

'Christianity Fever' Journalists Investigate and Report

Extracts from Two Chinese Language Journals

[Editor's Note: Since the 1980s various groups of journalists and researchers inside and outside of China mainland have made serious studies of China's current 'Christianity Fever' phenomenon. Below are excerpts from two of these reports: 1) by two mainland reporters and published in *Liaowang*, No. 5, January 1989, under the title, *Reflections while Facing the Cross: An Investigation of the 'Christianity Fever' in China* and 2) by two Hong Kong journalists entitled, 'Christian Fever': *Journalists among Chinese Christians*", published in *Contemporary*, January 15, 1994. Although there is an interval of five years between the first and the second account, observations and experiences are strikingly similar and the phenomenon does not seem to show any signs of moderating. The two groups, however, arrive at very different conclusions. The texts are used with permission.]

Excerpts from "Reflections While Facing the Cross: An Investigation of the 'Christianity Fever' in China"

*As reported by Jiang Zhimin and Yu Zugen
translated by Don MacInnis and Yu Linkai*

A popular wave of belief in Christianity has spread rapidly in China in the 1980s. In an attempt to understand this mystery we recently conducted journalistic investigations in provinces of the northeast, east and south-central China.

Praying for God's Blessings

Mu'en Church, Shanghai

This church was built in 1887 and is the oldest and largest Protestant church in Shanghai. Christians attending the first service at 9:00 A.M. each Sunday are immediately replaced by the second group. Every seat in the main hall and the upper balconies is filled, leaving standing-room only for latecomers in the two outside porches.

A church worker told us that when this church was reopened in 1980, more than 5,000 people crowded into the service, almost squeezing the building out of shape. The pressure was not relieved until twenty-two other Shanghai churches had opened one after the other, but this church is still crowded. Three services are held each Sunday in order not to disappoint the believers. Even so, the church is filled each time.

It should be noted that great changes in the makeup of the Christian population have taken place since the beginning of the '*Christianity fever*', when almost all Christians were "white-haired" and unlettered. The Religious Affairs Bureau of Shanghai estimates that one-fourth of the 20,000 Christians converted in the last three years are young people and educated professionals, including university professors and students, medical doctors, writers and engineers. Communist Youth League leaders say that 26 percent of the 6,000 Christians in the city of Shenyang are young people, more than double the proportion in 1980.

One-fifth of the new Christians in Anhui and Jiangsu provinces, according to Religious Affairs Bureau statistics, are junior or senior high school graduates. Since these people are educated and can read the Bible, many of them become "backbones" of the community of believers soon after baptism.

In the blazing heat of July, when temperatures stayed at 40 degrees centigrade for several days, the Christians in Huaibei, Anhui, were not deterred from attending religious services. One Sunday morning Christians of Dazhuang Village, Si County, gathered at a meeting place which consisted of several normal-sized rooms. A cross, painted red, had been erected over the courtyard gate. Several hundred bicycles were parked in neat rows outside the gate, while more than a thousand Christians, men and women, sat crowded together inside the building. The service opened with a piano prelude, followed by congregational hymn singing led by a choir of ten young women. Although everyone was soaked with perspiration from the burning heat, they sang with zeal and devotion.

With deep feeling, the deputy chairman of the Dazhuang District told the visiting journalists that, except for three weeks in the late summer when they take time off for the harvest, the Christians in this district meet regularly for worship throughout the year.

Here is an imposing building, with a magnificent arched gate and cross reaching skyward from the peak of a Gothic roof facing a steeple nearly seven meters high. This building, located in Zhuangyuan Township, Wenzhou, occupies one-third of an acre and seats one thousand. It was built by volunteers at a cost of 150,000 yuan, all donated by the three thousand Christians of this district. On the day that construction began, Christian volunteers, men and women, young and old, were there to carry on the work. Their zeal and devotion are beyond the power of words to describe.

'Christianity fever' quite naturally brings with it a boom in church building. It is said that thousands of "foreign-style churches" have been built in recent years, while the Chinese-style meeting places have been springing up, like bamboo shoots after a rain, in such numbers that they cannot be counted.

It is expected that this *'Christianity fever'* will continue to expand in the coming years, moving from its present concentration in the southeast coastal areas into the areas populated by ethnic minorities in west China. Statistics provided by the Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Association show many Christians already among more than ten of the national minorities, including the Miao, Va, Lisu, Hani, Lahu and Jingpo.

