

EFFECTS OF CULTURAL NUANCES ON WITNESSING STRATEGIES
AMONG THE ENGLISH-SPEAKING CHINESE ADULTS IN SINGAPORE

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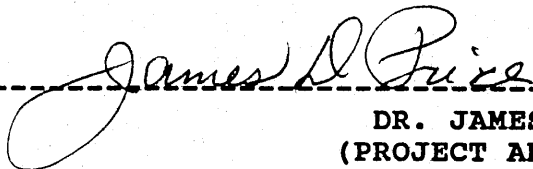
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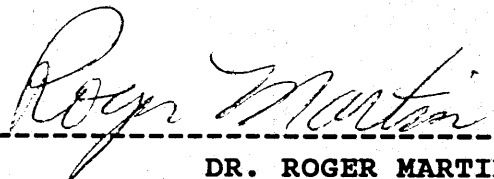
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TO

MY FATHER AND MOTHER

FOR THEIR LOVE, COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE

TO ME, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

**"Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours;
and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13b).**

AND TO

MY BELOVED WIFE

FOR HER EXEMPLARY LOVE AND DEDICATION

TO THE LORD, ME AND THE CHILDREN

**"Her children arise up, and call her blessed;
her husband also, and he praiseth her" (Prov. 31:28).**

A TRIBUTE TO MY DAD (by Rev. Goh)

June 29, 1979

My heart has many fond memories of you. What I am today as a servant of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has been, in many, many ways, influenced by you. In you, I see the faithfulness of the all-providing Almighty God. As a child, I can still remember the times of privilege and joy when I put my hands trustingly in yours, knowing that you would care and provide. Even in these short years of my marriage life, I can see your faithfulness in taking care of us. Our physical home has your touch of care. Our cupboards are filled with your supplies. The lives of your son, his wife and your grandson have been so refreshed again and again by your constant presence, protection and provision. Truly, it is then not difficult for me to believe that there is the God of faithfulness and love because you, as His creation, has exemplified Him, the Creator. Also, it is not difficult for me to give up my life fully to the Almighty God and Father as His servant, because you have been an example of His Reality and Faithfulness in providing for my family and for the family of the believers of Jesus Christ and for others who need the Saviour Jesus Christ.

Many other lessons have I learned from you that which I cannot pen all at once but that which I will always praise God daily for you as I am called into remembrance of them. One great lesson, however, stands very prominently which you have taught, not just only with your words, but, above all, with your actions and life. This great lesson which you personify is the constant persistency of your labour of love in many practical ways for me and the family as well as for many that have come in contact with you. Even in times of misunderstanding, you have stood the test of consistent love for us. Nothing that we have done or said stops you from loving us. Many are the testimonies of your labour of love and many mourn your quick departure from this life.

You are now entered into your deserved rest. All souls belong to the Lord God and you are now returned to Him. You have lived well and the Lord God has appointed your rest from the fury and weariness of this life. Your physical body, dust it is and to dust it shall return, is now sown to the ground but it shall be raised incorruptible and put on immortality. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, not only died for our sins so that our sins are forgiven but also rose up from the dead to guarantee our bodily resurrection. Then death will have no more sting and grave, no victory. Then God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away.

I promise to take care of your companion of over forty years, your wife and my mother. In your wise choice of her, you have provided me, my brothers and sisters, one of the greatest mothers of the world. We thank God very much for both of you. May we live our lives wisely, never foolishly, never a grief to you or to her that bore us!

You are now gone ahead of us and we know that you are still concerned that we live our lives well. You have always written "May God Bless You" and we know that as you are in the presence of the Lord God, you are personally requesting Him to bless us with His salvation, wisdom and strength to do and complete His will. May the Lord God help us that we will be worthy of His Name and your prayers for us! We will meet again before His Throne and praise God for all that He has done for us. Till we see one another again, enjoy your rest in God.

Sen Jong

IN FOND MEMORY OF OUR MOTHER!

"WHO CAN FIND A VIRTUOUS WOMAN? FOR HER PRICE IS FAR ABOVE RUBIES! PROV. 31:10

Dearest Mother, we thank our LORD GOD for giving to us the greatest mother of all. In both you and dad, your companion of over forty years, we have a great example of the nature and personality of the Almighty GOD! In dad, we have been reminded of GOD's constant presence, protection and provision. In you, and because of your constant presence with us, we have been privileged to know of GOD's holiness, love, discipline and sacrifice. God has thus blessed us with you both to complete our lives.

Though you did not have lot of formal education, you taught us by your example the importance of truthfulness and hard work. We do not have to take things that do not belong to us! We have been privileged to have life so that we can apply our strength and talent to good use in order to have a good life. You had always been with us in the various endeavours of our life, providing with the on-the-job training. One aspect involved our studies in school. Even though you did not know the subjects involved, you were with us even till late in the night, helping us by your presence, and the special drinks and food that you provided. Though you had never been in any parent training class, yet you realized that "the rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" (Prov. 29:15). You applied the rod and reproof firmly and we praise GOD that we have not brought you shame. There were many instances of special sacrifices you made for us! Once, you had to labour outside the home to supplement the income of the home during a very difficult time. We still remember the great labour of love. Everytime we were sick, you were always there all day and night. It was always so comforting to feel the touch of your hand on our foreheads, even during the late hours of the nights. There was so much tenderness in your life that has made it so easy to us to realise there must be tender-mercies in the GOD who made us. Your love and sacrifice extended to our spouses and children. You had always been quick to observe their needs and to supply them as best as you knew how. Outside our home, you had always been extending your hand to help the needy of whatever needs. One example involved the peace-making of quarrels. You had always been a peace-maker and others always brought their problems to you. You had not failed them, even though there were times when others misunderstood and you yourself were blamed. Truly, blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of GOD (Matt. 5:9).

Your children arise today and call you blessed! Many have done virtuously, but you have excelled them all. Above all, we praise you for your fear of the LORD GOD for as GOD's Word reminds us, "Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised!" (Prov. 31:30) "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him." (Psalm 103:13). You are now entered into your deserved rest, in the presence of our LORD God and re-united with dad. There is rest from your labour. Your good works will follow after you in and through our lives. May we never bring shame to you! We do not say, 'Goodbye' for now. We will say, 'Mother, Goodnight,' have a good rest till we see you in the morning. Praise the Lord that we will see you again in the many mansions in Heaven and we will never be separated again. Praise GOD for the Blessed Hope because of the death and resurrection of our LORD Jesus Christ! Thank you again for the privilege and joy to have you as our mother. We will see you someday! Enjoy your rest with dad. We love you and will miss you!

April 10, 1988

ABSTRACT

Effects of Cultural Nuances on Witnessing Strategies Among the English-speaking Chinese Adults in Singapore

by

Seng Fong Goh

There are over one billion Chinese around the world and about 2.1 million Chinese in Singapore. In order to communicate the Gospel to them, it is important to understand their culture and thought so that the message may both be comprehended and acted upon by the recipients as intended. The primary objective of this thesis is to search for an understanding of the Chinese cultural nuances, for points of contacts to win friendship and confidence, and for a basis on which to build the best explanation of the Gospel. Its main concentration is on the English-speaking Chinese adults in urban Singapore.

Chinese culture is dominated by three main systems--Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism--which interact and fuse with other popular folk beliefs to form a syncretistic nature. Historical research is conducted to observe the effects of the three in the minds of the Chinese. Chapters 4 to 6 trace the history and teaching of each of the three respectively. Each is compared with one another. The uniqueness of the Christian faith is shown in the discussion of the doctrines of God, Humanity, and Immortality.

Chapter 7 focuses on four major cultural nuances that are

chosen for further study: Eclecticism, Family, Vitality of Religion, and Personal Religion. Their effects on witnessing strategies are diagnostically interpreted from the insights of historians, sociologists, evangelists, and church planters. Anyone who holds to a reasonable view of the nature of reality will be able to design an appropriate plan of action.

A descriptive qualitative study is needed to measure current experiences and attitudes concerning the cultural nuances and strategies. Chapter 3 sets forth the methodology, while chapter 8 provides the analysis of a questionnaire survey of three hundred Christians and three hundred non-Christians. Interesting patterns are observed. The Chinese culture in Singapore seems to be a culture in crisis. The belief of ancestor-worship, for instance, which is a formidable barrier to a Christian witness, is undergoing some changes. Helpful strategies include the need for more social services and home groups for support and felt needs.

While Chapter 7 describes the strategies to meet the needs of the four main cultural nuances, Chapter 9 concludes with a strategic positioning of Christian witness that involves the total mobilization of the church with a scriptural mindset and lifestyle. A strategy orientation includes an understanding of the process of the journey of a soul and of the process of witness leading to a decision making for Christ. Effective witness to the Chinese must take into account all these factors.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to express his heart-felt thanks to the Lord God for His salvation and call into His ministry. Special praise also goes to Him for these three years of equipping for the years ahead.

Deep appreciation goes to his God-provided helpmate, Daisy, for her great love, patience, and labor, for without her, this thesis would not have been completed.

To the many loved ones and friends, he owes their uplifting prayers and gifts of love so that he and his family can be provided with the strength and physical means. His gratitude goes especially to two couples--Dr. and Mrs. Timothy Tow and Dr. and Mrs. Goh Seng Heng--for their additional labor of love in so many ways.

To the pastors and members of the fifteen churches that participated in the survey, the writer wishes to thank them for their willingness to be involved. To the many friends, college professors, and students, he thanks them for the preparation and the keying in of the data of the survey.

To Dr. Roger Martin, who opened the door for the writer to study at Temple Baptist Seminary and who is his advisor, the writer owes the guidance and encouragement. To Dr. James Price, his research professor, he owes the insight and guidance in this project.

May the Lord use this thesis in the writer's life for His glory and for the salvation of souls!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	xiv
List of Figures	xv
List of Graphs	xvi
Chapter	
1. Introduction	1
The Research Problem	2
The Research Question	4
Subsidiary Questions	5
Definitions and Delimitations	6
Need for the Study	9
Assumptions and Limitations	13
2. Review of Relevant Literature	16
Post-Graduate Studies	16
Works on Religious Thoughts	19
Works on Witnessing Strategies	21
Working Papers and Surveys	26
Journals and Periodicals	28
3. Methodology of the Study	30
Reflecting on Historical Research	31
Descriptive Qualitative Study	34
Population and Sampling	35
Design of Questionnaires	38
Data Analysis	42

4.	The Art of Living: Confucian Humanism	49
	Its Founder	49
	Its Brief History	50
	The Literature	51
	The Influence	52
	Neo-Confucianism	53
	The Decline	55
	The Expansion Overseas	56
	Classical Confucianism	57
	A Proper Religion	58
	Its Specific Teachings	59
	God and Heaven	59
	No Atheism	60
	Sacrifices	62
	Deities	63
	Creative Force	64
	Humanity	65
	The Good Nature	66
	The Ideal Man	66
	The Ideal Society	73
	The Family	75
	The Ruler	77
	Immortality	80
5.	The Path of Escape: Buddhist Escapism	82
	Its Founder	82
	The Legends	83

Historical Traditions	84
His Enlightenment	85
His Mission	87
His Karma	89
His Death	90
Its Brief History	90
The Spread of Buddhism	91
The First Mission	92
Mission to the North	93
The Expanded Mission	93
Assimilation	94
Mission to the West	95
The Split into Two	96
The Spread into China	98
Ally with Taoism	99
Indigenization	99
"Pure Land" School	101
Ch'an Buddhism	103
The Decline	105
Expansion Overseas	105
World Buddhism	106
Singaporean Buddhism	106
Its Specific Teachings	107
The beginnings	107
The Causeless Cause	107
No Sovereign Ruler	109

Humanity	110
Three Marks of Existence	110
The Wheel of Existence	113
The Four Noble Truths	118
The Three-fold Discipline	120
Nirvana	124
A State	124
A Place	124
Paradise	125
6. The Way of Life: Taoism Nothingness	128
Its Founder	128
Its Brief History	130
Early Taoism	130
Later Taoism	131
Degeneration	133
Modern Resurgence	134
Western Taoism	135
Singaporean Taoism	136
Its Specific Teachings	136
Tao of Taoism	137
The Absolute	137
The Cosmic Mother	138
Tao of the Bible	139
Taoist's Pantheon	140
The beginnings	142

Humanity	143
Monism	143
Philosophy	144
Golden Era	147
Taoist's Fallacy	147
The Good Nature	148
Nature of Things	149
Reversal of Tao	149
Relativity of Truth	150
Relativity of Morals	151
Ethics	152
Life and Death	153
Natural Processes	154
Immortality	154
Eternal Life	155
7. Needs and Strategies	157
Eclecticism	157
Supplementary Nature	157
Life-long	159
No Co-option	160
Functional Substitutes	161
The Masses	162
The Keystone: The Family	163
One Stream	164
Pietism	165
Family Evangelism	166

Single Nucleus	167
Youths and Young Adults	168
Network Evangelism	169
Three Cs Ministry	170
Champion of Family	171
The Men	173
The Women	174
Status of People	176
"Class" Churches	177
Kinship Evangelism	177
Vitality and Validity	179
Objectives	179
Functional Christianity	180
Early Missions	181
Unfriendly Churches	182
"Prosperity" Gospel	183
Signs and Wonders	184
Personal Religion	185
No Interference	186
Private Worship	188
Church Membership	189
8. Analysis of Surveys	191
Profiles of Respondents	192
Sex	192
Marital Status	194
Educational Level	194

Religion	196
Age Group	198
Christians	200
Age of Conversion	200
Circumstances	202
Chinese Beliefs and Values	204
Summary of Data	204
Ranking of Data	204
Beliefs and Values	207
Present Life	208
Ancestor Worship	210
Traditional Ways	211
Good Works	213
Contacts with Witness	215
Summary of Data	216
Ranking of Data	216
Recommendations of Witness	219
Summary of Data	219
Ranking of Data	221
Important Contacts	224
Social Services	224
Christian Friends	225
Home Support	227
Felt Needs	228
Family	227
Tuition	231

	Special Events	233
9.	Strategic Positioning	235
	Foundational Principles	237
	The Divine Spirit	240
	The Mobilized Church	243
	Philosophy of Ministry	245
	Vision	246
	Infrastructure	252
	Celebration	254
	Congregation	256
	Cell	258
	Core	264
	Strategy Orientation	268
	Process of Journey	269
	Stages of Growth	269
	Seasons of the Soul	273
	Process of Witness	276
	Relationship	276
	Service	278
	Testimony	280
	Invitation	283
	Evangelist	294
	Prayer	299
10.	Conclusion	305
	Historical Research	305
	Descriptive Study	308

Recommendations	311
Appendixes	
A. Fundamental Buddhistic Beliefs	314
B. The Wheel of Existence	316
C. A Comparison of Life Views	317
D. Chronology of Chinese History	318
E. Buddhist and Chinese Literature	320
F. Survey Forms for Christians	322
G. Survey Forms for Non-Christians	330
H. Summary of Christians' Responses	336
I. Summary of Non-Christians' Responses	343
J. Ranking of Beliefs and Values	349
K. Teaching Material for Outreach	350
L. Infrastructure Plan	368
Bibliography	369

TABLES

Table		Page
1.	A Comparison of Ranking of Beliefs and Values by Total Scores for Degrees of Importance	205
2.1	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Present Life Cross-tabulating with Categories	209
2.2	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Ancestor Worship Cross-tabulating with Categories	210
2.3	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Traditional Ways Cross-tabulating with Categories	212
2.4	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Good Works Cross-tabulating with Categories	213
3.	A Comparison of Ranking of Contacts with Witness by Total Scores for Degrees of Helpfulness	217
4.	A Comparison of Ranking of the Recommendations of Witness by Total Scores for Degrees of Helpfulness	221
5.1	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Friends Cross-tabulating with Categories	226
5.2	Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Reporting on Item Family Cross-tabulating with Categories	230
6.	Ranking of Chinese Beliefs and Values by Total Scores, with Corresponding Frequencies for Degrees of Importance	348

FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Engel's Spiritual Decision Process	270
2.	Neighbour's Pyramid	271
3.	Holmes and Rahe's Social Readjustment Rating Scale	275
4.	Plan of Salvation	286

GRAPHS

Graph		Page
1.	A Comparison of Distribution of Sex	193
2.	A Comparison of Distribution of Marital Status	193
3.	A Comparison of Distribution of Educational Levels	195
4.	A Comparison of Distribution of Religions	197
5.	A Comparison of Distribution of Age Groups	199
6.	A Distribution of the Age Groups of Conversion	201
7.	A Distribution of the Circumstances leading to Conversion	201
8.	A Distribution of the Summary of Data on Chinese Beliefs	204
9.	A Distribution of the Summary of Contacts with Christian Witness	204
10.	A Distribution of the Summary of Recommendations of Christian Witness	220

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

When Jesus said that the field is white unto harvest, and that the harvest truly is plenteous, He must surely have had in mind the one billion Chinese settled in China and all over the world today. This is aptly described by a Chinese saying: "Wherever one finds ocean waters, one will find a Chinese."¹ A 1990 survey indicated 1.13 billion in mainland China, 52.1 million in Asia, outside the mainland, 2.4 million in North America, 600 thousand in Europe, 500 thousand in Latin America, 230 thousand in Oceania and 65 thousand in Africa.² Singapore, the country being considered, had 2.1 million Chinese out of 3 million in 1990, with a median age of 30.6 years.³

The Chinese boast of a cultural history of over five thousand years and regard it as an abundant and immortal heritage. In order to communicate the Gospel to them, it is important to understand the Chinese culture and thought. A very familiar Chinese proverb has it that to be always assured of success, one must know the one he deals with as well as

¹ Vanessa Hung, "Chinese and Chinese Church Panorama," Chinese Around the World, January, 1992, 7.

² Hung, 7-8.

³ Lau Kak En, Singapore Census of Population 1990 (Singapore: SNP Publishers Pte. Ltd., 1993), xvii.

culture and its social dynamics.⁴ To be effective, the communication of the Gospel must be in the Chinese context of thoughts and philosophies.⁵

The Research Problem

Singapore, a sunny island of about 221 square miles (about 572 square km), twenty-six miles long by fifteen miles broad at its widest points, is a first class modern city-nation! In the short twenty-eight years since independence from the British, it has developed into the cosmopolitan technological hub of South-East Asia, with a mixed constituent of migrants from China and from other ethnic groups of India, Malaysia, Indonesia and others. As a result, have the Chinese been assimilated into the "melting pot"⁶ concept and lost their culture altogether? Or is there a regrouping, a reclustered around language, religious and ethnic pattern, into a multi-racial and multi-religious society? Also with the fast pace of urbanization as well as Western influence, will there be changes in their worldview? Will all these changes affect witnessing strategies to the Chinese.

⁴ David J. Hesselgrave, Planting Churches Cross-Culturally: A Guide for Home and Foreign Missions (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 173.

⁵ Charles Brock, Indigenous Church Planting (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1981), 48.

⁶ David Haney, Foreword to Target-Group Evangelism, by Ralph W. Neighbour, Jr., and Cal Thomas (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1975), vii. The concept describes the assimilation of migrants to the host culture.

God made man and man produces culture. James Tai stated that culture is "the sum of men's knowledge, beliefs, arts, ethics, laws, customs and habits."⁷ Culture involves religion and philosophy. Both are concerned with ultimate reality, but their approaches differ. The supreme task in religion is to dedicate oneself to the object of worship, whereas in philosophy, it is to contemplate.⁸ Religion seeks knowledge for the sake of worship while philosophy seeks it for the sake of understanding.⁹ Thus the religious man enjoys his experience whereas the philosophical man contemplates his.

The Chinese culture is basically a combination of religion and philosophy. Its philosophy contains ideas that are essentially religious.¹⁰ It seeks to understand the nature of God and the significance of religion in life without recourse to specific revelation. The Chinese generally do not separate their religion from other aspects of their lives. Ancestral belief and spiritism, which dominated Chinese religion for centuries, intermingle with philosophical thoughts. The culture is dominated by three great literate systems--Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism--which interact and

⁷ James Tai, "God and Culture," Chinese Missions Overseas Vol. 8, No. 9 (1986):4.

⁸ D. E. Trueblood, Philosophy of Religion (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957), 7-8.

⁹ William Temple, Nature, Man and God (London: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1934), 30.

¹⁰ D. S. Nivison, "Chinese Philosophy," Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), III:245.

fuse with other popular folk beliefs, ancestral rituals, myths and cosmological symbols to form a syncretistic and eclectic nature.

Therefore the Christian's communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ must be such that the message is both comprehended and acted upon by the recipient as intended. The vehicle of that effective communication must be a practical demonstration of a caring, loving, sensitive perception of the felt needs of the Chinese people¹¹ (cf. Phil. 3:17; 4:9). The primary objective is to search for the understanding of the cultural nuances, for points of contact to win friendship and confidence, and for a basis on which one can build the best explanation of the unsearchable riches in Christ Jesus "that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:23). The present study concentrates on the English-speaking Chinese adults in Singapore.

The Research Question

The research question or the hypothesis helps to determine the thrust of this study. It is stated in the form of an interrogative sentence that asks the relationship between the cultural nuances of the Chinese and witnessing strategies.

It is stated thus: Have certain cultural nuances in the Chinese worldview affected and influenced strategies of

¹¹ S. D. Faircloth, Church Planting for Reproduction (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991), 64.

witnessing among the English-speaking Chinese adults with which this writer is working in urban Singapore?

Subsidiary Questions

In order to treat the research question adequately, its logical components are considered. Taken as a whole, the successive answers to these subsidiary questions or the subhypotheses will shed light and contribute something vital to the answer of the research question. These are the subsidiary questions:

1. What are the worldviews and experiences of the founders and adherents of the three main religions that influence Chinese thoughts?
2. In what ways do the three religions affect one another in the mind of the Chinese?
3. How do these three religions differ in the understanding of Christian doctrines, such as the doctrines of God, creation, humanity, life and death, and of Christian concepts of salvation, such as sin, confession, repentance, forgiveness, faith, love and grace?
4. What are some of the cultural nuances that have given the Chinese a certain "Chineseness"?
5. What influences do these cultural nuances have on the Christian witness in Singapore?
6. As a result, what will be the writer's personal strategic positioning in witnessing to his own people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Definitions and Delimitations

The various terms of the hypothesis will now be defined. These definitions will determine the scope and nature as well as the delimitations of the study.

Cultural Nuances

These nuances are the delicate qualities of the shared basic assumptions and beliefs that operate unconsciously or, as G. Hofstede asserted, of "the collective mental programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one human group from another."¹² David Hesselgrave defined it as "the totality of learned, socially transmitted behavior or custom."¹³ An example of the religious feeling and practice of a Singaporean Chinese is portrayed in C. S. Leong's observation:

Geok Song comes from a family that has for generations practiced idol and ancestral worship. He is not very sure of the names of the gods in the home, but he is sure he will carry on with the practice of ancestral worship in his own generation and the next. Like all the boys interviewed to date, Geok Song carries the casual attitudes that having a religion does not really make one a better person but he will continue with ancestral worship anyway, because it is the tradition to do so In the same way his parents would be angry with him for conversion to say Christianity, he would also be extremely displeased if his own children should take up other religions.¹⁴

¹² G. Hofstede, "Motivation, Leadership and Organization," Organizational Dynamics, Summer, 1980, 25.

¹³ David J. Hesselgrave, ed. Dynamic Religious Movements (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, n.d.), 298.

¹⁴ C. S. Leong, Youth in the Army (Singapore: Federal Publications, 1978), 136-37.

Chinese Worldview

James Sire defined worldview as "a set of presuppositions that we hold, consciously or unconsciously, about the basic makeup of our world".¹⁵ Ronald Nash asserted that a well-rounded worldview includes what a person believes on at least five major topics: God, reality, knowledge, morality, and humankind.¹⁶ The writer will use these topics as points of reference as he relates the Chinese beliefs with the teachings of Christianity. C. Kraft pointed out further four functions of worldview:

1. It provides an explanation of how and why things are as they are.
2. It serves as a basis for evaluation of experience.
3. It provides psychological reinforcement for a way of life.
4. It serves as an integrating function for new thoughts and experiences.¹⁷

The following incident illustrates one aspect of the Chinese worldview and the necessity to understand it:

There is story about a Chinese and a Caucasian visiting their respective family graves. The Caucasian placed a bouquet of flowers before the grave and stood for a moment in silent meditation.

¹⁵ James Sire, The Universe Next Door (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 17.

¹⁶ Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 30.

¹⁷ Charles Kraft, Christianity and Culture (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1979), 53.

Then he watched the Chinese man go through the motions of offering wine, food and money.

"Come now, " he jested. "Do you really think your ancestors can eat the food, drink the wine, and spend the money?"

"As much as your ancestors can sniff your flowers," replied the Chinese.¹⁸

Strategies of Witnessing

The various approaches or programs used for witnessing of the saving grace of the Lord Jesus Christ will be introduced, though not discussed in detail. A few will come under critique as they relate to the witness to the Chinese. This research is limited to the area of witnessing and thus does not address the other areas of the church life unless they lend support to the Christian witness. This writer hopes to forge what he calls a "strategic positioning" of Christian witness, that is, by positioning or posturing Christians and the elements of the witnessing process to best participate in what the Lord desires to do. It is not the matter of developing a plan of witness, but one of knowing His will and entering into His plan and purposes. The wisdom of the Psalmist reminds us:

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that
build it:

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in
vain.¹⁹

¹⁸ Eileen, G. Lee, "Problems of Communication in the Chinese Churches" (M.A. Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, May 1979), 17.

¹⁹ Psa. 127:1.

English-speaking Chinese

The research is also limited to a specific group, that is, Chinese adults (over 18 years old) who use English as their first language. The Chinese-speaking or dialect-speaking Chinese will need different strategies. Youth and children will also need different approaches. The writer is more familiar with the researched target group since he has been ministering with such Chinese adults for twenty years. Thus his concern will be with the fifteen churches in which he has personally ministered. He has known their pastors, some of whom are his former students in Far Eastern Bible College. He has conducted seminars and training classes and has spoken in the churches and in the week-long camps held by the churches. Though the target group speaks English, yet there is a common "Chineseness"²⁰ with all Chinese. The former Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew, a lawyer, expressed such observation thus:

I may speak the English language better than the Chinese language because I learnt English early in life. But I will never be an Englishman in a thousand generations and I have not got the Western value system inside; mine is an Eastern value system. Nevertheless I use Western concepts, Western words because I understand them. But I

²⁰ Vivienne Wee, What does "Chinese" Mean? (Singapore: NUS Department of Sociology, 1988), 1-2. Wee concluded that Chineseness is a result of historical and political action, relating to time, place and people. Such identification is through ascription by others and not through achievement of self.

also have a different system in my mind.²¹

Urban Singapore

Singapore has been the writer's home for forty years of his life. He has watched it developed from a British colony of migrants into a modern technological urban city-nation of trade, banking and tourism. He has had the privilege and joy to minister among the people for the past twenty years. With the fast-changing development of the past twenty-eight years after independence, there may be some sociological as well as cultural changes among the Chinese who make up 77.7% of the cosmopolitan urban Singapore.

Have affected and influenced

This study will investigate whether cultural beliefs have influenced witnessing strategies. Tay Mui Lan's personal testimony shows evidence of some influences:

I remember the first time I tried to reason with my parents. A classmate had advised that I should first ask my parents if they loved me. If they said, "yes," I would say, "Then wouldn't you like me to have the best?" If they said, "yes" again, I would add, "Then wouldn't you let me be a Christian if it is good for me?" The strategy sounded very logical. But I never got beyond the first question. As soon as the question left my mouth, my mother became very offended. "How could you question a mother's love?" she said.

One day, in an attempt to show how much I loved her, I said, "Thank you" for a dress she had bought for me. She retorted back in hurt and pain. Her

²¹ John Clammer, Singapore: Ideology, Society, Culture (Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1985), 22. Mr. Lee Kuan Yew is eminently qualified to make such an observation as he was Prime Minister of Singapore for more than 25 years and had led the nation from a fledgling nation into a world class modern one.

complaint? "I am not a stranger. I am your mother. Why should you thank me like a stranger?" I was puzzled for a while and then I understood. What may appear to us as a genuine expression of gratitude may not seem that way to our parents. That is because we have very different orientations. Communicating with my parents is, therefore, a cross-cultural experience.²²

Need for the Study

This study will benefit certain people. It is beneficial to the writer's own personal life as well as to his ministry. Pastors and church-planters will be able to glean helpful thoughts and advice. Sociologists will refresh themselves with some up-dates.

First, this study provides an exhilarating experience to enable the writer to discover his roots, and thus to understand himself and his people better. The whole project began as the writer wrote and presented a paper on Chinese Buddhism and Confucianism in a modular Missions class. As his interest increased, he began to develop the paper further and then to incorporate it into his research study. He realizes that such a study will also enhance his ministry of evangelism, pastoring and teaching, which are his spiritual gifts. In evangelism, he desires to be able to use suitable strategies in witnessing. In teaching, he desires to share the findings with fellow-pastors and students. This study too will help him to develop strategies for other ethnic groups by using the methodology of this research.

²² Tay Mui Lan, "Introduction," in How to Speak to our Elders about Christ, ed. Tay Mui Lan (Singapore, An OMF Book, 1978.), 3.

During his presentation of his paper in the modular class, he found that the fellow students, some of them in the doctoral program, were quite ignorant of the Chinese beliefs and practices. Thus there is a need for a preliminary account, readable and uncomplicated, so as to enable an interested Christian to begin to understand the Chinese, and later, to build upon the account and expand it for further understanding.

In attempting to make such a complicated and complex subject as clear as possible, the writer may seem to oversimplify some things. The discussion of each religious thought, for example, may lead some to think that a Chinese is either a Buddhist, a Taoist, or a Confucianist. The common Chinese is not so but is a mixture of all three and other folk beliefs. The writer is not a theologian nor a philosopher and does not pretend to be an authority on the study. He is an ordinary preacher, seeking after God and witnessing of His Grace to his own people. He hopes that the study will make some small contribution, because being Chinese, he is able to catch the spirit and sense in a way not possible to Western writers, and to communicate to his generation of English-speaking Chinese the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The review of the relevant literature indicates that the most recent study of the religion in Singapore is John Clammer's The Sociology of Singapore Religion, a series of essays concerning the relationship between ethnicity and

religion. Even then the statistics quoted were from the early 1980s. The only research analysis of why people joined the Baptist churches in Singapore was done in 1985 by David Finnell. Thus there is a need for a more up-to-date combination of historical and descriptive research as well as program development, especially in the midst of the fast-paced changes in Singapore and around the world.

Politicians, especially the government cabinet, have tried to unite the migrants of diverse culture into a Singaporean culture, since independence, but they have been unsuccessful. For a time, there was confusion. The story abounded of the description of the Chinese as being like a banana, "yellow on the outside, but unripe inside,"²³ a derogatory phrase, to mean that the Chinese in Singapore had no Chinese culture anymore. Recently, however, the policy is towards regrouping into one's own ethnic culture and beliefs. The Chinese are now encouraged to study their history and to emulate the ancient culture. Many sociologists such as Vivienne Wee (writing from a non-Christian point of view), and John Clammer (writing from a Christian point of view) have been researching the "Chineseness" of the Singaporean Chinese. The analysis of the proposed qualitative survey into the Chinese beliefs should be an interesting up-to-date contribution to such a study.

²³ Christopher Khoo, "Yellow on the Outside, White on the Inside." in Straits Times, 26 June 1985, sec. 2, p. 1.

There have been many kinds of witnessing strategies in Singapore, some imported from England, others from America. The writer has been involved, at one time or another, in some of them, mainly with the Inter-School Christian Fellowship (from England), the Youth for Christ, city-wide crusades, literature and correspondence course evangelism, street evangelism, Evangelism Explosion, Continuing Witnessing Training (from the Southern Baptist), Home Fellowship, and slum evangelism with food distribution and medical treatment. Most of these are "one size fits all" type of programs, imported and used, perhaps because they have been successful in the host countries, which are English-speaking. Some of these programs have been offensive because they are not culturally sensitive.

During the last decade or so, the conflict has been between the traditional form of worship and the contemporary type. The logic is that the younger generation of English-speaking Chinese is more westernized and thus the contemporary worship will have a better appeal, just as it has been a success in the West! The most recent strategy of church growth is the cell-church concept of Ralph Neighbour, which has stirred up some actions. Ralph Neighbour is presently serving in a Baptist church in Singapore, conducting training of his concept in churches. This writer and some of his fellow-pastors have used the Navigators model and the Meta-church model. The need is to develop some strategies that may

not have the potential to be offensive, divisive and disruptive to the racial harmony of the country. The writer believes that this reflective study will facilitate in some measure the development of the Holy Spirit's creative and contextualized strategies of witness for his generation. This study will not stand as the final word in this fast-changing, all-changing, and complex world; though, hopefully, it will provide some insight for deliberations now and in the future.

Assumptions and Limitations

The fundamental assumptions are that the subject concerns the past and the present trends of man; that man individually and collectively is complex and challenging; that to study man in sufficient complexity requires social science concepts and theory in psychology, sociology and anthropology; that man can only be studied "as an analytical entity through some conceptual framework";²⁴ and, that once a knowledge of human behavior is gained, then other aspects of his history fall into their proper slots. This writer does not claim to be a historian, nor a social scientist, nor a statistician, though he plans to use some insights of the disciplines to achieve his objectives. These, hopefully, will be satisfying to the specialists.

As to the past, the traces of history left behind are the presumed valid evidences. The writing of a historical account

²⁴ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 5.

of the three main religions is thus limited by the amount of surviving materials and the inability to observe the past as a living reality. It is further limited by the use of translated copies of the writings of the leaders. The writings of Lao Tze, for example, were translated by different people, with their own peculiar interpretations. Also, care will be taken not to read the evidences in terms of one's own time and ideals rather than of the postulated past time. The positive aspect is that there is the possession of a knowledge of the outcome of human ideas and actions. Thus the writer can assess the impact as he traces the history of each of the religious thoughts from the beginnings to the present days.

The qualitative survey assumes a reflective approach, with "knowledge-in-action,"²⁵ on the part of the writer as well as the respondents. The writer enters into the world of the respondents in their settings and obtains the data without any deliberate attempt to alter them. Then he reflects on it, analyses and synthesizes it. This assumes that the perspectives of the respondents are meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit as accurately as possible. Such "knowledge-in-action" is a critical assumption because it says that the participants are the most valuable sources of

²⁵ Bill J. Mowry, "A Reflective Approach to Research: Applying the Research Paradigm of Post-Positivism to the Evangelical Church," Christian Education Journal, Vol. XIII, No. 2, 1993, 51-65. Mowry describes the reflective approach as "a systematic inquiry into purposeful subjects which utilizes the knowledge and experience of the participants in an effort to gain meaning, insight, and understanding."

knowledge.

The writer assumes that the Chinese beliefs and cultural nuances have some degree of consistency. Twenty-three of such nuances have been reflectively selected for evaluation. Such perceptions of the respondents will be hampered and limited if care is not taken to see that special hazards like the "Hawthorne Effect," the "Halo Effect," and the "Self-fulfilling Prophecy"²⁶ are avoided or at least minimized. These will be discussed later.

²⁶ Edward S. Balian, How to Design, Analyze, and Write Doctoral Research (New York: University Press of America, 1982), 46. The "Hawthorne Effect" asks the question: Will the respondents react differently if they realize that they are being watched? The "Halo Effect" occurs when a person gets into a habit of evaluating a certain number regardless of attitude. The "Self-fulfilling Prophecy" is the giving of an answer which reflects the way one likes to see himself.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Relevant Literature

An examination of the standard sources, which include computer generated references, reveals no doctoral dissertations or books, related specifically to the proposed study. Libraries at Tennessee Temple University, University of Tennessee (Chattanooga), Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (Fort Worth), Dallas Theological Seminary (Dallas), Singapore Bible College, Far Eastern Bible College (Singapore), Singapore Baptist Seminary and National University of Singapore were the main ones used. Computer generated references involved systems like ERIC (Educational Resources Index Center), ATLA (American Theological Library Association), TREN (Theological Research Exchange Network), Religious and Theological Abstracts, Dissertations Abstracts International and Comprehensive Dissertations Index.

Post-Graduate Studies

Doctoral theses which appear to be related to this study were written about situations in urban Hong Kong and Singapore. They include the following (in chronological order):

(1) Smith, Henry Newton. "Chinese Ancestor Practices and Christianity: Toward a Viable Contextualization of Christian Ethics in a Hong Kong Setting." Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX., 1987.

(2) Carroll, Charles Cowan. "Towards a Culturally Relevant Strategy of Evangelism and Church Planting for Baptists Among English-speaking Chinese in Urban Singapore." Ph.D. diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX., 1989.

(3) Yeo, Bee Tin Peggy. "Conversion to and Continuation in the Christian Faith Among Multi-generation Chinese Protestant Families in Singapore." Ph.D. diss., Westminster College, Oxford, 1992.

Smith's dissertation bears on one aspect of Chinese culture, that is, Chinese ancestor practices. Though his survey was conducted among the Chinese in urban Hong Kong, his findings give insight to such ancestor practices as essentially a matter of social custom rather than a religious ritual. Though the survey did not include findings of witnessing strategies, Smith did suggest the traditional strategies of Christian compassion, family concerns, and social involvement.

Charles Carroll's work seems to parallel the study at hand. However, its narrower focus considered only the problems faced by the Singapore Baptist Mission (the arm of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board) and the Singapore Baptist Convention. It is primarily a historical research of the involvement of Southern Baptist missionaries in Singapore from the 1950s. It is reflective to a certain extent, weighing the successes and failures of the strategies employed

in evangelism and church planting. Carroll reiterated many of the witnessing strategies with which church planters and this writer are familiar. Being a Third-waver, Carroll prescribed a contemporary worship, the use of all the spiritual gifts and the cell church model of church ministry.

Peggy Yeo (a former fellow-student with the writer) contributes to another significant aspect of Chinese culture: the strong Chinese family and its effects on kinship evangelism. As the survey involved only a small sample of twenty families, trends could not be established. Nevertheless, the study confirms some hypotheses about kinship evangelism.

Three books, which have evolved out of post-graduate studies, and which bear significantly on some aspects of the study, are these: James Wong's Singapore: The Church in the Midst of Social Change (Singapore: Church Growth Study Center, 1973); Keith Hinton's Growing Churches Singapore Style: Ministry in an Urban Context (Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1985); and, David Hock Tey's Chinese Culture and the Bible (Singapore: Here Life's Books, 1988). The first two were written at the School of World Missions at Fuller Theological Seminary, while the last one was written at Western Conservative Baptist Seminary.

James Wong's study is one of the earliest attempts to relate church growth to social change from the insight of a church planter. The 1970s had seen the rise of Neo-

Charismaticism in Singapore, and James' own denomination, Anglicanism, was the leading faction. Thus the study advocated Charismaticism and contemporary worship and music. This gives the historical backdrop of some of the practices of the modern churches in Singapore.

Keith Hinton's work is a masterful discussion of the overall ministry of the churches, while this study involves only the cultural aspects and evangelism. This is one of the primary sources from which this writer gleans for his discussion on "Needs and Strategies." David Hock Tey's readable book is a must for anyone who desires to take an initial step into the world of the Chinese. It takes on topics ranging from Chinese thoughts, filial piety, fortune telling, spirit mediumism to the many Chinese customs and traditions. This writer is indebted to Tey for his insight into the unique features of the Chinese thoughts.

Works on Chinese Religious Thoughts

Basic to this study is an understanding of the history of the founders, their teachings and the spread of the three main religions. Besides the use of Vergilius Ferm's An Encyclopedia of Religion, Encyclopedia Britannica, Encyclopedia of Religions and Ethics, and The Encyclopedia of American Religions, the main encyclopedia consulted was The Encyclopedia of Religion, edited by Mircea Eliade. Five articles from it contribute to the understanding and the writing of the chapters on Chinese thought and its evolution:

David S. Nivison's "Chinese Philosophy," Daniel L. Overmyer's "Chinese Religion: An Overview," N.J. Girardot's "Chinese Religion: History of Study," Alvin P. Cohen's "Chinese Religion: Popular Religion," and Chan Wing-Tsit's "Chinese Religion: Religious and Philosophical Texts."

Standard translated texts of Confucius' writings include Chan Wie's The Four Books (Macao: Shu-man-tong-shu-chu, 1962), James Legge's The Four Books (New York: Paragon Book Reprint Corp., 1966), and Arthur Waley's The Analects of Confucius (New York: Random House, Inc., 1989). Arthur Waley's work is primarily used for this study as it is considered the one widely used with its annotations. Among the books used for the understanding of the history and the teachings of Confucianism are Chan Ping's The Four Books Commentary, Chen Li-fu's The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of the Four Books, and H.G. Creel's Confucius and the Chinese Way. Creel's work is a more practical application of Confucius's thoughts to the Chinese culture.

The standard translated texts of Lao Tsu's writings used are Tao Te Ching by D.C. Lau and Lao Tsu: Tao Te Ching by Fern Gia-Fu and Jane English. Both translations are readable and have much in common. H.G. Creel's What is Taoism and Other Studies in Chinese Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970) is a significant help in understanding Taoism in the Chinese practical life.

There is no standard translated text used of Buddha's

writings, but Buddha's history and teachings can be culled from books of proponents, such as K.S. Ch'en's Buddhism--The Light of Asia (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1968), C. Humphrey's Buddhism (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1952), Trevor Ling's The Buddha (Maryland: Penguin Books Inc., 1973), and A.K. Coomarasamy's Buddha and the Gospel of Buddha (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1964). Trevor Ling's work connects Buddhism with the great civilizations of India, Ceylon and in South East Asia, while Coomarasamy's deals with the personal aspects and applications of the Buddhist teachings.

Works on Witnessing Strategies

Besides the works of witnessing strategies already mentioned, the writer will glean strategies from historians of the main denominations. These are the 1993 statistics of the main denominations (total evangelical Christian membership in Singapore, compiled by the Kaos of Singapore Every Home Crusade, is 101,505, a mere .034% of the 3 million population): 24,650 Methodists, 13,330 Anglicans, 10,308 Pentecostalists, 10,262 Presbyterians, 6,552 Bible-Presbyterians, 5,187 Brethren and 5,129 Baptists. These are some of the works that have had some impact on this study: Theodore R. Doraisamy's The March of Methodism in Singapore and Malaysia, 1885-1980 (Singapore: The Methodist Book Room, 1982); James Wong's (from the Anglican's point of view) Singapore: The Church in the Midst of Social Change

(Singapore: Church Growth study Center, 1973); and Lillie O Rogers' A History of Baptists in Malaysia and Singapore (Singapore: Malaysia-Singapore Baptist Mission, 1971). Bobby Sng included all the other denominations in his book, In His Good Time: The Story of the Church in Singapore 1819-1978 (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 1980). In all these accounts, one can read much of the British as well as the American influence, the traditional trend as well as the contemporary trend.

The only Holy Ghost revival in Singapore (1935-1939) was recorded by Bible-Presbyterian Pastor and leader, Timothy Tow, who is one of the fruits of the revival, in his books John Sung my Teacher (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1985) and The Asian Awakening (Singapore: Christian Life Publishers, 1988). Thousands were saved through the faithful prayer and preaching of repentance and faith by John Sung, evangelistic bands were organized and sent forth, and scores consecrated their lives for full-time service. Timothy Tow himself has been used by the Lord these last forty years to start some forty churches, missions, and Bible training centers in Asia, Africa and Australia. The latest on the third of October 1993 was the establishment of Grace Bible-Presbyterian Mission in the Ivory Coast, Africa. "One church for each year of ministry" has been Tow's goal! This writer had the privilege to sit under the teaching and example of Dr. Tow and to learn many precious lessons of life and ministry.

In the area of personal evangelism, the "Four Spiritual Laws" booklet is used among high school students and university students. Church members, who are involved in personal evangelism, use the Evangelism Explosion (EE) method of James Kennedy of Florida or the Continuing Witnessing Training (CWT) of the Southern Baptist Convention. The basic assumption is that the people witnessed to believe in the One God who desires peace and love for all and Heaven for those who believe. One of the diagnostic questions used in both EE and CWT may be offensive to the Chinese. By using the clause in the question "Suppose you were to die today and stand before God," the Chinese feel that the Christian is wishing death upon them. The CWT emphasizes repentance more than the other two methods. The EE program, however, has three levels of training and thus is more favored as it helps to enable Christians to be better equipped. Both the EE and CWT programs are high commitment programs and thus will be more suitable for those who have the gift of evangelism.

Books that help to understand the urban society and Christian witness include the following: F.M. Dubose's How Churches Grow in an Urban World (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978); Larry Rose and Kirk Hadaway's An Urban World: Churches Face the Future (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1984); and Ray Bakke's The Urban Christian: Effective Ministry in Today's Urban World (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1987). Their messages are the same: impersonal evangelism

will not work because of the special traits of an urban society. Personal evangelism must then be in the context of networks of relationships, in the biological, geographical, recreational and vocational relationships.

Elmer Towns made a video resource kit on How to Reach the Baby Boomer (Lynchburg, VA: Church Growth Institute, 1993) and suggested valuable advice on how to reach the Baby Boomers. George Barna researched in his book The Frog in the Kettle that one out of four unchurched people would attend church if invited by friends. He prescribed creative responses to a changing world in User-Friendly Church. User-friendly churches must be quality-driven and should not be insulated from the community. There should be no cold-call evangelism but event evangelism, in which the church provides public interest events. In his Church Marketing: Breaking the Ground for the Harvest, he suggested that the church should be ministry-driven. The church must recognize its unique identity and use that knowledge to meet community needs.

Bill Hybels built the Willow Creek Community Church with a seeker-sensitive ministry (Church Leaders Handbook, Barrington, IL: Willow Creek Association, 1993). About 15,000 yuppies gathered each weekend Saturday and Sunday this year to hear a soft-sell Gospel message. This writer spent a whole week recently at the Church to study its philosophy and its growth. The philosophy is that the unchurched Harry and Mary desire to be anonymous and that evangelism must suit their

music and language to which they can relate. In one of the associate churches, rock music is used. Lee Strobel, one of the pastors, recently wrote Inside the Mind of Unchurched Harry and Mary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1993), in which he emphasized the importance of giving space, creativity, something good, something from the heart, and something to which the unchurched can relate. The soft-sell non-offensive messages seem a far cry from the hell and brimstone preaching of some fundamentalist preachers. Also, the method can sometimes dilute the message of the Gospel of repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.

To inculcate deep relationship and community in churches, the small group ministry is in vogue in growing churches. The four primary models are: The Covenant Model of Navigators and "Churches Alive" (San Bernardino, CA: Churches Alive); The Meta Church Model of Carl George from Fuller Institute (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute); The Cell Church (a modified Cho of Korea Model) of Ralph Neighbour (Houston, TX: Touch Ministries); and Serendipity Model of Lyman Coleman (Littleton, CO: Serendipity). The writer believes that the small group ministry is an important part of urban strategy and has been in training seminars of all four models. Concerning evangelism, Lyman Coleman, in his Serendipity Small Group Resources (Littleton, CO: Serendipity), has developed Lifestyle Series and Support Group Series to help reach out to people with felt needs. This is termed side-door evangelism,

an attempt to bring a non-Christian from the church barrier to faith.

Carl George of the Fuller Institute, wrote in Prepare Your Church for the Future (Tarrytown, NY: Revell, 1991), of "the empty chair" principle in the small group gathering. Prayer and effort can be made to fill the empty chair. "Fishing ponds" are the gatherings of people during various special events. Ralph W. Neighbour in The Shepherd's Guidebook (Houston, TX: Touch Outreach Ministries, Inc.), felt that Share Groups are the most Biblical and effective means for reaching the unchurched. The groups begin with relationships rather than with Bible studies. Topics for discussion are to be relevant to the unchurched.

Working Papers and Surveys

In recent years, sociologists in Singapore have been concerned about the sociological changes in the Chinese community. Some of the writings are working papers done by lecturers of the Department of Sociology of the National University of Singapore, while some are published in books. Two of the working papers help in the understanding of the modern Singaporean Chinese: Vivienne Wee's What does "Chinese" Mean? (Working Paper No. 90, Department of Sociology, Singapore, NUS, 1988) and Eddie C. Y. Kuo's Confucianism as Political Discourse in Singapore (Working Paper No. 113, Department of Sociology, Singapore, NUS, 1992). Wee's belief-that Chineseness is an identification through ascription by

birth instead of identification through achievement--provides food for thought. Kuo's work interprets Confucianism as a social movement.

Sociologist John Clammer's book, Singapore, Ideology, Society and Culture (Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1985) and the recent sequel The Sociology of Singapore Religion: Studies in Christianity and Chinese Culture (Singapore: Chopmen Publishers, 1991) provide a wealth of research information. Being a professing Christian, John Clammer writes sympathetically of the cause of Christianity. Nevertheless, he writes with the masterful insight of a seasoned sociologist. His writings will remain a primary source in this generation of the relationship of sociology and the religious practices of Singapore.

Researches of religious trends, with special references to Christianity, were made as far back as 1982, with an analysis, based on the 1980 census reports, by Bobby Sng and You Poh Seng in Religious Trends in Singapore (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 1982). The Singapore Government's Ministry of Community Development conducted other religious surveys in the 1980's. Two reports focussed on the growth of Christianity in Singapore: Jon S. T. Quah's Religion and Religious Conversion in Singapore: A Review of Literature (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1987) and Tong Chee Kiong's Religious Conversion and Revivalism: A Study of Christianity in Singapore (Singapore: Ministry of Community

Development, 1989). The report by Eddie Kuo in Religion in Singapore: An Analysis of the 1980 Census Data is most helpful as it reported that Christianity was "ethnically neutral" compared to all other religions. It was also a religion associated with a higher educational level (and English education), better income, and more prestigious occupations. The analysis of a survey of some 1,015 persons by Eddie Kuo and Jon Quah, reported in Religion in Singapore: Report of a National survey (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development) indicates an interesting observation, that conversion to another religion was typically a long and complicated process involving many facilitating factors.

David Finnell's Evangelism in Singapore: A Research Analysis Among Baptist (Singapore: Singapore Baptist Book Store, 1986) is narrow in that it focussed only on the Baptists, but is broad in that it included English speaking youth, English speaking adults, Mandarin speaking adults, bi-lingual youth and bi-lingual adults. Also the survey was to be a pilot project to determine the potential for a larger research project, covering only those that were baptized into a Baptist Church during the last three years. There were only 218 respondents. The survey provided data of percentages of people (in the form of pie-charts and histograms) that were influenced by programs like camp, rallies, media, etc.. There was no data on the culture issue. This study is a great help in the developing of items of strategies in the survey forms.

Journals and Periodicals

Among the journals and periodicals consulted are the Journal of the American Oriental Society, Missiology, Asia Journal of Theology, Ching Feng, Chinese Theological Review, Church Growth Bulletin, Chinese Missions Overseas, Chinese Around the World, and Chinese in North America. Some of the articles are tangentially related to this study, while others are helpful. Some helpful ones are these: "Christian Spirituality and Chinese Context" by Paul Clasper (Chin Feng, xx.1, 1977), "A Confucian-Christian Dialogue" by Liu Shu-hsien and Peter K. H. Lee (Chin Feng, 33:3, Sept. 1990), "On Confucius' Attitude Towards Gods, Sacrifice, and Heaven" by Liu Shu-hsien (Chin Feng, 34:1, Jan. 1991), "The Family as the Axis of Religion" by Whalen Lai (Chin Feng, 35:1, March 1992), "Evangelizing the Chinese Men" by Luke Sheldon Fetters (Chinese Around the World, April & May, 1992), "Beyond the Chinese Way of Doing Things" by Samuel Ling (Chinese Around the World, March & April, 1985), "An Analysis of Chinese Culture" by Samuel Ling (Chinese Around the World, December, 1985 & Jan. 1986), "The Logos Discourse in St. John's Gospel" by Luo Zhenfang (Chinese Theological Review, 1985), and "A Christian Perspective on the Traditional Chinese Concept of Man" by Zi Zhu (Chinese Theological Review, 1989).

CHAPTER 3

Methodology of the Study

Missiologists have written about the contextualization of Christian witness or the evangelization and church-planting of the world cross-culturally. While there are different definitions given for the term "contextualization," it primarily means the process of expressing Christian beliefs and practices in ways faithful to the revelation (text) and relevant to the local culture (context). The three distinct elements, revelation, interpretation, and application, must maintain a continuity of meaning.²⁷ How then can Christian witness be contextualized in Singapore with reference to the English-speaking Chinese adults in Singapore? A major research question is thus put forth, along with six subsidiary questions. The answers to them should provide support for the major thesis. This study involves research of people as well as a practical and strategic program development of evangelism. Insights needed for making strategic decisions, not prediction or control, are obtained and reflected on from

²⁷ D.J. Hesselgrave and Edward Rommen, Contextualization (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1989), 31-35, 109-211. Different views are held that move beyond the concept of indigenization of Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson and the Roman Catholic notion of accommodation of Louis J. Luzbetak (p.32). Other writers include: Harvey M. Conn, "Contextualization: A New Dimension for Cross-Cultural Hermeneutics," Evangelical Missions Quarterly 14 (January 1978):39-46; Charles Kraft, "The Contextualization of Theology," Evangelical Missions Quarterly 14 (January 1978):31-36; and Charles R. Taber, "Contextualization," in Exploring Church Growth, ed. Wilbert R. Shenk (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983), 117-128.

historians, sociologists, missiologists and demographers. Several tasks prove to be helpful: reflecting on a historical research, conducting a descriptive research with surveys and their analysis, and interacting with the research data, resulting in the construction of innovative strategic positioning in the writer's own personal and ministry context.

Reflecting on Historical Research

First of all, the writer considers succinctly each of the three main religious systems. Usually such a consideration may begin with the treatment of the specific religious beliefs, but he desires to begin with the founder and his experience and the brief history of the movement. While he believes that the knowledge of the teachings is important, there can be misunderstandings of them unless one understands the worldviews and the experiences of the adherents that led them to propound the beliefs. Religions are thus more than systems of doctrines and institutions; for they imply, as Joseph Kitagawa indicated, "people and communities, embracing within them those who have gone, those who are in them, and those who are yet to come."²⁸ Such a study of the history of origins and of the spreading of the religions provides a set of basic assumptions about the origin and nature of life that shapes everything the Chinese do or say. In other words, this study does not simply rehash historical data, but it

²⁸ Joseph M. Kitagawa, Religions of the East (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: The Westminster Press, 1968), 11

attempts to explain and predict Chinese behavior.²⁹

The multiplicity of books available today on the study of religions shows that there is no single "right" approach in such a study. Some hold to the view that each religion can be interpreted only by its adherents, and that outsiders cannot do justice to its depth. This study attempts as far as possible to quote the writings of the founders as well as of their followers. In addition, this writer attempts to follow the advice of Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr. that "historians must simultaneously present in their synthesis the many viewpoints present in past time with the external actions they produced and how they were consequently seen by the actors at that time and viewed by observers later."³⁰ Ideally, at least, the aim is to study, understand and reflect upon the ethos and structure of the three main religions in such a way that the perspectives and deeper significance will be meaningful to the adherents and non-adherents alike.

As this study is of the nature of Christian ministry, the aim is to understand the beliefs and the needs of the Chinese and to enter into their loneliness and longings, their questioning and quests. It is to build bridges so as to

²⁹ L.R. Gay, Educational Research 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publishing House, 1990), 205-214. Gay reiterated that all research is to explain, predict, and/or control phenomena. Since the nature of historical research eliminates control of phenomena, its purpose then is to explain and predict.

³⁰ Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., A Behavioral Approach to Historical Analysis (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 320.

communicate the Gospel with love and effectiveness. Thus there will be an evaluation and interpretation, sincerely and honestly, of the three religious teachings, comparing them with one another and with Christianity. These specific teachings will be treated under general headings of the doctrines of God, Beginning of Life, Man, Salvation, and Immortality. This may appeal to the Western logical mind, but may be artificial to the oriental mystical and philosophical mind. However, in dealing with the English-speaking Chinese, who are somewhat affected by the Western way of thinking, this can be of help, as they will be brought through from the beginning of time to the present and finally to the end of time, comparing and contrasting prayerfully the Chinese beliefs with the truth of the Holy God. In this, the writer thanks God for his dual background as he is enabled to identify himself with the English-speaking Chinese, while retaining his "Chineseness." In dealing with the Mandarin- or dialect-speaking Chinese, it will not be so much as whether the beliefs are rational or not, but it will be beliefs based on traditions and experiences of the past, as they are more conservative and tradition-bound than the English-speaking Chinese. Strategies to meet the felt and unfelt needs will have to be prayerfully and creatively devised.

The chapter on "Needs and Strategies" is a reflective study, culled from the experiences and wisdom of church historians, church planters and pastors in their writings as

well as from the experiences of the writer's own personal life and ministry. Bill Mowry rightly noted that "our ministry experience is often a developmental arena for expertise, knowledge, and philosophy."³¹ The reflective approach then is, as Warren Bennis pointed out, "a way of making learning conscious,"³² by drawing upon the specialties and principles of competent men to form a basis for analysis and evaluation.

From the selection of the many diverse experiences, certain key issues are noted and then discussed, with suggested interpretations and remedies: Eclecticism, Family, Vitality in Religion, and Personal Religion. The chapter is intended to be diagnostic and descriptive, not prescriptive, based on the assumption that anyone who holds a reasonable view of the nature of reality will be able to design an appropriate plan of action. The key issues might be some of the issues of the past, but are they present with the Singaporean Chinese today? There might be some of the strategies of the past, but are they applicable today? Thus this leads to the necessity for a descriptive research, involving the churches where the writer has been ministering. There is a potential for a larger research to involve more churches in the future.

³¹ Mowry, 59.

³² Warren Bennis, On Becoming a Leader (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1989), 115.

Descriptive Qualitative Study

Singapore's cosmopolitan social environment, which is a melting-pot of traditional and modern Western customs and values, will have some effect on the English-speaking Chinese, resulting in a gradation of religious and cultural attitudes among them. This part of the study involves measuring the current experiences and attitudes of the people by encouraging them to reflect upon their values and beliefs, the impact of Christian witness in their lives as well as the insight into what the Christian witness should be in their social settings. From the analysis and synthesis of such reflective experiences of the people involved and of historians, sociologists, church-planters and so on, the writer hopes to suggest some strategic positioning of witness. The descriptive method of research is thus used to help provide the answers, with data collected through a questionnaire survey. However, there is a reminder: just as a historical researcher has no control over what was, a descriptive researcher has no control of what is, and can only measure what already exists.

Population and Sampling

The "target population,"³³ an idealistic choice, may be all English-speaking Chinese adults in Singapore, but the accessible or the available population was the English-

³³ Gay, 125. Gay compared the target population with the accessible one as an idealistic to a realistic choice. The population must be defined so that others may determine how applicable the findings might be to their situations.

speaking Chinese adults of fifteen congregations and their friends to whom the writer has been ministering. Thus, the results of the study would be reflective of the accessible population and may only be indicative but not definitive to the target population.

The writer sought to analyze responses from a stratified sampling of two sub-groups, from at least three hundred Christians (for the Christians sub-group, it was more than 10 per cent of the accessible population of some two thousand adults)³⁴ and three hundred non-Christians.³⁵ To hit the targets, four hundred survey forms for Christians and four hundred forms for non-Christians were given out to compensate for attrition and other similar circumstances.³⁶ The churches surveyed were Bible-Presbyterians and Baptists, made up of one large church of about eight hundred, three churches of about two hundred to four hundred, three churches of about one hundred to two hundred, and eight churches of less than one hundred. Since no sampling technique would guarantee a representative sample, a combination of sampling techniques was used at different stages of the survey to ensure optimal

³⁴ Gay, 130, 137. Gay suggested at least 10% of the population as the minimum desired sample size.

³⁵ Balian, 115. Balian observed that in most dissertations, sample sizes of 60 to 300 are common, with most averaging about 200 respondents.

³⁶ Gay, 229. Gay observed that if the percentage of returns is not 70% or so, the validity of the conclusions will be weak. The percentage of 300 out of 400, or 75%, will give the survey validity.

results.³⁷ A stratified random sample was drawn from computing the ratio of attendance of each size category and then assigning the appropriate number of questionnaires needed to match the ratio. Identification marks were put on the questionnaires to indicate the size category. Equal-sized stratified samples, involving an equal proportion of males and females, were also used which helped to guarantee desired proportionate representations of the sub-groups and enhanced their use as independent variables in the statistical analysis.

The actual selection of respondents in churches varied from church to church. Systematic random sampling³⁸ was used in churches which had rolls of active members. The questionnaire was handed to every fifth person on the roll, personally in church, instead of mailing it, to ensure that it was delivered. In other churches, trained ushers passed out forms to every fifth Christian entering the worship building. Church leaders announced the project two weeks before and

³⁷ Balian, 103-108. Balian's seven sampling criteria--population size, accuracy and cost, listing availability, geographic area, population diversity, prior knowledge of population, and simple or complex research issue--are used as a guide to the sample method selection.

³⁸ Gay, 126. Gay defined random sampling as "the process of selecting a sample in such a way that all individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected for the sample." Balian differentiated between simple random sampling and systematic random sampling. In the simple sampling, sample respondents are simply selected from the population listing, while in the systematic one, subjects are selected in a systematic way (e.g., every fifth name on the list) Balian, 100.

further explanations were made from the pulpit by the trained pastors or by the writer when he was present. In some churches, permission was granted for the respondents to fill out the survey right there and then in the building. In others, the filled-in surveys were collected over the three-week survey period.³⁹ In some cases, the writer or a trained leader visited some age-group fellowships and Sunday Schools and randomly chose every fifth participant. This group-administered data collection instrument was relatively accurate and traditionally accepted.⁴⁰ The quality of the anonymity of respondents could be graded from excellent to average, depending on the trust and the specific methods of implementation. In all cases, a specific deadline date was set, and follow-up activities such as reminders from the pulpit, in the bulletin, and by word of mouth from the trained leaders involved in the administering of the survey were also introduced.

