

Chinese Intellectuals and the Search for Modern China

Samuel Ling

A new millennium is dawning and everything in China seems to be new. A new generation of young people, comparable in mindset to Generations X and Y in the West, searches for material riches and temporal pleasure. New skyscrapers grace the skylines of Shanghai and other cities. Promising to weather the financial crisis in Asia, China's leaders continue to push for economic growth and modernization. As state enterprises are dismantled, the private sector is becoming dominant.

Will the twenty-first century be China's century in the world? If China does become a world leader, will Christian ideas influence her direction? Her goals?

What ideas will truly guide the "search for modern China?" Will China be an anti-foreign, militant, and nationalistic people in the 21st century? Will nihilism, materialism, and atheism be the governing ideas for the worldview of the Chinese people? Will Buddhism and folk religions rise again to dominate their thinking? Will a new version of Confucianism find a hearing among China's students and teachers? What is the place of the Christian gospel, a worldview based on the Old and New Testaments, in China's search for an all-comprehensive national ideology?

A Battlefield of Ideas:

Christianity and the May Fourth Movement (1915-1927)

The Christian gospel was a contestant in China's battle of the mind earlier in the twentieth century. Soon after Sun Yat-sen's revolution of 1911, key Chinese intellectuals realized that a constitution and a parliament were insufficient to transform China into a modern, strong, and prosperous state. Something more fundamental was at stake: China needed a new culture, a new set of ideas and values to guide individual and social behavior. The "New Culture Movement" was born.

The most influential magazine read by young people during this "May Fourth Period" (1915-1927) was called *New Youth*, edited by the journalist and activist Chen Duxiu. Launched in the Fall of 1915, Chen called for the emancipation of the individual, free thought, and experimentation. He invited a society conducive to the promotion of democracy and science, the abolition of all Confucianist and feudal ideas and institutions, and a vision for the future based on the Social Darwinism of Thomas Huxley and Herbert Spencer. In short, all things ancient and Chinese must go; all things modern and Western were to be implemented.

The May Fourth demonstrations in 1919 taught China's students the magical power of mass rallies and political organization. Into a climate of anti-foreign, anti-imperialistic anger, Marxist ideas entered through Soviet agents and an indigenous

Continued on page 2

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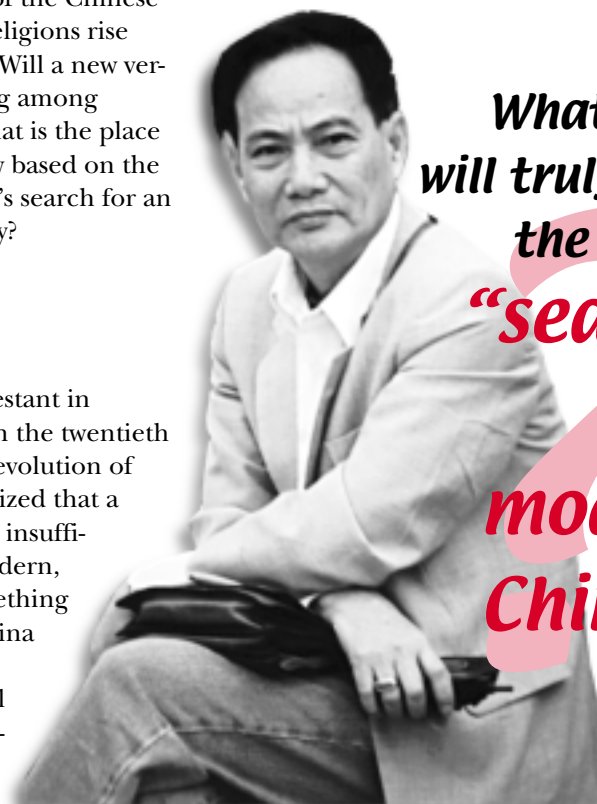


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Perspectives and analysis for those who serve China
China SOURCE

Marxism study group which met at the librarian's office in Beijing University. Mao Zedong, an assistant to librarian Li Dazhao, was a junior member of the group. The Chinese Communist Party was organized as an underground movement in July 1921.

