanson, Joel W. Meyerson (Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press, 1995), 119.

⁴⁶ Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*, 5.

⁴⁷ Ibid. Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*.

⁴⁸ Ruth Hayhoe, *China's Universities, 1895-1995 : A Century of Cultural Conflict* (New York: Garland Pub., 1996), 46-47.

⁴⁹ Richard P. Stutmeier, "Academic Exchange: Values and Expectations in Science and Engineering," in *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*, ed. Joyce K. Kallgren, Denis Fred Simon (Berkeley CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987), 228-29.

⁵⁰ Zheng, "Sino-U.S. Educational Exchanges and International Relations Studies in China."

Chinese students' openness and ambition have made American influence enter China with more ease. While studying in the United States, they show broad interest in American culture, from its advanced technology to its political, economic, and social life. Comparing China and the United States, they are often impressed by the well-developed social systems and the advanced science and technology in the United States. The result is that Chinese students often look to the United States for standards to modernize China.⁵¹ Many of them harbor a strong sense of obligation to serve China with the education and training they acquire in the United States.⁵² Some are even so inspired by their overseas experience as to determine to rewrite Chinese history with what they learn from the West.⁵³ Even if they could not create a new democratic era, they would at least think of creating "a new IBM."⁵⁴

If Chinese students and scholars have embraced science and technology taught in American universities with great enthusiasm, not all of them show interest in the religious presence on American campuses. But the fact that they have been from a non-Christian background believing in either atheism or Asian religions makes them targets of campus missionaries. American uniqueness and religious exceptionalism have been fervently embraced by Protestant religious leaders who take pride in the United States as a "city upon a hill." They show more interest and commitment than secular leaders in exporting American religious beliefs. International educational exchanges have provided American

⁵¹ Yuan, "Chinese Intellectuals and the United States: The Dilemma of Individualism Vs. Patriotism," 646.

⁵² Ibid.: 652. Stacey Bieler, "'Evening Chats' in North America," in *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel*, ed. Samuel Ling, Stacey Bieler (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1999), Ruth Cherrington, *China's Students : The Struggle for Democracy* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1991), 97-98.

⁵³ Qian and Chu, *Chinese Students Encounter America*, 189.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 189.

evangelists with an opportunity to approach people who have never heard of the Gospel. And the traditional Protestant focus on congregations has facilitated local churches' efforts to attract international students. While religion's role in the American education system has been dwindling and largely marginalized,⁵⁵ the commitment to spreading the Gospel has persisted against the prevailing of secularization and scientism.

Generations of Chinese students have been pursued by campus ministries in American universities. Religion has lost its grip on American public education, so much so that no matter how much one wants to "speak to the center of power" of the university, voluntary Christianity only represents the residual voice at the periphery.⁵⁶ Even departments of religious studies use scientific methods to study religion.⁵⁷ However, religion has not disappeared from campus. Religious education has been around waiting for "teachable moments" to answer "critical questions" that the secular academia is believed not capable of answering fully.⁵⁸ Still active on campus are organizations like Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA)/Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), Campus Crusade for Christ, and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. And campus evangelism has been one of the most active converting agents for Chinese people in the United States.⁵⁹ Without the residual presence of religion on campus, today's Chinese students would probably miss their direct encounter with American Christianity. Recently, with the rise of "de-

⁵⁵ George M. Marsden, "The Soul of the American University: A Historical Overview," in *The Secularization of the Academy*, ed. George M. Marsden, Bradley J. Longfield (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 33.

⁵⁶ Robert W. Lynn, "the Survival of Recognizably Protestant Colleges': Reflections on Old-Line Protestantism, 1950-1990," in *The Secularization of the Academy*, ed. George M. Marsden, Bradley J. Longfield (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), 172 & 83.

⁵⁷ David Claerbaut, *Faith and Learning on the Edge : A Bold New Look at Religion in Higher Education* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2004). Marsden, "The Soul of the American University: A Historical Overview," 36.

⁵⁸ Kathy Winings, "Campus Ministries and New Paradigms for Educating Religiously," *Religious Education* 94, no. 3 (1999): 333.

⁵⁹ Fenggang Yang, "Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity: The Importance of Social and Cultural Contexts," *Sociology of Religion* 59, no. 3 (1998): 246.

Europeanization of Christianity,”⁶⁰ Campus Crusade has launched new efforts to Christianize Asians including those from Mainland China, Taiwan, and Korea.⁶¹

Chinese religions have long been considered as exotic religious Other. It was the eagerness to erase difference and to assert a hyper-Protestant ethic that provided early missionaries the primary motivations to Christianize China. Chinese religious practices in the late-nineteenth-century America were desacralized by Christian intellectuals.⁶² Ever growing numbers of American Christians were involved in the foreign mission enterprise to take an “errand into the wilderness” and to spread the Gospel to “uncivilized peoples.”⁶³ In Guangdong, China, early American missionaries joined the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge⁶⁴ to introduce to young Chinese boys the arts and sciences of the West along with Protestant instructions.⁶⁵ Junior colleges were set up by missionaries in the cities of Guangzhou, Fuzhou, and Nanjing. And it was the Reverend Samuel Brown who in 1847 brought to the United States Yung Wing, the first Chinese student in the country.⁶⁶

In the United States, religious leaders in the 1890s began to articulate the need for “world Christianity.” John R. Mott, general secretary of the World Student Christian

⁶⁰ R. Stephen Warner, "The De-Europeanization of American Christianity," in *Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association* (Hilton San Francisco & Renaissance Parc 55 Hotel, San Francisco, CA: 2004), 20-23.

⁶¹ Tim Stafford, "The Tiger in the Academy: Asian Americans Populate America's Elite Colleges More Than Ever--and Campus Ministries Even More Than That.(Ministry)," *Christianity Today* 50, no. 4 (2006): 70.

⁶² Laurie Maffly-Kipp, "Engaging Habits and Besotted Idolatry: Viewing Chinese Religions in the American West," *Material Religion* 1, no. 1 (2005): 75.

⁶³ William R. Hutchison, *Errand to the World : American Protestant Thought and Foreign Missions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 5.

⁶⁴ The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge was founded in 1826 in London. It was an organization that published inexpensive texts to meet the needs of the rapidly expanding reading public. It closed down in 1848. Wikipedia, "The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge," http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Society_for_the_Diffusion_of_Useful_Knowledge.

⁶⁵ Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*, 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 23.

Federation and the YMCA International Committee, introduced the Bible to Chinese students who he believed needed help in their overseas life. During summer holidays, the local YMCA in Michigan organized a Bible institute to let Chinese students learn Christianity.⁶⁷ Mott's plan for establishing the Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students (CFRFS) was believed mainly to "influence the character, spirit, and attitude of the future leaders of these Oriental and Latin American nations; and to bring the educated young men and young women of these different lands under the best influences of the Western Christian nations."⁶⁸ Mott and his associates often expressed their belief by quoting the German proverb "What you would put into the life a nation put into its schools."⁶⁹ Robert E. Speer, an American authority on missions, believed that foreign students could become ambassadors of good will and missionaries to "carry Christianity back to their own people."⁷⁰ Along with CFRFS, the Intercollegiate Student Christian Movement and the Association of Cosmopolitan Clubs were also involved in influencing foreign students.⁷¹

Chinese ministries in the United States have joined American churches' efforts to baptize Chinese students and scholars. By the 1970s, there were over two hundred Bible study groups of Chinese students,⁷² and most of the members were from Hong Kong or Taiwan. They were converted by campus Christian campaigns. After 1978, when Mainland China opened its door to the Western world, its students and scholars came to study in the United States. They either joined existing Chinese churches or organized

⁶⁷ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 23.

⁶⁹ Ibid, 25.

⁷⁰ W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King, Alexander B. Davidson, ed., *The Foreign Student in America* (New York: Associate Press, 1925), Foreword.

⁷¹ Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 32.

⁷² Hai Wai Xuan Dao Xie Hui Zhong Hua, *Hai Wai Xuan Dao Za Zhi* 2, no. 1 (1973): 4.

their own Bible studies. As a result, by the year of 2000 there had been 819 Chinese Protestant churches in the United States.⁷³ Over ninety percent of them were founded by post-1965 immigrants.⁷⁴

The sharing of the same language, cultural heritage, and immigration experiences makes Chinese American ministries more effective in recruiting and converting Chinese students and scholars. Their efforts have made Christianity more culturally acceptable to Chinese students and scholars. Recent years have seen the rise of Chinese American Christian scholars such as Fenggang Yang and Russell Jueng and the emergence of Chinese intellectual missionaries like Zhiming Yuan and Bingcheng Feng. Yuan, one of the dissident student leaders in the 1989 Tiananman Incident, has contributed much to making cultural connections between Chinese and Christian cultures. He argues that God was not absent in Chinese history.⁷⁵ Chinese American scholars' efforts in reinterpreting China's religious history and contextualizing Christianity have made Chinese students and scholars more comfortable with Christian beliefs.⁷⁶ From the Tiananmen Incident in 1989 Chinese American Christians found new hopes to Christianize Chinese students who became disillusioned by the Chinese Communist Party. North America became "one of the most fruitful mission fields" for spiritual "harvest."⁷⁷ The optimism was echoed by Yang who believed that after years of political turmoil and struggles, Chinese people

⁷³ Russell Jueng, *Faithful Generations : Race and New Asian American Churches* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 4.

⁷⁴ Fenggang Yang, "Gender and Generation in a Chinese Christian Church," in *Asian American Religions: The Making and Remaking of Borders and Boundaries*, ed. Tony Carnes, Fenggang Yang (New York: NY: New York University Press, 2004), 210.

⁷⁵ Wenjie Xie, Yuan Zhiming, Qin Chuan, Wang Hanting., *Shenzhou China's Confession* (Petaluma, CA: Shen Zhou Chuan Bo Xie Hui, 2000).

⁷⁶ Yuting Wang and Fenggang Yang, "More Than Evangelical and Ethnic: The Ecological Factor in Chinese Conversion to Christianity in the United States," *Sociology of Religion* 67, no. 2 (2006): 186.

⁷⁷ Tsu-Kung Chuang, *Ripening Harvest: Mission Strategy for Mainland Chinese Intellectuals in North America* (Paradise, PA: Ambassadors for Christ Inc., 1995), 1.

longed for peace, love, and trust. Their openness toward the Gospel in the 1990s was amazing and exciting to church leaders.⁷⁸

The desire for peace, love and trust is shared by peoples all over the world, both Christians and non-Christians. Secular factors are also found to have been specifically responsible for Chinese students' conversion to Christianity. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a strong sense of cultural inferiority made Chinese students eager to imitate the West in every possible way. Westernization was widely practiced and many of them adopted Christianity which was believed to be an essential element of being a westerner.⁷⁹ Hating to be called traitors, those Christian students defended their conversion by arguing that Christianity was supranational and that they joined it simply to create a better society.⁸⁰ Other social and cultural contextual factors identified by Brian Hall, such as the collapse of traditional Chinese culture, western modernization, and the prestige of Christianity,⁸¹ are also applicable to the group of Chinese students in American universities. These students are generally curious about American Christian culture.⁸² Meanwhile, they are practically-minded and show interest in anything that promises measurable benefits.⁸³ It has been the hope to find a solution to China's problem, a sense of crisis in the spiritual and economic life in the-twentieth-century

⁷⁸ Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America : Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 85.

⁷⁹ Y. C. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872-1949* (Chapel Hill,: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), 93.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 223.

⁸¹ Brian Hall, "Social and Cultural Contexts in Conversion to Christianity among Chinese American College Students," *Sociology of Religion* 67, no. 2 (2006).

⁸² Wang and Yang, "More Than Evangelical and Ethnic: The Ecological Factor in Chinese Conversion to Christianity in the United States," 190.

⁸³ Elmer Yelton, "The Attitude of the Foreign Student toward Christianity," in *The Foreign Student in America*, ed. W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King, Alexander B. Davidson (New York, NY: Association Press, 1922), 196.

China that has led some Chinese intellectuals to look beyond traditional Chinese culture and turn to Christianity.⁸⁴

In their encounter with American cultural and religious influences, Chinese students and scholars have not been passive receivers. They are curious about the different American culture; they are open to new concepts and ideas; they are also responsive to forces that they hope to be able to influence China. But concerning what specific influence can be taken back to China and in what ways American influences will be accepted into Chinese society and culture, the process becomes complicated and elusive. First of all, Chinese students and scholars have their own preference and judgments. Then, some of them will seek permanent residence in the United States after the completion of their study. Also, the home culture in China is decisive in how to handle the influence from abroad. All these factors contribute to the resistance and autonomy exhibited by Chinese students in their encounter with American influences.

⁸⁴ Feng Zhang, *Hafo Xin Ying Lu = Hafo Xinging Lu*, Di 1 ban. ed., Shi Jie Ming Xiao Wen Hua Cong Lu (Shanghai: Shanghai ming xiao wen yi chu ban she, 2000), 202-03.

2. Cultural Resistance and Autonomy

月是故乡明。

The moon shines brighter in my hometown.

--- Du Fu (712-770) Chinese poet

China was never totally colonized by the West, but its history since the mid-nineteenth century had been characterized by a strong sense of crisis in national identity and sovereignty. From 1949 to 1978, anti-imperialism was propagated to mobilize people against western cultural invasion and economic exploitation. The opening policy adopted in 1978 changed China's anti-western propaganda, but the government has been very cautious in its relations with the West. In reality, either before or after China became a Communist country, its resistance against western control and assimilation never subsided. China used to be open to foreign civilizations, but China's sense of insecurity due to years of unequal relations with the West results in its suspicion over Western influences.

China's defeat in the Opium Wars awakened its arrogant policy makers to the hard fact that the country was far behind Western powers. The Chinese study abroad movement started then and has persisted till today on an ever larger scale than any time in Chinese history. In dealing with foreign civilizations, a popular Chinese slogan reveals a generally accepted principle: one should reject the dross while absorbing the essence. Lu Xun, one of the most influential modern Chinese writers, advocates active "grabism" to achieve renewal of Chinese culture – to grab from foreign cultures what was good and useful for

China.⁸⁵ The essence that China has been coveting since its opening up is not western-style participatory democratic movement, but mainly economic reforms through advanced science and technology of western countries.⁸⁶ The dilemma for China is how to guard against foreign encroachment while borrowing from western cultures.⁸⁷

In the Chinese late Qing dynasty when the demand for science and technology was not as urgent as today, the arrogant government chose to close its door to western countries than have their influence. It used to ban foreign missionaries from engaging in any educational activities in China.⁸⁸ The Chinese Educational Mission, which intended to send 120 students to the United States in four installments between 1872 and 1875, came to a halt in 1881 because of strong criticism by Chinese officials who were worried about the Americanization of Chinese students.⁸⁹ Those students were blamed for being “too specialized in skills, too individualistic in attitude, too aloof from the masses.”⁹⁰ According to a survey by the China Institute in America, the Chinese Education Mission was brought to an end by Beijing’s alarm over the possibility that the students might be influenced by American republican or anti-monarchical ideas.⁹¹

In modern Chinese history, returning students were likened to Prometheus. They brought Western knowledge home to save China. But they could also become Icarus who indulged in the free flight so much that finally he plunged into the sea. Getting too close

⁸⁵ Longxi Zhang, "Western Theory and Chinese Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 19, no. 1 (1992): 107.