Non-Christians were selected by a kind of "snowball sampling."⁴¹ Christians who had been selected in the sampling took one questionnaire form to each to their friends and neighbors who were non-Christians. Also pastors and members were encouraged to visit the homes and shopping

³⁹ Gay, 227. Gay believed that two to three weeks would be enough time for response as well as discouraging procrastination.

⁴⁰ Balian, 110.

⁴¹ Balian, 103.

centers near their church buildings. There is a good reason for this. This study involves witnessing among people. Thus in seeking out friends and neighbors, an analysis could be made to understand the mind-set of these people, concerning their beliefs and their understanding of Christian witness. A comparison would be made between the responses of the Christians and of the non-Christians to enable the writer to study the relationships and comparisons.

Design of Questionnaires

Since there were no published diagnostic instruments available for analyzing the effects of cultural nuances on witnessing strategies, the writer designed two original questionnaires for a sample survey, one for Christians and the other for non-Christians. The forms included demographic data items (e.g., sex, marital status, educational level, religious preference and age-group) so that subgroups within the population could be discussed.

The next three major sections involved the responses of attitude towards Chinese values and beliefs (23 structured items),⁴² contacts with Christians and their activities (16 structured items), and recommendations of Christian witness (19 structured items). Since these questions were

⁴² Gay, 224-225. A structured item consists of a question and a list of alternatives responses. It facilitates data analysis; scoring is very objective and efficient.

attitudinal, the Likert-type scales were used.⁴³ Five response choices (e.g., Strongly Disagreed, Disagreed, Undecided, Agreed, Strongly Agreed) were selected. A. N. Oppenheim observed that the reliability of Likert scales tends to be good and, partly because of the wide range of answers permitted to respondents, a reliability coefficient of .85 is often achieved.⁴⁴ This scale tends to have one distinct problem: respondents can cling to the "Undecided" choice (the "cop-out" syndrome) which will affect analysis. Nevertheless, this scale is still the most common pattern used. The respondents were reminded of such a hazard. For the subgroup Christians, there were two additional sections: previous religious experience (3 structured items) and circumstances leading to conversion (20 structured items).

One potential disadvantage of structured items was the possibility that a subject's true response was not listed among the alternatives. Therefore, these questionnaires included an "others" category in the appropriate place and a space for writing in a response not anticipated. Also the writer had no way of knowing whether the respondents understood the questions, nor did he know whether the

⁴³ Balian, 79-85. According to Balian, the Likert-type scaling with five response choices is the most common scaling pattern used.

⁴⁴ A.N. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 140.

respondents actually understood the answer categories.⁴⁵ One solution was that words must be used to convey information accurately to the respondents for their understanding. The writer thus culled the words from the writings of experts in the required fields and then pretested the questionnaires in a field test.

There were other hazards that could weaken the data, which the writer and the trained leaders needed to warn the respondents before they responded.⁴⁶ Some respondents might want to "help" the project goals instead of providing sincere data. Others might give answers which reflected the way they would like to see themselves. Still others might alter their responses because they knew that they were being studied. To minimize this "Hawthorne effect,"⁴⁷ the questionnaires were made as non-invasive as possible. They were made to be self-administering. Also no name or address was required in the survey sheets, and all the information would be kept strictly confidential.

⁴⁵ Patricia J Labaw, Advanced Questionnaire Design (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Abt Books, 1980), 144. Labaw discussed the advantages and disadvantages of open-ended and closed questions and suggested some solutions.

⁴⁶ Balian, 46, 85, 89. Balian warned of four hazards: "Help" syndrome, "self-fulfilling prophecy," "halo effect," and "Hawthorne effect."

⁴⁷ This effect was first recognized when an experiment was conducted at the Hawthorne plant of the Western Electric Company. See G. Homans, "Group Factors in Worker Productivity," in Basic Studies in Social Psychology. H. Prohansky and B. Seidenberg, eds. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1965): 592-604.

The "halo effect" must also be recognized in the surveys in which the respondent had to respond to the many attitudinal questions, using an identical response scale, numbering one to five. The respondent might get into a habit of evaluating all items as a certain number, regardless of his attitude towards them. Thus sub-parts within the questionnaires were used to help break up these undesirable habit-forming patterns. Also, the problem was remedied by rewording some selected questions (Items II M and Q) in reverse direction at strategic locations of the questionnaires.

Items on the questionnaires were carefully gleaned from the chapters on the religious thoughts and witnessing strategies. The tentative list was evaluated by veteran pastors and some sociologists for content validity and reliability.⁴⁸ The list was then revised and refined. The questionnaires were field-tested among the intended target groups for further instrument deficiencies as well as suggestions for improvement. Fifty Christians from a cross section of agegroups were surveyed. Fifty non-Christians were surveyed; some of these were friends of Christians, while

⁴⁸ Balian, 57. Balian believed that, overall, content validity, while certainly hard to defend quantitatively, can be very valuable. Besides the sources already mentioned, other sources for the mechanics of constructing questionnaires include: Earle R. Babbie, Survey Research Methods (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1973): 136-56; Tyrus Hillway, Introduction to Research 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1964): 187-210; John M. Johnson Doing Field Research (New York: Free Press, 1975): 50-77; and Ho Kong Chong, The Community Study: A Discussion of the Method with Modifications for Research in Singapore (Singapore: NUS Department of Sociology, Working Paper #96, 1988).

others were living near some of the churches. These people were not surveyed again, nor were their field-test results used for the analysis.⁴⁹ This led to the final revision. The instruments were then typed and printed. For the Christians, the questionnaires were in yellow paper; for the non-Christians, they were in blue paper. They were ready for distribution and sampling as discussed previously.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the questionnaire results involved three steps: description, explanation, and exploration.⁵⁰ On one level, data analysis was sought simply to describe response patterns by discovering the distribution of attitudinal and behavioral attributes, which were recorded as percentages and frequencies. Measures of central tendency, such as median, the mode, and the arithmetic mean, sometimes shed some light on the characteristics of the samples. Since most of the data were ordinal and ranked according to the Likert Scales,⁵¹ the

⁴⁹ Balian, 45-46. A potential hazard is the "reactive effect of testing", i.e. a person becomes test-wise and simply applies the same response to the post-test, which will affect analysis. See also D. Campbell and J. Stanley Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963). This is acclaimed by some as the definitive text on experimental research design.

⁵⁰ Earl R. Babbie, Survey Research Methods (Belmont, CA.: Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1973), 57-59.

⁵¹ A. N. Oppenheim, Questionnaire Design and Attitude Measurement (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966), 133-142. Oppenheim discusses the pros and cons of the various attitude-scaling methods. Reliability of Likert Scales tends to be good, but it offers no metric or interval measures.

median, which was the measure with an equal number of scores above and below it, was the statistic of choice.⁵²

On another level, since the data were qualitative and descriptive, in either the ordinal or nominal category, the Chi-square statistic of independence was chosen as the most appropriate nonparametric test for determining the independence of two variables.⁵³ A number of null hypotheses involving independent variables and the attitudinal items of the survey tools were chosen and tested for possible associations. This assumed that the responses to particular questions were independent of their class in a given independent variable.

Chi-square measured the proportionality of observed and expected frequencies. If its value was significant beyond the selected probability level, then the null hypothesis would be rejected. A significance level of .001 was generally chosen, indicating that the association was strong enough to occur on

⁵² Marija J. Norusis. SPSS/PC+ Studentware (Chicago, Illinois: SPSS Inc., 1988), 104. Sidney Siegal, in his classic Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1956), 30, tabled the four levels of measurement and the statistics appropriate to each level. For the ordinal scale, he prescribed the Median as an appropriate statistic.

⁵³ David F. Groebner and Patrick W. Shannon, Business Statistics: A Decision-Making Approach 3rd edition (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 101-105. Edward Balian also suggested the use of Chi-square as the appropriate test in his book How to Design, Analyze, and Write Doctoral Research (New York: University Press of America, 1982), 138,144.

the basis of chance alone less than one time in one thousand.⁵⁴ The level of significance was defined as "the probability of committing a Type I error, which is falsely rejecting a null hypothesis that is true."⁵⁵

Chi-square could only indicate when a null hypothesis should be rejected and the alternative one, that a relationship existed, should be accepted. It could not show how the variables were related or how strong the correlation was. However, the probability statements could be "exact probabilities,"⁵⁶ regardless of the shape of the population distribution from which the random sample was drawn.

The SPSS/PC was used to help analyze data. The computer-generated contingency helped to visualize interesting patterns. The coefficient of contingency computed for each table indicated the strength of the observed relationship. Both the "one-way" and the "two-way" Chi-square procedures were used. The one way analysis tested a specific sample group concerning a categorical response. The two-way compared two or more variables. The categorical variable was cross-tabulated and the comparisons, for example, between the sexes, were evaluated.

The coefficient of contingency has its limitations. Its

⁵⁴ Siegal, 8-11.

⁵⁵ Thomas Long, John Convey, and Adele Chwalek, Completing Dissertations in the Behavioral Sciences and Education (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1985), 88.

⁵⁶ Siegal, 32.

significance level ever changes as a function of the specific cell dimensions in the two-way table, making it impossible to directly compare this statistic to a Pearson r or Spearman ρ , which are popular parametric measures of relationship. Nevertheless, it is believed that it still provides a good measure of relationship in a non-parametric situation.⁵⁷

Much data could be analyzed from the surveys, but this study concentrates only on those that are significant and meaningful to its purpose. The tables reproduced portrayed the patterns discovered among related variables as well as simplifying the presentation of the data analyzed.

⁵⁷ Balian, 145.

CHAPTER 4

The Art of Living: Confucian Humanism

This chapter discusses the origin and development of Confucianism through the centuries. It also surveys the use of Chinese thoughts as ideological foundations of Chinese political institutions. L. G. Thompson called Confucianism "The State Cult" during a certain period of Chinese history.⁵⁸ Specific teachings in three areas are set forth: God and Heaven, Humanity, and Immortality. These are compared with the Christian's worldview.

Its Founder: Confucius

Confucius (551--479 B.C.) was born as Kong Chiu in the state of Lu, now known as Shantung province in mainland China. He came from a poor family and worked as a park warden and did menial tasks to support himself. He was a self-taught man.⁵⁹

He grew up in a turbulent period when the Chou feudal and traditional ritual systems were collapsing. He resolved to improve himself and society through all avenues of learning, believing that education was one way to improve the human condition. He claimed to be a transmitter of the ancient tradition, although he innovated new ideas along the way.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ L. G. Thompson, "The State Cult," The Encyclopedia of Religions. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), IV:

⁵⁹ H. G. Creel, Chinese Thought: From Confucius to Mao Tse-tung (Illinois: University of Chicago Press, n.d.), 25,26.

⁶⁰ Betty Kelen, Confucius (Singapore: Graham Brash Pte Ltd., 1971), 22,23.

His teachings were based largely on the Chou system of rites and music and his understanding of the ancient books and records.⁶¹ He formulated new ideals of moral excellence and taught self-cultivation. He was consumed by a zeal to reform society through education. To propagate his beliefs, he travelled to different states, hoping to persuade rulers to adopt his teaching. Rulers, he argued, should be benevolent and caring, so that subjects would respond by being royal and trusting.⁶² His mission failed and he returned home to teach. His teachings were recorded in the Four classics, the basis of Chinese education for many centuries.⁶³

Its Brief History

Confucius described himself as "a transmitter and not a creator"⁶⁴ and "one who is fond of antiquity and earnest to seek it."⁶⁵ He studied ancient Chinese literature to pass on traditional wisdom to benefit future generations. He believed truth was revealed from above but discovered and demonstrated in human affairs. The real test of truth was in human history

⁶¹ Curriculum Development Institute of Singapore, Confucian Ethics: Secondary Four Textbook (Singapore: Educational Publ. Bureau Ltd., 1986), 97.

⁶² Wu Teh-yao, Confucius: The Man (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1989), 50.

⁶³ Creel, Chinese Thought, 43

⁶⁴ A. Waley, trans., The Analects of Confucius (New York: Random House Inc., 1989), 7.33. This translation will be used in this study as the translation of The Analects.

⁶⁵ The Analects, 7.12.

and thus he looked to the past for historical evidences of truth.⁶⁶

The Christian also believes in divine revelation that is discovered in human history. The value of man and the meaning of history are found in the nature and character of God as He reveals Himself in nature and in the affairs of man. The Holy Bible is also recognized as a historical document.

The Literature

Confucius gathered material mainly from the royal administrative bureaus and relied heavily on six historical ancient classics, "Changes" or I Ching, "Odes" or Shih Ching, "History" or Shu Ching, "Spring and Summer Annals" or Chun Chiu, "Rites" or Li Chi and "Music" or Yueh Ching. These formed the bulk of Confucian literature. His disciples compiled the core texts which included the Five classics and the Four Books. By the ninth century A.D., the Classics were expanded to thirteen volumes and then narrowed to only four after four centuries. These were the Analects, Mencius, the Great Learning and the Doctrine of the Mean. They were more simple and were supposed to reflect Confucius's actual words.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Hu Shih, "The Natural Law in the Chinese Tradition," The Natural Law Institute Proceedings 5 (1953), 133-41.

⁶⁷ Chan Wing-tsit, "Chinese Religion: Religion and Philosophical Texts," The Encyclopedia of Religion, Vol. III. (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), III:310.

The Influence

For two thousand years following the first compilation, the core texts molded Chinese thought and character.⁶⁸ In 124 B.C., a national university was set up with five colleges to teach the Classics. In the fourteenth century, the Classics became civil service examinations texts. They were regarded as the norm for life until the early twentieth century.⁶⁹ They were respected and upheld as the ultimate moral law. The philosophical ethics became a court of appeal in conducting relationships among individuals, societies and nations.⁷⁰

They were also used as a political strategy in rule and government.⁷¹ During the Qin dynasty, legalism ruled and Confucian books were burned. However, the next ruling house, the Han dynasty, adopted Confucian thought as state ideology and started the scholar-official class. Government officials were elected based on imperial examinations that tested on Confucian Classics. Confucianism soon absorbed other schools

⁶⁸ Lin Yutang, My Country and My People (New York: The Modern Library, 1938), 100.

⁶⁹ Chan Wing-tsit, "Chinese Theory and Practice," in The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture, ed. C. A. Moore (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 13.

⁷⁰ Mei Yi Pao, "Confucianism" Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. IV. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1983), 29.

⁷¹ Chu Chai and Winberg Chai, Confucianism (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1973), 2.

of thought.⁷² These scholars dominated the religious thought of the nation. In other words, in Western countries, the clergy or priest took on the function of the scholar and educator, while in China, the scholar did much of the work of the priest in developing the religious thought of the people.⁷³ The Classics also became an authority for checking the power of the emperors, who were previously regarded as the highest earthly authority.⁷⁴ In the last dynastic era, the Sung-Ming period, Confucian thought became pragmatic and academic. School curricula included the Classics.

Neo--Confucianism

The foundations of Neo-Confucianism was laid through the efforts of Han Yu (768-824 A.D.) and Li Ao (d. 844 A.D.), and developed in the Sung period (960-1279 A.D.), the Ming (1368-1644 A.D.) and Ch'ing (1644-1911 A.D.).⁷⁵ It was a complex cultural and semi-religious movement. It was a cultural nationalism asserting itself during a time when China was politically at a low ebb. Ou-yang Hsiu (1007-1072 A.D.) taught that the nation could be revived by the return of ancient customs, communal spirit and rites. The vision was one of a benevolent and selfless utopia of the mutual

⁷² H. G. Creel, Confucius and the Chinese Way (New York: Harper and Brother, 1960), 76.

⁷³ Y. C. Yang, China's Religious Heritage (New York: Abington--Cokesbury Press, 1943), 360.

⁷⁴ Chan Wing-tsit, Chinese Theory and Practice, 12.

⁷⁵ Kitagawa, 67-74.

revitalization of state and society.⁷⁶

It was a "secular" religious movement, a reaction against the decades of preoccupation with Buddhism and Taoism. It was especially a reaction against Buddhism as socially parasitic and Ch'an's subjective philosophy which denied the existence of objective reason. Chu Hsi (1130-1200 A.D.) taught that everything has a Li (principles or laws) and the Li, the metaphysical principle of government, is the highest prototype and standard of things. To him, that which unites and embraces the Li of heaven, earth and all things is the Supreme Ultimate (T'ai Chi). Only by bringing out the Supreme Ultimate that is within himself, through reverence, intellectual improvement and extension of knowledge, can one attain complete and sudden enlightenment.⁷⁷

In contrast to the teachings of Confucius, which were primarily concerned with human relations and the social duties of man, Neo-Confucianism developed a speculative and metaphysical system to understand the Universe, through which moral values could be transformed into super-moral values. Chou Tun-i (1020-1073 A.D.) offered the T'ai-chi t'u (Diagram of the Supreme Ultimate) showing all things as evolved from a first principle that differentiates itself into the Yin and Yang, then into the five elements and so on. Chang Tsai

⁷⁶ D. S. Nivison, "Chinese Philosophy," in The Encyclopedia of Religion, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), III:254.

⁷⁷ Kitagawa, 69-70.

(1020-1077 A.D.) taught all things as continually condensing out of and dissolving back into a primordial Ch'i and drew the moral conclusion that we and all things are one family.⁷⁸

The Decline

At the turn of the twentieth century, Confucianism lost favor as state ideology. The civil service examinations based on the Classics were abolished although public schools still taught them. The doctrines were still regarded as the basis of moral cultivation.⁷⁹ China's doors were also opened to Westernization, reconstruction of traditional philosophy and the triumph of Marxist Maoism. The introduction of foreign thought from Darwin and Spencer to Descartes, James, Plato, Kant and Hegel opened a vista to metaphysics, logic, epistemology, positivism and pragmatism. Pragmatism was the most influential, planting the seed for intellectual revolution.⁸⁰ Leading contenders for a new ideology ranged from Buddhism to Christianity, Scientism and Marxism.⁸¹ Atheism was also introduced as part of the "new learning" from the West rather than part of the religious heritage for the Chinese have always believed in a God.⁸²

⁷⁸ Nivison, "Chinese Philosophy," in The Encyclopedia of Religions, III:254.

⁷⁹ Wing-tsit Chan, Chinese Theory and Practice, 34.

⁸⁰ Wing-tsit Chan, "Chinese Religion," in ER III:415-16.

⁸¹ D. Lancashire, ed., Chinese Essays on Religion and Faith, (San Francisco: Chinese Materials Center, 1981), 1.

⁸² Y. C. Yang, 47-48.

By the mid-twentieth century, the communist victory decided the end of Confucian state religion and ideology. Though the late Premier Mao Tse-tung was not labelled a philosopher, his two essays, "On Practice" and "On New Democracy" set the pattern to "discover truth through practice and through practice to verify and develop truth".⁸³ He propounded meeting the practical needs of the masses. There was still the underlying agreement that man should occupy the center of thought.

The Expansion Overseas

Migrating Chinese spread Confucian thought into Korea, Japan and the East Asian countries. These countries adopted the Classics as early school curricula. Although the texts are now replaced, their ideals of filial piety, wisdom, courage, rightness and propriety still influence East Asia today.⁸⁴ There is a revival of Confucian thought and ethics, especially among the three little dragons, Korea, Taiwan and Singapore. These are concerned about nation building and work ethics to compete in the market places. The first generation immigrant Chinese Singaporeans made the study of Confucianism a viable non-religious alternative in moral education but this was later dropped. At present, Confucian ethics, together with the study of other religious systems, has been formally re-introduced in the school curriculum for high school

⁸³ Lancashire, 1.

⁸⁴ Mei Yi Pao, "Confucianism," in EB IV:1099.

students. The purpose is to produce men who would place society before self, uphold the family as the basic unit of society, and value consensus, racial and religious harmony.

Confucian thought influences the Chinese at the very root of their culture and mind-set.⁸⁵ It has evolved much throughout history but some traditional Confucian values surmount modern change. In 1989, Nobel laureates discussed the prospect of "Facing the twenty-first Century" and concluded that if man is to survive, he has to tap the wisdom of Confucius.⁸⁶ Modern Confucians worldwide seek to promote human dignity. De Bary explained that they visualize the destiny of the earth as a "humanness forming one body with Heaven, earth and all things."⁸⁷ They believe that reaching out to share in the experience of other people, religions and ethical traditions will help them grow in their own understanding of Confucianism. They are convinced Confucianism will contribute distinctively to dignify mankind.

Classical Confucianism

Classical Confucianists believe in the system of philosophical ethics in the out-working of human relationships. Thus they disconnect ancestral rites with

⁸⁵ L. J. Luzbetak, "Unity in Diversity: Ethno-theological Sensitivity in Cross-Cultural Evangelism," Missiology 4 (1976): 213-16.

⁸⁶ Wu Teh-yao, Confucius: The Man, 55.

⁸⁷ W. T. De Bary, Confucianism as an Aspect of East Asian and World Civilizations (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), 10.

Buddhist idolatry and Taoist superstition. Instead they stress that these rites symbolize filial piety, family unity and continuity.⁸⁸ They claim that temples erected in Confucius's honor stand as memorial monuments rather than religious institutions.⁸⁹

Proper Religion

The answer to the question "what is the proper religion?" depends upon the definition of religion itself, on which there is a conspicuous lack of agreement. The Bible gives a functional characterization in James 1:27 which reads: "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions and to keep himself unspotted from the world." In this, Confucianism fits for it teaches self-cultivation of morality as well as the meeting of social needs. If the two essential elements of religion are to be faith and worship, then it may be considered a religion with its major emphasis of faith and with only a minor emphasis on worship. As a faith, perhaps no religion has succeeded more than has Confucianism in knitting a whole nation together in a set of unquestioned beliefs but having their roots in certain fundamental concepts of an overruling Cosmic Order.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ E. R. Hughes and K. Huges, Religion in China (London: Hutchinson's University Library, 1950), 20-21.

⁸⁹ Mei Yi Pao, "Confucianism," in EB, IV:1095.

⁹⁰ Y. C. Yang, 60.

Confucianism regards the empirical sociopolitical order in toto as the framework of its holy community. The Chinese do not make a distinction between the sacred and the secular. Tao is to be realized in the midst of everyday life. Religion does not create its own holy community apart from human relationships; it sanctifies these human fellowships.⁹¹ Thus Confucianism is generally so considered and function as a religion in China.

Its Specific Teachings

Three important beliefs of Confucianism are high-lighted. In all these areas, the main emphasis is on man. Confucianism is basically humanistic.

God and Heaven

Religion for the Chinese is not theology about a Supreme God, but morality concerning one's fellow man. They do not attempt to try to understand the attributes of Deity or the genesis of the universe.⁹² It was assumed that the world must have a beginning, and that in the beginning there must be a Creator. But there was nobody to witness the creation and so there could be no really authentic account. One person's guess is perhaps almost as good as that of another.

It is, of course, with great joy that the Christian can show to the Chinese that God, the Creator, was there and He has given us His account in the Holy Bible (Gen. 1-3). Still,

⁹¹ Kitagawa, 77.

⁹² Y. C. Yang, 41.

the center of the world of thought of the Chinese, as well as the world of life, has been man and this life of his. Confucius was no different. His reasoning was this: "If you know not life, why speculate about (life after) death?"⁹³ We have enough to do with the present life. Why conjecture about a future life? He was homocentric and practical, interested more in concrete rules of living than in speculative philosophy of life. Whatever religion he had was from man to God, derived from his own subjective inference and not from God to man, from divine revelation.⁹⁴

No Atheism. However, in refraining from discussing about Deity and the future life, Confucius simply admitted his own intellectual limitations. He was not at all atheistic. He taught that we ought to know and respect heaven, but he did not know the ruler of heaven. Because the Creator was thought to be impossible to conceptualize, he was called Tao, or the Way.⁹⁵ Sometimes Confucius referred to God by his dwelling place, "Heaven" (Tien) and sometimes as the "Supreme Ruler" (Shang Ti). He believed the Way or Tao prevailed when individuals and society are in proper order. The moral law in the Way is rooted in Heaven or Tien, and its mandate or Ming

⁹³ The Analects, ix 11:1.

⁹⁴ Y. C. Yang, 73.

⁹⁵ J. B. Noss, Man's Religions, 6th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publ. Co., 1980), 237.

"does not speak,"⁹⁶ but leaves the Way to operate by itself. "Without knowing the Mandate of heaven, one cannot be a superior man."⁹⁷ This leads to fatalism as Confucius wrote, "If my Tao or way is to prevail, it is Ming or the will of Heaven; if my Tao is rejected, it is also Ming."⁹⁸ (Ana. 14.38). The will of God is thus inevitable and beyond man's control. The Confucianist understands the Way variably as the way of man, ancient sage, king or virtue. The Taoist views it as the way of nature. Confucius expounded the doctrine of the universal attainability of sagehood, which is man's ultimate goal. Tey described it as the "men to sages" theory.⁹⁹ It is thus man that can make Tao great. Confucius' self-achieved sagehood is based on a vague, impersonal divine presence.¹⁰⁰

The central tenet is "fate," which is an impersonal force that cannot be modified by men or gods. However, fatalism, in the sense of allowing things just to go along, is absent. There is a keen interest in fate so that one can then align himself to maximize the good of life and minimize the hardship. Consequently, he visits the astrologers, the spirit mediums and the ancestor spirits for specific guidance. There

⁹⁶ The Analects, Chapt. 17: Yang Huo.

⁹⁷ The Analects, 20:3.

⁹⁸ The Analects, 14:38.

⁹⁹ David H. Tey, Chinese Culture and the Bible (Singapore: Here's Life Books, 1988), 39.

¹⁰⁰ Chan, "Chinese Religion," in ER, III:415.

are also ways to change or amend one's fate through the selection of an auspicious name, fictive adoption by a deity or by seeking help from a more powerful deity.

Confucius' conception of God lacks the warmth of the Christian view of God as our personal, loving and forgiving Heavenly Father. Respect and not love is the attitude and the sentiment most emphasized among the Chinese, not only in religion but also in human relations.¹⁰¹ The "awe of the ordinances of Heaven"¹⁰² forces the Confucianist to offer sacrifices to Heaven. In ancient China, the emperor would offer sacrifices to heaven on behalf of the people, which was called "field sacrifice." However, Confucius's heaven does not speak. But the Lord God of Heaven does speak and has revealed Himself through His Word, the real Way, the Truth and the Life, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

Sacrifices. The Confucianist also sacrifices to the earth, rivers, mountains, ancestors and heroes. Although, Confucius was a rational humanist, he believed in religious ceremonies. The existence of spirits was documented clearly in the ancient classics (Wu-Ching). Thus Confucius divided spirits into three classes: (1) those that live in the mountains; (2) those in the water; and (3) those that dwell in

¹⁰¹ Y. C. Yang, 74.

¹⁰² The Analects, chapt. 16: Chi Chih.

the earth.¹⁰³ He advised his disciples to devote themselves to the duties that were proper to the people and to respect the spirits and to keep a proper distance from them.¹⁰⁴ The hosts of mountain and forest demons were the most dangerous as they were the causes of the floods, droughts and disturbances of nature that created havoc in the homes. The officials were to step into the breach on behalf of the people with sacrifices. The people, however, in Taoist fashion, were involved in orgies of exorcism which was condemned by Confucius. Although he did not clarify the meaning of the rites because he did not know enough,¹⁰⁵ he hated superficial observances and the slavish use of empty magical ceremonies.¹⁰⁶

Deities. Different classes of purely Confucian deities are worshipped, giving rise to a mixture of nature worship and cult of the dead. The highest class is the worship of Shang Ti, the imperial ancestors, heaven and earth, and the earth gods of ten leading mountains, the four oceans and the four great rivers. Of personified nature powers, the foremost are the four dragons (the water and rain gods) and the cloud god. Another class involves the gods of healing, god of war, god of

¹⁰³ K. L. Reichelt, Religion in Chinese Garments (London: England: Lutterworth Press, 1951), 47,48.

¹⁰⁴ The Analects, 6:22.

¹⁰⁵ The Analects, 2:11.

¹⁰⁶ The Analects, 3:26.

fire, goddess of the sea and the god of architecture.¹⁰⁷ All these worships are against the command in Exodus 20:3-5, that man should worship only the One true God and no other gods.

Creative Force. The phenomenal world was expressed through two forces - Yin and Yang, proceeding from Tao. Tao, the first cause or creative force, produces the cosmos, the Tai Chi. Tai Chi produces the Yin, the negative or female principle and Yang, the positive or male principle. From the operation of these two principles, we have heaven, earth and mankind. Harmony prevails when the spirit of truth pervades and governs all of them.¹⁰⁸

All things can be classified into the polar opposites of male and female, light and dark, hot and cold, good and evil, and active and passive. Harmonious life is a complementary interaction of these two. The passive yields to the aggressive but, by yielding, absorbs and overcomes. However, the cosmos is not static but alive. So, change is its essence. The material world resulting from Yin and Yang can be reduced to five basic phenomena, called Wu Hsing - water, metal, wood, fire and earth.¹⁰⁹ Ethical teachings are also derived from the Yin-Yang philosophy which developed in the second century A.D.. Man and nature activate each other.

¹⁰⁷ Reichelt, 59-60.

¹⁰⁸ Y. C. Yang, 150-51.

¹⁰⁹ J. B. Noss, Man's Religions, 6th ed. (New York: Macmillan Publ. Co., 1980), 236-37.

Natural disasters occur when human behavior, especially of rulers, is deviant. These are seen as a warning from Heaven to the ruler who can avert misfortune by ethical rule.¹¹⁰

Humanity

Confucianists make man as the prime subject. Not all Confucianists agree in their view of human nature. Confucius thought that there are some good elements but human nature is not absolutely good. He wrote, "By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart,"¹¹¹ because of bad influences and failure to cultivate self. Mencius, his disciple, propounded the "good nature" theory, based on subjective and relative standards - the standards of the sages - ignoring the evil tendency in man. This became the accepted theory. This means that the whole trouble with man's moral life is that his good self is like a clean mirror covered by dust, and all that is needed is to dust it off and this can be done by education. It also follows that all men are essentially alike.¹¹² All are educable and can climb to the highest possibility in life.

However, the Bible gives a far deeper understanding of the human nature. Man was originally good when God created him (Gen.1:31) but he fell into sin and his nature became

¹¹⁰ Ye-lan Fung, A Short History of Chinese Philosophy (New York: The Free Press, 1966), 208.

¹¹¹ The Analects, Chapt. 17: Yang Huo.

¹¹² Y. C. Yang, 76.

corrupt (Gen.3) and as a result the sinful nature was transmitted to subsequent generations (Rom.5:12; Ps.51:5). It is only by repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus and through the work of the Holy Spirit that man can be transformed into the image of Jesus (2Cor.5:21; Rom.12:2; 8:29).

The Good Nature. In advocating the "good nature" theory, Confucianism used the human conscience as its standard; man "acting straight from the conscience."¹¹³ Confucius taught that those who wish to cultivate their persons must first be sincere in their thoughts and rectify their hearts.¹¹⁴ Mencius thought that all men are capable of the feelings of shame and approval and it would be well that they proceeded accordingly to these. A peaceful conscience is taken as proof of innocence.

However, the problem lies in the fact that when man was corrupted by sin, his conscience lost its absolute standard (Eph.4:19; Matt.12:35). Man's conscience now has only relative standards based on man, not absolute ones based on God (Ps.25:8; 119:68). Neither can our sins be wiped out by self cultivation or the awakening of conscience. Our conscience can be cleansed by the blood of Jesus (Heb.9:14) and then we can live in godliness "with a good conscience" (1Pet.3:16; 1Tim.1:19; 3:9; 2Tim.1:3). This is the greatest need of Confucianism.

¹¹³ The Analects, 19:2.

¹¹⁴ The Great Learning, Chapt. 1.

The Ideal Man. The central thought is the Art of Living and is similar to an ellipse. One side is "the Ideal man" (Chun Tze) and the other "the Ideal society." The whole problem of life, in its concrete application, resolves itself into teaching man how to live and what to live for: (1) living by himself, and (2) living with others.¹¹⁵

To the ancient Romans and Japanese, the model man was the disciplined warrior. To the classical Greeks, it was the handsome and virtuous man. To the Indian saints, both Hindu and Buddhist, he was the ascetic. To those of Abrahamic tradition--Jewish, Christian and Muslim--he is inconceivable apart from his relationship to God.¹¹⁶ To the Confucianist, he is variously called "the princely man," "the superior man" or "the gentleman," matured and full-grown as compared with "the small or little man."¹¹⁷ The gentleman is one in harmony with the Tao, the ethical structure, living by Li, the propriety.

Five cardinal virtues can be laid down - Jen or Benevolence, Yi or Righteousness, Li or Propriety, Chih or Wisdom and Hsin or Fidelity, that is, faith and faithfulness. The relationship can be best explained by using a tree as an

¹¹⁵ Y. C. Yang, 61.

¹¹⁶ G. Fry and E. Swanger, Great Asian Religions. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1984), 99.

¹¹⁷ Y. C. Yang, 62.

analogy.¹¹⁸ Benevolence is the root of all moral, good and proper, action. Righteousness is the trunk, the manifestations of Jen. Rules of propriety (including etiquette and ceremony) are the various branches or concrete detailed rules of conduct based on the idea of Righteousness. Wisdom is the flower and Faith the fruit on this tree of virtue.

Confucius taught Jen as love and the basis for right living and relating. The Chinese character Jen is composed of two radicals--"man" and "two,"--connoting human-relatedness defined as morality or love.¹¹⁹ Thus Confucius said, "The doctrine of Jen is the doctrine of man,"¹²⁰ and "benevolence is to love man and knowledge is to know man."¹²¹ In other words, the measure of man is man; the standard of his attitude toward "other selves" is his attitude--his hope, desire and wants--toward his "own self." The whole problem of life has the "self" as Alpha and "the other self" as Omega, extending from the individual to the family, from the family to the nation and finally to the world. Jen thus can be expressed through virtues like righteousness, sense of shame, propriety, fraternal love and filial piety.¹²² "A youth should be

¹¹⁸ Y. C. Yang, 81.

¹¹⁹ Fung, 69-73.

¹²⁰ Doctrine of the Mean, 20:3.

¹²¹ The Analects, 12:22.

¹²² Chai and Chai, 35.

filial at home and fraternal when abroad. He should be earnest and sincere; he should show affection for all and be disposed toward Jen."¹²³ The characteristics of Jen are activity, life or production and propriety, which are valuable in themselves and necessary to self-fulfillment.¹²⁴ So "the man of Jen wishing to establish his own character, also tries to help others to succeed."¹²⁵

Righteousness is not a religious duty but the Confucian way to serve the mandate of heaven to live uprightly and relate orderly.¹²⁶ To be a gentleman is to be courteous, diligent, loyal, brave, broad-minded and kind in public encounter as observed in The Analects 13:9; 14:5; 17:6. Rules of propriety refers generally to norms and standards of proper behavior in a social, ethical and even religious situation. They are important because they are a means to fulfill Jen, as Confucius said, "To conquer yourself and return to propriety is Jen."¹²⁷ It is not passive submission but active participation. The harmony that propriety seeks between men is an expression of the harmony that Jen seeks between man and

¹²³ The Analects 1:6.

¹²⁴ Wei-ming Tu, Humanity and Self-Cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought (Berkeley, CA: Asia Humanities Press, 1979), 10

¹²⁵ The Analects, 6:28.

¹²⁶ K. Yeo, "Amos 4:4-5 and Confucius: The Will of God," Asia Journal of Theology 4 (October 1990): 481.

¹²⁷ The Analects, 12:1.

heaven.¹²⁸ Propriety or Li then is a process of self-realization, of becoming fully human, in four stages--cultivating personal life, regulating family relations, ordering the affairs of the state and bringing peace to the world.¹²⁹

The Confucianist's ideas on love and righteousness seem to parallel the Christian's concept except for some serious flaws. Love and righteousness in the Christian life are divine, supernatural and eternal and thus the standard is consistent and absolute. The life (John 3:16; 1John 4:8) and strength (Rom.5:5) of Christian love have their source in God. Both the quality and quantity of such love surpass that of Confucianism. The Bible not only exhorts man to love himself, others and even his enemies; it also exhorts man to love God (Mark 12:30; Deut.6:5). The Confucianist needs to seek such a love for God which is the highest objective of love for the Creator and Father of all. The quality of love also includes forgiveness. The Confucianist's forgiveness has limitations within the depraved human nature. Mencius wrote that we can tolerate our adversary only twice and then reject him as a beast the third time.¹³⁰ Christian's forgiveness is unlimited from the heart (Matt.18:21,22) because of the divine

¹²⁸ Tu, 6.

¹²⁹ S. H. Chao, "Confucian Chinese and the Gospel: Methodological Considerations," Asia Journal of Theology 1 (April 1987): 18.

¹³⁰ Mencius: Le Lou, part II.

power.

The Bible also takes God's righteousness as the absolute standard (Ps.135:3; Rom.3:24-26). Unfortunately, the Confucian standard is often affected by circumstances and lacks an absolute rule in application because of the fallen nature of man. For example, a duke declared that a son who bore witness against the father in his theft was upright. Confucius stated that in his part of the country, the upright father would conceal the misconduct of his son and the son would conceal the misconduct of his father.¹³¹ Also the Bible teaches that man cannot live up to God's standard and thus he needs the Savior. Even Confucius admitted the futility of man to be able to do good. "Those who know virtue are few."¹³²

"But the course of the Mean cannot be attained."¹³³ He said modestly, "The way of the superior man is threefold and I am not equal to it: virtuous, he is free from anxieties; wise, he is free from perplexities; bold, he is free from fear."¹³⁴ The Christian's good news is that repentance and faith in the Jesus Christ, brings or produces grace and power (Ps.73:26; 1Peter 4:11) to live holy and victorious lives.

The flower of this tree of virtue is the possession of wisdom. Learning could be acquired from various sources,

¹³¹ The Analects, Chapt. 13: Tze Lu.

¹³² The Analects, Chapt. 15: Wei Ling Kung.

¹³³ Doctrine of the Mean, Chapt. 9.

¹³⁴ The Analects, Chapt. 14: Hsien Wen.

including the collective experience of human community or tradition. Man can become wiser through learning and better through the practice of virtue. Four progressive steps in "morality in cultivation" are taught--investigation of things, knowledge of the final objective, rectification of the heart and sincerity of purpose--with four procedures, namely, to study, to know, to will and to do.¹³⁵ Another set, four progressive steps in "morality in action," are self-cultivation, ordering the family, governing the country and harmonizing the world. This may be illustrated by a diagram of a series of concentric ever-widening circles, starting from a moral self, passing to a moral family, then to a moral nation and finally to a moral world.¹³⁶ Three practical measures include: (1) distinguishing between the fundamentals and incidentals of life, (2) putting first things first, and (3) having a due sense of proportion. The fruit, then, is faith and faithfulness in the application of the knowledge of truth thus apprehended.

Education therefore is of supreme importance. It should be for all men as well as for the whole man, as Confucius said, "With education, there is no class distinction."¹³⁷ It should involve both character building and knowledge or learning. Such training also makes the nation great. In

¹³⁵ Y. C. Yang, 78.

¹³⁶ Y. C. Yang, 78.

¹³⁷ The Analects, 15:38.

theory, a good scholar and a bad man are incompatible and impossible.¹³⁸ "With wealth, you can decorate the house; but with virtue, you adorn the personality."¹³⁹ The classical program in Confucius' days consisted of literature and mathematics for a foundation in liberal arts and science (intellectual training), rules of propriety to make him a cultured gentleman and the art of music to teach the great value of harmony (moral training), and archery and charioteering to develop the body (physical training). Among the Chinese, the scholar, not the warrior or the millionaire, has always stood at the top of the social ladder.

The Ideal Society. Man does not live in isolation for he is a social being. From time immemorial, man has always speculated on the nature of the ideal society. Confucius' ideal society is not the Kingdom of God on the principle of Love but a kingdom of man on the principles of Righteousness and of Reciprocity in a series of five social relationships. Love has its place but it is only to be salt with which righteousness is to be seasoned.¹⁴⁰ Someone once asked Confucius whether injury should be recompensed with kindness. He replied that man should recompense injury with justice and recompense kindness with kindness.¹⁴¹ This righteousness can

¹³⁸ Y. C. Yang, 100.

¹³⁹ Book of Great Learning, 4:4.

¹⁴⁰ Y. C. Yang, 79.

¹⁴¹ The Analects, 14:36.

be best attained through moral instructions and influence directed to the promotion and preservation of right relationships between individuals and social units.

The Law of Reciprocity was stated by Confucius, "Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire."¹⁴² Essentially, this is the Golden Rule (cf. Matt.7:12), found almost universally in all religions, but stated in a negative way, similar to Jewish teaching by Tobias and Hillel.¹⁴³ Some called this the Silver Rule.¹⁴⁴ Man is to follow this rational and ethical duty. If he deviates, evil results.¹⁴⁵ It is a selfish concern that sets the limit on evil and harm in society. Jesus' teaching is superior because love is more than a restraint from harm. Love motivates one to desire goodwill that results in positive action for others.

The five fundamental relationships can be grouped as follows: (a) those in the family, between father and son, between husband and wife, and between elder brother and younger brother, (b) that between friends and friends, and (c) that between sovereign and minister (or between the state and

¹⁴² The Analects, 15:24.

¹⁴³ Joachim Jeremias, New Testament Theology (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), 3.

¹⁴⁴ Fry and Swanger, 103.

¹⁴⁵ Yi Pao Mei, "The Basis of Social, Ethical and Spiritual Values," in The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture, ed. Charles A. Moore (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 152.

citizen).¹⁴⁶ These do not exhaust the whole range of duties but they are fundamental and basic. The importance attached to the family relations is well known, but the relationship between friends, that of fidelity, is equally important, though less known. The value of friendship is reflected in the popular Chinese proverb, "When at home, rely upon your parents; when away from home, rely upon your friends."¹⁴⁷ Two characteristics should be noted. Firstly, these relations deal with duties and obligations and not rights and interests. The question usually is what a person should rightfully do. Secondly, these duties are relative, not absolute; bilateral, not unilateral; and reciprocal, not one-sided.¹⁴⁸ A violation from one can modify or absolve the other from carrying out the duties.

THE FAMILY. The strongest institution is the family. Its solidarity and stability are regarded as the foundation of Chinese civilization.¹⁴⁹ The Western notion of individualism, born during the Renaissance, is quite alien to the thought of the Confucianist. The individual is not ignored, but he operates from the "home base." The family is the logical starting point for moral development, in which one applies principles at home and slowly extends them to others.

¹⁴⁶ Doctrine of the Mean, 20:8.

¹⁴⁷ Y. C. Yang, 82.

¹⁴⁸ Y. C. Yang, 83.

¹⁴⁹ Fry and Swanger, 106.

Thus a familiar proverb has it that the best place to look for a loyal minister is in a family renowned for its filial piety.¹⁵⁰

Between father and son, there should be family affection, the father, be kind and the son, be filial. The father has the responsibility to the child and for him, to be fulfilled with grace, wisdom and generosity. The son is to obey his father without question and the respect continues even after death. Grafted onto the cult of ancestors already in existence in China, it resembles the cult of saints as understood in some sectors of Islam and Christianity.¹⁵¹ However, in Confucianism, it is service by the living for the dead rather than help from the dead to the living. It is much more of a worship in Buddhism and Taoism.¹⁵² In general, filial piety requires that a person provide, liberally and respectfully, for the needs of the living parents and that he keep them in respectful memory of the departed. Confucius wrote, "A proper man does not neglect his relatives; he does not grieve his great minister by keeping them useless; he does not cast off the old without great reason."¹⁵³ But, above all, he called for noble living to maintain the honor and good name of the family. Honoring the father and mother has been

¹⁵⁰ Y. C. Yang, 85.

¹⁵¹ Fry and Swanger, 106.

¹⁵² Y. C. Yang, 87.

¹⁵³ The Analects, 18:10.

rightly taken to mean living worthily, nobly and successfully. The Christian's Bible promises long days for those who practice such honor (Exod. 20:12; Eph.6:2,3). It is an interesting and significant observation to note that the people who have paid the greatest attention to such obedience also happen to be the nation with the longest history.

Between husband and wife, there should be differentiation of functions; between brothers, a proper order of precedence, the older being good, the younger being respectful.¹⁵⁴ While the husband is to be righteous to his wife, she is to be obedient and listening.¹⁵⁵ Man and woman are to come together as a unit to meet biological, social and economic needs.¹⁵⁶ The woman in China has always occupied a dignified and important position, though admittedly a less prominent and a somewhat subordinate and secluded one.¹⁵⁷ The woman takes care of the home while the man handles the outside affairs. However, accounts of outstanding women are not lacking in Chinese history, especially accounts of those who brought up famous sons.

The Ruler. The ruler is to be benevolent while the subjects are to be loyal. The underlying political theory is a curious mixture of the divine right of kingship and the

¹⁵⁴ Mencius, Book III, Part I:6,8.

¹⁵⁵ Compare this teaching with Eph. 5:22-25.

¹⁵⁶ Fry and Swanger, 107.

¹⁵⁷ Y. C. Yang, 92.

popular sovereignty of the people. The Chinese character for king is Wang. It is written as three horizontal stripes connected through the center by a vertical line. The three lines signify the realms of heaven, earth and human; the vertical line, that the three realms interrelate.¹⁵⁸ In the Chinese worldview, the king is conferred the title of the son of Heaven, and to Heaven, he is dutifully responsible as a son to Heaven, the Father.¹⁵⁹

The notion of the mandate of Heaven implies that imperial authority could not become a permanent possession of the ruler, that Heaven has the complete freedom to confer or withdraw the mandate.¹⁶⁰ The Chinese son of Heaven obviously has nothing to do with the genealogical concept of kingship, such as in ancient Egypt or Japan where the king was considered as the descendant or incarnation of a certain god; the Chinese ruler is simply the earthly representative of the heavenly will.

The ruler should model Heaven by committing himself to the path of Jen.¹⁶¹ Heaven is sought in the will of the people because "Heaven sees as the people see, and Heaven

¹⁵⁸ Li-fu Chen, The Confucian Way: A New and Systematic Study of the Four Books (London, England: KPI Limited, 1986), 450.

¹⁵⁹ Y. C. Yang, 95.

¹⁶⁰ Manabu Waida, "Authority," in The Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: Macmillan Publ. Co., 1987), II:2.

¹⁶¹ K. Yeo, 480.

hears as the people hear."¹⁶² The king then is to rule for the people and not the people for the king. If he disregards the welfare of the people, he flouts the will of Heaven and is guilty of unfilial conduct and ceases to be the son. Thus revolution is justified as it not only replaces the bad ruler but also vindicates Heaven's righteous indignation. Such revolution is described as "the falling of opportune rain" and "saving the people from water and fire."¹⁶³ This is been the impetus for many upheavals in China, especially the revolution in 1911 with the formation of the Chinese Republic, the revolution in 1950, with the communists in power and the recent upheavals by the students' movement.

Thus Confucianist insists that a moral government, built upon benevolence and righteousness, is not only the best government but also the strongest and the most permanent one.¹⁶⁴ Confucius encouraged upright and able men to go into government service. The superior man can influence in that "he is reverent in his personal conduct, scrupulously honorable in giving to his prince, considerate in providing for the people and just in employing them."¹⁶⁵

Jesus Christ is the answer to the Confucianist's desire for the King as the Son of Heaven, fulfilling and modelling

¹⁶² Mencius, Book V, Part I, 5,8.

¹⁶³ Mencius, Book III, Part 5, 4,5.

¹⁶⁴ Mencius, Book II, Part I, 5,6.

¹⁶⁵ The Analects, 5:5; 6:15.

Heaven's will. He personally fulfills the law or will of the Heavenly Father (Matt.5:17). The Confucianist believes that the king should bring about harmony between heaven and earth; and Jesus not only brought harmony, but also reconciliation, which is the greatest need. Through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus, man can be reconciled and strengthened to do the will of Heaven and produce an ideal community.

Immortality

Confucius believed heaven originated the world and regulated moral order, but he was vague about ultimate reality and the supernatural. "You are not yet able to serve men; how can you serve spirits? You do not yet understand life; how can you understand death?"¹⁶⁶ His advice on ancestors was his only reference to the after-life. The Confucianist thus has no idea about the immortality of spiritual life. There is no salvation concept either.¹⁶⁷ However, he believes in the intellectual immortality. When a man establishes virtue in this life, he becomes immortal in the sense of his influence because he exemplifies the universal moral order. The idea of life is not just one's body and living for oneself. We live as members of society in an exchange of ideas and life with others. At death, our bodies perish, but many parts of our life will continue, like flesh and blood, in our children, our

¹⁶⁶ The Analects, 11:11.

¹⁶⁷ Tey, 37.

interests, our words and our contributions in society.¹⁶⁸

Three areas of immortality are proposed: (1) in Virtue--attaining to sage-hood and setting an example; (2) in Merit--relieving the people's suffering; and (3) in Words--writing and formulating doctrines.¹⁶⁹ Thus, a person can still live in the hearts of people generations after his death. Confucius is then considered to be living, not as a person, but as a force. This is immortality and the highest goal of the Confucian spiritual pursuit.

In contrast, the Christian immortality is one of spiritual life, which is not affected by time or space and is co-existent with God (1Cor.15:42-45, 50-54). The most important difference is the second coming of Jesus, when all believers will be raised from the dead or raptured directly to Heaven and be given glorious and immortal bodies. This is not just a good name nor merely spiritual immortality but the true experience of a heavenly life. What the Confucianist lacks can be found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

¹⁶⁸ Wing-tsit Chan, "The Individual in Chinese Religions," in The Chinese Mind: Essentials of Chinese Philosophy and Culture, ed. Charles A. Moore (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971), 303-4.

¹⁶⁹ Liang Chou, Christianity and Confucian Thought (Taiwan: Cosmic Light Publishing Co., 1984), 16,17.

CHAPTER 5

The Path of Escape: Buddhist Escapism

This chapter surveys, principally, the origin and the historical development of Buddhism in the various areas in which it has flourished. It attempts to identify certain of the elements and structures that have constituted the two Buddhist traditions as Buddhism has evolved over the past twenty-five hundred years. It traces complex and ideological formations that have allowed it to develop from a small religious community to a "universal" religion associated with empires. The religion also has to contend with the modernity and contact with the Western thoughts.

Its Founder

The founder, Gautama Buddha (563-483 B C.), is known by a number of names. As a member of the Gautama clan, he was sometimes referred as Gautama. At birth, he was Siddhartha, meaning "he who had accomplished his objectives." The later Buddhist literature has him "Sakyamuni," the sage of the Sakya tribe. Before he attained enlightenment, he was a bodhisatta, a being destined for enlightenment. After attaining it, he was called the Buddha or the Tathagata, one who had attained bodhi or enlightenment. But what about his life? It has been very difficult to construct the historical Gautama. Chronology never comes easy in India, for the Indians do not keep accurate historical records or if they do, they have a tendency to add legends to their famous heroes. Gautama's

teachings were also conveyed orally for a century and a half after his death and by that time, there had been several sects with their own unique versions.¹⁷⁰ Inordinate praise colored the memory of the founder. As many as four different versions are sometimes given of one event.¹⁷¹ No complete biography of Gautama was compiled till the 4th century A.D. in Sanskrit.¹⁷² There were also the Ceylonese and the Jain chronicles.

The Legends

One famous legend, written on a medallion found in the Calcutta Museum, illustrated his immaculate birth.¹⁷³ The future Buddha surveyed the world and found the world and a woman ready to receive him. He changed into a white elephant and entered into the womb of sleeping Maya. On the day of birth, a sage saw the gods in glee and was told of the coming enlightened one. He saw the Gautama and departed, weeping because he would not be able to see and hear the Gautama anymore. Seven days later, the mother died and ascended to one of the Buddhist heavens to be reborn there as a deity. There seem to be some parallels in the immaculate conception and the story of the sage (cf. Simeon, Luke 2:25-35) which

¹⁷⁰ Fry and Swanger, 65.

¹⁷¹ C. Humphreys, Buddhism (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1952), 30.

¹⁷² K. S. Chen, Buddhism--The Light of Asia (New York: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1968), 16.

¹⁷³ K. S. Ch'en, 17,18.

suggest some interchange of ideas between the Christian and Buddhist tradition.

Another legend had it that the child came forth from his mother while she was standing up and holding on to the branch of a sacred sal tree.¹⁷⁴ Gautama was completely free of any after-birth and was immediately able to walk and talk and proclaimed himself ruler of the universe.

Historical Traditions

The historical Gautama was the son of a prince of the Shakya clan in the southern border of Nepal. The father was of some degree of political and economic and was interested in the son's welfare, making sure that he had earthly pleasure, free from human suffering. However, in his late twenties, Gautama came across sufferings and was very concerned. These were "the four passing sights": a decrepit old man, a sick man, a corpse in a funeral procession and a monk begging for food. From the religious wanderer, he saw a peaceful look and felt that could be a possibility of release. He then left his wife, son and home at about twenty-nine years of age,¹⁷⁵ and roamed as a wandering seeker and studied under several masters of the Hindu Scriptures. He found no answer. Hopeless meditation led to asceticism, but again to no avail.

He then remembered that as a child, he had known a state of happiness and also began to suspect that being healthy is

¹⁷⁴ Fry and Swanger, 65.

¹⁷⁵ Humphreys, 30.

important for successful religious quest. These two elements became central to his teachings, which was named The Middle Way.¹⁷⁶ One ought to have a rational lifestyle, giving the body enough to maintain its health, neither too much (his early life with his father) nor too little (his years with the ascetics) so that one can meditate on the quest of life. Another set of extremes to be avoided consists of nihilism, everything is not, and materialism, everything is; instead, Gautama stressed that everything is becoming.¹⁷⁷

His Enlightenment

The nature of change, which took place when he was thirty-five years old, was described by saying that he became a Buddha, the Awakened one. In later Buddhist literature, the transition was described as an earth-shaking event with a battle against the hosts of Mara, the evil One;¹⁷⁸ but the earlier literature, especially the Pali Sutta called Discourse on the Ariyan Quest, gave a more prosaic and analytical account, and one which made the events described difficult to fit into the categories of "religious" or "spiritual" experience.¹⁷⁹ According to one tradition, five successive dreams informed Gautama that through meditation, he was to

¹⁷⁶ Fry and Swanger, 66-68.

¹⁷⁷ K. S. Ch'en, 31.

¹⁷⁸ Humphreys, 32.

¹⁷⁹ Trevor Ling, The Buddha (Maryland: Penguin Books Inc., 1973), 130.

come out of ignorance and be enlightened of the reality of the eternal round of decay, suffering and death.

At the time of the full moon in May, on the bank of the Nairamjana river, he sat down under a sacred tree (bodhi tree) facing east. There he successively entered the four stages of meditation: calming the passions and detaching the senses; focusing mind serenely and confident of success; achieving an alert mind and blissful body; and, transcending the polarities of pleasure and pain.¹⁸⁰ Purification of the mind was necessary.¹⁸¹ He passed in review his former births, the cause of all rebirth and its consequent suffering, and the spokes of the Wheel of Rebirth which rolled and rolled unceasingly. He linked the various components of self to the Self which used them. Finally he bound in one the Self which was still human and the Self of pure Enlightenment.¹⁸² H. C. Warren described the incident thus: by dawn, his consciousness penetrating even deeper, Gautama realized that "rebirth has been destroyed, the holy life has been lived, the job has been done, there is nothing after this."¹⁸³ Another account recorded simply that as he discovered the four Noble truths,

¹⁸⁰ Fry and Swanger, 67.

¹⁸¹ T. Ling, 131.

¹⁸² Humphreys, 32.

¹⁸³ H. C. Warren, Buddhism in Translations (Mass: Harvard University Press, 1896), 380-1.

his mind became free.¹⁸⁴ The great awakening had occurred and he emerged a Buddha. He remained seated for seven days in a state of bliss.

His Mission

After struggling with the question of whether or not to tell others, he felt the call and in a place called the Deer Park of Sarnath, near Benares, he presented the Four Noble Truths, the cornerstone of Buddhism, to five ascetics. In that first sermon, Gautama gave the classic definition of suffering, as recorded by Ch'en:

Now this, monks, is the noble truth of pain: birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful.¹⁸⁵

These five monks became the first missionaries and were ordained and sent out with the power to ordain converts in some simple formula, which in its final form, is still repeated by followers today:

I take my refuge in the Buddha,
I take my refuge in the Dhamma (Teaching),
I take my refuge in the Sangha (Order).¹⁸⁶

Then Gautama began a life of wandering in the eastern part of the Ganges Valley, preaching the Dhamma and establishing a community of monks till his death at age

¹⁸⁴ T. Ling, 131.

¹⁸⁵ Ch'en, 41.

¹⁸⁶ Humphreys, 35.

eighty. Success crowned his efforts from the very beginning and those who joined the community of monks came from all classes--brahmans, merchants, warriors, even outcasts. The dominant position at that time was held by the brahmans, clinging on the Vedic literature and the Upanishads. Gautama repudiated the claim that the Vedas was the sole source of religious truth, rejected correct conduct of rituals as means of salvation and disapproved of the Upanishadic emphasis on intellectual means to attain emancipation.¹⁸⁷ He protested against the iniquities of the caste system, especially the high pretensions of the brahman class and admitted all four castes into his order. Women were allowed to enter the order, and they formed the female branch of the order after much insistence from his disciples.¹⁸⁸ When asked how to deal with women, Gautama suggested not to see nor speak to them. If the women spoke, then the men were to keep wide awake.¹⁸⁹ The Buddha's reported guidance, as reported in the Pali texts, is more human. The husband is to respect the wife, to be faithful and provide for her. She is to love him, perform her duties well, be hospitable, be faithful and watch over his goods.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁷ Ch'en, 11.

¹⁸⁸ Humphreys, 38.

¹⁸⁹ Ch'en, 26.

¹⁹⁰ R. A. Gard, Buddhism (New York: George Braziller, 1962), 223.

His Karma

However, Gautama still followed the Indian doctrine of karma (moral retribution) and rebirth, that a sentient being was to suffer repeated rebirth in the endless cycle of life as a consequence of the deeds that he had done. This teaching provided for a moralistic and rationalistic explanation for the diversity of living beings, for good deeds were rewarded and evil ones punished accordingly, with no room for a mystical or theological agency to intervene.¹⁹¹ As a result of the deeds performed in the past or present, a living being would continue in the cycle of rebirth and assume a different form in each rebirth.

While Gautama accepted the prevailing views concerning karma, he also added a significant point. He taught that not only the deed but also the intention or volition is present. Here is the reason for the emphasis of the discipline of the mind. Not only every act but also every thought leaves behind some traces which could not be erased, but would be manifested in present and future existence. Thus a living being, after performing some evil in his present life, would require numerous lives in the future to work out the consequences and some of the consequences might be rebirth in a lower form of existence.¹⁹² Gautama adhered also to the prevailing view that the goal of religious life was release from this endless

¹⁹¹ Ch'en, 31.

¹⁹² Ch'en, 32.

cycle, and that the religious life could best be lived by cutting off ties with family and society.

His Death

He died in a small, insignificant village called Kushlinara at the age of eighty. His remains were to be treated in the same way as those of a universal emperor.¹⁹³ They were wrapped in cloth and soaked in oil, placed on a funeral pyre made of all kinds of fragrant wood and burned. The ashes were divided into ten parts and given to the Rajas of the land. The relics were enshrined in a great memorial cairn where all too soon, the respect and worship of these grew into a cult. Even today, the relics of teeth and pieces of bones in India and Ceylon receive a respect which he, it would seem, would be the first to deplore.¹⁹⁴

Its Brief History

Since the objective of this study will be to concentrate on Chinese Buddhism, the spread of Buddhism elsewhere will be briefly described and then traced through Chinese history. Buddhism was from the first a missionary religion. The Buddha's command, as recorded by Humphreys, was "Go ye forth, for the gain of the many, for the welfare of the many, in compassion for the world. Proclaim the Doctrine glorious, preach ye a life of holiness, perfect and true."¹⁹⁵ The

¹⁹³ T. Ling, 126.

¹⁹⁴ Humphreys, 42.

¹⁹⁵ Humphreys, 60.

method of teaching was by preaching and by subsequent discussion.

The Spread of Buddhism

During the sixth to first centuries B.C., the Buddha was regarded as a Teacher and conceived as a Great man and Universal Ruler; popular veneration of him developed into a Buddha-cult which expressed him as the Exalted one.¹⁹⁶ The Dhamma was developed in doctrinal statement and scholastic interpretation begun in Pali, Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. The basic scriptures were the Tripitaka or Three Baskets, containing the Vinaya with rules for the monks and the story of Buddha's life, the Sutras with the collection of Buddha's sayings, and the Adhidhamma with the discourses of Buddha. Buddhist architecture, sculpture and literary arts also developed.

The year 270 B.C. saw the emergence of the Indian Empire under Asoka who became a Buddhist monk while still Emperor. Until Asoka, Buddhism was a local Indian sect, but with Asoka's help, it was spread throughout his kingdom, to all of India, and into Ceylon, Nepal and central Asia.¹⁹⁷ Asoka had inherited an intensely missionary understanding of his faith from the Buddhist writings and implanted it within the

¹⁹⁶ Gard, 21.

¹⁹⁷ John Walters, The Essence of Buddhism (New York: T. Y. Crowell Co., 1961), 94-102.

movement.¹⁹⁸ This missionary zeal has distinguished Buddhism from almost all other indigenous faiths of Southern Asia. This also led to the establishment of Buddhism as the national religion of many countries, like Ceylon, Nepal, Tibet, Siam, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam, giving a Buddhist culture and civilization to these.

First Mission. The first mission was to Ceylon about fifth century B.C. and it was such a great success that even today, in spite of Tamil invasions from South India and later European aggression, Ceylon (now called Sri Lanka) remains the stronghold of the Theravada school. It was the country where the Buddhist Scriptures were first put into writing in 80 B.C..¹⁹⁹ Religious relics and their veneration added to the fervor.

In the third century A.D., Ceylon was honored with a tooth of the Buddha which has become a national treasure. During the first and fifth centuries, Buddhism spread rapidly from India eastward to Bengal during the Gupta Dynasty rule (320-533 A.D.) and then into Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam and to Indonesia; and then northward to China and into Korea. By this time, the Mahayana tradition evolved in the Buddhist areas in India, Central Asia, China and Korea. Ideas of the Buddha further developed into the Bodhisattva (male deity)

¹⁹⁸ J. G. Melton, The Encyclopedia of American Religions 3rd ed. (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1989), 170.