As young Chinese Communists sought to influence their contemporaries with their worldview and program for change, the battlefield of ideas began to take a significant turn. Communists claimed that Christianity was unscientific and was a tool of imperialism. Religion was an impediment to social

China through liberal education and gradual change. The Sermon on the Mount was to guide China's transformation. Little was said about Adam's sin and the fall of humanity, the atoning death of Christ on the cross, or salvation by God's grace in Christ.

The May Fourth search for China's ideology came to a close in 1927 as civil war ended. Chiang Kai-shek ordered all students to return to their books in 1928. China entered a period of conservatism, and the nineteenth century scholar-warlord, Zeng Guofan, was hailed as a hero for junior and senior

A Second Chance

PRC students emerged from the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976) as some of the most well read intellectuals in the late twentieth century. Like their counterparts in Russia and the former Soviet republics, Chinese students are trained to think, write, debate, and handle profound issues in literature, the arts, philosophy, the social sciences, and politics.

On June 4, 1989, Christians outside China (Chinese or otherwise), were glued to their television sets, shedding tears of support for the student demonstrators overrun by the People's Liberation Army. Chinese evangelical leaders took to the streets in Hong Kong and Los Angeles, calling on God to judge with justice. Soon China returned to an awkward normality. Christian professionals and English teachers returned to China. The economy took off in China and in the United States as China became a major trading partner with the United States. The Communist Party's desperate struggle to respond to unprecedented changes after 1989 and to continue to govern 1.2 billion people, made its position very vulnerable; so it harassed and persecuted Christians who might destabilize the nation, just like what had been done in Eastern Europe. Many intellectuals, working for business enterprises rather than reading and writing philosophy, found that "to get rich is glorious."

Post-1989 China shares one thing in common with post-1919 China. Despite the economic changes, China still needs to find an all-comprehensive ideology or worldview to guide her into the future. Since Christian liberal theology lost the distinctiveness of Christ and fundamentalism withdrew from

Continued on page 6

Will Christianity offer a viable voice to shape China's future?

progress. Communist students led the first Anti-Christian Movement in 1922, as well as the second wave of anti-Christian fermentation from 1924 to 1925. Western Christian missionaries, as well as Protestant Chinese leaders, were caught on the defensive. How should Christian churches and institutions in China change to meet these challenges? Could one be a Christian and a patriotic Chinese at the same time?

Liberal Protestants in China, both Western and Chinese, began to demonstrate that Christianity was compatible with Confucianism at a time when intellectuals called for the total abolition of Confucianist ideas! They also explained that Christianity could be a significant instrument to foster a spirit of democracy to produce Chinese leaders and to bring about a society based on equality and freedom. The kingdom of God was to arrive on the good earth of

high youth. The Communists fled to the countryside and were later forced to go on "The Long March" in 1935 and resettle in Yanan. All seemed quiet on the battlefield of ideas.

Evangelical preachers like John Sung, Wang Mingdao, Watchman Nee, Calvin Chao, and Andrew Gih began their revivalist careers shortly after 1925. From 1927 to 1949, many high school and university students turned to Christ and dedicated their lives to evangelism. Little did they realize that they were preparing themselves for a period of suffering and persecution (1949-1976). With great fervor, Sung, Wang, and Nee exhorted young and old alike to separate themselves from the world and live holy lives for Jesus Christ. A biblical, Christian worldview, which called Christians to transform the world, but not be transformed by it, was rarely presented.

Brent Fulton, Editor • Julia Grosser, Copy Editor • Dona Diehl, Layout and Design



ChinaSource is published quarterly by ChinaSource, a cooperative effort of the Evangelical Fellowship of Mission Agencies, the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association, World Evangelical Fellowship, the Chinese Coordination Centre of World Evangelism and the Institute for Chinese Studies, Wheaton College. Its purpose is to provide up-to-date and accurate analysis of the issues and opportunities facing Christians involved in China service and to provide a forum for exchanging viewpoints and discussing strategies. The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect those of ChinaSource or its cooperating agencies.