⁸⁶ Craig Calhoun, "The Ideology of Intellectuals and the Chinese Student Protest Movement of 1989," *Praxis International* 10, no. 1+2 (1990): 144.

⁸⁷ U.S.-China Education Clearinghouse. et al., *An Introduction to Education in the People's Republic of China and U.S.-China Educational Exchanges* (Washington, D.C.: The Committee : The Association, 1980), 3.

⁸⁸ Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 26.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 177.

⁹¹ China Institute in America. Committee on Survey of Chinese Students in American Colleges and Universities., *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years. In Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Graduation of the First Chinese from an American University, Yung Wing, B.A., Yale 1854. A Prelim. Report* (New York,: 1954), 5.

to the sun of American culture could be hurtful. After decades of sending students to the United States, Western-style education was still considered incompatible with Chinese traditions and thus remained marginal in China.⁹² The pre-1950 Chinese government liked to see students bring home Western knowledge, but it did not want them to be westernized for fear that the students would become less loyal to Chinese culture.⁹³ When the American-educated students returned, they often encountered suspicion or resistance of various degrees. After all, being acculturated overseas, how could they prove that they could strengthen China while keeping it free from foreign encroachment? Both in Taiwan and the Mainland, American-trained students were criticized for having individualistic and materialistic attitudes that were typical of Americans.⁹⁴ American-style education institutions in China met the same fate. Each of the early missionary colleges like Yenching University in Beijing, Lingnan University in Guangdong, and St. John's University in Shanghai produced lasting effects on Chinese society. However, none of them achieved their intended goals to "Christianize" China. Christianity was seen as a threat to Chinese learning,⁹⁵ so instead of the spread of the Christian faith, even the missionary colleges emphasized natural sciences which were believed to be more useful.

Chinese leaders since the adoption of the open-door policy in late 1970s have been challenged by two major problems created by sending students abroad: the brain drain and the spread of Western ideas. Many students admire the economic prosperity, political stability, and freedom in the United States, and choose to delay their return or to stay

⁹² Li, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*, 3.

⁹³ Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams : Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000*, 20.

⁹⁴ Leo A. Orleans and Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (U.S.), *Chinese Students in America : Policies, Issues, and Numbers* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1988), 66.

⁹⁵ Qian and Chu, *Chinese Students Encounter America*, xvii. Wang, *Chinese Intellectuals and the West, 1872-1949*, 45.

permanently.⁹⁶ To bring the students and scholars back home and to avoid westernization, Chinese policy-makers impose strict standards on the selection of personnel for government-sponsored overseas study programs and adjust domestic policies against excessive westernization. Students' loyalty to the motherland, party membership, and commitment to the national construction cause are all measured more heavily than other requirements such as English proficiency and professional competence.⁹⁷ Personnel over thirty-five years old run a greater chance of getting selected. They are believed to have developed a more mature and stable sense of loyalty to the home government.⁹⁸ A study by Zhao and Xie upholds the belief that the older the Chinese students, the less subject they are to foreign influence.⁹⁹

Domestically, China often alerts people to excessive westernization and takes measures to reduce undesirable western influence. In late 1980s China launched a widespread campaign against western countries' "cultural corrosion" and "spiritual pollution" of China. Those who admired or advocated western-style individualism and democracy were charged with "bourgeois liberalism."¹⁰⁰ As a consequence, liberal theorists of the Communist Party were attacked and liberal publications were closed.¹⁰¹ In 1981-1983, Chinese government temporarily forbade undergraduate and graduate

⁹⁶ David Zweig, Changgui Chen, and Stanley Rosen, *China's Brain Drain to the United States : Views of Overseas Chinese Students and Scholars in the 1990s* (Berkeley: Institute of East Asian Studies, University of California, Berkeley, Center for Chinese Studies, 1995).

⁹⁷ Orleans and Committee on Scholarly Communication with the People's Republic of China (U.S.), *Chinese Students in America : Policies, Issues, and Numbers*, 26-31.

⁹⁸ Ruth Hayhoe, "China's Universities since Tiananmen: A Critical Assessment," *The China Quarterly*, no. 134 (1993): 308.

⁹⁹ Xinshu Zhao and Yu Xie, "Western Influence on (People's Republic of China) Chinese Students in the United States," *Comparative Education Review* 36, no. 4 (1992).

¹⁰⁰ Li, *Bridging Minds across the Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-2003*, 3, Stacey Bieler, "Patriots" Or "Traitors"? : A History of American-Educated Chinese Students (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2004), 353.

¹⁰¹ Bieler, "Patriots" Or "Traitors"? : A History of American-Educated Chinese Students, 354.

students from studying abroad.¹⁰² Children of senior cadres were forbidden, too.¹⁰³ All other government-funded scholars had to go through political conformity censure and morality and accountability clearances by their employers and public security agencies before they could set sail for overseas study.¹⁰⁴

The Chinese preference of natural sciences and engineering over social sciences and humanities has also hindered American influence from traveling to China through education exchange. In China, the government has given absolute priority to natural sciences in its funding of study abroad programs.¹⁰⁵ Scholarships for studying social sciences and humanities overseas are usually very competitive and limited to a handful of universities in central cities like Beijing and Shanghai. This imbalance between social sciences and natural sciences is also due to China's obsession since the 1980s with science and technology as key indicators of a country's national strength. In contrast, social sciences are often viewed as less useful and even politically dangerous.¹⁰⁶

The relationship between social sciences and politics is different in China and the United States, but social sciences are not value free in either country. If the relationship between social sciences and the external social and political forces is informal and dialectical in the United States, in China it is formal and static with social sciences and humanities expected to help achieve specific social or cultural goals set by the government.¹⁰⁷ The American scholarly environment might seem "free" or "amorphous

¹⁰² Danni Lu, "The Evolution of China's Policies for Study Abroad in 1980s," in *Liu Xue Sheng Yu Zhong Guo Wen Hua*, ed. Xisuo Li (Tianjin: Nankai University Press, 2005), 407-08.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Maddox, "Academic Exchange: The Goals and Roles of U.S. Universities," 133-34.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Richard Madsen, "Institutional Dynamics of Cross-Cultural Communication: U.S.-China Exchange in the Humanities and Social Sciences," in *Educational Exchanges: Essays on the Sino-American Experience*,

and anarchic,”¹⁰⁸ humanities and social sciences are actually “supported” departments held accountable to the government or to other external funding institutions.¹⁰⁹ Tiryakian observes that however scientific or objective that American social sciences or humanities claim their research methods or results to be, they are the spill-over of the revived American evangelistic impulse of mission targeting both home and overseas.¹¹⁰ With deep suspicion over the ability of American social sciences to serve the Chinese value system, China lacks sufficient incentives to get American-style social science education. The underrepresentation of social sciences and humanities in the exchange programs cuts two ways. It keeps China from being exposed to foreign influence critical of the legitimacy of Chinese politics, but it also slows down China’s political reform and cultural modernization. Chinese history in the twentieth century shows that neglecting liberal arts education is often accompanied by the emergence of militaristic, authoritarian, or ideological, fanatic leadership.¹¹¹

The process of return and resettlement of American-educated students and scholars is not always smooth. Many times, they have a hard time readjusting to the life and work climate back home. Their returning journey is often turned bumpy by problems like coworkers’ jealousy, the society’s lack of respect for their new knowledge, and people’s assumption that only incompetent students return.¹¹² In the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, one of the top national policy consultative agencies, only four percent of the

ed. Joyce K. Kallgren, Denis Fred Simon (Berkeley, CA: Institute of East Asian Studies of University of California, 1987), 195.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 196.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 193-194.

¹¹⁰ Tiryakian, "American Religious Exceptionalism: A Reconsideration," 46.

¹¹¹ Li, *Bridging Minds across the Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-2003*, 99.

¹¹² ———, *U.S.-China Educational Exchange : State, Society, and Intercultural Relations, 1905-1950*, 197.

research fellows are returnees.¹¹³ In Beijing University where a large proportion of the faculty is Western-educated, the reform initiative intended for internationalization suffered strong resistance from indigenously-educated faculty.¹¹⁴ Criticism came from different directions. Some opponents of the reform argued that any blind adoption of American education was doomed to fail as it could not serve the best interest of China, while others blamed the university for American-educated returnees inbreeding.¹¹⁵ The reform intensified the conflicts between returnees and teachers without overseas study experiences and similar confrontations are being repeated by other universities as more and more faculty return with foreign advanced degrees. The treatment of returnees reflects the bigger issue in China over how to maintain socialist values while tolerating the Western liberalism implicit in the process of modernization through the opening policy,¹¹⁶ and how to balance political loyalty and specialized expertise,¹¹⁷ although returnees are not necessarily politically less loyal or ideologically more liberal.

On the part of today's Chinese students and scholars, they are not too ideologically biased to borrow from the great American civilization. They are different from Chinese writer Zhu Ziqing who in the 1940s would rather starve to death than accept food donated by the United States.¹¹⁸ Nor are they so pessimistic about Sino-U.S. relations that they even hesitate to give their Chinese home addresses to the school alumni network as earlier generations of Chinese students did.¹¹⁹ The 1989 Tiananmen Incident and the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 let them calm down from the over-enthusiasm

¹¹³ ———, *Bridging Minds across the Pacific: U.S.-China Educational Exchanges, 1978-2003*, 97.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ Suzanne Ogden, *China's Unresolved Issues : Politics, Development, and Culture*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1995), 312.

¹¹⁷ Gutek, *American Education in a Global Society : Internationalizing Teacher Education*, 192.

¹¹⁸ Yuan, "Chinese Intellectuals and the United States: The Dilemma of Individualism Vs. Patriotism," 648.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

about American-style democracy and rethink China's standing in the world. Since then, strong nationalism and a determination to revive China have prevailed among them.¹²⁰ If pre-Tiananmen intellectuals held a utopian dream about the ability of American ideology to save China from crises, the post-Tiananmen generation de-Romanticizes the United States and call for an end to the Westernized mindset in China's modernization process.¹²¹ Chinese intellectuals have regained momentum for modernizing China through their own native culture and traditions,¹²² although they do not deny the value of borrowing from foreign civilizations.

If in the past century and a half, Chinese intellectuals have been searching over the Western world for effective ways of saving China from national crises, they have only occasionally found Christianity appealing to them in contrast to their persistent interest in the advanced science and technology of Western powers. Being either the religious other or the atheist communists, Chinese have always been considered a race foreign to Protestantism and the target to be redeemed by the American religious crusade. While some Chinese students were converted during their time in the United States, their return has not changed the atheist climate of China. After ups and downs in American missionary efforts to Christianize China, the country still remains officially atheist with only a marginal proportion of the population being Christians.¹²³

¹²⁰ Suisheng Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s," *The China Quarterly*, no. 152 (1997): 738. Carol Lee Hamrin, "Advancing Religious Freedom in a Global China: Conclusions," in *God and Caesar in China: Policy Implications of Church-State Tensions*, ed. Jason Kindopp, Carol Lee Hamrin (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 172.

¹²¹ Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s," 730-31.

¹²² Hamrin, "Advancing Religious Freedom in a Global China: Conclusions," 172.

¹²³ There have been conflicting estimates about the total number of Protestants ranging from the 10 to 12 million to ten times that figure. The majority of Chinese Protestants are in rural China and the composition

Christianity was rejected by the general public in China mainly because of its association with western imperialism in Chinese history. It is understandable even to contemporary minds that when China was defeated, exploited, and humiliated by Western countries, few Chinese would stand out to embrace the religion widely practiced in the West. In the 1920s, the belief in scientism and the introduction of Western anti-religious currents to China handicapped all religions from growing or taking root in China including Christianity and native Chinese religions.¹²⁴ Later on, an anti-Christianity movement was encouraged by both the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party.¹²⁵ In the 1950s to the 1970s, all foreign religious influence was purged from China. The government organized and started the indigenization movement by introducing the three-self principles¹²⁶ of administering Chinese own Christian churches and severing all their connections with foreign churches.¹²⁷

Education in schools has been atheistic in Mainland China. During the years of the Cultural Revolution, believing in a religion was wrong, counterrevolutionary, and reactionary.¹²⁸ Atheistic education has since then been offered and received from the kindergarten all the way to college. Three decades of economic reform has loosened the

of Protestant congregations has been characterized by the "four manys": many old people, many women, many sick, and many illiterate. Ryan Dunch, "Protestant Christianity in China Today: Fragile, Fragmented, Flourishing," in *China and Christianity: Burdened Past, Hopeful Future*, ed. Stephen Uhalley Jr, Xiaoxin Wu (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2001), 202-03.

¹²⁴ Chuang, *Ripening Harvest: Mission Strategy for Mainland Chinese Intellectuals in North America*, 19.

¹²⁵ Zhaoming Deng, *Cang Sang Yu Jiong Jing : Si Shi Duo Nian La Di San Zi Ai Guo Yun Dong*, Chu ban. ed., Jing Feng Cong Shu ; Di 8 Zhong (Xianggang: Jidu jiao Zhongguo zong jiao wen hua yan jiu she, 1997), 6.

¹²⁶ The three-selfs of the movement refer to the principles of self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-governing in Christian church administration. The full name of the movement is three-self patriotic movement which marries religious belief with patriotism. The three-selfs remain China's official policy in regulating Chinese Christian churches. Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 22.

¹²⁸ Yang, *Chinese Christians in America : Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities*, 84.

Communist Party's control over people's religious belief,¹²⁹ but activities such as spreading religious ideology and recruiting young people on campus for religious purposes are illegal and religious activities by foreigners are strictly controlled. It is predicted that in the new century scientific rationality would continue to be embraced as an ethos essential to Chinese modernization.¹³⁰ With few exceptions, all students and scholars coming to study in the United States have been educated as atheists and scientific progressives.

Early records of Chinese students in the United States showed dramatic episodes of their encounter with Christianity. When the students of the China Education Mission were brought to a church service for the first time, they rushed from the church all the way back to the safety of their rooms. Under steady pressure of their host families, only a few of the students eventually converted.¹³¹ Encounters of later generations of Chinese students with Christianity might not necessarily have been so dramatic; such scenes are definitely not new to them.

Chinese students of the 1920s and 1930s were more responsive to American evangelizing efforts than earlier generations, but they sometimes would also show their bitterness. In the International House in New York, Chinese students along with students from other countries used to complain that they were religiously exploited by American Christian leaders who prioritized Christianity over all other world religions.¹³² Some

¹²⁹ Chi-Tim Lai, "Daoism in China Today, 1980-2002," in *Religion in China Today*, ed. Daniel L. Overmyer (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 112.

¹³⁰ Nancy N. Chen, "Healing Sects and Anti-Cult Campaigns," in *Religion in China Today*, ed. Daniel L. Overmyer (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 202.