¹⁹⁹ Walters, 101.

doctrine and many idealized a collection of Buddhas in the Mahayana tradition.²⁰⁰

Mission to the North. During the sixth to tenth century A.D., Buddhism continued to spread, principally from Korea and China to Japan, and from India to Nepal and Tibet. Foreign travel by Buddhist pilgrims and scholars increased. The Buddha-concept and Buddha-cult culminated in the Buddhist pantheons and elaborate rituals. The observation has been that when there is a change in the religious system, the old provides the building blocks for the new. Old religions do not die; they live on in the new ones that follow them.²⁰¹ The additions had arisen from the excess of tolerance which Buddhism displayed from the beginning.²⁰² As it gently flowed into country after country, it tended to adopt or failed to contest the rival claims of the indigenous beliefs. Thus, in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, the worship of nature-spirits continues side by side, while in China and Japan, the Confucian, Taoist and Shinto beliefs have modified the entering stream of Buddhism.

Expanded Mission. During the eleventh to fifteenth century A.D., Buddhism institutions declined or were supplanted by Hinduism or Islam in most of India and central Asia. However, they were established in Laos, Siam, Mongolia,

²⁰⁰ Gard, 22-27.

²⁰¹ Charles Kraft, 72-73.

²⁰² Humphreys, 12.

Bhutan and Sikkim, and progressed in Cambodia, Ceylon and Japan and not notably in China, Korea or Nepal.²⁰³

During the sixteenth to twentieth century A.D., the most significant changes occurred in the varied responses to the challenges presented by European colonialism, ideas and values, modern technology and educational reforms. There began a closer understanding and co-operation among the various traditions. New factors involved the reorganization of monastic education in the form of Westernized or modern Buddhist schools and colleges, the exchange of publications among the laity and scholars and the public welfare activity of both the Sangha and laity.²⁰⁴

Assimilation. One interesting development is the assimilation of Buddhism to the common pattern of "religions" in urbanized societies. It tries to accommodate itself to an existence as one religion among a number of other religions. For centuries, the Buddhist laity traditionally regarded the Sangha as the only Buddhist organization. But with the advent of modern scientific changes, secular trends and Western ideological challenges they have established various lay societies and associations.

Thus in the late nineteenth century, the Young Men's Buddhism Association movement developed in Ceylon and spread to India, Burma, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Singapore and

²⁰³ Gard, 25-26.

²⁰⁴ Gard, 27.

elsewhere.²⁰⁵ Welfare activities at the present time include education, homes for the orphans, poor and aged, medical dispensaries and hospitals, vocational training centers, supplies for leper and refugee settlement and other assistance intended to further community spirit and being.

Mission to the West. Introduced in the first place by Chinese and Japanese immigrants, Buddhism is now making itself at home in the United States with the forms of organization and congregational services modelled on the American pattern.²⁰⁶ Most groups in America are transplanted Oriented sects, with Caucasians joining them. Another kind is the philosophical Buddhist center formed usually around leaders who have been trained in Japan.²⁰⁷

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, a Muslim country, the Buddhist Missionary Society, founded in 1962, has regular services, Sunday school attended by all ages, the singing of Buddhist hymns and songs and services for weddings and funerals.²⁰⁸ From a stagnant religion, it became a living force in the country with adherents from the Ceylonese, Indians and Chinese.

In England, Buddhism is represented by a number of

²⁰⁵ Gard, 226-33.

²⁰⁶ E. Nottingham, "Buddhist Ethics and Economic Development," World Buddhism Vesak Annual, 1967, 38.

²⁰⁷ Melton, 176.

²⁰⁸ Voice of Buddhism (Kuala Lumpur), Vol. 8, No. 3 (September 1971): 50-57.

associations in cities, towns and in universities and the groups share a tendency to see themselves as part of the spectrum of local religious sects and churches.²⁰⁹ Anyone who is familiar with English Christianity will observe much that is similar, only with Buddhist terminology substituted.

The Spilt into Two

Within a generation of Gautama's death, different views of his teachings emerged. Today, Buddhism is composed of two major traditions, the Theravada (or Hinayana, the Little Raft) and the Mahayana (Great Raft, for crossing the sea of suffering). The former is found in Burma, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Laos and Kampuchea; the latter in Japan, Korea, China and Vietnam. The Theravada, literally, "the way of the elders," implies that it embodies the tradition in its oldest form while the other, sometimes called "theistic Buddhism,"²¹⁰ shows an exuberant openness to the creative power of the religious imagination.²¹¹ Many of the Mahayana teachings are modifications of themes already present in the other; nevertheless there are important differences.

The Theravada school teaches that Gautama was a superior, even a heroic, person but nevertheless only a man, while the other teaches that he was not merely a man but a manifestation of the Absolute, essentially sacred. Like the Docetists, the

²⁰⁹ T. Ling, 27.

²¹⁰ T. Ling, 242.

²¹¹ Fry and Swanger, 74-77.

Mahayana Buddhists teach that Gautama's physical body and activity such as eating and sleeping were only illusions.

The Theravada tradition has it that man could be freed from samsara, the eternal round of rebirths, by one's own effort. At some point, he must enter the monastery to engage in qualitative disentanglement and meditation. If he perseveres, he can in time--perhaps it will require several rebirths--achieve freedom. The other allows for individual's own effort, but self-effort is no longer necessary because one can appeal on the grace and love of the Buddha. Indeed, such grace and love is even adequate to save even the meanest, so that an upright life is not necessary.

The Theravadist canon is composed of suttas or "discourses" rarely exceeding twenty pages each. Known as the Tripitaka (literally, three baskets), in the Pali language, the canon is divided into three parts: the discourses of Gautama, those of his disciples, and the scholastic commentaries. By contrast, the Mahayana canon is extensive. The entire set of sutras is not available in a single language; parts are in Tibetan, Chinese or Sanskrit. Most were composed from the first through the sixth centuries A.D. and they were many and long. Whereas the Theravada school values the Tripitaka because of the message, most of the laity of the other school attribute magical power to the sutras. Because the sutras are the embodiment of the truth of the Absolute, they are also able to provide protection and

material success if one masters the master or carries the sutra in the pocket.²¹²

The Theravada school perceives the world as psychologically real and thus one seeks to transcend samsara by a psychological analysis of the world and by using the insight gained thereby to disentangle himself from any attachment to it. The other sees the world as an illusion and it seeks to educate its people to the ideal of selfless effort for others even as the bodhisvatta, the enlightened person, postpones his own freedom to seek redemption to all. This bodhisattva ideal stands in clear contrast with the image of the individual's seeking his own salvation of the Theravadin school. This provides the spirit behind the great missionary zeal and sacrifice of the Mahayana Buddhists.

The Spread into China

There is a strong tradition that Buddhism reached China early in the Han dynasty around 1st century B.C.,²¹³ but there is historical evidence that, in A.D. 61, the Emperor Ming, as result of a dream, sent messengers to India for Buddhist books and teachers.²¹⁴ Two monks returned with images and scriptures of the Mahayana school. The new arrivals were not received with open arms. Confucianism was the dominant ideology and it was opposed to the habit of

²¹² Fry and Swanger, 76.

²¹³ Ch'en, 136.

²¹⁴ Reichelt, 101.

monkhood, then unknown in China. Equally objectionable was the idea of begging instead of working for a living in a highly developed culture. Buddhism drew people from home, while Confucianism pointed to the individual to his place in the home, there to practice filial piety and fulfill the obligations of life.²¹⁵ Because Confucianism only provided for the humanistic side of life, it left the religious side unsupplied and thus the door was opened for the entrance and acceptance of Buddhism.

Allied with Taoism. Buddhism soon allied itself to another native system, Taoism, which had certain external similarities. Both systems worshipped without sacrifices, practiced meditation and indulged in respiratory exercise. The Buddhist believed that all things were by nature empty, while the Taoist believed that all things had non-being as their origin. For the Buddhist, emptiness was the highest truth, while for the Taoist, non-being was the ultimate principle.

The Buddhist taught that one could attain rebirth in one of the numerous heavens, just as the Taoist claimed that one could be reborn as an immortal in the Eastern Sea.²¹⁶ This Buddhist-Taoist understanding and assimilation meant that Buddhist monks could intermingle freely with the famous literary scholars, the elite of society, and they soon gained

²¹⁵ Humphreys, 66.

²¹⁶ Ch'en, 137-41.

some sort of acceptance.

Indigenized. Although Buddhism in China is a religion of foreign origin, it has become thoroughly indigenous. It boasts of being an improved stock.²¹⁷ It succeeded in rooting itself in the life of the Chinese, by cleverly taking over the customs and traditions and recasting them in the Buddhist mold. Thus, for instance, filial piety and ancestral worship, which were not a part of the first century Buddhism, were adopted into the system. Or one could say that it embraced the cardinal Confucian virtue of filial piety, which was manifested in the form of temples and pagodas dedicated to the memory of deceased ancestors.

Certain Indian bodhisattvas also assumed Chinese appearances to render them more acceptable. Avalokitesvara (the Indian male figure) became Kuan-Yin, the female deity who received prayers from mothers anxious to have sons. This bodhisattva became female primarily because women are more likely to be experienced as compassionate figures in Chinese culture.²¹⁸ She is considered a goddess with all the motherly tenderness and womanly charm, always able and ready to help. This is often expressed in a gripping way in that her statue is furnished with "a thousand arms and a thousand legs."²¹⁹

²¹⁷ Y. C. Yang, 107.

²¹⁸ Fry and Swanger, 80.

²¹⁹ Reichelt, 146.

The Buddhist sangha also became closely identified with the interests of the state and performed religious ceremonies for the welfare of the state. Thus it developed into a powerful religious force. Chinese religious life was enriched and deepened by the colorful worship of compassionate Buddhas and bodhisattvas, while the Chinese horizon was broadened by the message of the unity of all life, tolerance of all creeds and the universality of salvation.²²⁰ As the world and the whole universe go through cycles of death and rebirth, new Buddhas appear to resume the teaching anew. The world now awaits a new Buddha-to-be--Maitreya, the future Buddha--(in Chinese, Mi-le-Fo) who is waiting in heaven to come to earth and start Buddhism all over again.²²¹

"Pure Land" School. Chinese Buddhism is divided into many schools, each with its main scripture and practices. One of the oldest and most influential is the "Pure Land" School. It was started by Hui-Yuen (333-416 A.D.) and many freer and more spiritually minded monks gathered about this school down through the centuries. "Buddha's Discourses on the Boundless Life" and "The Amitabha Scripture" were used in private worship and meditation, as well as in the general worship of the mass.

However, the Nestorian influence that came into the

²²⁰ Ch'en, 169.

²²¹ D. L. Overmyer, Religions of China (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1986), 44.

movement has a remarkable correspondence to Christianity. The Nestorian missionaries started out in China at the same time and place as the Pure Land School.²²² Detailed presentations are given in Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism by K.L. Reichelt and in The Nestorian Monument in China by Professor Saeki.²²³ The trinitarian trend of thought was further developed: Amitabha as "the Merciful Father of the Ten Heavenly regions", Ta-shih-chi as "the Most Mighty" and Kuanyin, the compassionate female deity, all stand side by side as the rulers of the Western Paradise. Also under the influence of the impressive Nestorian ceremonial of prayer for "the living and the dead" came the increasing tendency to make the masses for the dead more striking and effective.²²⁴

The concept of faith already in the Mahayana tradition was further developed. Instead of seeking salvation by good works, there was now the salvation through inward faith by calling upon the name of merciful Amitabha. Instead of studying the immense collection of scripture, the learned and the unlearned could now gather about that name, with liturgical passages and litanies. In place of meditation, one could simply find haven through faith. In other words, the "short cut" way to salvation was more than welcome. Prayers and chanting like "I flee to O-mi-to-fo", "Praised be O-mi-to-

²²² Y. C. Yang, 132.

²²³ Reichelt, 124-29.

²²⁴ Reichelt, 124.

fo" and "I devote myself to Buddha, to the Teaching and to the church" are repeated several thousand times daily in temple halls. These are also engraved in stones or printed on paper to keep down demons. The name O-mi-to-fo is not only a term for deity but also the expression of reunion with the highest and the absolute, Fo (Buddha).

In later years, a large number of religious and philanthropic activities have been initiated in Korea, Japan and the South East Asian countries. Reichelt believed that it is an incontrovertible fact that, of all the Buddhist schools, only the Pure Land has had the spiritual power and elasticity to enter into the missionary effort.²²⁵

Ch'an or Zen Buddhism. Some Mahayana schools, combined with the strong influence of the philosophical Taoism, gave birth to the Ch'an or Zen Buddhist tradition, which has given the world haiku poetry, ink painting, gardens, tea ceremony and some of the martial arts.²²⁶ Legend has it that it was derived from an Indian monk, Bodhidharma said to have arrived in China about 520 A.D., who was a master of meditation (dhyana, hence the name "Ch'an"). There was added to the Buddhist meditative techniques the doctrine of instantaneous enlightenment, in one single act the goal of mystical truth in both its objective and subjective aspects.²²⁷ It sees itself

²²⁵ Reichelt, 129.

²²⁶ Fry and Swanger, 83.

²²⁷ Melton, 172.

as preserving "a mental transmission" of true insight from the Buddha himself.²²⁸ Ch'an Buddhism rejects the study of the sutras, the fine points of Buddhist philosophy, and the use of images and objects of devotion as well as the devotional life itself. The Buddha is not to be found in images and books, but in the heart of man and thus the potential for enlightenment is inside every person. The slogan is: "Become a Buddha yourself by realizing your own inner potential."²²⁹ Actual scripture is worthless in the letter, and only valuable for that to which it leads; and to that goal, there are other guides than the written or spoken word.²³⁰ As a result, there are some who do not classify Zen Buddhism as Buddhism. It seeks to empty the mind of all ideas by meditation so that a person might awaken to the insight that all that exists is in essence the Absolute, the Buddha-mind, Mind-only or No-mind.²³¹ Then he is free to live from all anxieties and fears and becomes a natural person, spontaneous and creative.

Because of these new ideas and practices, it was not acceptable to the majority of the pragmatic Chinese. Its center of influence soon shifted to Japan. It also found its

²²⁸ Nivison, "Chinese Philosophy," in ER, III:254.

²²⁹ Overmyer, Religions of China, 47

²³⁰ A. K. Coomarasamy, Buddha and the Gospel of Buddha (New York: Harper Torch Books, 1964), 253-55.

²³¹ Fry and Swanger, 85.

appeal in North America and Europe because of the similar thoughts of self development.²³²

The Decline. In the late nineteenth century, some Chinese intellectuals began to incorporate into their thoughts new ideas from Western science, philosophy and literature, but the trend in religion was toward reaffirmation of Chinese values. Under Communism, thousand of religious images were destroyed, temples and churches confiscated and books burned.

Since 1980, however, many churches, monasteries and mosques have reopened and religious leaders reinstated, in part to establish better relationships with other countries. There has been a certain amount of revival in all these popular religions. The government's estimates of 1991 show that there are a formidable 100 million Buddhists, compared to 20 million Moslems, 5 million Protestants and 4 million Catholics.²³³

Expansion Overseas. Since 1949, the Chinese religions have increasingly prospered in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, particularly at the popular level, where the people have more freedom of belief and more funds. Many new temples have been built, sects established and scriptures and periodicals published. Buddhist monasteries and publishing houses are also doing well in Taiwan and Hong Kong, though lay

²³² Overmyer, Religions of China, 47.

²³³ F. M. Bordewich, "China's Daring Underground of Faith," in The Readers' Digest (August 1991): 35.

Buddhist sects have always been more influential among the people in these areas.

In the urban areas, an urban strategy of organization, worship and education, similar to the Christian, has been successfully implemented and there has been much growth. Observations of similar patterns have been noticed in the United States of America and England. The Chinese Buddhists are thus better equipped and poised to return to their land of birth.

World Buddhism. Efforts have also been made to formulate and to present a united front of World Buddhism. In 1891, Colonel Olcott prepared in fourteen "Fundamental Buddhist Beliefs," a common platform for all Buddhist schools (see Appendix A). These were accepted by the schools of Japan, Burma, Ceylon, Chittagong and Mongolia. The second step under the effort of the Buddhist Society in London, in 1954, was the adoption of the Twelve Principles to suit and to draw in the Pure Land sect. For the first time, there were standards of basic beliefs guiding World Buddhism.²³⁴

Singaporean Buddhism. In Singapore, Buddhism, being a traditional religion among the Chinese, has been able to retain a persistent proportion of followers of all ages and socio-economic status. Moreover, with the new trend towards an intellectual search for a more meaningful interpretation, there emerges an expanding group that attend talks and

²³⁴ Humphreys, 71-76.

meditation classes and do voluntary welfare work.

Compared to Taoism and Confucianism, Buddhism is now perceived as a more logical, systematic and relevant religion.²³⁵ It is also organized and has a body of canonical text and an ordained monkhood, leading and spreading the teachings. It finds support from yet another source, from the Nichiren Shoshu Buddhist Association from Japan, attracting young Chinese with its active outreach program and effective grassroots network. Some have observed that, in the long run, Buddhism may well provide a viable alternative to those Chinese who find themselves "too Chinese" to convert to Christianity.²³⁶

Its Specific Beliefs

Three main beliefs will now be introduced and discussed with greater specificity, so as to identify the centrality of the Buddhist message. The discussion will revolve around the doctrines of Creation, Humanity, and Heaven.

The Beginnings

The Buddhists maintain a "Causeless Cause" in their creation beliefs. Essentially atheistic, they depend on an impersonal law of cause and effect.

The Causeless Cause. The Buddhists have their "Cause theory" and think that the universe was produced by causes.

²³⁵ C. Y. Kuo, S. T. Quah, and T. C. Kiong, Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore (Singapore: Ministry of Community Development, 1988), 28.

²³⁶ Kuo, Quah, and Kiong, 28.

The Buddha maintained "a noble silence" about the Causeless Cause because it would be mere speculation and waste of time.²³⁷ Even if there were one, it must be infinite, unlimited. unconditioned and with attributes in contradistinction to man, who is clearly finite, limited and conditioned by attributes. Sakyamuni (the name used by the Chinese) announced that all things were "illusions produced by a combination of causes and man is one of the illusions."²³⁸ As soon as the causes were activated, they would go on forever through endless cycles of reincarnation.

Another expert on the Buddhist culture concurred that the Buddhists believe that all things are born by the interactions of these causes and thus their existence is false or illusionary.²³⁹ They have no body or substance and are "sunga" (empty). This relationship is expressed in Chinese by the correlatives Yin and Yuen, cause and relations, which is a relationship quite different from that expressed in the correlatives, Yin and Kou, cause and effect. The concept of Yin is of two component parts: the basic material fact and the relative active force which sets the basic fact into operation. Instead of the formula, Cause = effect, Yin-Yuen

²³⁷ Humphreys, 79.

²³⁸ Princeton Hsu, Christianity and Chinese Culture (Hong Kong: Baptist Press, 1962), 54.

²³⁹ Timothy Kung, A Comparison of Christianity and Buddhism (Taiwan: Christian Youth Press, 1979), 73.

can be illustrated by, Yin + Yuen = effect.²⁴⁰ For instance, the seed of a plant is the cause, its planting by the a farmer is the accessory condition and the resulting plant, the effect.

No Sovereign Ruler. There is no sovereign ruler of the universe. Buddhism is essentially atheistic.²⁴¹ For the Buddhists the heart of man decides whether all things are or are not. The substance of heart is called the "real substance" or the "heart of the multitude."²⁴² Nothing comes into being unless and until the external stimulus and the internal response co-exist, and there is a meeting within the mind. Thus there is only so much of a world as is created by our own mind and desire. Then by regulating our heart's desire, we can regulate the kind of world we live in and by eliminating all desires, we can eliminate the world altogether.²⁴³ When the "cause" stops, then the "effect" ceases to be produced; and the law of cause and effect (karma) ceases to operate and one becomes thus enlightened! Such a view is based on man and not God and as a result there is a real loss of direction.

The "Creation theory" of the Holy Bible is more substantial as it is the most direct account revealed by God

²⁴⁰ Y. C. Yang, 122.

²⁴¹ Humphreys, 79.

²⁴² Tey, 48.

²⁴³ Y. C. Yang, 123.

Himself. God created all for His pleasure and glory (Rev. 4:11; Ps.19:1; Isa.43:7). Man was created in His own image and was specially endowed so that he could worship the true God (Gen.2:6; 1Cor.2:11). The whole universe was created with a purpose and a plan as the Holy Bible reveals. Man finds true fulfilment as he enters into God's plan.

Humanity

Concerning mankind, Buddhism has much to say, for, after all, it is a religion that seeks to explain and to solve the problem of sufferings in mankind. Existence has three marks. The Wheel of Existence points out six states of existence, while the Four Noble Truths outlines the way of escape.

Three Marks of Existence. Three marks of existence are introduced. These form the basis of Buddhist's thoughts on mankind. These are sufferings, Anicca, and Anatta.

The first mark is that all is suffering. This fact is cardinal. Humphreys recorded the Buddha as saying, "One thing I teach, dukkha, and the ending of dukkha."²⁴⁴ Birth, decay, death, sorrow, pain, grief and all that is opposite of what we term well-being, perfection and bliss, are suffering. This aspect is not always apparent because man may be deluded by temporary and superficial experiences of happiness and pleasure which are "gilded snares" or "disguised pains."²⁴⁵ This does not refer only to actual suffering but also to

²⁴⁴ Humphreys, 81.

²⁴⁵ Humphreys, 82-84.

suffering as result of the universal law of impermanence. All states of existence are subject to change and dissolution, and hence are miserable and unsatisfactory; and thus, they all contain in themselves the germ of suffering.²⁴⁶

The second mark is anicca or impermanence. This is the rising, passing and changing of things, or the disappearance of things that have become or arisen. Things never persist in the same way, but they are vanishing and dissolving from moment to moment. There is no finality or rest, only a ceaseless becoming and a never-ending change. Like all other natural processes, anicca is cyclic. It is an ever-rolling Wheel with four spokes - Birth, Growth, Decay and Death.²⁴⁷ This may not be apparent because it may be concealed by continuity, but when continuity is disrupted, this mark becomes apparent in its true nature.²⁴⁸ Life then is continuous, ever seeking self-expression in new forms. The second principle of Buddhism is: "Life is a bridge; therefore build no house on it."

The third is that there is no permanent self or soul. The teaching of Anatta, "which is not" is in direct contrast to that of the Brahmans. The law of change applies equally to the "soul." There is no principle in an individual that is immortal and unchanging. All forms of life are manifestations

²⁴⁶ T. Ling, 135.

²⁴⁷ Humphreys, 80.

²⁴⁸ T. Ling, 135.

of the ultimate Reality which is beyond change.

The third principle of Buddhism is explained thus: no one owns the life which flows in him any more than the electric light bulb owns the current which gives it light. To the Brahmans, life is one, and the personal immortal soul of man and the one of the universe are one and at rare moments, the one of man could enter into relations with the Absolute.²⁴⁹ The Buddha held that this belief is a deceitful delusion, for it would give rise to egoism and egoism to cravings for pleasure and fame, which in turn would lead to sufferings.²⁵⁰ That which is called ego is merely an aggregate of skandhas, a complex of sensations, ideas, thoughts, emotions and volitions.²⁵¹ Thus if we would destroy our selfish desires, we would enjoy peace of mind.

The ego then is not a rigid, unchanging, self-constituted entity, but a living, complex, changing, evolving organism. On the subject of Self, there are three "selves": (1) spirit or Atman, the common denominator of all forms of life but the monopoly of none; eternal but not an immortal entity; (2) soul, in the sense of a growing, evolving bundle of attributes, which passes, by a process of causal impulse, from life to life; and (3) body, in the sense of personality,

²⁴⁹ Humphreys, 85.

²⁵⁰ Ch'en, 44.

²⁵¹ Humphreys, 86-87.

composed of the lower attributes or skandhas.²⁵² When a living being dies, the five aggregates would disintegrate, but because of the karma accrued in the past, there must be fulfillment, and so there is rebirth. The force of past karma brings a new being into existence, a new collection of the five aggregates, which inherits the fruits of the past karma and whose form is determined by those fruits. It is a continuity of an ever changing entity; "there is continuity but there is no sameness, just as a flame is not the same nor a different flame."²⁵³

The Wheel of Existence. The Wheel of Existence is based upon the Law of Causation. In the wheel, there are six states of existence. Each human being is in one of states right now. He or she can be reborn into another state, better or worse, depending on the life lived on earth.

The Law of Existence or Dependent Origination is formulated to present an explanation of the origin of suffering. There is a regular sequence of events, not caused by the arbitrary will of a deity or just disorder and confusion, but each event arises as a sequence of a previous one. The Buddhist has a graphic presentation of this formula in a form of a wheel in which the rim is divided into twelve segments, one for each link, with each segment containing a symbol (see Appendix B).

²⁵² Humphreys, 87-88.

²⁵³ Ch'en, 45.

The two causes of the past are ignorance and predispositions (impressions left by activities). The fatal causal source is ignorance.²⁵⁴ This is traced to the five hindrances, craving for existence, hatred, laziness, pride and doubts, and is nourished by the sins of body, speech, and mind.²⁵⁵ Ignorance leads to predispositions, the traces left in the mind by taking the wrong view of things, which will determine future existences.

The five effects of the past appearing in the present are consciousness, "names" and "forms" (the physical body), the six senses, contact and sensation (impression). From sensation arise the three causes of the present: craving, grasping and becoming (possessing). The becoming is the act that produces future birth, one that is a new stream of consciousness in the future; and from birth, old age and death. In the light of the continuous circle of life, the future stages of birth and death contain in themselves causes for further growth.²⁵⁶

This teaching seems to provide hope because it purports to explain the causal relations between events. If a person can isolate a causal relation between events and if the cause can be eliminated and its effects eliminated also, then the

²⁵⁴ D. L. Johnson, A Reasoned Look at Asian Religions (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 128.

²⁵⁵ Ch'en, 49.

²⁵⁶ Ch'en, 49-51.

whole sequence of events cannot take place.²⁵⁷ Ignorance is considered as the beginning or root because it is the link that can be destroyed by the gaining of wisdom and enlightenment and when this link is destroyed, then the following sequence is broken. The promised result is release.

The Wheel of Karma (i.e., the great circle or wheel of cause and effect, which conditions life in its ongoing) has control of an endless variety of existence forms. Three aspects of the iron law of karma which totally control life are these: (1) people experience the karma which has already produced its effects from the past, (2) there is the sort of karma which is yet to bear its effect, and (3) there is karma which is yet to accrue.²⁵⁸ Karma is a comprehensive law which covers every aspect of life. Through sin and misdeed, man is eternally indebted to Karma, from which no release can be had until the last debt is paid; however, the balance of account in each life, from merits and demerits, is likely to be against rather than for him. Therefore, he is forever chained unless he finds a way of escape.²⁵⁹ The six sections within the spokes of the Wheel of Existence indicate the six worlds or phases of life, in the process of reincarnation and transmigration.

The upper division is made up of gods and is called

²⁵⁷ D. L. Johnson, 127.

²⁵⁸ D. L. Johnson, 123.

²⁵⁹ Y. C. Yang, 116-17.

heaven. There are thirty-three heavens, where the various gods dwell. These are more refined in constitution than humans, less coarse in emotions with a life-span much longer, more like the Olympian gods, but not immortal. This state is not everlasting for the gods are still subject to karma and once the fruits of meritorious karma have been exhausted, they will fall and be reborn in a lower one.²⁶⁰ The buddhas are higher than these gods, because they have gained release from the wheel and united with the "Absolute."

The assuras are celestial beings, furious spirits who continually fight with the gods and the real devil spirits. They are creatures, half good and half bad, the women beautiful and then men ugly.²⁶¹ Then there is the human division where men live in all their manifold variety as determined by Karma. Rebirth as a man is considered the most desirable because it is only man who can achieve salvation and nirvana.²⁶² Man is not only heir to his previous existences but also the creator of his own future. He can save himself as he strives for the highest goal of religious life. Because of this emphasis, the Buddhist would do away with all distinctions of people based on birth, caste or wealth.

The next three divisions are called "the three evil ways." First, there is the Buddhist Hades, the hells of the

²⁶⁰ Ch'en, 32.

²⁶¹ Reichelt, 107-9.

²⁶² Ch'en, 32.

region of the dead and of purgatory, where punishments are carried out through the almost endless periods of time. There are eighteen great hells, ranging from the glowing hot to the icy cold, then the 500 smaller ones and lastly the 1000 little hells, all under the control of the ten kings of hell and their subordinates. The matter of surveillance and punishment is developed from and patterned after the human judicial system of the East. Thus the spirit rulers and officials keep careful account of men's good and evil deeds and report these to heaven so that punishment or reward follows in due time. Buddhism has allied itself with such beliefs and its priesthood, where its masses and other sacred acts of worship can come to the defense of a humanity laden with sin and guilt.²⁶³

The fifth is the category of evil spirits or devils, with their many grades, depending on how evil they had been. Most numerous are the "hungry ghosts," unblessed and tormented by hunger, who fly about through the endless spaces of the region of death. Special efforts are made to feed these through many sacrifices so that these would not be more hardened in evil and harm the living.

The lowest group is the animal category, recruited from the worst criminal and malefactors of the earth. They change at death to various kinds of animals according to their character of their sins, and they may become horses or cows,

²⁶³ Reichelt, 108-9.

wolves or tigers, and even serpents or insects.

With regard to all these divisions, none is of absolutely eternal duration. It may involve endless ages of ages, but the final result is, nevertheless, the salvation of all that lives because, slumbering in all living beings, there is a "buddha seed."²⁶⁴

The Four Noble Truths. The "revelation" to salvation can be summed up in the Four Noble Truths. They are the great certainties and basic facts of life,²⁶⁵ and are as follows:

1. That life is suffering. All life involves suffering. It is a lamentable journey from birth to death.

2. That desire is the cause of suffering. It is no casual notion of lust or craving but the quest for private fulfillment.²⁶⁶ The craving for existence, for repeated rebirth, for pleasure and power, all leads to acts that result in karma, and this karma in turn binds one to the cycle of rebirth.²⁶⁷

3. That by bringing about the cessation of desire, one can put an end to suffering and thus remove suffering itself. No one would feel disappointed and distressed in not having what he desires not. Ten fetters have been listed for destruction: Delusion of self, Doubt, Belief in efficacy of

²⁶⁴ Reichelt, 109.

²⁶⁵ Y. C. Yang, 118.

²⁶⁶ D. L. Johnson, 120-21.

²⁶⁷ Ch'en, 41.

ceremonies, Sensuality, Ill-will, Passion for earthly life, Desire for future life, Pride, Self-righteousness and Ignorance.²⁶⁸ Destruction of these would deliver one from the wheel of rebirths, and the blissful state of Nirvana would be reached.

4. That the way for such elimination is through adhering to the Eightfold Right Path.

The Eight-fold path consists of right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. These are usually divided into the three categories that comprise the whole range of Buddhist discipline: Morality or moral conduct, embracing right speech, action and livelihood; meditation or concentration, embracing right mindfulness, effort and concentration; and intuitive wisdom or insight, embracing right view and intention. Buddha's teaching thus requires a person to separate from ordinary life and join the monastic community in his quest for liberation.

The Holy Bible also talks about suffering, but from a very different and more positive viewpoint than Sakyamuni's. The whole creation "groaneth and travaileth in pain" (Rom. 8:22) as the result of sin, but there is the promise of deliverance in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:18-25). All of us encounter the great burden of suffering (Eccl. 8:6; John 16:33). However, God is our refuge (Jer. 16:19) and gives

²⁶⁸ Walters, 62-65.

strength (1Peter 5:10), comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-11) and deliverance (Ps. 32:7; 33:17; Tit. 3:10,11).

Not only is God in control in times of suffering, but He also allows suffering for the positive effect of maturing our lives so that we may be a blessing to others (Ps. 119:71; Rom. 5:2-5). Above all, we have the Lord Jesus Himself who had tasted suffering for us (Heb. 2:9) so that we would obtain freedom of sin and suffering. Repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus provides the answer to the shortcomings of Buddhists in trying to get rid of suffering by strenuous self-effort and discipline.

The Three-fold Discipline. The Three-fold Discipline is to be cultivated. It involves morality, concentration, and wisdom.

The kernel of the discipline of morality is expressed thus: "Not to commit any sin, to do good, to purify one's mind, that is the teaching of the Buddha."²⁶⁹ Sin is not as a transgression of some divine law, but as originating in the minds and deeds of man, any act that is harmful to oneself or to another. There are ten virtues and ten evils with man. The ten virtues are these: not killing, not stealing, not committing adultery, not speaking evil, not double-talking, not reviling, not speaking obscenity, not coveting, not being angry and not seeing evil.

²⁶⁹ Ch'en, 33.

The ten vices are the opposites of these virtues.²⁷⁰ The Chinese Buddhists take these as standards of good and evil and use the virtues to compensate for their evils. There are other precepts that apply only to monks and nuns. These include eating moderately and only at appointed times, avoiding that which excites the senses, not wearing adornments, not sleeping in luxurious beds and not accepting silver or gold.²⁷¹

However, some positive virtues are emphasized, such as kindness and compassion. Kindness is to impart happiness and compassion is to remove suffering. These are seen not just as acts of virtues but also expressions of a transformed nature.²⁷² The Buddhists extend their charity and almsgiving to the needy and hungry. This gives rise to the establishment of such institutions as hospitals, dispensaries and homes for the poor and aged. In this respect, they were the forerunners in China of the Salvation Army. But the greatest charity according to the eleventh and thirteenth sections of the Diamond Sutra, is the acceptance of the Sutra and explaining it to others. Great blessings on the person will follow as a result. This teaching imbues the Buddhists with fervent missionary zeal and made it the first religion actually to

²⁷⁰ Tey, 45.

²⁷¹ J. McDowell and D. Stewart, Understanding Non-Christian Religions. (San Bernardino: Here Life's Publishers, 1982), 57.

²⁷² Y. C. Yang, 134.

become international.²⁷³

The scope is not limited to human beings but is also extended to all animals, birds and fish. Coupled with the teaching that it is wrong to take life in any form, two widely prevalent customs have grown up. The first is vegetarianism, either on certain days, or for a short period or at all times. The second is the practice of paying for captured animals or fish at "pools of redemption" in temples, and then restoring them to their freedom.

Buddhists understand that it takes time to be holy and thus spend time for it. Thus concentration is needed. The simply-minded repeats some simple Buddhist formula or prayer over and over again, counting it off on a string of beads, which he holds in his hands and which he wears as a necklace when not in use. This helps him in a deeply meditative, quiet and prayerful mood, away from the annoyance and attachment of this world. Others have a definite period for "sitting in meditation" when they empty their thoughts, to keep their hearts pure to see the truth.

The main objective is to bring the mind to a single point and hold it steady on that point, without wavering or wandering. The elaborate details are worked out in manuals like The Path of Purity to help one along the arduous practice. There are four degrees of meditation, which are

²⁷³ Y. C. Yang, 136-37.

produced by concentration.²⁷⁴ The initial stage is to empty all other thoughts and concentrate on a colored disk till one can produce that image in the mind even when one is not looking at it. A state of buoyant expectation and inward bliss then sets in. Further practice brings one where he pays no heed to distinction between objects and reaches to the idea of infinity of space.²⁷⁵ However, concentration is not an end in itself, but it is a means to intuitive wisdom or insight into things as they really are.

When the practice of meditation has been faithfully followed, it is said that realization of the truth (that is, wisdom), which the Buddha himself had first won, would follow, almost immediately in the case of some or more slowly in the case of others.²⁷⁶ In this state of enlightenment, the whole burden of individual karma and the prospect of continually repeated experience would disappear. One by-product is the attainment of the "supranormal faculties," like having divine eyes and ears, magic powers and knowledge of other's thoughts and past existences.²⁷⁷ One then attains the arhatship and is worthy of offerings. Herein lies a difference between Buddhism and the Hindu's Upanishads. In Buddhism, man can become perfect by his will and effort, without gods or caste

²⁷⁴ McDowell and Stewart, 52.

²⁷⁵ Ch'en, 35-40.

²⁷⁶ T. Ling, 139.

²⁷⁷ Ch'en, 52,53.

connections, whereas in the Upanishads, man is already perfect and therefore there is no need to strive.²⁷⁸ When the arhat passes away, he enters into nirvana.

Nirvana

The Buddha declared that Nirvana is the very reason for the spread of his religion. It has been said that the non-Buddhists have treated the study of Nirvana as an object of academic and intellectual interest; but for the Buddhists, Nirvana is a religious experience that cannot be set in logic.²⁷⁹

A State. "Nirvana" in Sanskrit, has a two-fold meaning, that of becoming cold, as in the case of one who has cooled his passions, and that of blowing out, as in the putting out of flame. Thus, some suggest that Buddhists desire annihilation,²⁸⁰ but the Buddhists describe it, not as a place, but as a state of perfect peace and tranquility.²⁸¹ It is the cessation of all evil passion, which is a kind of fever, and its cessation is as a cooling after fever, a recovery of health.²⁸² It is then a state of mind in which desire and attachment are extinct, and the mind has attained a blissful state of enlightenment, peace and rightness in this

²⁷⁸ Ch'en, 55.

²⁷⁹ Ch'en, 56.

²⁸⁰ D. L. Johnson, 128.

²⁸¹ Y. C. Yang, 128.

²⁸² T. Ling, 136.

life and beyond.

A Place. Where is Nirvana? The answer is that Nirvana, like the Kingdom of Heaven, is within the man.²⁸³ It must begin there, although it does not end there. A person must have Nirvana within him in this life before he can enter it after death. Buddha referred to two kinds of Nirvana, one with a residue and the other without a residue.²⁸⁴ The first is known as Nirvana, which is the condition attained by the perfect living saint, with the desires binding him non-existent. The second is the Pari-nirvana or Super-nirvana, the condition where all karma is exhausted and peace of mind prevails.

This distinction corresponds to the three stages of enlightenment: (1) One with Enlightened mind, called Arhat or Lohan; (2) One with Enlightened life, one that is devoted to enlightening others, called the Bodhisattva or P'u-sas; and (3) One with the perfect enlightenment, called the Buddha.²⁸⁵ Hinayana stops with the first step and attains "limited Nirvana" whereas Mahayana pushes on to the third.

Paradise. In addition, the Pure Land School of Mahayana preaches salvation through invoking the name of Amitabha (O-mi-to-fo). He is the king of the "Western Paradise," the Land of Blessedness. The description of the paradise has some

²⁸³ Y. C. Yang, 128.

²⁸⁴ Ch'en, 57.

²⁸⁵ Y. C. Yang, 129.

similarities to that of the Holy Bible because of the Nestorian influence.²⁸⁶ It is a place of silver, gold, coral, and crystal trees bearing a variety of gems, fragrant flowers and luscious fruits, with perfumed waters running clear and cool into lakes of lotus blossoms. Beside the lakes and among the trees are magnificent palaces for the blessed, free of every care.²⁸⁷ Here, people constantly get to hear the Buddha's teaching, so that it is easy to attain enlightenment, never more to be reborn on earth.²⁸⁸

Amitabha is "The Eternal One," full of loving kindness and grace, truly a favorite god in all Eastern Asia.²⁸⁹ When one worships Amitabha, who in himself unites all the Buddhas, there would be born in him a longing to be holy. He would then receive an inner glimpse of the real goal of life and begin to progress. Through various stages of meditation, one would be brought into a discovery that Amitabha is not something external, but is simply the realization of one's own innermost being. In the same manner, the souls after death will be led in through the temporal heavens to the essential reality--"to be absorbed in Buddha", to absolute peace and harmony.²⁹⁰ Again, there is a recognition of self-effort

²⁸⁶ Y. C. Yang, 132-33.

²⁸⁷ Fry and Swanger, 78.

²⁸⁸ Overmyer, Religions of China, 46.

²⁸⁹ Reichelt, 144.

²⁹⁰ Reichelt, 145-46.

being involved. The invocation of the name should be repeated often and with sincerity, deep belief and longing.²⁹¹

The Holy Bible teaches only of eternal life through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ or of eternal death because of sin (Rom. 6:23) and of this present life on earth. It knows of no previous life, because all life is created by God and not derived from a process of reincarnation. The essence of life differs in man and animal, not only in degree but also in kind. When God created, He created them each after its own kind (Gen. 1:24). Because of the fallen nature in man, man will be separated from the holy God forever (Rev. 20:12-15). But God's love sent Jesus into the world to give man life and life more abundantly (John 10:10). Man then must come by repentance and faith in the redemptive work of Christ and receive the adoption of sonship and inherit the new heaven and new earth forever (2 Peter 3:10-13; Rev. 21:22).

²⁹¹ Melton, 172.

CHAPTER 6

The Way of Life: Taoist Nothingness

This chapter introduces the thought and practice on one of the home-grown major religions of China. It traces the brief history of its founder and its development from its origin, into diverse aspects of the original tradition, and finally into the modern resurgence of scholarship in East Asia and the West.

Its Founder

Lao-tze (born 604 B. C.), meaning the Old Philosopher, was perhaps China's deepest thinker and greatest mystic.²⁹² A senior contemporary of Confucius, he lived in the same age as the Buddha in India, and Jeremiah and Ezekiel of the prophets of Israel. There is little information about his childhood and youth. His father was a farmer of the eastern part of Honan province.²⁹³ A legend has it that even at his birth, he had white hair and the countenance of an old man, and that he announced his own name as soon as he came to earth.²⁹⁴ Next, we read of him as the keeper of archives of the Chou Dynasty and the state historian. He must have been fluent with the basic documents with which Confucius was familiar. As might be expected, the I-Ching, with its bold speculations, became a leading source. Lao-tse was also much

²⁹² Y. C. Yang, 141.

²⁹³ Reichelt, 73.

²⁹⁴ Y. C. Yang, 141.

freer regarding the writings than Confucius. Both built on the doctrine of Tao, but Lao-tze brought its concept into different varied connections.

Tradition relates the meeting between the two sages. Confucius unfolded his plans for reform with youthful fire, but Lao-tze retorted that all would be of no profit. Confucius confessed that he could not understand the older sage. Tao-tze lived in an age of feudal anarchy, with injustice, corruption and oppression. He himself tried to lead the way with mercy and goodness, but was disillusioned. Near the end of his life, he resigned from his post and left, heading west. At the insistence of a border official, he wrote the Tao-Teh-Ching, (literally, "Truth and Virtue Classic"), the Scriptures of Taoism and then was mysteriously lost to the world.

The Tao-Teh-Ching is of about 5000 words of eighty short chapters and divided into two parts: Tao and Teh (Virtue), in which he set forth his grand philosophy of life. It was said that the system was reviewed orally with the official and thus the book was nothing more than propositions. But this best treasured "oriental puzzle," as Yang described it,²⁹⁵ was a loss for those after them, for much became obscure and misinterpreted.

The first 37 chapters deal with the essence of Tao and its forms of manifestation, whereas the Teh deals with the

²⁹⁵ Y. C. Yang, 142.

practical expression of Tao, of great ethical teaching and humility. "The Book of Changes" (I Ching, dated around 1150B.C., early Chou period), was a major source of Lao-tzu. This offered an analysis of some sixty-four life situations, along with suggestions, of the idea of caring for life, reflecting upon experiences and giving thought to options.

A later school of moralists, the Hedonists, made its contribution by focusing on the needs and pleasures of the living rather than on the problems of the dead. The Quietists contributed the thought of freeing the mind from the external and seeking happiness and power from the essential roots of the personality, the vital life force.²⁹⁶

Its Brief History

It is not easy to define Taoism, for throughout its history, this philosophical and religious tradition assumed very different characters. Nevertheless, certain unifying themes can be sorted out.

Early Taoism

Early Taoists continued to glorify Tao, spontaneity, the "inaction" in the sense of following nature, simplicity, peace and "emptiness." These were all dedicated to the search for "long life and lasting vision" (in the case of Lao-tze), for "preserving life and keeping the essence of our being intact" (in the case of Yang Chu, c. 440-360 B.C.) and for "companionship with nature," "transcendental bliss," "peace of

²⁹⁶ Fry and Swanger, 117.

mind," "equality of things and opinions," and "spontaneous and unceasing transformation" (in the case of Chuang Tzu, between 399 and 295 B.C.).²⁹⁷ While Lao-tze taught stillness and non-action (Wu Wei), Chuang Tzu taught regulation of things and of life and death.

To Chuang Tzu, as one returns to nature, he will be able to attain the simplicity of body and soul which more than anything else favors the life of the spirit. One must sense the flow of life or experience rather than struggle against it.²⁹⁸ Thus there was an urging to the unity of spirit, teaching that all activities should be in harmony with the unseen Tao, with abundant liberality towards all things in nature.

Later Taoism

The disciples moved farther and farther away from the teaching of the master, in proportion to their separation from him in time. The movement at this period moved towards the search for immortality, inward power and superhuman ability through divination and magic, led by priest-magicians (Fang Shih). The leading Taoist teachers began to call themselves Chin Jen (i.e. "True Men"), who professed to control the forces of nature and to see the future.²⁹⁹ By means of a

²⁹⁷ Vergilius Ferm, An Encyclopedia of Religion (New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945), 154.

²⁹⁸ Fry and Swanger, 119.

²⁹⁹ Reichelt, 85.

vegetarian diet and regular and continued breathing exercises, one could gain the mastery over self, be filled with Tao and obtain immortality.

As the Fang Shih movement grew in popularity, religious and political reformers competed to incorporate it into their own schemes. Especially with the arrival of Buddhism with its well developed religious system, the Taoist leaders began to evolve their own religious system with underlying Buddhist influence. In this, Chang Tao-Ling of the second century A.D., the historical founder of the Taoist religion was most successful.

A legend has it that Lao-tze appeared to Chang Tao-Ling, in his home, in the province of Kiangsi, and commanded him to organize the movement. To some, he was "a holy one", skilled in producing elixirs of life (e.g. pills of immortality) as well as exorcism; to the literati, "The Rice Prince"; to the Emperor Chen Tsung, "The True Prince."³⁰⁰ It seemed that Lao-tze decreed that the high priesthood should belong perpetually to the Chan clan. His direct descendants held the hereditary title of the Heavenly Teach (the Pope of Taoism) until 1927 when the Chinese Government abolished the papacy.³⁰¹ The dynasty, however, continues in Taiwan.³⁰²

³⁰⁰ Reichelt, 87.

³⁰¹ V. Ferm, 154.

³⁰² Fry and Swanger, 122.

The Chang's emissaries organized temple worship and cloister life, diocesan divisions and tribute payments. In the course of time, the leaders lived among the people, which was one of the distinguishing marks. The world itself is a sacred place and thus China was divided into areas controlled by sacred mountains with their shrines and altars. There were also a locality god for each smaller area, field or city and gods for the various parts of the house. A system of ethics developed and it is this ethical teaching that has kept it alive.³⁰³

Degeneration

Slowly, however, the system descended from its spiritual heights to the grossest traffic in demonology, a deterioration which made it lose the respect of most people. It became the religion of the unlearned and ignorant, while Confucianism and Buddhism, comparatively speaking, were religions of the learned and cultured.³⁰⁴

However, on the whole, Taoism may supplement the others in giving the Chinese a more rounded view of life. Confucius is too serious and formal; Buddhism, too resigned and pessimistic; but Taoism gives a touch of bright color for it teaches that life is good and worth living and should be improved and prolonged indefinitely. In the area of time reckoning of auspicious days and geomancy (feng-sui), the

³⁰³ V. Ferm, 155.

³⁰⁴ Y. C. Yang, 167.

Taoists have maintained their position of leadership. Feng-sui assumes that the whole world is potentially sacred and alive with lines of force; those living where such lines come together will have vitality and good fortune.³⁰⁵ Also with their intimate knowledge of the endless number of gods, they have rendered good service both as astrologers and as genealogists.

Modern Resurgence

The increased political role of Japan in China during the 1930s brought many Buddhist scholars to China. Some, such as Fukui Kojun, pursued research in the Taoist canon. The 1950s saw publications in Paris of works on Taoism, especially by Henri Maspero; while in China, specialists in the history of the Chinese religions, such as Ch'en Yon-ko and Ch'en Yuan, had devoted articles to aspects of Taoist history. Before 1980s, three International conferences were held, in 1968 (in Italy), 1972 (in Japan) and 1979 (in Switzerland). Thus Taoist studies finally were able to achieve true international status. By 1980, the Chinese Taoist Association was active once more. Taoist priests appeared in the streets and market-places of Chinese towns. The living tradition of the religion has not been cut off entirely by the Cultural Revolution.³⁰⁶

In recent years, books were written, applying the Taoist

³⁰⁵ Overmyer, Religions of China, 60,61.

³⁰⁶ T. H. Barrett, "Taoism: History of Study," The Encyclopedia of Religions (New York: Macmillan Publ. Co., 1987), XIV: 330-32.

principles of harmony and simplicity to a wide range of current problems. Fritjof Capra, in "The Tao of Physics" (1977), Jean S. Bolen, in "The Tao of Psychology" (1979) and Ralph G. H. Siu, in "The Tao of Science" (1958) discuss the issues in science and human behavior and the need for new and changing concepts.³⁰⁷

In 1983, a comprehensive survey of Taoism, of works of twenty-three scholars, was published in Japan under the title "Dokyo." Studies have also been made concerning Taoism of the Tao tribesmen of northern Thailand, of overseas Chinese communities in Hong Kong, Singapore and others. It is in Hong Kong and Taiwan that popular Taoism is most lived. In Taiwan, some two thousand temples serve the people, and in Hong Kong, temples and shrines are constantly visited.³⁰⁸

Western Taoism

In the West, Taoism saw a short revival in 1960s and 1970s, not as a result of missionary activity by the Chinese, but because of counterculture youth who were dissatisfied with the social life and responsibility and the denial of any transcendent meaning to life.³⁰⁹ Thus there was a "tune out, drop out" mentality.³¹⁰ The concern for self-fulfillment and self-realization is a Taoist principle. Man

³⁰⁷ Fry and Swanger, 132.

³⁰⁸ Fry and Swanger, 138.

³⁰⁹ D. L. Johnson, 55.

³¹⁰ McDowell and Stewert, 108.

is to live for self first and life is of more value than possessions or ideas.³¹¹ To date, there are no academic posts specifically devoted to research and teaching in Taoism.

Singaporean Taoism

The Taoists in Singapore are practically all Chinese, from the older dialect-speaking generation of relatively lower socio-economic status to the followers of other religions. Exposed to a modern educational system, many younger Chinese do not understand the meanings and rationale of the traditional rituals and thus reject them. Also there is no centralized institution, no ordained priesthood, no systematic theology and no attempt for propagation. There are numerous variations in rituals, because of dialect and regional differences or even personal preferences. Those who practice Taoism do so because it is part of the Chinese folk tradition to solve the problems of daily life and not as a rational belief system.³¹²

Its Specific Teachings

Five unifying themes are presented. Some may seem scholarly and erudite, some superstitious, while others are esoteric. Nevertheless, the religious Taoists do not break with the fundamental concepts of the philosophers, though these concepts have been much transformed.

³¹¹ D. L. Johnson, 46.

³¹² Kuo, Quah and Kiong, 25,26.

Tao of Taoism

The teaching of Tao, The Way, the Truth or the Word, in the Tao-Teh-Ching is the cornerstone of the whole system. Tao is a composite word of two characters: Shou, meaning "first," "head," or "leader," and Chiah, meaning "to walk" or "to pace". According to the derivation, it suggests the idea of the Way or the Path in which we should walk. In the earliest Chinese texts, Tao means "road or pathway." By the time of the Eastern Chou dynasty (770-256 B.C.), it came to mean "a correct or natural way something is done." Verbally, it also meant "to show the way" or "guide"; hence, the meaning as "teaching," "doctrine" or "moral truth."³¹³ Taoism slowly generalized and mystified it and brought it to mean not only a practical method of conduct but also the eternal law of nature and the metaphysical first principle of life.³¹⁴

The Absolute. Lao-tze's whole philosophy of life is based on the pregnant conception of Tao.³¹⁵ The very first paragraph of the Tao-Teh-Ching carries one into a mystical religious mood to which no parallel is found in any other Chinese ancient literature. The Tao that can be expressed, named or defined, is not the Tao of the Absolute, the constant and invariable Tao, the real, eternally existing Tao (Chapter 1). Lao-tze's Tao was the constant Tao but it was rather

³¹³ Nivison, "Tao and Te." in ER, XIV: 284-85.

³¹⁴ Y. C. Yang, 148-49.

³¹⁵ Reichelt, 79.

abstract and metaphysical, of an eternal principle, devoid of all attributes and that of a supreme unity.³¹⁶ When forced to give it a name, he called it "Greatness" (Chapter 25). However, Heaven is also greatness, so are earth and man. Human beings are modeled on the earth. The earth is modeled on heaven. Heaven is modeled on the Tao. The Tao is modeled on nature.³¹⁷ Ultimately, Lao-tze's Tao has to return to natural law.

"The Cosmic Mother". Tao is also called "the cosmic mother of the universe" and "the root" (Chapter 24). The Tao is a feminine principle, the mother of the world, giving birth to all beings and nourishing, preserving and bringing them into maturity.³¹⁸ It being so, "nature" itself in a universal sense is the undifferentiated first cause out of which all nameable things are articulated. Y. C. Yang pointed out that one can have the delight of soaring into "mystical heights of the imaginary world to speculate on the imponderables of Nature and the universe."³¹⁹ This would lead from a simple observation of nature to an experimentation and the manipulation of nature, by the alchemist or shaman, for example, to bring about immortality. Chinese thoughts

³¹⁶ Farseen Baldrian, "Taoism: An Overview," The Encyclopedia of Religions (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), XIV: 291.

³¹⁷ Ya Poh Chao, ed. Lao Tzu in Modern Language (Taiwan: Hsing Kuang Publishing Co., 1982), 135-36.

³¹⁸ Baldrian, "Taoism: An Overview," in ER, XIV: 291.

³¹⁹ Y. C. Yang, 152.

thus demonstrate that there is but a short distance between speculative science and magic.³²⁰ There are those who believe that, originally, Taoism was essentially mystical, contemplative and meditative; and that application of the insights to external problems came later.³²¹

Since Tao is the Supreme Law of Nature, the way by which one should order his life,³²² then man's duty is simply to conform to nature. In other words, the law of life is to be natural. Relax and let go. Just float along with nature. This is the teaching of nonaction (Wu Wei) as action and action by nonaction.³²³

Tao of the Bible. The Holy Bible, the inspired revelation of God, describes Tao very clearly: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God" (John 1:1). The Word (i.e. "Logos" in Greek) refers to a systemic word, the expression of some thought or concept (Tey, p.55). In the translations of the Gospel of John into Chinese, the word "Logos" is rendered Tao, since both terms point to the creative and sustaining force. However, the "Logos" is not the intangible and impersonal force and nature of the Chinese Tao; this Word, from eternity to eternity, co-exists with God, and is the personal and living God.

³²⁰ D. L. Johnson, 44,45.

³²¹ Fry and Swanger, 131.

³²² McDowell and Stewart, 101.

³²³ Y. C. Yang, 154.

The Word, manifested in the flesh, was Christ (John 1:14), full of personality, intelligence and wisdom (Eph. 3:11; Col. 2:2,3). Christ is the Truth (John 17:17), the Word of Life (Phil. 2:16), the Word of God (Heb. 13:7; Rev. 19:13) and the One who is totally involved with our problems, especially with the once-for-all solution of the sin problem on the Calvary Cross (Heb. 2:13-17). The real Tao thus is the personal, loving and responsible Supreme Creator Being, who is both willing and able to meet the deepest needs we all have (Matt. 11:28-30). If one hears, believes and obeys the Word of God, he will personally experiences all the blessings of life.

Taoist's Pantheon. In the course of development, the spirituality in original Taoism degenerated into one of magic, polytheism and demonolatry. The lofty Taoist doctrine of the Trinity, "Three Pure Ones" (San-Ch'ng), namely, Essence (Ching), Vital Force (Ch'i) and the Spirit (Shen),³²⁴ were personified in Lao-tze, Yu-huang Shang-ti and Yuen-shi Tien-Tseng. As Buddhism immortalized its Buddha, Lao-tze was also immortalized. However, because Lao-tze was the spirit-filled one and continually sunk in contemplation, he could not be burdened with daily affairs. "The Jade Emperor" or "The Precious Emperor God," a faint reflection of the great god Shang-ti, who was worshipped in the earliest times, took over the burden of meting out rewards and punishment. Yuen-shi Tien-Tseng ("The Revered Heaven Lord of Origins") gave the

³²⁴ V. Ferm, 152.

spiritual force (the spirit) behind all the prophetic personages who in life and teaching had given expression to the great Tao.³²⁵ However, this doctrine has played little important part in the practical religious life because it deals with abstractions to gain clearness and unity in the system.

In local temples, galleries of gods, most often in the form of large paper scrolls on the walls, consist of four main groups, often with Buddhist gods added. The first group is called Tien-kai (Heaven Group), consisting of the God of Thunder and his wife, the Guardian Generals and others. The second is called Ti-kai (Earth group), of Ox king, Horse king, etc.. The third is named Yang-kai (Sunlight group), of City God, God of literature, God of the soil, etc.. Finally, there is the Sui-kai (Water group), of the Lord of Tungting Lake, Dragon of the Eastern Sea, etc..³²⁶

Taoism also worships the spirits of animate and inanimate objects (e.g., the stars) as well as ancestors and famous historical persons. It capitalized on the Buddhist patterned heavens and hells. The Taoists have their own thirty-three heavens which they have increased to eighty-one.³²⁷ The celebrated "Eight immortals" were borrowed from popular tradition. Various festivals were formalized for the

³²⁵ Reichelt, 94,95.

³²⁶ Reichelt, 99,100.

³²⁷ V. Ferm, 155.

intermingling of gods and men at common meals, the remembering of ancestors, and the making of the seasons.³²⁸

The Beginnings

The Taoist's theory is similar to that of the Confucianist, except that he believes all things come into being naturally. Instead of writing about the absolute point of origin, Lao-tze writes in Chapter 42:

Tao creates the one. This one creates the two, and the two creates the three, and the three creates all things. All things contain Yin and embrace Yang. These unite harmoniously through Chi (or life force).

It can be summarized thus: Tao, the first Cause, produces the Tai Chi, the cosmos. This produces the Yin, the negative or female principle, and the Yang, the positive or male principle (here, the "two"), and these two produce the heaven, earth and mankind (the "three"). Harmony prevails when the spirit of truth pervades and governs all.³²⁹ Lao-tze was unable to explain clearly the substance of the Tao, nor did he give it a positive purpose. Finally, he concluded that "Tao is modelled on nature." He returned to a formless naturalism,³³⁰ that all things are produced by the natural combination of Ying and Yang. Tao thus acts through natural law, which is formless and intangible.

Both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible declare

³²⁸ Fry and Swanger, 122.

³²⁹ Y. C. Yang, 150-51.

³³⁰ Tey, 57.

that the universe and man were created by a loving and personal God for His own will and purpose (Rev. 4:11). The universe could not have been created by a blind and aimless nature, as nature itself must also have had a beginning. All things were created by God (Gen. 1:1; John 1:2,3), a great masterpiece of the True God. All things were made through Christ (Heb. 1:2,10; Col. 1:16). Life is also from Him (John 1:4), and man was created in His own image and likeness (Gen. 1:26,27). All physical laws are created (Heb. 1:3) and He upholds all things by the His power. Man can only process or remake the original materials, but must submit to His revelation and guidance for salvation and life.

Mankind

Taoism identifies mankind closely with nature. Such a thought has a definite effect on the philosophy of life, now and in the hereafter.

Monism. Both Lao-tze and Chuang Tzu regarded man as just one of the natural objects. Chuang Tzu believed that man and all things were fused together in one body--a continuation in space. He wrote of a dream that he had, in which he was transformed into a butterfly. Chin Hsiu Go recorded the dream: "Did he dream that he was a butterfly or did the butterfly dream that he was Chuang Tzu?"³³¹ Such is a typical example of the equality of all things. Therefore, to

³³¹ Chin Hsiu Go, ed. Chuang Tze in Modern Language (Taiwan: Hsing Kuang Publishing Company, 1983), 125.

comprehend the laws of nature, one should not be preoccupied with material desires; matter and I should forget each other. To equalize all things, one must first get rid of selfishness, and to do that, one must forget oneself and then fame, profit and merit will be also forgotten. This is one main thought of Taoism. The greatest regret for the Taoists is that in trying to equate themselves with things, they could not find the personal and loving God.

Philosophy. The system of the philosophy of life is built on these key words: Tao-Teh, Nature and Wu-Wei, Nonaction. Tao is the Truth, the Eternal Law of Nature, which when expressed in deed or action is the Teh virtue. Nature is the Tzu Jan (literally, the "self-so" or "naturally so") suggesting the idea of "I am that I am," the "is" which was from the beginning.³³² Thus, life is: (1) to know Nature, (2) to be natural, and (3) not to interfere with Nature. Tao is the mighty stream of life, flowing on from eternity to eternity; and man will find the end of life by completely adjusting himself to it and surrendering to this river of life to carry him to life. Quietude and passive adjustment are all that is needed. Relax and put one's mind at ease and the tensions of life will be released. One does not have to struggle or do anything to float on nature. Teh is "the stock of credit (or deficit) that at any given moment a man has at the bank of fortune" and as "a latent power, a "virtue"

³³² Y. C. Yang, 154-55.

inherent in something."³³³ Others see it as "the power that holds society together" or the "activity" in which Tao, universal energy, resides.³³⁴

The best action is nonaction, the absence of intentional human action into nature.³³⁵ This does not mean that nothing should be done. Wu-Wei means to let things work according to their intrinsic principles.³³⁶ Natural inclinations (going by the conscience) and spontaneity determine how one acts. The Taoists reject all forms of self-assertiveness and competition,³³⁷ and idealize humility. Against the Confucianist tendencies to encourage management and standardization, Taoists would choose to abandon the city life and to tune to the flow of nature.³³⁸

Adjusting government to the Tao would be to rule by nongovernment (letting society exist and flourish by itself without laws or rules). The rulers are simply to exert a general influence on the overall direction of affairs, as a kind of "majestic arbiter,"³³⁹ who refuses to tamper. This,

³³³ A. Waley, The Way and Its Power (London, England: Allen and Unwin, 1956), 31,32.