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Fan Xuede's article is not an easy one to read.

Here you will find the brutally honest soul of a contemporary mainland Chinese mind, who views the West—and the Christian religion—from a 20th-century non-western perspective. **You may not be ready for what you will find.**

A former Marxist philosopher who is now living in the United States, his words will warm your heart and move you to tears. It may also surprise, shock, anger, shame, and convict you.

Our prayer is that it will move you to your knees, to prayer and to action.

Reflections on God and Culture

Why I would **not** become a Christian

Fan Xuede

For many years I regarded Christianity, with its sense of superiority and strong intolerant spirit, as the representative faith of Western culture. This became my excuse for refusing to believe in Christ. But when I pondered how China might become more democratic politically, and modern economically, I could not evade the whole subject of Western culture.

In the mid-1980s, I read Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. I saw that the Puritan ethical spirit in Protestant Christianity was the primary force behind the development of a rational capitalist system.

What a fatal blow to my preconceptions! The Protestant ethic of the Christianity I loathed was the dynamic giving rise to the development of the modern West. How an ancient gospel has blessed millions in the modernization process. How could the Christian faith exert such dynamic life-giving power? I did not believe in God, so I could only explain this phenomenon with the concepts of "historical inevitability" and "historical accident."

Even though I suppressed the Christian faith in my emotions, my mind could not ignore the transforming power which Christianity has exerted time and again in Western history, especially its impact on the human spirit. Religion provided moral teachings and could nurture many great souls: this was no surprise. The wonder was that in Christianity I found the most basic principle for human ethics: love! Love your neighbor as yourself. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. I must confess that these norms were gems of supreme value.

I also knew that these supreme ethical norms were built on the foundation

of holy love from God, and our love to God: true love means loving one's enemies. True love means forgiving the sins others have committed against one. True love means acknowledging the poverty in one's own spirit. True love means bearing the cross of suffering. True love means serving others. True love means trusting totally in God and committing one's all to God.

With a passion for democracy, I cried many times during theoretical conferences in China, for democracy transcends all classes; it is a universal political form.

After I came to the United States, I discovered through my readings that the foundation for such a universal

Such a stark contrast between **darkness and **light** was unbelievable!**

democratic system came from the fundamental spirit of Christianity. Man is not perfect; he has defects. Institutions created by man are likewise faulty. Therefore, power must be limited and a checks-and-balances system instituted. Man was created by God. In God's presence, all men are equal. Therefore, men should enjoy equal rights.

The Glory and the Darkness

When I arrived in the United States, I was first shocked by how the material culture and the environment were so highly developed. There were super-highways going in every direction, automobiles of all sizes in perpetual motion, communications networks and the information highway, supermarkets that were squeaky-clean, the blue sky,

the green landscape. I was jealous.

I was even more deeply impressed by the fact that I could just relax and enjoy the lifestyle in this civilized society. It did not matter how much money I spent in the store; I was greeted with a smile and a “Thank you.” When I stood in line, I never saw anyone cut in. When I bumped into someone by accident, he apologized first. The white toilet paper in public restrooms was not stolen. The wild geese that I saw while taking a walk in residential neigh-

Conflict between the races, the disintegration of the family, chaos brought about by drug trafficking, guns out of control, advertising everywhere enticing the lusts of consumers, and sex and violence everywhere in the media seducing the flames of man’s desires.

So how did I explain all this darkness? I knew that the moral depravity of society was due to man’s rejection of faith. Money and sex had become man’s substitutes for God. When I reasoned this way, I fell into my own trap.

Since I hated Christianity so much, didn’t it suit me just fine that people rejected it? Since I thought that God didn’t exist, wasn’t it just normal that people did not believe in God? How could I hope that this God—such a flimsy fantasy—would be used as a moral restraint on mankind?

to ask, “O Christian, what witness have you borne for Christ in Western culture? Did you bring Christ into modern Western culture to Christianize culture? Or did you bring modern Western culture into Christianity to secularize your faith? Have you ever reflected on the reason why people see the witness of your lives and end up doubting the reality of your faith?”