Explaining the *'Christian Fever'* Phenomenon

Why is there *'Christianity fever'* in Socialist China? The problem is quite complicated. Scholars and experts believe that this question can only be answered from the perspectives of history, philosophy, psychology and sociology.

Experts hold that religion is an ideology quite isolated from its material foundation. Compared with other ideologies, it is slow to change and clearly dependent on its historical heritage. Religion has a long history in China. Buddhism, Daoism, Islam and Christianity all appeared in China over a thousand years ago. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the particular religious rites and beliefs of each of the religions, carried down through history and protected by the policy of freedom of religious belief, have proved to have great attraction for some people.

Attraction of Protestant Christianity

Protestant Christianity, among all the religions, seems to have the strongest power of attraction: unlike Buddhism which is extremely ascetic, with stricter and complicated rules and rituals, [Protestant] Christians, except for their religious beliefs, are no different from non-Christians in their daily life. Nor are they like the Catholics, who only allow priests to preach. Ordained pastors are not the only ones who preach in their churches; lay Christians, as well, are encouraged to "bear fruit" (to lead others to conversion), and to "give their testimony" (to tell stories of their own religious experiences). These "special advantages" of [Protestant] Christianity make it easier to draw non-believers into their community.

Influence of Family Traditions

Religious traditions also influence family relationships. During our investigations we learned that religious parents usually require that their children should also become believers of the same religion. In Wenzhou City we visited more than twenty young Christians, most of whom said, "I have been a Christian ever since I was in my mother's womb." All twenty members of a Shanghai church choir told us that their parents were Christians. They have been receiving religious formation from the time they were young children.

Understanding Forces of Nature

Different levels of comprehension of natural phenomena and different emotional needs can also stimulate people's interest in religion.

Experts point out that in the earliest religions, primitive peoples, because of their low productive capabilities, were filled with a sense of mystery and dread when confronted with the forces of nature, and regarded inexplicable natural and social phenomena as supernatural and related to deities whom they worshiped. Although science and culture have made great advances in recent times, there are still things in the worlds of nature and society which cannot be explained. Misconceptions and erroneous interpretations will inevitably result, engendering a religious psychology in some people who then look for answers to these questions in religion. In China, levels of science and culture are still quite low, especially in the rural areas

where culture and education are extremely backward. Many people are still in a state of ignorance, and it is easy for some, already firmly rooted in traditional thinking about worship of ghosts and deities, to give themselves to religion. There is, then, nothing unusual about this fervor for Christianity.

Psychological Factors

Experts also say that, so long as religious dogmas are held as truth, people will develop corresponding religious feelings which lead to religious conversion. In the course of our investigations, we came to understand the psychology of many Christians. Some pray in the devout hope that God's power will heal their illnesses; some, having encountered setbacks and difficulties, hope to solve their problems and relieve their miseries by relying on God's help; some, feeling guilty of "sin", search for the self-discipline of religious morality in the hope of achieving more perfection; some, who feel spiritually empty, without meaning or hope, take part in religious activities hoping to find happiness in fellowship with Christians. Although different in form, each of these stems from the same psychology--the need for emotional satisfaction. The famous philosopher, Feuerbach, drew this insightful conclusion: Emotion is the basic instrument of religion.

If psychological factors are the "original source" of this religious fervor, then social factors are the catalyst.

Social Factors

We are now in the initial stage of Socialism, with many social problems still bothering the people, upsetting their psychological balance and causing apathy, fatigue, disillusionment and cynicism about life in this world as they search for a spiritual mooring. In the course of our investigations we discovered a number of clearly relevant factors.

When asked about the reasons for their conversion, many newly-converted intellectuals spoke of corruption both inside the Party and in society. A young doctor in Wenzhou said, "Now the corruption inside the Party and in society is simply rotten. I'm disgusted and fed up with the way they use their official positions to seek personal gain through bribery, cheating, crooked deals, gambling, prostitution, etc. Only when I walk into a church and hear the hymns of praise, *Holy, holy, holy*,

being sung does my mind and spirit, as if filtered, feel calm and refreshed. I believe this God and God's holy kingdom calling me."