³³⁴ Fry and Swanger, 129.

³³⁵ Nivision, "Tao and Te," in ER, XIV: 285.

³³⁶ D. L. Johnson, 50.

³³⁷ Fry and Swanger, 125.

³³⁸ D. L. Johnson, 54.

³³⁹ Creel, Chinese Thoughts, 98.

as a result, frees the people from harassment by the rulers, although it offers little relief when it is the underlings who are doing the harassing.

Adjusting personal life to Tao would be to live with a selflessness and simplicity found in nature, unencumbered by modern means and unembittered by the evil pursuits of the world. Behind such a life is the force of the universe. It signifies the exalted state, when action spontaneously is flowing out from a heart which has been tuned in to full harmony with Tao (the divine law of life).³⁴⁰

Considerable attention is paid to such meditative devices as the maintenance of certain postures and to specific breathing techniques, as in Yoga, Zen and Sufism. Elimination of destructive emotions - anger, anxiety and even joy - is important so as to gain a sense of harmony with and awareness of all living things.³⁴¹ Thus for living, it is necessary to rejoin the actual with the ideal, the transient with the eternal, the human with the divine and the relative with the absolute.³⁴² The power with its harmony is really a label for an experience, a means of identifying it. Basically that set of experiences to which the Tao refers has to do with one's experience of a "road, path, way ... method, principle,

³⁴⁰ Reichelt, 82.

³⁴¹ Fry and Swanger, 131.

³⁴² Y. C. Yang, 157.

doctrine."³⁴³ One senses the flow of life or experience rather than struggles against it.

Golden Era. Both Confucianism and Taoism look forward to a Golden Era of tranquillity and harmony, but there is this great difference. Taoism conceives it to be the "undegenerated" state of nature and centers its thoughts on nature and its laws. Confucianism thinks in terms of a regenerated state or moral perfection and centers its thoughts on the man and his creativeness to be co-worker with nature. Thus Taoism minimizes the man in the vastness and majesty of nature, while Confucianism magnifies man and his creative power in the world and over nature. Both these Utopian societies are attractive but unattainable because of the sinful nature of man and the curse upon the earth because of sin.

Taoist's Fallacy. The fundamental fallacy is in the failure to draw the distinction between man and objects of nature. The two, created by the Creator God, are different and must live by different rules. Man is created higher than other things, and thus is not equal to things. One soul is even more valuable than all the world (Matt. 16:26). He will not be in unity with things but with God (John 17:21), since in Him is life. Man is supposed to be master of things, not their slaves (Gen. 1:28) and overcome covetousness (Ex. 20:15,17; Rom. 13:13). Man is to be God's faithful and

³⁴³ Waley, The Way and Its Power, 30.

sensible steward to use all things for His Glory. Inanimate objects of nature and animals may live, thrive and grow best when left alone. However, because "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain" (Rom. 8:22), it is doubtful.

The Good Nature. Both Taoism and Confucianism hold to the opinion that the human heart is originally good. There is no understanding of the terrible heritage of evil inclinations and heavy lading of ill which weigh down the individual and society. Left entirely to his depraved nature and unrestricted free will, man will not have the powers and capacities to do what the systems demand but will degenerate deeper into sin (Rom. 1:18-32). Nor is there in the two systems any clear reference to a source of power from without to help.

Lao-tze's concept of Tao is rendered still more abstract and intangible, though majestic and magnificent, and still farther removed from reality. There is no help from such a Tao. The personal and loving Creator of the Holy Bible is the answer to the Taoist's fear and powerlessness. The teaching of Wu-Wei may seem to parallel the Christian's concept of salvation and life of faith and by faith. We can be in one with the true Eternal, Divine, Absolute, personal and loving Creator God through resting in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, it is not in the Taoist Tao, the abstract, metaphysical principle of life that we live and move and have

our being; but it is in Christ that we live and move and have our being (Acts 17:28). It is "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). It is the living Christ that not only frees us to the full potential to do what we must do as His creation, but also enables us to fulfil His good will and pleasure (Phil. 2:13).

Nature of Things

The universe is an organic whole with two opposing, yet interdependent, polar forces called Yin and Yang. These combine to make all things and thus all things are interdependent, interrelated and relative to one another. Black is black because it is the opposite of white and yet black depends upon the white in order to be black. Each depends upon the other to make each what it is. There is then a basic order and harmony in nature.³⁴⁴ A number of conclusions can be drawn.

Reversal of Tao. First is the notion of the reversal of the Tao. Life and human events are not seen in linear terms of progress toward some ultimate goal but they move in a circle. History is a circle of events in which one expression is followed in time by its opposite. Summer always follows winter and winter follows summer, which are the opposite expressions of Yin and Yang. History thus is going nowhere

³⁴⁴ Fry and Swanger, 112.

but where things were before.³⁴⁵

In the personal life, there is a patient hope of good coming after evil events, and a fearful and unsettling feeling that evil will come after some good. Ways are discovered to avoid trouble during bad times, while maximum advantage is gained when the times are good. Gods and ancestor spirits are sought to predict the times and to protect, influence and provide guidance.

Relativity of Truth. Then there is the relativity of truth. The only Absolute is that which gave birth to the Yin and the Yang.³⁴⁶ Reality emerges through the interaction of all the polarities that enter into our experience. There can be no absolute truth because everything implies its polar opposite. Every idea contains its own negation or opposite and is relative to a context and a time.³⁴⁷ A lady can be pretty to others, while animals would flee from her. Which has the right standard for judging? Also words do not have absolute meanings. They are relative, incomplete, inaccurate and often deceptive. What is a "long" flight to a sparrow is but a "short" flight to a migrating duck.³⁴⁸ It is then impossible to ever possess any absolute truth to which to refer in defending one's own positions.

³⁴⁵ D. L. Johnson, 52.

³⁴⁶ Creel, Chinese Thought, 27.

³⁴⁷ D. L. Johnson, 52.

³⁴⁸ D. L. Johnson, 48.

Relativity of Morals. Because values are relative, so are morals. "Right" and "wrong" are just words which may be applied to the same thing, depending upon which partial viewpoint one sees it from.³⁴⁹ Also what is good in one context can be bad in another and one should not make any moral judgments. For each individual, there is a different "true" and a different "false." From the transcendent viewpoint of the Tao, all such things are irrelevant.³⁵⁰ The purpose of things is relative to a particular frame of reference. What seems to be a fine purpose for the existence of a cow (milk and food for man) might not seem so fine a purpose from the cow's viewpoint. The world thus does not indicate that it is made for man or that man is the preeminent form of life.³⁵¹ In viewing life, one must constantly acquire and maintain a fresh and original point of view. This new or lateral thinking questions all assumptions and prefers to observe the problem in a new, creative, and unusual way.³⁵² Thus Lao-tze denounced hypocrisy and false morality as unprofitable and advocated the return to man's original nature, which was as pure as an innocent infant.³⁵³ The insistence that purpose and morality must be natural,

³⁴⁹ Fry and Swanger, 126.

³⁵⁰ Creel, Chinese Thought, 3.

³⁵¹ D. L. Johnson, 49.

³⁵² Fry and Swanger, 128.

³⁵³ Tey, 59.

unforced, certainly clashes with the Christian view of the man.

Ethics. Later religious Taoism is essentially a sanction of ethics, with rewards or retribution following each rule. In addition to the Five precepts (no killing, drinking alcohol, lying, stealing, committing adultery), borrowed from Buddhism, Taoism advocates the Ten virtues, namely, filial piety, loyalty to the emperor and teacher, kindness towards all, patience, remonstrance of evil deeds, self-sacrifice to help the poor, teaching the unenlightened, promoting welfare, studying the holy writings and offering to the gods.³⁵⁴ Taoism had in time past been actively involved in the promotion of social services and community improvement. While the Buddhists would more likely contribute money to build roads and bridges, the Taoists would be disposed to actually build them. The acts would be credited to their account as the Taoists believe that there would be a strict accounting and one who has a large balance of good deeds would receive rewards in life.³⁵⁵

The Holy Bible is very clear and positive that God is absolute wisdom, power, love, righteousness and holiness (1 John 1:5; Acts 17:31; Ps. 147:1). In His wisdom, He has His will and His perfect ending for all (Rom. 8:18-23). Through His power, He will bring all things to pass (Dan. 4:35). In

³⁵⁴ V. Ferm, 166.

³⁵⁵ Y. C. Yang, 172-73.

His love, He desires the best for all, even desiring that all may be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9). His righteousness and goodness are eternal, infinite and absolute.

All evil is regarded as "sin," which is falling short of God's standard, waywardness or disobedience to His holy laws. A man is a sinner because he has inherited a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5) and evil is always present in him (Rom. 7:21). Not only his actions, but also his thoughts and intentions are judged (Matt. 5:28). There is a depravity that does not enable him to earn merit with God (Isa. 64:6; Titus 3:5,6). Although one's conscience is a valuable asset, it is fallible. There are consciences that are weak (1 Cor. 8:7), defiled (Titus 1:15), evil (Heb. 10:22) and seared (1 Tim. 4:2). The conscience must be quickened and guided by the Word of God. Repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus is the only way to the source of life, purpose, truth, goodness and holiness.

Life and Death

Tao-tze divided the human family into two classes. The first class is made up of (1) saints, in which Tao reveals its nature, (2) philosophers, only partially permeated by Tao, and (3) the talented, of knowledge and insight, but not as examples for others to follow. The second class is made up of (1) the common people, in ignorance, greed and empty pleasures, and (2) robbers. The duty of the first class is to work so that all may be filled with Tao and receive strength for virtue (Teh). However this early existence is not man's

real life. Both before birth and after death, the stream of life goes on, for the individual as well as for the race. So Lao-tze writes, "The departure is life; the homecoming is death" (Chapt. 50)³⁵⁶ If the question of immortality is raised, the answer is: He who is absorbed in Tao has eternal life.

Natural Processes. Chuang Tzu continued this line of thought. Life and death are equal and are the natural processes of the universe. "Heaven and earth were born together with me, and all things are one with me."³⁵⁷ Man and nature are one and thus he would exist even after he died. If a man cultivates himself to the level of a sage, he will merge with nature, transcend over life and death, and be subjected to unknown future changes.³⁵⁸ Chung Tze also compared life and death to dreams, life and death as night and morning, and the course of life as a dream. Taoists try to get rid of death and the fear of death by equaling life and death, but they cannot obtain spiritual and eternal life.

Immortality. Later Taoist religionists made the discovery of immortality as the central objective, just as the central idea of Buddhism is to find a way of escape from the sufferings of life. Life is good and worth living; let us

³⁵⁶ Reichelt, 81.

³⁵⁷ Gia-Fu Fern and Jane English, trans. Lao-Tsu: Tao Te Ching. (New York: Vintage books, 1972), Chapt. 26.

³⁵⁸ Go, 51-52.

improve it and prolong it indefinitely. Immortality is essentially an indefinite prolongation of the present earthly existence. These immortals are supposed to enjoy freedom from the restrictions of time and space and to have an unending innocent happy life.³⁵⁹

A popular presentation of the idea is found in the story of the famous Eight Immortals or Fairies, originated in the Yuan dynasty (13th and 14th century), who were ordinary people, thought to have gained immortality by asceticism.³⁶⁰ They lived in the enjoyment of innocent pleasure in a fairy island in the Eastern Sea, but sometimes interested themselves by helping some helpless mortal. Drops, herbs, yoga-like physical exercises, breath control, magic, talismans, dietary restrictions were all used as ways to avoid death and hell and to achieve a life of blessedness beyond this present one. These religionists also adopted the Buddhist conception about hell,³⁶¹ especially about the various orders of gods and a vast array of demons of restless and uncared dead.³⁶²

Eternal Life. When the Holy Bible speaks of life and death, it always refers to sources and destinations. God created man, as separate from animals and nature, in His own image (Gen. 1:26, 27), with physical as well as spiritual life

³⁵⁹ Y. C. Yang, 167.

³⁶⁰ Fry and Swanger, 122.

³⁶¹ Reichelt, 93.

³⁶² Overmyer, Religions of China, 52.

(Gen. 2:7; I Thess. 5:23). Because of sin, the wages of sin (Rom. 3:23; 6:23) is (1) physical death (Ps. 104:29; 146:4; 1 Cor. 15:56; James 1:15), the separation of body and soul (Eccl. 12:7; Gen. 35:18; Luke 23:46); (2) spiritual death (Gen. 2:17; 1 Tim. 5:6; Eph. 2:1,2); and (3) second death (Rev. 20:11-15) in the eternal lake of fire forever.

Life and immortality come through the Lord Jesus Christ, who through death had abolished death (2 Tim. 1:10; 1 Cor. 15:54-57). He gives life and life more abundantly (John 10:10) and power (Phil. 2:12,13) and grace (2 Cor. 9:8; 12:9) to will and to do His good pleasure. For the believer, death is truly a welcome home in Heaven (John 14:1-4; Heb. 11:8-16; 12:22,23), the Blessed hope of the Rapture (1 Thess. 4:13,14; 1 Cor. 15:51-53) and the New Heaven and New Earth (Rev. 21, 22).

CHAPTER 7

Needs and Strategies

This chapter deals with the key needs of the Chinese and the strategies used. Four main areas of needs are covered: eclecticism, family, vitality of religion, and personal approach to religion. Past and present strategies to meet these needs are studied for their pros and cons. Suggestions are introduced for prayerful considerations.

Eclecticism

In religion, as perhaps in many other things, the Chinese people sometimes appear to be an Oriental puzzle which cannot be easily explained or analyzed. Chinese religion is almost impossible to separate from the daily secular functions of life. It is an eclectic mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. The pure of the three religions is for the selected few, being too philosophical and abstract. Thus some sections of each have been simply incorporated into the already amorphous, diffused religion. For the majority, either the movements are vitiated by dragging them down into the gross superstition and materialism, or the people are satisfied with the knowledge of the ethical demands and go on living in fear and powerlessness.

Supplementary

Explanations may be found both in the nature of these three religions and in the temperament and psychology of the Chinese. The three religions are not mutually exclusive, but

rather mutually supplementary. Confucianism, with its emphasis on the issues of present living, leaves plenty of room for the mysticism and spiritism of Taoism on the one hand and for the metaphysics of Buddhism on the other.³⁶³ Confucianism emphasizes an "I-thou" relationship between man and man; Taoism, an "I-thou" relationship between man and nature; and Buddhism, an "I-thou" relationship between being and non-being.³⁶⁴ Chinese philosophy teaches that truth is unlimited and one can learn humbly from all persons on the way to wisdom. It also teaches the unity and universality of truth. One truth from here and there and another put together make more truth and not less truth. Also the Chinese are rationalists and humanists and will accept and adapt anything that will promote their well-being of wealth, health and longevity here on earth. Thus they have no prejudices and make no embarrassing distinctions. They can be Confucian in their daily habits and yet call upon the Taoist or Buddhist priests when they have problems. Such eclecticism is known as Folk religion or Popular religion. In the beginning, the popular religious practices were diffused throughout the social system, based in family, clan, and village, devoted only to spirits with limited and local powers.³⁶⁵ Soon they

³⁶³ Y .C. Yang, 39,40.

³⁶⁴ Kitagawa, 75.

³⁶⁵ Overmyer, "Chinese Religion: An Overview" in ER III:281-

personalized deities of higher status, brought in by the Mahayana Buddhists and the Taoists. Values were based on pragmatic reciprocity, but some assurances about life after death were added to promises for aid now.

The Folk tradition is based on ancestor veneration and the cult of household gods. The ancestor-worship can be seen as two separate cults: one, the hall cult in ancestral halls, expresses the unity of lineage, and the other, the domestic cult, centers upon the recently deceased members, with daily offerings at a home altar.³⁶⁶ Beyond the household, its rituals are performed at shrines for locality gods and at local temples. In the temples, the gods accept petitions and offerings, and convey messages through the means of divination, dreams, spirit mediums, and spirit writing.

The Folk religion is also associated with a cycle of annual festivals, funeral rituals, and geomancy (feng-shui). Popular values are sanctioned by messages from gods and by belief of purgatory and rebirth, according to the principle of karmic retribution. Passage through purgatory can be amended through the transfer of merit money by Buddhist or Taoist rituals.

Life-long

Religion is for life and not life for religion. The Chinese thus have no place for the structural, institutional

³⁶⁶ Helen Hardacre, "Ancestors: Ancestors Worship" in ER, I:266-67.

aspects of religion. The Christian witness then should have a minimum of institutional baggage, else it will lose its credibility and practical relevance. Also no single strategy alone will suffice for the different dialect-speaking and the language-speaking Chinese, and for the urban and the rural Chinese. Every situation is different and requires its own special strategy, and thus it is mind-boggling to try to work out strategies for each special group. The best strategy is the one that works for a particular target group. In reaching out, there must be more creative thinking and planning, and believing prayer on a target group. One cannot design a careless, wholesale condemnation or an over-enthusiastic appreciation and compromise. One also has to be careful not to be simplistic and distribute canned apologetics from the classroom.

No Co-option

Care has to be taken lest true Christianity be absorbed into the diffused Chinese religion. It is the nature of the Chinese religion to be accommodating and old religions do not die; they live on in the new religions which follow them.³⁶⁷ It would be the co-option of Jesus³⁶⁸ into the Chinese worldview, a form of domestication, Jesus being honored and worshipped as one of the many manifestations of deity in the

³⁶⁷ M. Kraft, Worldview and the Communication of the Gospel (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1978), 72,73.

³⁶⁸ L. Newbigin, The Gospel in a Pluralist Society (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989), 3.

course of human history. While Christians should be all things to all men so that by all possible means they might save some (1 Cor. 9:22; 10:33), they should also be watchful and not compromise. There should be a clear Christian identity over against the surrounding culture, a clear sense of conservative, doctrinal truth and of meaning and value, and an intolerance to inner pluralism or dissent, to pave the way for the holy and loving God to work in and through Christians for His Glory and for the salvation of souls.

Functional Substitutes

Functional substitutes to replace certain anti-scriptural cultural traits must be put into place to help the Chinese Christians live out and share their faith. Acceptable cultural characteristics must be discerned in the light of the Scriptures and should be adopted and adapted so as to demonstrate the warmth of the Gospel in the understanding of the culture.³⁶⁹ Again, care must be taken so that the Chinese Christian would not be removed from his roots. This is especially important for the English-speaking Chinese, because of the Western influence and rapid social change, not only through the world but also through the churches. One can detect an identity crisis in the individual as well as in the church as to what is supracultural and what is Western or Chinese culture. This is the fear of the older generation, as they observe that the younger generations are less Chinese and

³⁶⁹ Faircloth, 161-63.

more Western in their philosophies and lifestyles. Some younger members have even discarded the use of their given Chinese names and have used "Christian" Western names.

The Masses

The movement of the Chinese religion is the movement of the masses, but it does not mean that the Chinese need canned, mass-oriented messages. It means that they need practical solutions to their daily needs as well as total participation in building genuine spiritual community and inter-personal relationships. As stated earlier, the Chinese do not desire an institutionized religion where the work of ministry is, as Grubb observed, "exclusively the job of special agents sent out by mission boards."³⁷⁰ This need for participation must be fully exploited so as to release God's "frozen credit,"³⁷¹ as Kraemer called the laity, for the ministry. Lay ministry and zeal have been the most powerful local institutional growth factors for the Chinese in Taiwan.³⁷² A survey in Singapore noted that males, in particular, find most fulfillment and spiritual blessing in active serving roles, else they tend to become restless and dissatisfied. Provision of such activities should continue to ensure that they remain. More females feel sufficiently fulfilled in passive

³⁷⁰ Kenneth Gruff, Frontier Vol. 4, No. 4, (Winter 1961): 238.

³⁷¹ Hendrik Kraemer, A Theology of the Laity (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1958), 9,10.

³⁷² A. J. Swanson, ed. Ten Case Studies of Church Growth in Taiwan (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1987), 92,96.

participation.³⁷³ The Chinese, being supernaturalistic, also need a meaningful, participatory worship, with the essential ingredients that leave them feeling that they have met God. Thus the Christian message and life must be sufficiently alive, relevant and attractive.

The Keystone: The Family

The keystone in the arch of Chinese society as taught by Confucius and practiced by the Chinese is the family where there is a lot of cohesion and loyalty. Fathers have the authority and families are known by their surnames and these are grouped in clan associations. The family is also the orbit around which religion revolves. This "family-ism" explains why Confucianism and Taoism do not develop any system comparable to the parish in Christianity, and why Buddhism becomes to all intent and purposes a family religion.³⁷⁴ Thus family religion is basic, while individual religion is secondary, and ancestor veneration is the center of the family religion.³⁷⁵ The main festivals are all family and ancestor centered. Preservation of the family line is crucial. The family line is regarded as extending back in time to ancestors

³⁷³ K. W. Hinton, 12 Churches Study (Singapore: Unpublished, n.d.).

³⁷⁴ Kitagawa, 78.

³⁷⁵ L. G. Thompson, Chinese Religion: An Introduction (Belmont: Dickerson Publishing Co., 1969), 34.

as well as forward to descendants,³⁷⁶ and thus the dead are just as much part of the family as the living.

One Stream

Living and dead are connected together in one stream; the living are to uphold the family traditions, bring honor to the ancestors, and prepare to become good ancestors themselves, remembered for their good work and example. Prayers and rites are thus made to insure the well-being of ancestors as well as to beget sons to continue the line. Sons often follow their fathers' occupations or desires. The ancestor spirits are watching and protecting and will revenge or reward according to the adherence to the traditional Chinese values. Among the values encouraged are male centeredness, respect for age, emotional reservedness, dependence, submission, obedience, orientation to the past, conservatism, security, loyalty, filial piety and group dominance over the individual.³⁷⁷

The living are to live to uphold the honor of the ancestors and the family. They are to mutually care for the spirits by offering food, money and so forth, which are transmuted to the ancestors who need all these in the other world; else, their ancestors, left as "hungry ghosts," would not bring peace, prosperity and longevity to the descendants

³⁷⁶ Alvin P. Cohen, "Chinese Religion: Popular Religion," Encyclopedia of Religions (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1987), III: 290.

³⁷⁷ K. W. Hinton, Growing Churches Singapore Style (Singapore: Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 1985), 43.

nor protect them from evil and harm. Here is where Christians must learn to listen more--listen to their insecurities, hurts and secret fears that drive them to ancestral worship and idolatry. Then Christians need to match those needs with understanding and patience to the promises, assurances and comfort of the Scriptures, using languages, themes and illustrations in their context.

Pietism

This pietism, the strong sense of loyalty towards the religion, family and clan, is a binding and blinding force. The eldest son in particular would feel it the most because he is the one responsible to carry on the tradition. If he turns to Christianity, considered "a white man's religion," he would be unfilial and disloyal, even a traitor to his heritage, his family and his nation. His family would lose face and be dishonored and the ancestor spirits would not be cared for. The living parents also live with the gnawing fear that there might not be any one taking care of them after death and they might end up as wandering, hungry ghosts. Many Chinese have thus found it very hard to renounce this tradition.

Those who do often face severe opposition and persecution, especially from the old Chinese women and the mothers, who are the guardians and transmitters of the old tradition. Not only must the Gospel be witnessed to, but there must also be a biblical response to show the eternal reality of the love, faith and Lordship of Jesus Christ as

against these fears. The testimony, life and support of others who have gone that way will help in the out-reach. Above all, the dynamite of the Gospel is able to set the Chinese free from such slavery. Thank God that there have been many trophies of His grace among the eldest sons who have been thus comforted so that they may comfort others who need that special comfort. The writer is one of them.

Family Evangelism

The biblical pattern would be to win the father of the home and then down to the rest, though the old tradition in older generation dies hard. It has been surveyed that where there has been an extended family, it has been more difficult to make converts.³⁷⁸ However, much prayer and persistence must continually be put into such a witness for it is the biblical pattern. McGavran, a church growth expert, while emphasizing "Win the Winnable,"³⁷⁹ advocated priority on winning whole families in his "Try these seven steps for Church Planting."³⁸⁰ Jesus exemplified this emphasis in Mark 1:19-31; Matt. 9:9-13; Luke 10:38; 11:37. Paul's ministry to families may be inferred from Acts 16:31-34; 20:20. In the understanding of Scriptures to reach families, there is

³⁷⁸ Swanson, 24.

³⁷⁹ D. A. McGavran, Understanding Church Growth (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 290.

³⁸⁰ D. A. Gavran, "Try these 7 Steps for Planting Churches," Global Church Growth Bulletin 18 (May-June 1981): 110.

nothing to militate against selectivity in making contacts.³⁸¹ It is manifestly impossible to reach all, and thus some will be contacted before others. The target group may be the single nucleus young family and then using it, to reach to the older generation. Biblical theology, then, is the Christian's control and pattern in the way of doing evangelization.³⁸²

Single Nucleus

Because of the relocation and mobility of people in urban Singapore, Hong Kong and Taipei, there has been a predominance of single nucleus families, young families who are not so intimidated by the older generation, that can give rise to new Christian families. Thus, as Christians witness and disciple from this level up, there will be new generations of Christian families springing up. The older generation will have to be reached by the faithful kinship evangelism of the younger, though it takes much prayer, love and effort. It took some twenty years of persistent and consistent witnessing before the writer's parents came to trust in the Lord.

Sociologists observe that, in urban society, peer relationships grow stronger at the expense of intergenerational kinship relationships. Also ethnic and

³⁸¹ Hesselgrave, Planting Churches, 157-58.

³⁸² David, J. Hesselgrave, Today's Choice for Tomorrow's Mission (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1988), 144-45. Hesselgrave wrote against missiology going its own way instead of being controlled by biblical theology.

linguistic barriers usually break down, leaving class stratification as the main homogeneous unit classification.³⁸³ Therefore new strategies of peer networks must be adopted to reach the heads of the families.

Youth and Young Adults

Experiences in urban Singapore have shown that the youth and young adults are more receptive and are brought to the Gospel through peer group based networks in schools, colleges and working places.³⁸⁴ Another survey also indicates that sixty per cent are converted between the ages ten and nineteen, and after the age of twenty-four, there is a rapid falling off in the number of conversions.³⁸⁵ There is always a significant degree of attrition in that conversion group because of parental persecution.

However, after some thirty years of work by groups like YFC, ISCF, Navigators, Campus Crusades and Youth Fellowships in churches, there has been a new generation of young adults and mid-lifers in the churches. Many of them are in places in leadership in new independent churches. Also the ones who underwent persecution are drifting back as they are now freer, though not altogether freed, from persecution. As they face newer and more difficult challenges of the urban life, they do

³⁸³ Hinton, Growing Churches, 79.

³⁸⁴ Bobby E. K. Sng, In His Good Time (Singapore: Graduates' Christian Fellowship, 1980), 5-8.

³⁸⁵ Hinton, Growing Churches, 118.

remember the teachings of Christianity and thus head back into churches for the answers to their needs. Thus effort must be maintained and increased to reach these age groups without neglecting the work for the conversion of whole families.

Net-work Evangelism

Kinship evangelism is clearly not as easy as peer group friendship evangelism. Most conversions take place through the regular on-going daily work and life of the Christians and church rather than through special crusades. Thus, to reach out, the church must equip itself for ministry, not just in the church, but also for friendship network ministry in the arenas of the daily living, where people are living, working, and playing.

The city is, as Eames and Goode observed, "the network of networks,"³⁸⁶ rather than the single community of the rural community. People relate to different people in different settings, such as family, friends, occupations, religion, education, neighbors, and recreation. Life-style and friendship evangelism will be more appropriate than the confrontational type especially when people have been newly uprooted. Evangelistic Bible and other felt-needs studies can be held in homes, neighborhoods, schools, and working places. These allow for true dialogue and sharing of opinions and questions and the leader will have the opportunity to relate

³⁸⁶ Edwin Eames and J. G. Goode, Anthropology of the City (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1977), 242.

the Gospel to specific needs.³⁸⁷ Others in the group can help with their input as they have themselves wrestled in long struggles to interpret the meaning of faith in a complex structure of a modern urban life. Also as the corporation and the working place have displaced the home and the church as the source of inspiration of living,³⁸⁸ the small groups can help to correct, continue, and cement the primary and personal relationships as well to develop the right life-style which relates to urban living.

Three Cs Ministry

A full-orbed ministry to meet the spiritual, social and psychological needs of the people has been variously styled. A three tier model consisting of celebration, congregation and cell has been suggested by Peter Wagner.³⁸⁹ Others suggest the meta-church model with celebration and cell only,³⁹⁰ while Ralph Neighbour has his cell-group church model.³⁹¹ All these models recognize the need for the various networks

³⁸⁷ Hasselgrave, Planting Churches, 224.

³⁸⁸ F. M. Dubose, How Churches Grow in an Urban World (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 34,35.

³⁸⁹ Elaborations are given in Wagner's book, Your Church can Grow (Ventura: Regal Books, 1984).

³⁹⁰ Meta-church model is explained in Carl George's book, Prepare your church for the Future (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1991).

³⁹¹ This model is advocated in Neighbour's books: The Shepherd's Guidebook (Houston, TX: Touch Outreach Ministries Inc., 1988), and Where do We go from here? (Singapore: Touch Resource, 1990).

needed for the building up of the saints as well as for the reaching out to loved ones and friends. Howard Snyder echoed the belief that the small groups offer the best hope for the discovery and use of spiritual gifts and for renewal within the church.³⁹² However, there is a danger that these would become smug retreats for Christians, with a kind of horizontal relational theology and practice,³⁹³ but with little vertical transactional theology and practice, and without the vision and burden for the lost. There is then a necessity for the right theology of relationships with God and Christians as well as for the sharpening up for the work of evangelism.³⁹⁴ There will then be openness, communication, trust, and total vision and burden. This writer believes, with Dubose and others, that the small groups can be effective for the penetration into the private world of personal and primary group relations as well as to the world of the massive structures to which the urban man relates.³⁹⁵

Champion of the Family

With all the modern pressures breaking up the family, the church should be the champion of the family. People not only suffer from separatism and alienation in an urban society, but

³⁹² H. A. Snyder, The Problem of Wine Skins: Church Structure in a Theological Age (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1975), 139.

³⁹³ Charles M. Sell, Family Ministry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 140.

³⁹⁴ Faircloth, 89.

³⁹⁵ DuBose, 40.

also from the disintegrating fragmentation of the extended family life, which leads to "hyperfamilism," as Sell labelled it.³⁹⁶ The fragile and isolated nuclear family,³⁹⁷ in the flats in Singapore, becomes a virtual idolatry and a fortress that shields individuals from the larger community. The results are that members in that home have lost touch with their roots and traditions and are less equipped to face their tasks and hardship. Sell observed further that such a family becomes a "boiling cauldrous emotionality;" because left to itself to provide the major source of emotional security, it becomes almost explosively emotional.³⁹⁸

There is in each individual a real felt-need for community life as well as a rich family life. The church should support the family and does it best when it becomes the family of families.³⁹⁹ In the larger family life of congregation, it should develop other forms of family-clusters and intergenerational groups. A sense of community and belonging as individuals as well as families can be inculcated, in which all is bonded and healthily connected. Special projects should be introduced to help especially the young adults, the new nucleus families, to build better homes

³⁹⁶ Sell, Family Ministry, 31.

³⁹⁷ Jack Balswick and Judith Balswick, The Family (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1989), 13.

³⁹⁸ Sell, Family Ministry, 38-40.

³⁹⁹ Dennis B. Guernsey, A New Design for Family Ministry (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co., 1982), 106-9.

and families. Pre-marital, marriage enrichment, and family-related classes, seminars and camps have been found to attract many anxious and bewildered young adults in the fast-paced urban life. These have also attracted non-believers and thus have exposed them to the salvation and the purpose of God in their family life, in the midst of a non-threatening and noninvasive atmosphere concerning felt-needs shared with their peer group. Hence Christians do have these unique strategies, and thus need to utilize them more.

The government of Singapore recognizes the need for family counselling services and has encouraged religious organizations to be on the forefront. Family counselling services should be provided in churches, for Christians alone possess the holistic answer. Also creches, Child Development centers, and kindergartens for young children should be set up as bridges of love for contact and cultivation because more mothers are going out to work. Whole families can be reached as committed workers minister lovingly not only to the children but also to the parents. All these may demand more resources than a single church can handle. Here is where a group of churches can cooperate to set up these services in a central location. Women power can also be tapped from the churches to man these ministries, alongside the church staff.

The Men

One unique problem relates to the spiritual headship in the home. Traditionally, the women have been the ones who

provide the example and instruction of religion,⁴⁰⁰ while the men take the active role outside the home. Thus while the men may even be active in the church, they usually leave the spiritual training in the home to the women. One common complaint is that the man, after a day's work, will park himself in front of the television at home and will refuse to help around the house or take spiritual leadership, even when both are working outside. This is, of course, due to the Chinese cultural practice of the man being in charge of the outside affairs while the wife is in charge of the household. This attitude and lifestyle will have to be corrected by biblical preaching and the modelling of faithful men.

Also as men find social interaction and assimilation more difficult than women, structures, like the homogeneous friendship groups, must be created to help them assimilate and be challenged to know Christ and make Him known. Challenging task-oriented ministries like the Boys' Brigades, Boys' Camps and Men's Growth Seminars have been used with great effect in Singapore.

The Women

Because the women are more active in religion, more free to convert with less restraint, and now participating more in education and in the work force, they have been a fertile target for evangelism. When the credibility of the religion

⁴⁰⁰ Alvin Cohen, "Chinese Religion: Popular Religion," Encyclopedia of Religions, III: 293.

is called into question by the modernizing worldview, more are now converting at an even faster rate than men. Men are more prone to gravitate towards passive agnosticism and aggressive pursuit of materialism, while the women gravitate to religion for the security and the sense of belonging. The greatest attrition rate in Singapore appears to be in the age category 25-39 years,⁴⁰¹ with the same finding in Taiwan.⁴⁰² This is the period when ambitions concerning careers and social status sidetrack many, especially the men, who pride themselves as the primary provider in the home. This leads to a unique sexual imbalance in most churches in Singapore, which is even noticed by non-Christian parents.

In a society where singleness is not yet acceptable, many single girls are discouraged into converting because there are no ready Christian boys around. Some are pressured into marrying non-Christians, at which point most become inactive or turn to another religion. In the Chinese context, the women run the household affairs, which includes religion. If there are problems, it is the woman who makes the offerings, or goes to the temple for solutions. In the church, which is outside the home and thus dominated by men, the women are largely relegated to menial tasks and Sunday School teaching. A theology of the role of women in the church needs to be worked out so as to tap their strong intuitive bent to discern

⁴⁰¹ Hinton, Planting Churches, 178.

⁴⁰² Swanson, 210.

the voice of the Lord and their capacity in leadership.

Status

In the Chinese cultural context, men are regarded as of superior status and this has its influences. Men can persuade their non-Christian girl friends to attend church or meetings, where they are converted. However, it is not often successful the other way round. Those ladies who are already married and became Christians later, find it also difficult to bring their husbands to Christ. These are some of the dilemmas which only God Himself can and must solve. All that can be done is to faithfully relate each situation to the Word of God and provide an atmosphere of love, care, support and affirmation in the community of saints. Here is where the small care groups can help as the members provide the special and close fellowship and mutual accountability.

Also non-Christian men will more likely attend small friendship gatherings for their felt needs to be met. Some churches offer tuition classes, Boys' Brigades and other task oriented ministries to attract and retain the males. Tuition classes, for example, has attracted many males because the Chinese families place more emphasis on male attainment. Special pre-marital counselling classes have been conducted with great success for young couples with non-Christian partners. While there is a real danger of false conversions, yet with love, prayer and patience, these partners can be brought into the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

"Class" Churches

In the urban situation, the establishment of various levels of "class" churches for yuppies, factory workers, etc., might give a greater impetus and effectiveness to the outreach. No one church can satisfy the needs of everyone adequately and also people are more comfortable with their kind. The styles of ministry and worship, social activities and patterns of evangelism will then be tailored accordingly. Special evangelistic thrusts, for example, in the form of breakfast or lunch meetings, can be used with great effect. Churches should then provide multi-lingual and multi-dialect ministries, so that the whole family, old and young, might be adequately catered to in the same church, if not in the same congregation.

Kinship Evangelism

Urban relocation may have served to scatter the kinship groups, yet the family is still a very influential network and most in Singapore visit family members more than friends on their days off. The conversion of kin groups is called a web movement by McGavran. He feels that whole families make strong, better Christians than lone rebels, and churches built of inter-related persons have more endurance and communicative ability than those built of disparate individuals.⁴⁰³ It is not easy for the young to influence the older family members. Their status in the family is low, and while most of the older

⁴⁰³ McGavran, Understanding Church Growth, 360-63.

members speak the many dialects, the young could only speak them haltingly, with very little religious vocabulary. In addition, the Biblical vocabulary itself in the dialects is strange to the older members with their market-place dialects.

The Baptists in Singapore have provided a concerted effort and careful training to their members to reach their older loved ones. Seminars have been held each year thus far to train members in the various aspects of witnessing. Such aids as dialect tapes, literature, and videos are provided in the Baptist Media Center. Also there is a combined yearly Family Night when they invite their loved ones to a dinner night in a hotel, where there will be testimonies from older Christians and preaching from older preachers in dialects, together with the food and fellowship. All these are in a non-threatening environment. This also serves as an introduction to the community of saints at large, which is of interest to the parents, because they often wonder what their younger family members have been doing. Furthermore, it opens the door for the Christians to minister to the family both spiritually and physically in times of crisis, such as illness, loss of job or even a death. As a result, an encouraging number of conversions out of the older Chinese religionists has been noted. Also when the conversion of a person of high status takes place, Christian meetings are started in his home to take advantage of his authoritative position in the various networks, for reaching out.

Vitality and Validity

To the Chinese, religion is not so much a subject for abstract philosophical speculation as it is a matter for practical living. The more practical Buddhist writings from India were translated and fused into the existing structure while the abstract was ignored. The center of the world of thought, as well as the world of life, has been man and this life of his. Religion is from man to God, rather than from God to man. It is therefore this-worldly, materialistic and pragmatic. On Christianity in Chinese Hong Kong, Gail Law commented that to commit oneself entirely to God is a concept too risky for the Chinese to try. "To their thinking--which gives money, fame, and pleasure top value--Christianity is impractical and therefore unacceptable"⁴⁰⁴ It is problem oriented, exhibiting religious fervor only when they are anticipating or experiencing trouble and thus is result oriented. Several characteristics have been observed: (1) emphasis of the concrete, (2) a vivid sense of the relational, personal and utterly practical, and (3) a rhythm which implies action first and then reflection.⁴⁰⁵

Objectives

The object of much religious activity may be divided into six general categories: (1) protection of life and property,

⁴⁰⁴ Gail Law, 93.

⁴⁰⁵ Paul Clasper, "Christian Spirituality and Chinese Context," Chin Feng xx, 1, (Jan. 1977): 12.

(2) peace and harmony in home life, (3) success in the struggle for livelihood, (4) adjustment to the order of nature and favor from deities, (5) salvation from punishment in Hell, release from suffering, and (6) favorable rebirth.⁴⁰⁶ Four are concerned with the world of life and two with the afterlife. The Christian has the Gospel for the two concerns with the afterlife, but it must be the four concerns of the world life that must be bridged.

Functional Christianity

After surveying the situation in Singapore, sociologist John Clammer concluded that there has been a lack of emphasis on the social aspects of belief, a shortcoming which tends to impress non-Christians that Christianity is a religion of talking and not doing.⁴⁰⁷ This should not be so, for the call of the church as salt, light and leaven indicates its great potential as loving, caring, sharing and developing the full potential of mankind. Christians need not fear to be labelled as proponents of Liberation Theology as they lovingly obey the biblical commands to do good works (Matt. 5:16), to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions (James 1:27) and to develop the total being as Jesus Himself grew in all aspects (Luke 2:40,52).

⁴⁰⁶ Alvin Cohen, "Chinese Religion: Popular Religion," Encyclopedia of Religions, III: 290.

⁴⁰⁷ Clammer, Singapore: Ideology, 32.

Early Missions

A survey of some early missionary work indicated a team missionary endeavor. Not only were there churches started, but there were also schools for boys and girls and other social welfare program. The Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, and the Anglicans used this method, and as a result, have established a permanent and effective witness in Asia. The schools, for example, because of their high standards of morality and study and contribution to society, have undermined early prejudice against Christianity. The professionals have been heavily Christianized and remain so to this day. The Baptists have used successfully this inroad in Hong Kong where they have schools, colleges and a hospital; while in Singapore, they failed to use it and as a result, they did not make such a great impact as the others. The problem about the schools and the other program is that after some time, they lose their cutting edge concerning the purpose of reaching out to the lost. The schools, for example, are now for "our own children" and "our own denomination." To be effective again, there must be a renewal of the original purpose. This writer would like to suggest such a team missionary effort, if and when the door to China is opened again. Needed are not only preachers to start churches, but also a host of other co-workers in schools, colleges, hospitals, orphanages, homes for the handicapped and aged, farms, and wherever people are. True religion, after all,

should be an integral part of the whole business of life and living, not just a compartment of life.

Unfriendly Churches

One criticism is that the church is an "unfriendly" place, full of hypocrites. The Chinese Christians, because of the redemptive lift, have moved to a higher status in life, and thus are cut off from the masses, and being oriented upwards, find it difficult to relate to those of lower income group. Also because of the strongly pietistic expression of Christianity, social and cultural activities are considered "unspiritual" and thus frowned upon as a waste of energy and resources.⁴⁰⁸ Such an attitude must change, for we all need the social dimension in our lives. The church in koinonia should be the true answer to the urban, pluralistic society.

Because of the relocation and mobility of the people and of the great change in job structures, many are lost, lonely, confused, and even frightened. The meaning of life evades them and communication in the disrupted networks is superficial. A credibility crisis in regard to their own traditional religions may also exist. There may also be a need for crisis counselling. The church, as Jesus' agent of reconciliation, should provide the security, belonging, acceptance, forgiveness and affirmation. There should be the personal touch and warmth of corporeality, a body, a family and an organism. Structures for belonging, caring and sharing

⁴⁰⁸ Hinton, Planting Churches, 181.

should be provided.

One proven structure is the small home meeting, cell or kinship circle, and when well-conducted and with members accountable to one another and to the church, it proves to be the most successful dynamic for evangelism, nurturing, community, and training. The church facilities can also be fully utilized as a Family Life Center, Community Center, Tuition Center, Kindergarten, Drug Rehabilitation Unit, Crisis Counselling Center or some other such purpose so as to provide a needed service as well as build rapport and confidence with the community.

"Prosperity" Gospel

Since religion has been problem-oriented and pragmatic to the Chinese, one must not be tempted to preach a Christianity that would make one happy, healthy and wealthy which would surely be very palatable. One cause of attrition is in line with this pragmatism. Some embrace Christianity at a time of need or crisis and then later drop out when things are running smoothly. Others will demand a quick result just as they do with their temple gods. If they do not get it, they will be disenchanted and move on to another help. God is then treated as a slave to their whims and fancies. Repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ must be preached. The biblical theology of God's will in Christian living, especially in suffering, must be taught else people would not be strong in the harsh realities of life. There has been too long a superficial

understanding and experience of the purposes of suffering.

Signs and Wonders

Coupled with the pragmatism is the sense of wonder at the miraculous, a fear of the unknown, and the presence of a tinge of superstition and mysticism. Thus the Chinese involve themselves in fortunetelling, witchcraft, spirit mediumism, healing and exorcism which are, as Overmyer pronounced, "dramatic expressions of the Chinese understanding of life as an arena where human beings constantly interact with cosmic forces."⁴⁰⁹ This provides a fertile ground for Charismaticism, and lately the Signs and Wonders Movement to flourish. Sometimes, the non-Christians do not see the difference between the tongues-speaking in the churches and the tongues-speaking of demon-possessed mediums in temples. The music beats and the swaying and dancing remind them of mediums going through such motion before they are possessed. Also the assurance of young converts can be undermined as they try to seek for some mystical experience. The phenomenon of being slain by the Holy Spirit is not taught in the Holy Bible. Such teaching leads to an inordinate absorption with the demon spirits. This leads to the naming of all kinds of spirits in so-called spirit-infused objects and to exorcism. Christians do not doubt the mighty working power of the Almighty God through prayer of God's people, but they believe that the Lord does not need some of those inordinate anti-

⁴⁰⁹ Overmyer, Religions of China, 77.

scriptural methods.

It is not within the scope of this paper to provide the biblical answer to these evil and divisive practices, but to emphasize that while the Chinese, like the Jews, seek for a sign, there will be no sign except the sign of Jonah (Matt. 12:39-40). Moreover, if they hear not the Word of God, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead (Luke 16:31). If there be any true power encounter, there will a power encounter with the Word of God, better acknowledged as truth encounter (Rom. 1:16; 10:17), and with people born again by the Word (1 Peter 1:23). There will be power encounter with the Holy Spirit who convicts (John 16:7-11), converts (John 3:5; Titus 3:5,6), and conducts to conform to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:26-30). Again, Christians must not be tempted to follow such teaching though numbers seem to be growing in this kind of church, but they must boldly preach against such in the spirit of love and truth, and encourage others to walk likewise. More accountability to the Lord, His Word and faithful leaders--even at the expense of growth--might save lives as well as the integrity of His Word and the church of Jesus Christ.

Private and Personal

To the Chinese, real religion is strictly private and personal. He might participate in a communal way as he goes along with the others to a certain temple. This is the public side to his religion, as a social obligation to his family,

clan and community. Usually he goes through this in the outward form, without entering into it in spirit.⁴¹⁰ He feels that he belongs to it. It is part of his "Chineseness" to preserve the social, cultural and religious traditions of the ancestors. Yet, even then, in the crowded temple, he acts as an individual, making his own prayer and burning his own incense. If gods of one particular temple do not help, he would visit another temple. Even his own individual family members frequent different temples. In his home, he has his own ancestor tablets and deities. This is all born of his own faith as he collects, collates and fuses the beliefs around his environment. He can then be both a Buddhist and a Confucianist without any sense of contradiction or incongruity. He devotes himself in solitary meditation and private worship which is expressed in self-culture and in good moral conduct.⁴¹¹ This is his real religion, strictly private and personal, where he meets his god in spirit and truth. This has some implications.

No Interference

It means that no one should interfere with his religion. It will be hard to use the confrontational "cold-turkey" method with him. The "Explosion Evangelism" method or the "Continuing Witnessing Program" by the Southern Baptist Convention can be used with some success only among loved ones

⁴¹⁰ Eileen Lee, 7.

⁴¹¹ Y. C. Yang, 43,44.

and friends, coupled with lifestyle evangelism. Otherwise, the Christian would be interfering, and saying that he is wrong. The Christian would be accused of trying to change his religion, a part of his inner life and of his culture and community. For those who have a over-negative attitude towards him, he labels them as westernized and uncultured. Religion has always been regarded as a cultural and racial possession. The Chinese have their own; the foreigners have Jesus Christ. The attitude is: We worship our gods, and you worship yours. There should be no interference.

Also, historically, the impression left by early missionaries was negative. These missionaries brought their culture, dress code, arts and Western life-styles and deemed their own culture as part of the Gospel truth. Many branded the Chinese culture as pagan and demonic, so that if there were conversions, the Chinese would have to adopt Western cultural practices. That would mean that the Chinese would excommunicate themselves from the rest of the community. Thus they would resist the foreign culture and with it, the Gospel as well, since theirs has a rich and proud cultural heritage of over five thousand years, superior even to the West. It will take loving friendship, teaching and modelling before they make Christianity their own.

Bridges of love must be built to span the gap between Christianity and Chinese culture, and to destroy that close uncalled-for association of Christianity with the western

culture. Also some aspects of Chinese culture are not religious at all, but cultural and ethical. Thus the Christian needs to know when to reject, adopt, adapt or find a functional substitute and thus to reach the Chinese through a medium with which they can easily identify. As the Christian opens himself to their culture, he may find them opening themselves up to his faith. Moreover, because the Chinese value personal privacy and household privacy, it is going to take a strong sense of missions to send the Chinese Christians into witnessing and missions.

Private Worship

As a rule, then, worship is not shared with anyone else. Congregation worship does not exist. Church affiliation and congregational worship are distinctly Christian institutions and innovations in Chinese religious life.⁴¹² There is also the reservedness in attitude among the Chinese, especially among the men, who show little emotional and relational skills. There will be a feeling of confusion in a strange place, of failing to feel a part of the situation, and of finding any meaning in it. A large Sunday School class or a large church can provide a better "soft-landing" to enable them to remain inconspicuous. The public invitation for salvation given by some Baptist churches can be a hindrance rather than a help. Since the Chinese believes that his religion is personal and private, he can be better helped in

⁴¹² Y. C. Yang, 44.

his belief in Christ as Christians assist him in praying for and with him as he remains in the pew.

Also there should be room for private and silent meditation to allow for expression of private worship. The Chinese-speaking and dialect-speaking churches are more ritualistic than the English-speaking ones, because they are more used to an ordered service, and they are not prone to changes because of their conservative nature of preserving order.

The church needs to work hard in trying to assimilate the newcomers. They are to be followed up in an individual basis, and in a meaningful way as well as in a care group basis, to develop nurture and community. These care groups should meet in homes of their friends so that there will be a non-threatening atmosphere. Welcome dinners and personally matching newcomers with members can also be helpful. Great care must be taken in the training of leaders for care groups, and in the provision of interesting study materials so that the groups can be dynamic, strong and Bible-oriented.

Church Membership

Baptism, devoid of any sacramental importance, is viewed as inconsequential and thus not attended to.⁴¹³ Often, the idea of church membership is detached from Christian belief, and while there are many who believe and congregate, the church membership remains small. Then, too, the membership

⁴¹³ Hinton, Planting Churches, 179.

ties are not strong, and there is little loyalty and much interchurch mobility across denominational lines. This is due to the "consumer" spirit or in the Chinese context, the "temple" syndrome, in that one is motivated by that which will meet his felt needs. The Chinese urbanites are very aggressive, demanding, insensitive and impatient. They demand the best in their work as well as in the church. A great deal of moving has been due to dissatisfaction with the quality of leadership, ministry and body life of the church. This has led to some splits in churches. While this action seems harmful to the total testimony of the church, some believe that it is good because it gives rise to new growing and dynamic churches. However, because of carnality and immaturity, seeds of resentment, bitterness and unforgiveness have been sown which would not bring God's fullest blessings. As these seeds germinate, grow and bring their fruits into the new churches the results are vicious cycles of divisions and splits.

CHAPTER 8

Analysis of Surveys

Reflective experiences and researches of historians, sociologists, and church-planters had been discussed in the previous chapter. This chapter seeks to analyze the current experiences and attitudes of the Chinese people concerning their beliefs, values, and impact of the Christian witness in their lives. Two key questions are to be answered. Are the beliefs and values of the past held by the Singaporean Chinese today? Are the strategies of witness of the past applicable today?

Frequency counts and percentages of the answers in the surveys were computed and presented first. These were presented in graphic terms whenever possible, to guarantee that the main points were readily grasped. The ranking of beliefs, values, and methods helped in the understanding of priorities in the Chinese thoughts and in the selection of certain questions and answers for analysis. While straight tabulations provided a general picture, the underlying dynamics were observed by cross-tabulating answers by some demographic characteristics. Variations might provide clues to differences in receptivity among the audience sub-groups and the best way to reach them.

The cross-tab data collected were too detailed and voluminous. Thus the writer would desire to follow Engel's advice that "the best approach is to avoid tables and graphs

and describe the significant tabulations in narrative form."⁴¹⁴ Summary tables of the bivariate and multivariate analysis were represented according to the technique suggested by Edward Balian.⁴¹⁵ The focus would be on interpretation, conclusions, and recommendations for actions. At times, the writer would be forced to present several alternative options for data patterns, because he did not have a full grasp of all factors that affected decisions. For these, further analysis and discussion will be recommended.

Profiles of Respondents

There were six hundred respondents, the number divided equally between Christians and non-Christians. The demographic data on sex, marital status, educational level, religion, and age-group were collected. For the Christians, an extra question was asked concerning their previous religions before conversion to Christianity.

Sex

The total sample was composed of 49.3 percent of males and 50.7 percent of females. The random survey among Christians brought in 48 percent males and 52 percent females. Using mainly the "snowballing" technique of sampling among the

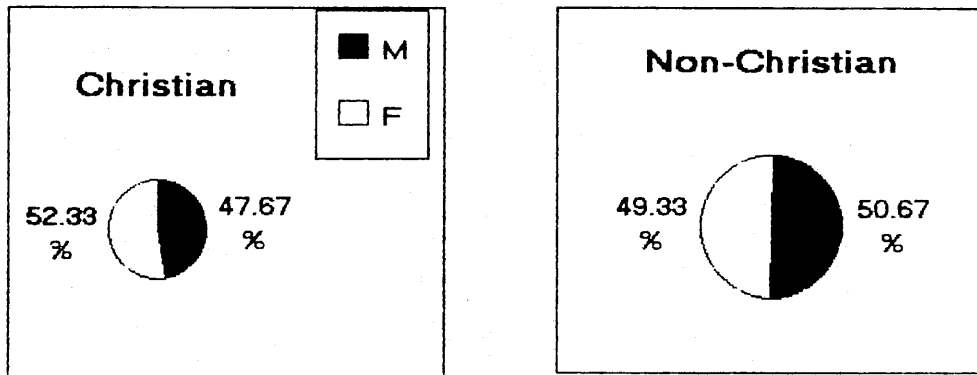
⁴¹⁴ James Engel, How can I get them to Listen? (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), 145. Guidelines from this handbook on audience analysis and effectiveness measurements are used as helps in the analysis of the surveys.

⁴¹⁵ Edward Balian, How to Design, Analyze, and Write Doctoral Research, 224-226.

Graph 1

A Comparison of Distribution of Sex

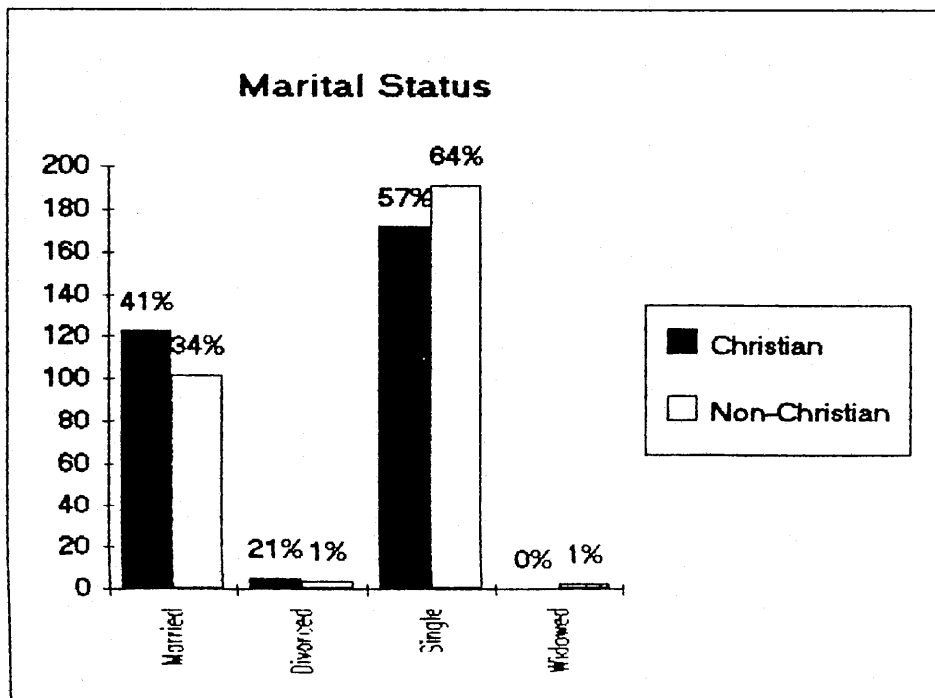
Sex		M	F
Christian		143	157
Non-Christian		152	148



Graph 2

A Comparison of Distribution of Marital Status

Marital Status	Married	Divorced	Single	Widowed
Christian	123	5	172	0
Non-Christian	102	4	191	3



non-Christians, respondents were 51 percent males and 49 percent females (see Graph 1). There was then a good balance of males and females in the sampling.

Marital Status

There were mainly two classes, the married and the single. The data from the small samples of the divorced and the widowed were collapsed to form one column "others." The total sample was composed of 39.2 percent married males and 59.1 percent single males; 35.9 percent married females and 61.5 percent single females. Again there was a good balance of the distribution of marital status. Graph 2 gives the comparison between the Christians and the non-Christians. There were 41 percent married Christians as compared to 34 percent married non-Christians; and 57 percent single Christians as compared to 64 percent single non-Christians. There were more singles than married, because the majority surveyed were from the 18-25 age group.

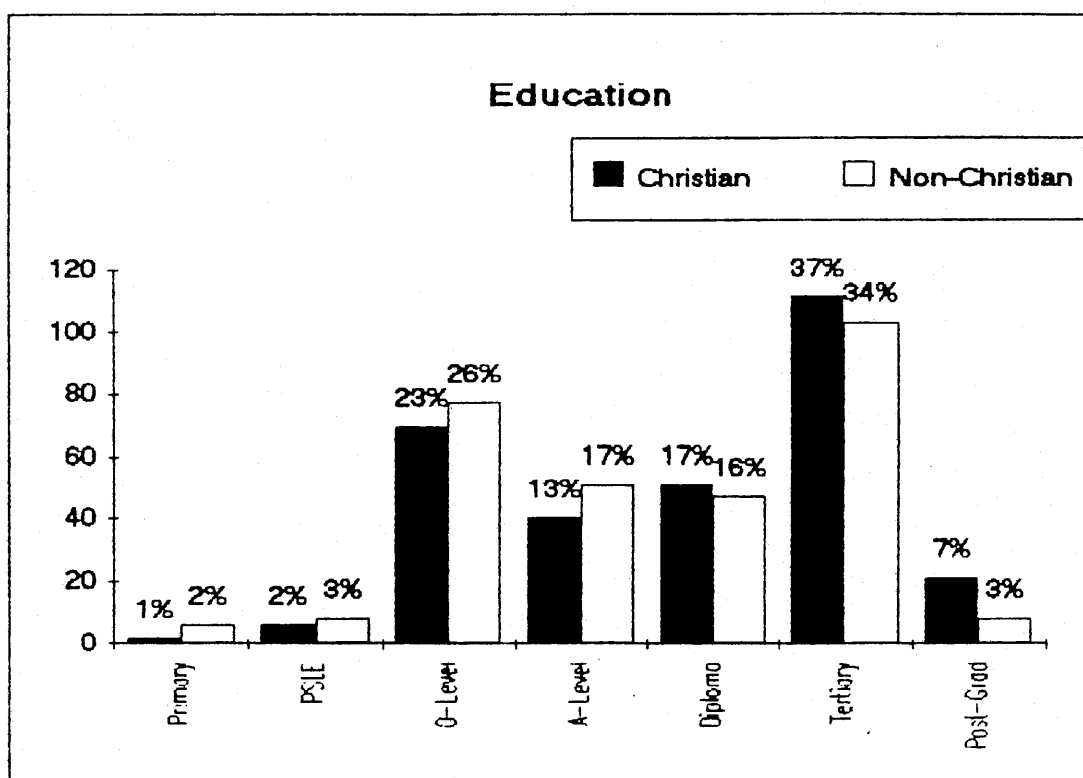
Educational Level

The English educated target group was a highly educated group as indicated by the high percentage of those of tertiary education among Christians (37 percent) as well as non-Christians (34 percent) (see Graph 3). There was a high value placed on education. The percentages in the O-level and A-level could be due to the fact that the respondents were in the 18-25 age group. There were few in the primary school level. To help analyze the data, the columns for the small

Graph 3

A Comparison of Distribution of Educational Levels

Education	Primary	PSLE	O-Level	A-Level	Diploma	Tertiary	Post-Grad
Christian	2	6	69	40	51	111	21
NChr	6	8	77	51	47	103	8



samples of the primary and PSLE (Primary School Leaving Examinations) were collapsed into the O-level column, and the post-graduate into the graduate column.

Cross-tabulating marital status by educational level, controlled by Christian and non-Christian, led to the observation that there were twice the number of singles of tertiary education than of married. There was then a good number of educated respondents of marriageable age. A strategy for a singles ministry must be provided. Social gatherings and activities for singles can be organized for them to mingle and make friends.

Religions

Graph 4 indicates a culture in crisis. There were more free-thinkers than those of the traditional Chinese groups.⁴¹⁶ 41 percent of Christians (48 percent males and 52 percent females) were formerly free-thinkers, while 46 percent of non-Christians (58 percent males and 41 percent females) were free-thinkers. From the ranks of the non-Christian free-thinkers, there were 46.1 percent that were married and 46.6 percent that were singles. The worldview of free thinkers seemed to pervade every strata of Chinese society.