A Spirit of Intolerance?

Many accuse Western culture as well as Christianity of an intolerant spirit; shouldn’t Christians seriously reflect on this?

Christians would often proclaim to me that the Christian faith is the only true faith. They certainly have a right to do so. But, I hope that more than anything else, Christians would dare to say, “Look at my life! If it were not

Ken Benintendi



If God exists there MUST be an infinite distinction

To help me shake my doubts, some Christians gave me this explanation: the good things in Western culture came through Christianity; the bad was the evil result of rebellion against Christianity.

Such a stark contrast between darkness and light was unbelievable. I admit that many good things in Western culture came through Christianity. But if we were to say that all good things came from Christianity, it would not be borne by the facts. There is much good in Western culture—Homer’s Iliad, Socrates’ philosophy, the logic and poetry of Aristotle, ancient Greek sculpture, Roman law—these did not come from Christianity.

I felt that one could not extricate Christianity totally from some of the dark chapters of Western history; otherwise one could not explain the dark Middle Ages or the need for Martin Luther’s religious revolution. I wanted

Christ ruling as Lord, it would not be so beautiful and holy.” In this world flooded with human desire, only holy lives, produced by a living faith, can convince me that the Christian faith has nurtured new lives that reject this evil world.

Then, there was all the internal strife and mutual rejection in Christianity. These convinced me that Christianity is an intolerant religion. Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy opposed one another. Catholics and Protestants treat each other as enemies. Within Protestantism, we have Lutherans, Reformed, Anglicans and Baptists critiquing each other. Even within one denomination, factions hold on to their own distinctive positions and yet claim that their faith is the only true faith in the universe while proceeding to further split the Christian church. The entire religion of Christendom becomes a machine pro-

borhoods did not end up as someone’s gourmet dinner.

I could no longer deny the greatness of this material culture. So I began to deny the spiritual foundation which produced all these. Since it was invisible, I could argue against it. I reasoned: there is no intolerance in the material culture of the West—in its science and technology, in the universal principles of democratic institutions, in the public norms for everyday public life; all these principles belong to all mankind. But in the realm of spiritual culture and faith, there was intolerance in the West.

Therefore, all I saw was darkness!

ducing divisions, strife and fragmentation.

Why did this happen? I pondered for a long time. Is it the intolerance in Western culture that brought about the intolerance in Christianity? Or did the intolerance in Christianity nurture Western culture? Or is it a little bit of both?

On one point, however, I am clear: if God exists, there must be an infinite distinction between Him and mankind. Besides Jesus, no one can realize God's will completely in word and deed. Therefore, no denomination has the right to declare that it represents the complete truth of God. No one Christian is perfect and without flaws. A presupposition for unity among Christians and among churches is the recognition of their differences; the condition for Christian unity is to recognize one's own spiritual poverty in his own life and denomination.

between Him and mankind.

Are Nations "Christian?"

Some Christians and Christian literature, in an effort to prove the greatness of Christianity, say that Western nations are Christian nations. When I hear and read about this, my immediate emotional response is one of anger and hatred. In this statement, I can smell the white man's sense of superiority. This concept expels non-western nations and places them in a morally and spiritually inferior position.

If Western countries are indeed Christian nations, they must have an intrinsically Christian nature. But Christianity is a spiritual force with the love of God at its core. The nature of a nation-state and the nature of Christianity are different in their power and orientation.

My best conclusion is that even during the periods in history when Christianity and the powers of the state were united, Western nations did not

achieve the Christian spirit; they betrayed the Christian spirit.

The unification of church and state has injured the powers of the state. It intensified the corruption of secular powers by adding a divine label to all of its activities. It also polluted the Christian faith. Christianity had to endure the outright interference of the secular powers and bear responsibility for the iniquities of the state.