¹³¹ China Institute in America. Committee on Survey of Chinese Students in American Colleges and Universities., *A Survey of Chinese Students in American Universities and Colleges in the Past One Hundred Years. In Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Graduation of the First Chinese from an American University, Yung Wing, B.A., Yale 1854. A Prelim. Report*, 13.

¹³² Bu, *Making the World Like Us : Education, Cultural Expansion, and the American Century*, 96.

Chinese students equated Christianity with any other practice of imperialist western nations toward China.¹³³ A questionnaire conducted among returning students in the 1920s by YMCA and YWCA showed that most students' attitudes toward Christianity was unaffected by their contact with Americans.¹³⁴

Apart from the afore-mentioned Christian association with imperialism, other factors are held responsible for hindering the Christianization of Chinese students. In the early decades of the twentieth century, American missionaries were criticized for their desire to teach without bothering to learn about people from other lands. The students were not treated as equals; instead, they were taught as if they came from a barbarous land.¹³⁵ Some students doubted that Christianity would be of any use to Chinese who had either their own religions or a code of ethics based on Confucianism already.¹³⁶ Science has also been competing with Christianity as the hope for reviving China. A majority of Chinese intellectuals in North America in the last decade, according to a survey, considered the conflicts between science and religion as the major barrier for them to accept Christianity.¹³⁷ Even if some really want to adopt Christianity, their status as sojourners often discourages them from becoming Christians. Once they return upon completion of their study, they will have to readjust to the atheist social context back home. Other ensuing problems would be where to find a suitable place for fellowship and

¹³³ Elmer Yelton, "The Attitude of the Foreign Student toward Christianity," in *The Foreign Student toward Christianity*, ed. W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King, Alexander B. Davidson (New York, NY: Association Press, 1925), 196-97.

¹³⁴ W. Reginald Wheeler, "Returned Students in Their Homelands," in *The Foreign Students in America*, ed. W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King, Alexander B. Davidson (New York, NY: Association Press, 1925), 98.

¹³⁵ Bieler, *"Patriots" Or "Traitors"?: A History of American-Educated Chinese Students*, 219-21.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Chuang, *Ripening Harvest: Mission Strategy for Mainland Chinese Intellectuals in North America*, 87.

whether being religious will obstruct their career advancement.¹³⁸ That is also why Chinese students are found more open to the gospel than visiting scholars who have to return on the basis of their visa type.¹³⁹

For those Chinese students and scholars who are converted while studying or researching in the United States, utilitarian concerns often dominate their conversion stories. “Christianity is welcomed not so much for the character of its founder or the loftiness of its ethics or the impressiveness of its history – though they all count in the final effect – as for its practical efficacy in translating ideals into action, in imparting dynamic force to moral principles, in producing an effective morality for the public life of the nation.”¹⁴⁰ Evangelical Christianity’s appeal to well-educated Chinese is found to have come from its compatibility with Confucianism whose values such as family and ascetic ethics still defines the converts’ Chinese identity.¹⁴¹ Many nationalist Chinese Christian intellectuals seek in Christianity a solution to China’s perceived social ills.¹⁴²

Field studies of Chinese American churches reveal the constant utilitarian theme as an important motivation for many student converts. In Kwai Hang Ng’s research, some converts believed that specific material and psychological benefits could be brought about by joining ethnic Christian churches and “a wider social network, better

¹³⁸ Bieler, *"Patriots" Or "Traitors"?: A History of American-Educated Chinese Students*, 221.

¹³⁹ Chuang, *Ripening Harvest: Mission Strategy for Mainland Chinese Intellectuals in North America*, 109. Also, a visiting scholar is often issued by U.S. Department of State a J-1 visa which is subject to the "two year rule". A holder of the J-1 visa is required to reside outside of the United States for two years following the time in the United States. In contrast, an F-1 visa, which is issued to an foreign citizen who has developed a study plan on his/her own, does not bear such a requirement.

¹⁴⁰ Y.Y. Tsu, "The Political and Religious Background of Students Coming to America," in *The Foreign Students in America*, ed. W. Reginald Wheeler, Henry H. King, Alexander B. Davidson (New York, NY: Association Press, 1925), 45.

¹⁴¹ Yang, "Chinese Conversion to Evangelical Christianity: The Importance of Social and Cultural Contexts."

¹⁴² I. Buruma, "The Pilgrimage from Tiananmen Square," *The New York Times Magazine*, April 11 1999.

educational resources, and greater trust and support.”¹⁴³ As Christians, few Chinese congregants called themselves sinners or mentioned their Christian born-again experience. God in their minds was not only a savior, but also a friend, a co-worker, and a tutelage agent that was able to offer concrete blessings.¹⁴⁴ Instead of the “Rice-Bowl Christians” as early Chinese immigrants in the United States were referred to, Andrew Abel saw “favor fishing and punch-bowl Christians” among Chinese congregations composed largely Chinese students and scholars in a college town. One fifth of baptized members surveyed by Abel admitted that their Christian faith was “only seldom or sometimes” important, and that their lifeless church activities were in stark contrast to the spirited social periods that followed.¹⁴⁵ Christianity participates in the identity construction of some young and well-educated Chinese who consider belief in Jesus a symbol of modernity. This view is shared by many Chinese students and scholars who come to study in the United States. In contrast to the traditional image of religions as conservative or restrictive, Christianity is associated with modernity in the eyes of some well-educated Chinese young people.¹⁴⁶

The conversions of Chinese students and scholars in the United States resonate with the recent rise of “Christianity fever” among their intellectual counterparts at home.¹⁴⁷

These Chinese intellectuals are not Christians, nor are they affiliated with Christian

¹⁴³ Kwai Hang Ng, "Seeking the Christian Tutelage: Agency and Culture in Chinese Immigrants' Conversion to Christianity," *Sociology of Religion* 63, no. 2 (2002): 197.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Andrew Abel, "Favor Fishing and Punch-Bowl Christians: Ritual and Conversion in a Chinese Protestant Church," *Sociology of Religion* 67, no. 2 (2006): 164.

¹⁴⁶ Fenggang Yang, "Lost in the Market, Saved at McDonald's: Conversion to Christianity in Urban China," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44, no. 4 (2005).

¹⁴⁷ The "Christianity fever" is part of the "cultural fever" and "Western learning fever" that took place simultaneously in the 1980s. The "fevers" represent nationalist Chinese intellectuals' urgent desire to modernized China by criticizing traditional Chinese culture and Chinese national character and by studying Western classics. See Zhao, "Chinese Intellectuals' Quest for National Greatness and Nationalistic Writing in the 1990s," 727-28.

organizations. But they study Christianity as one of the world religions and a cultural phenomenon at public research institutes.¹⁴⁸ Their emergence marks a shift in Chinese government's attitude towards religion from being the opposite of socialism and science to being a cultural product.¹⁴⁹ The motivation for the Christianity fever has been practical, too. It is to examine how Christianity can serve Chinese needs and how the Christian theology can be used to revitalize Chinese culture.¹⁵⁰

The Chinese utilitarian way of treating Christianity has not changed much over the history of educational exchange between the United States and China. From the slogan of the Chinese Students' Christian Association in the early twentieth century: "Christianize China with China-ized Christianity"¹⁵¹ to today's "punch-bowl Christians," Chinese student- and scholar- Christians in the United States have been expecting practical returns out of following the faith. If Christianity is regarded as an instrument for gaining worldly benefits, or if Christians' God is re-conceptualized into a god's image as in China's popular religion that serves man's needs, the difference between whether Christianity is appropriated and whether Chinese are Christianized is blurred.

¹⁴⁸ Cunfu Chen, "Ji Du Tu Xian Xian De Zong Lan Yu Fan Si," in *Wen Hua Ji Du Tu: Xian Xiang Yu Lun Zheng, Cultural Christians: Phenomenon and Argument*, ed. Institute of Sino-Christian Studies (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, 1997).

¹⁴⁹ Linshu Chen, "Studies on Religions in Modern China," *Numen* 41, no. 1 (1994): 81-82.

¹⁵⁰ Chuang, *Ripening Harvest: Mission Strategy for Mainland Chinese Intellectuals in North America*.

¹⁵¹ Bieler, *"Patriots" Or "Traitors"? : A History of American-Educated Chinese Students*, 222.

Part II

Missionary Montage – Local Christian Influence

My experience in the midwestern university town of Lawrence started with my midnight meeting with Ella who came to pick me up at Kansas City Airport. Ella is the wife of Lawrence Evangelical Chinese Church's pastor Joseph. She was introduced to me by a Chinese-American Christian whom I knew when he visited China as a member of an American cultural exchange delegation.¹⁵² Ella and I had a few email exchanges about the airport pick-up and housing options in Lawrence before I left China. Many KU Chinese students come to Lawrence through this type of voluntary pick-up service offered by local Christians. I was put up for the night in Ella's home. The second day was Sunday. I was told that I could visit an American church which I knew later was the Mustard Seed Christian Fellowship. I had never been to a Christian church before and did not want to miss the opportunity to visit one. My curiosity about Christianity and naivete about the mission-driven Christian culture did not allow me a second thought before I went there with Ella although I might have needed more rest due to jet lag. At the church, I was introduced to Julie, a renowned name among Chinese students and scholars at KU. In fact, even if Ella had not taken me to the American church that day, I would have visited it sometime later. My survey and conversations with Chinese students show that many KU Chinese students and scholars had the same intellectual curiosity about the Christian culture when they came to the United States.

¹⁵² The delegation visited the school where I was a teacher. It was supposed to be a cultural exchange delegation interested in English teaching in China. Actually most delegation members were Christians. As religious teachings are forbidden in Chinese schools, the delegation did nothing more than visiting English classes. But later I knew that they introduced to some students their Christian beliefs in their personal talks with the students.

Before Chinese students visit any church or religious organization in Lawrence, a city tour is enough for them to know about the ubiquity of religious influence. A total of 82,120 residents¹⁵³ are served by well over two hundred Christian churches.¹⁵⁴ Such a churchscape might be ordinary in most American urban or rural areas where church buildings are invested with spiritual significance,¹⁵⁵ but it never fails to attract the attention of Chinese visitors who are from an overall atheist and non-Christian culture. If in China, college students pay a visit to a church or a temple only on very unusual occasions, here in Lawrence where a church is just around the corner, the psychological as well as the physical distance is greatly shortened between the Chinese students and religion.

Religious presence on campus is another important cultural difference between China and the United States. For the first time in their educational experience, the Chinese students see stands of religious groups at the school orientation. Later on, they may find that not only religious organizations offer activities on campus but also a few religious personnel have offices in university-owned buildings. The availability of religious influence on campus and the credence students usually give to university administration with regard to campus culture disarm the Chinese students of their initial caution against religious groups, which makes further contact between them and campus religious groups possible. Therefore, once invited, new Chinese students are very likely to agree to visit a local church or participate in local church activities.

¹⁵³ Census Bureau U.S., "State and County Quick Facts," <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/20/2038900.html>.

¹⁵⁴ Yellow Book USA, *Yellow Book, 2007-2008: Lawrence/Ottawa* (Yellow Book USA, Inc., 2007).

¹⁵⁵ Wilbur Zelinsky, "The Uniqueness of the American Religious Landscape," *Geographical Review* 91, no. 3 (2001): 565-85.

There are many evangelical Christian groups and organizations active on KU campus. Those appealing to Chinese students include but not limited to International Friends, Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church, Mustard Seed Christian Fellowship, Grace Presbyterian Evangelical Church, Campus Christians, and Nation 2 Nation.¹⁵⁶ They work together as religious advisors for KU students. After nearly two years of study at KU, I have known Julie from Mustard Seed Christian Fellowship, Lucas and Daniel from Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Landon from Campus Christians, and most members of the Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church. Some of them are more active in providing practical help to international students than others; while others are more interested in cultivating international students' spiritual preference for Christianity or even evangelizing them. My next part concentrates on Julie, Lucas, and the Chinese church as a group. They are all very devoted Christians, although they might have different ways of presenting their faith to foreign students.

Julie

A white American lady in her late fifties, Julie has been working with international students since the early 1990s. Born to a father who is one of the founders of the Mustard Seed Christian Fellowship, Julie is very committed to spreading the “good news” among foreign students particularly among students and scholars from China. Julie does not work for the church for a living, but her commitment to her mission is comparable to that of any full-time church employees. Julie has her own way of approaching and serving

¹⁵⁶ From campus flyers of KU International Student and Scholar Services, August 2007. Other campus religious organizations for KU students include Amitabha Buddhist Association, Ecumenical Christian Ministries, Hillel KU, and Muslim Student Association. Cosponsoring organizations and ministries of campus religious activities include but not limit to First Presbyterian Church College Ministry, Lutheran Campus Ministry (ELCA), Campus Christians, University Christian Fellowship, etc.

international students. The first Sunday of every month, she invites international students to her home for lunch. Sometimes, especially at the beginning of a semester, her international lunch can be so crowded with new students that some have to eat in the back yard of her home. Julie has kept a tradition of taking pictures of everyone who has visited her home. So far, she has accumulated several albums of students and scholars from all over the world. And those from China account for a big portion of her international visitors. Here is one of the many invitations that Julie has sent to international students for her fun and church activities.¹⁵⁷

Hi, this is Julie. I'm with International Friends. For the past 17 years, my husband, Will, and I have had a LUNCH at our home for international students and scholars the first Sunday of every month!

Usually at the September lunch, we meet a lot of new internationals, which is GREAT!

Americans will provide the food, so just come and join us for good food and good conversation!

What date? Sunday, September 2

Time? 12:15pm

Place? xxx 31st Street

We met about 15 NEW students at the August lunch. I will have your photo in my book and have an extra print for you to take home.

If you would like a ride to the LUNCH, contact us!

Home: xxx-xxxx. Will cell: xxx-xxxx. Julie cell:xxx-xxxx

You can also attend church with us before the lunch, if you wish. Just let us know!

Through years of working with international students, Julie has made lots of Chinese friends. Compared with KU students from other countries, Julie said, Chinese students showed more interest in American culture in general and in Christianity specifically.

¹⁵⁷Julie sends such emails nearly every week.

Being already a grandma, Julie is back to school as a part-time student of Chinese. Her interest in the language and culture of China and her efforts towards the acquisition of Chinese linguistic and cultural knowledge will help her communicate with KU Chinese students and scholars more effectively.¹⁵⁸ Julie went to China several years ago and stayed there for a summer as an English teacher in the southern province of Guangdong.¹⁵⁹ Given that China prohibits public religious propaganda in all its schools, working as an English teacher for a local school has been reported as a typical guise for a foreign missionary to take the “good news” to Chinese people.¹⁶⁰ Julie will be visiting China again in a few months.