Christian Love

A woman's husband in Tanhe County, Henan Province, died of illness. She had no money for his funeral, so she asked the cadres of the village and district for help, but not one responded. Just at that time, when she had nowhere to turn, a group of Christian brothers and sisters came to her home and of their own free will gave her 200 yuan to help pay for the funeral costs. The woman was so moved that she soon became a Christian.

Ennui and Loneliness

In some parts of the country, material life has prospered in recent years, but spiritual life is still impoverished. Many educated youth who cannot stand the loneliness are one after another joining in religious activities. During an interview in a village in the Huaibei region, Anhui, some young Christians said, "In the past year and a half we have not had a single film or play here; the culture room is empty, the "militia family" has disbanded and the Youth League has no organized activities. What else is there for us to do besides take part in religious activities?"

Health and Faith Healing

In some places there is a serious lack of medical care, which results in many people turning to "faith healing". Our surveys in Henan, Anhui and Zhejiang provinces show that 70 percent of the Christians believe in "faith healing". These Christians live mainly in poor, remote and mountainous areas. Because of inadequate medical care, poverty and inconvenient travel facilities, when people here become ill they have nowhere to go, so they turn to Jesus, entreating him to "drive out the demons" and restore their health.

Overseas Infiltration

Following our government's open policy, infiltration of our country by some overseas religious organizations, using various means, is another element that should not be overlooked. They

have set up many Chinese language "gospel" radio programs, broadcasting religious dogma day and night; by mail and other means they bring in large amounts of printed matter, Bibles and audio-video materials; they use our invitations for foreign language teachers and international exchange programs as opportunities for missionary activities; some have even fostered the growth of underground churches....

Christianity and Social Spiritual Civilization

Faced with the rapid spread of '*Christianity fever*', people are asking, what effect will this have on the building of socialist spiritual civilization? This is a very complex theoretical and practical problem.

The city of Wenzhou, with its long history of Christianity, has been called, "the Jerusalem of China." The Christian population in the eight counties and two districts which make up Wenzhou municipality, has 320,000 [Protestant] Christians. We witnessed both Christians and non-Christians playing leading roles in the growth of the commercial economy.

Model Citizens

In 1984 and 1986, at two conferences held in Wenzhou called, "Religious Circles Exchange Experiences About Their Contributions to the Four Modernizations," 207 out of 232 persons who received special awards were [Protestant] Christians.

Engels once said that early Christianity had notable similarities with the modern workers' movement: both preach that poverty will be wiped out, although Christianity expects to get rid of poverty in heaven after death, while socialism expects it will happen here on earth (Engels, "History of Christianity"). At present, the efforts of the Communist Party and government of China to free the people from poverty here on earth are fully in accord with the hopes of all the people, religious believers and non-believers alike.

Social Services

During our field surveys we often saw or heard stories about the ways in which Christians are enthusiastically serving society.

The "Three-Self" patriotic group [of Christians] in the town of Linyu, Si County, Anhui, heard that the town government

wanted to build a new road through a low-lying area. More than two hundred Christian volunteers turned out with tools and food, and within ten days had completed a high-quality gravel road 500 meters long and fifty meters wide. The church members declined with thanks, the town government's offer of 800 yuan. Instead, the leader of the "Three-Self" group sought out the mayor and gave him a red envelope, saying, "Here are two hundred yuan donated by our brothers and sisters. Please send this to the soldiers on the Vietnam front. Although this is only a small sum of money, it represents our sincere concern for them!"

In the city of Pingdingshan, Henan, a Christian woman, after her retirement, ran a family school for deaf and dumb children when she saw that they had no school to attend. She used her own money to buy desks, chairs and teaching equipment for the fourteen young students whom she teaches tuition-free. She can be seen each morning and evening leading the students from home to school and back.

Indeed, Christians do these good deeds because of the Christian teaching to "give glory to God and benefit [God's] people," thereby increasing their spiritual "glory." But this spirit which comes from a combination of "love of country" and "love of church" still benefits society.

Law Abiding Citizens

The "Ten Commandments" of Moses are still revered by Christians; Honor your father and mother, do not kill, do not steal, do not commit adultery, do not bear false witness, do not covet your neighbor's goods. . . . These commandments are like the sword of Damocles hanging over their heads, for it is said that those who violate these commandments will be mercilessly punished by the almighty and all-knowing God, who will deny them entrance into heaven after death.