Christians say ever so casually that Western nations are Christian nations. They probably do not realize how much this injures the feelings of people from countries that have been oppressed by the West. Nevertheless, the greatest injury is done to the Christian faith itself because this makes people associate the colonialism and aggression of the West with the Christian faith. When the British Empire, with her military might, forced the Chinese to receive opium for over half a century, many people identified the gospel of the kingdom of God with the

aggression of the expansionist, colonialist and imperialist powers.

This is why I want to cry out: "O Christian, don't carry this pseudonym 'Christian nation' on your lips any more—this doesn't help your religion at all! It is high time to stop chaining Christ and the powers of the state together. The noble name of Jesus Christ should no longer be insulted by the selfishness of a nation, people or institution."

Among this great host who call themselves Christians, how many of them truly put their trust in Jesus Christ? Look at their lives: who can believe that they believe in Jesus Christ? When individualism becomes the final authority for moral decisions, when consumerism takes hold of people's lives, isn't faith a mere decoration?

I do not believe that there is a Christian nation on earth for this reason: Since "all have sinned," anything cre-

ated by people could not be perfect and flawless. Sin must leave its mark on it. Even something as giant as a nation state could not escape the trap of sin. But Jesus came into the world to call sinners to repentance; He did not call sinful nations to repentance. When a person acknowledges that he is a sinner, receives Jesus as Savior, and worships God in Spirit and in truth, the Spirit of God can give the man new birth. He becomes one who belongs to Christ. But a nation-state cannot repent and receive the new birth; how can it become "Christian"?

Western Culture as "Christian Culture"

Just as some Christians call Western nations Christian, some of them would boast that Western culture is Christian culture. I believe this is as ridiculous as boasting that traditional Chinese culture was the only and unrivaled civilization on earth.

This claim created a tremendous barrier to the Christian faith for me. For a person from a non-western country to receive the Christian faith would now mean receiving Western culture; since Western culture is claimed as Christian culture, the two have become inseparable. The issue of whether one accepts the Creator of the universe and mankind becomes an issue of one culture over against another. For me, a Chinese intellectual who loves his land and culture, this is highly injurious.

If Western culture were truly Christian culture, it would be valid for people to criticize Christian missions as cultural aggression from the West. There would be good reason to reject the Christian faith. Because Western culture includes so much degenerate rubbish, why should I be obliged to accept it?

I concede that Christianity has exerted a great influence on Western culture. However, the non-Christian elements in Western culture have deeply influenced Christianity. This reciprocal influence was not all beneficial to Christianity. The anti-Christian elements in Western culture have always stood in tension and opposition to the Christian religion. How can Christians

face these facts and still call Western culture a “Christian culture”?

Christians must no longer ignore the explosive power of the anti-Christian elements in the West. They have become abnormal, one-sided; absolutized Man, not God, has become the norm for all things. Reason has become the basis for determining truth, goodness and beauty; self-interest has become the starting point for human activity. Science is omnipotent; man is the master of his own destiny. Therefore, there is no absolute truth; all truth is relative. To move one step further, there is no relative truth because there has never been any truth. Truth, morality and values are mere beautiful words.

It was a very important breakthrough for me to see that Western culture is not Christian culture and the decline of Western culture has been inseparable from the rejection of Christian faith.

Faith has its source in God; Western Christian culture comes from man. The foundation of the Christian faith is the Bible. People from different societies and different historical contexts interpreted the Bible differently and the result was the expression of the Christian faith in a variety of concrete manifestations.

The Christian faith spread from Jerusalem to the Middle East, and then to the West, but it did not require all Westerners to become Jews. Even the Apostles Peter and Paul, during their time, did not require Gentiles to receive Jewish culture. If Chinese people believe in Christ, they do not need to receive Western culture. The precondition to embrace the Christian faith is only to receive Jesus Christ.

It is true that Christians in the West have created all kinds of splendid cultural forms that are appropriate to the cultural characteristics of Westerners and helpful in their worship of Jesus Christ. However, for people from other cultural and ethnic backgrounds, these are only meant for reference. Chinese Christians should not be copies of their brothers and sisters in the West. They should express themselves creatively and produce worship forms and theo-

logical works which are appropriate to the spirit and cultural characteristics of the Chinese people.