Julie’s church of the Mustard Seed has been active in exporting Christianity over the U.S. border. In its mission statement the church makes it clear that its Doorstep Ministries seeks to “evangelize international students and families at K.U.”. Its slogan is to “Change Lawrence, Change the World.”¹⁶¹ It encourages its member Christians to “start small but grow big”, and to take God’s assignments to reach out as a host family, conversation partner, Bible study partner, or simply as an English teacher to family members of international students and scholars.¹⁶² The church finances overseas mission projects of its members as well as other churches. In May 2008, a young family just left for a Central American country on their missionary journey.

By working with KU international students, Julie contributes to her church’s global evangelizing campaign without leaving the United States. She offers different activities

¹⁵⁸ Stacey Bieler and Dick Andrews, *China at Your Doorstep: Christian Friendships with Mainland Chinese* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1987), 17.

¹⁵⁹ As a neighboring province of Hong Kong and as one of the few Chinese coastal provinces that experimented with Special Economic Zones, Guangdong saw the comeback of foreign missionaries shortly after the implementation of China's open door policy.

¹⁶⁰ Nicholas Tapp, "China: A Pandora's Box?," *Anthropology Today* 2, no. 2 (1986): 10-12.

¹⁶¹ See the church's website at www.mustardseedchurch.com

¹⁶² Ibid.

and services to engage international students. Besides the international lunch, once a year on KU campus, Julie gives out free household items donated by members of the Mustard Seed for the “housewarming” of foreign students. Donated items include chinaware, furniture, and electrical appliances. The Mustard Seed also encourages its members to come out to welcome foreign students by driving them on a “tour of Lawrence.” Christian volunteers also drive their trucks and help foreign students move furniture or other heavy household objects. After the initial contacts, Julie takes down new students’ names, phone numbers, or email addresses and invites them to her other activities very soon. Julie’s hospitality is impressive to Chinese students and scholars who have just started their new lives in Lawrence and who are still wary of religion and church people.

Services and recreational activities offered by the church help build Chinese students’ positive impressions of the church and make them less wary of its religious purpose. Julie takes international students to the Renaissance Festival at the beginning of the fall semester to ease out their anxieties in a new environment. Visiting the festival is free for students and Julie gives out the tickets before they leave for the festival. There the students see a village built to resemble sixteenth-century England with winding dirt paths. They listen to Scottish music and watch many shows featuring ancient people like knights and kings. That is an exotic and interesting experience for all international students except those from Europe. Another recreational activity that is repeated every year or every semester is the introductory golf class. Julie and her husband take foreign students to the Eagle Bend Golf Course and practice golf. By organizing those activities, Julie knows more international students and understands them better.

After a trust relationship is established through initial contacts, Julie starts to invite international students to Bible studies or church services offered by the Mustard Seed church. After the church service, Julie and her husband often reward the students who participate in church services by taking them to lunch at local buffets or pizza restaurants. Usually American Christians who want to eat together with international students have to pay for their own meals. Only international students are billed to Julie, and eventually to the Mustard Seed's Doorstep Ministry. There are students who have no apparent interest in the religion but only in free meals or the opportunity to network. But it seems that Julie does not care. I was confused and could not help asking her once. She said that she just tried to show the love of God and that she was simply doing what Paul did in the Bible, that was, to be all things to all the people. She is happy as long as international students go to her activities and keep themselves open to the Christian influence.

The real Christian education happens with the start of a ten-session program, the Alpha course, among international students. The program is designed to introduce the basics of Christianity to non-believers.¹⁶³ It is scheduled to fit into the KU school timeline. During the fall and spring semesters, the course is offered at the Mustard Seed and attended by both foreign students and Lawrence residents. Very few American students are there. But during summertime when most international students can relax a bit from their school work, the Alpha course is offered at Julie's house where it is able to attract quite a big group of students every week. In her email to international students, Julie often refers to taking the Alpha course as an opportunity to practice English, to meet friends, to enjoy nice food, and to know Jesus. Every Alpha night starts with well-prepared food. So when Julie emails the students, she never forgets to highlight the food.

¹⁶³ The program is developed by Nicky Gumbel, an ordained Anglican priest, vicar, and author.

To avoid being regarded as pushing international students for Christianity, Julie assures the students that all opinions are welcome and that the program is open for discussion. But the fact is that even if the students have different opinions, they would like to let them go. During my observation period, I saw only one international student from Nepal stand up and argue with surrounding Christians about the superiority of the Christian God to gods of other world religions. On an Alpha night, international students first watch a DVD program featuring one of the ten talks for about forty five minutes. Then they have a group discussion. It is through the group discussion that Julie can really understand how the students view Christianity and how much of the Christian belief has been accepted or rejected. Many times, the discussion turns into a question-and-answer session with Julie, her husband, and her father answering questions or clarifying confusions the students raise about the Christian beliefs.

The Alpha course often concludes with a weekend retreat featuring group praying and religious immersion. The most recent retreats were held at a Christian camping and conference center located near Manhattan, two hours away from Lawrence. Weeks before the retreat, Julie begins to email international students and advertise for it. The moment one arrives at the center, one would be impressed with its strong religious atmosphere created by a big cross standing on the top of the hill not far away and biblical quotations carved on stones or wooden boards scattered around buildings. The slogan “Jesus is Lord” is painted large on the slope of the hill opposite the buildings. Some biblical quotations are particularly thought-provoking, such as “If you won’t praise Him, I will” (Luke 19:40) and “He is risen.”

Even if one is not impressed by the religious atmosphere created by the landscape, subsequent religious programs would seldom allow participants to think about other things than the Bible and God. There are no televisions in guest rooms or cell phone connection in the area. Major activities are purely religious, including team praying, the Bible study, and witness sharing. Sitting around the bonfire at night, people keep talking about the Bible, their witnesses, or other religious experiences. If they sing, they sing hymns to praise God. For Christians or those who are interested in such a religious experience, the retreat can be a place for self-renewal and self-transcendence as Julie describes it, but for some others, it can be boring. Then one can not help wondering why they go there if they have no interest in the religion? In my talk with Chinese students who have been to a retreat, some of them told me that they went there because they had thought that it was another recreational trip. To attract more student participants, Julie did emphasize in her email the natural beauty there and some fun activities.¹⁶⁴

Even if you haven't come to Alpha class, you can attend the weekend away. Just let us know SOON, if you want to come. We must give the ranch a number at the end of this week.

We will go to LIVING WATER RANCH near Manhattan, Kansas (about 2 hours away). To me, the smooth rolling green scenery of the Flint Hills is the most peaceful place in Kansas. I hope you can come and rest and receive something good from God.

We have so much fun at that place. There is hiking, canoeing, a firepit for our Friday night singing and wonderful time for conversations. We will be learning about the Holy Spirit during the weekend. I guarantee you will feel the presence of God in that beautiful, rural place.

Julie takes good care of the concerns of international students as long as they take the Alpha course or attend church services. I used to take my seven-year-old daughter to the Alpha course in the evening. A day or two before the Alpha course, Julie would contact

¹⁶⁴ From an email Julie sent to international students.

me to let me know that babysitter(s) were hired. When I mentioned to her that I did not want to incur extra babysitting expenses for her, she told me not to worry about that because babysitting fees were part of the cost of the Mustard Seed's Doorstep Ministry. Once when she learned that my daughter would conclude her piano lessons with a recital, she brought her husband and her father to the recital hall in spite of the cold weather in December. My intellectual interest in Christianity gave Julie the illusion that I might convert. As a result, her religious commitment turned into an invisible debt and pressure on me when I knew that I could not become a Christian as she had been expecting. Many times I felt like escaping had I not been there collecting materials for my thesis. Other Chinese students had already escaped after a few visits to Julie's activities, although they agreed that she was a nice person.

To maintain the science-oriented foreign students' steady interest in Christianity, Julie has to compromise her suspicion over modern science and borrow authority from the higher education system. She and her husband have always been critical of the secular American education system and believe that university professors do nothing more than making a living by propagating and profiting on their so-called "sciences." However, working with international students who come to learn the most advanced science and technology from American professors, Julie can not spread the Gospel far without recognizing the value of university education. Whenever Julie or her husband introduces guest speakers whom they invite to give talks on Christianity, they would highlight the speakers' educational backgrounds and academic titles, preferably university professors, scientists, or doctoral degree holders, to add weight to what the speakers preach. Recently,

Julie invited a senior IBM engineer with a master's degree from the University of Missouri and a pastor with a doctoral degree from UCLA.

By taking different means to engage international students in her religious activities, Julie sends them a clear message that Christianity is the only religion worth believing in the world. Actually, she is so committed to her belief and so ready to convert atheists and non-Christians that she does not look aside at other religions or allow the students any room to compare, which turns her religious activities into a one-way channel of cross-cultural communication. Most Chinese students are atheists, but they are not necessarily anti-religion. They tend to interpret Julie's religious enthusiasm as her hospitality and friendship. Still, many of them are uncomfortable with her single-mindedness and discrimination against other world religions.

Lucas

Lucas works for the Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Lawrence as an elder and a minister. He is better known by international students as the principal organizer of International Friends, a KU campus religious network through the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship which seeks to evangelize international students in the United States. International Friends is not supported by a single church, but by interdenominational cooperation between local Christian churches. The Grace church is one of its many sponsors, and evangelizing international students is an important part of the church's global missionary commitment. The church's Mission Team aims to "take the message of the Gospel of Christ to all the world."¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁵ From the online mission statement of the church at <http://www.gepc.org>.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship, the national Christian organization under which Lucas operates the International Friends, works with over 33,000 students on 577 campuses in the United States and impacts foreign students through its International Student Ministries.¹⁶⁶ In justifying its religious impact on foreign students, Interservice Christian Fellowship states that one fourth of the world's future leaders are today's international students who on their return "are taking their learning, leadership experience and commitment to Jesus Christ, and are having an impact for the Gospel in their home countries in churches, universities, the workplace, missions and governments."¹⁶⁷ Lucas shares the same vision and expects international students to play special roles in their home social and political structures.

Lucas's inspiration for the International Friends came from his missionary experience in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s. When the former Soviet Union was disintegrated in 1991, Lucas was in the Republic of Ukraine. He witnessed the end of the Cold War and historic changes of global significance. Lucas has been very excited over that experience, and often refers to it when he introduces himself to international students. Concerning the religious future of China, the largest Socialist country in the world after the disintegration of the former Soviet Union, Lucas is very confident of what he has been doing among Chinese students. He believes that Chinese students are generally easy to relate to as they have little or no knowledge about Jesus or the Bible when they come to the United States. Lucas predicts that God has a special plan for China which he expects to become the center of Christianity in the future world.

¹⁶⁶ InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, "International Student Ministry," <http://www.intervarsity.org/ism/page.php?id=42>.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

Having been created by Lucas in 1995, International Friends offers a series of services and programs to approach and influence KU foreign students. It operates with wide community support. In September 2007, it had around seventy-five American Christian student volunteers and a hundred community members.¹⁶⁸ Important activities of International Friends include Friendship Family, Conversation Partner, and English classes. Lucas is involved in the running of some of the activities, but not all. He is unable to go to the detail that Julie does to take care of international student's practical needs given the size of International Friends. Instead, he is responsible for creating or exploring educational opportunities to expose foreign students to the American Christian culture in order for them to "know Jesus" and to make mental transformations by themselves.

Conversation Partner has been a program that engages international students widely. It is operated on the belief that such an opportunity to improve English and to understand the American culture is much needed among international students. Useful information on how to find a conversation partner is easily available on campus. In my interview with Lucas, he told me about his original thought to start the conversation partner program. He felt that international students were surrounded by Americans but there was no one to talk to. Realizing the great need for such a program among foreign students, Lucas designed a semester-long sixteen-session curriculum for the program with each session comprised of activities such as pronunciation, chats, and idioms and proverbs. He also included articles about Kansas history and stories of Christian festivals like Christmas and Easter as conversation materials.

¹⁶⁸ Terry Rombeck, "Circle of Friends," *Lawrence Journal World*, http://www2.ljworld.com/news/2007/sep/22/circle_friends/.

Lucas did not forget to build religious influence into the program curriculum. One important requirement for being a conversation partner is the belief in Christianity. The instructions for conversation partners not only list some tips for carrying on cross-cultural communication, but also ask conversation partners to share their faith with international students.¹⁶⁹ To encourage sharing, Lucas tells the partners that eighty five percent of the internationals arriving in the United States would like to learn about the Bible and Christianity. Therefore, sharing their faith is simply to satisfy “an existing interest in your international friend” instead of pushing it.¹⁷⁰ “If you discover any interest in your faith ... give them a Bible in their language, invite them to visit your church or fellowship, read/study the Bible with them, start a four week Bible study for them and some of their friends” And then, “check for response.”¹⁷¹ To avoid confrontation or distrust from international students, Lucas suggests a slow but careful and patient way of presenting the faith. He also cautions that American Christians should not discriminate on the basis of international students’ receptiveness to the Christian belief.

Two characteristics are noteworthy for Lucas’s activities. One is that he strategically schedules his activities to semester breaks when international students can relax a bit from study and invest some time in extracurricular options. Another characteristic is that Lucas designs his activities in such a way that Christian education is built carefully into fun activities. Most of his activities look like fun, but you can not really have fun, he believes, without relating to Christianity in one way or another. One fall break night, Lucas invited me to a concert in Lawrence. The concert turned out to be an event featuring how a Native American singer converted to Christianity. It still was a concert,

¹⁶⁹ An instruction page is distributed to every conversation partner.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

but it was more like a converting campaign. Every fall semester, Lucas's church sponsors the Carnival Festival and the Square Dance. Both events attract large numbers of international students. Some students have never been to a church before and have tried to avoid meeting church people. But if they are invited to such recreational events, they may want to rethink their decision. The point is that while the students have fun at the events, their original negative impression about the church may change and their suspicion over Christianity may soften.

Lucas never misses the opportunities of celebrating Christian festivals like Easter and Christmas with international students. During the Easter period, international students are invited to a church dinner or snacks where they listen to stories about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. For Christmas, a very old tradition, Lessons and Carols, which started in England in the 1800's, is staged in a campus chapel. Featuring singing songs and reading passages from the Bible, the tradition is called by Lucas a fun and beautiful way to remember Jesus' life. Also, Lucas and his wife invite international students over to their home for a party which is usually to decorate cookies, sing Christmas songs, and listen to traditional Christmas stories. While doing things together and talking with American Christians about the holiday, international students are time and again referred back to Jesus or Christianity.

Each winter break but before Christmas, Lucas organizes a tour of local churches that have been decorated for the holiday. Such a tour is a good opportunity for Lucas to give international students a general education about Christianity without inviting much suspicion. Around the end of 2007, Lucas took international students first to the Trinity Lutheran Church where he explained theological concepts like symbolism, the "Church,"

and salvation. He also introduced Christian denominations and how Christians worshipped God by singing, praying, listening, and giving. In a Methodist church, Lucas introduced different types of church leadership and organization such as Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian churches. Then students were taken to a large Catholic Church where Lucas briefly mentioned the differences between Catholics and Protestants. The tour ended at Lucas's own church where he emphasized the role of a Christian fellowship in community life.