Probably this is the reason that most Christians are law-abiding.

We visited some experts on religion during our investigations who pointed out that the structure of socialist ethics has more than one level, including both communist and religious morality. Religious ethics are really one kind of social ethics in religious form which exercises particular restraints on religious believers. It is because of their religious teachings that believers

do good and resist evil, observe public morality and obey the laws of the nation. So long as it is properly directed, this is conducive to social stability.

On the other hand, we also found certain problems that should be noted: Religion in the Socialist period can, under certain conditions, have a relative impact on society. According to the analysis of experts, all religious teachings, rituals and ideas have gone through a long historical development. Part of this heritage has been cast off, modified or added onto in the socialist period, but it is impossible to come up with an entirely new interpretation in a short period of time. Therefore some negative aspects of this religious heritage will inevitably continue to influence religious believers, in some cases even causing a small number of well-intentioned Christians to use religion to cause confusion, resulting in certain social problems and giving religion a bad image.

Negative Factors

Growth of Meeting Places and Free-lance Preachers

One negative factor of '*Christianity fever*' is the rapid growth of private meeting places and free-lance preachers. Many local meeting places have been opened by local Christians in recent years without government permission. Most of these have been set up by heterodox free-lance preachers who reject the leadership of the "Three-Self" Patriotic Association and branch out on their own. According to the Religious Affairs Bureau of Henan Province there are at least 2,000 of these meeting places and over 500 free-lance preachers in the province. These preachers, taking advantage of the pious hopes of some believers that God will heal their ailments, often actually harm these persons with their "healing by exorcising demons." In Shan County, over a period of several years, ailing persons were beaten thirty times, and twenty-four others died because they had waited too long to seek medical care while submitting to "demon exorcism."

In May 1987, a free-lance preacher named Sun Yingpen of Lixing Country, Anhui, came unannounced to Lizhuang Village. He assembled the twelve Christians in their meeting place and said, "Brothers and sisters, God has told me that the end of the world is near; the heavens will fall, there will be floods and

fires across the earth and Jesus Christ will send a sacred vessel to transport us to heaven."

The following day he selected seven men and women for the first group to "ascend to Heaven." They went to the banks of Cihuaixin river twenty miles from the village, and, after prayers, hymn-singing and sacred dancing they walked at sundown arm-in-arm into the river. Except for one who was rescued by a local fisherman, they all drowned.

How Should a Socialist Government Deal with '*Christianity Fever*'?

People from every sector of society are aware of the rise of Christian fervor in China.

How should the Socialist government deal with this Christian fervor? Some experts on religion hold that religion is a very complex social phenomenon which must be handled with extreme caution, neither exaggerating its negative impact by attempting to "block" it, nor lowering the guard by ignoring real problems and letting things drift. The proper measures and attitudes should be to enforce the policy of freedom of religious belief firmly and respect the religious feelings of the people. Freedom of religious belief has two meanings: Every citizen has the freedom to believe or not believe in religion, and freedom to believe in one religion or another. The official powers of a socialist country should not be used to promote one religion, and they certainly should not be used to ban another. They should not be alarmed at the fact that some people are becoming Christians, nor even at the appearance of a Christian "fever," but should firmly protect freedom of religious belief. No individual organization shall interfere with or obstruct [these rights].

It must be emphasized that the policy of freedom of religious belief has not been fully enforced in some places. Church properties that should be returned [to the Christians] are still occupied, and since reasonable arrangements to return these churches have still not been made, the religious feelings of the Christians have suffered. This situation should be remedied as soon as possible.

On the other hand, religious activities should be dealt with according to the law and in conformity with our society.... Therefore, a "Legal Code for Religion" with Chinese character-

istics, based on the actual conditions in China, should be enacted as soon as possible so that the transition from the traditional direct government supervision to an indirect supervision based on the new law code can take place....

Conclusion

Religion will die out. In the course of human history religion will finally die out, but this will happen naturally only after the long-term development of Socialism and Communism, when all the objective conditions have been achieved through the efforts of many generations. So, from now on we must work hard to develop the socialist economy, culture, science and technology, and reform and strengthen ideological education in our efforts to build a society with a highly advanced material and spiritual civilization in order to gradually eliminate the social and cognitive sources for religion.