Epilogue

O heavenly Father! No culture can defeat faith in You. You are in heaven, culture is on earth; You have created man, man lives in culture; You are infinite, culture is finite. Cultures come and go; there are old and new ones: yet You are immutable.

Abridged from “Between Heaven and Earth,” in Why I Would Not Become a Christian by Fan Xuede. Fan Xuede was a lecturer on philosophy in China. He is a graduate of Moody Bible Institute and now lives in the U.S. Translation by Dr. Samuel Ling.

Chinese Intellectuals

continued from page 2

engaging the culture, both proved to be inadequate. What can the church offer China? As Chinese students meet Christian teachers in English classes in China, or international student workers on campuses in the West, they want to know: What does Jesus Christ have to say to China’s political, economic, cultural, educational, and family needs? Will Christianity offer a viable voice to shape China’s future?

Post-Tiananmen Square China can be compared with two other periods in Western history. During the sixteenth century, Martin Luther and John Calvin preached the gospel of salvation by grace through faith to Europeans enslaved by medieval Catholic legalism and authoritarianism. The gospel of Jesus Christ is all about grace: a Father in heaven, loving, accepting, and transforming his children as they come to Him in faith. China today needs to hear the strong word of grace!

Then, in the eighteenth century, after Luther and Calvin’s influence began to wane as a secular, commercialized society took shape in England and America, the Great Awakening called Christians back to repentance and a disciplined lifestyle committed to the glory of God and the transformation of society. Jonathan Edwards both wit-

nessed the movement of repentance in New England and sought to shape and sustain it. Responding to the church’s skeptical critics during the Enlightenment period, Edwards interpreted the experiences of the Christian soul, both in the light of the Bible, and in response to eighteenth century skepticism. A biblical worldview made a significant contribution in shaping the new republic, balancing and tempering the secular, Deist ideas of the time as America adopted her Constitution in 1789.

Compare this experience with France. France endured mob rule during the 1789 Revolution, followed by Napoleon’s dictatorship. Why the difference? In large measure, Reformation ideas embodied in the Great Awakening tempered the American experiment in modern democracy.

Evangelical outreach to Chinese intellectuals today needs to be similarly undergirded with a philosophy of history grounded in the Bible. Evangelistic fervor and fidelity to the gospel of the cross of Jesus Christ need to be complemented with intellectual rigor and integrity. As the late Francis Schaeffer called upon Christians in the 1970s to provide “honest answers to honest questions,” so twenty-first century evangelicals must be prepared and equipped with a biblical, compassionate, and relevant apologetic.

What Christian ideas can guide China? What does the Bible have to say about constitutional democracy, economic progress, business ethics, divorce and remarriage, and postmodern art and literary criticism—not to mention the challenge of New Confucianism and folk religion in China?

This is the church’s second chance to bring hope to China, by presenting a Christian worldview to her leaders. Let us not miss it. Again.

Abridged from “A Second Chance” by Dr. Samuel Ling (in Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel, Samuel Ling and Stacey Bieler, eds., forthcoming). Dr. Samuel Ling is President of China Horizon.

Reflections on the Bombing of the Chinese Embassy

Daniel B. Su

NATO's bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade this past May was tragic, and it led to open protest by angry Chinese university students both on the streets and through the media. Many Chinese students in America also took part in demonstrations on their campuses or in Washington. Amidst the statements of apology by leaders of Western countries, many Americans—Christians or otherwise—have sent letters of condolence to the Chinese embassy in Washington. For those of us involved in outreach to Chinese students and intellectuals, we find ourselves in an awkward situation, not knowing how to address the issue. The bombing has impacted our ministry.

It is not difficult to understand the Chinese reaction. China has always taken pride in its historical glory and greatness, but its pride was deeply wounded when the British gunboats blew open China's door in 1840 and Western "Christian" nations defeated China in subsequent conflicts. That wounded pride has since driven the Chinese in a common quest to revive China by making it rich and powerful (*Fu Qiang*). This is particularly true among China's intellectuals who, following the Confucian tradition, view themselves as responsible for China's destiny. In the embassy bombing, China sees itself again as the "victim" in the hands of Western powers, and President Jiang vowed that China would never be "bullied" again.