During the fall break, Lucas takes international students to Lawrence's countryside where a visit to a nearby historic church and two local farms is often arranged. Students have lots of fun at a cookout, a hayride, and bonfire roasting marshmallows. Again the church visit brings students back to Christianity. After the spring semester is over in May, Lucas takes students to join International Student Ministry's (ISM) one-week-long House Party. The recent two House Parties, as far as I know, were held in Rocky Mountains of Colorado where students enjoyed fun activities like horseback riding, hiking, rappelling, and rock climbing. They also tasted delicious food, listened to music, and had "camp fires, good conversations, and new friendships"¹⁷² with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. Every day when students came back from outside activities, they were gathered to study the Bible and to discuss "who Jesus is, what his message was to the world and why it still matters."¹⁷³

Even if one has only vague interest in campus Christianity, one can not miss meeting Lucas and his colleagues in International Friends. Once every week, there is International Friends tea time in the lobby of the Kansas Union. During lunchtime, Lucas appears with

¹⁷² See flyers for ISM's HouseParties '08.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

his lunch at the public eating area of the student union and talks with international students who eat there. The cooking program of International Friends is supposed to appeal to wives or husbands of foreign students with an opportunity to exchange cooking skills and to practice English. While the food, be it green bean casserole, fall apple crisp, or gingerbread men, is cooked in the kitchen, international students or their husbands or wives read and discuss a Bible excerpt of usually no more than one page.

Lucas keeps constant contact with international students through emails in case that some students may not be able to attend his activities due to a tight work schedule. In his emails, one can find biblical stories and prayers as well as messages like “English idioms” and “cultural notes” which often give very practical advice on how to manage a good life in the United States. By sending emails, Lucas maintains his virtual presence on campus and tells the students that he is around all the time taking care of their physical as well as spiritual concerns. If some students express their interest in understanding Christianity, they will be invited to his Bible study program. The following is one of Lucas’s emails to international students.

*Hi -- welcome to a strangely warm day in January.
This is how you know you live in Kansas --- it is 60 today and supposed
to snow tomorrow! :-) Have a great week.*

Lucas

Idiom of the week: when it rains, it pours

Meaning: You say this in response to a story or situation where something that has happened is very extreme.

It is a metaphor using the image of a very hard rain. (It is pouring today)

Example: A friend tells you that it has been an easy semester, but suddenly they have two papers due and two tests and must complete a long application for job by tomorrow. You say ----- wow, "when it rains it pours"

Culture Note: free health clinics

Since I told you about hospitals last week, I'll continue the theme. You probably know that medical services in the US are very very expensive. The best solution is to have health insurance. However, many people in the US do not have health insurance. The result is that they are in great danger of financial trouble if they or their children become ill. One answer to this, are free health clinics which communities start. Here in Lawrence we have an excellent one called Health Care Access. Doctors in the community volunteer time for free and many drug companies donate medicine to the clinic for free. Also, people in Lawrence give money to the clinic to make it possible. It is sad that anyone needs to use this clinic, but it is a wonderful gift to them when they are sick.

Int Friends this week:

** just our regular Friday night --- 7pm in the Burge Union (Conversation groups / Intro to the Bible / International Bible Study)*

Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church

The Chinese church at Lawrence started from a Bible study group in the 1960s. It was officially instituted in 1995 when Joseph Li came to assume the pastorship from California. Joseph was originally from Taiwan as an international student in engineering. He converted during his study in the United States. Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church has a regular membership of around fifty, but people present at the Friday night's Bible study program can sometimes reach as many as a hundred. The Chinese church does not have its own building. All of its activities are held in rented facilities. If for some local American churches, international students are only one group of the population that they reach and serve, for the Chinese church, reaching and serving KU Chinese students and scholars is their all. Every church member is encouraged to bring students to church activities and services.

Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church plays a subtle role in presenting Christianity to Chinese students and scholars. What distinguishes this church from others is that church members are themselves the results of the converting campaign in the United States. Very few of them come as Christians. They convert through either American Christians or Chinese-American Christians. Even if their conversions have been through the influence of Chinese Americans, the broader religious environment in the United States is determinant in the process. Another thing that distinguishes the Chinese church is that it works side by side with local American churches to reach Chinese students and scholars. The church shares the same ethnic identity with Chinese students; at the same time, it shares the same religious identity with local American churches. Therefore, it can speak to both sides.

The Chinese church has the advantage of ethnic proximity to reach Mainland Chinese students and scholars. If other American Christians have to bear in mind an extra list of tips to guide their contacts with Chinese students, the Christians at the Chinese church have an easier time understanding what the students want and finding ways to satisfy them. And if what draws the Chinese students to American churches and their Bible study programs is cultural curiosity or the desire to improve English, what draws them to the Chinese church are their common cultural heritage and common concerns nourished by their experience of living in China.

Actually, the Chinese church has adopted its ethnic identity as a strategy to attract students from Mainland China. The church has tried to construct for itself an image of “overseas home” for the Chinese students whom the pastor called “wanderers” from China. The Chinese Church members are from different countries and areas such as

Mainland China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, and other Asian countries with a Chinese population. But the church has downplayed the geographical or political differences among its members (like the political dispute between Taiwan and Mainland China), and emphasizes, instead, their common Chinese cultural heritage. Away from their families and home culture, most Chinese students feel alienated in the new environment. They tend to have a stronger need for love, care, and friendship than when they are in China. When Chinese Christians invite students to the church, they always say “Come and talk with other Chinese folks, you will feel better,” or “come if you need help.” People in the church speak Chinese only. They celebrate most major Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival, the Moon Festival, and the Dragonboat Festival. They offer Chinese food, dessert, or soups after Friday night’s Bible study. The church is also very concerned with social and economic developments in China. Such a tie with the home culture instead of the Christian belief is often what draws the Chinese students to the church.

The Chinese church often gives very practical help and advice to Chinese students to start their new lives in Lawrence. The church’s willingness to help can be motivated by its Christian love for other people; but more importantly, it can also be inspired by its religious mission to reach non-believers. The new Chinese students at KU may not like the church’s religious service, but they can’t deny its physical help with such settling issues as transportation to and from Kansas City Airport, temporary accommodations, apartment rental, rides to grocery stores, and advice on car purchases. Those services are much needed by Chinese students, most of whom have never come to the United States before. Chinese Christians do not necessarily reveal their religious identity when they

give help, but not long afterwards, they will invite the students that they have helped to visit their church. Few students will turn down the invitation due to their gratitude for the help. They will show up, get to know people there, and see whether they want to visit it again.

Some students will come to the church again, while others will not. The church, however, always hopes to retain as many new students as possible to maintain its growth. Without adequate cultural distance to arouse curiosity among Chinese students as the local American churches do, the Chinese church has to work out its own ways to make the students less suspicious of the church or even trust it within a short period of time. An effective way of doing that is to introduce to the new students KU Chinese faculty and staff who are Christians. In China, teachers or professors are expected to be role models of students, so if the new students learn that who and who in the church are KU professors they will have an easier time reconciling religion and their secular education. Among all the Chinese faculty of KU,¹⁷⁴ two of them often go to the Chinese church. When groups of new students are brought to visit the church before a semester starts, the two professors are introduced and their academic titles highlighted. The professors are often asked to share their religious experiences and their understandings of the Bible, too.

To most Chinese students and scholars, Chinese Christians' educational background often speaks louder than what they preach, so the Chinese church often uses evangelizing materials that feature eloquent and well-educated Chinese-American missionaries to influence students. Bingcheng Feng, one of the most publicized among Chinese American Christians, is an America-educated natural scientist from Mainland China. Another eloquent Christian scholar, Zhiming Yuan, was a graduate of an American

¹⁷⁴ About twenty-five Chinese people are employed as KU faculty. See www.ku.edu.

seminary. But he is often mentioned as a visiting scholar of Princeton University and a doctoral candidate of People's University of China.¹⁷⁵ Religious videos of both Yuan and Feng are widely circulated among Chinese Christians in the United States. Minghui Liu, a former Princeton professor, a natural scientist and an active pastor from Taiwan, has been proud of the high level of education of his church members. When he comes to Lawrence Chinese church to preach, he never forgets to mention that the majority of his church members are American PhDs. When KU Chinese students hear these people's talks, they often can't help but reexamine their knowledge about religion and Christianity.

Being small in size and distinct in ethnic identity, the Lawrence Chinese church emphasizes nationwide networking with Chinese churches in other places to reinforce its influence. The Chinese church in Lawrence mainly depends on the Missouri-based Christian Witness Center for its operation and leadership/disciple training. The Christian Witness Center is "a mission organization targeting toward the overseas Chinese living in the Midwest."¹⁷⁶ It serves more than forty campus ministries in over ten Midwestern states where the Chinese student population is over ten thousand. Most of the students are from Mainland China. Every year, it offers nine big conferences or camps for "evangelizing, establishing, training co-workers, and shepherding churches in the vicinity."¹⁷⁷ The Chinese church in Lawrence often persuades non-Christian Chinese students and scholars to participate in the center's conversion camps or conferences. Programs such as the winter conference can attract hundreds of Chinese Christians and

¹⁷⁵ Zhiming Yuan was a doctoral candidate of People's University of China before he was ousted by Chinese government for his subversive role in Tiananmen Incident. After the Incident, he came to the United States for political asylum and became a visiting scholar at Princeton University.

¹⁷⁶ Christian Witness Center, www.cwcnnet.org.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

convert many non-Christians. Quite a few Christians at Lawrence Chinese church converted at the conference.

Chinese churches in California send a mission team to Lawrence at least twice every year to help the local church to expand its influence. The team members come to the KU campus and invite every Chinese student that they meet to church activities. As a strategy of its recruiting campaign, the team promises the students that if they go to California for a job after they graduate, Chinese churches there will be a great help. Lawrence Chinese church also invites missionaries or pastors of Chinese churches in other places of the United States to share their testimonies. By networking with each other, Chinese churches in the United States form a big ethnic Christian family and a mutual support system. Most KU Chinese students know that if needed they always have the option of joining the church and gaining access to the big overseas Chinese family organized on their belief in Jesus. Some students know the support network even before they come to the United States.

The project of influencing and evangelizing KU Chinese students has revealed some patterns shared by campus ministries. While most outreach tactics are suggested in Lawson Lau's classical Christianizing handbook *God Brings the World to Your Doorstep*,¹⁷⁸ the local churches are slightly different from each other based on their own resources. They are independent in designing and operating their influence on foreign students, but many times they lend support to each other to maximize the effect.

¹⁷⁸ Lawson Lau, *God Brings the World to Your Doorstep: Open Your Heart and Home to Welcome the Internationals* (Mahomet, Ill: Leadership Publishers, 2006).

Church activities seldom overlap and compete with each other. Instead, they complement each other to engage the largest number of international students. If Julie invites Chinese students to her church's services and the Alpha Course program, Lucas arranges for conversation partners and a church tour, and the Chinese church invites the students to their "overseas home" and treats them with warmth and consideration. Churches also collaborate with each other. Last year, the Chinese church and the Mustard Seed church cooperated for a religious music festival. The Chinese church often introduces Chinese students to Julie. There has also been the practice of co-baptizing Chinese students by pastors from the Chinese church and the Mustard Seed.

Some Chinese students may wonder what religious influence a picnic or a conversation can produce on them. But when they group the activities together, they will find that church activities for international students are actually arranged progressively toward the goal of conversion, although different activities can happen simultaneously. Lucas knows the conversion process better than anybody else because he has worked out a map for it.¹⁷⁹ Julie and the Chinese church must have a similar map in their minds, if not in a well-defined written form. Lucas's map categorizes all church activities into two types: one-time and continuing activities. One-time activities include fun activities like city tour, carnival party, square dance, and housewarming. They are expected to lead to interest in reading the Bible and understanding the Christian culture. Some students may stop their contact with the churches after a one-time activity. Others may decide to stay

¹⁷⁹ Lucas's timetable resembles the Spiritual Stages Scale developed by International Student Inc.. The twenty-stage scale is arranged into the broad processes of preparing the soil, planting the seed, cultivating and watering the crop, harvesting, Christian fellowship and personal growth, and ministry outreach. Among the processes, harvesting is the most important turning point symbolizing conversion and receiving Jesus as Savior. Donald E. DeGraaf, "International Houseparties at Cedar Campus," www.intervarsity-org/ism/download.php?article_id=2636&version_id=3851.

after the initial contact and join continuing activities like conversation partner, English classes, and other weekly/monthly events.

Church activities are characterized by a strong sense of triumphalism and moral exceptionalism. Even if the students are not Christianized, “we’ve been successful,” Julie said, as long as they are moved along “the continuum ... towards God.”¹⁸⁰ Joseph, pastor of the Chinese church, compared his conversion campaign as sowing seeds in people’s minds. The seeds, he said, may not sprout in Lawrence, but will in ideal conditions somewhere else. According to the triumphant logic, what is more important than even conversion and discipleship is the international students’ potential to spread their knowledge about and belief in Christianity when they go back to their home countries. In the case of Chinese students, both Lucas and Julie expressed their concern with China’s democratic progress and one-party politics. They hope that the spread of Christian values in China can correct some social or political wrongs there.

To remove the east-west cultural barrier and to make Christianity more acceptable to Chinese students, Julie, Lucas, and the Chinese church all try to emphasize the universality of Christianity. They say that Christianity is not a religion for a specific country or culture. It is for the whole world. They all deny that the dominant American culture is a Christian culture. Instead, they insist that Christians are a minority in this country, which is confusing to most Chinese students who view the United States as a country founded on Christian principles. Or at least, it is more Christian than China.

I am thinking of having hundreds of Julies and Lucases on American campuses imposing their Christian influence on Chinese students and scholars studying there. While this is very typical of the bottom-up pattern of how American grassroots join

¹⁸⁰ From the interview with Julie.

together to initiate something big, the religious purpose remains controversial among KU Chinese students and scholars. Coming to study and live in a foreign country, the students are the weak minority in every sense. They need help to settle down. They need to improve their English. They also need friendship and communication with American students or local citizens. Then churches come in with help, and religion. But foreign students can not take help while denying religious education. Until then, they are reminded that there is no free meal in the world.

Apart from the different voices among Chinese students, I also heard some negative comments about campus ministries from American students. They questioned the churches' real motivation for helping the international students. They said that the churches were dominating, patronizing, and pushing foreign students. If that is true, it has not been that international students like being dominated, patronized or pushed. Many times they have to pay the price to get what they want. It is a symbiotic relationship. Maybe Lucas exaggerated the fact when he said that international students were surrounded by Americans, but there was nobody to talk to.¹⁸¹ However, it has remained true that international students are more vulnerable to uncertainties, social isolation, and other life problems.

¹⁸¹ From the interview with Lucas.

Part III

Responsiveness and Resistance

My examination of KU Chinese students' responses to the local Christian influence is based on the data I collected by the SurveyMonkey system among 353 Mainland Chinese students, scholars, and postdoctoral researchers enrolled at KU in the academic year of 2007-2008.¹⁸² My call for participating in the survey was spread initially through snowball sampling and later through the email system of KU International Student and Scholar Services. A total of seventy Chinese students and scholars completed and submitted the survey questions.