Excerpts from 'Christian Fever'

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From its inception, the PRC has not only denied the existence of God, but also insisted that religion is a kind of opium which numbs people into passively accepting their servile state. Despite their efforts, '*Christian fever*' has in recent years broken out all over China. Today it is estimated that some 50,000,000 mainlanders profess Christianity, and these give every indication that the Lord is indeed alive in their hearts and active in their lives. If we add to this total, those who have caught the Taoist and the Buddhist 'fever', we can begin to imagine how widespread is the current religious epidemic.

Can belief in God bestow peace on the believer? What makes the Christian God suddenly so attractive to so many Chinese? These were the questions we brought with us on our journey to Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Hubei, Anhui and the many other places where Christian communities now gather together to worship and pray.

Selected Testimonies

A Country Chapel in Anji County

On a Sunday in February, we came into a small village chapel outside Dipu Town in Anji County where over 300 men and women, old and young, sat packed together in about 80 square meters of floor space. Even the centre-aisle was jammed tight with people....the only decoration was a red cloth with a large cross which hung from the wall in front of the room. Before the banner stood the evangelist, a middle-aged woman, leading the congregation, made up of all country people, in singing from *Hymns of Praise*. After the hymn the evangelist picked up her Bible and began to speak in a loud animated voice. She said, in part, "To believe in Jesus you need a heart that is true and one that is resolute. Faith allows for no half measures, no retreating, no thoughts of giving up along the way." The atmosphere was solemn and reverent; the people were silent and receptive. You could feel their sincerity and see how engrossed they were in what the evangelist had to say.

After the service... a young man, a factory worker from the town, told us he always left church with a feeling of elation and more at ease with himself. "I don't lose my temper much any more. Also, I guard my serenity. Unlike before, I find little now to upset the equilibrium of my daily life. And since becoming believers, we have become a more harmonious family."

God is Spirit

The old village woman came up and whispered in my ear, "God is a spirit, you know. Everyone in my family believes in Christianity...except my two daughters-in-law. My nephew, he believes...he was in Viet Nam. Every time fighting broke out in his area he prayed and he was not killed. This is a miracle entirely due to the Lord's special protection. Our family has prospered since we entered the church. We now have life in abundance."

From Discord to Harmony

There was a woman in Wayao village who was mean and spiteful," said the teen-age girl as we stood chatting outside the church after the service. "She cursed everything--her in-laws inside the house and her neighbors outside. No one in the village could stand her; they also feared her. Then one day she became a believer and suddenly she changed completely. She was a new person. She treated people kindly and showed respect for her in-laws. And she now lives in harmony with her neighbors. I think only the power of God could have brought about such a change."

An Old Cadre Waits at the Door

He came to church out of curiosity, wanting to see for himself if such people were really sincere. A retired cadre, a former bureaucrat, a member of the Party, who had a large paunch that hung over the belt of his pants and went before him as he strutted about with a supercilious air. "They tell me your people here arrive on time for services, even when its raining," he said to us the first time he came. "They also tell me your church has a lot of enthusiasm and people come in large numbers...on their own, too. Old men and women crawl on their hands and knees just to get here for your services. People tell me these things.... Personally, I find it hard to believe and rather weird. I've come to see for myself." A month later he returned with his wife. He stayed outside at the church door while she went in. He said by way of explanation, that he was a stubborn man. "I've got a thick hide...it's against Party principles to sit in church...besides, it wouldn't look good." So he decided he'd stand by the door where he could observe. "Hundreds went in," he said with a note of wonder in his voice, "but not one man or woman ever walked out before the end of the service. This is quite beyond belief! And I saw many sick people being carried in as well. Surely our own Party meetings could learn something from this."

Everyone Needs Spiritual Support

The young man said he had come to test out God. He was a

worker from a local factory. He did not give his name nor the name of the work unit to which he belonged. He did tell us, however, that his grandfather, his father and his mother all had served as cadres in their time. He wore a thick grey woolen sweater, cut in the style that modern youth prefer, and he was smoking a thin cigar. He said he had tried Communism, Daoism and then Buddhism and found their ethical teachings to be much the same: "be one with the common people; put others before self; be industrious and do everything to the best of your ability; be content with helping others, and work for their benefit and not your own." He found, he said, that what Party cadres today were not able to do, Buddha and the Dao could do, that is, motivate, inspire and support others spiritually. Now he wanted to test and see what Jesus Christ could do. He insisted that everyone needed some kind of spiritual support.