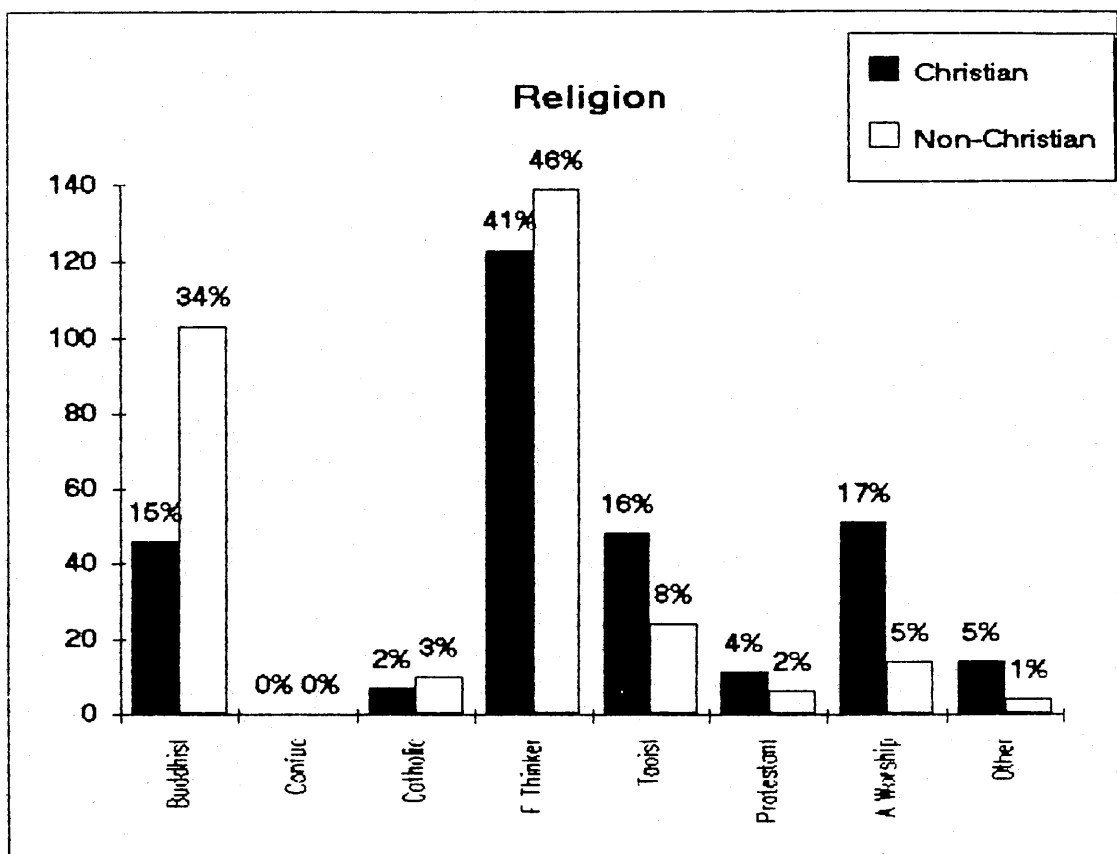
Buddhism (34 percent with 43 percent males and 56 percent females) was the second most prevalent choice of the non-

⁴¹⁶ The data concur with the findings of Eddie Kuo, Jon Quah, and Tong Chee Kiong ("Religion and Religious Revivalism in Singapore") who reported that there was an increase in the number of persons that claimed no religious affiliation. However, the estimated figure was 17.6% of the population in 1988.

Graph 4

A Comparison of Distribution of Religion

Rel	Buddhist	Confuc	Catholic	F Thinker	Taoist	Protestant	A Worship	Other
Chr	46	0	7	123	48	11	51	14
NChr	103	0	10	139	24	6	14	4



Christians. It might prove to be a formidable challenge to Christian witness. Taoism, followed by ancestor-worship, was next. There was no sample of Confucianism. Special strategies would be needed in this context of cultural ambiguity. A cheerful note to observe was that there were conversions to Christianity from all the groups.

Age Groups

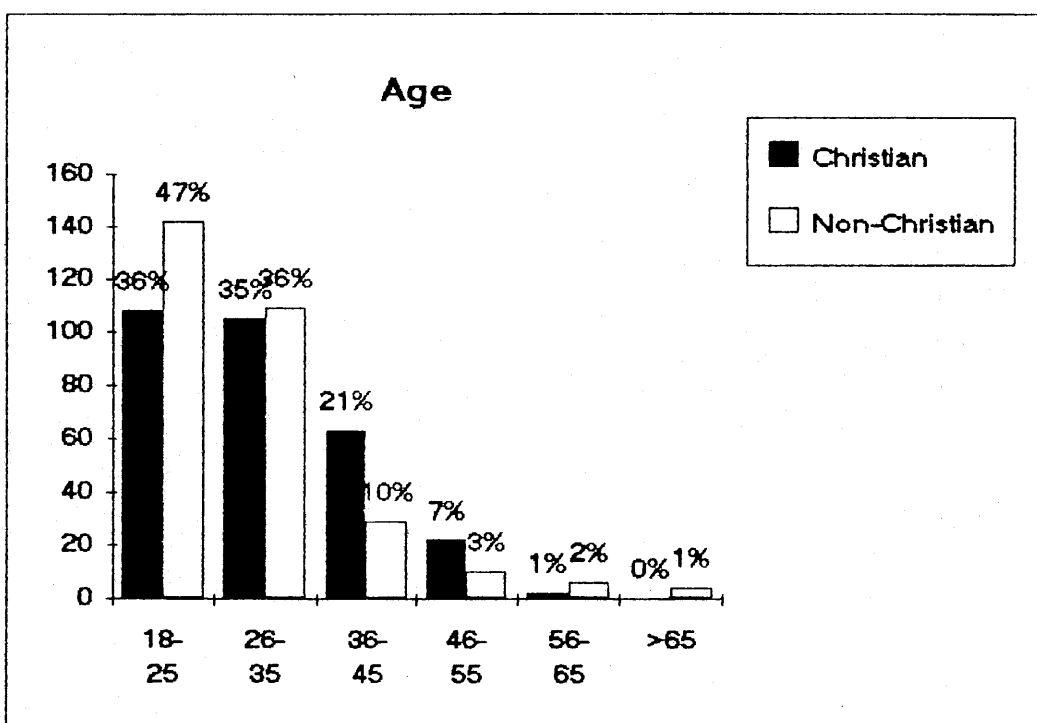
The 18-25 and 26-35 age groups consisted each of more than 35 percent of Christians as well as non-Christians. Together with the 36-45 age group, they formed about 90 percent of the sample (see Graph 5). That range is the writer's target population, which will be the main concentration. Multivariate analysis showed that there was equal number of males and females in each age-group. It seemed that the favorable age of marriage was around 25 years old. There were more unmarried Christian respondents in the 26-35 age group than married ones, while there was an equal number in the married and singles of the non-Christian subgroup. Again there may seem to be a real need for a strategy of a singles ministry that will cater to the needs of the singles in the churches as well as serve as a witness to other singles in the community.

For the non-Christians, 51 percent of the Buddhists (34 percent of the sample) were from 18-25 age group; 37 percent from 26-35; and 10 percent from 36-45 age group. Of the free-thinkers, 47.5 percent (46 percent of the sample) were from

Graph 5

A Comparison of Distribution of Age Groups

Age Group	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-55	56-65	>65
Christian	108	105	63	22	2	0
Non-Christian	142	109	29	10	6	4



18-25 age group; 34.5 percent from 26-35 age group; 9.4 percent from 36-45 age group. These two sub-groups (with a total of 80 percent of the sample) with their worldviews would provide the bulk of the non-Christian views and values.

Christians

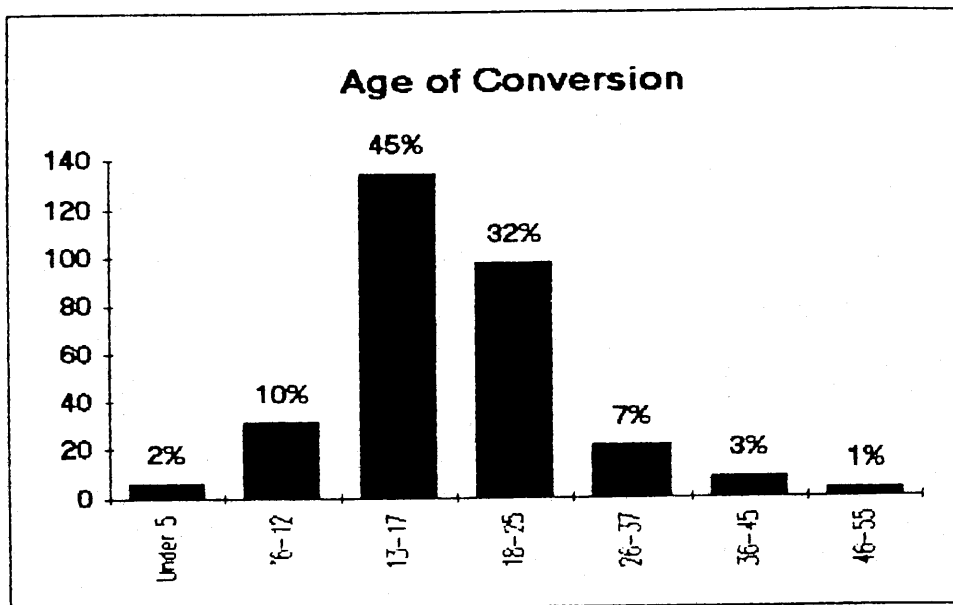
The profiles of the Christians that were surveyed are considered. The ages of their conversions and some of the final circumstances leading to their conversions may help in an understanding of the strategies used. Certain prominent features will be high-lighted. Concentration is on the targeted population between eighteen and forty-five years old. The writer is not oblivious to the fact that the surveys were subjective and not very large. Also, not all the methods would have been used on everyone; thus there would not be positive responses. Above all, he realizes that the Holy Spirit can break through in His own way, using any one method, or many, and even using other methods outside the list. He hopes only to find some pattern of witness.

Age of Conversion. Graph 6 gives a graphic presentation of the age-groups of conversion. The majority (77 percent) were saved at the 13-17 (45 percent) and the 18-25 (32 percent) age groups of conversion. Some 12 percent were saved before they were twelve years old. Only 36 percent of the people surveyed were in the 18-25 age group. This means that most of the people (88 percent) were saved before they were twenty-five years old. Some 85 percent of the graduates and

Graph 6

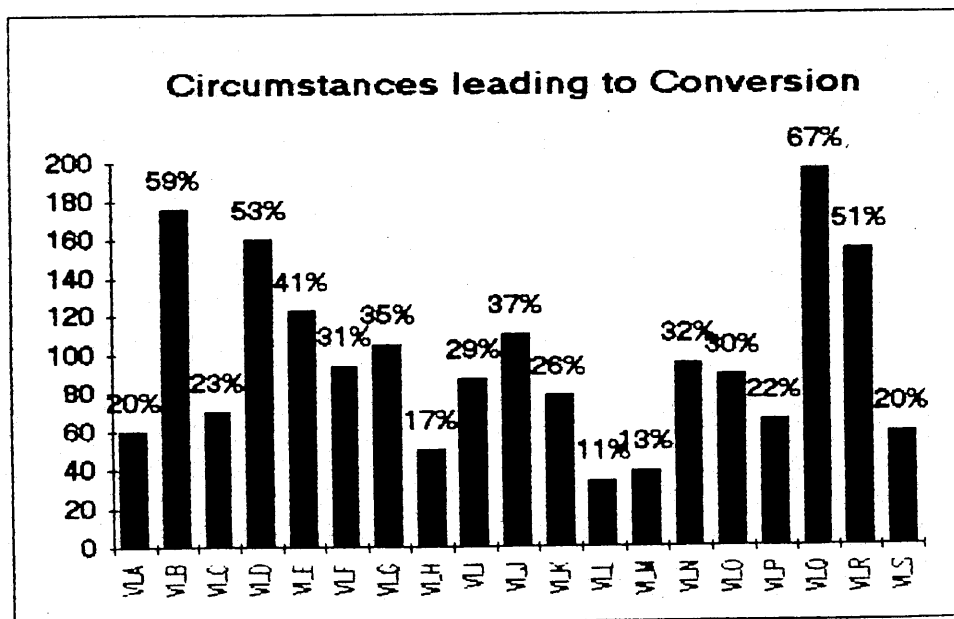
A Distribution of the Age Groups of Conversion

Age group	Under 5	6-12	13-17	18-25	26-37	36-45	46-55
Christian	6	31	134	97	21	8	3



Graph 7

A Distribution on Circumstances leading to Conversion



post-graduates were saved altogether in the 13-17 (52 percent) and the 18-25 (33 percent) age groups of conversion. About an equal percentage (47 percent) of males were saved in each 13-17 and 18-25 age groups of conversion; and an equal percentage (53 percent) of females saved in each of the above mentioned age groups of conversion.

The analysis of the above data seemed to suggest that the ripe ages of harvest may be from thirteen years old to twenty-five years old. However, since the median age of the Singaporean Chinese is 30.6 years, there are then a good number of people from twenty-five years old to thirty-five years old that must be reached also. Of the 105 people in the 26-35 age group surveyed (about 35 percent of the total 300), only eight (about 7.6 percent) were saved in the 26-35 age group of conversion. The rest were saved earlier. Some of the strategies used in the past may or may not help. However, the recommendations of witness by Christians and non-Christians, when discussed later, may give further insight in formulating strategies.

Circumstances

A good number (about 67 percent) was drawn to the Lord because of conviction of personal sins, with about 49 percent males and 51 percent females; and about 75 percent altogether in the 13-17 and 18-25 age groups of conversion. 32 percent came because of personal crisis and problems, with 44 percent males and 56 percent females; and about 34 percent in the 13-

17, about 36 percent in the 18-25, and about 14 percent in the 26-35 age group of conversion. Women seemed to be slightly more affected at those difficult times. The Christian witness must be alert to the seasons of life as well as the seasons of the soul.

Testimonies (about 51 percent) and witness of friends (59 percent) and of family members (23 percent) seemed to take a positive impact. The low percentage of family member involvement might be due to the low number of family members who were Christians. Kinship and friendship evangelism may be important in bringing loved ones and friends to Christ.

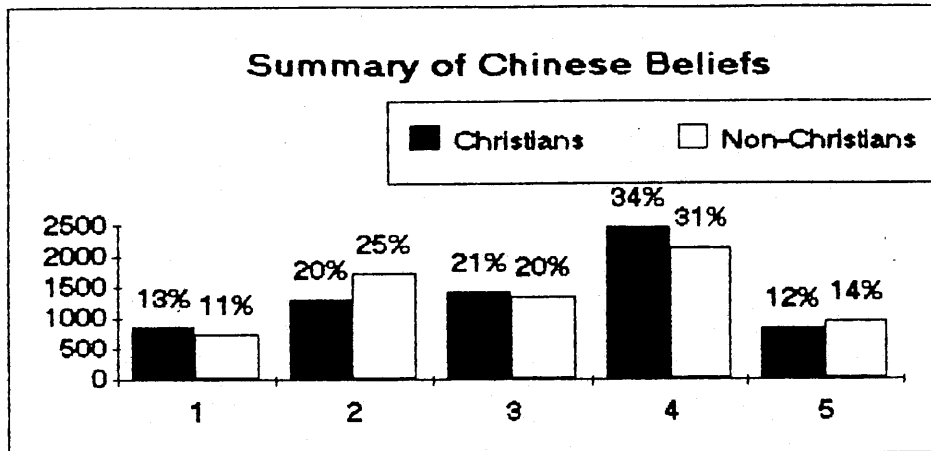
Some 41 percent were drawn by the church Sunday services. Great preaching (30 percent of respondents) and music (22 percent), were also effective. Evangelistic meetings (31 percent of respondents) and special events (29 percent) drew some positive responses. Others were drawn by Bible study classes (35 percent) and fellowship meetings (37 percent). The positive response for home gathering was only 17 percent. This could be because most of the churches surveyed did not have the proper home gatherings of care and support. Later discussion on the correct use of home gatherings will help guide strategy and increase participation among Christians as well as non-Christians in home meetings.

Social outreaches, like camps, seminars, tuition, were not assessed too high, maybe because they were mainly conducted for Christians, or they were very rarely conducted

Graph 8

A Distribution of Summary on Chinese Beliefs

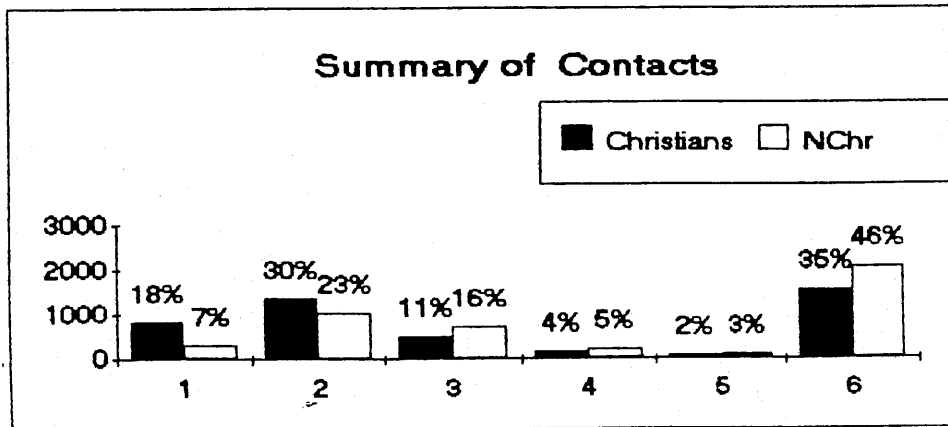
	1	2	3	4	5
Beliefs	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree
Christians	866	1318	1428	2453	830
Non-Christians	750	1714	1353	2143	938



Graph 9

A Distribution of Summary on Contacts with Christian Witness

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Contacts	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	No Contact
Christians	831	1373	510	175	76	1575
NChr	321	1046	708	232	113	2080



in the churches that the writer surveyed. These will be considered later on in this paper.

Chinese Beliefs and Values

A summary of the data on Chinese beliefs and values was first computed and presented. Then the responses to questions were ranked according to the degree of positive responses. Both Christians and non-Christians were ranked. A comparison was then made. Certain beliefs and values were chosen from the list so as to ascertain whether these were adhered to.

Summary of Data

The list of Chinese beliefs and values was culled from the experiences, researches, and wisdom of the historians, sociologists, and philosophers of the Chinese culture. The summary of the responses should be positive if the Chinese in the survey still followed the list. Christians, who were asked concerning their previous upbringing, responded with 46 percent in agreement, 33 percent in disagreement, and 21 percent in uncertainty. Non-Christians responded with 45 percent in agreement, 35 percent in disagreement, and 20 percent in uncertainty (see Graph 8). Thus there was generally a positive response to the list, indicating that, by and large, the respondents held to a general Chinese worldview.

Ranking of Data

The ranking for degrees of importance was done as indicated in Appendix J (Table 6). Item scores were computed

first by multiplying each cell value (-2 for "strongly disagreed," -1 for "disagreed," 0 for "undecided," 1 for "agreed," and 2 for "strongly agreed") by its corresponding frequency, and then by summing the products. The item numbers were listed in Table 1 for identification with the survey questions. The numbers in brackets indicated the total scores.

Table 1

A Comparison of Ranking of Beliefs and Values
by Total Score for Degrees of Importance

<u>Christians</u>	<u>Non-Christians</u>
1. IIU Family (392)	1. IIU Family (443)
2. IIT Education (363)	2. IIT Education (325)
3. IIG Hell (245)	3. IIS Personal (291)
4. IIE Sincerity (244)	4. IIK Paths to God (261)
5. IIF Good Works (184)	5. IIE Sincerity (219)
6. IIS Personal (128)	6. IIG Hell (81)
7. IIR Filial Piety (120)	7. IIJ Next Life (63)
8. IIK Paths to God (83)	8. III Rebirth (37)
9. IIW Money&Fame (49)	9. IIV Mother (26)
10. IIL Chinese Ways (47)	10. IIA Present Life (12)
11. IIV Mother (30)	11. IIF Good Works (-2)
12. IIB Troubles (0)	12. IIL Chinese Ways (-14)
13. IIH Heaven (-11)	13. IIW Money&Fame (-30)
14. IIN Eldest Son (-53)	14. IIH Heaven (-56)
15. IIJ Next Life (-56)	15. IIR Filial Piety (-70)
16. IIA Present Life (-65)	16. IIB Troubles (-81)
17. III Rebirth (-92)	17. IIN Eldest Son (-158)
18. IIP Anc.Worship (-94)	18. IIP Anc.Worship (-188)
19. IID Ghosts (-177)	19. IIC Fate (-251)
20. IIO Sacrifices (-184)	20. IID Ghosts (-266)
21. IIC Fate (-232)	21. IIO Sacrifices (-268)

Note: The positive numbers in brackets indicated the scores towards "agreed" and "strongly agreed;" while the negative indicated towards "disagreed" and "strongly disagreed."

A comparative study between Christians (before conversion) and non-Christians was made. Values held were

discussed first. Then the beliefs held were noted in areas of worship and practices. There will be definite implications for strategies of witness since there had been some cultural shifting.

There was strong agreement that the family was important and that each must fulfil his or her duties as a member. Family program thus should top the list of church activities. However, while the Christians (before conversion) felt "the loss of face" if they did not fulfill the duty of filial piety, the non-Christians felt a slight disagreement in this area. Both groups disagreed concerning certain aspects of ancestor-worship. They did not think that the eldest son would be failing in his filial duty if he failed to worship his ancestors. There was not a necessity to pray to ancestors for protection and prosperity. There was a strong agreement that the next generation did not have to offer sacrifices to them after they were gone. This attitude could be due to the strong influence of the worldviews of the free-thinkers and the Buddhists who made up of the bulk of the sample in both groups. Filial piety might have lost the religious element.

Education came next in importance for both groups so as to have good jobs and social status. However, money, fame, and pleasure were not high in value in life. There was a slight consensus that there was enough to do in the present life that one should not bother about life after death. Life therefore was to be practical and pragmatic.

However, there was a strong belief of life after death, especially about spending a time in hell for sins committed on earth. The respondents seemed to entertain a hope that heaven was not for special people only. Thus these Chinese did not need a vision of hell because they had an idea of a type of hell; they needed a vision of Calvary's love and forgiveness. Sincerity and good works seemed to be important in obtaining favor with God. There was a slight difference in opinion of the belief in rebirth between the two groups. The non-Christians generally held to it, maybe because of the higher number of Buddhists in the group (34 percent in the non-Christian group to 15 percent in the Christian group, before conversion).

Generally speaking, gods, goddesses, evil spirits, ghosts, mediums, astrologers, and ancestors needed not be sought after. The understanding could be that man was to be the master of his own destiny. That could be the influence of the free-thinkers in both groups. Nevertheless, it was all right to have religions because they were good and the same; they all led to God. However, religion was personal and no one should try to change another's belief.

Values and Beliefs

Certain prominent Chinese traits were chosen from the list and then cross-tabulated with these categories: sex, marital status, educational level, religion, and age-group. Data of some of the sub-groups were collapsed into others

because the samples were too small. "Single" and "Divorced" were collapsed into a new code "Others." The data from the primary schools (1 and 2) and from secondary schools were collapsed into "0 Level;" while the tertiary education and the post-graduate education into "Graduate." Protestant, Catholic, and others were collapsed into "Others." The age-groups 46-55, 56-65, and 65 & above were collapsed into "46 & above."

The chi-square analysis was used to indicate whether there was an existence of a statistically significant correlation between variables. The significant level (p) was at .05.⁴¹⁷ Any level lower than that would mean that the null hypothesis--that the two variables were independent--be rejected. Cramer's V was chosen as the chi-based coefficient of contingency because it could measure the strength of observed association to value 1 (a perfect relationship) in any dimension.

Present Life. Item IIA in the survey list was: "As I have enough to do with the present life, I should not bother about what will happen to me after this life."

For four categories--sex, marital status, educational level, and age-group--the null hypothesis could not be rejected (see Table 2.1). The variables in them were thus independent. The null hypothesis could only be rejected in

⁴¹⁷ Edward Balian, 226. Balian's suggestion of the level .05 was used as a guideline, though .001 would suggest a stronger association between variables.

the category of religion since the p level was less than .05 (p of .0091). The strength of association was not large (V of .13026). A closer look at the data indicated that there were slightly more free-thinkers that loved this present life than those free-thinkers who thought of both worlds. Slightly more Buddhists thought of the after-life than those Buddhists that did not. The more religious were concerned about the after-life. However, there were slightly more ancestor-worshippers who indulged in the present life than those of the sub-group who thought of the after-life. Some ancestor-worshippers might have treated ancestor-worshipping as a tradition rather than as a religious practice.

Table 2.1

Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Test Reporting			
IIA	Item on Present Life cross-tabulated with:	p level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.4146	.05418
IB	Marital Status	.6126	.06107
IC	Educational Level	.5723	.06312
ID	Religion	.0091	.13026
IE	Age-Group	.3045	.07735

A further analysis, cross-tabulating IIA by Religion, controlling for sex, indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected only for males (p of .0344, V of .16754), but not for females (p of .1500). The strength of association for the category male was not large. Males were a little more fluid than females in their lifestyle. The same pattern as the above occurred, with slightly more free-thinkers and ancestor-

worshippers thinking about the present life, and slightly more Buddhists thinking about the after life. The Gospel message should be presented with more emphasis on the blessings of the present life than of the afterlife. Christians should also be concerned about meeting present-day needs.

Ancestor Worship. Item IIO in the survey list was this: "It is important that my next generation makes sacrifices to me when I am gone from this world."

Table 2.2

Graphic Technique for Chi-square Test Reporting			
IIO	Item on Ancestor Worship cross-tabulated with:	p level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.0456	.10147
IB	Marital Status	.0548	.08787
IC	Educational Level	.5723	.06312
ID	Religion	.0133	.12684
IE	Age-Group	.0320	.10722

For the categories of educational level and marital status, the null hypothesis could not be rejected, indicating that the variables involved were independent (see Table 2.2). For the categories of sex, religion, and age-group, the null hypothesis was rejected, but the strength of association in all cases was not large. Further multivariate analysis revealed no other significance.

The Buddhists and the Taoists were generally not in favor of others worshipping them after their death, maybe because of their own emphasis of their own good works on earth. The free-thinkers were equally divided in their opinions for and

against, with a good number in the "uncertain" column. They seemed to be a group in disorientation. Surprisingly, there were slightly more ancestor-worshippers in disagreement than in agreement. Again, some of these might be taking such worship as traditional and thus might not wish others to worship them.

There were slightly more males and females in disagreement with the statement, though there were more males in disagreement than females. However, there was a good number of females in the "uncertain" column. Together with the ones in disagreement, they made up of 71 percent of the women surveyed. The women who traditionally managed the religious affairs of the family might be going through a crisis time. This might be a good time of harvest among the women. There were slightly more in disagreement in the age groups 18-25, 36-45, and 46 above than in the age-group 26-35. Moreover all the age groups were more in the state of flux with an average of 73 percent each of sub-groups, in both the "disagreement" and "uncertain" columns. The belief in ancestor-worship seemed to have been broken down a bit. This may indicate that there is one less barrier for the Gospel witness to overcome.

Traditional Ways. Item IIL in the survey list was this: "I believe in the Chinese traditional ways, whether I understand them or not."

For the categories of marital status, educational level,

and age-group, the null hypothesis could not be rejected, indicating that the variables in them were independent. For the categories of sex and religion, the null hypothesis was rejected, though the strength of relationship was not large.

Table 2.3

Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Test Reporting			
IIL	Item on Traditional Ways cross-tabulated with:	p level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.0122	.12121
IB	Marital Status	.3799	.05914
IC	Educational Level	.5092	.06629
ID	Religion	.0006	.15157
IE	Age-Group	.2314	.08212

The Buddhists, Taoists, and the Ancestor-worshippers were generally in favor with the statement. They might be equating their beliefs with the Chinese traditional ways. The free thinkers were slightly not in favor, with a good number in the "uncertain" column. Together, these represented 64 percent of the 260 free-thinkers. The men were more in favor of the statement than the women who were slightly in disagreement with it.

Further analysis of IIL by religion, controlling for sex, indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected only for the sub-group male (p of .0237, V of .17284). The level of significance for the sub-group female was .0763, which meant that the null hypothesis could not be rejected and that the variables were independent. In the sub-group male, the Buddhists, the Taoists, and the ancestor-worshippers were in

favor of the statement. The male free-thinkers were slightly in favor too. The males might have a little more indifferent attitude to culture than women or they might be concerned about passing on the roots to the next generation.

Good Works. Item IIF was this statement: "If my good works are more than my bad ones, I will find favor with God."

Table 2.4

Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Test Reporting			
IIF	Item on Good Works cross-tabulating with:	p level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.2661	.06643
IB	Marital Status	.1305	.07694
IC	Educational Level	.4001	.07194
ID	Religion	.00005	.17590
IE	Age-Group	.1437	.08933

The null hypothesis was rejected only for the category of religion; still the strength of association between the variables was not particularly large (see Table 2.4). The Buddhists, Taoists, and the ancestor-worshippers were mainly in favor of doing good works to satisfy God. The number of free-thinkers in favor was slightly more than that which was not, though the combined percentage of those not in favor and uncertain was 55 percent of the total free-thinkers (sample of 260).

Further analysis of IIF by religion, controlling for sex, indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected in both sub-groups of the male (p of .0007, V of .21333) and the female (p of .0407, V of .16282). The strength of association

in the male category was a little stronger than that in the female category. Strategies of witness may include activities for the good of society to attract and move men closer into a decision for Christ.

Bivariate and multivariate analysis were also done concerning three other prominent issues: IIK "All religions the same," Item IIS "Personal Religion," and IIU "Family." The results showed that the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that all the variables in them were independent. An examination of the data showed that a good majority of all the sub-groups believed that all religions were good and the same; many paths led to God. Care must be taken that the Gospel be not co-opted into this eclectic mind-set. A Gospel witness will have to involve the introduction of the uniqueness of Christ and Christianity.

Item IIS was: "My beliefs are personal and I do not like others to try to change my beliefs." The survey indicated a strong belief in a personal religion in all the sub-groups. Christian witness may take the form of life-style evangelism till times of need or difficult seasons of life, when a verbal Gospel witness becomes necessary. If this mind-set were to be carried over to the time when a Chinese became a Christian, it would be difficult to get him witnessing to others.

Item IIU was this statement: "My family is important and I must fulfill my duties as a member." This value was on top of the list of important values for a great majority of the

people surveyed. This may have some implications. If the family head were non-Christian, then the rest would have to follow to try to keep the peace in the home, else one would not be fulfilling one's duty. Persecution would usually set in for members who turned to Christianity. There would also be a burden of guilt for these who might feel that they were failing in their duty. In these cases, counselling would be important. Thus it may be important to reach first the head of the home and then the whole family may be brought to the Lord. To reach the whole family and not to split the family up, churches must provide family ministries to meet the needs of every member. The Chinese family structure is already quite intact, and with the transformation power of the Gospel, the Chinese Christian family can be a great powerhouse for the Gospel witness.

Contacts with Witness

Respondents were asked concerning their impressions of their contacts with Christians and their activities, whether the contacts were very helpful, quite helpful, uncertain, quite unhelpful, very unhelpful, and no contact. A summary of the data was first computed and presented. Then the responses were ranked and a comparison between the responses of the Christians (before their conversion) and non-Christians was made. As the responses for the column "no contact" were high for both groups (35 percent for Christians and 46 percent for non-Christians), with the appropriate response data not

forthcoming, further analysis was not possible. Also the samples for the other useful responses were too small for further analysis. General observations could only be made.

Summary of Data

The list of contacts was culled from the experiences and wisdom of church planters and evangelists. It was expected that the responses of the Christians would be positive. The data concurred with 18 percent responses of "very helpful," 30 percent "quite helpful," 11 percent "uncertain," 4 percent "quite unhelpful," and 2 percent "very unhelpful" (see Graph 9).

The responses of the non-Christians were interesting. The non-Christians were generally positive to the contacts that were made. There were 7 percent responses of "very helpful" and 23 percent "quite helpful" as compared with 5 percent "quite unhelpful" and 3 percent "very unhelpful." It seemed that Christians with their contacts were making some helpful impacts, helping the respondents in the decision making process for Christ. Christians before conversion had a greater number of contacts. With more contacts, non-Christians may be drawn a little closer. Churches may have to work harder to bring non-Christians into contact with as many helpful Christian strategies as possible.

Ranking of Data

Item scores were computed first by multiplying each cell value (2 for "very unhelpful," 1 for "quite helpful," 0 for

"uncertain" and "no contact," -1 for "quite unhelpful," and -2 for "very unhelpful"), and then summing the products. The item numbers were listed first in Table 3. The numbers in brackets indicated the total scores.

Table 3

A Comparison of Ranking of Contacts with Witness
by Total Score for Degrees of Helpfulness

Christians				Non-Christians			
1.	IIIIi	Friends	(307)	1.	IIIIi	Friends	(198)
2.	IIIIA	Literature	(258)	2.	IIIIK	Special Events	(147)
3.	IIII E	Fellowship	(228)	3.	IIIIJ	Family	(122)
4.	IIIIK	Spec. Events	(206)	4.	IIIIA	Literature	(110)
5.	IIII C	Sun. Service	(200)	5.	IIII L	Schools	(87)
6.	IIII B	Film\Video	(195)	6.	IIII C	Sun. Service	(81)
7.	IIII H	B.S. Group	(186)	7.	IIII B	Film\Video	(80)
8.	IIII G	Street\Home	(185)	8.	IIII O	Felt Needs	(78)
9.	IIII J	Family	(182)	9.	IIII N	Spec. Outings	(71)
10.	IIII D	Spec. Mtgs	(176)	10.	IIII E	Fellowship	(61)
11.	IIII N	Spec. Outing	(153)	11.	IIII F	Home Mtgs	(56)
12.	IIII F	Home Mtgs	(149)	12.	IIII H	B.S. Group	(50)
13.	IIII L	Schools	(132)	13.	IIII D	Spec. Mtgs	(49)
14.	IIII O	Felt Needs	(85)	14.	IIII M	Tuition	(36)
15.	IIII M	Tuition	(56)	15.	IIII G	Street\Home	(4)

Observations would only be general and descriptive, because of several factors. First, a good number of people had not experienced some of the contacts and thus had not been able to comment. This would affect the total scores. Also the types of contacts would not have been uniform; some would be pleasant, others unpleasant, depending on how each contact had been presented. Hopefully, there would be an observable pattern.

The total scores of the Christians were predictably higher than that of non-Christians. The helpfulness of

friends was high on the list for both groups. Friendship evangelism may have to be high on the list of strategies. Both also put special events as helpful. Churches may have to major on high visibility special events, especially on important Christian holidays. Special evangelistic meetings in the church or city-wide campaign were not high in the list for both. These may mean that the special events meetings can not be conducted like the evangelistic meetings, but will have to be more seeker-friendly, to meet the felt needs of non-Christians. Evangelistic meetings, if held, need to be more seeker-oriented too. Christian leaflets, books, and Bibles seemed to be high on the list for both. Such, if distributed and encouraged by friends, may lead non-Christians closer to decision making for Christ.

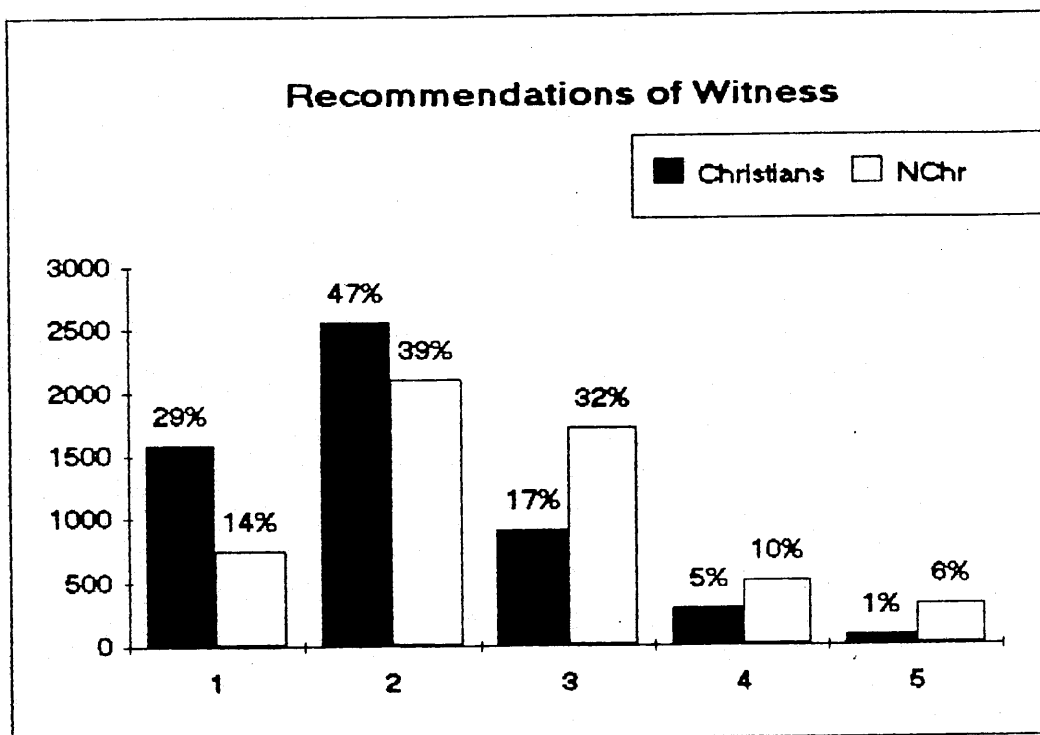
Another good influence came from the Christian family members and relatives. Kinship evangelism thus may be very important. Last on the list for non-Christians was witnessing by strangers on the streets or in their homes. The Chinese dislike interference in their beliefs. Specially trained Christians will be needed in this form of evangelism. Home meetings were low in influence for both groups. The reason could be because most of the home meetings were primarily Bible study groups, almost like a Sunday school class. These would not meet the needs of non-Christians.

Tuition seemed to be low in the list. This was not because education was not important, but because there was

Graph 10

A Distribution of Summary
on Recommendations of Christian Witness

	1	2	3	4	5
Witness	Very	Quite	Uncertain	Quite	Very
	Helpful	Helpful		Unhelpful	Unhelpful
Christians	1580	2556	909	293	77
NChr	756	2097	1714	514	322



about 70 percent of "no contact" in each group. The few that responded were slightly in favor of tuition in churches. The ones in disagreement would have been in tuition classes that were not well run. The writer was involved in such tuition classes in slum mission work and had found them very helpful in reaching students for Christ. Further comparison with the results in the next section, on what the churches and Christians should be doing, may help further with the unfolding of a helpful pattern of witness.

Recommendations of Witness

The purpose is to study the understanding of Christians and non-Christians concerning the various Christian contacts. A comparison was done to see whether both groups were thinking alike. Both were asked to base their responses on their own experience and their understanding of Chinese culture. Again the responses would have been subjective.

A summary of data was computed and presented first to make some general pattern. Then the responses were ranked to observe the relationships. Some of the important contacts were chosen for further analysis to observe any statistical significance.

Summary of Data

Both groups showed a general positive response to the contacts (see Graph 10). Christians were predictably high, 76 percent "helpful," 17 percent "uncertain," and 6 percent "unhelpful." Non-Christians had 53 percent "helpful," 32

percent "uncertain," and 16 percent "unhelpful." This would indicate that Christians were doing something helpful in society. More helpful contacts will be noted later.

Ranking of Data

Items scores were computed as had been done in the two previous instances of the ranking of data. The item numbers were listed in Table 4 to help identify with the survey list. The numbers in brackets indicated the total scores.

Table 4

A Comparison of Ranking of Recommendations of Witness
by Total Score for Degrees of Helpfulness

Christians				Non-Christians			
1.	IVD	Family	(521)	1.	IVO	Soc.Serv.	(327)
2.	IVC	Friends	(514)	2.	IVC	Friends	(307)
3.	IVJ	Home Gps	(364)	3.	IVJ	Home Gps	(240)
4.	IVK	Fellowship	(351)	4.	IVL	Felt Needs	(225)
5.	IVI	Spec. Events	(343)	5.	IVD	Family	(224)
6.	IVM	Tuition	(296)	6.	IVM	Tuition	(221)
7.	IVR	B.S. Gps	(288)	7.	IVN	Soc. Acti.	(203)
8.	IVP	Outings	(287)	8.	IVQ	Schools	(175)
9.	IVE	Film\video	(283)	9.	IVI	Spec. Events	(164)
10.	IVH	Spec. Mtgs	(278)	10.	IVK	Fellowship	(163)
11.	IVN	Soc. Acti.	(276)	11.	IVP	Outings	(160)
12.	IVG	Sun. Serv.	(272)	12.	IVG	Sun. Serv.	(80)
13.	IVL	Felt Needs	(269)	13.	IVR	B.S. Gps	(66)
14.	IVO	Soc.Serv.	(253)	14.	IVE	Film\video	(54)
15.	IVF	Literature	(249)	15.	IVH	Spec. Mtgs	(33)
16.	IVQ	Schools	(235)	16.	IVF	Literature	(20)
17.	IVB	Home Visits	(105)	17.	IVA	Street Ev.	(-77)
18.	IVA	Street Ev.	(80)	18.	IVB	Home Visits	(-136)

The first observation was that the total scores indicated significantly high positive responses, except for the few low scores at the end of the list. This may mean that there can be positive response by Christians to help in the needed areas if called upon. For example, the item "tuition" was high in

both groups. Needed in the provision of tuition would be a lot of volunteer teachers and thus the high scores might also indicate a willingness to help. As for non-Christians, the churches should plan programs to meet their felt needs, according to their rankings.

High on the list of non-Christians were concerns like social services, home groups for care, seminars for felt needs, social activities, tuition, kindergartens, and schools. This may be due to the mind-set of the Chinese that religion should be practical and society-oriented. The desire for a good education was also reflected. Christians put some of these concerns in the lower ranks, not because they were not interested in them (their total scores were high), but maybe because in a cosmopolitan, urban Singapore, they would leave these concerns to the government or other social groups (like the Alcoholic Anonymous and the Drug Rehabilitation Center). There may seem to be a need for a review on how the churches can meet the social needs of others, thereby bringing them to the Savior for their spiritual needs. Christianity is life and churches should be concerned with every facet of human life and not leave it to others. What a single church may not be able to do, a group of like-minded churches may!

Family and friends were also especially important to both groups as would be expected. These were important parts of the Chinese values. Christians put the item "family member living a good Christian life" high on the list, maybe because

of the desire and the struggle to live such a life at home, so as to win their loved ones to Christ. Churches must teach their members how to relate to their loved ones, especially to their parents and elders. Kinship and friendship evangelism then may be very important in the Chinese culture. Ministries to build strong families and strong relationship among friends must be instituted. The church should be a family of families and a family of friends.

Interestingly enough, while the previous section on the degree of helpfulness indicated the item "home meetings" low on both groups, it was high in this section. This should help to show the necessity of churches to have home support and care groups, especially in an urban situation where there has been a major breakdown in the family structure. The item "Bible study groups" was low in helpfulness among non-Christians, maybe because these were run like Sunday school classes. Felt needs must be met during home meetings. The Bible is to be personalized and put into practice. Building of good relationship, care, and support is also important.

Again, as in the previous ranking of helpfulness, special event meetings were more helpful than special evangelistic meetings. Should not the special evangelistic meetings be conducted like special events--celebrative and seeker-oriented? These evangelistic days can be called Friends' Day, Family's Day and so on. The church should make much of every occasion to witness to the saving grace of Christ.

The lowest in the ranking involved witnessing in the streets and in homes. This could be considered particularly ungracious to those who believed that religion was personal and that one should not try to change another's religion. It could also be very intrusive to invade the privacy of one's home. Personal evangelism in the streets and in homes, if done, must be done by well-trained members who will have to be sensitive to the belief systems of the lost. Such evangelism may be best done together with kinship and friendship evangelism.

Important Contacts

Certain important helpful contacts were chosen so that further analysis could be made to observe any statistically significant data to help implement these helpful contacts. Bivariate and multivariate analysis were made and computer print-outs were studied. The print-outs were too much to be included, even in the appendix. Tables were given only if there were enough significant data. Otherwise, only the significant ones were presented. Specific ministries must be initiated to target certain sub-groups.

Social Services. The item "social services" were on the top of the list of non-Christians. Though it was not high in the ranking list of the Christians, the total score was high. Cross-tabulating the item with the demographic categories revealed no significant level in the chi-square analysis. Thus the null hypothesis could not be rejected in all cases.

The variables concerned were independent.

However, cross-tabulating it with the two main groups, Christians and non-Christians, revealed some statistical significance (p of .0011, V of .15065). The strength of association was not particularly large. An examination of the data showed that there were more non-Christians (82 percent of the total in its group) than Christians (69 percent of total in its group) that were in favor. More Christians were uncertain of the item's helpfulness. Both groups registered low percentages in the "unhelpfulness" column (2 percent for non-Christians and 6 percent for Christians). Therefore, both groups did indicate a strong preference toward the item, though some Christians were a bit uncertain about its helpfulness. This might be due to the uncertainty they faced concerning the extent they could be involved in society. Or it might be that they bifurcated God's work into spiritual and secular, and were more concerned about spiritual work than social work, leaving the social work to society at large.

Christians may have to rethink their involvement with social programs. Much can be done to meet social needs so as to meet spiritual ones. Since there is a good number of well-educated Christians, there should be enough man-power and finances to do medical and other social services.

Christian Friends. Caring and sharing friends were very influential in both the groups of non-Christians and Christians. The analysis of cross-tabulating the item with

the groups showed that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .00005, V of .28813). The strength of association was quite strong. Christians registered 98 percent of its group and non-Christians 82 percent of its group. The degree of uncertainty for non-Christians was 15 percent.

Table 5.1

Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Test Reporting			
IVC	Item on Friends cross-tabulated with:	p Level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.4319	.05290
IB	Marital Status	.6681	.04444
IC	Educational Level	.0358	.10606
ID	Religion	.0004	.15419
IE	Age-Group	.4213	.07081

The analysis of cross-tabulating with the categories sex, marital status, and age-group showed that the null hypothesis could not be rejected (see Table 5.1). The variables in them were independent. The analysis with the categories religion (p of .0004, V of .15419) and educational level (p of .0358, V of .10606) indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected. The strength of relationship, however, was not large. The favorable percentages were high, especially recorded by the free-thinkers (92 percent of its 260 people), the ancestor-worshippers (99 percent of its 65 people), and the graduates (93 percent of its 244 people). These sub-groups should be noted in planning friendship evangelism. Christians will have to be taught how to initiate and build relationships with non-Christians. Fellowship and support can

be done within the context of small groups. Further multivariate analysis showed no other significant results.

Home Support. Home groups for support and care were important for both groups, Christians and non-Christians. The chi-square analysis showed that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .0001, V of .17750). The strength of association was quite high. The percentages of helpfulness were a little higher for Christians (85 percent out of 300 people) than for the non-Christians (71 percent out of 300). Christians may form the base support of the home groups, from which they can invite non-Christians.

Cross-tabulating with the categories sex, marital status, religion, and age-group, the analysis yielded no significant results. The null hypothesis could not be rejected in these cases. The one with category educational level indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .0314, V of .10743), though the strength of relationship was not particularly large. People from the higher levels of education indicated a greater desire for the home support groups, the professional diploma holders (80 percent of its group of 98) and the graduates (82 percent of its group of 244).

Other multivariate analysis yielded no significant results, except for two. Cross-tabulating the item with the categories of sex and educational, controlling for the groups, Christians and non-Christians, the analysis showed that the

null hypothesis could be rejected for the item by category sex, controlling for non-Christians (p of .0302, V of .15274), and by category educational level, controlling for non-Christians (p of .0055, V of .17466). The strength of association was not large. Males (77 percent out of its group of 152) registered a little higher percentage than females (64 percent out of its group of 148). The non-Christians of higher educational levels recorded higher percentages, professional diploma holders (70 percent out of its group of 47) and graduates (76 percent out of its group of 112). Male non-Christians of higher education may need some extra support and help. Men's breakfast groups, games, fishing, and other outings and activities, especially for men where there is interaction, fellowship, and camaraderie, can provide the kind of care and support needed.

Felt Needs. The item on seminars and counselling on felt needs had similar high scores for both Christians and non-Christians. Bivariate analysis with categories sex, marital status, educational level, religion, and age-group indicated no significant result. The null hypothesis in each case could not be rejected. The variables in them were independent.

However, multivariate analysis yielded some results. Null hypothesis could be rejected in the cases of the item cross-tabulating with the category sex, controlling by Christians (p of .0063, V of .18377), and with the category religion, controlling by non-Christians (p of .0039, V of

.19421), with the strength of association a little high. Females Christians (79 percent out of its group of 156) considered help in felt needs higher than the male Christians (63 percent out of its group of 144). Non-Christian free-thinkers (74 percent out of its group of 139) saw greater need for such help than the Buddhists (58 percent out of its group of 102) and others. Interestingly enough, however, it was the male non-Christians (73 percent out of its group of 152) that had the higher percentage than the female non-Christians (62 percent out of its group of 148). It may seem that the male free-thinkers did consider such counselling services of the churches as important and helpful. Marriage counselling and seminars, for example, may target some of these free-thinker families.

Family. Christian family members and relatives, living good Christian testimonies, were considered very helpful by both Christians and non-Christians. The analysis indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .00005, V of .44949), with the strength of association between the variables quite large. Christians (96 percent out of its group of 300) showed a much higher percentage than non-Christians (59 percent out of its group of 300, with 35 percent uncertain). The reasons for the higher percentage for Christians had been noted earlier. The lower percentages for non-Christians could be for one reason or the other. Some might not have any Christian family member. Some might

consider that when a member turned to Christianity, it already meant a loss of face, notwithstanding the good testimony.

In the analysis of all the categories, only in two categories, religion and age-group, could the null hypothesis be rejected (see Table 5.2). In the one of category religion (p of .00005, V of .21559), the strength of relationship was quite large, whereas in that of category age-group (p of .0019, V of .13215), it was not particularly large.

Table 5.2

Graphic Technique for Chi-Square Test Reporting

IVD	Item of Family cross-tabulated with:	p level	V
IA	Sex: Male and Female	.3866	.05629
IB	Marital Status	.1156	.07860
IC	Educational level	.3610	.07407
ID	Religion	.00005	.21559
IE	Age-Group	.0019	.13215

The free-thinkers (82 percent out of its group of 260), the ancestor-worshippers (94 percent out of its group of 65), and the Taoists (79 percent out of its group of 72) were more positive than the Buddhists (58 percent out of its group of 150). The older age-groups, 36-45 (91 percent out of its group of 91), 46 and above (89 percent out of its group of 45), and 26-35 (80 percent out of its group of 213) were more positive than the age-group 18-25 (70 percent out of its group of 251).

Further multivariate analysis indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected when the item was cross-tabulated

with the category religion, controlling by non-Christians (p of .00005, V of .2559), with the strength of association quite large. Again, the free-thinkers (71 percent out of its group of 159) and the ancestor-worshippers (79 percent out of its group of 14) were more positive than the Buddhists (39 percent out of its group of 102) and the Taoists (46 percent out of its group of 24). Kinship evangelism, then, may be possible among the older age-groups of free-thinkers and ancestor-worshippers. Christians have to be taught how to relate to members of their family. Meetings and dinners for families, in which members of their families can be invited, should be conducted on a regular basis. Parents can be invited to Parents' dinner night conducted by a group of churches, in which there can be a program and a message suited to their needs.

Tuition. Education occupied a high place in the life of the Chinese. Thus, the church as an educational center for tuition and kindergarten was favored by Christians as well as non-Christians. A chi-square analysis of the item cross-tabulated with the two groups showed that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .0065, V of .12948), with the strength of association not particularly large. Christians (77 percent out of its group of 300, with 19 percent uncertain) were more in favor than non-Christians (67 percent out of its group of 300, with 26 percent uncertain).

Out of all the analysis with the categories, only that in

the one with the category of marital status, could the null hypothesis be rejected (p of .177, V of .09983), with the strength of association quite small. The married (79 percent out of its group of 225, with 16 percent uncertain) were more positive than the singles (67 percent out of its group of 362, with 27 percent uncertain). The married would be more interested in the item, especially if they had children.

Multivariate analysis discovered only one case in which the null hypothesis could be rejected. The item was cross-tabulated with the category religion, controlling for non-Christians (p of .0113, V of .18142). The strength of association was quite large. All the religious groups registered positive agreement. Free-thinkers (72 percent of its own sub-group) and ancestor-worshippers (64 percent of its own sub-group) were slightly more positive than the Buddhists (57 percent of its own sub-group) and the Taoists (54 percent of its own sub-group).

There are few churches that conduct tuition classes in Singapore. Churches may have to rethink the importance of this ministry to reach children and teens. Well-educated Christians can be mobilized to serve in the tuition ministry. There are good kindergartens in churches. Sometimes these are just money-making social efforts with a little religion thrown in. Few efforts are made to visit parents or follow up the children. Churches should fine-tune this ministry to reach families for Christ. New kindergartens are difficult to

establish because of government regulations. Nevertheless, united groups of churches may be able to meet these regulations and establish the kindergartens.

Special Events. Singapore, being a multi-racial and multi-religious society, strives for racial and religious tolerance. This can be reflected in the mutual invitation and attendance to one another's religious holidays. Thus about 61 percent of non-Christians surveyed felt that special events in churches were helpful, with 25 percent uncertain. Christians had about 89 percent positive, with 7 percent uncertain. The analysis of this item, cross-tabulated with both groups, indicated that the null hypothesis could be rejected (p of .00005, V of .32018), with the strength of association quite strong.

Analysis with all the categories showed only one case in which the null hypothesis could be rejected. The case of the item, cross-tabulated with the category of religion, had a p level of .0006 and V of .15084, with the strength of association not particularly large. On further analysis, controlling for both groups, Christians and non-Christians, the null hypothesis could be rejected only in the case of the item with category religion, controlling for non-Christians (p of .0039, V of .19407), with the strength of association quite large. From the total of each sub-group, the free-thinkers were 68 percent positive; Taoists, 66 percent; ancestor-worshippers 78 percent; and lastly Buddhists, 47 percent.

There were altogether 25 percent uncertain non-Christians. Moving the 61 percent of the total non-Christian positive response to a decision for Christ, and the 25 percent uncertain ones to positive response and so on, should provide be a great challenge to the churches.

Some of these events, for example, Good Friday and Easter, are too solemn and cater only to Christians. These special events--Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, and church anniversary--should be great opportunities, not only for the Christians to celebrate, but also for invitations to non-Christians to know why Christians are celebrating. The church has these events only once a year, and it must use them for the salvation of souls. The events must be celebrative and seeker-friendly. Special music, drama, and great burdened preaching by burdened, God-gifted evangelists should be directed to seekers. Coupled with kinship and friendship evangelism, these events can be greatly used of the Lord.

The writer had used such times with God's abundant blessings for the salvation of souls. Christians were prepared ahead of time by praying and inviting friends and loved ones. They were trained how to initiate and build relationship and how to interact with visitors. Usually during Christmas and Chinese New Year, there would be dinner involved, so that there could be fellowship and the getting-to-know one another. Special music, drama, and guest evangelists were all directed towards the seekers. Follow-up

was usually done primarily by members of small groups.

CHAPTER 9

Strategic Positioning

Missiology may be touted as a science of a selection of an eclectic body of knowledge from related disciplines (for example, research in social science and missionary experiences) for application in field situations.⁴¹⁸ However, the use of biblical controls in missiology is extremely important. There can be no substitution of the changing word and world of man for the eternal Word of God. The church is not expected to devise its own strategy and sets its own goals. It is a body, called into a special loving relationship to God; a body under control of its Head, the Lord Jesus Christ. What is then needed is to begin with the truths of the Holy Scriptures, and then, on the basis of the truths, to suggest certain practical applications.

It is as the church positions itself in loving and obedient relationship with the Lord God, then the Lord will reveal Himself to the world. Also the church can say with confidence of His blessings, as the servant of Abraham had confessed, "Blessed be the Lord God . . . I being in the way, the Lord led me" (Genesis 24:27). There will be a God-given vision, passion, and sacrifice in its members, as each will be enabled to yield as Queen Esther of old, ". . .if I perish, I perish" (Esther 4:16), for God has brought each to serve his own generation. God's work done in God's way and timing will

⁴¹⁸ Hesselgrave, Today's Choices, 144-45.

never lack God's supply and blessings!

This chapter begins with the seeking out of certain foundational principles in the Holy Bible. These principles are supracultural, and therefore are re-producible in any culture, at any period of time. They will be applied primarily to the strategic positioning of evangelism, although the over-all facets of the church ministry will be mentioned as they relate to the Christian witness. They will also be related to this writer's philosophy of ministry, his giftedness, and his calling. Thus his strategic positioning and practices may not be equally effective for others. The discussion will not be exhaustive because of the nature and size of this research. The historical background, size, and the type of church are also not discussed, though they must be taken into account, because these do affect the capacity and ability of the church to grow.⁴¹⁹ Resources will be introduced to help with the equipping process. Care must be taken in the use of some of the resources because of their American background. Wisdom and adjustments must be carefully sought from the Lord before the principles taught are to be applied. To that end, in-house training materials and manuals must be produced and used.

⁴¹⁹ Lyle E. Schaller is one of the experts in the study of the sizes and types of churches. Looking in the Mirror discusses the dynamics of sizes in member relationships and administration. Small, middle-sized, and large churches are discussed in The Small Church is Different, The Middle Sized Church, and The Multiple Staff and the Larger Church.

Foundational Principles

The four Gospels (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18; Luke 24:45-49; John 20:21-23) and Acts 1:8 record several dimensions of the Great Commission. The evangelistic message is one of repentance, faith, and discipleship through the suffering, resurrection, and Lordship of Jesus Christ, based upon the solid Word of God. The mandate is to share this Gospel to every creature of all nations. The human witnesses are both the medium and the message. They both proclaim and exemplify the Gospel. They are to proclaim the message with both biblical fidelity and audience sensitivity. The means is the supernatural and dynamic empowering of the witnesses by the Holy Spirit, to enable them to fulfill the God-given mission. The Holy Spirit is also solely responsible for both the qualitative as well as the quantitative growth.

Before the disciples were ready to carry out the Great Commission, they were to wait in unity and prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:1) for the coming of the Holy Spirit upon them with power (Acts 1:8). Thus, to position the church for God's blessing, Christians must begin at the place of prayer and fasting concerning their need for the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit in power, and at that place, they must maintain throughout their lives. God's people must come to the place of deep repentance because of their worldliness, apathy, and powerlessness, as the Apostle Peter attested, "For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God" (1 Peter

4:17). However, the call and promise of the Lord God to Solomon can be claimed: "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from Heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (2 Chron. 7:14).

As there is humility before the Lord, He will give grace and more grace (James 4:6), and as Paul testified, "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work" (2 Cor. 9:8). It is recorded that great grace was upon the first group of believers after Pentecost (Acts 4:33). As a result, there was perfect unity and concord in prayer (Acts 1:14; 2:1,42; 4:31), in purity of doctrine (Acts 2:41,42) and deportment (Acts 2:47; 5:13), and in purpose for worship (Acts 2:46) and witnessing (Acts 2:46,47; 5:42; 8:4).

The ministry of the Holy Spirit in great power was upon them (Acts 4:33). Prayer and the filling of the Holy Spirit were closely bound together. There was great power in prayer (Acts 4:31) and in witnessing of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:31,33), resulting in changed lives (Acts 2:44,45), and fear among the people, inside and outside the assembly of God's people (Acts 5:11,13). There was practical charity in contentment (Acts 2:46) and in communion with one another (Acts 2:44,45). Therefore, God's people must make much of prayer in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:26): more prayers,

much prayers and better prayers! With prayers, led by the Holy Spirit, in the pulpit and in the pews, there will be passion and power in witness and action in the hearts of unbelievers. God must often have wondered why there is no intercessor (Isa. 59:19), no one to take hold of Him (Isa. 64:7) for His blessings. May God's people come before Him with broken and contrite hearts (Ps. 51:17), with soul-travailing prayer (Isa. 53:11; Gal. 4:19), burdened and believing (Gen. 30:1; 1 Sam. 1:10-18; Mark 11:24), and with a conquering spirit (Joshua 14:12)!

The Apostles made much of preaching, teaching and witnessing of the whole counsel of God's Word, in the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). The various accounts in the Acts of the Apostles give the emphasis of communicating God's Word to the Jews and Gentiles alike, and several basic words are used to describe the process. The first century Christians spoke (4:1), evangelized (preached the Gospel, 5:42), taught (4:2), proclaimed or preached (8:5,6), announced publicly (13:5), solemnly testified (28:23), and reasoned (17:2,3). Different processes were used as they communicated to different types of people on the people's "mental and emotional wave lengths," as Getz pointed out.⁴²⁰

George Peters listed six patterns: (1) Person-to-person method (John 1:35-40; Acts 8:26-38), (2) Group method (Acts

⁴²⁰ Gene A. Getz, Sharpening the Focus of the Church (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1984), 63.

10:24-48), (3) Informal and public proclamation (Acts 2:1-40; 17:17-31), (4) Formal Bible readings, expositions, dialogues, disputations, reasoning, and persuading (Acts 9:22-29; 17:2-17; 18:4,5), (5) Rebuking and compelling historic and polemic messages (Acts chapters 3,4,6,7,13,22,23), and (6) Persuasive, factual and experiential apologetic presentation (Acts 26; Gal. 3:1).⁴²¹ God has promised that His Word will not return unto Him void, but it shall accomplish that which He pleases and it shall prosper in the thing whereto He sends it (Isa. 55:11). Sinners are born again, not only of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-8), but also of the incorruptible Word of God (1 Peter 1:23). Christians may plant and water, but God gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Salvation is of the Lord from the beginning to the end (Ps. 3:8), though He condescends to use His people.

The Divine Spirit

The importance of the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit must constantly be recognized, emphasized and reiterated. No matter what strategic positioning is put forth, if the Holy Spirit does not lead and bless, saints as well as sinners are doomed to fail. Christians must not resist, quench nor grieve the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51; 1 Thess. 5:19; Eph. 4:30). They need to die daily to self and sin, be continuously filled by the Holy Spirit, and walk in the Spirit

⁴²¹ George W. Peters, Saturation Evangelism (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), 18-19.

(1 Cor. 15:31; Eph. 5:18; Gal. 5:16,25). The Holy Spirit works in sanctification to conduct Christians to conform to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:26-29). Christians do not simply share the Gospel--they are the epistles, to be known and read of all (2 Cor. 3:2). They are "little Christs," going about doing good, as Jesus Christ went about doing good (Acts 10:38), so that men may glorify the Father in Heaven (Matt. 5:16). Christianity is not a religion; it is Christ in man, the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). It involves the right and growing relationship with God and with man. Evangelism thus is not a program; it is the showing and shining forth of Christ in and through the Christian, the graces and fruit of the Holy Spirit, so that others may be rightly related to God.