China has been a leading place of origin for international students in American universities in recent years. Other countries and areas that have a large student presence on American campuses include India, South Korea, and Japan.¹⁸³ KU has similar presence of international students by country. In the academic year of 2006/07, students from China numbered the largest. They were followed closely by students from India, Korea, and Japan.¹⁸⁴ Therefore, one will not be surprised to see Chinese students participate in KU campus events and activities, but what is impressive is that there has been a disproportionate presence of Chinese students in church-sponsored activities, particularly at the beginning of a new semester. Compared with students from other

¹⁸² From the information systems of KU International Student and Scholars Services. There are 297 students and 56 scholars and postdoctoral researchers from China.

¹⁸³ India was the leading place of origin for international students in the United States with 83, 833 in 2006/07, followed by #2 China (67,723), #3 Korea (62, 392), #4 Japan (35, 282), #5 Taiwan (29, 094), #6 Canada (28, 280), #7 Mexico (13, 826), #8 Turkey (11, 506), #9 Thailand (8, 886), #10 Germany (8,565). "Open Doors 2007," <http://opendoors.iienetwork.org>.

¹⁸⁴ "International Attendance by Country," <http://www2.ku.edu/~issfacts/stats.shtml>.

countries and areas, Chinese students and scholars have showed greater interest in visiting American churches and have been more open to the Christian influence.

Church activities often bustle with Chinese students. Sometimes, Chinese students can be more than students from all the other countries combined. At least half of the students Julie contacts for her activities are Chinese. Julie has the tradition of taking pictures of international students going to her activities. In the large and thick albums exhibited in her sitting room, at least half of the pictures are of Chinese students and scholars. When asked why Chinese students respond to her activities with enthusiasm while in contrast, Indian students, another large international student group at KU, seldom show up, Julie said that students from India simply tried to avoid her. At the international lunch before the Christmas of 2007, Julie had so many Chinese students and scholars that Julie's father joked, "Okay. This is China."¹⁸⁵ Being eager to know Americans and to experience the American culture, some new Chinese students often get disappointed by having "too many" from China in church activities. At one of International Friends' Friday night gatherings, I met a new undergraduate student who left immediately after he found that lots of participants there were Chinese.

The enthusiasm that Chinese students and scholars show to local church activities results partly from their curiosity about American churches and American Christian culture. Out of the seventy surveys I collected, forty-seven (67.1%) reported that they had been to local American churches in Lawrence. Among the forty-seven visitors, thirty two (72.7%) admitted that they went there because of their cultural curiosity. For many of them (61.4%), this was the first time that they were ever in a foreign country. A higher percentage of them would report that this was the first time they came to the United

¹⁸⁵ From my observation at Julie's home.

States. The Chinese students' curiosity with Christianity is met with evangelical churches' commitment to spreading the Gospel. If Christianity were one of the familiar Asian religions, if more Chinese students had the experience of having studied or lived in a Christian country, or if evangelical Christians were not this committed to their religious mission, the percentage of students visiting American churches would come down a lot. There are campus ministries or organizations of other religions such as Buddhism, Islam, or Judaism, but none of them appeal to the Chinese students as much as the Christian churches.

The willingness of Chinese students to know about the Christian belief is also revealed in their high rate of keeping the Bible. Forty-six out of seventy (65.7%) reported possessing the Bible. Among the forty-six students, thirty seven (75.5%) said that they got the Bible from an American Christian after they came to the United States. Another ten (20.4%) reported that they bought their Bible. Some may argue that Bibles are always available when church people come to KU campus and give out free copies. But the fact is that nobody forces free Bibles on others. The students have the option of not accepting the Bible if they have no interest. Also, out of thirty six students who had been to the free English classes offered by campus ministries, sixteen (44.4%) claimed that they liked the religious content of the programs. Fewer students (22.3%) said that they were uncomfortable with it.

Both Julie and Lucas are impressed with Chinese students' responsiveness to their activities, either fun trips or the Bible study program. Julie said that Chinese students were like blank slates in terms of their knowledge about Christianity. The fact that the majority of them don't know what the Bible is and who Jesus is gives Julie the

opportunity to fill the slates and fulfill her mission. Lucas observed that Chinese students were different from those from European countries regarding their attitudes towards Christianity. Chinese students are neutral, Lucas said. But European students think that they have already known Christianity, so they have no interest in attending church activities. Some other European students are even against Christianity from their culture or background. Talking about the openness of Chinese students to Christianity, Lucas gave a quantitative idea of Chinese students' conversion rate - among ten international students converted into Christians, seven are Chinese.

Lucas tried to be objective in his analysis of Chinese students' interest in Christianity and related the responsive phenomenon to the Chinese government's recent policy towards religion. He believed that the government's attempt in the 1970s to destroy religion and to make people forget about religion was being replaced by national openness and inquisitiveness into it. In China, he said, there is a reaction against the actual attempt to play down the significance of religion, to keep people from religion, and to persecute Christians sometimes. To Lucas, it is largely the contrast between the United States and China that has made the students interested in the religion. Coming from a place where there is the lack of religious opportunity, he said, the Chinese students obviously want to look at and to understand the American culture. If the students were sent to India, maybe they would explore Hinduism. If they were in Saudi Arabia, maybe it would be Islam that they wanted to understand. But back to his religious exceptionalism, Lucas insisted that there was something about Christianity that the Chinese students found more attractive than other religions. Lucas predicted, as China embraces capitalism, the young generation will feel less afraid of a capitalist country,

capitalist values, and capitalist structures. They will, therefore, be more responsive to Christian influence.

Julie rated Chinese students as the most interested in Christianity and the most likely to adopt Christianity among international students that she had worked with, although generally people with greater needs tended to search more seriously for God. Julie recalled that she felt flattered at how Chinese people seemed to like Americans when she was in China in 2001. That was a stark contrast with European countries where Americans were not liked, she said. She felt strange, though, that Chinese people thought that all Americans were Christians. Comparing today's Chinese students and scholars with those of the past, Julie said that the newer and younger generation had been less taught against Christianity. Julie expressed her understanding of the older visiting scholars' reluctance to accept Christianity due to their fear of the government and of risking their careers in China. As the country is opening up, Julie said confidently, more contact will lead to more likelihood of Chinese young people being open to Christianity.

Julie's feeling is right. While China is reforming itself by borrowing heavily from western countries, westernization has been a fashion, especially among the young generation. Otherwise, there would not have been the study abroad movement in China. At KU, these western-oriented students admire the United States for different reasons.¹⁸⁶ Some like its high level of science and technology (32.9%), others like its high standard of living (15.7%), and still another small proportion of them (4.3%) like its religious freedom. Most important is that none of them regard being Christian and being Chinese as conflicting.

¹⁸⁶ Among all the seventy students I surveyed, only one admitted that he/she was forced to study in the United States by his/her parents.

Several KU Chinese students have built their new identities by adopting Christianity. These students have responded very quickly to the local Christian influence and even sought Christian church membership actively. Before they come to the United States, they have already heard a lot about overseas Christianity or contacted some Chinese Christians who are successful professionals or returned students from western universities. While driven by the westernization force, some Chinese students join the local secular youth culture and avoid churches; a small group at the other extreme embraces the Christian culture. They convert within a short period of time after their arrival in the United States.

Several other Chinese students embrace Christianity because they hope the religious belief can bring what they need badly in their challenging overseas life – love and peace of mind. The conversions of these students often result from a fear of disorientation and insecurity. The church, often the Chinese church, becomes these students' haven in their new life and a substitute for the family bonds, friendship, and supportive social network that they enjoy in China. Before they come to the United States, they are atheists, or Chinese Communist Party members. They may not feel the need for any religious belief as millions of Chinese do. However, as circumstances change with their arrival in the United States, their symbol of authority is gone with their professional, economic, or political status in Chinese society. This may be exacerbated if they lack proficiency in English or if they are particularly sensitive to the cultural shock. When they are unable to show their education and intelligence, they feel negative about life. But from the church life or the biblical teachings, they rediscover themselves and regain strength and the meaning of life.

Among all the Chinese student groups, the above group is drawn the closest to Christianity. One of my interviewees, Jun, told me that adopting Christianity was the most valuable thing that she had obtained from studying in the United States. Coming to the United States caused dramatic changes to her family life and put her at the crossroads between the United States and China. From the Christian belief she found the courage, patience, and strength against difficulties and uncertainties in her life. Jie, my second interviewee, converted in the United States for a similar reason. She is very reluctant to go back to China for fear of losing her religious freedom, although life in the United States is full of challenges. Jie has the experience of going to house churches in China which, she said, were different from American churches in many ways.

Female students are generally more sensitive to the cultural shock and circumstance change in their overseas life, so they are more open to relational options offered by local churches and are more likely to accept Christianity as a cushion against stress and uncertainties. By comparison, not as many male students convert for that reason. As a result, the Chinese church has more female than male members and American church activities often attract more female than male students, too.

Even those Chinese students who seldom go to church activities recognize the positive side of Christianity. Most of them are atheists, but they are not necessarily anti-Christian. Christianity, to them, is one of the many world religions. While religion used to be denied by Chinese official media as “superstition” and “opiate of the masses”, the attitude has been remodeled and few students and scholars in my survey or interviews are negative about Christianity. They recognize local Christian churches as important community organizations in the United States, because the church comforts, unites, and

motivates local citizens. This attitude towards Christianity and churches is dominant among KU Chinese students and scholars. They might have never thought of visiting a church in the United States or even avoid local church people, but they know that Christians are not mysterious or superstitious as they had thought.

Despite the fact that Chinese students and scholars have overall been more responsive to local Christian influences than those from other countries, Christian students are a very small minority (about 3.5%) among the Chinese student population at KU and Christianity is still considered alien and irrelevant to the majority. As a bridge connecting Christian belief with Chinese students, the Chinese church has not seen much growth in proportion to the annual increase of students and scholars from Mainland China. Seeing fellow students come and go with only a few staying and becoming committed to the belief,¹⁸⁷ the Christian students are very concerned about the overall “lukewarm” attitude of Chinese students and scholars towards Christianity.

However, Joseph, the Chinese pastor, has been as persistent as his American colleagues at working with students and scholars from Mainland China. His responsibility, he said, is to reach Chinese students and let them know the “good news”, but it is God who opens people’s eyes and hears people’s voices. Joseph and his family had been the very center of the Chinese church. But in June 2008, having worked at Lawrence for thirteen years, Joseph left for California with his family and returned to seminary for further education. His departure is not necessarily disastrous for the fledgling Chinese church. It is at least a serious test for its future development. In my talk

¹⁸⁷ An average of five students convert every year regardless of whether they are from Mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, or Malaysia.

with Joseph, he expressed his sincere concern with students from Mainland China who, he feared, would probably follow the steps of students from Taiwan in their contacts with Christian churches. Taiwan has a longer history of sending students to study in the United States than Mainland China.¹⁸⁸ If Taiwanese students felt interested in the American Christian culture in the early years of their study in the United States, their interest cooled off later. Christianity is now viewed as only one of the many religions in the world.

It does not take long for the curiosity of students from Mainland China to fade away, either. For the first few weeks of a new semester, church activities are usually full of Chinese students. Everything looks new to them. They want to know the campus and people as soon as possible. At this stage they seldom turn down invitations to church activities. But gradually when they get busier with their school work and their curiosity gets satisfied, church activities start to lose participants. Also, initially they are told that they can go to church activities to practice English and meet other Chinese, but later they may find that they have other ways of meeting both needs. Only those who are really interested in the church or the belief will stay. Therefore, every semester will see new tides of Chinese students come and go.

Not all students that embrace the western lifestyle and values can well negotiate their atheist education with a belief in Jesus. A young undergraduate couple, Yan and Jian, transferred to KU from a Hong Kong University. The first time they went to the Chinese church and the Mustard Seed's Bible study, they claimed that they wanted to study the Bible and explore the belief. They have made very earnest efforts to understand the belief but are still stuck with one thing, that is, they have never seen God's miracle happen to

¹⁸⁸ Taiwan started sending students to the United States in the 1950s, while Mainland China resumed its education exchange with the United States in 1978.

them in real life. They said that they would only believe in Jesus after they saw God's miracle. Their search for God's miracle has lasted for a year. During that time, Julie told them some stories of American Christians meeting or seeing angels in real life. But it seemed that they only believed in their own eyes. They stopped going to the Chinese church later, and only go to Julie's activities occasionally.

To most Chinese students and scholars, Christianity has only been a passing attraction. They come to the United States for a well-defined goal, that is, to earn an academic degree or some research experience in modern sciences instead of picking up a religion. Being able to know American Christians and understand the Christian culture is an extra gain if they feel it is helpful to their life and career development. Religion has seldom been an (important) factor in most students' decisions concerning their study in the United States. While three students (4.3%) in my survey rated religious freedom as the thing that they liked the most about the United States, six other students (8.6%) considered religious influence as the most salient problem in the country. Most of these students are positive towards Christianity as one of the world religions, but their possibility of converting is slim. New students may want to go to church activities in the beginning weeks, but when they settle down and make new friends with other KU Chinese students, they will drop away from those activities.¹⁸⁹

After a period of observation and exploration with local church activities, those Chinese students who are intellectually curious about American Christian culture are often able to work out their own interpretations of Christianity and Christian churches. Some of them believe that there is nothing wrong in becoming a Christian. Christianity,

¹⁸⁹ Over half of the Chinese students in my survey reported that they hung around with other students from China most of the time. Thirty seven percent said that their social circle is half-Chinese and half-non-Chinese.

to them, is no more than a way of living and thinking. Everyone has the freedom to choose to follow it or not to follow it, they said. The Christian belief does not appeal to this group of students at all, because they think that they can live happily without Jesus and that they can fix problems and difficulties in their life by themselves. This self-reliant mindset is very typical of Chinese students, Joseph told me. It is the major barrier that has kept Chinese students from adopting Christianity.

As Joseph said, these students stop going to church activities after they think that they know what Christianity is. Around seventy percent of the students who had been to the church activities reported that they stopped going after the first two or three contacts. Some of them understand American churches as social clubs based on religious belief. A social club seeks to develop its targeted customer base by providing certain services. American churches do likewise, these Chinese students believe. That's also why some of the churches are denominational while others are independent, they think. Just like social clubs seek expansion, growth, and prosperity, churches keep recruiting believers. The supply and demand relationship between churches and church-goers tells you, they suggest their fellow students, that if you do not need the membership or services, you should not invest in going to church activities and hanging around with Christians. Another group of Chinese students interprets churches as a social support system. This group believes that people join the church either for seeking help or having resources to give away. They suggest that if you don't need help or have nothing to give away, do not go there.