Religious Winds Blow in Lushan

We went to Lushan in Jiangxi for a few days of rest and relaxation. While there, we experienced for ourselves the strong winds of faith blowing across this most historic place. We looked from the peak of Lushan out over one side of the mountain. There we saw all the well-known tourist sites: the Lushan Museum, the former home of Zhou Enlai, the old Meilu residence of Chiang Kai-shek and his wife Song Mei-ling, the house where Mao Zedong lived for a while, and all the places made famous by the early leaders of the new Peoples' Republic. And then we turned our gaze to the other side of the mountain. There we could see the spires of the Catholic Church. These days many tourists come to visit Lushan's historical sights, but the Catholics who come to pray in the old church outnumber them by far. Some live along the paths on the mountain side, while others come from great distances. We watched from above a long and silent stream of pilgrims entering and leaving through the main door of the church. On Sundays, the mountains resound with their hymns and prayers.

Differences in Urban and Rural Christians

We have been told that the Christians living in the countryside are different from those in the cities. In the rural areas,

elderly Christians outnumber the young, and there are more men than women; however, Christians are found in greater numbers among the sick and the poor; few are educated, most being illiterate or semi-literate. On the other hand, in the cities many Christians come from those who are disenchanted with the political system and who are seeking something more out of life. In places like Shanghai and Hefei, in recent years, about a quarter of those entering the church are young people and intellectuals, including university professors, artists, doctors, writers, engineers, university students and even movie stars.

Why So Many?

The deepest mysteries of life are expressed through faith. On the one hand, lonely persons looking for surcease may place their faith in people or groups. They are indifferent to the object of faith as long as it will relieve them of their pangs of loneliness. On the other hand, persons who guard their own solitude, when confronted with the pain of human limitation search, in the midst of difficulties for reasons to have hope. Also, there are in the recesses of every human heart a memory of the possibilities of love. People respond to this in different ways, with a kind of faith that may vary in expression depending on the condition of each individual. But in the end, it is hope that drives us forward in search of our heart's destiny.

Doubts about Communism

The faith of the younger generation in China is being effected by many larger social factors. Many Party policies are seen as muddleheaded; the Party is accused of mismanaging the economy; it is blamed for corruption within both the Party and the government; it is charged with the unfair distribution of wealth and resources, for the present inflation and the deterioration of social values, for the rise of materialism and the gradual erosion of a community spirit. Many young people today are turning to religion in search of better and more positive responses to these and other social problems and issues.

Among intellectuals, arguments in favor of religion often take a scientific turn. The contributions made by religions in the past are recognized, and there is a call for closer scrutiny of

what values there might be in the present. Religions have provided much insight into the human condition, have spoken wisely about relationships, and provided the world with a rich storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. Religion has also provided inspiration and understanding to a variety of modern disciplines ranging from ESP to telekinetics, from martial arts to astrology. The founders of the world's great religions number their disciples in the millions, and their teachings have withstood the test of time. Down through the centuries, their teachings have been and are still able to motivate and inspire vast numbers of people and societies. And their doctrines are analyzed and discussed seriously in the intellectual market places of the world. This is why many Chinese intellectuals and youth question a system of thought that ignores religion or persecutes it, and why many end up having grave doubts about the foundations of their faith in Communism.

Negative Aspects of Religious Revival

We must mention now in closing something of the negative side of the sudden religious revival of Christianity on the mainland. Religious activity has not all been for the good. We did indeed meet up with a number of charlatans, those who masquerade in the garb of religion but who are bent on all kinds of illegal activity, such as cheating people out of their savings and using religion to seduce women and corrupt the young. Also there are certain Christian sects engaged in angry contention with each other, often bordering on violence, as each claims that it alone possesses the 'true spirit' and is the sole means of salvation for the world. There are also other groups who preach an unorthodox gospel, whose meetings are filled with much noise and mayhem. Such people can indeed become a danger to the public order, and also a source of destructive behavior for themselves and others. However, the existence of a minority of groups and individuals like this should not detract from the overriding truth that Christianity is indeed experiencing a healthy and positive renewal of faith on the mainland that bodes well for the future of China and its people.