The Holy Spirit is the Lord of harvest and He must send forth laborers (Matt. 9:38; Acts 13:2), restraining or releasing them into a particular field of people (Acts 16:7-10). He is the anointing that teaches all truth (1 John 2:27), brings all things into remembrance (John 14:26), and enables Christians to speak the Word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31,33). Needed are top calibre laborers, well-trained in the Word, immersed in the culture of the Chinese and urban pluralism, creative, and yet full of the Holy Spirit and of wisdom to be ministering among a demanding, aggressive and achievement oriented people in a harsh urban situation. The old monk-beggar mentality of the Chinese Christians concerning pastors and full-time workers must go or else the most

talented Chinese would be reluctant to enter His service.

Holy Spirit's renewal and revival fire must fall among the Chinese Christians, for they would be the best instrument for reaching their own people for Christ, though others will be needed as well in the equipping process. People should not be treated as projects for evangelism but as souls for whom Jesus died. Oh, to be freed from sin, self and Satan's deception, and be fired with vision, passion and action, and be filled with the Holy Spirit to go into a world that needs Christ! Oh, for a total mobilization and empowerment for the work of the ministry of edification, community, and equipping!

As the Christian goes forth in obedience and under the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit precedes him and prepares the hearts of souls (Acts 16:14). He reveals and reproves the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:8-11). Sinners are drawn to the Savior through the blessed work of the Holy Spirit (John 6:44). They are born again by the Holy Spirit and are made new creatures in Christ, partakers of the divine nature (John 3:3,5; 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 3:9). The Holy Spirit dwells within (John 14:16,17; 1 Cor. 6:19), seals every believer, and gives assurance of salvation (Rom. 8:15,16). With the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in the Christian, going before and after him, the Christian can go forth by faith, weeping, and bearing the precious Word of God, knowing that he will doubtless return with rejoicing, bringing the souls for whom

Jesus died (Ps. 126:6). Surely, as the Holy Bible reminds us, Jesus "shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11). Come, from the four winds, O Breath of God, and breathe upon all Christians and the lost that they may all live! Amen!

The Mobilized Church

The church as an organized and mobilized body of believers is God's primary agent for world evangelization. James Engel asserted that "it alone has divine permanence and a never-ending mandate."⁴²² Jesus began His church when He declared, "... and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). He charged the church to be the final authority on earth in the discipline of believers (Matt. 18:15-20).

From the very beginning, a clear organizational structure emerged among the Jerusalem believers. New believers were baptized and incorporated into the church (Acts 2:41,47). They were taught the Word of God (Acts 2:42). There was social adaptation as they cared and shared their possessions (Acts 2:45). They were not isolationists, but were culturally identified with society as they gained the favor of those in their particular cultural sphere (Acts 2:47; 5:11,13). There was a continuous propagation of the Gospel as they taught and witnessed unceasingly and daily, both in the temple as well as

⁴²² James F. Engel, Contemporary Christian Communications (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979), 316.

from house to house (Acts 2:46,47). Peter Wagner commented that these Christians were growing up in their relationship with the Lord, growing together in fellowship and service to one another, growing out to reach unbelievers, and growing more as the Lord used them to bring others to Him (Acts 2:41-47).⁴²³ The right quality of believers will produce the quantity of growth. Wherever the Apostles went, they started churches, and it was through churches that the Holy Spirit accomplished His mission (Acts 13:1-4). Truly, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God was made known (Eph. 3:10).

Several images are given in the Holy Scriptures to assist in the understanding of the nature of the church. In its organizational identity, the church, as the "ekklesia," the assembly of Jesus Christ (Matt. 16:18), is an organized and autonomous band of believers under its Head, having New Testament officers, practicing New Testament ordinances, and actively engaged in the carrying out of the Great Commission. In its spiritual identity, the church is the temple of God (1 Cor. 3:16), the place where the true God reveals His presence and blessings, and where He is worshipped, praised and heard. The Church as the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:27) develops the idea of the body as the essential form and means of expression of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is an entity with a single will (Jesus Christ as the Head), with direct relationship with

⁴²³ Peter Wagner, Breaking the 100...200 Barrier (Pasadena, CA: Charles E, Fuller Institute, 1994), Seminar Notes, March, 1994, 5.

every part of the body. The functions of the parts are according to gifts, passion, and yieldedness.

The church as the household or family of God (1 Tim. 3:15) defines the church, as David Switzer commented, "our life together as the people of God."⁴²⁴ The primary purpose of the family is that of mutual need-fulfillment, and thus there are many commands of the necessity of the "one-anotherness" (Rom. 12:10,16; Gal. 5:13,15; Eph. 4:5). In the family, believers are provided with self-defining experiences which lead to effective and meaningful lifestyles, thereby maintaining the family as a unit and yet with a high degree of respect for the uniqueness of the individual. The church as the candlestick (Rev. 1:20) indicates its involvement as light in the dark world. It is supposed to bear fruits (John 15:1,16; Gal. 5:22,23) as seen from its image as God's husbandry (1 Cor. 3:9).

Philosophy of Ministry

Churches are different from one another and the Head of the churches makes them thus so that He can use them to reach all the different cultures and personalities of people. Each church should seek from the Head that which He desires to accomplish in and through it. A mission statement on the what, why and how of ministry, agreed upon by its members, can be important for setting direction and priorities for a

⁴²⁴ David H. Switzer, Pastor, Preacher, Person (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1979), 31.

church. Here is one example: "The mission of the church is to glorify God, by providing a biblically oriented fellowship of Spirit-filled believers, which will equip each believer to be ministering actively in worship, ministry and witness, leading to responsible, reproducing and Christ-like Christians and churches, here and to the regions beyond." Holy Spirit's wisdom, creative forms, and structures of worship, ministry and witness can then be developed to reach the goals set.

Vision

While the mission statement defines the key ministry objectives of the church which can be common to other churches, George Barna pointed out that the vision statement is "a clarification of the specific direction and activities the church will pursue toward making a true ministry impact."⁴²⁵ The pastor's vision will probably incorporate a core aspect of the church's vision and add in some areas that will be according to his giftedness and passion. Strategy is the means to apply the vision efficiently and effectively.

The Scripture proclaims, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18). Vision will give a unified sense of direction, an excited anticipation about the future, and an energizing distinctiveness to the church. Barna defined vision as "a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an

⁴²⁵ George Barna, The Power of Vision (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 38.

accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances."⁴²⁶ Dale Galloway paraphrased Hebrews 11:1 thus: "Faith is vision and vision is seeing it long before it is."⁴²⁷ In other words, vision is the God-given ability to see people and things the way God desires them to be and to know that God desires and will enable the church to fulfil His will.

Such a vision is not focused upon satisfying people's selfish desire, but upon a selfless mission to reconcile the sinners to Christ. The natural tendency for self-promotion will also be replaced by an urgent and unifying task to seek God's glory by doing His ministry, His way, and His timing, according to His vision. Gone will be the pressure of constantly searching for new gimmicks to motivate others, and the anxieties of pleasing men or traditions. This vision is not a series of programs or activities. It is to become the lifestyle of the members, at work, home or play.

One vision statement may be: "To equip, unto Christ-likeness and accordingly to giftedness, a growing community of English-speaking Chinese believers in Singapore, into a family of families, and release them for ministry in their web of networks of relationships, using primarily small groups to

⁴²⁶ Barna, The Power of Vision, 28. John C. Maxwell has a great series of tapes on "Vision--the Process of Passing it on," which can be purchased from INJOY, 1530, Jamacha Road, Suite D, El Cajon, CA 92019-9959. The emphasis is that great leaders realize their dreams by effectively casting the vision.

⁴²⁷ Dale E. Galloway, Small Group Seminar (Portland, OR: Foundation of Hope, 1994), 2.

meet the Chinese urban needs." In a shorter version, the vision may be: "Equip and Release," that is, "Equip unto Christ-likeness and according to spiritual gifts and then Release for ministry." The process involves the glorification of God in bringing sinners to Christ and Christ-likeness.

Thus elements of the vision may include:

1. To establish the church as a growing family of families that will care and share, be well-equipped and released for ministry.

2. To establish integrated and specialized ministries of outreach, discipleship, and support for children, youth, and adults.

3. To help train, equip, and send members of other churches and nationals of other countries to reach their own for Christ.

Vision is the heart of strategy; strategy is the practical implementation of vision. Joseph Aldrich believed that a strategy is simply the church's best effort at finding out how the giftedness and passion of the members mesh with God's redemptive purposes and how the members can become productive in God's ministry in a plan developed for His purpose.⁴²⁸ Some suggested strategies are as follows:

1. To develop a praying community, especially a pastor's prayer partners ministry. John C. Maxwell of INJOY (address:

⁴²⁸ Joseph C. Aldrich, Gentle Persuasion (Portland, OR: Multnomah Press, 1988), 239.

1530, Jamacha Road, Suite D, El Cajon, CA 92019-9959), has a package of video, cassettes tapes and outlines on how to begin and maintain a prayer support group for the pastor.

2. To help believers identify their spiritual gifts, train them accordingly, and mobilize them for service. Bruce Bugbee's "Network" training program helps believers to identify their unique passion, gifts, and personal style, and integrate them into a fulfilling ministry.⁴²⁹ John Maxwell's "Lay Ministry Training" videos, and "T.E.A.M. Manual" tapes from INJOY are a great help in motivating, recruiting, and involving members in God's plan for the whole church.

3. To identify, train, and place new leaders in the various ministries through mentoring and discipleship. Daniel Brown's "Leadership" Video Seminar is a great training tool to help leaders to plan for the development of new leaders, spiritual growth, and outreach growth, in line with the church's mission and vision.⁴³⁰ John Maxwell adds to this process in his video series called "Developing Leaders through Discipleship," in which he shows how to continue developing leaders through discipleship.

4. To develop an exciting and meaningful worship and

⁴²⁹ Network materials are available through Willow Creek Resources, 5300 Patterson Ave. S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49530.

⁴³⁰ Brown's teaching is refreshingly biblical, yet innovative and practical. He faces the modern issues of leadership squarely and gives challenge, new insights, and focus. This video series can be obtained from Fuller Institute, P.O. Box 91990, Pasadena, CA 91109-1990.

celebration every Sunday through prayer, music, and the pulpit ministry. Carl George of Fuller Institute excites churches with his audio cassettes on "Celebrative Worship: Making Celebration-Sized Events Come Alive." Worship and the rest of the church life can be meshed powerfully together. Pre-evangelism and seeker friendly services are integrated into the celebration times.

5. To establish a network of support, discipleship and service groups for prayer, outreach, care, and Bible study. There are excellent training videos and manuals on small groups from Fuller Institute, Serendipity, and Dale Galloway's Foundation of Hope (Address: 11731 S.E. Stevens, Portland, OR 97266). One does not need to attend any seminar because these training videos will enhance greatly the training of leaders and of strong small groups. Judy Hamlin's The Curriculum & Small Group Resource Guide is a rich comprehensive catalog with helpful comments of virtually every small groups curriculum resource published in America.⁴³¹ Each entry is indexed according to the target users or groups: the age, stage of life, stage of spiritual walk, time period of meetings, number of weeks, and felt needs.

Comprehensive records for operational information must be kept in computers and be easily generated when needed. These must be kept current, accurate, and structured to activate

⁴³¹ Judy Hamlin, The Curriculum & Small Group Resource Guide (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1991). A complete software version is also available from NavPress Software.

needed attention with full reporting. The church needs to know the relation precious people have to its life and witness. Concerning its members, it needs to know the general facts, the spiritual gifts, talents, passion, and the level of equipping, ministry, and participation. Concerning others, it needs to know who they are and to know some other information to reach them, the source of contact, and the type of witness already made on them. People are God's concern and so are the church's. The members and visitors are constantly monitored, helped, and supported in their spiritual journey.

A reliable software package is the "Church Information System--Touch" (price \$295, from SBC Sunday School Board, Nashville, TN) with the integrated "Touch Reaching" (price \$225) for visitation. It not only has most of the church's administrative features, but also keeps track of family units with the family leader. In addition, it has the ability to define and maintain special profile information on interests, talents, spiritual gifts, and blood types. Equipping, ministries, and witness can be set up with the knowledge of such data. It also handles a multi-level organization, with rooms for different types of small groups. Reports can be made of group rolls (with announcements inserted), attendance check lists, and enrollments. Absentees can be visited through the lists printed for absentees. Special groups can be selected based on a variety of criteria (for example, single adults who joined within the last month). Prospects

can thus be visited.

The "Touch Reaching" is an excellent tool for visitation, especially for those churches using the Evangelism Explosion program or the Continuing Witness Training program. With it, the church can reach out further to identify larger groups of prospects, even to those who are relationally distant (for example, through surveys, tele-marketing, and correspondence courses) and record them. Prospects can be assigned specific follow-up visits through the general church outreach or the small groups outreach. A record of all contacts can be printed out to allow for prayer and better follow-up. Accountability can be monitored and reports turned in for sharing praise and prayer items as well as for further follow-up. The report feature has the fields listed according to the EE and CWT programs, which facilitate better controlled reports.

Infrastructure

An infrastructure is needed to fulfil the vision of the church. According to Bob Gilliam, such an infrastructure is "the organization of the church to develop healthy relationships and effective numerical and spiritual growth so that healthy disciples are continuously produced."⁴³² The Meta-

⁴³² Bob Gilliam, How to develop a Disciplemaking Church, Lecture Notes (Chattanooga, TN: Temple Baptist Seminary, Jan. 1994), 22.

church model by Carl George is a good concept to follow.⁴³³ The model is for any size church; a church can be large enough for celebration and yet small enough to care. The emphasis is not on staff members, but on lay leadership and ministry. The pastor and the staff serve primarily as equippers and facilitators, thereby fulfilling their calling as given by God's Word in Ephesians 4:11-14. Staff members can be identified, trained, and selected from the lay leaders with excellent track records and similar vision. Ownership of the vision by members and full participation of members will bring God's blessings in quality and quantity. The model will be especially effective among the Chinese, as they are interested in full participation. Also, as there is the problem of the lack of building facilities for worship and meetings in Singapore, small groups can meet and grow in homes, while celebration can take place in multiple services, and if necessary, in rented facilities. Meta-church model has the Cs--celebration, congregation, and cell. Peter Wagner proclaimed these as "the internal organs of the body of Christ."⁴³⁴ This writer suggests a modified model and adds an additional C--core--the family, which is not emphasized in

⁴³³ Carl F. George, Prepare your Church for the Future (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell, 1992), 70-81. "Meta," taken from the Greek language, signifies change. Thus the emphasis is on changed lives in a changing society.

⁴³⁴ Peter Wagner, Breaking the 100...200 Barrier, 19,

the meta-church model but must be integrated into the church life.

Celebration. People gather side-by-side in corporate praise celebration of worship, usually on Sundays. The worship, music, and preaching should be inviting, celebrative, reflective, and challenging. Though most of the Sundays are primarily for Christians, yet both Christians as well as non-Christians should feel an apprehension that God is in their midst, accomplishing something great enough to be worthy of their investment. Celebrative events may provide a non-threatening "soft landing" for non-Christians. When they are brought by loved ones or friends, they can remain anonymous, yet known and loved by those closest to them. A sense of identity and significance can emerge in celebration as one apprehends the great works of God and thus invests in eternal values. Sermons should be expository, and yet practical, positive, and personal. They should be up-lifting and life-changing. Christians should be healed up, charged up, and filled up, ready to live and be a witness of God's Gospel. Non-Christians should feel the awe and joy of the great God.

High visibility special events (with drama, special music, and special speakers) on special days, like Christmas (December), Chinese New Year (February), Good Friday, Easter Sunday (April), Church Anniversary (mid-year), and Friends' Day (October), target non-Christians. Not only are loved ones and friends invited, but the surrounding neighborhood and the

public are also invited through visits and literature. Members prepare themselves by prayer, by setting goals, and by being visitor-sensitive. Car park attendants, ushers, members in the pews, counsellors, and follow-up members are taught exactly what to do. Sermons should have the Chinese culture, beliefs, and felt needs as the springboards. Chinese New Year sermons can concentrate on the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac. The year 1994, for example, is the year of the dog. Therefore, a sermon on the biblical teaching of dogs will attract non-Christians to hear what God has to say about dogs. Sermons on sufferings (Job 1,2), Heaven and Hell (Luke 16:19-31), and life (Luke 12:13-31) will strike a chord in the heart of a Chinese.

Public invitations to Christ should not offend the worldview, integrity, and sensitiveness of the Chinese. The preacher is to present the Gospel faithfully and extend the call, trusting God with the response and giving Him the Glory. An invitation is a symbolic expression of the spiritual reality of repentance and faith. Specific believing prayer should permeate the meeting so that the Spirit can do His work. An honest invitation should begin with the messages of the songs and music used and with the opening prayer of the preacher. Then it is repeated throughout the message as the truth is applied.

The final invitation is to be given with conviction, courage, urgency, and expectancy. Interested persons are

requested to raise their hands for prayer and help, as everyone bows in prayer. The preacher prays for them and then helps them by leading them to pray the sinner's prayer. He next indicates to them that he desires to help them further and requests that they step forward. Trained counselors are instructed to come forward at the beginning of the invitation to assist people, for it can be frightening to come forward publicly and stand alone in front of the church. Personal counseling takes place in the front or in a quiet nearby room. Quick and dependable follow-up in the next forty-eight hours both by phone and a personal visit must also take place. All visitors will be contacted through a welcome letter, by phone, and through a visit by trained members during the following week. The emphasis is to turn a first-time visitor into a second-time visitor; then into a believer and a member; and finally into a minister and a leader. Encouragement should be given to join the congregation and the cell structures so that assimilation, fellowship, and support can take place.

Congregation. A congregation is a homogeneous group of people, gathering face-to-face, for a relational function of fellowship and an equipping function of life-related needs. Specific targeted groups are the children's fellowship, youth fellowship, singles fellowship, and adult fellowship. Camps, picnics, outings, games, and seminars are usually conducted. Family clusters and inter-generational activities can be held in camps, fellowship dinners, and outings. All these should

be "fishing pool" events or multiple points of entry, meeting people at their points of needs. These are bridging multiple-option events that will attract visitors and create a people flow toward the church. Targeted newcomers are witnessed to, invited further to join small groups for relationships, and assimilated. Goals then must be set to facilitate attendance and growth. Members should be sensitive to the needs of others so as to develop new congregation structures to meet new needs. One of the ways to know needs is to conduct surveys among church members and the members of the community.

Joseph Aldrich termed some of these activities as "harvest vehicles."⁴³⁵ He included Evangelistic Dinners, Businessmen's Breakfasts, Christian Movies, Conferences or Retreats, Seminars, Fishing\hunting Trips, Church Sports Program, Special Musical Concerts, and Boys' Brigade. These can provide a "soft landing" in which a new comer may feel at ease. They are not too big so that he may feel isolated and left out, nor are they too small so that he may feel too conspicuous. Aldrich felt that to bring someone to a point of decision may involve inviting him to participate in three or four "harvest vehicles."⁴³⁶

⁴³⁵ Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism, 211-14.

⁴³⁶ Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism 214. His other book Gentle Persuasion gives the practice in everyday life of his philosophy of "Love-people-till-they ask-why." Rebecca Pippert's Out of the Salt Shaker is another excellent resource book on making evangelism a way of life. The do's and don'ts are shared through stories, biblical insight, and plain common sense.

Cell. Lyman Coleman, a leading small group proponent and founder of "Serendipity," defined cell or small group as "an intentional face-to-face gathering of 3 to 12 people in a regular time schedule with the common purpose of discovering and growing in the possibilities of the abundant life in Christ."⁴³⁷ Some biblical bases are Genesis 17:1-7 (basis for a covenant in the group to gather for long-time relationship); Acts 2:42-47; 20:20 (gathering in homes); Exodus 18 (Jethro's advice of manageable units); and John 20:1,20, 24-30; Acts 1:12-14 (experience of the disciples in healing and unity). It is also noted that Jesus used the model of small groups as he recruited the twelve and taught them by teaching, modeling, and sending them out with a strategy. The disciples became a support group for one another for prayer, healing, and sharing of the Gospel (Acts 1:12-14; 2:1-4). People responded and were taken into the fellowship (Acts 2:42-47).

Carl George believes that by organizing the caring and the leadership formation around the building block of a ten-person cell, a church of any size can insure quality or care at very intense levels.⁴³⁸ George's cells are usually open groups, primarily structured for evangelism and outreach. Neighbour's Shepherd groups are also open groups, and he

⁴³⁷ Lyman Coleman, Small Group Training Manual (Littleton, CO: Serendipity, 1991), 7.

⁴³⁸ George, Prepare your Church, 59-60.

advocates the necessity of building up of a group to fifteen members in six months, and then of multiplying it into two cells.⁴³⁹ However, because of the short period of six months of involvement in one group, intimacy development among the members can be a problem. Also a high level of competence that exceeds most leaders will be needed to lead members at different levels of maturity and experience, as well as to lead them in outreach. Moreover, because of the different levels of commitment and growth and of the necessity for discipleship training and ministry, there should be open as well as closed groups.

Some of the groups can be Bible study groups, Evangelistic Bible study groups, Discovery groups, Prayer groups, Fellowship groups, Nurture groups, Social groups, Support groups, and Task groups. Each will have its own focus and style, but will include the same basic elements of prayer, outreach, sharing, and Bible study. These must be integrated carefully and managed faithfully so that they can fulfil the vision of the church. The ministry of the church is thus decentralized to where the people are located--at work, play and home--with the emphasis on lay leaders rather than of the staff. These leaders must be identified, well trained and held accountable. Each group will have an apprentice leader, who will undergo an on-the-job training. People can move from one group to the another periodically as they progress.

⁴³⁹ Neighbour, Where Do We Go from Here? 217.

Newcomers are prayed for, sought out, welcomed, and assimilated into the body life of the community. For groups that meet from one to two years, there must be strategic plans for the birthing of new groups.

The groups exist then for edification, effective ministry, evangelism, and expansion of leadership base. These people meet heart-to-heart for kinship and intimacy in homes during week-nights. The group provides the primary care in the church. There will be growth in transparency, mutual acceptance and care, and accountability. There will be instruction, demonstration, and experience in a life-related context. Christian habits, spiritual growth, and leadership skills are modeled and developed. Spiritual gifts are encouraged, used, and affirmed. Instructions and modeling of a life-style of Christian witness can be shared. Thus empowering takes place best in small groups. It is the process of helping another recognize and affirm strengths and potential, as well as of guiding and facilitating the development of these qualities so that one can be the best that the Lord desires him to be.

Every group should be involved in evangelism, though some are purposefully geared for it. Even task groups, using gifts and talents, with tasks like social concern, building maintenance or others, can invite newcomers into their activities. Small group gatherings are common, familiar, and effective face-to-face interactive channels of influence in

society. Thus they are a natural and continuing experiential way of exposing people to the Gospel and to the love, acceptance, and fellowship of the messengers of the Gospel, because people need a period of such exposure. A small group also provides a fluid situation in which a person can move in and out of it without destroying either the group or his relationship with its members. Moreover, people can participate without feeling put on the spot as in a one-to-one setting.

The Holy Spirit can use the backgrounds, experiences, giftedness, and maturity of the members to minister to one another in the group and to others outside. A group of Christians will have more wisdom, insight, and sensitivity than a lone Christian. The effect of the members' correction, guidance, and exhortation is usually more suitable and subtle than direct confrontation. A more intensive one-to-one relationship building and witness can then take place as the Holy Spirit helps to identify and discern the necessary follow-up on individuals.

For the witnessing Christian, the small group is a safe place to learn how to talk easily and comfortably about his faith. He can easily add something in a small group discussion in the presence of other Christians. Also he benefits by watching more experienced Christians share Christ in a variety of ways and methods. His fellow-members will also be praying, supporting, and helping as he launches out to

others outside the group.

Evangelistic Bible study groups, Seekers groups, and Discovery groups are some special groups geared for unbelievers. Christians are encouraged to pray for their loved ones and friends, build relationships, and bring them to these special groups. "Your Home, a Lighthouse" by Bob and Betty Jacks is a practical book to use to learn how to lead or host Evangelistic Bible studies in homes.⁴⁴⁰ One can gain the vision of reaching the community in a relaxed relational way.

Seekers groups can be started by leaders who are gifted and well trained in Christian evidences and apologetics to reach out to the highly educated. The starting point may be to ask a question, "If Jesus were here, what questions would you ask Him, concerning your life and the world?" Then the suggestion is made to gather a group to spend some nights discussing the answers. The objective is to begin where the seekers are and then to guide them in their journey with much prayer, care, and trust relationship. At some point, a one-to-one presentation of the Gospel should be provided.

Groups can be formed on the study of life issues and special needs, without compromising the Gospel. Attention is

⁴⁴⁰ Bob and Betty Jacks, Your Home, a Lighthouse. (San Bernardino, CA: Churches Alive International, 1980). "Churches Alive," an organization primarily dealing with discipleship through Discovery groups and Growth Groups, has excellent resource materials as well as series of Bible study helps. Judy Hamlin's "The Curriculum and Small Group Resource Guide" is an additional source manual for assorted subject matter.

attracted and motivation is maintained, when content is seen to be relevant. The goal is not to make the Gospel relevant, but rather to witness of the relevance of the Gospel. Addressing felt-needs, according to Craig Ellison, (1) provides a point of redemptive connection with those to be reached; (2) adds credibility to the witness of the Gospel; and (3) is commanded by God and demonstrated by Christ.⁴⁴¹ Meeting the needs of people's life situation is then one of the best ways to help people cross the church barrier. Needs assessments can be obtained by using surveys from members, census data, community agencies, and educational centers. By matching these needs with the giftedness, passion, and maturity of trained leaders, a variety of small groups can be started, and thus these provide multiple entry points into the church life. New leaders for the groups and for other new groups with new needs must be continually trained.

Lifestyles series, recovery courses, and special needs courses by "Serendipity" (address: P.O. Box 1012, Littleton, CO 80160) are excellent resources to help build groups around common everyday felt needs. The Lifestyle series includes career, money, success, transitions, stressed-out and wholeness. Recovery courses include addiction, co-dependency, fatigue, stress management, and unemployed. "Serendipity" has

⁴⁴¹ Craig W. Ellison, "Addressing Felt Needs of Urban Dwellers," Urban Mission, March 1987, 26. Pat Hile wrote in similar tone in "Communicating the Gospel in Terms of Felt Need," Missiology, vol. 5 (October, 1977), 499-506.

also started publishing Youth series on friendship, morality, identity, relationships, lifestyles, and modern issues of drugs, divorce, occult, etc.. These are life challenging and life changing helps for the growth and outreach of youth. The key is to show the practical relevance of the life-relating truths of the Scripture.

Core. The core is the family, especially the husband and the wife, providing soul-to-soul care for oneness and intimacy. The family is God-established and ordained, and its primacy is over the institutions of government and church. It is the unitary structural building-block of society and church. The family, as the primary and intimate group, is the first laboratory in which a child learns and practices his skills of relationships as well as his sense of worth in God and his self-identity. Psychologists have discovered a relationship between weakened family ties and physical illness.⁴⁴² The family actually provides the longest and most significant relationships in life. Thus the family is not tangential, supplemental to the growth of the church. In fact, commitment to the church is a commitment to the families of that church. The church, as a family of families, must structure its ministry to involve the whole family and support the family in the task of discipling and equipping its own members.

The church must not become too task-centered with a

⁴⁴² Sell, Family Ministry. 70.

superficial inter-relationships, else the members are not trained for family life. The age-group structures should not compete with the family, with a proliferation of programs, which rarely involve the whole family. Too much demand of time on parents in so many programs can lead to fragmented homes and lonely children. Church education should be in formal and structured methods as well as in non-formal and intimate exchange in classes and out of classes.

The church life and program should be built on the principle that the parents are responsible for the child's nurture (Deut. 6; Eph. 6:4), and thus training must be provided for the training of parents (especially the fathers) for their role. The church can move in three program directions: (1) Family-life education--the training of husbands, wives, youth and children for family life; (2) Family nurture--the teaching of family as the primary agency of Christian nurturing; and (3) Family-unit ministries--inter-family as well as intra-family for togetherness in meaningful and inter-generational worship, recreation and learning.

The church must strategically position itself as a vibrant and vital witness to the world as the champion of the family. The church should dedicate a month as Family month and celebrate it together with Fathers' Day, Mothers' Day, and Children's Day. The key is to make much of the families in the church and to emphasize that the church is a family of families. Its families must live the Christian precepts of

covenant (to love and be loved), grace (to forgive and be forgiven), empowering (to serve and be serve), and intimacy (to know and be known).⁴⁴³ The homes should be Christian homes of great, blessed, and planned memories, spiritual and otherwise, to provide unity, purpose, and understanding of life and to preserve roots and traditions to the next generations.

As members of the families grow, they can invite non-Christians to grow with them. The family should be one of great hospitality. These qualities are not only easily taught by example, but also caught as each member learns and actually practices in an environment of loving support of the family. The use of homes for guests (out-of-town visitors or the needy) and for informal meetings (support groups, children's vacation story times, share-a-meal, etc.) is to be encouraged. A ministry of care and share among the neighbors and the unfortunate should involve the whole family. Evangelistic efforts should be to reach whole families, with the whole family, using its giftedness and maturity. It is important not split up the members of both the Christian family as well as the lost family.

Non-Christians are invited to small groups for premarital guidance and marriage enrichment. In this involvement, premarital counseling meets, not only its fullest ministry, but also its choicest opportunity. Such counseling provides

⁴⁴³ Balswicks, The Family, 21-33.

opportunity for the building of good marriages as well as of good relationship building for witness. As a resource, the marriage starter packages by "Marriage Partnership" (address: P.O. Box 550-A, Church Hill, MD 21690) are an excellent tool. They combine key books ("So You're Getting Married," "The First Years of Forever," and "Before You say, 'I do'"), diagnostic tools, and audio cassettes into a comprehensive marriage preparation strategy. Couples are also introduced to support groups for further witness, ministry, and accountability.

Marriage enrichment is an on-going process. Periodic check-ups can be in the form of marriage enrichment seminars, interviews with counselors or pastors, reading good marriage books, listening to tapes, and evaluation sessions. Men especially need help in planning budgets and handling finances, in leading the family when their roles have been questioned and reversed by a changing society, and in making and relating well to friends. Working women as well as homemakers will need guidance in their respective roles. A week-end retreat once a year is also feasible and advisable. Support groups should be formed for those who are engaged, single, newly married, single parents, infertile, divorced, blended families, parents with pre-schoolers, parents with teens, mid-lifers, senior citizens, and those dealing with grief and loss. "Serendipity" has seven-week and fourteen-week courses for such support groups.

Singles--the fastest-growing segment--will need special treatment and outreach. The church must have warmth and concern for their needs. Specific strategies must be planned to reach out, minister, and involve singles to their full potential in the life of the church.⁴⁴⁴

Strategy Orientation

The church continues to position itself specifically for witness as it helps to identify, equip, affirm, and support its members in their giftedness, talents, and passion in sharing the Gospel. As its members are already immersed in the culture everyday, the pastor and leaders must instill in them a strategy orientation of the church's vision, equip them accordingly, and release them for ministry. Members must learn to discern opportunities for reaching and ministering to people in the context of where they live, play, and work, rather than bringing them into a church setting.

The ministries can be done individually or corporately by small groups or as the whole church's project. However, no matter who is doing the ministry or what harvest vehicle is being used, there must be co-ordination and integration of team collective effort to fulfill the whole mission of the vision, especially so, since the Christian witness is not a one time or one approach effort. It is often a process of

⁴⁴⁴ "Church Growth Institute" of Lynchburg, VA has two great resource tools: "The Complete Guide to Starting or Evaluating a Singles Ministry," and "Empowering Single Adults for Effective Leadership."

understanding the culture and the spiritual journey of the unbelievers and then positioning the church and each

Figure 1

The Spiritual Decision Process

FIGURE 1

The Complete Spiritual Decision Process Model Showing the Stages of Spiritual Growth

GOD'S ROLE		COMMUNICATOR'S ROLE	MAN'S RESPONSE
General Revelation			-8 Awareness of Supreme Being
Conviction	Proclamation	Call for Decision	-7 Some Knowledge of Gospel
			-6 Knowledge of Fundamentals of Gospel
			-5 Grasp of Personal Implications of Gospel
			-4 Positive Attitude Toward Act of Becoming a Christian
			-3 Problem Recognition and Intention to Act
			-2 Decision to Act
			-1 Repentance and Faith in Christ
REGENERATION			NEW CREATURE
Sanctification	Follow Up	Cultivation	+1 Post Decision Evaluation
			+2 Incorporation Into Church
			+3 Conceptual and Behavioral Growth
			• Communion With God
• Stewardship			
• Internal Reproduction			
• External Reproduction			
			Eternity

(From James Engel's "Contemporary Christian Communications", p. 83)

individual Christian with prayer and a variety of approaches to help these unbelievers on their journey to a salvation decision.

Process of Journey

In this spiritual journey, there are primarily two elements for discernment as the Christian watches and prays in his witnessing: the stages of the growth and the seasons of the soul. These elements will be briefly discussed as the resources quoted can be looked up and used for equipping.

Stages of growth. James Engel revised Viggo Sogaard's two-dimensional model into eight steps toward and three steps after the point of decision. This is known as the "Engel model" in the evangelistic process.⁴⁴⁵ The principle is that as knowledge and understanding of Christian faith increase, a person is moved closer to a decision for Christ. Engel's model has not only man's response and growth, but also God's role and the witness' role as indicated in Figure 1, which is self-explanatory.

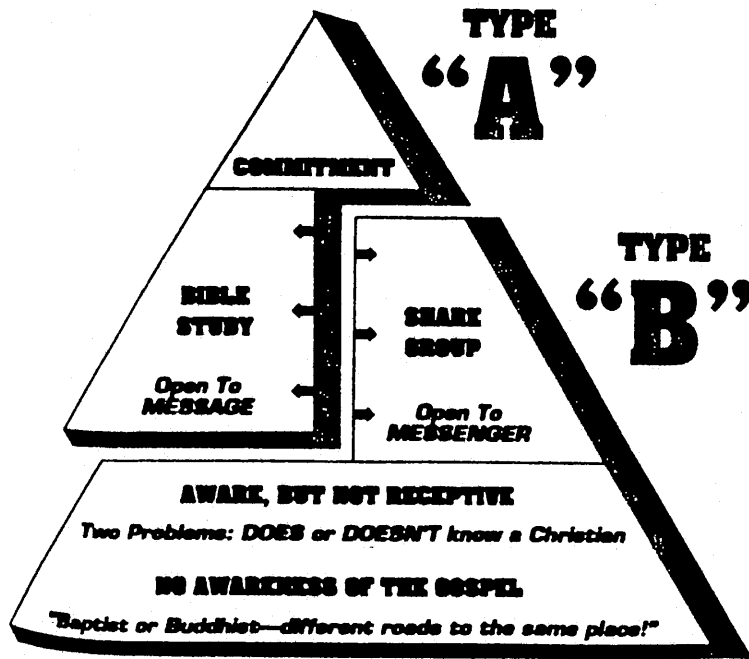
Ralph Neighbour improvised a graphic representation of the basic ingredients of Engel model. There are five levels of unbelief, and thus there are different suggested approaches of witness (Figure 2).⁴⁴⁶ A pyramid is used to point out

⁴⁴⁵ Engel, Contemporary Christian Communications, 83.

⁴⁴⁶ Neighbour, The Shepherd's Guidebook, 63-64. This is expanded in his newest book Where Do We Go from Here?, with a great discussion of using share groups in home settings (pp. 239-261). The share groups are the evangelistic arms of the Shepherd groups.

Figure 2

Neighbour's Pyramid



R. Neighbour's "Where do We go from Here?"
pp. 244-45.

Type "A" Unbelievers: The "Like Us" People, Easily Reached

1. They have attended a Celebration or Congregation meeting, and have been referred to you because they signed a visitor's card.
2. They already believe in God, accept the Bible, understand that Jesus is the Son of God, and have some awareness of scripture facts (like Christ's death on the cross).
3. They may already have a church membership somewhere, but are inactive—perhaps have been so for years.
4. They are searching for something, and have come to our congregation in their search.
5. They may not have all the "pieces of the puzzle" in place as far as Christian knowledge is concerned.
6. Bible Study, and explaining the plan of Salvation, are appropriate activities to share with them.

...these people are reached through visitation!

Type "B" Unbelievers: "Hidden" People, Needing Cultivation

1. They seldom attend church; have no desire to do so.
2. They may not believe in God, do not accept the Bible, do not understand Jesus is the Son of God, and have very little awareness of scripture truths.
3. They have no active church membership.
4. They are not searching for the Lord's purpose for their lives, and have no intention of visiting church activities.
5. They have very few of the "pieces of the puzzle" in place as far as Christian knowledge is concerned.
6. Bible Study or discussing the plan of Salvation aren't appropriate activities to do with them at the start. There must first be a time of developing relationships—exposing them to the reality of the living Christ in our own lives.

...these people are reached through Share groups!

there are always more people at the lower levels than the upper ones. The people at the lowest level have no knowledge of the Gospel. Sharing of a godly life and testimonies (especially of salvation) will be a good step. The people in the next level can be reached by initiating and continuing good personal relationships of caring and sharing. The unbeliever is then brought at level three into the Share group (a special group within the Shepherd group) where he will be ministered to by the body-life of the group and impacted by their lifestyle. A one-to-one study of the scriptures can then take place, with invitations to Celebrations and appropriate Congregation meetings. At the fourth level, they are exposed to an appropriate small group in which their felt needs will be met. Basic truths concerning the biblical teachings of God, sin, Calvary, and resurrection, that lead to a personal commitment, are also presented. The commitment level is the time of desire leading to a conversion experience. At this stage, missing pieces of biblical truths are added to help decision making. An invitation to decide is given and the decision is made--one way or the other. Those that do not believe will still continue to be ministered to by members of the Shepherd group.

Dayton and Fraser revised it further to apply to people groups, in which they felt that people are also profoundly affected by their culture.⁴⁴⁷ Needs are often defined by

⁴⁴⁷ Dayton and Fraser, Planning Strategies, 105-30.

groups. The model involves the understanding of (1) the "nonverbal" communication of body language, spatial relationships, temporal relationships, body contacts and aesthetics, (2) the social and economic structures, and (3) institutions, such as schools, festivals, marriages and funerals. An estimate of the overall responsiveness and resistance will help determine methods and approaches. For example, the young nucleus families, forced to live far away from their extended families because of the housing situation in Singapore, will be responsive to churches that are geared to family ministries and are like extended families.

Seasons of the soul. While supernatural influences do make hearts responsive, positive events as well as tragedies also help to make people more open at these periods than they are at others. Christians need to watch out for the signs of openness. The most widely quoted source concerning the stages through the life cycle is Gail Sheehy's book Passage (New York: Bantam Books, 1977). She has six stages: (1) Pulling up Roots, (2) Building the Dream, (3) Living out the Dream, (4) Mid-life Transition, (5) Middle Adulthood, and (6) Late Adult Transition.

Daniel Levinson addressed the stages of a man's journey in Seasons of a Man's Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1978). Charles Sell used the recent social science researches, articulated the Christian's worldview, and suggested how the church needs to respond to the potential and challenges at

each stage. The book Transitions through Adult Life (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991) deals with the major events and challenges in the stages of young adulthood, middle adulthood, and older adulthood. Some of the specific topics include courtship, singleness, faith development, career, child-rearing, loss of loved ones, divorce and physical decline. This book is a comprehensive resource tool which can be used in ministering to adults.

Some type of tragedy can result in the crumbling of beliefs and values and lead to a desire for change. Every person lives with cumulative stresses which affect the totality of his being. The Holmes-Rahe Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Figure 3) assesses the influence of stress. Each stress level is added to others, causing a total stress count that can be traumatic. Levels of around one hundred are frequent, but when the stress factors climb higher, the person will function in an entirely different plane than when he is normal. These who are intimately affected can be receptive to the gospel witness, if it is presented lovingly. The writer's mother was an example of a person that was disoriented as the result of death of her spouse, her death-threatening cancer, her stay in and out of hospitals, her children leaving home one by one as a result of marriage, etc.. God used these incidents to make the seventy year old ancestor-worshipper receptive and responsive to the call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Christians should watch and pray, and pray

Figure 3
Rating Scale

FIGURE 3

The Effects of Change on Social Readjustment

LIFE EVENT	MEAN VALUE
1. Death of a spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (e.g., through birth, adoption, oldster moving in, marriage, etc.)	39
15. Major business readjustment (e.g., merger, reorganization, bankruptcy, etc.)	39
16. Major change in financial state (e.g., a lot worse off or a lot better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments with spouse (e.g., either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage greater than \$10,000 (e.g. purchasing a home, business, etc.)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (e.g. promotion, demotion, lateral transfer)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (e.g. marriage, college)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Wife beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living conditions (e.g. building new home, remodeling, deterioration of home or neighborhood)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress, manners, etc.)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major change in working hours or conditions	20
32. Change in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activities (e.g. lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (e.g. clubs, movies, dances)	18
37. Taking on a mortgage or loan less than \$10,000 (car, TV)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (e.g. a lot more or less than usual, or change in part of day when sleep)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers (more or less)	15
40. Major change in eating habits (more or less, or different)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Christmas	12
43. Minor violations of the law (e.g. traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc.)	11

Reproduced by special permission from T.H. Holmes and R.H. Rahe, "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, vol. 11 (New York: Pergamon Press; Ltd., 1967), pp. 213-218. Engel "Communications" pp. 121-22.

and watch, as their loved ones and friends go through the various seasons of life. They should dedicate themselves to be used of the Lord to their potential as they are challenged in the different stages of life.

Process of Witness

The Holy Scripture abounds with examples of the various approaches of witness, besides those blessed approaches of the Lord Jesus Christ. The approach used in a particular situation seems to be tailored to the personality, talents, gifts, and passion of the individual witness. The approaches need to be taught; members need to be equipped, supported, and prayed for as they witness.

Relationships. The first illustration of Jesus' influence of a disciple's life has to do with witness among loved ones and friends. After Andrew was convinced of Christ, he first found and brought his brother Peter to Jesus (John 1:41). Philip witnessed to his friend Nathanael (John 1:45). Matthew, after his call from the Lord, opened his home to his friends, other publicans and sinners (Matt. 9:9-13), and invited Jesus to preach. Jesus' command to the healed demoniac was to go home to his loved ones and friends and share his life-changing testimony (Mark 5:19,20). Cornelius gathered his kinsmen and friends to hear Peter's message (Acts 10:24). This can be termed the process of relational networking through the building of friendships and relationships. This involves existing relationships, the

digging up of old relationships, as well as the building of new ones as channels through which to reach people.

New relationships can be built as members purposefully involve themselves in community events, such as neighborhood projects, school functions, and sports and country clubs. New contacts can be made through strategic patronizing in stores, gas stations, and public transport. Others can be made through the sharing of contacts of other members, especially of the new believers who will have their fresh networks of potential relationship building.

Members must be taught how to pray specifically, identify, and build good relationships, by observing and helping people and by initiating certain activities to develop and continue relationships (see Appendix K). Each contact should move them closer to the reality of Jesus Christ. The list of loved ones, friends, and the types of relationship initiated can be shared with others, especially in small group setting, so that other Christians can be involved in prayer, praise, support, encouragement, help in ministry, and accountability. A collection of the practical approaches in relationship building can be compiled and shared with the whole church as resource material. Loved ones and friends can be invited to join the small groups. One-to-one witnessing can take place as the Lord leads, or a group from the church or small groups can visit the lost.

Loved ones and friends can be invited to the special

celebrative events targeted for unbelievers. Some Sundays can be earmarked for Friend Days. "Church Growth Institute" (address: P.O. Box 4404, Lynchburg, VA 24502) produces three excellent resource materials: "Friend Day," "Second Friend Day," and "FRANatastic Days"--to help reach friends, relatives, associates and neighbors. Members are trained on how to relate to newcomers during these events. An individual member can invite loved ones and friends to his home for birthdays of family members, job promotions, and any other happy occasion. Evangelists and other members of the church and of the small groups can be invited to mingle with the friends to relate to them, discern opportunities, and give a verbal witness. There can be food, fellowship, testimonies of blessings, short appropriate message for that occasion, and a prayer of blessing for all.

Service. Witnessing usually takes place in the context of human needs. Jesus was in touch with the hurts and hopes of people and responded accordingly at their point of need. The disciple Dorcas was known for her good works, and she served primarily by using her hands to make coats and garments for the needy (Acts 9:36-42). Walls of resistance to the Gospel can be broken down when the church shows its love by caring, sharing, and providing for those within and without the assembly. This is in obedience to Christ's command (Matt. 5:16) and in response to Christ's example, who went about doing good (Acts 10:38). Thus the church needs to be involved

in community and social services and activities as the light and the salt of the world (Mt. 5:13,14).

People are loved in totality as persons and not as evangelistic projects. They have not only spiritual, but also intellectual, emotional, psychological, and physical needs. Homes for senior citizens, orphans, drug addicts, and other needy people can be provided. Medicine, food, clothing, and other items can be made available. Schools, tuition centers, kindergartens, day care centers, craft classes, and seminars for family needs can be conducted by churches.

Another suggestion is that the church can identify the talents and occupations of its members, and then connect the members and their expertise to those who need help, so that the ministry of caring and sharing can be done. Joseph Aldrich identified this type of approach as presence or incarnational evangelism.⁴⁴⁸ Actions do speak louder than words--and they do often tell the truth! The church's work of charity should be a distinguishing mark, especially among the pragmatic and practical Chinese. These groups can be termed cluster groups with certain skills and a definite mission of helping others and reaching them for Christ.

Actions alone, however, cannot do all the talking; there must be the accompaniment of a verbal witness of the Gospel.

⁴⁴⁸ Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism, 82. In his book, Aldrich discussed three categories of evangelism: proclamational, confrontational/intrusional, and incarnational/relational. He believed that most people can use the incarnational/relational method with great effectiveness.

Meeting of physical needs is only a starting point for witnessing, and the writer concurs with James Engel that "felt needs cannot be ministered to unless underlying belief patterns are changed to bring them into accord with scriptural reality."⁴⁴⁹

Testimony. It is obvious that the starting point of a verbal witness is a compelling testimony of one's salvation, and thereafter testimonies of the present reality of the Christian walk should be the norm. The psalmist exhorts, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." (Psa. 107:2). The biblical command, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me" (Acts 1:8), implies telling of what God has done for the Christian, that which the Christian has seen, heard, and experienced. That was what Peter and John testified, "We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20).

The blind man, healed by Jesus, confessed to the Jewish leaders, "... one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see" (John 9:25). The spiritual reality was given to him later on as Jesus sought him out (John 9:35-39). The command of the Lord to the healed demoniac was to go home and "tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee and hath had compassion on thee" (Mark 5:19,20). That was just what he did and all men did marvel. Thus, a carefully prepared testimony, given in the power of the Holy Spirit, can be of immediate and effective use in nearly every witnessing situation. It is so

⁴⁴⁹ James Engel, Contemporary Christian Communications, 118.

personal and uniquely the Christian's that no one can disagree or deny that it ever happened. It also whets the appetite of the listener for more, so that he can be led a step closer to decision. Moreover, in the testimony, one can say things that would be offensive if stated propositionally. For example, instead of stating that ancestor worship is futile, one can testify:

I was born the eldest son into a family that worshipped ancestors. As the eldest son, it was my duty to help such a worship. I performed the task just as a tradition, and felt no purpose or peace in it. At times, I accompanied my mother to the temples. I was always afraid of the sight of the huge idols of deified famous past Chinese heroes. I felt these were unapproachable not only because of their awesome appearance, but also because they were made of clay and stone.

Every Christian should have a personal and potent testimony ready to be shared. However many Christians need help in preparing their personal testimony. They should be taught, especially in a small group environment, so that they can be prepared, prayed, and supported specifically in their endeavor to share. A carefully and intelligently worded three-minute testimony will be more effective than an extemporaneous and prolonged one that distracts and detracts from the Gospel witness. Usually a three-point outline is sufficient: (1) Life before knowing Christ, (2) The conversion experience, and (3) Life after knowing Christ. (Appendix K gives further teaching on this matter, which this writer uses in the training of group members for outreach.)

The place to begin is to learn to listen to the pulse and

the felt needs of the unbeliever and then to cause him to identify with the Christian in his testimony. Since all people, whether Buddhists, Taoists, or others, have been made by God and for God, there will be the same restlessness, emptiness, and lack of fulfillment, apart from God. As the Christian recalls his past life without Christ, he will arouse interest and cause the unbeliever to identify with his feelings, struggles, and thoughts, as the unbeliever is also seeking answers to the same questions. Sometimes, there may not be an identification; thus there is the necessity for a group team effort, working in tandem, so as to fill up the gap with a variety of experiences.

Some of the basic emotional or psychological needs are these: no peace, no purpose, no happiness, fear of death, fear of God's judgment, loneliness, boredom, emptiness, guilt, anger, dissatisfaction of life, worry, depression, gripped by sinful habits, and inability to live up to moral standards. Included in the testimony will be some aspects of the Chinese cultural beliefs and behavior. A collection of Spirit-led testimonies will be great for praise, edification, guide, as well as a witnessing tool.

After the testimony has been shared, one may ask some questions to gauge response, listen for responsiveness or objections, and then proceed from there. One may ask one, two or all of the following:

1. What do you think of my testimony?

2. Would you be interested to know Jesus Christ?
3. May I show you from God's Word the way to Jesus?

A person may not make a decision there and then, but the testimony will bring him a step closer to salvation. The Holy Spirit will help to call the testimony to remembrance, and that person will think about the confidence of the witness and the assurance the witness has of the reality of Christ. Other present-day testimonies of Christ should be shared; good relationships must continue to be built; and the unbeliever should be invited to attend a small group and other harvest vehicles. Joseph Aldrich encouraged the use of harvest vehicles to help avoid the big step from where the lost are now to a Sunday morning church service.⁴⁵⁰

Invitation. Many Christians do not witness because they do not purposefully go forth, as commanded in the Holy Bible (Psa. 126:6; Mark 16:15). It takes love, dedication, and sacrifice to do His will. This may involve going from house to house (Acts 20:20) and even to the highways and hedges (Luke 4:23). Literature evangelism and invitations to correspondence courses⁴⁵¹ and the church can be done in the streets, shopping centers, and neighboring homes, by trained members (who can assess potential audience responses). These

⁴⁵⁰ Aldrich, Life-Style Evangelism, 211-14.

⁴⁵¹ The writer used materials from "Source of Light," Madison, Georgia. These home courses were very useful for children, teens, and adults. After careful grading of the courses, teams were sent out to visit prospective seekers. The Lord had used these courses greatly in bringing the Gospel to the general public.

may contribute at the early stages of the decision process in the sense of stimulating attitude change and of building contacts for further witness. Seminars, drama, concerts, films, cassettes, and videos are also important. However, the church needs to integrate the mass media and interpersonal media (which plays a greater role in the actual decision making) into a common strategy, because both are needed in the whole process.

Then Christians must see the necessity of presenting the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes (Rom. 1:16, Acts 3:35), and of inviting sinners to repent and trust in Jesus then and there. The psalmist invites, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him" (Psa. 34:8). Philip, after his contact with Jesus, entreated his friend Nathanael, "Come and see" (John 1:46). The woman at the well, after her meeting with her Messiah, implored the men of the city, "Come, see ... is not this the Christ?" (John 4:29). The lord, mentioned in Jesus' parable, commanded the servant to compel people to the feast (Luke 14:23). Paul wrote about persuading men (2 Cor. 5:11), which he did on many occasions (Acts 18:4;13; 19:26; 26:28).

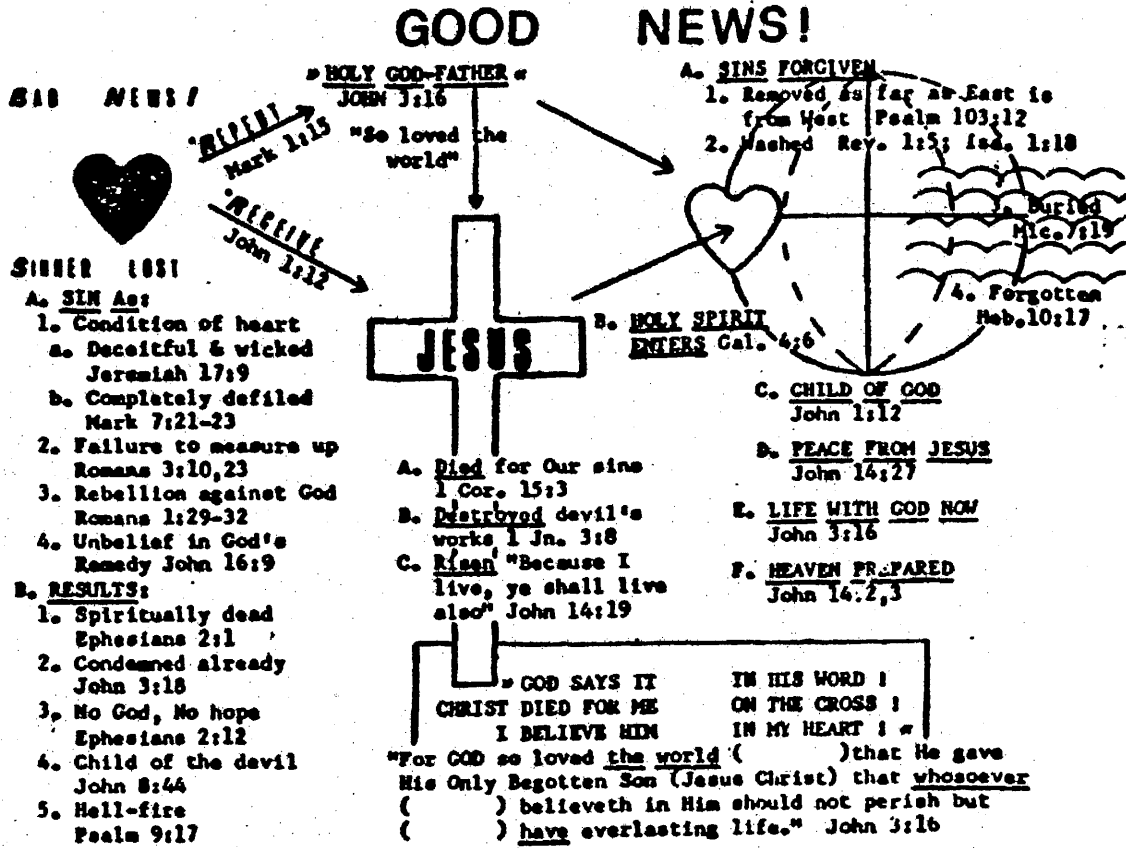
This implies that every member should be equipped with the ability to answer every man the reason of the hope that is in him (1 Peter 3:15), not only by using his testimony, but also by presenting a plan of salvation to lead others to

Christ. The Evangelism Explosion (EE) and the Continuing Witness Training (CWT) programs are specialized and elaborate programs for certain purposes and may not be appropriate for the average Christians. Some have used the Four Spiritual Laws booklet, whereas others have used the Romans Road presentation with great success.

The writer has developed his own graphic presentation, which he has used personally and also taught to his members. The following is written to help explain the rationale behind the chart (see Figure 4). The Christian witness may have to identify the important aspects for emphasis, depending on the needs of the one witnessed to. After listening to the spiritual pulse of the unbeliever, the writer usually begins with: "Would you like to know why there is so much trouble and suffering in this world?" The cause of human suffering is always in the mind of the Chinese. The Buddhist, for example, traces the cause to the craving that is due to ignorance regarding impermanence (anicca) and the non--self (anatta); but the Bible teaches that suffering entered the human race as a result of man's rebellion against the personal and holy God. The only adequate solution is also given in God's Word.

The writer then points to the black heart and explains the bad news. The biblical pictures of sin and its results are painted in contrast to the Chinese beliefs of craving, ignorance, purgatory, and reincarnation. Sin is not just a socially wrong behavior; it is a condition of the heart and

socially wrong behavior; it is a condition of the heart and
 Figure 4: Plan of Salvation



helps for the believer

1. **DON'T DEPEND** on your feelings. Instead trust God's promises for your salvation. (Romans 10:13, John 5:24).
2. **YOU ARE NOW** a child of God, because you have accepted Christ. God is now your Heavenly Father. (John 1:12, Romans 8:14-17).
3. **MAKE CHRIST** your constant Companion. He is now your Saviour and Friend and He cares for you. He will also be with you. (John 14:27, Hebrews 13:3, 6).
4. **CONFESS CHRIST** wherever you go. Let people know what He has done for you. (Romans 10:9-10, Mark 8:19-20).
5. **READ YOUR BIBLE** and pray daily. God will speak to you through the Bible which is His Word. Through prayer you can speak to Him. (Psalm 119:9, 1 Peter 2:2).
6. **YOU WILL BE TEMPTED.** Do not be dismayed at this. Even Christ was tempted, but temptation is not

- etc. Look to Christ for help to overcome, then resist the Devil and he will flee from you. (1 Corinthians 10:13-15, Eph. 6:10).
7. **ATTEND Church** regularly. You will be strengthened as you join with others in prayer and worship and in learning more about the Christian life. (Hebrews 10:24, 25).

MY DECISION FOR CHRIST

- SALVATION:** I now accept Christ as my Saviour and Lord, having repented of all my sins and promising to confess Him faithfully.
- DEDICATION:** I am yielding my life completely to Christ.
- RESTORATION:** I am surrendering my life to Christ again, promising to be faithful to Him from now onwards.

Signature

Date

thus a person needs a cleansed heart. It is also a violation against the laws of the holy God. Man is morally responsible for his own sin of rebellion, and thus he needs freedom from sin and its guilt. Through the redeeming death of Jesus Christ, sin can be removed, washed, buried, and forgotten forever. A new power, the presence and power of the Holy Spirit (Gal. 4:6), and a new nature, the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) are given to the believer in Christ to enable him to give godly, justly, and soberly.

One major felt need is the freedom from the bondage of fear of the activity of malevolent spirits in sickness, calamity, and other failures of life. Thus he needs to experience definite release from such bondage. To enable him to do that, he needs to understand that he is a child of the Devil, taken captive by him to do his will (John 8:44; 2 Tim. 2:26). Only the power of Christ over the power of the Devil can set him free. Jesus, on and through the Cross, had rendered inoperative the Devil and his works (Heb. 2:14; 1 John 3:8), and had spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them (Col. 2:15). Christ then is the Lord of all, preeminent and supreme, and is able to free any person from the fear of the Devil, spirits, gods, and ancestors. Therefore, man should worship the true Originator of his ancestors, who is more powerful than any of his immediate ancestors and who is able to help him overcome the fear of

spirits (1 John 4:4).⁴⁵²

The transcendent, personal, and loving God who omnipotently governs the world is presented against the intellectual Buddhist's idea of an impersonal principle, the Confucian's concept of an impersonal or supra-personal god (heaven), or the popular Chinese worship of idols, images, and gods. The Christian witness has to first identify the religious background of the unbeliever and address his belief about God accordingly. Existence is not ultimately meaningless because the eternal Creator gives value and purpose to His created order. This solves the problem of fatalism. Also God is the only answer to the hopelessness and purposelessness of life. Moreover, He is the only One that can give strength and hope as man will find out that he is not all self-sufficient in his life and master of his own destiny.

The Holy Spirit enters a man to fill him with the capacity and the ability to enable him from within to withstand whatever the pressures of life (Phil. 2:12,13). For example, the practical reality of the answer to the problem of suffering can be seen in the inexpressible joy and peace in the Holy Spirit that Christians can enjoy in the presence of suffering (2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Peter 1:6,7; Col. 1:24). In life too, the present reality is the God-given peace of mind, love,

⁴⁵² The genealogical accounts of Genesis 10, Matthew 1 and Luke 3:23-38 can provide good preaching material to help trace all ancestral lines to God, the Originator of all ancestors. Man should worship the Creator rather than the created.

joy, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22). Moreover, the present order of suffering is only temporary (Rom. 8:22,23). Because of Jesus' resurrection, Heaven, man's resurrection (or rapture), and immortality are made possible. There is then the final deliverance from all pain, sorrow, and mortality. There is the final state of existence where individual identity is maintained and will continue eternally. There will be an enhancement and deepening of each personality in his relationship to God. This eschatological hope in Christ provides peace, purpose, and dedication in this life.

While the Buddhist claims that there is no substantive self and others degrade the value of man in urban society, God affirms man's identity, self-hood, and dignity as His creation in His own image. Furthermore, the reality of man's self-hood is confirmed by the fact of Christ's incarnation as a genuine historical Person. This incarnation demonstrates the high value God is placing on each human being. Man is worth God's interest, love, and sacrifice! The chief purpose of the incarnation is seen in Jesus' redeeming death and triumphant resurrection for man's justification, both of which powerfully underscore human self-hood and value (Mark 8:36; John 3:16; 2 Cor. 5:19). Man, no matter what religion he believes in, yearns for love, significance, and security, and he can find these in the love of God. Witnessing to the Chinese, then, will not really hurt their dignity or feelings, because their

true dignity and self-worth are derived from the wonderful provisions of the loving God in creation and redemption. The Chinese have never heard of such a high status being given to man before, nor of the privilege and joy of a new relationship as children of God in Christ Jesus (John 1:12; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Some desire to become a buddha or have a heart of a buddha, through education, self-discipline or meditation. Others made gods out of great men, but they themselves are far from that goal. In all these, they are deeply disappointed. The great Gospel of Jesus Christ is that God came down to earth in Christ Jesus to restore man to His own image. A man in Christ is born again and is made a new creature (John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17). He becomes a partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4); his body is indwelt by the Holy Spirit as His temple (1 Cor. 6:19). He is then God-possessed man, safe and secure for time and all eternity (Rom. 8:35-39). The God that is in him is greater than he that is in the world (1 John 4:4). Man can grow to be like God in holiness, knowledge, and wisdom.