Unfortunately, missionaries were not able to enter China until the British gunboats had blown open China's door. Since those days, Christianity has always been linked with Western imperialism. It would be a theologian's work to debate if God "caused" China's door to open the way it did, or if God simply "allowed" it to happen within that historical context. Whichever the case, we have to live with its consequences. The embassy bombing has added to the disillusionment many Chinese intellectuals feel about Western style democracy and its geopolitical alliances. Here are some perspectives that may be helpful.

1. Keep a healthy distance between our Christian faith and our respective governments. No country has ever been fully Christian in its true sense; there is an irreconcilable difference between the City of God and the City of Man, as St. Augustine points out. The United States and Britain each have their own Christian heritage, but it would be misleading to label them as "Christian" countries. In fact, almost all Western nations are becoming increasingly hedonistic and even pagan.

2. Remember that government at its best is only a mixed blessing. Caesar can't help God. It would be a mistake to look up to our government too much instead of looking up to God. The government's ability to address moral issues such as human rights and religious freedom rests heavily upon its moral credibility. Once the credibility is gone, so also is its ability. The current U.S. government with its scandals, coupled with the bombing of the embassy, will not be an effective spokesman on moral issues, at least for the foreseeable future.

3. Be aware that it is not enough to teach Christian faith only at a private, personal level. This level focuses on personal salvation, devotion, confession and quiet time. The relevance of our faith and its impact on our society and the entire world also need to be discussed among ourselves and in the course of our ministry to the Chinese. For example, what does it mean to love, confess, forgive and reconcile in an international context?

4. Keep our ultimate loyalty to God alone. This important aspect of biblical truth should not only be applied to us but also be shared with the Chinese students and intellectuals we are trying to reach. In this way, we may together transcend our earthly allegiance to find true fellowship and common identity as citizens of God's kingdom where there is neither Jew nor Greek, Chinese nor American.

God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform. As the Tiananmen Square bloodshed prepared the hearts of many Chinese for their spiritual journey, may the tragedy of the embassy bombing remind us of God's call to be salt and light in society and among the nations.

Rev. Daniel B. Su works with international students and is assistant to the president of China Outreach Ministries in Fairfax, VA.

May the tragedy of the embassy bombing remind us of God's call to be salt and light in society and among the nations.

Ken Benintendi



Partnership: The key to Reentry

Carolynn Hudson

The issue of reentry is a sensitive subject for Christian Chinese students and scholars who return home following time spent outside of their country. Only a national currently living in his country, or one who is thoroughly committed to returning home, has the right and the credibility to call a fellow international to join him in returning. While it is not our role to try and make this decision

worldview—the cultural lenses through which we see and evaluate the world. It is critical that we remember that our own culture is not the standard by which China, or any other country, is to be measured. By holding our own culture up to the measuring stick of the biblical standard, we confront our own cultural idolatry. Until we begin to relinquish that idolatry, it is difficult for us to truly understand and appreciate

world. Many who have been in ministry to internationals over the years have found themselves surprised—and not a little intimidated—by the new generation of students coming to our universities. As a result of modernization and globalization, these students are often sophisticated, technologically savvy and more ambitious than internationals of the past. Unlike previous students who were comfortable in ongoing care-giving ministries, these students are very sensitive to relationships that they may perceive as unequal.

Changes in the Christian world are immediately clear; the Church is moving south and east while declining in the West. The world to which we once took the Gospel is now clearly in a position to come back to help us.

Understanding the changes in international students and in God's working in the world must shape our attitudes towards internationals. The growth and maturity of the global Church, together with cultural affinity, make Christian internationals on our turf far better equipped to reach their own people than we are.