Still another group of students are atheists, too. But they visit local churches so often that they are treated as truth-seekers. Among all the Chinese students, they are the most

inquisitive and active learners of the American Christian culture. They consider studying in the United States as an opportunity to experience authentic American culture and meet American Christians. They justify their visits to local churches by saying that they don't want to miss their opportunity of learning an important part of the American culture. There is no point, they believe, avoiding the churches simply because of some differences or disagreements on religious beliefs. Almost every semester, Julie rents one or two rooms in her house to such "brave" tenants from China. The church, to these students, is an ideal platform for cultural communication. They examine and compare Chinese and American cultures carefully and insist that good virtues and good behavior patterns are shared by all great civilizations in the world. Therefore, they insist that when you have already had those good things in your native culture, why bother borrowing from others. Current Chinese students or scholars may not feel as strong a responsibility to protect traditional Chinese culture as earlier generations, but over eighty percent respondents in my survey said that they had "strong" or "very strong" attachment towards the home country.

Like the above-mentioned inquisitive minds, if a student disregards the not-go advice and still keeps going to church activities, it means that he or she is really pursuing something there. Whether he/she interested in Jesus or something else has to be examined individually and culturally. One Chinese student went to the Bible study program for free meals. He used to cook together with several other Chinese students. But when school was out and other students went back home for the winter break, he did not want to cook by himself. Then he went to the Bible study program twice a week, only for free food. In reality, he was not the only one going to church activities for free meals. During my

observation period, I met two other such students, one from Taiwan and another from Japan, who claimed openly that they had no interest in the religion, but only in free food. It seems that these (usually male) students were trying to take advantage of evangelical efforts of local Christian churches. While Julie used delicious free food to attract students to study the Bible, these students went to eat it by pretending to go to study the Bible.

A Chinese girl student in her late twenties went there to know more people. She hoped to meet somebody there that she could marry. She joined almost all church activities, the Bible study program, the retreat, and the church services for a while. She told people that she was still single and in the progress of searching for a boyfriend to marry her. For weeks later on, I did not see her at church activities and did not know why. When I met her in the school library finally, she told me that she had been committed to a post-doctoral researcher introduced to her by one of her Chinese friends.

Some Chinese students go to church activities simply for fun. They like fun trips or activities such as the Renaissance Festival and the Carnival Festival much more than Bible studies. Having no interesting places to go to at weekends, two Chinese students, Wu and Chen, often go to church activities together. They went to the retreat in the fall of 2007 and came back complaining that there was too much Bible study time. When other participants were team-praying at the retreat, they sneaked away to the lakeside because they said the lake view was more interesting than praying. One of them, Chen, went to the Houseparty of International Students Ministry in Colorado at the end of May 2007, but came back saying that the trip was boring and a waste of time. The problem, again, was too much Bible study.

Compared with students, visiting scholars are even less likely to accept Christianity. Among forty-eight visiting scholars at KU in the academic year of 2007-08, there is only one Christian. She converted in Hong Kong before she came to the United States. Most Chinese scholars lack the motivations to become Christians. First of all, the duration of a scholar's research or study program is usually one or two years, which is short for a serious religious commitment. Also, visiting scholars are generally older than degree students, and they are less likely to adopt a new belief. More importantly, visiting scholars are mid-career researchers or professionals in universities or governmental institutions in China. Even if they have the time and desire to pursue Christianity, they will have to think seriously about their future career development back home where the dominant belief is atheism. It's not that they will get persecuted, but that they will miss some career opportunities due to their minority belief.

A small group of Chinese students simply avoid all local church people and church activities. They don't even want to talk about religion or reveal their opinions on religion. A girl student used to be invited to the Chinese church the second day she was in Lawrence. When asked to leave her name and address for future contact, the girl said that she did not want to because she would be very busy with her lab work. One of the respondents, in my survey, Cai, intentionally hid the fact to me that he had been to the church. But unfortunately Julie's contact list betrayed him. Cai was very nice and helpful to Chinese students but did not want to get his name connected with the church. He was once asked to give a ride to a new student who had just come to Lawrence and was living temporarily with the Joseph's family. The pastor family greeted Cai warmly but Cai firmly refused to step into the pastor's house or even his front yard as if the pastor's

territory was a forbidden area. Hearing Cai's story, I guessed that he might have been hurt by some unhappy contact with the church just as what a Chinese girl student, Zhang, experienced.

Zhang was a Buddhist. Before she started her story, she told me never to go to the Chinese church. She was once "kidnapped" with several other Chinese girls by a coworker from the Chinese church. Before they left, she was told that it was a fun trip to a lake. But as soon as they arrived there, they were forced to confess that they were sinful. In Chinese culture, there is no such a concept as sin, and in the Chinese version of the Bible, sin is translated into the word which means crime. Zhang was very confused, because she did not understand what "crime" she committed. She refused to confess. When she was very hungry, there was nothing for her to eat until the confession was completed. She felt so helpless and depressed that she started crying. On their way back to KU, the church coworker apologized to them for failure to tell them earlier that it was not only a fun trip. Such misunderstanding and misconduct often make situations more complicated and less favorable to the Christianizing campaign of the Chinese church.

Julie, Lucas, and their colleagues have been very careful, indirect, and tactical when they reach Chinese students to avoid misunderstandings and conflicts due to cultural differences. But the Chinese Christians are more direct, although atheist or non-Christian visitors often reserve their different ideas and seldom challenge Christians at the church. As a consequence of the directness, Chinese students may feel offended when some Christians are so eager to convert them that they frighten them with the Hell-after-death story.

Most Chinese students quit going to the church if they feel offended or uncomfortable, but Wang, a visiting scholar in his fifties and a philosophy professor from a Chinese university did not quit that easily. Wang went to both American and Chinese church activities. When he was with American Christians, he was silent most of the time. Maybe his English did not allow him to argue as effectively as his Chinese. But when he was with Chinese Christians, he often challenged them with his atheist and philosophical theories. Hating to see Wang argue fiercely with Chinese Christians, Wang's wife did not want to be unwelcome visitors and told Wang to stop saying anything. But it seemed that he was so determined to fix up the Chinese Christians' belief that he would not listen. As a senior professor in China, Wang commands lots of intellectual authority, but in the Chinese American church, his authority was gone. Every argument between him and Chinese Christians ended with disappointment and unhappiness on both sides. After another fierce argument in the second half year of his stay at KU, Wang left the Chinese church for good. When later I contacted him for some interview possibility about his experience with Lawrence churches, he turned down my request politely.

While the majority of Chinese students and scholars have resisted the local Christian influence in one way or another, Chinese Christian students have also revealed much autonomy in interpreting and understanding their faith. Having converted after they came to the United States, many of them base their understanding of Christianity on pragmatism or Chinese popular religion. In my interview with Lucas, he said that he had also noticed the phenomenon that Chinese tended to see their adopted Christian belief as a charm or a good-luck banner. They customize their understanding of the faith by eliminating the sin concept, adding a Chinese-type God as a supreme protector of their

life, or making other alterations according to their practical needs. One of the Chinese Christians, Jing, admitted that she did not read the Bible. She needed the belief only for the peace of mind. Jun, a very devoted Christian, said that she actually believed in multi gods, both traditional Chinese gods and the Christian God.

Altogether, several factors are responsible for Chinese students' autonomy and resistance against local Christian influences. One is the students' maturity. Most of them are graduate students and two-thirds of the respondents in my survey are over twenty-five years old, an age old enough to have a mature belief system. Another is their atheist and secular educational background. They come to study in the United States for a well-defined purpose – to learn science and technology instead of adopting a religion. Then, even those who convert are not passive recipients of the Christian traditions. Instead, they customize the belief on the basis of their practical personal needs and their own understanding of Biblical teachings. Lastly, Christianity is still regarded as an alien and western religion. Some Chinese students may find the Christian belief attractive, but they don't like the stare from their peers. Believing in Christianity makes them distinct from the majority Chinese students who are atheists or believers in traditional Chinese religions. They need courage to make the conversion decisions, and more courage to take the mission of spreading the Gospel among their peers.

Conclusion

Exerting religious influence by providing doorstep services is an effective and economical way of spreading the good news among Chinese students via whom, local American Christian missionaries hope, the faith can be delivered to people in China once the students go home. By mixing Christianization up with cross-cultural communication, local American churches effectively remove the students' suspicion over religion. By taking advantage of Chinese students' intellectual curiosity about American (Christian) culture, Christian missionaries are able to advertise their religious exceptionalism concept. And by using the weak status of foreign students in the host country of the United States, missionaries are able to dominate their contacts with the students. As a result, some KU Chinese students and scholars fall subject to the Christianizing campaign, although the majority do not.

For many KU Chinese students and scholars, their study in Lawrence is also an opportunity for them to meet local (Christian) citizens and experience the local American (Christian) culture. The experience is both eye-broadening and self-educating. By comparing and contrasting the host and home (religious) cultures, the students have a better understanding of the Chinese culture and Chinese religions. What they see and experience in the United States often inspires them to reflect upon their original perceptions over religion generally and Christianity particularly. A small number of them even reshape their beliefs so much that they become converts. But as sojourners, the Chinese students at KU exhibit more autonomy, flexibility, or resistance and less conformity with local evangelical forces.

New ideas are more likely to reach young minds than older ones and educated people tend to be more efficient than less educated ones in transmitting new concepts. But it is one thing to influence; it is another to decide how much influence to accept. China is now opening up to the outside world and the overall atmosphere is favorable for foreign influence to come in. Chinese people are now more receptive to western influences than in the past. The openness, however, is determined by practical needs on the national and individual bases. With the dominant belief system being atheist or non-Christian in China, there is a lack of motivation for Chinese students and scholars to pick up a religion in the United States, especially when there is rising nationalism among the educated.

Meeting local Christian citizens and studying under instructions of Christian professors gradually change Chinese students' opinion on religion. Before they come to the United States, many of them tend to dichotomize science and religion. Now they realize that well-educated and reasonable people can be religious and that religion is not necessarily associated with poverty, ill-education, or superstition. The days of "One more Christian, one less Chinese" is gone, so being Chinese does not conflict with being Christian. At the same time, they realize that China does not have to borrow Christianity to modernize itself.

The process of my collecting materials for this thesis was full of fun and inspirations. I would never have reached so many Christians or have been to church activities so often without undertaking this thesis. It's been a growth for me academically and experientially. I like the Bible stories, but that is not enough to change my atheist belief. I respect Julie, Lucas, and devoted Christians in the Chinese church. But I like my American friends Daniel and Landon more. They are devoted Christians, too. They help

students from all over the world, and they are particularly popular among Chinese students. But their philosophy is not to mention their Christian belief to foreign students unless they are asked about it.

Before I close my thesis, I want to write a few words about my daughter who has been with me during the whole process from material collecting through thesis writing. She was at the sites where I did the participant observation and interviews for the thesis. Intermittently for a semester she was put in the Friday night's AWANA (Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed) class of the Chinese church.¹⁹⁰ There she played with other Chinese kids of the same age and was told short stories about Jesus. What's interesting about her was that one day she told me that she believed in God. But could a seven-year-old kid be serious when she said so? Obviously, she was much less resistant to evangelical influences than adult Chinese students and scholars at KU.

¹⁹⁰ AWANA is designed to give Bible training to students in preschool through high school. Its goal is that the students would come to know, love, and serve Jesus Christ as Lord.

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Appendix 1 Survey Questions for KU Chinese Students and Scholars

1. How old are you?
I am _____.
2. Which province of China are you from? _____
3. What degree are you currently working for at the University of Kansas?
 - (1) Bachelor's degree
 - (2) M.A. or equivalent
 - (3) Ph.D. or equivalent
 - (4) non-degree program
4. How long have you been at KU?
 - (1) 0-1 year
 - (2) 1-2 years
 - (3) 2-3 years
 - (4) above 3 years
5. How long have you been in the United States?
 - (1) 0-1 year
 - (2) 1-2 years
 - (3) 2-3 years
 - (4) above 3 years
6. Are you male or female? I am _____
 - (1) female
 - (2) male
7. Which of the following choices best describes your family background?
 - (1) peasant
 - (2) worker
 - (3) intellectual
 - (4) public servant
 - (5) business background
 - (6) military
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
8. How many times have you been abroad before this time?
 - (1) just this time
 - (2) once before
 - (3) twice before
 - (4) more than twice
9. Please indicate which agencies or parties provide tuition and/or living and travel expenses for you?
 - (1) Chinese government
 - (2) The University of Kansas
 - (3) International foundations
 - (4) Families or Self-support
 - (5) Other (please specify) _____
10. What is your field of study at the University of Kansas?
 - (1) natural science
 - (2) applied science

- (3) business or management
 - (4) applied social sciences (law, economics)
 - (5) social sciences
 - (6) humanities
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
11. What is your marital status?
- (1) married
 - (2) single
 - (3) divorced
 - (4) widowed
12. If you are married, is your spouse with you in the United States?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
13. Do you have children?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
14. What is your current attitude about returning to China?
- (1) definitely will go back as soon as the degree program is finished
 - (2) definitely will go back after graduating and working in the United States for some time
 - (3) probably will go back
 - (4) not very likely to go back, but might go if I have to in the case of being unable to secure a job
 - (5) definitely will not go back
 - (6) don't know
15. Do you have siblings?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
16. Please choose from the following list TWO things that you like about the United States.
- (1) high standard of living
 - (2) good personal relations among people
 - (3) political freedom
 - (4) social mobility
 - (5) religious freedom
 - (6) equality of opportunity
 - (7) high level of science, technology, and management
 - (8) middle-class society
 - (9) none of the above
17. What of the following do you think is the most salient problem in the United States?
- (1) pressure and too fast speed of life
 - (2) racism
 - (3) religious influence
 - (4) poor living conditions
 - (5) poor interpersonal relations among people
 - (6) undocumented immigrants

- (7) violence
 - (8) none of the above
18. How do you describe your life in the United States?
- (1) I have enjoyed my experience at KU.
 - (2) My curiosity about American lifestyles and culture has been satisfied.
 - (3) I admire American management techniques and its advanced science and technology, but I have no interest in its social life, including its Christian belief.
 - (4) My life has not been very enjoyable due to heavy workload and cultural differences
 - (5) My life has not been very enjoyable due to the financial concern.
 - (6) My life has been miserable.
 - (7) My life has been lived fully.
 - (8) other (please specify) _____
19. Why did you come to study in the United States?
- (1) Going abroad was a fashion among my classmates and other college graduates.
 - (2) I admired American lifestyles and culture.
 - (3) I wanted to learn the most advanced academic theories and practices in the world.
 - (4) I did not have much interest in studying in the United States, but my parents wanted me to.
 - (5) I hoped to work in the United States after I graduated.
 - (6) other (please specify) _____
20. Please describe your social network here at KU?
- (1) totally Chinese
 - (2) mostly Chinese
 - (3) half Chinese, half non-Chinese
 - (4) mostly non-Chinese
 - (5) totally non-Chinese
21. What social activities do you go to?
- (1) church activities at weekend
 - (2) KU campus activities like sports, movies, concerts, etc.
 - (3) Chinese students' activities.
 - (4) American club or organization activities
 - (5) other (please specify) _____
22. How do you describe your impression of Americans overall in terms of their attitudes towards international students?
- (1) they are polite, friendly, and helpful
 - (2) they are polite, but cold
 - (3) they are condescending
 - (4) they are impolite and impatient
 - (5) they are rude
 - (6) other (please specify) _____
23. Do you celebrate Chinese festivals in the United States?
- (1) I have always managed to.
 - (2) Sometimes.
 - (3) I don't.
24. Do you find that traditional Chinese festivals are more meaningful to you now than when you were in China?