The twin-steps of repentance and receiving Christ are enunciated. The turning from idols to worship the true and living God is emphasized (1 Thess. 1:9). In this step, he realizes the supremacy of Christ and the importance of a directional change towards Him. Then there is the need for forgiveness of sin against the personal and holy God. The Bible promise of John 3:16 is personalized. After sharing the

great promise of Revelation 3:20, the writer expresses an invitation with these words:

If when you need help, someone important and powerful, like the Prime Minister of Singapore, were to wait at the door of your house desiring to help you, would you allow him to come in? (Pause for the "yes" answer.)

Now, we have Jesus Christ, God who came in flesh, who loves you and me, had died, but rose up, and is alive today to give you the blessings you need; He is waiting to come into your life--right now--surely you will not turn Him away, will you invite Him to come into your life?

If the response is positive, the writer will first of all lead in prayer, introducing the concerned soul to the Lord with:

Lord Jesus, here is _____ (name of person). I am introducing _____ (name) to you. He realizes that he needs to turn away from idols (or whatever is needed to confess here) and serve you, the true and living God. He wants to confess that he is a sinner and desires to come to you for forgiveness, because of what you have done for him on the Cross. He also wants to invite you into his heart. Help him now as he prays to you for your help.

Then a request is made that he should pray in his own words and make his decision. If he finds it hard to begin, help should be given to have him repeat a sinner's prayer as the person sharing the Gospel leads in prayer. Assurance is given straightaway by personalizing and claiming God's promise in John 3:16. A prayer of thanksgiving should follow to thank God as well as to observe whether there is an understanding of the process.

Now would you bow your head with me once again and thank God for what He has done in your life? Would

you say, "Thank you, Lord, for forgiving me of my sins and coming into my heart."? If you desire to say more, please do.

Follow-up begins immediately. He is encouraged to trust in God's promises, to make Christ his constant companion through Bible reading (the Gospel of Mark is suggested) and prayer. He is invited to visit a small group and church services for assimilation and incorporation into the Christian community. This major step helps to protect and support him from the serious social consequences of turning away from his old religion. Hitherto, when he would worship his ancestors or go to a temple to worship, he would only worship separately, even in a crowd. Thus, he needs to experience corporate worship. He needs the fellowship, nurture, support, worship, and mutual ministry. Baptism in obedience to Christ, faithful membership, and mutual accountability must be emphasized. One of the best ways is through his participation in a small group in which these are nurtured, modeled, and encouraged.

If the answer is in the negative, help him in the following way:

I see that you are not ready to ask Jesus to come in right now. I'm glad you are honest about this.
(Pause.)

Now I didn't ask to come into your heart, did I?
(The answer will be "No.")

Then you are not refusing me, are you? ("No.")

You are actually refusing the God who loves you and has done everything for you to forgive you and to give you peace and purpose of life. When you are

refusing to let Jesus Christ into your life, you are actually refusing all the blessings of God. That's clear to you, isn't it? ("Yes.")

Actually, you really don't need me or anyone else around when you desire to ask Christ into your heart. This is something that is between you and Him. Why, even tonight, as you lay your head on your pillow, you can simply talk to Him and ask Him to come into your heart as your Savior. It is that simple because God has provided it all for you. Here is a tract with the good news as well as a prayer for you to repeat if you really mean it. Perhaps we can talk about this again sometime.

There must be no forcing or condemnation else the soul will be forced to retreat. Relationship building must continue and the Christian must be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading for another opportunity to invite that soul to Jesus.

Whatever plan is used, the approach should not be set in concrete, nor should it be mechanical. Its primary purpose is to give direction and help in presenting Christ and leading others to Him. The Christian witness must be sensitive to the needs of the unbeliever. Involved in this equipping will be the training of how to deal with those who are having difficulties in believing, uninterested and unconcerned, ignorant, trusting in their own feelings, fearful and despairing, procrastinators, self-righteous, carnal, and fault-finding.

Certain gifted members need to be trained in commitment counselling during the invitation times, revival, camps, retreats, small group meetings, home visitation, and phone counseling. "Decision Time" from the Baptist Sunday School

Board of Nashville is a good resource training module for this.⁴⁵³ It begins with the purpose and the process of counseling. Then it enters into the various types of counseling: counseling for salvation, assurance of salvation, baptism, membership, Lordship of Christ, Christian maturity and follow-up. Basic problem-solving models to counsel families, youth, adults, seniors, couples, the sick, those contemplating suicide, and the grieving can be taught with "Wise Counsel: Skills for Lay Counseling," also from the Baptist Sunday School Board. These are some of the ways Christians, going as servant-friends, may invite the lost to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Evangelist. The early churches were established as the result of the strong proclamational evangelistic ministries of the apostles. They preached in the temple, on street corners, in synagogues, and in market places. Paul wrote that "it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believeth" (1 Cor. 1:21). Though this approach has biblical validity, yet it must be observed that this special task is for certain gifted people (Eph. 4:11). Timothy, the pastor at Ephesus, was commanded to do the work of an evangelist (2 Tim. 4:5). A pastor then should be conscious of his calling to

⁴⁵³ Leonard Sanderson and Arthur Crisco, DecisionTime: Commitment Counseling (Nashville, TN: Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, n.d.). This training resource is part of the excellent LIFE (Lay Institute for Equipping) training system in five ministry areas: Worship\Intercession, Teaching\Preaching, Nurture, Evangelism, and Service.

model, mentor, and lead in the witnessing process. In his preaching, whether primarily to his flock or not, he must include an evangelistic fervor for the lost and to the lost. There should be an invitation for the lost to receive Christ during the Sunday celebrations as the Spirit leads him. In his ministry, he must include the lost and lead others to do likewise.

Moreover, he will be wise to involve evangelists in the harvest vehicles of his church. Several annual seekers events for the whole church should be scheduled, in which outside evangelists are invited. These may fall on Christmas, Chinese New Year, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Friends Day, and the Church Anniversary. Small groups can have their quarterly group outreach with pot-luck dinners and picnics.⁴⁵⁴ The invited evangelist can give his testimony, a gospel presentation, and a tasteful and sensitive invitation to receive Christ. He must be familiar with the culture, beliefs, the journey process, and the seasons of life of the people. The Chinese psyche is more in tune with the story-telling approach of teaching and learning. Thus expository preaching of lives of people in the Bible, of miracles, and of parables are some of the important preaching messages. For example, sermons on Job's life of suffering (Job 1, 2, 42), on

⁴⁵⁴ Other outreach activities for the small groups can include camping trips, fishing trips, marriage or family retreats, hiking trips, concerts, films in a home, and special speakers on subjects of interest such as time and financial management.

the lives of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), and on the miracles of Jesus over sicknesses, demonic forces, and the natural forces, will be greatly used by the Spirit to bring conviction and salvation. Chinese history and culture may be tapped for illustrations. These will help in building bridges, applications as well as the maintenance of roots. Functional substitutes for some anti-biblical practices such as ancestor worship, may be suggested in the light of scriptural principles.

Evangelists in the church must be equipped with the tools and resources of witnessing. While a common plan of salvation should be developed for all members as witnesses, the specialized EE or the CWT may be used to further equip the evangelists. Members are trained in the classroom as well as on the job with mentors. A course may run from thirteen to sixteen weeks. Both have the basic outline of presentation: God's purpose, our need, God's provision, and our response. The EE has the advantage of having two more levels of equipping, dealing with some Christian evidences and apologetics about some common objections, cults, and other religious beliefs. Both programs can be quite effective among those who have been properly related to by Christians, and who have some knowledge of Bible truths.

However, the two diagnostic or exploratory questions, used in the beginning before the basic outline, may not be appropriate:

1. Have you come to a place in your life that you know for certain that you have eternal life and that you will go to heaven when you die?⁴⁵⁵

2. Suppose you were to die today and stand before God and He were to say to you, "Why should I let you into My heaven?" What would you say?⁴⁵⁶

These are culturally not sensitive, because the Chinese would think that the witness is wishing death upon them as he mentions about dying and death. Also the Gospel of Christ has much to offer for the present life right now, that one does not need to start with the life-after. This latter approach will suit the Chinese more because they are more practical and are concerned more about the present life than about life after death. Neighbour quipped on the reason for the former approach, "It is because what we have to offer the new convert in this life is a bit embarrassing to us."⁴⁵⁷ Moreover, the concepts used, such as eternal life, life after death, God, and heaven, need some Christian orientation for the listener for understanding, especially so since the Chinese perspective and the Christian teachings are fundamentally different.

The introduction to the basic outline may begin at the

⁴⁵⁵ C. B. Hogue, Continuing Witness Training (Atlanta, GA: Home Mission Board, 1982), 15.

⁴⁵⁶ D. James Kennedy, Evangelism Explosion III International Level I Training Notebook (Fort Lauderdale, FL: Evangelism Explosion III International, 1983), 40.

⁴⁵⁷ Neighbour, Where Do We Go from Here? 242.

unbeliever's felt need, as the Christian witness checks on the pulse of the unbeliever, as in the case of the use of the testimony or of the writer's graphic plan of salvation as he begins with the problem of suffering. Recently in January, 1994, the writer witnessed to an English-speaking immigrant to the United States from mainland China. The immigrant was not so interested in what was going to happen to him after his death. He felt that such a topic was too presumptuous for anyone to discuss. Also he did not like the idea of a kind of religion that taught a kind of a "fire escape" from hell. However, he was gripped by sinful habits and wanted freedom from them. Since he had an understanding of certain biblical concepts from friends, the writer was able to lead him to know from God's Word that it was not God's purpose to have him gripped by his habits. Using the CWT presentation, the writer then led him to realize his real need, God's provision, and his response for salvation, freedom and power. Praise the Lord for working in that man's heart!

Sometimes, the people involved in the EE or CWT will only go out witnessing during the prescribed training period, and fail to be motivated into a continuous life-style of witnessing. The church needs to challenge them and set them free for other ministries. These trained evangelists, therefore, should be positioned strategically in the harvest vehicles of the church. Also they should lead in home visitation, hospital visitation, funerals, and other occasions

of loved ones and friends of members of the church. The Home Evangelistic Bible study groups as well as Seekers groups will be other effective areas of their ministry.

Prayer. Last, but not least, the church needs prayer warriors or intercessors. Everything begins, is continued, and ends in prayer. There are innumerable commands, promises, entreaties, encouragement, and examples of prayer in the Holy Bible. Yet, it is recorded that God "saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor" (Isa. 59:16a). The prophet Isaiah echoed that there is "none that calleth upon Thy Name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of Thee" (Isa. 64:7). Prayer is the vital breath of life of the Christian as well as of the church. Prayer should be first and foremost in the believer's life and in the church's life. The temple of the Holy Spirit (corporately, 1 Cor. 3:16,17, as well as individually, 1 Cor. 6:19,20) should be God's house of prayer (Isa. 56;7; Matt. 21:13; Mark 11:17; Luke 19:46). There should be a burdened praying church led by burdened praying pastor and leaders, to result in burdened penitents. There should be designated days of fasting and prayer, of deep humiliation and confession, and of fervent intercession for God's working of revival in the saints and of salvation in the unbelievers.

The Lord Jesus Christ was known, first and foremost, as a man of prayer. Though He is the Son of God, yet He is the High Priest forever, "who in the days of His flesh, when He

had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared" (Heb. 5:6,7). No wonder, His disciples entreated Him, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). He taught them and commanded later that men ought always to pray and not faint (Luke 18:1). He twice exhorted them to watch and pray (Mark 13:33; 14:38). Paul repeated this exhortation in Colossians 4:2 and Ephesians 6:18. Christians must watch while they pray and pray while they watch.

In witnessing, they must watch for opportunities for prayer, and for divine appointments and providence, being sensitive to God's leading to lay some souls on their hearts. Prayer must be definite and specific. Then they need to watch their own hearts to keep them pure for God's use, noting the temptations of Satan and the flesh that would assail them and the sins that most easily beset them. They must pray believingly (Mark 11:24), knowing that God loves people and desires them to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9), and that with God all things are possible (Mark 10:27; Jer. 32:27). They must pray that God will be glorified through the salvation of souls (John 14:13), as He opens their ears and hearts (Mark 13:13,15; 2 Cor. 4:3,4) through the Holy Spirit (John 16:8-11; Titus 3:5).

Moreover, they must pray, claiming the authority of Christ of the tearing down of Satan's strongholds in the unbelievers (2 Cor. 10:4,5), and claiming the souls that

Christ had purchased with His own Blood (2 Tim. 2:26). Jesus Christ "shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied" (Isa. 53:11a). Finally, they must watch for answers to their prayers, and continue to pray persistently, unceasingly, and perseveringly (Luke 18:7; 1 Thess. 5:17,18, Eph. 6:18). As they expect that God will hear and answer, they will go to that loved one or friend to inquire if the heart is newly interested in spiritual things. They will then be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading to the next step.

One way to involve members is to use the small group ministry. Half an hour to forty minutes during each small group meeting (about two hours) may be spent in outreach activities, including help in building testimonies and in relationships, the discussion of group outreach project or seeker-events, and prayers for each member and the ones to be invited. An outreach prayer list is made, with columns: Name of Member, People to Invite, Date to Invite, Response to the meeting or invitation (see Appendix K). This encourages not only fervent and specific prayer, but also faithful encouragement, support of team-ministry, and mutual accountability. An empty chair is placed conspicuously as a reminder for prayer and for involvement to fill it with a loved one or friend. The group is encouraged to make a covenant to pray and to bring a new visitor once a month in the small group meeting.

Prayer is made for boldness to build relationships and to

invite visitors to special meetings. Prayer is also made that the invited will attend with prepared hearts and will respond positively to the Gospel. The responses and the appropriate follow-up will be discussed after the meetings. Moreover, knowledge of the names and some other information about the guests in advance will make it easier for members to know them at the meetings. Members should pray daily, and this can be enhanced by using the buddy-system in which two are paired and they contact each other daily for prayer. Half-night or all-night prayer may be scheduled before any special meeting.

Individually, a Christian should make a covenant with God to claim souls for God. One soul or a family can be identified, prayed for, and claimed per year for the Lord.⁴⁵⁸ A prayer card should be made and kept in the Bible as a daily prayer reminder:

ONE SOUL OR FAMILY BY FAITH IN 1994

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6).

"Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22).

1. I will prepare my life for God to work in and through me, allowing the Spirit to fill me daily with His power and love.
2. I will ask God daily to give me faith to believe and a heart-thirst for souls through the reading of His Word and prayer.
3. I will pray daily to God to impress upon my heart one soul or family.
4. I will do my best, by the Holy Spirit:
 - a. To pray for that soul or family

⁴⁵⁸ Win Arn and Charles Arn, The Master's Plan for Making Disciples (Pasadena, CA: Church Growth Press, 1982), 97-123. The Arns developed "oikos" evangelism, using the natural webs of relationships.

- every morning and night, and at any time God helps me to recall.
- b. To do works of service and to build relationships.
 - c. To share my personal salvation testimony and present-day blessings of Christ's reality.
 - d. To give tracts, books, and tapes of music and sermons.
 - e. To extend invitations to harvest vehicles.
 - f. To present the plan of salvation and encourage a positive decision.
 - g. To invite to my small group and church for assimilation and community.
 - h. To encourage baptism, church membership, participation, and ministry.

Name of person or family by faith:

My Signature by faith: _____

After all that has been lived, said, and done, there is no substitute for the heart-language of love. Christians need to pray for the Holy Spirit to shed the love of God in their hearts, for the souls that Jesus Christ loved and died (Rom. 5:8). The love of Christ should constrain, control, and compel Christians, with dedication, commitment, and sacrifice, into a hopeless and helpless world without Christ. Only by the demonstration of integrity and love can Christians begin to witness about the God of the Bible who is truth and love personified.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁹ David Hesselgrave, Communicating Christ Cross-Culturally, 188.

Missionary Jean McCracken articulated the desired virtue of love when she wrote:

I may be able to speak fluently the language of my chosen field and even understand its culture,
 but if I have no love, the impact of my speech is no more for Christ than that of a businessman who comes to exploit the people.
 I may have the gift of contextualizing God's Word when I deliver it to my hearers.
 I may have all knowledge about their customs,
 I may have the faith needed to combat witchcraft,
 but if I have no love, I am nothing.
 I may give everything that I have to the poor, to the hungry in the favelas,
 I may even give my life for them,
 but if I have no love, this does no good.

Love is . . .
 thinking in their thought patterns,
 caring enough to understand their world view,
 listening to their questions,
 feeling their burdens,
 respecting them,
 identifying with them in their need,
 belonging to them.

Love is eternal.
 Cultures pass away.
 Dynamic equivalents will change because culture change.
 Patterns of worship and church administration will need revision.
 Languages will be altered over time.
 Institutions will be replaced.
 . . . Because these are not reality.

Since I am finite, I can only study how to express the Message cross-culturally, trying to free it from my cultural bias.
 I am able to do this only in a limited way,
 but I pray that the Spirit will use my life to show Christ to those with whom I work.

Meanwhile these remain . . .
 Identification,
 Contextualization
 and
 Love.

BUT THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁶⁰ Jean McCracken, "First Corinthians 13," Evangelical Missions Quarterly 15 (1979):151. Alignment and spacing follow the original.

CHAPTER 10

Conclusion

There are over one billion Chinese around the world and about 2.1 million Chinese in urban Singapore. In order to communicate the Gospel to them, it is important to understand their culture and thought so that the message may both be comprehended and acted upon by the recipients as intended. The primary focus of this thesis has been to search for an understanding of the Chinese cultural nuances, for points of contacts to win friendship and confidence, and for a basis on which to build the best explanation of the Gospel. The targeted population has been the English-speaking Chinese adults in cosmopolitan Singapore.

The Historical Research

The historical research on the three main systems of thoughts--Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism--has shown their tremendous impact on the culture and religions and ethical values of the Chinese. These interact and fuse with other popular folk beliefs to form a syncretistic and eclectic Oriental puzzle, which cannot be easily explained or analyzed. The pure of the three religions is for the selected few, being too philosophical and abstract. For the majority, either the movements are deprived of efficacy by dragging them down into the gross superstition and materialism, or the people are satisfied with the knowledge of the ethical demands and go on living in fear and powerlessness.

Explanations may be found both in the nature of these three religions and in the temperament and psychology of the Chinese. The three religions are not mutually exclusive, but rather mutually supplementary. Confucianism, with its emphasis on the issues of present living, leaves plenty of room, on the one hand, for the mysticism and spiritism of Taoism, and on the other hand, for the metaphysics of Buddhism. Confucianism emphasizes an "I-thou" relationship between man and man; Taoism, an "I-thou" relationship between man and nature; and Buddhism, an "I-thou" relationship between being and non-being.

Chinese philosophy teaches the unity and universality of truth and thus one truth here and there put together make more truth and not less truth. The Chinese, then being practical rationalists and humanists, will accept and adapt anything that will promote their well-being of wealth, health, and longevity on earth.

As a result, care should be taken lest true Christianity be absorbed into the diffused Chinese religion. There should be a clear Christian identity over against the surrounding culture, a clear sense of conservative, doctrinal truth and of meaning and value, and an intolerance to inner pluralism or dissent, to pave the way for the holy and loving God to work in and through Christians for His glory and for the salvation of the Chinese. To that end, the writer has attempted to compare the worldviews of each of the three religions with the

teachings of the Holy Bible.

Five major topics have been covered: God, reality, knowledge, morality, and humankind. The uniqueness and superiority of the Christian belief has been quite evident. While the three religions emphasize the human effort to reach out to God, Christianity teaches that God reaches out to man freely and truly, in and through Jesus Christ. While they advocate doing good works for salvation, Christianity centers on the fact that salvation had already been accomplished in Jesus Christ; and the full and free salvation is offered to everyone. While they focus on human will to better oneself to frustration and emptiness, Christianity testifies of God in man through Jesus Christ, for the capacity and ability to live the abundant life, here and in the life hereafter.

The keystone in the arch of Chinese society as taught by Confucius and practiced by the Chinese is the family where there is a lot of cohesion and loyalty. The family is also the orbit around which religion revolves. The living and the dead are connected together in one stream; the living are to uphold the family traditions, bring honor to the ancestors, and prepare to become good ancestors themselves, remembered for their good work and examples. Prayers and rites are thus made to insure the well-being of ancestors as well as to beget sons to continue the line. This pietism, the strong sense of loyalty towards the religion, family, and clan, is a binding and blinding force and has hindered the Gospel witness much.

To be biblical and effective, the church must be a family of families. It should be the champion of the family. Biblical priority on winning whole families should be advocated and practiced. There is nothing in this understanding to militate against selectivity in making contacts, in winning the winnable. The target group may be the single nucleus young family, and then using it, to reach the older generation. Strategies of peer networks in the urban society must be adopted to reach the heads of the families. Special projects, for example, pre-marital and marriage enrichment seminars and retreats, should be introduced to help these families to build better homes in the purposes of God. In the larger family life of the congregation, other forms of family-clusters and inter-generational activities should be instituted.

The Descriptive Study

The descriptive qualitative study of current experiences and attitudes seems to indicate that the culture of the English-speaking Chinese is presently one in crisis. Two predominant patterns appear to undermine the ancient beliefs. First, there seems to be an increasing number of people that prefer to be called freethinkers. Then there appears to be an erosion of the belief of ancestor-worship. These may be the results of the influences of a multi-racial and multi-religious society and a Western-oriented educational system. These will provide excellent opportunities as well as

formidable challenges to the presentation of the Gospel.

Yet, despite some of the shifting patterns, the Chinese seem to remain stubbornly Chinese underneath! In their social and familial lives and in their ideas and culture, they desire to retain the Chineseness in them. They will believe and follow the Chinese traditional ways, whether they understand them or not. Such ways are the delicate cultural nuances of shared basic assumptions and beliefs that operate consciously or unconsciously.

Among these nuances, the four dominant ones--eclecticism, family, vitality of religion, and personal religion--have been extensively discussed in this study. Their effects on witnessing strategies have also been diagnostically interpreted. About 89 percent of the Christians surveyed professed Jesus Christ before the age of twenty-five years old; 57 percent before the age of seventeen years old. Most were brought to the Lord through friendship evangelism. Since the median age of the Chinese is 30.6 years (total number of Chinese is 2.1 million), there are still a lot of people between the ages of twenty-five to thirty-five that need to be reached.

A dominant group of people surveyed was in the 26-45 age group. The results seem to be quite revealing. Kinship evangelism and friendship evangelism are important, but two other concerns may also help in reaching the adults. One is that the church should be involved in social services and

activities. Tuition, medical services, and homes for the needy are some of the services that can be provided by the young and affluent Christian community. The other is the need for home groups for support and felt needs. Men in the surveys were slightly higher in number in their request than the women. The Chinese men usually find social interaction and assimilation more difficult than women. Thus structures like the homogeneous home groups must be created to meet their longing for such interaction and fellowship. Inter-family as well as intra-family groups can be formed for worship, recreation, and the meeting of felt needs.

Strategic Positioning

The study of the Christian witness is not complete without the important mention of the necessity of the strategic positioning of the church. This involves the total mobilization of the church, under the power of the Holy Spirit, with a scriptural mind-set and life-style. A mission statement as well as a vision statement should be formulated and accepted, to give a unified sense of outreach direction, an excited anticipation about the future, and an energizing distinctiveness to the church. Comprehensive and up-to-date records for operational information must be kept in computers and be easily generated when needed. An infrastructure of celebration, congregation, cell, and core (see Appendix L) should be instituted to develop healthy relationships and effective numerical and spiritual growth so that healthy

disciples are continuously produced. Small groups especially can help to correct, continue, and cement the primary and personal relationships as well as to develop the right life-style which relates to urban living.

As the church's members are already immersed in the culture everyday, they must be instilled with a strategy orientation of the church's vision, be equipped accordingly, and be released for ministry. It is often a process of understanding the culture and the spiritual journey of the unbelievers, and then positioning the church and each member with prayer and a variety of approaches to help them come closer to a salvation decision. The process of this journey will involve the understanding of the stages of growth in knowledge of the truth and of the seasons of soul that will make hearts receptive to the Gospel. The approaches used, such as building relationships, giving testimony, doing service, and inviting to meetings, will depend on the giftedness, passion, and maturity of each believer. With prayer, love, and the filling of the Spirit, the Lord will give the capacity and ability to lead others to Him.

Recommendations

This has been the writer's first attempt at combining a historical research with a descriptive study. The multiplicity of books available on the study of religions shows that there is no single "right" approach in such a study as well as in writing such a study. The attempt made in this

study has been to quote as much as possible from the founders and their adherents, and to organize a preliminary account, readable and uncomplicated, so as to whet the appetite and enable an interested Christian to begin to understand the Chinese. Hopefully, this will lead to a deeper desire to build upon the account and expand it further.

In the analysis of the data, the writer has observed that some of the samples in the variables were too small for a correct Chi-square analysis. As a result, he had to collapse some of the columns in the analysis. A different range interval, for example, in the educational level variable, or a larger sample, may help to give a better analysis. Also, a larger sample that includes other denominations, like the Methodists, the Anglicans, and the Charismatics, should give further insights into the study. The number of variables can be reduced to sharpen the focus. Related questions, such as asking for the reasons for certain responses, may be helpful, though it may mean an enlargement of the data base. Personal interviews may be possible, which will be time-consuming. It may also be fascinating to do such kind of survey among the Mandarin-speaking Chinese and observe those responses.

The writer desires to recommend some of the strategies to the churches in Singapore. Besides the friendship and kinship forms of evangelism, he will especially desire to see more home groups for support and felt needs. Seminars and retreats for singles and married couples for their special needs should

also be encouraged. It will be interesting to conduct another survey five years from now among churches that use these approaches strenuously and those that do not, to see whether there will be any difference in the numbers of professions for Christ.

Appendix A: Buddhistic Beliefs

TWELVE PRINCIPLES OF BUDDHISM

FUNDAMENTAL BUDDHISTIC BELIEFS

1. Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance, and brotherly love to all men, without distinction; and an unwavering kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.

2. The Universe was evolved, not created; and it functions according to law, not according to the caprice of any God.

3. The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive kalpas, or world periods, by certain illuminated beings called *Buddhas*, the name *BUDDHA* meaning 'Enlightened'.

4. The fourth Teacher in the present kalpa was Sakya Muni, or Gautama Buddha, who was born in a royal family in India about 2,500 years ago. He is an historical personage and his name was Siddhartha Gautama.

5. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance produces desire, unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth, the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow, therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.

6. Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life by which the necessity for such repeated rebirths can be abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.

7. The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the persevering practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.

8. The desire to live being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished rebirths cease and the perfected individual attains by meditation that highest state of peace called *Nirvana*.

9. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Noble Truths, viz:

1. The miseries of existence;
2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire ever renewed of satisfying oneself without being able ever to secure that end.
3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of oneself from it;
4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means which he pointed out is called the noble eight-fold Path, viz: Right Belief; Right Thought; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Means of Livelihood; Right Exertion; Right Remembrance; Right Meditation.

10. Right Meditation leads to spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.

11. The essence of Buddhism as summed up by the Tathagata (Buddha) himself is:

To cease from all sin,
To get virtue,
To purify the heart.

12. The universe is subject to a natural causation known as 'Karma'. The merits and demerits of a being in past existences determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.

13. The obstacles to the attainment of good karma may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism, viz: (1) Kill not; (2) Steal not; (3) Indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasure; (4) Lie not; (5) Take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor. Five other precepts, which need not here be enumerated, should be observed by those who would attain more quickly than the average layman the release from misery and rebirth.

14. Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity. Gautama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in science and literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any sage, written in any book, or affirmed by tradition, unless it accord with reason.

Drafted as a common platform upon which all Buddhists can agree.

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

1. Self-salvation is for any man the immediate task. If a man lay wounded by a poisoned arrow he would not delay extraction by demanding details of the man who shot it, or the length and make of the arrow. There will be time for ever-increasing understanding of the Teaching during the treading of the Way. Meanwhile, begin now by facing life as it is, learning always by direct and personal experience.

2. The first fact of existence is the law of change or impermanence. All that exists, from a mole to a mountain, from a thought to an empire, passes through the same cycle of existence - i.e. birth, growth, decay and death. Life alone is continuous, ever seeking self-expression in new forms. 'Life is a bridge; therefore build no house on it.' Life is a process of flow, and he who clings to any form, however splendid, will suffer by resisting the flow.

3. The law of change applies equally to the 'soul'. There is no principle in an individual which is immortal and unchanging. Only the 'Namelessness', the ultimate Reality, is beyond change, and all forms of life, including man, are manifestations of this Reality. No one owns the life which flows in him any more than the electric light bulb owns the current which gives it light.

4. The universe is the expression of law. All effects have causes, and man's soul or character is the sum total of his previous thoughts and acts. Karma, meaning action-reaction, governs all existence, and man is the sole creator of his circumstances and his reaction to them, his future condition, and his final destiny. By right thought and action he can gradually purify his inner nature, and so by self-realization attain in time liberation from rebirth. The process covers great periods of time, involving life after life on earth, but ultimately every form of life will reach Enlightenment.

5. Life is one and indivisible, though its ever-changing forms are innumerable and perishable. There is, in truth, no death, though every form must die. From an understanding of life's unity arises compassion, a sense of identity with the life in other forms. Compassion is described as 'the Law of laws - eternal harmony', and he who breaks this harmony of life will suffer accordingly and delay his own Enlightenment.

6. Life being One, the interests of the part should be those of the whole. In his ignorance man thinks he can successfully strive for his own interests, and this wrongly-directed energy of selfishness produces suffering. He learns from his suffering to reduce and finally eliminate its cause. The Buddha taught four Noble Truths: (a) The omnipresence of suffering; (b) its cause, wrongly directed desire; (c) its cure, the removal of the cause; and (d) the Noble Eightfold Path of self-development which leads to the end of suffering.

7. The Eightfold Path consists in Right (or perfect) Views or preliminary understanding, Right Aims or Motive, Right Speech, Right Acts, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Concentration or mind-development, and, finally, Right *Samadhi* leading to full Enlightenment. As Buddhism is a way of living, not merely a theory of life, the treading of this Path is essential to self-deliverance. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do good, cleanse your own heart: this is the Teaching of the Buddhas.'

8. Reality is indescribable, and a God with attributes is not the final Reality. But the Buddha, a human being, became the All-Enlightened One, and the purpose of life is the attainment of Enlightenment. This state of Consciousness, Nirvana, the extinction of the limitations of self-hood, is attainable on earth. All men and all other forms of life contain the potentiality of Enlightenment, and the process therefore consists in becoming what you are. 'Look within: thou art Buddha.'

9. From potential to actual Enlightenment there lies the Middle Way, the Eightfold Path 'from desire to peace', a process of self-development between the 'opposites', avoiding all extremes. The Buddha trod this Way to the end, and the only faith required in Buddhism is the reasonable belief that where a Guide has trodden it is worth our while to tread. The Way must be trodden by the whole man, not merely the best of him, and heart and mind must be developed equally. The Buddha was the All-Compassionate as well as the All-Enlightened One.

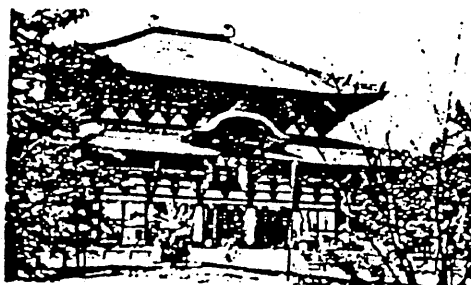
10. Buddhism lays great stress on the need of inward concentration and meditation, which leads in time to the development of the inner spiritual faculties. The subjective life is as important as the daily round, and periods of quietude for inner activity are essential for a balanced life. The Buddhist should at all times be 'mindful and self-possessed', refraining from mental and emotional attachment to 'the passing show'. This increasingly watchful attitude to circumstances, which he knows to be his own creation, helps him to keep his reaction to it always under control.

11. The Buddha said: 'Work out your own salvation with diligence'. Buddhism knows no authority for truth save the intuition of the individual, and that is authority for himself alone. Each man suffers the consequences of his own acts, and learns thereby, while helping his fellow men to the same deliverance; nor will prayer to the Buddha or to any God prevent an effect from following its cause. Buddhist monks are teachers and exemplars, and in no sense intermediaries between Reality and the individual. The utmost tolerance is practised towards all other religions and philosophies, for no man has the right to interfere in his neighbour's journey to the Goal.

12. Buddhism is neither pessimistic nor 'escapist', nor does it deny the existence of God or soul, though it places its own meaning on these terms. It is, on the contrary, a system of thought, a religion, a spiritual science and a way of life, which is reasonable, practical and all-embracing. For over two thousand years it has satisfied the spiritual needs of nearly one-third of mankind. It appeals to the West because it has no dogmas, satisfies the reason and the heart alike, insists on self-reliance coupled with tolerance for other points of view, embraces science, religion, philosophy, psychology, ethics and art, and points to man alone as the creator of his present life and sole designer of his destiny.

Humphreys, C. "Buddhism"

pp. 74-75



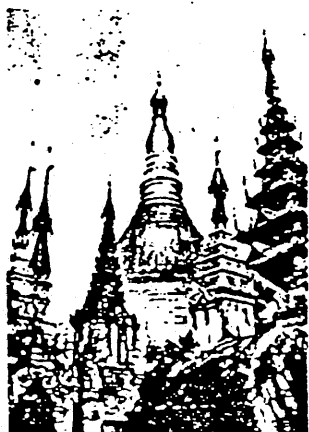
1. Hondo, Hiei-ji, Japan. (Reproduction of the Hondo at Hiei-ji, the largest wooden building in the world. Author's photograph from The East)



2. Buddha. Head of grey sandstone. (Reproduction of the Buddha's head in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown Copyright)



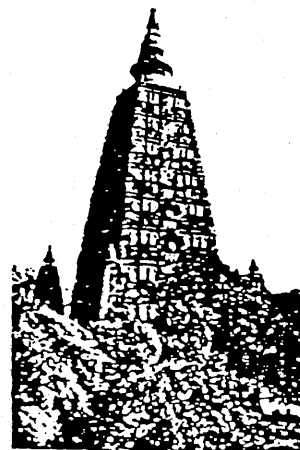
3. Seated Buddha. (Reproduction of the Buddha seated on the lotus throne in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Crown Copyright)



4. The Shwe Dagon Pagoda, Rangoon. (The author's photograph from The East)



5. Bodhisattva. The Buddha of Zen Buddhism in the Victoria and Albert Museum (1906)

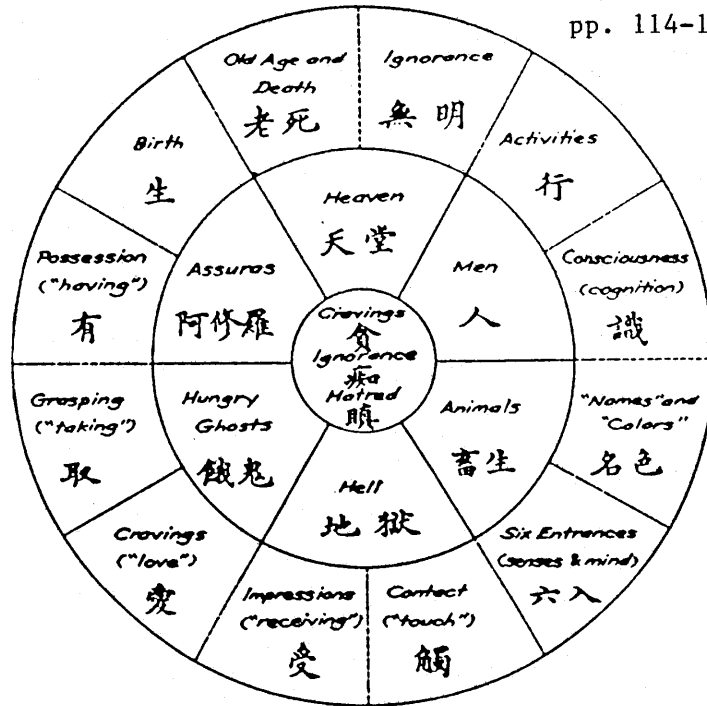


6. The Buddhist Temple at Bodhi Gaya, India. (Reproduction of the Bodhi tree in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Author's photograph from The East)

CHINA'S RELIGIOUS HERITAGE

(Yang)

pp. 114-15



BUDDHIST CONCEPTION OF THE WHEEL OF EXISTENCE⁵

⁵ The Wheel of Existence is perhaps to be regarded more as an analysis of the basic factors or forces of the Buddhist conception of the eternal life cycle than an outline or summary of its philosophy of life.

The twelve *Nidanas* or links in the Causal Chain are not necessarily a chain of links in the sense that each of them is the antecedent cause of the next following; but they are the twelve "causes"—factors and forces—which link the "inner man" with the "outside world," and set in motion the wheel of life. Perhaps the best illustration is to say that the twelve

BUDDHISM: THE PATH OF ESCAPE

Nidanas form a sort of switchboard with switches which can turn on the current of life and set the Wheel of Karma to turn.

The twelve *Nidanas* are often symbolically represented or pictorially presented as follows:

1. Ignorance or lack of enlightenment by a blind woman led by a man.
2. Motion or activities by a potter making earthenware.
3. Consciousness or cognition by a restless monkey.
4. "Names" and "Colors," i.e., tangible and intangible objects, by a boat rocking in the waves.
5. The "Six Entrances" or the six "roots of life"—i.e., the five physical senses, eyes, ears, nose, tongue and body, and the psychic sense, the mind—by a building under construction.
6. Contact or "touch" by a man and a woman sitting together and embracing each other.
7. Impressions or "receiving" by a man with an eye pierced by an arrow.
8. Cravings or "love" by a man trying to quench his thirst by drinking intoxicating wine.
9. Grasping or "taking" by a man filling a basket with fruits picked from a tree.
10. Possession or "having" by a pregnant woman.
11. Birth by a woman in childbirth.
12. Old Age and Death by an old man overladen with a heavy burden and about to die.

(The above English terms for the twelve *Nidanas* are direct translations from Chinese Buddhist literature. Dr. Paul Carus, in his book *The Dharma*, gives them as follows: (1) ignorance, (2) organized formation, (3) sentiency, (4) name and form, (5) the six fields, (6) contact, (7) sensation, (8) thirst, (9) craving, (10) growth, (11) birth, and (12) old age, death, sorrow, etc. Dr. J. B. Pratt, in his book *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, page 75, uses the following terms: (1) ignorance, (2) disposition, (3) cognition, (4) name and form, (5) five senses and the mind, (6) contact, (7) feeling, (8) craving, (9) grasping or attachment, (10) becoming, (11) birth, and (12) old age, sickness, death.)

A COMPARISON OF LIFE VIEWS

Bible	Confucianism	Buddhism	Taoism
<i>Man's Origin</i>			
Created by God in His image	Produced naturally by Yin & Yang interaction	Illusion by the causes and as a process of six-fold reincarnation	By natural working of Yin & Yang
<i>Man's Nature</i>			
Good before the fall, evil after	Originally good (Confucius' own view different)	Despite his Buddha nature, man's previous sins passed to this life	Man's nature is good
<i>Man's Evil</i>			
Has innate evil & acts of sin	No innate evil, but has misdeeds of this life	Man has sins from both previous & present lives	No innate evil but acquires falsehood in this life
<i>Man's Goodness</i>			
Tendency to dislike good; must be led by Holy Ghost to imitate Christ	Natural leaning towards goodness; educable by good example	Though not against goodness, has difficulty becoming good; must be led by reason	Though not inclined to goodness, becomes good easily, must be taught thru nature
<i>Purpose of Life</i>			
To gain eternal life. To save all men	To enjoy life and obey fate. Utilitarian	To extinguish life. Escapist	To develop life. Permissive

Appendix D: Chronology of Chinese History

Chronology of Chinese History and Religion

Overmyer, D.L. "Religions of China"
pp. 5-10

Chronology of Chinese Historical Periods and Western Dates

Major Cultural and Religious Features

Prehistory: Beginning of agricultural village life, c. 6000 B.C.	-grave objects buried with the dead -bone divination (without writing)
Shang dynasty (c. 1500-1040 B.C.)	-rule of a large area by powerful kings -bone and shell divination with written inscriptions -huge tombs with many offerings -rituals by king and priests for ancestors and nature gods
Zhou (Chou) dynasty (1040-256 B.C.)	-China's feudal period; one king with many separate states -ritual feasts for ancestors -"Decree of Heaven" as source of king's authority -first records of shamans and spirit-mediums -search for immortality -rise of philosophy and skepticism about religion for a few
Qin (Ch'in) dynasty (221-207 B.C.)	
Han (or former or Western Han) dynasty, (202 B.C.-A.D. 9)	
Xin (Hsin) dynasty (A.D. 9-23)	

Later Han (or Eastern Han) dynasty, (A.D. 25-220)
-beginnings of Chinese empire and imperial state religion
-Confucianism established as official teaching
-rise of popular religious movements
-Buddhism enters China

Three Kingdoms era (A.D. 220-280)

Wei (220-266),
Shu Han (221-263),
Wu (222-280)

Jin (Chin) (or Western Jin) dynasty (266-316)

Era of North-South division (316-589)

Sixteen Kingdoms (301-439)

Northern and Southern dynasties (317-589)

-collapse of empire; China divides into separate states again
-beginnings of Daoist religion
-Buddhism becomes established at all levels of society

Sui dynasty (581-618)

Tang dynasty (618-907)

-China reunified
-Buddhism and Daoism reach a peak of development, with many monasteries and temples
-development of Chinese Buddhist philosophy
-formation of Pure Land and Chan (Zen) Buddhism
-Confucian reaction and the suppression of Buddhist monasteries in the ninth century

Five Dynasties era (907-970)

-another period of political disunity

Song (Sung) (or Northern Song) dynasty (960-1127)

Northern Conquest dynasties
(916–1234)

Liao dynasty (916–1125)

Jin (Chin) dynasty
(1115–1234)

- China reunified once again, but with threats from other kingdoms to the north
- revival of Confucian philosophy
- spread of Buddhist devotional societies among the people
- Chan becomes the major form of monastic Buddhism

Southern Song dynasty
(1127–1279)

- North China ruled by the Jurchen (Jin) dynasty
- continued development of Confucian thought
- popular religion takes shape as a tradition in its own right

Yuan dynasty (1264–1368),
Mongol

- all of China conquered by the Mongols
- popular religious sects take their characteristic form

Ming dynasty (1368–1644)

- Mongols driven out and replaced by a Chinese emperor
- Roman Catholic missionaries in China

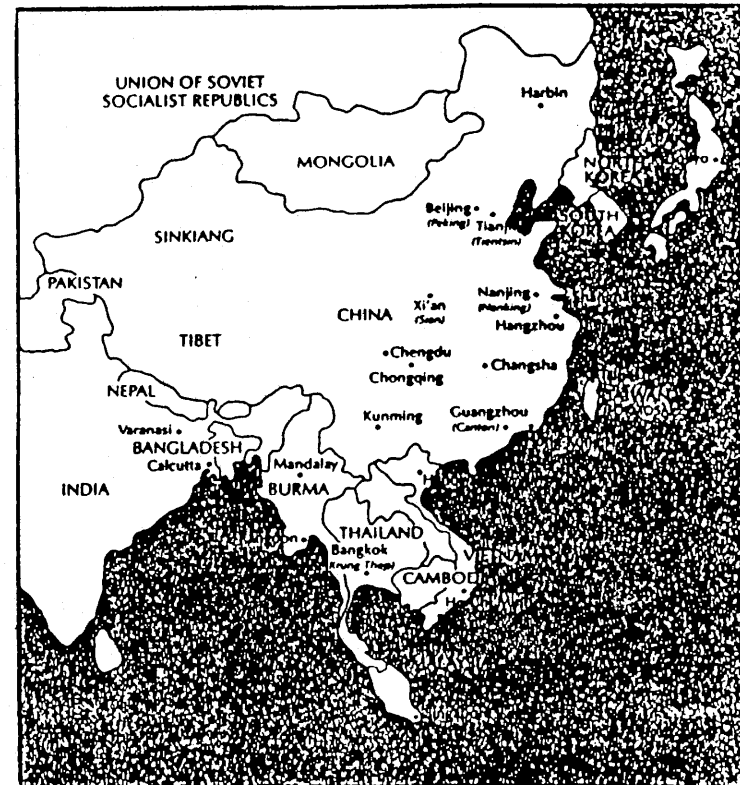
Qing (Ch'ing) dynasty
(1644–1912), Manchu

- Manchus rule China
- continued development of Buddhism, Daoism, and popular religious sects
- gradual suppression of Catholicism
- invasion of China by European powers in the nineteenth century
- Protestant missionaries arrive and Catholics return

Republic of China
(1912–1949 on mainland,
1945 to the present in
Taiwan), and

People's Republic of China,
(1949 to the present)

- collapse of the Qing empire and the rise of a new China
- invasion by Japan
- civil war between Nationalists and Communists
- Communist victory in 1949; Nationalists retreat to Taiwan
- popular religion flourishes in Taiwan
- suppression of religion during the Cultural Revolution in China, 1966–1976
- restoration of some religious activities after 1978



Appendix E: Buddhist and Chinese Literature

BUDDHIST LITERATURE

SCRIPTURE: *Tripitaka* (Sanskrit); *Tipitaka* (Pali).

There are three sections made of three distinct types of texts. *Vinaya* deals with the disciplinary regulations for the community of monks. *Sutra* relates discourses of the Buddha. *Abhidharma* is a set of texts giving detailed discussions of matters spoken of in earlier sections. Sections of the scriptures often appear as individual publications, for example, the *Dhammapada* or the *Lankavatara Sutra*.

The canon of scripture used by the *Theravada* Buddhists (called "Pali Canon") was closed by the first century B.C. Buddhist texts continued to appear which were included in the *Mahayana* Buddhist canon. It is doubtful that the *Mahayana* canon was ever closed; no consensus could be reached across the vast geographical areas *Mahayana* covered. Let us look at the major texts considered canonical by *Mahayana* Buddhists.

The *Prajnaparamita-Sutra* ("Sutra on the Greater Wisdom") exists in several versions of various lengths. It marks a new emphasis upon the *Bodhisattva* and the ideal of compassion at the same time as it speaks of the emptiness of existence (*Shunyata*). It is *Sutra* literature in the sense that the sayings are attributed to the Buddha.

The *Saddharmapundarika-Sutra* ("Sutra on the Lotus of the True Teaching") attempts to combat the conservative doctrines of the *Theravada*, primarily by characterizing them as shallow and selfish in their pursuit of enlightenment.

The *Sukhavativyuha-Sutra* ("Sutra on the Pure Land") argues the case for devotion to the Buddha as a means to salvation, which is characterized as a paradise.

The *Avatamsaka-Sutra* ("Flower-ornament Sutra") gives an extensive portrayal of the *Bodhisattva's* search for enlightenment. It views existence as interdependence of impermanent elements.

Numerous sutras teach the existence of the Buddha *Amitabha* ("Infinite Light") and his paradise in Western space, together with doctrines of devotion and faith as means for rebirth in paradise.

There appeared various attempts to summarize the essence of *Sutra* literature. Two main *Sutras* of this type are *Vajracchedika-Prajnaparamita-Sutra* ("Diamond Sutra") and the *Hridaya-Prajnaparamita-Sutra* ("Heart Sutra").

TALES.

Numerous tales of significance for moral ideas concerning life appear in a collection called *Jataka*, the birth stories and accounts of Buddha's previous lives.

COMMENTARIES.

Commentaries on all texts appear in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean, together with translations and additions to canonical texts. Buddhist studies generally require some familiarity with Sanskrit, Chinese, and Japanese. Yet those languages provide access to only the extended teachings of the *Mahayana*. Countries of Southeast Asia, most of which hold to the Pali Canon, hold texts in the languages of Burma, Thailand, Kampuchea, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia.

CHINESE LITERATURE

CONFUCIAN TEXTS

Confucius was concerned to point out the proper order of life as it existed in the Golden Age of the early dynasties. To do so he pointed to the Classics. These, together with four other books, comprise the Confucian scripture.

THE CLASSICS

All of these purport to date from pre-Confucian times and to represent the earliest literature of China. Modern scholarship disputes the claim. But the Confucian school saw itself as the protector and transmitter of this ancient literature. These five books became the chief object of study for the educated class of China for a couple thousand years. They are held by Confucianists to contain not only the answers to all the most important questions about history, but also the embodiment of moral law.

I Ching ("The Book of Change") is a book of divination which originally made sense out of the cracks which appear on a tortoise shell when heated. Eventually *yarrow* sticks made to fall in a particular way are read in terms of patterns designated by the book. The assumption is that change in the world occurs according to patterns, and the patterns of change can be known so that people can adjust their lives accordingly.

Shu Ching ("The Book of History") is a collection of ancient Chinese chronicles recording monarchs and their accomplishments. Interspersed with the accounts, however, are passages of moral counsel and advice. Contained in the *Shu Ching* is a reference to the Mandate of Heaven and its removal or transfer to the most worthy.

Shih Ching ("The Book of Odes") contains folk songs and poems probably used at ceremonies performed by kings and officials.

Li Chi ("The Book of Rituals") contains the rules for conduct of every day life. Implied is the notion that obligation must be acted out in terms of formal behavior.

Ch'un-ch'iu ("The Book of Spring and Autumn Annals") provides brief and obscure records of events affecting the state of Lu, Confucius' home area.

THE ADDITIONAL FOUR TEXTS

Lin-yu ("The Analects") is a collection of the sayings of Confucius and provides the most comprehensive account of his teaching, even though it seems to lack a clear arrangement. No precise date can be assigned to the work. It was probably compiled by disciples after Confucius' death.

Tao Hsio ("The Great Learning") is a capsule summary of the teachings of Confucius.

Chung Yung ("The Golden Mean") is traditionally ascribed to a grandson of Confucius. Its central emphasis is on the Middle Way or moderacy as the highest ideal of conduct.

Hsiao Ching ("The Classic of Filial Piety") is a prime scripture. It bases the sense of moral obligation upon respect for parents and obligation to ancestors.

One other major text must be included in any list of Confucian texts. It is Meng Tzu ("The Book of Mencius"). Living in the fourth century B.C., Mencius became Confucius' chief interpreter for Chinese history. He developed a theory of morality and of benevolent government which served as the ideal for centuries.

THE TAOIST TEXTS

Tao Te Ching ("The Book of the Way and Its Power") is attributed to Lao-Tzu. This is a small book of some five thousand characters divided into eighty-one chapters. It counsels avoidance of material gain, refusal to identify happiness with the acquisition of particular things, and the eschewing of ambition. Letting things operate according to their inner way allows all things to simply be and to do what they are made to be and to do.

Chuang Tzu ("The Book of Chuang-Tzu") is named after a philosopher who lived some two centuries after Lao-Tzu, and he is reported to have died around 270 B.C. Philosophical Taoism traces itself primarily to the writings of Chuang-Tzu. Yet his writing is loaded with irony, paradox and humor. A major theme in his writing is the distinction between what is natural and what is artificial (human creation).

Johnson, D.L. "A Reasoned Look at Asian Religions"
pp. 172-75



A Daoist priest conducts a ritual.



Buddha Attended by Two Bodhisattvas and Two Arhats

II. CHINESE VALUES AND BELIEFS HELD BEFORE YOUR CONVERSION

Before your conversion into Christianity, you were brought up or influenced by certain values (eg. filial piety) and beliefs. How far did you agree or disagree to the following statements at that time? Circle the appropriate number. The numbers and what they represent are:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | Strongly
Disagreed | Disagreed | Undecided | Agreed | Strongly
Agreed | |
| A. As I have enough to do with the present life, I should not bother about what will happen to me after this life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. I should pray to the gods and goddesses when I have troubles and problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. The belief in "fate" causes me to visit the spirit mediums and astrologers for guidance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Evil spirits and ghosts are responsible for bringing problems, so I must make them happy with offerings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| E. As long as I am sincere in my life, God will bless me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. If my good works are more than my bad ones, I will find favour with God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Hell is a place where I will pay for my sins committed on earth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H. Heaven is a special place for special people and I do not think I will be there because of my sins. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I. By the process of rebirth, I will experience many lifetimes on earth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| J. If I am sincere and good in this life, I will come back ^{to} on earth in a better place in the next life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| K. All religions are good and the same; many paths lead to God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- L. I believe in the Chinese traditional ways, whether I understand them or not.
1 2 3 4 5
- M. Sacrifice to ancestors is not an important filial duty as the ancestors can take care of themselves.
1 2 3 4 5
- N. The eldest son will be failing in his filial piety if he fails to worship his ancestors.
1 2 3 4 5
- O. It is important that my next generation make sacrifices to me when I am gone from this world.
1 2 3 4 5
- P. Ancestors have the power to protect and to bring me prosperity; thus I need to pray and sacrifice to them.
1 2 3 4 5
- Q. All religions are different; thus I should try to change the religions of others.
1 2 3 4 5
- R. Parents and children will "lose face" if they do not fulfill the duty of filial piety.
1 2 3 4 5
- S. My beliefs are personal and I do not like others to try to change my beliefs.
1 2 3 4 5
- T. Education is important to me so that I can get a good job and ^{have} social status.
1 2 3 4 5
- U. My family is important and I must fulfill my duties as a member.
1 2 3 4 5
- V. My mother runs the religious affairs in the family.
1 2 3 4 5
- W. Money, fame and pleasure are of great value in my life.
1 2 3 4 5

III. CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIANS & THEIR ACTIVITIES

Before your conversion, you might have come into contact with Christians and their activities. Please go through the following list and, where you did have such a contact, circle the number that corresponds to your general impression of its helpfulness. If there was no such contact, please circle the number 6. The numbers and what they represent are:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	No Contact	
A. Christian leaflets/books/Bible	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Christian Films/videos	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Sunday Church Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Special Meeting (In church or city-wide mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Fellowship Meeting (Adult/Youth Fellowship, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Home gathering for care/fellowship	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Personal Sharing of Beliefs (On the street/home visit, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Bible Study groups (On Sunday, weekday)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Christians Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Christian Family members/relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Special Events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Christian Kindergarten/schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Christian Tuition Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Special Outings (camps, picnics)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
P. Others (Specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS

From your own experience and your understanding of the Chinese culture, please indicate how effective you think the following methods of Christian witness are. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	
A. Christians giving out leaflets on the streets	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Christians visiting from home to home sharing their beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Christian friends being caring/sharing	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Christian family members/relatives living a good Christian life	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Showing of Christian films/videos	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Giving out of books/Bible/ Bible correspondence courses	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Invitation to Sunday church services (to find out what's going on)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Invitation to Special Meetings (In Church or city-wide Mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Invitation to special events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary - to celebrate with Christians)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Providing home support/care groups	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Providing Fellowship groups (Youth, Married, Senior Citizens)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Church as Education Center (Tuition, Kindergarten, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Church as Children/Youth/Adult Center (Social activities)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| O. Providing Medical & Social Services
(Clothing, food, etc) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| P. Invitation to Special Outings
(Camps, picnics, hikes, etc) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q. Mission Schools | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| R. Invitation to Bible Study groups
(to find out about the Christian faith) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| S. Others (specify _____) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

V. YOUR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. YOUR RELIGION BEFORE YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 BUDDHIST | 5 TAOIST | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 CONFUCIANIST | 6 PROTESTANT | |
| 3 CATHOLIC | 7 ANCESTOR-WORSHIPPER | |
| 4 FREE-THINKER | 8 OTHERS | |
| | Specify _____ | |

B. AGE OF CONVERSION

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--------------------------|
| 1 Under 5 | 6 36 - 45 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 6 - 12 | 7 46 - 55 | |
| 3 13 - 17 | 8 56 - 65 | |
| 4 18 - 25 | 9 65 & above | |
| 5 26 - 35 | | |

C. I AM A CHRISTIAN OF:

- | | | |
|------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 1st generation | 3 3rd generation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 2nd generation | 4 4th generation | |

VI. FINAL CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO YOUR CONVERSION

From the list below, please indicate the final circumstances or occasions under which you trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Please circle "Yes" or "No".

- | | | |
|---|----------|--------------------------|
| A. Someone witnessing on street/in home | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B. Friends sharing Gospel | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C. Witness of Family members/relatives | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D. Use of Christian literature/Bible | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | | |
|--|----------|--------------------------|
| E. Church Sunday Service | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| F. Evangelistic Meeting (Church, city-wide) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| G. Bible Study class (Sunday, weekdays) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| H. Home Gathering for care/fellowship | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| I. Special Events (Christmas, Easter, etc) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| J. Fellowship Meeting (YF, AF, etc) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| K. Special Outings (camps, picnic) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| L. Educational Center (Tuition, schools, etc) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| M. Seminar/counselling | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| N. Personal crisis/problems
(sickness, job problems, etc) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| O. Great Preaching | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| P. Great music/singing/choir | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q. Conviction of sins | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| R. Testimony of Christian | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| S. Films/Videos | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| T. Others (specify _____) | Yes / No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**THANKS AGAIN SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP! MAY GOD
BLESS YOU GREATLY!**

II. CHINESE VALUES AND BELIEFS

You have been brought up or influenced by certain values (e.g. filial piety) and beliefs. How far do you agree or disagree to the following statements? Circle the appropriate number. The numbers and what they represent are:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

A. As I have enough to do with the present life, I should not bother about what will happen to me after this life.

1 2 3 4 5

B. I should pray to the gods and goddesses when I have troubles and problems.

1 2 3 4 5

C. The belief in "fate" causes me to visit the spirit mediums and astrologers for guidance.

1 2 3 4 5

D. Evil spirits and ghosts are responsible for bringing problems, so I must make them happy with offerings.

1 2 3 4 5

E. As long as I am sincere in my life, God will bless me.

1 2 3 4 5

F. If my good works are more than my bad ones, I will find favour with God.

1 2 3 4 5

G. Hell is a place where I will pay for my sins committed on earth.

1 2 3 4 5

H. Heaven is a special place for special people and I do not think I will be there because of my sins.

1 2 3 4 5

I. By the process of rebirth, I will experience many lifetimes on earth.

1 2 3 4 5

J. If I am sincere and good in this life, I will come back on earth in a better place in the next life.

1 2 3 4 5

K. All religions are good and the same; many paths lead to God.

1 2 3 4 5

- L. I believe in the Chinese traditional ways, whether I understand them or not.
1 2 3 4 5
- M. Sacrifice to ancestors is not an important filial duty as the ancestors can take care of themselves.
1 2 3 4 5
- N. The eldest son will be failing in his filial piety if he fails to worship his ancestors.
1 2 3 4 5
- O. It is important that my next generation makes sacrifices to me when I am gone from this world.
1 2 3 4 5
- P. Ancestors have the power to protect and to bring me prosperity; thus I need to pray and sacrifice to them.
1 2 3 4 5
- Q. All religions are different; thus I should try to change the religions of others.
1 2 3 4 5
- R. Parents and children will "lose face" if they do not fulfill the duty of filial piety.
1 2 3 4 5
- S. My beliefs are personal and I do not like others to try to change my beliefs.
1 2 3 4 5
- T. Education is important to me so that I can get a good job and social status.
1 2 3 4 5
- U. My family is important and I must fulfill my duties as a member.
1 2 3 4 5
- V. My mother runs the religious affairs in the family.
1 2 3 4 5
- W. Money, fame and pleasure are of great value in my life.
1 2 3 4 5

III. CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIANS & THEIR ACTIVITIES

You may have had some contacts with Christians and their activities before. The following are some you may have encountered. Please circle the number that corresponds to your general impression of the helpfulness of each. If there was no such contact, please circle the number 6. The numbers and what they represent are:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Very	Quite	Uncertain	Quite	Very	No	
	Helpful	Helpful		Unhelpful	Unhelpful	Contact	
A. Christian leaflets/books/Bible	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Christian Films/Videos	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Sunday Church Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Special Meeting (In church or city-wide mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Fellowship Meeting (Adult/Youth Fellowship, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Home gathering for care/fellowship	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Personal Sharing of Beliefs (On the street/home visit, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Bible Study groups (On Sunday, weekday)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Christians Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Christian Family members/relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Special Events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Christian Kindergarten/schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Christian Tuition Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Special Outings (camps, picnics)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
P. Others (Specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

From your own experience and your understanding of the Chinese culture, please tell us what you believe the churches and Christians should be doing for you and the Chinese community. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	
A. Christians giving out leaflets on the streets	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Christians visiting from home to home sharing their beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Christian friends being caring/sharing	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Christian family members/relatives living a good Christian life	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Showing of Christian films/videos	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Giving out of books/Bible/ Bible correspondence courses	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Invitation to Sunday church services (to find out what's going on)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Invitation to Special Meetings (In Church or city-wide Mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Invitation to special events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary - to celebrate with Christians)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Providing home support/care groups	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Providing Fellowship groups (Youth, Married, Senior Citizens)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Church as Education Center (Tuition, Kindergarten, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Church as Children/Youth/Adult Center (Social activities)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------------|
| O. | Providing Medical & Social Services
(Clothing, food, etc) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| P. | Invitation to Special Outings
(Camps, picnics, hikes, etc) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Q. | Mission Schools | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| R. | Invitation to Bible Study groups
(to find out about the Christian faith) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| S. | Others (specify _____) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**THANKS AGAIN SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP! MAY GOD
BLESS YOU GREATLY!**

II. CHINESE VALUES AND BELIEFS HELD BEFORE YOUR CONVERSION

Before your conversion into Christianity, you were brought up or influenced by certain values (eg. filial piety) and beliefs. How far did you agree or disagree to the following statements at that time? Circle the appropriate number. The numbers and what they represent are:

- | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|
| | Strongly
Disagreed | Disagreed | Undecided | Agreed | Strongly
Agreed | |
| A. As I have enough to do with the present life, I should not bother about what will happen to me after this life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 17.0 | 28.0 | 19.0 | 31.7 | 4.3 | |
| B. I should pray to the gods and goddesses when I have troubles and problems. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 20.0 | 17.7 | 17.0 | 33.0 | 12.3 | |
| C. The belief in "fate" causes me to visit the spirit mediums and astrologers for guidance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 33.7 | 33.7 | 12.3 | 17.0 | 3.3 | |
| D. Evil spirits and ghosts are responsible for bringing problems, so I must make them happy with offerings. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 31.0 | 27.3 | 15.3 | 22.3 | 4.0 | |
| E. As long as I am sincere in my life, God will bless me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.7 | 8.0 | 12.3 | 55.3 | 20.7 | |
| F. If my good works are more than my bad ones, I will find favour with God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 5.0 | 10.7 | 18.3 | 50.0 | 16.0 | |
| G. Hell is a place where I will pay for my sins committed on earth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 3.0 | 8.33 | 17.0 | 47.3 | 24.3 | |
| H. Heaven is a special place for special people and I do not think I will be there because of my sins. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 8.3 | 23.0 | 40.0 | 21.3 | 7.3 | |
| I. By the process of rebirth, I will experience many lifetimes on earth. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 19.7 | 19.3 | 36.7 | 20.7 | 3.7 | |
| J. If I am sincere and good in this life, I will come back on earth in a better place in the next life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 18.7 | 18.0 | 31.7 | 26.7 | 5.0 | |
| K. All religions are good and the same; many paths lead to God. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | 12.7 | 11.3 | 25.0 | 37.7 | 13.3 | |

- L. I believe in the Chinese traditional ways, whether I understand them or not.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.3 | 24.0 | 20.0 | 43.0 | 5.7 |
- M. Sacrifice to ancestors is not an important filial duty as the ancestors can take care of themselves.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.7 | 26.7 | 31.7 | 27.3 | 6.7 |
- N. The eldest son will be failing in his filial piety if he fails to worship his ancestors.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16.3 | 26.3 | 21.3 | 30.7 | 5.3 |
- O. It is important that my next generation makes sacrifices to me when I am gone from this world.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26.3 | 28.0 | 29.3 | 13.3 | 3.0 |
- P. Ancestors have the power to protect and to bring me prosperity; thus I need to pray and sacrifice to them.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21.7 | 23.3 | 24.0 | 26.7 | 4.3 |
- Q. All religions are different; thus I should try to change the religions of others.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13.0 | 37.7 | 35.3 | 10.3 | 3.7 |
- R. Parents and children will "lose face" if they do not fulfill the duty of filial piety.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.7 | 15.7 | 17.0 | 48.3 | 11.3 |
- S. My beliefs are personal and I do not like others to try to change my beliefs.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.3 | 18.7 | 22.7 | 42.7 | 12.7 |
- T. Education is important to me so that I can get a good job and social status.
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.7 | 4.3 | 2.7 | 54.0 | 37.3 |
- U. My family is important and I must fulfill my duties as a member.
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 0.7 | 1.3 | 2.7 | 57.3 | 38.0 |
- V. My mother runs the religious affairs in the family.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.3 | 28.3 | 12.7 | 38.3 | 10.3 |
- W. Money, fame and pleasure are of great value in my life.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.3 | 26.3 | 13.3 | 36.0 | 13.7 |

III. CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIANS & THEIR ACTIVITIES

Before your conversion, you might have come into contact with Christians and their activities. Please go through the following list and, where you did have such a contact, circle the number that corresponds to your general impression of its helpfulness. If there was no such contact, please circle the number 6. The numbers and what they represent are:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	No Contact	
A. Christian leaflets/books/Bible	1 27.7	2 42.3	3 13.3	4 5.7	5 3.0	6 8.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
B. Christian Films/videos	1 16.3	2 40.0	3 11.0	4 3.7	5 2.0	6 27.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
C. Sunday Church Service	1 22.0	2 32.0	3 15.7	4 3.3	5 3.0	6 24.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
D. Special Meeting (In church or city-wide mtg)	1 15.7	2 34.7	3 13.0	4 4.7	5 1.3	6 30.7	<input type="checkbox"/>
E. Fellowship Meeting (Adult/Youth Fellowship, etc)	1 23.7	2 36.0	3 6.0	4 4.7	5 1.3	6 28.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
F. Home gathering for care/fellowship	1 15.0	2 22.7	3 10.3	4 1.0	5 1.0	6 50.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
G. Personal Sharing of Beliefs (On the street/home visit, etc.)	1 20.7	2 36.0	3 12.3	4 5.7	5 5.0	6 20.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
H. Bible Study groups (On Sunday, weekday)	1 17.7	2 30.3	3 6.7	4 2.3	5 0.7	6 42.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
I. Christians Friends	1 35.7	2 39.7	3 12.3	4 5.3	5 1.7	6 5.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
J. Christian Family members/relatives	1 21.3	2 26.7	3 12.7	4 4.0	5 2.3	6 33.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
K. Special Events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary)	1 16.7	2 44.3	3 9.0	4 6.3	5 1.3	6 22.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
L. Christian Kindergarten/schools	1 14.3	2 21.7	3 12.0	4 5.0	5 0.7	6 46.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
M. Christian Tuition Center	1 5.7	2 10.0	3 10.7	4 2.0	5 0.3	6 71.3	<input type="checkbox"/>
N. Special Outings (camps, picnics)	1 14.0	2 28.0	3 9.0	4 3.0	5 1.0	6 45.0	<input type="checkbox"/>
O. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1 9.3	2 12.7	3 10.0	4 1.7	5 0.7	6 65.7	<input type="checkbox"/>
P. Others (Specify <u>Drama</u>)	1 1.3	2 0.7	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS OF CHRISTIAN WITNESS

From your own experience and your understanding of the Chinese culture, please indicate how effective you think the following methods of Christian witness are. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	
A. Christians giving out leaflets on the streets	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5.7	45.0	22.3	24.3	2.7	
B. Christians visiting from home to home sharing their beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.3	37.0	27.0	20.7	3.0	
C. Christian friends being caring/sharing	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	76.3	21.7	0.3	0.3	1.3	
D. Christian family members/relatives living a good Christian life	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	80.0	16.3	2.0	0.7	1.0	
E. Showing of Christian films/videos	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	17.0	65.0	14.3	2.7	1.0	
F. Giving out of books/Bible/ Bible correspondence courses	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	17.7	55.3	19.7	7.0	0.3	
G. Invitation to Sunday church services (to find out what's going on)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19.0	60.7	13.7	5.3	1.3	
H. Invitation to Special Meetings (In Church or city-wide Mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	22.0	55.3	17.3	3.3	1.7	
I. Invitation to special events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary - to celebrate with Christians)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	30.7	58.3	7.0	2.7	1.3	
J. Providing home support/care groups	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	40.0	45.0	12.3	1.7	1.0	
K. Providing Fellowship groups (Youth, Married, Senior Citizens)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	35.0	50.7	11.7	1.7	1.0	
L. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	25.0	46.0	24.7	2.3	2.0	
M. Church as Education Center (Tuition, Kindergarten, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	28.0	48.3	19.7	2.3	1.7	
N. Church as Children/Youth/Adult Center (Social activities)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	27.0	44.3	23.3	3.0	1.7	

O.	Providing Medical & Social Services (Clothing, food, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
		22.33	46.67	25	5.0	1.0	
P.	Invitation to Special Outings (Camps, picnics, hikes, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
		21.67	51.33	15	4.0	1.0	
Q.	Mission Schools	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
		22.0	44.33	25.67	4.0	1.0	
R.	Invitation to Bible Study groups (to find out about the Christian faith)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
		22.0	53.33	17	4.67	0.67	
S.	Others (specify <u>Drama</u>)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
		0.67	0.33				

V. YOUR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

A. YOUR RELIGION BEFORE YOU BECAME A CHRISTIAN

1	BUDDHIST	15.33%	5	TAOIST	16.0%	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	CONFUCIANIST	0%	6	PROTESTANT	3.67%	
3	CATHOLIC	2.33%	7	ANCESTOR-WORSHIPPER	17%	
4	FREE-THINKER	41.0%	8	OTHERS	4.67%	
				Specify <u>Muslim, JW</u>		

B. AGE OF CONVERSION

1	Under 5	2.0%	6	36 - 45	2.67%	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	6 - 12	10.33%	7	46 - 55	1.0%	
3	13 - 17	44.67%	8	56 - 65	0%	
4	18 - 25	32.33%	9	65 & above	0%	
5	26 - 35	7.0%				

C. I AM A CHRISTIAN OF:

1	1st generation	81.67%	3	3rd generation	6.33%	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	2nd generation	10.33%	4	4th generation	1.33%	

VI. FINAL CIRCUMSTANCES LEADING TO YOUR CONVERSION

From the list below, please indicate the final circumstances or occasions under which you trusted Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Please circle "Yes" or "No".

A.	Someone witnessing on street/in home	Yes / No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		20.0 79.67 (0.33)	
B.	Friends sharing Gospel	Yes / No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		58.67 41.0 (0.33)	
C.	Witness of Family members/relatives	Yes / No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		23.33 76.0 (0.67)	
D.	Use of Christian literature/Bible	Yes / No	<input type="checkbox"/>
		53.33 46.0 (0.67)	

E.	Church Sunday Service	Yes / No 40.67 59.33		<input type="checkbox"/>
F.	Evangelistic Meeting (Church, city-wide)	Yes / No 31.33 68.67		<input type="checkbox"/>
G.	Bible Study class (Sunday, weekdays)	Yes / No 35.0 65.0		<input type="checkbox"/>
H.	Home Gathering for care/fellowship	Yes / No 16.67 83.33		<input type="checkbox"/>
I.	Special Events (Christmas, Easter, etc)	Yes / No 29.0 70.67	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
J.	Fellowship Meeting (YF, AF, etc)	Yes / No 36.67 63.0	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
K.	Special Outings (camps, picnic)	Yes / No 26.0 73.67		<input type="checkbox"/>
L.	Educational Center (Tuition, schools, etc)	Yes / No 11.33 88.67		<input type="checkbox"/>
M.	Seminar/counselling	Yes / No 13.0 86.67	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
N.	Personal crisis/problems (sickness, job problems, etc)	Yes / No 31.67 68.0	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
O.	Great Preaching	Yes / No 29.67 70.33		<input type="checkbox"/>
P.	Great music/singing/choir	Yes / No 21.67 78.0	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Q.	Conviction of sins	Yes / No 67.33 34.67		<input type="checkbox"/>
R.	Testimony of Christian	Yes / No 51.33 48.67		<input type="checkbox"/>
S.	Films/Videos	Yes / No 19.67 80.0	(0.33)	<input type="checkbox"/>
T.	Others (specify <u>Drama</u>)	Yes / No 1.0		<input type="checkbox"/>

THANKS AGAIN SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP! MAY GOD BLESS YOU GREATLY!

II. CHINESE VALUES AND BELIEFS

You have been brought up or influenced by certain values (e.g. filial piety) and beliefs. How far do you agree or disagree to the following statements? Circle the appropriate number. The numbers and what they represent are:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree

- A. As I have enough to do with the present life, I should not bother about what will happen to me after this life.

1	2	3	4	5
8.0	30.0	18.0	35.3	8.0

- B. I should pray to the gods and goddesses when I have troubles and problems.

1	2	3	4	5
18.0	33.3	13.3	28.3	7.0

- C. The belief in "fate" causes me to visit the spirit mediums and astrologers for guidance.

1	2	3	4	5
29.0	41.7	15.3	12.0	2.0

- D. Evil spirits and ghosts are responsible for bringing problems, so I must make them happy with offerings.

1	2	3	4	5
31.0	39.7	18.7	8.3	2.3

- E. As long as I am sincere in my life, God will bless me.

1	2	3	4	5
5.3	8.7	13.3	53.0	19.7

- F. If my good works are more than my bad ones, I will find favour with God.

1	2	3	4	5
10.3	27.0	22.7	33.0	7.0

- G. Hell is a place where I will pay for my sins committed on earth.

1	2	3	4	5
8.0	14.7	30.7	35.7	11.0

- H. Heaven is a special place for special people and I do not think I will be there because of my sins.

1	2	3	4	5
9.0	27.3	40.7	19.3	3.7

- I. By the process of rebirth, I will experience many lifetimes on earth.

1	2	3	4	5
8.3	14.0	41.3	29.7	6.7

- J. If I am sincere and good in this life, I will come back on earth in a better place in the next life.

1	2	3	4	5
7.0	15.3	36.3	32.3	9.0

- K. All religions are good and the same; many paths lead to God.

1	2	3	4	5
3.7	9.3	13.0	44.3	29.7

- L. I believe in the Chinese traditional ways, whether I understand them or not.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.3 | 34.7 | 21.3 | 32.7 | 5.0 |
- M. Sacrifice to ancestors is not an important filial duty as the ancestors can take care of themselves.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.3 | 31.3 | 32.3 | 21.7 | 4.3 |
- N. The eldest son will be failing in his filial piety if he fails to worship his ancestors.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18.7 | 41.3 | 18.3 | 9.3 | 1.0 |
- O. It is important that my next generation makes sacrifices to me when I am gone from this world.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29.3 | 42.0 | 18.3 | 9.3 | 1.0 |
- P. Ancestors have the power to protect and to bring me prosperity; thus I need to pray and sacrifice to them.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18.0 | 44.3 | 22.3 | 13.0 | 2.3 |
- Q. All religions are different; thus I should try to change the religions of others.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 43.7 | 40.0 | 12.0 | 3.7 | 0.7 |
- R. Parents and children will "lose face" if they do not fulfill the duty of filial piety.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13.3 | 36.7 | 16.0 | 28.0 | 6.0 |
- S. My beliefs are personal and I do not like others to try to change my beliefs.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|-----|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.3 | 11.3 | 8.3 | 47.0 | 32.0 |
- T. Education is important to me so that I can get a good job and social status.
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 1.0 | 8.7 | 2.7 | 56.3 | 31.3 |
- U. My family is important and I must fulfill my duties as a member.
- | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 0.7 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 42.3 | 53.7 |
- V. My mother runs the religious affairs in the family.
- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10.7 | 29.7 | 11.7 | 36.7 | 11.3 |
- W. Money, fame and pleasure are of great value in my life.
- | | | | | |
|-----|------|------|------|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.3 | 35.7 | 22.3 | 29.0 | 5.7 |

III. CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIANS & THEIR ACTIVITIES

You may have had some contacts with Christians and their activities before. The following are some you may have encountered. Please circle the number that corresponds to your general impression of the helpfulness of each. If there was no such contact, please circle the number 6. The numbers and what they represent are:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	No Contact	
A. Christian leaflets/books/Bible	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	9.7	35.3	29.0	8.7	4.7	12.7	
B. Christian Films/Videos	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7.0	22.0	19.3	4.7	2.3	44.7	
C. Sunday Church Service	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6.7	22.7	18.3	5.0	2.0	45.3	
D. Special Meeting (In church or city-wide mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4.3	15.3	14.0	5.0	1.3	60.0	
E. Fellowship Meeting (Adult/Youth Fellowship, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5.0	18.0	12.7	5.0	1.3	58.0	
F. Home gathering for care/fellowship	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5.0	15.3	13.7	3.3	1.7	61.0	
G. Personal Sharing of Beliefs (On the street/home visit, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6.3	18.3	19.7	14.3	7.7	33.7	
H. Bible Study groups (On Sunday, weekday)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5.7	13.0	9.7	3.7	2.0	66.0	
I. Christians Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.7	51.3	20.0	6.7	2.0	7.3	
J. Christian Family members/relatives	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8.3	33.3	20.0	5.3	2.0	31.0	
K. Special Events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13.3	32.0	19.3	5.7	2.0	27.7	
L. Christian Kindergarten/schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7.0	21.0	11.3	2.0	2.0	56.7	
M. Christian Tuition Center	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3.7	11.0	11.0	2.3	2.0	70.0	
N. Special Outings (camps, picnics)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	5.0	22.0	12.0	3.0	2.7	55.3	
O. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7.3	18.0	6.0	2.7	2.0	64.0	
P. Others (Specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5	6	<input type="checkbox"/>

IV. WHAT SHOULD THE CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS BE DOING?

From your own experience and your understanding of the Chinese culture, please tell us what you believe the churches and Christians should be doing for you and the Chinese community. Circle the number that corresponds to your opinion.

	1	2	3	4	5	
	Very Helpful	Quite Helpful	Uncertain	Quite Unhelpful	Very Unhelpful	
A. Christians giving out leaflets on the streets	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3.0	26.3	28.3	26.7	15.7	
B. Christians visiting from home to home sharing their beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	3.0	18.3	29.0	29.7	20.0	
C. Christian friends being caring/sharing	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	26.7	54.3	15.0	2.7	1.3	
D. Christian family members/relatives living a good Christian life	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	23.3	36.0	35.0	3.3	2.3	
E. Showing of Christian films/videos	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	8.0	27.3	45.7	12.7	6.3	
F. Giving out of books/Bible/Bible correspondence courses	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	4.3	29.3	42.0	17.3	7.0	
G. Invitation to Sunday church services (to find out what's going on)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	7.0	38.7	34.3	14.0	6.0	
H. Invitation to Special Meetings (In Church or city-wide Mtg)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	6.0	29.3	42.0	15.0	7.7	
I. Invitation to special events (Christmas, Easter, Church Anniversary - to celebrate with Christians)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	12.3	49.0	24.7	9.0	5.0	
J. Providing home support/care groups	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21.0	49.7	22.0	3.0	4.3	
K. Providing Fellowship groups (Youth, Married, Senior Citizens)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	13.0	40.7	38.0	33.0	4.0	
L. Seminars/counselling on felt needs (Marriage, parenting, drugs, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	19.0	48.7	34.3	4.3	3.7	
M. Church as Education Center (Tuition, Kindergarten, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	21.0	44.7	28.0	3.7	4.7	
N. Church as Children/Youth/Adult Center (Social activities)	1	2	3	4	5	<input type="checkbox"/>
	16.0	49.0	26.3	4.0	4.7	

O.	Providing Medical & Social Services (Clothing, food, etc)	1	2	3	4	5		<input type="checkbox"/>
		31.7	49.7	16.0	1.3	1.3		
P.	Invitation to Special Outings (Camps, picnics, hikes, etc)	1	2	3	4	5		<input type="checkbox"/>
		10.0	45.7	35.3	5.7	3.3		
Q.	Mission Schools	1	2	3	4	5		<input type="checkbox"/>
		17.0	34.3	41.7	4.0	3.0		
R.	Invitation to Bible Study groups (to find out about the Christian faith)	1	2	3	4	5		<input type="checkbox"/>
		9.3	28.0	45.0	10.7	7.0		
S.	Others (specify _____)	1	2	3	4	5		<input type="checkbox"/>

**THANKS AGAIN SO VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP! MAY GOD
BLESS YOU GREATLY!**

Appendix J

Table 6

Ranking of Chinese Values and Beliefs by Total Scores,
with Corresponding Frequencies for Degrees
of Importance by Christians before Conversion

Values and Beliefs	Importance					Score
	SDisag.	Disag.	Uncert.	Agr.	SAgr.	
IIU Family	2	4	8	172	114	392
IIT Education	5	13	8	162	112	363
IIG Hell	9	25	51	142	73	245
IIE Sincerity	11	24	37	166	62	244
IIF Good Works	15	32	55	150	48	184
IIS Personal	10	56	68	128	38	128
IIR Fil. Piety	23	47	50	145	34	120
IIK Paths-God	38	34	75	113	40	83
IIW \$ & Fame	31	79	40	108	41	49
IIL Chin. Ways	22	72	60	129	17	47
IIV Mother	31	85	38	115	31	30
IIB Troubles	60	53	50	99	37	0
IIH Heaven	25	69	120	64	22	-11
IIN Eldest Son	49	79	64	92	16	-53
IIJ Next Life	56	54	95	80	15	-56
IIA Pres. Life	51	84	56	95	13	-65
III Rebirth	59	58	110	62	11	-92
IIP Anc. Wor.	65	70	72	80	13	-94
IID Ghosts	93	82	46	67	12	-117
IIO Sacrifice	79	84	88	40	9	-184
IIC Fate	101	101	37	51	10	-232

Note: Item scores were computing first by multiplying each cell value (from -2 for "strongly disagreed," -1 "disagreed," 0 "uncertain," 1 for "agreed," and 2 "strongly agreed," by its corresponding frequency, and then by summing the products.

Appendix K

Teaching Material for Outreach in Groups

OUTREACH

Outreach is a broad concept, encompassing all the loving expressions from the cup of cold water given to another, to the evangelistic presentation of our faith in Jesus Christ. Matthew 25:34-40, 1 Timothy 6:18, Acts 4:20, 2 Corinthians 5:19,20, Acts 1:8, 2 Timothy 4:2, Romans 1:16, Mark 16:15.

WHAT IS OUTREACH?

- 1 Outreach includes evangelism. It is maintaining a relationship with those who do not know Christ and patiently, lovingly, helping those who are ready to respond.
- 2 Outreach encompasses all of our outgoing expressions of love toward those who have not yet received Christ.
- 3 Outreach is basically developing a lifestyle where Jesus Christ has the freedom to express His nature in us.

OUTREACH PLAN

A well-planned outreach ministry equips you in the following ways:

- 1 to open lines of communication.
- 2 to build bridge of friendship.
- 3 to present your testimony.
- 4 to relate the good news of the gospel.

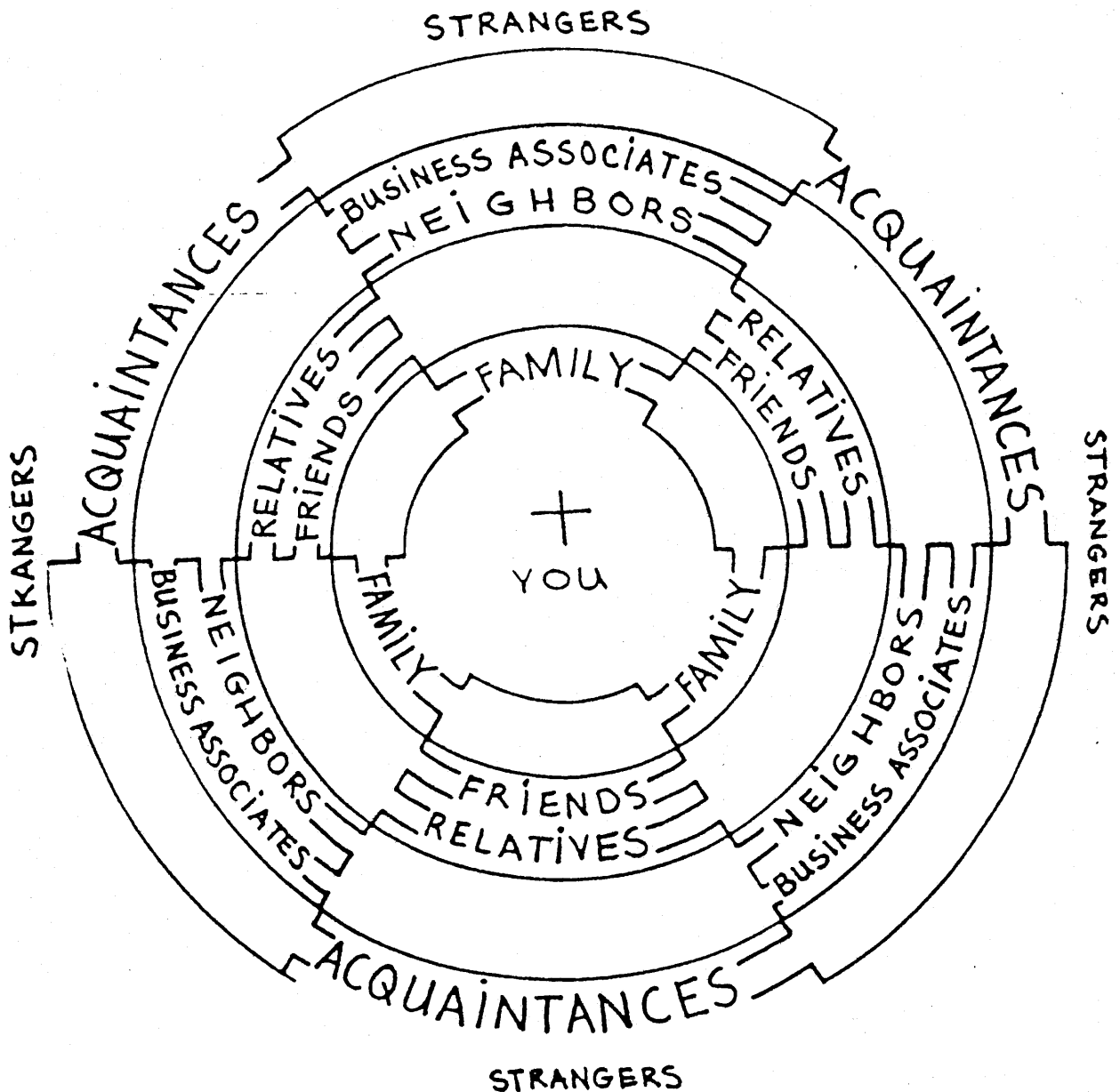
GROUP OUTREACH ACTIVITIES include:

- 1 building bridges of relationships individually.
- 2 sharing personal testimonies.
- 3 sharing a gospel presentation.
- 4 building relationships through group outreaches.
- 5 evangelism through group outreaches.

(Some of the notes are from EE, CWT, and "Churches Alive.")

"Let your light so shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matt. 5:16)

"My God-given Circles of Concern"



"RELATIONAL EVANGELISM" uses existing relationships and new ones as channels through which to communicate the gospel.

These are the people I plan to share the gospel with this semester.

Date: _____

Signed: _____

DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS WITH NON-CHRISTIANS

I OBSERVING PEOPLE

- marital status and family members
- occupation and educational background
- living arrangements and location of home
- interests, likes, dislikes, hobbies, sports
- experiences, situations, or interests we have in common
- problems
- needs
- health situation
- dreams and hopes
- cultural, ethnic, and religious background
- how leisure time is used
- friends
- clubs
- possessions
- personality traits (for eg friendly or standoffish; quiet or talkative; easy-going or hard-driving; analytical or overtly emotional; restless or content; sad or happy)

II ACTIVITIES FOR INITIATING OR DEVELOPING RELATIONSHIPS

- Plan a neighbourhood barbecue or picnic.
- Ask them to your house for dinner or dessert.
- Go to a sporting event or to the beach together.
- Share a table with someone in the lunchroom at school or work.
- Join a fraternal or charitable association.
- Invite them out to eat.

III HELPS FOR MAKING FRIENDS

- Listen for unique or shared interests.
- Ask what line of work a person is in, and how he or she entered it.
- Ask about a person's spouse and family (and remember their names).
- Avoid complaining or criticizing other people or groups.
- Develop openness and transparency - let people see what you're like.
- Remember details - store away facts, and write them down when you get home.
- Maintain a positive attitude and a smile.
- Be real - let people know you have problems too.
- Ask a married couple how they met.
- Spend more time listening than talking. Listen to their worries and desires.
- Let them know you've been wanting to get to know them.
- Exhibit joy and God-given purpose in your life, but without acting too "religious."
- Let them know they're important to you. Give them your full attention.
- Enjoy them, and let them enjoy you.

IV CONTINUING RELATIONSHIPS

- Refer to facts from earlier conversations (not mechanically, but showing true concern).
- Even if there is little or no reciprocation, invite them back, unless they are showing signs of feeling pressured.
- Tell them you'll be on the lookout for anything they've expressed a need for - for eg, a job opening, a used car for sale in your neighbourhood, etc. Keep your promise.
- Follow up on an illness or unresolved problem with a telephone call or a quick visit.
- Don't involve yourself in gossip, political controversy, or sticking up for your "rights".
- Send a card, flowers, or other thoughtful communication when they are experiencing illness or the loss of a loved one.
- Stop by on an evening - but don't overstay your welcome.
- Suggest that their children come and play with yours.
- Listen patiently and sympathize with their problems. Don't rush to tell them what they "should" do. Share their burden with them.
- Go together to a sporting event or dinner.
- Take their kids with you to the zoo, to the park, or to get ice cream.
- Try to adopt some of their interests, except in areas of sin.
- Don't recoil at unregenerate behaviour or language. Don't avoid them because of this. You can accept someone while not copying their behaviour.
- Show your own interests. Share your own problems and frustrations. Don't be afraid to let them know God is your help and your guide.
- Ask them if they would like to go to church with you.
- Lend them a book which might help them through a crisis or answer a particular need.
- Make yourself available to help them with a project at their house or in their yard.

Workshop "Developing Relationships with Non-Christians"

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3—Becoming Sensitive _____

Step 4—Initiating a Relationship _____

Step 5—Continuing and Deepening the Relationship _____

Workshop "Developing Relationships with Non-Christians"

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3—Becoming Sensitive _____

Step 4—Initiating a Relationship _____

Step 5—Continuing and Deepening the Relationship _____

One Hundred One Ways to Find Prospects

1. List unchurched families from Vacation Bible School records.
2. Conduct an inside census.
3. Locate newcomers by calling all new listings in phone directory.
4. Update a former community survey.
5. Identify homes where children are playing in the yards on Sunday morning.
6. Ask youth to survey blocks in which they live.
7. Compare church recreation participants to Sunday School rolls.
8. Subscribe to newcomer service for information on prospects.
9. Locate homebound by publishing lists and asking for update.
10. Use telephone directory to survey an entire telephone exchange.
11. Subscribe to local *Legal News* for information on new homeowners.
12. Canvass university dormitories for unchurched.
13. Check with BSU leaders for unenrolled students.
14. Survey apartments adjacent to campus for student prospects.
15. Check college admissions office for church preferences of students.
16. Confer with student housing office for names of students.
17. Check with workers at day care centers near colleges.
18. Confer with workers providing nurseries near colleges.
19. Confer with workers at college infirmaries.
20. Confer with workers at kindergartens provided near colleges.
21. Request information on prospects of mobile home park managers.
22. Ask neighborhood ice cream routeman where children live.
23. Request religious affiliation of students from college registrars.
24. Call college placement offices for newly employed.
25. Enlist help of diaper service route man for prospect information.
26. Check with receptionists in doctors' offices.
27. Check with receptionists in dentists' offices.
28. Confer with instructors in trade schools.
29. Enlist the help of school guidance counselors.
30. Contact administration of commercial trade schools for information.
31. Identify shift workers through church survey.
32. Ask shift workers to identify colleagues who are prospects.
33. Gather information on those who work in hospitals.
34. Survey membership for those who are food service workers.
35. Survey membership for those who are hotel and motel employees.
36. List church members who work on Sunday.
37. Ask Sunday workers to provide names of colleagues with whom they work.

38. Contact international clubs for information on foreign students.
39. Talk to labor unions for information on migrant workers.
40. Confer with military base chaplains for unchurched families.
41. Inquire of seamen's service for information on internationals.
42. Secure cooperation of associational office on any prospects.
43. Use the door-to-door survey to locate unchurched people.
44. Request business people to identify associates who are unchurched.
45. Request church members to identify neighbors who are unchurched.
46. Identify unenrolled parents of children enrolled in Sunday School.
47. Find unchurched parents from day care centers' enrollments.
48. Identify unchurched parents of children enrolled in church day schools.
49. Identify unchurched parents of children enrolled in church kindergartens.
50. Request mail response from radio audience.
51. Secure names from Dial-a-Devotional service.
52. Survey by phone newcomers listed by utilities turn-ons.
53. Contact moving companies for newcomers.
54. Use tip prospect cards in pew racks.
55. Use "I Know a Prospect" cards throughout the church.
56. Follow up on information received from Sunday School visitors.
57. Follow up on information received from church worship visitors.
58. Check with base chaplain for those with special Bible study needs.
59. Request information on newcomers from real estate agents.
60. Report the unchurched attending Bible Study Fellowships near military bases.
61. Use military base phone directories to take telephone survey.
62. Locate deaf by checking with community institutions.
63. Locate blind by checking with community institutions.
64. Check with public health service for names of handicapped persons.
65. Locate mentally retarded through Mental Retardation Association.
66. Secure information on the families of mentally retarded.
67. Check church roll against Sunday School roll for Bible study prospects.
68. Identify unchurched persons in one's vocation, discipline, and/or professional club.
69. Request union members to identify unchurched work associates.
70. Talk to nursing home personnel for information

71. Request personnel at retirement center for prospect information.
72. Locate persons in correctional institutions desiring Bible study.
73. Enlist help of institutional doctors to identify prospects.
74. Enlist help of institutional chaplains to identify prospects.
75. Secure assistance of relatives of institutionalized persons.
76. Enlist help of institutional managers in finding persons to whom church can minister.
77. Enlist help of employees at institutions for providing prospect information.
78. Clean local newspaper for information on newborns.
79. Check the hospital reports in newspapers for names of new babies.
80. Enclose a "return card" in graduate's congratulations.
81. Send congratulations to those who have been reported achieving any public recognition. Request information on enclosed return card.
82. Secure cooperation of local businesses to identify recent high school graduates.
83. Identify recent graduates with bank's list of new accounts.
84. Request apartment managers' assistance in locating recent graduates.
85. Ask guidance counselors for names of recent graduates.
86. Follow up on prospects located by bus ministry.
87. Ask bus riders to identify other unchurched children.
88. Follow up on families reached in bus outreach.
89. Contact welfare agencies to identify sub-culture groups.
90. Secure cooperation of social workers to identify sub-culture groups.
91. Check all family members of babies enrolled in Cradle Roll Department.
92. Use cross-reference directories to survey apartment houses.
93. Provide Outreach-Ministry forms for on going prospect reporting.
94. Provide guest book in church lobby to identify visitors to weddings, funerals, and other meetings at the church.
95. Use special registration forms for special events such as folk groups.
96. Register attendance of every person who attends revival.
97. Check newspaper for families of deceased—offer ministry.
98. Provide social events for parents without partners.
99. Secure information from administrators of senior adult centers.
100. Conduct an age group hunt of a specific area, and age.
101. Request "baby-sitters" to report information on unchurched families.

NOTES FOR GROUP EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH TRAINING

A typical group outreach includes:

- Informal visiting around appetizers/drinks.
- A testimony and gospel presentation.
- Refreshments or a meal during which the Growth Group members talk with guests to learn their responses to the message.

Prepare yourself for the outreach by:

- Realizing that without Christ you can do nothing (John 15:5).
- Recognizing His power reveals itself in weak people (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- Praying for a harvest (Matthew 9:37,38).
- Being cleansed by confessing sin (1 John 1:9).
- Asking God to give you a concern for lost people (Romans 10:1).

When inviting people:

- Relax. If you are nervous, people will be apprehensive. Be honest. Tell them if there is going to be a speaker and the subject of the talk. Invite them in a way that would be attractive.
- Be positive. Do not approach someone with "I don't suppose you'd like to come attitude." Instead, approach them with "I think you would really enjoy this. I hope you can come."
- Arrange to bring them to the meeting if possible.

What to do during the meeting:

- Introduce your guests to others.
- Meet the guests of others and talk with them.
- Talk about interests of the guests, not church related subjects.
- Be relaxed. Enjoy yourself and enjoy the company of your guests.

What to do after the message:

- Be sensitive to your guests. They may want to talk about spiritual things or something else. Adapt your conversation to their needs and desires.
- Use questions to open doors to spiritual conversation:
 - What do you think of the talk?
 - Did it make sense to you?
 - Have you made the discovery of coming to know Jesus Christ personally?
 - You would like to wouldn't you?
- When appropriate, use your testimony.
- Do not push for decisions.

Follow the meeting:

- Enroll the people who receive Christ in Discovery Class or follow up personally using Discovery Class materials.
- Continue to pray for those who came.
- Maintain contact with guests and plan to invite them to other things.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR GROUP EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH

HOST'S & HOSTESS' INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Provide name tags for everyone to avoid the embarrassment of not remembering names.
- 2 Plan food or refreshments to provide opportunities for conversations about the message.
 - *At a dessert outreach, serve coffee or punch as people arrive to help them relax and enjoy themselves. Serve the dessert after the speaker's presentation.
 - *At an evangelistic dinner, have the meal first, but serve the dessert after the speaker's presentation.
 - *At an evangelistic breakfast or lunch, have the speaker's presentation first. Then the conversation during the meal can refer to the message.
- 3 Avoid interruptions. Remove the telephone receiver or have someone ready to answer it quickly. Keep pets out of the meeting area. Leave children with babysitters. Have someone attend the door to welcome latecomers.

EMCEE'S INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Be cheerful and enthusiastic.
- 2 Do not make repeated comments about the Growth Group. You may mention it but do not emphasize it.
- 3 Plan your comments with your guests in mind. Be sure not to tell jokes that only insiders would understand.
- 4 When appropriate, have a game that will help people to get to know one another and relax.
- 5 Introduce the speaker informally. Tell about personal achievements, family, children, etc. Ask the speaker to prepare a 3 X 5 card with the information you will need.
- 6 After the presentation, express appreciation to the speaker and to those who came. Direct the people toward the refreshments or food.

SPEAKER'S INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Usually you will give your testimony, a gospel presentation and a tasteful invitation.
- 2 Your testimony should emphasize how Jesus Christ has been relevant to your life.
- 3 When presenting the gospel, be simple and clear. Do not assume a "preachy" attitude or voice. Do not purposely try to create an emotional atmosphere; inform the people of the facts of the gospel. You may wish to distribute a written presentation such as the **FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS**, and then read through it.
- 4 Use a tasteful invitation to receive Christ. Do not pressure or embarrass

the guests. Having the guests pray with the speaker is one of the best types of invitation~~s~~.

TYPICAL GROUP EVANGELISTIC OUTREACH SCHEDULES

DESSERT OUTREACH

- 7.30 Guests and group members arrive. Mix and get to know one another. Have coffee or punch available.
- 8.00 Introductions and/or get-acquainted game.
- 8.15 Host or emcee introduces speaker.
- 8.20 Speaker's presentation.
- 8.50 Emcee thanks speaker, gives instructions regarding dessert. Group members interact with guests over dessert using four questions, testimonies, etc.

POT LUCK OUTREACH

- 7.00 Guests and group members arrive. Mix and get to know one another. (You can use mixing games, if desired.)
- 7.30 Host or hostess announces dinner and gives instructions regarding the buffet table and seating. (Seat small groups around the living areas. Game tables are ideal.) Eat and visit.
- 8.15 Host or emcee invites guests to the living room and introduces speaker.
- 8.30 Speaker's presentation.
- 9.00 Host or emcee thanks speaker and gives instructions regarding dessert. Group members interact with guests over dessert using questions, testimonies, etc.

PLANNING FOR A NINE-WEEK OUTREACH IN GROUPS

D-Group Meeting No	Outreach Assignment	Outreach Activity	Prayer	Date Scheduled
1.	Talk to someone unfamiliar in the church. Find out the person's occupation, hobby and no. of years as a Christian. Fill them on the pink sheet given, bring to class & share next week.	Learn about the concept of outreach. What is outreach? The Group Outreach Project & Activities.	Pray for conviction to be involved in outreach.	
2.	Talk to another person (preferably of different age group) in the church and elicit the same information as week 1.	Learn about some typical group evangelistic outreach schedules.	Pray for wisdom and guidance to plan a suitable group outreach project.	
3.	Write a note of appreciation to someone who has been of special help to you.	Developing relationships with non-Christians. Learn how to initiate and develop relationships.	Pray for two non-Christian friends you would want to invite to the Outreach Project.	
4.	Strike a conversation with a service person. Ask him about his family, interests & background.	Planning the Outreach Project. Decide on the type of activity, location, date, time chairperson, speaker and persons to give testimony of salvation & testimony of the Discovery-group. Collect names for Outreach Project Activity. Write down in Outreach Prayer List.	Pray for the Project.	
5.	Give out a tract to the same service person or someone else. Start to invite your non-Christian friends to the Outreach Project.	Learning how to invite people to the Outreach Project. (Roleplay). Be acquainted with at least one method of Gospel presentation.	Pray that those you are inviting will respond positively.	

6.	Do something nice for a non-Christian friend.	Learning what to do during the outreach project. Discuss the value of personal testimony.	Pray for the non-Christians you are inviting. Pray for 1 Christian you would like to invite.	
7.	Share with a member of the church (the one you are inviting to the Outreach Project) at least 1 blessing of attending the Discovery Group.	Discuss how to do follow-up work.	Pray for all the people invited, for the group's involvement and for the Project.	
8.	Spend some time with the non-Christian friend you are inviting to the project. Invite him for a game, meal or a walk.	Learn how to maintain contact with guests.	Continue to pray for the Lord's blessing on the project.	
9.	Continue to develop a closer relationship with the non-Christian friend you're inviting.	Run through the whole Outreach activity.	Pray for salvation of/ blessing on the guests invited.	

4 P EVANGELISM
(Matt. 28: 18-20)

1. PRESENCE EVANGELISM
 - A. The Lord Jesus was the incarnation of God the Father to the world (John 1:14).
 - B. The church as a body of Christ is HIS incarnation to the world by developing a community life that is in contrast to the world. (Caring and sharing)
2. PROCLAMATION EVANGELISM
 - A. The difference in lifestyle needs to be explained.
 - B. We need to verbalize the Good News by sharing the basic facts of salvation.
3. PERSUASION EVANGELISM
 - A. Mere proclamation which does not produce change is advertising.
 - B. Others are persuaded to respond to the message (Luke 14:23; 2Cor. 5:11; Acts 26:28).
4. PROPAGATION EVANGELISM
 - A. The goal is the formation of Christian community. The Christian community becomes both the basis and the goal of evangelism.
 - B. A person is not regarded as evangelized unless and until he becomes a disciple of Christ and is a responsible member of a church.
 - C. Body evangelism can then take place with great effectiveness and will bear much fruit.

DISCOVERY GROUP

PLANNING SHEET

<u>ITEMS:</u>	<u>ASSIGNED TO:</u>	<u>READY?</u>
Physical Arrangement		
Refreshment		
Praise Time		
Welcome & Ice-breaker		
Praise & Prayer		
Sharing: i. Progress Report		
ii. Sermon Sharing		
Outreach		
Bible Study		
Assignments		
Closing Prayer		
Others:		

GROWTH GROUP'S EVANGELISTIC B-B-Q
 SATURDAY, 10 MAR 1990
 6.00 PM AT THE HOME OF ELDER & MRS MAH CHIN KWANG
 45-A JALAN SENANG (1441) TEL: 4444550

Responsibilities

Speaker:	Rev Goh Seng Fong
Chairman:	Bro Willy Ng
Ice-breaker:	Bro Seah Soon Huat
Ushers:	All members
Physical Arrangement:	Bro Chip Hung
Testimony of Growth Group:	Eld Mah & Sis Katherine Kho
Testimony of Salvation:	Sis Irene Tan & Dn Benjamin Sng
Name Tags:	Sis Lee Eng
Pianist:	
Counsellors:	All members
Refreshment:	Sis Lean Choo, Ser Kim, Mrs Sng

Order of Programme

6.00 PM	Guests Arrive
6.30 PM	Song - "Welcome Song"
	Grace by Pastor Eng Boo
	Food
7.15 PM	Singspiration - Bro Willy
	- "To God be the Glory"
	- "The Lily of the Valley"
	Ice-Breaker - Bro Soon Huat
	Song - "The Love of God"
	Testimony of Growth Group
	- Eld Mah
	- Sis Katherine
	Testimony of Salvation
	- Sis Irene Tan
	- Dn Benjamin
	Song - "Love Lifted Me"
	Message - "The Love of God"
9.30 PM	Goodnight

Things to remember:

1. Buy Stickers for name-tag
2. Song Books
3. Gospel tracts for guests to bring home
4. Tracts for Members
5. Bring chairs and lectern from Church

c.c. Rev Goh Seng Fong

HOW TO SHARE YOUR TESTIMONY EFFECTIVELY

THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN

Acts 5:42

"Daily in the Temple in every house they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus Christ." Everyday Evangelism Church Evangelism House to house Evangelism Every believer Evangelism Uninterrupted Evangelism Educational Evangelism Preaching Evangelism Christ-centered Evangelism

Your Testimony — Before Christ

The objective of this portion of your testimony is to arouse interest in your non-Christian listeners by causing them to IDENTIFY with you. Because all people have been made by God and for God, true fulfilment of our needs and desires can only come through Him. Apart from Christ we all have the same basic emptiness and lack of fulfilment. As we recall our own lives apart from Christ, non-Christians will be able to identify with our feelings and thoughts because they also are seeking answers to the same questions.

An effective way to share these areas of need is to aim for an "open-nerve" that is common to most of us. Just as an exposed nerve in a bad tooth will cause me to react when it is touched, so all of us have certain basic emotional or psychological "open nerves" that are sensitive to the touch. Below are listed some common "open nerve" areas typical to most non-Christians:

no peace	loneliness	guilt
no purpose	boredom	anger
no happiness	emptiness	worry
no meaning in life	dissatisfaction with life	depression
fear of death	inability to live up to	gripped by sinful
fear of God's judgment	moral standards	habits

1. **BE FACTUAL** — It is often tempting to stretch the truth for dramatic effect. Try to make the first section stimulating by being specific or by using tasteful humor.
2. **BE SPECIFIC** — "Each time I returned from a party, I would go home dreading the loneliness that I knew was waiting for me. Those were the worst moments of my life." *is better than* "I was a lonely person."
Specific incidents can illustrate a more general "open nerve."
3. **BE PERSONAL** — Use the pronouns "I," "my," "me" rather than generalizing to "we," "everyone," "the world" etc.

4. **BE BRIEF** — Don't relate your entire life history. Remember your objective is not to recite your autobiography but to identify with your hearers. If you aim to finish giving your entire testimony in 5 minutes, this section should proportionately take 1½ – 2 minutes of the time.

Plan:

1. List 3 "open nerves" that affected your life before you came to Christ.
2. What specific incidents or examples can you think of from your life that illustrate these three "open nerve" areas?

Before Christ:

My earliest childhood memories are of church and Sunday School each Sunday morning. But as the years went by, I realized that the life I was living during the week fell far short of what the church had taught me and what I knew was right. By the age of 14, I had stopped going to church altogether and had begun to run around with some teenagers who, like I, had no time for God. I began to drink and developed a serious problem with alcohol that progressed from bad to worse as I grew older. By 17, alcohol had put me in jail for the first time. At 18, a group of friends wanted to commit me to an institution for alcoholics. At 19, I was back in jail for the second time as the result of alcohol. Although I had graduated from high school and joined the air force, the military discipline had not helped my problems at all. In fact, they seemed to have become worse. I drank because I desperately wanted to anesthetize myself from the loneliness and lack of purpose that filled my heart. Each time I returned home from a party, I would go home dreading the loneliness I knew was waiting for me. Those were the worst moments of my life. I could see no meaning at all to existence and felt that if I could find no answer, perhaps the best thing would be to end my own life.

Specific.

Covers all major periods of his life before Christ.

Relates specific problems before Christ.

Strikes "open nerves" such as loneliness, lack of purpose, searching for direction.

The Conversion Experience

1. The Gospel should be brought out clearly enough in your narration that the hearer would know how to receive Christ himself.
2. It is effective to use one or two verses of Scripture that were influential in your conversion or that clearly give the Gospel. God's Word is alive and powerful and is used by the Holy Spirit to convict men of their need for Christ. God promises in Isaiah 55:11

"So shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." *

When using Scripture verses, remember:

- Don't use too many – Prayerfully choose one or two that are most significant to your particular story. If too many verses are used, you begin to sound like you are preaching.
 - Memorize the verses you use – If the verses were influential to your conversion, they should be meaningful enough to warrant memorization. Also, quoting the exact passage and reference ensure that we are really giving God's Word – not our recollection of it.
 - Explain any words in the verse that your listeners may not understand.
3. Be careful to avoid religious language that will confuse or be meaningless to a non-Christian – i.e. "saved," "grace," "washed in the Blood" etc.

Write

1. DATE AND PLACE OF YOUR CONVERSION
2. WHAT CONVICTED YOU TO RECEIVE CHRIST?
3. HOW DID YOU COME TO CHRIST?

Conversion Experience:

In this state I began to pray – asking God to help me find Him if He really existed. Then one day I picked up the base newspaper and read an interesting advertisement. It told of a minister who was coming to speak at our military chapel. Somehow I felt that this might be the answer to my prayer. The next Sunday morning I was sitting in the front row listening to him tell an amazing story. He told how as a young man he had searched for the same meaning and direction in life that I was so desperately searching for now. He opened the Bible and explained that because of sin man was separated from God and could never have purpose and happiness in life apart from Him. He said, however, that God still loved man and had sent His own Son, Jesus, to die and pay the penalty of man's sin so that man could again be reunited with God. He shared one verse in John 1:12 which said that – "To as many as received Him (Jesus) He gave the power to become sons of God." He explained that this verse meant that all one needed to do was to ask Christ into his life – to receive Him – and Christ would come in and give direction and power and purpose. That day as the pastor closed in prayer I silently prayed something like this:

O God, I know I am a sinner. Please forgive me and come into my heart. Make me the kind of man you want me to be. Thank you. Amen.

Specific narrative.

Tells exactly what happened.

Relates the Gospel clearly using the pastor's message as the "third person" method of telling the story.

No religious jargon used.

Uses Scripture and references
Scripture explained as to meaning.

Gives sample prayer so hearer will know how to pray and what to pray if he desires to do it himself.

Your Testimony — After Christ

1. Review the "open nerve" areas you shared in section 1. Think about how Christ has healed those sensitive and unpleasant needs. Then in this last section be sure you clearly relate how Christ has helped you with the specific "open nerves" shared earlier.
2. Don't present an unrealistic or idealistic picture of the Christian life. Christ's presence in our lives does not insure that we will never have another problem. It does mean that He is sovereignly in control of our lives and with us in each situation we face. You might say something like this:
 "Receiving Jesus Christ into my heart was not an end to all of life's problems. But it did give me the confidence that Christ would be with me in each circumstance and work it out for my good." Plan:

1. WHAT HAPPENED IMMEDIATELY AFTER YOU RECEIVED CHRIST?

[NOTE: If nothing spectacular happened immediately, say so! Many people have the mistaken idea that a conversion must be accompanied by sensational "feelings" or happenings. God has *quietly* converted many people and their experience is just as real to Him as a more dramatic one. For many people the change is very gradual.]

2. HOW DID CHRIST HEAL YOUR "OPEN NERVES"?

3. WHAT ARE SOME ACTUAL INCIDENTS YOU CAN USE TO ILLUSTRATE YOUR POINT?

4. WERE THERE ANY SPECIFIC SCRIPTURE VERSES, SUGGESTIONS OR HELPS THAT CAUSED IMMEDIATE GROWTH IN YOUR NEW CHRISTIAN LIFE?

Examples:

"The evangelist had me promise to read the Book of John 5 times."

or

"The next day the man who led me to Christ came to my house to pray and read the Bible with me. That was the first time I realized I could freely talk with God."

After Christ:

When I prayed that prayer, nothing spectacular seemed to happen. There were no flashes of lightning nor angels rocketing off the walls. I had no strange feelings or sensations. However, within the next few weeks I realized that something was indeed different. For the first time in my life I had a sense of peace and purpose and meaning. As I began to read the Bible I discovered that God had a wonderful, unique plan for each person's life and that Christ was alive and real and leading me into that plan — day-by-day. My loneliness and emptiness were replaced by quiet joy. I still had problems and bad days, but now I knew God was with me in each situation helping me through. My drinking problem was solved because now there was no need to escape from reality as I had tried to do before through alcohol. I guess II Cor. 5:17 best sums up what happened to me when it says: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new." I can honestly say that I would not trade one hour of my new life with Christ for all the years I spent without Him. He has truly met the deepest needs of my heart.

Tasteful humor

"Open nerves" now closed — specific solutions for the problems mentioned in Section 1.

Realistic — Salvation does not mean an end to all problems.

Good use of Scripture & references.

Sticks with personal pronouns — not preachy.

EVANGELISM EXPLOSION TESTIMONY CHECKLIST

The following checklist is compiled to assist you in developing your personal testimony into an effective evangelistic tool. It contains a list of errors commonly found in personal testimonies. Read your testimony and note the numbers that are written in red on your testimony. That number relates to one of the common errors on this checklist. In order to sharpen up your testimony you should rewrite it, eliminating the error noted.

1. Does not express your experience of God's faithfulness.
2. Does not express assurance that you have eternal life now.
3. Does not express assurance of going to heaven when you die.
4. Has too much travelogue.
5. Deals too much with externals.
6. Gives away the answer to the question, "What would you say to God if He were to ask why He should let you into heaven?"
7. Is a vague generality.
8. Is a meaningless cliché.
9. Is a highly connotative word which might create a problem in communication at the point of testimony.
10. Does not contain the positive benefits of eternal life now (such as friendliness of other members of God's family, God's love, forgiveness, friendship with God, new perspective on present life, freedom from the fear of living, or freedom from the fear of dying).
11. Is too preachy.
12. Does not use specific examples.
13. Comments:

You have now completed your testimony. I think you will discover that it will become one of the most invaluable resources you possess in witnessing to others. Because it is so personal, and because it is uniquely yours, no one can argue with it or deny that it happened to you. As you learn to relate your story with confidence, others will be amazed at the assurance you have of Christ's reality today.

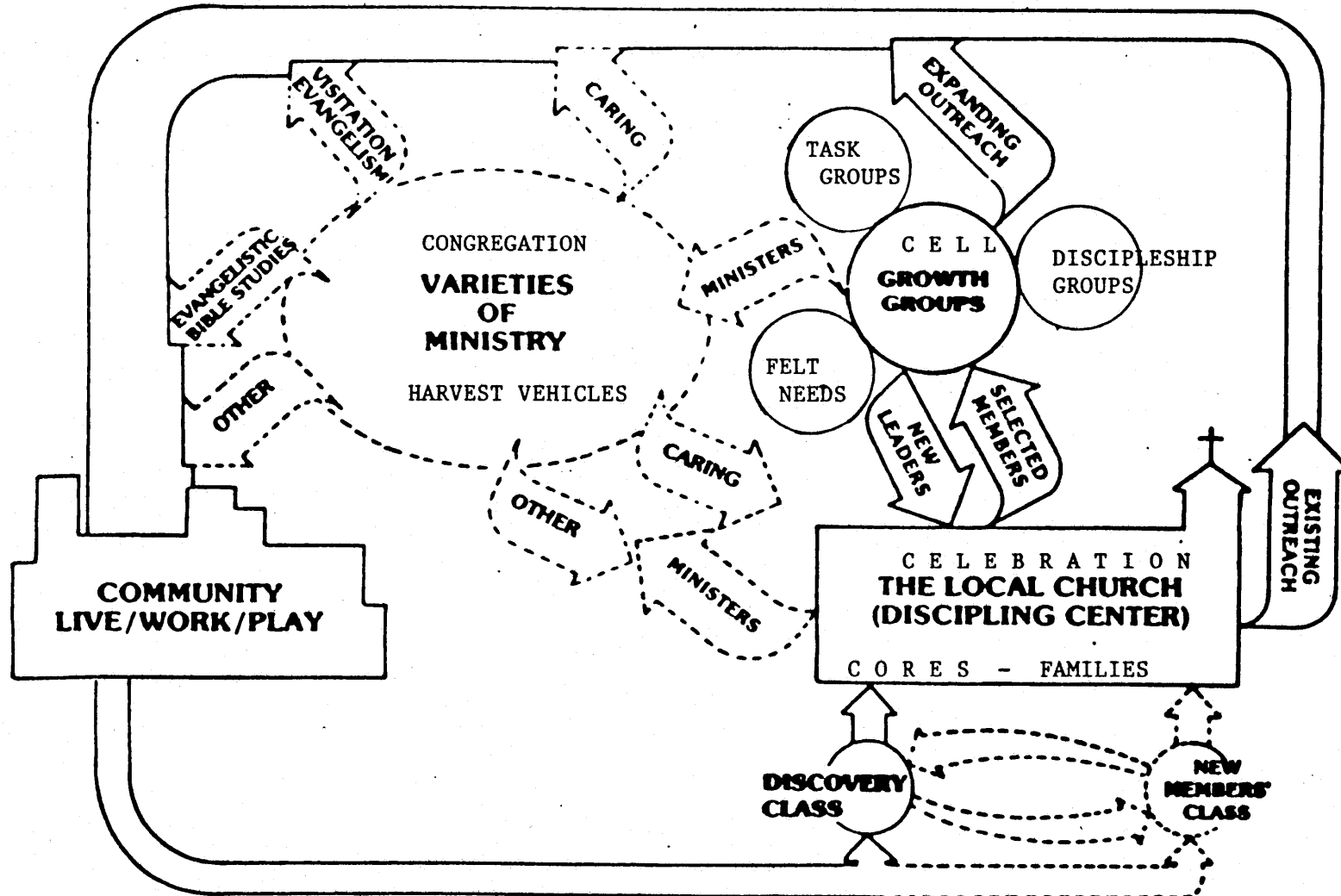
Now that you have written your testimony you must learn to use it verbally. Here are some suggestions which may help you:

1. Read the testimony several times aloud until all three sections flow together and you are very familiar with what you have written.
2. Practice saying your testimony aloud to yourself. *Do not memorize* what you have written word for word. This makes your narration sound artificial and unspontaneous. You may want to memorize certain key phrases to help you remember the flow of your story, but you should not give your testimony exactly the same way twice.
3. After you have said your testimony several times alone, try giving it to another Christian — perhaps your pastor, Christian leader, or a mature Christian friend. Ask the other person to critique your presentation and make suggestions for a clearer delivery.
4. Pray that God will give you the opportunity to use your testimony with a non-Christian friend or acquaintance. Pray also for boldness to take the opportunity when it arises. *Don't procrastinate.*
5. Launch out in faith even though you may not feel your story is perfected. Remember God the Holy Spirit is at work both in the heart of your hearer and in your presentation. Without God, the most eloquent delivery will be fruitless. With Him, the most stumbling speaker can be used to draw others to the Savior.

"And Moses said unto the Lord, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, 'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? NOW THEREFORE GO, AND I WILL BE WITH THY MOUTH, AND TEACH THEE WHAT THOU SHALT SAY.'"

GROWING BY DISCIPLING

(PLAN) (Modified from "Churches Alive")



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MAY, 1994

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Dear Loved Ones and Friends,

Thanks for your prayers and gifts of love. Here is the text of Seng's speech as the Valedictorian in the Seminary Graduation.

FREEMINENCE OF CHRIST IN SERVICE

"In all things, HE might have the preeminence" Col. 1:18

"Dr. Roberson, Dr. Faulkner, Dr. Boulter, Dr. Trachian, Dr. Stiles, faculty, fellow-students, loved ones and friends. Thank you for this unique honor. I praise God for these three years of further equipping for His service. I appreciate the faithfulness of Dr. Trachian, the administration, and faculty for the fine Seminary program which has enhanced my love for the Lord and for people. I thank the Lord for the many loved ones and friends who are praying and giving in so many ways so that I can be in His will. Special thanks go to my wife and my two children for their patience, understanding, and encouragement during these difficult but enriching years.

There are three lessons I have learned about the preeminence of Christ in service. The first lesson is that Christ has the right to decide where I should be. Twenty-two years ago, He called me into my first major equipping session in USA. I was then a high school teacher in Singapore. I had been teaching for ten years and had settled down into a routine of teaching and of serving the Lord in a student ministry as well as in a slum ministry. In obedience to His call, I had to leave home, loved ones, friends, and a steady job and went to a seminary in cold Wisconsin and studied there for three years. God supplied all my needs and equipped me. My wife and I returned to Singapore in 1976 and we were privileged to be involved in church planting, pastoring, teaching in a Bible college, and preaching in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, and Burma from 1976 to 1991.

In 1991, He moved us back here again for further equipping. Once again, we had to leave home, loved ones, friends, the ministry, and a certain amount of security. This time, there were four of us, and four of us decided to be in school. The main problem was, of course, -- Could He who had called, supply our needs? Could He who supplied our needs the first time when there were two of us, supply for four of us now? The answer was that He could and He did! I don't know the exact amount of money involved. It must be at least \$50,000 for these last three years and He faithfully supplied all our needs!

The second lesson is that Christ has the right to decide what I should do. From being a church planter, preacher, pastor, and teacher, I was "promoted" to, at various times, into

positions of obscurity: a student, a dish-washer, a waiter, a maintenance man, a store associate, which is translated a bag-boy, and a house-husband. It is going to be difficult to explain the turmoil of heart and mind that went along with the drastic changes. Once a teacher, now a student again after these long fifteen years. A holder of two Master degrees, washing dishes, cleaning rest-rooms, and bagging groceries! Here's a wise-crack for the house-husband--"Hey, dad is cooking again! He can even burn water!"

One of the words used in the Bible for service and ministry has the meaning of "a waiter;" another word, the idea of a slave. The angels are ministering spirits to us. Christ Jesus took upon Himself the form of a servant, a slave. He even washed the feet of His disciples. Being Jesus' follower, I am not above the Master. I have to be faithful and thankful even in obscurity, to serve Him by serving others in whatever areas He so desires.

The third lesson is that Christ has the right to decide what I should be. The ultimate goal is that I should be conformed to the image of Christ. Each process toward it is a goal by itself. When He called the second time for further equipping, I struggled for a while but soon learned afresh to simply obey, by faith, as Jesus learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Initially, as I took on the various menial roles, I was bothered, but as I looked up to the Lord, I was brought to understand more of His servant's heart. Jesus came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. To know Him first and better is the basis of making Him known. To be faithful in the very little then is to be faithful in much!

Little is much, when God is in it!
Labor not for wealth or fame.
There's a crown and I must win it,
If I go in Jesus' Name.

Is it worth it all? Yes, it is! Christ is worth it all! Souls to be brought to Him is worth it all! Saints to be built up is worth it all! Eternity is worth it all! In all things indeed, Christ must have the preeminence. I pray that He will have the preeminence in your life too. He has the right to decide where you should be, what you should do, and what you should be. Please pray for us as we enter into another phase of our life. Thank you again for this honor today! Thank you."

Praise the Lord for helping Seng through the last part of his studies. The honor and the degree bestowed belong to all of you who have prayed and given so sacrificially. Please continue to pray for us as we have to make some very difficult decisions. How we need His guidance again and your prayers! We target to return in September. We will write again to keep you in touch.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Seng, Daisy, Sam + Sharon