- (1) yes
 - (2) no
 - (3) I don't know
25. What western festivals did you celebrate when you were in China?
- (1) Christmas
 - (2) Easter
 - (3) Valentine's Day
 - (4) Halloween
 - (5) Thanksgiving Day
 - (6) Mother's Day or Father's Day
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
26. Why did you celebrate those festivals?
- (1) just for fun.
 - (2) they meant more than fun-making to me
 - (3) to follow the fashion
 - (4) other (please specify) _____
27. How do you contact your family and friends back in China?
- (1) internet
 - (2) mail
 - (3) telephone call
 - (4) see family members on their business trips to the United States
28. How often do you contact your family and friends back in China?
- (1) frequently, any time I want to
 - (2) constantly
 - (3) occasionally
 - (4) seldom
29. How do you describe your attachment to China?
- (1) very strong
 - (2) strong
 - (3) moderate
 - (4) a little
 - (5) no
30. How do you describe your overall English level?
- (1) My English is fluent for either academic purposes or daily communication.
 - (2) My English is good enough for academic purposes
 - (3) My English is good enough for daily life communication
 - (4) I scored high in TOFEL and GRE, but have some difficulty in communicating.
 - (5) My English is not good, but passable
 - (6) I am okay at reading and writing, but poor at speaking and listening
 - (7) My English is poor.
31. How have you been improving your English?
- (1) I have not done anything specific so far.
 - (2) I have had / am having English class with the Applied English Center (AEC).
 - (3) I have had / am having some informal on-campus/off-campus English classes.
32. Have you been to free English-practicing classes/events? Please choose as many as you can from the following list. If NO, please go to question 36.

- (1) conversation partner
 - (2) international friends Friday at Burge Union
 - (3) Bible study program
 - (4) baking class at the Stouffer Place community center
 - (5) lunch conversation groups at Kansa Union or Burge Union
 - (6) pronunciation class at Burge Union
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
33. How often have you been to the above-mentioned programs?
- (1) once or twice, but have not been there ever since.
 - (2) occasionally.
 - (3) often
 - (4) whenever I have time.
34. How helpful were/are the free English-practicing classes/events to you?
- (1) very helpful.
 - (2) moderately helpful
 - (3) slightly helpful
 - (4) not helpful
 - (5) I don't know
35. How do you like the religious context/contents of the free classes/events?
- (1) I like it.
 - (2) I do not care. My purpose is to learn English.
 - (3) I am a little bit uncomfortable.
 - (4) I am very uncomfortable.
 - (5) I don't know.
36. Have you been to a church-sponsored fun/trip activity here in Lawrence?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
37. Have you been to a church-sponsored retreat? If NO, please ignore question 38.
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
38. How do you like the retreat?
- (1) I like it.
 - (2) I like everything except its religious content.
 - (3) It's okay.
 - (4) I don't like it.
 - (5) I don't know.
39. Have you been to a Christian church so far? If NO, please ignore question 40.
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
40. How do you describe your feeling when you were at the church for the first time?
- (1) I felt scared
 - (2) I felt uncomfortable.
 - (3) I felt good and decided to continue to go later
 - (4) No special feeling.
 - (5) Hard to describe
41. How do you describe your knowledge about Christianity?

- (1) plenty.
 - (2) a lot
 - (3) some
 - (4) little
42. How have you got the knowledge about Christianity?
- (1) reading.
 - (2) learning English
 - (3) seeing movies
 - (4) going to Bible study class
 - (5) going to Sunday church services
 - (6) talking with Christians
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
43. Do you believe in the existence of a higher power or a transcendent force in the universe?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
44. Have you ever experienced in your life a sense of personal inadequacy and limitation?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
45. Have you ever experienced in your life a spiritual crisis for positive life transformation and improvements in the sense of self, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-identity?
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
46. How do you describe your belief?
- (1) atheism (无神论)
 - (2) animism (万物有灵)
 - (3) Christianity.
 - (4) Buddhism.
 - (5) Islam
 - (6) Judaism
 - (7) Other (please specify) _____
 - (8) No comment
47. Do you have a Bible? If NO, please ignore question 48.
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
48. How did you get your Bible?
- (1) I bought it.
 - (2) I borrowed it.
 - (3) A Christian in China gave it to me.
 - (4) A Christian in the United States gave it to me.
 - (5) other (please specify) _____
49. If you are not a Christian please go to question 52. If you are a Christian, when were you Christianized?
- (1) before I came to the United States
 - (2) after I came to the United States

50. Why did you decide to become a Christian?
- (1) spiritual need
 - (2) external pressure
 - (3) family tradition
 - (4) other (please specify) _____
51. Do you think that being Chinese conflicts with being Christian?
- (1) Yes
 - (2) No
52. Have you been to the Chinese Evangelical Church at Lawrence? If your answer to this question is NO, please go to question 57.
- (1) yes
 - (2) no
53. How did you establish your first contact with the Chinese church?
- (1) Somebody from the church picked me up at Kansas City International Airport and then invited me to their church
 - (2) I was invited there by a Chinese Christian.
 - (3) I was invited there by a non-Christian Chinese.
 - (4) I offered to go there myself.
 - (5) I attended the church's recruiting activity.
 - (6) I got some free stuff from the church.
 - (7) other (please specify) _____
54. Why do you go to the Chinese Evangelical Church?
- (1) To participate in the Bible study or Sunday services. It's a spiritual home for me.
 - (2) To know more Chinese.
 - (3) To understand Christian culture to help me with my study in the United States.
 - (4) Other (please specify) _____
55. What have you found about the Chinese Christians there?
- (1) They have been very nice and helpful to each other and non-Christians.
 - (2) They are like a big family.
 - (3) They always try to convert me.
 - (4) They look strange.
 - (5) Other (please specify) _____
56. How often do you go to the Chinese church?
- (1) Very often.
 - (2) Sometimes.
 - (3) Occasionally.
 - (4) I have never been there after the first few contacts.
57. If you have attended the church(es), ignore this question.
What have kept you from going to the Chinese Christian Evangelical Church?
- (1) I do not understand and would not want to know what people there talk about.
 - (2) I can live happily without Jesus.
 - (3) I am a follower of a different religious belief.
 - (4) I am too busy with my study.
 - (5) I understand Christianization as American hegemony and colonization.
 - (7) I do not know that there is a Chinese church in Lawrence.
 - (8) Other (please specify) _____

58. Have you been to an American church? If your answer is NO, please go to question #63.

(1) yes

(2) no

59. How did you establish your first contact with the church(es)?

(1) Somebody from the church picked me up at Kansas City International Airport and then invited me to their church

(2) I was invited there by a Christian.

(3) I was invited there by a non-Christian.

(4) I offered to go there myself.

(5) I attended the church's recruiting activity.

(6) I got some free stuff from the church(es).

(7) other (please specify) _____

60. Why do you go to the American church(es)?

(1) I am curious about American churches.

(2) I go there to study the Bible and worship God.

(3) I am invited to have free food.

(4) I go there to practice my English.

(5) Some knowledge about American religious culture is helpful to my study.

(6) other (please specify) _____

61. What have you found about people in the American church(es)?

(1) They have been very nice and helpful to each other and non-Christians.

(2) They are like a big family.

(3) They always try to convert me.

(4) They look strange.

(5) Other (please specify) _____

62. How often do you go to the American church(es)?

(1) Very often.

(2) Sometime.

(3) Occasionally

(4) I have never been there after the first few contacts.

63. Do you personally know any Christian in China?

(1) yes

(2) no

(3) I don't know. I never asked people's religious belief.

64. Do you personally know any Christian in Lawrence, KS?

(1) yes

(2) no

(3) I don't know. I never asked people's religious belief.

65. If your answers to question 63 and 64 are NO, please ignore this question. What do you think about Christians overall?

(1) Christians are not different from non-Christians

(2) Christians are different from non-Christians.

(3) There are all kinds of Christians. Some are devoted. Some are just nominal.

(4) I have no idea.

66. Do you think that you have been influenced by Christians in Lawrence?

(1) yes

(2) no

67. If your answer to question 66 is NO, please ignore this question. How much do you think that you have been influenced by Christians in Lawrence?

(1) Very much.

(2) A lot.

(3) A little.

(4) Little.

(5) It's hard to say. I don't care what people believe in.

Appendix 2 Interview Questions

1). Questions for Joseph, pastor of the Lawrence Chinese Evangelical Church

1. How long have you been working for the Chinese Church in Lawrence?
2. Do you think that students or scholars from Mainland China and Taiwan exhibit any difference in their likelihood to become Christians?
3. Over the years when you serve the church, have you found that more students and scholars from Mainland China than before are approaching Christianity?
4. What are your strategies to bring KU students and scholars from Mainland China to your church? Are they effective?
5. How many students and scholars from Mainland China have been Christianized so far?
6. What factors do you believe influence the likelihood of students and scholars from Mainland China to accept Christianity?
7. What aspects of Chinese culture are barriers to converting students and scholars from Mainland China?
8. In what ways do you think the opening policy of Chinese government has been a factor influencing the ability of Christianity to reach students and scholars from Mainland China? Is China's economic prosperity an important factor too?
9. With economic prosperity in China, do you expect more mainland Chinese students to come to the church?
10. Considering the structural change of KU Chinese students, that is, more and more students are at undergraduate level, do you think it's necessary to adjust the working manners of the church?
11. In what way do you think Chinese Christian students are different from or similar to American student Christians in terms of their understanding of the belief?
13. Have you discerned any gender patterns of adopting Christianity among students and scholars from Mainland China?
14. How do you measure a seeker's spiritual growth in your church?
15. What do you think when you find that the time, energy, and resources that you give fail to produce the spiritual fruits out of international students?

2). Questions for Julie of the Mustard Seed Christian Fellowship and Lucas of the Grace Evangelical Presbyterian Church

1. How long have you been working with international students? What are your motivations for working with international students?
2. What are the difficulties of working with international students? How about students and scholars from Mainland China specifically?
3. Do Chinese students have special needs compared to other international students in terms of their initial contact with Christianity?
4. Do Chinese students exhibit any differences from other international students in their ways of understanding Christianity?
5. Do you think that your work with international students is rewarding in terms of the proportion of students being Christianized?

6. How do you view the responsiveness of students and scholars from Mainland China to your invitations to either the Bible study programs, or Sunday service or other activities?
7. Are students and scholars from Mainland China more or less likely to accept Christianity than students from other countries?
8. Have you discerned any gender patterns over the willingness to adopt Christianity among students and scholars from Mainland China?
9. What specific and special factors influence Chinese students' likelihood to accept Christianity?
10. In what way do you think Chinese government is a factor in shaping Chinese students' attitudes towards religion? And increasing Sino-US economic activities?
11. What do you expect international students to take back to their home countries from your work with them?
12. With regards to your methods of working with international students, have you considered cooperating with other churches to exert Christian influence?
13. How do you measure a seeker's spiritual growth in your church?
14. What do you think when you find that the time, energy, and resources that you give fail to produce the spiritual fruits out of international students?
15. What are your suggestions or exhortations for those Americans who want to do missionary work with Chinese students in the United States?

3). Questions for Chinese Christian students

1. When were you Christianized in the United States? How long had you been in the United States when you decided to become a Christian?
2. What were the factors that helped you make the conversion decision?
3. Did you tell your parents or other family members about your decision before you were Christianized? Why or why not?
4. In what ways do you think that Christianity has influenced you or your life?
5. How do you reconcile your ancestral worshipping and the Christian belief in Jesus only?
6. Do you plan to work in the United States after you graduate? If yes, do you think your belief in Jesus can help you find a job and integrate into the American society? If not, will your belief influence your relations with your colleagues in China positively or negatively?
7. How much did you know about Christianity before you came to the United States? Had you reasoned the whole belief out before you decided to become a Christian or did you make the conversion decision before you truly understood the belief? Why or why not?
8. Have you been very proud of your Christian identity? Are you willing to reveal that to other non-Christian Chinese students or do you prefer not to reveal it to avoid misunderstanding?
9. How do you describe your relationship to the Chinese Evangelical Church? And your relationship with other local American churches if you attend them?
10. How do you describe your belief to other non-Christian Chinese students?

11. Do you think that there is a consensus in China that ignorant, uneducated and psychologically unhealthy people are more likely to be subject to religious influence? Why or why not?

4) Questions for non-Christian Chinese students who often attend church activities

1. What are your specific motivations for staying with the church(es)?
2. What appeals to you the most about the American or the Chinese church respectively?
3. How do you describe your relationship with the Chinese Evangelical Church? And your relationship with other local American churches if you attend them?
4. Do you have any doubt that you will become a Christian one day in the future? Why or why not?
5. What are the problems that you must solve before you become a Christian?
6. How do you describe your first contact with the church in the United States?
7. When and how did you start to develop your interest in the Christian church?
8. If you were in China, do you think that you would have the same interest in the Christian church?
9. In what specific ways are you expecting your participation in church activities to benefit your life in the United States?
10. How do you reconcile your atheist education with the church doctrines?
11. What role do you think religion plays in people's life?
12. Do you think that there is a consensus in China that ignorant, uneducated and psychologically unhealthy people are more likely to be subject to religious influence? Why or why not?

5) Questions for Chinese students who avoid churches

1. What role do you think religion plays in people's life?
2. How do you view the Chinese Christian students in the United States? Do you think that different attitudes towards religion or Christianity influence Chinese students' relationship with each other? In what ways?
3. What specific factors in your life have made you suspicious about religious influence?
4. How do you solve problems in your personal life? How do you describe your life in the United States so far?
5. Have you been to a local church in Lawrence? What specific about the church keeps you away from it?
6. Does the statement hold true to you that ignorant, uneducated and psychologically unhealthy people are more likely to be subject to religious influence? Why or why not?
7. How do you view the paradox that the United States is the most developed country in the world but at the same time it is one of the most religious countries?
8. How do you describe your first contact with the church in the United States?
9. How do you view church people's help to international students?
10. In what ways do you think Chinese culture encourages or discourages religion or Christian belief specifically?

6) Personal Interviews

Len Andyshack	01/09/2008
Jie Chen	12/30/2007
Fei Gu	12/30/2007
Guorong Gao	12/22/2007
Zhongli Jiang	12/23/2007
Ann Kihm	01/06/2008
Joel Li	01/11/2008
Hengwei Qi	12/30/2008
Jun Wang	12/31/2007
Kai Wang	12/20/2007
Lihua Xing	01/07/2007
Mingji Zhang	01/09/2008