● *Our commitment to partnership with internationals is a critical factor in adequate preparation for reentry.* I am indebted to Chinese Christian nationals who are my cultural informants. From them I have begun to understand the prevailing pragmatism of Chinese scholars who consider discussions about issues such as truth, human rights, and sinfulness far too abstract. Rather, they see God in the same way they would any other god—as someone to manipulate to get what they want. If we do not understand this cultural way they view god, our incorrect assumptions about their motivation for knowing God can have significant implications upon their return to China.

Equal partnerships between Westerners and Chinese nationals can help alleviate some of these misunderstandings. When our partnerships involve internationals in a context where Christianity is modeled in their own cultural style, the very real danger that hampers reentry—the taking on of so much of

Chinese students who returned to their homeland have made their mark repeatedly in recent Chinese history.

for them, we can help prepare them for this challenge. If we desire to see internationals prepared to reenter their home countries as solid, effective Christians, I am convinced there must be a paradigm shift in the way we view and work with internationals here. There are five foundational ministry concepts that I believe are significant.

● *We need to “think reentry” from the first day we meet internationals.* Reentry needs to influence everything we do in evangelism and discipleship as well as in the final stages of reentry preparation. To be able to “think reentry,” we must first clearly understand our own

another culture, let alone help someone think through how to function in it as a Christian. As we consider evangelism, unless we recognize that our evangelistic tools may be culture-bound, we cannot hope to help internationals think through contextualized evangelism within their culture.

● *Internationals' views of our attitudes toward them have a radical impact on reentry.* Our attitudes toward internationals need to reflect the changes in today's world. Two critical areas are changes in the new generation of students and changes in the Christian

Continued on page 13

The Dilemma for Chinese Intellectuals

Social Consciousness or Personal Interest

Huo Shui

Historically, Chinese intellectuals have been best known for their deep concern for the nation and its people. A scholar's greatest dream was to succeed in the national academic exam, be nominated by the emperor's court and eventually govern on behalf of the dynasty, putting his political ideas into practice. For those who failed to realize this ambition, intellectual criticism was a way to contribute and assist the emperor's policy-making process.

Over 2000 years ago, the first great poet in Chinese history, Qu Yuan, was a high-ranking official in his home state of Chu during a time when it was under siege. The king of Chu did not recognize or appreciate Qu Yuan's suggestions for saving their homeland. Rather, treacherous officials slandered him, and sent him into exile. Upon

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hearing the news that the capital of Chu had fallen into enemy hands, he threw himself into the Miluo River and drowned. Having his counsel recognized was, to him, more important than his life.

If the voices of these neglected intellectuals were rejected, they would retreat to the mountains and wilderness to live the life of a hermit, enjoying

their wine, writing their poetry or burying themselves in academic works. In a word, the philosophy of Chinese intellectuals throughout history can be described as follows: if selected, benefit the society; if rejected, cultivate self-perfection.

For several thousand years, the ideal path for a Chinese intellectual to follow was considered study, civil service, and finally governance on behalf of the nation. For them, academic success meant civil position. The moral argument for intellectuals' privilege was that only educated people are able to understand issues and morality, interpret the writings of the sages and represent the will of the ordinary people.

Those who were educated but not favored for an official position, or who had been stripped of their titles, were never content with being left out of the political arena. They made the emperor's court the target of their criticism hoping, as an opposition group, that the next emperor would raise them up to the decision-making class.

Only an extremely small number of Chinese intellectuals have truly seen themselves as the voice of the ordinary people, chosen to remain outside the circle of power and been willing to be the moral conscience of the society. The path for most was to study for an official position, serve the nation, assist legislation in the emperor's court, propagate the way of the sages. Actually, this system worked well to meet the needs of China's feudal societies.

Another side of the Chinese intellectuals' tradition stems from their education. Being educated with ancient sages' works, intellectuals became arrogant and aloof, seeing no one but themselves. From the time of Confucius, they developed a habit of

What is the **REAL** current status of Marxist belief among Chinese intellectuals . . . ?

looking down on manual labor, despising mercantile activities and belittling the pursuit and practice of the natural sciences. With the 21st century approaching, we may question how much weight we can attribute to the influence of this long tradition. What is the real current status of Marxist belief among Chinese intellectuals after having been ordained as the "political correctness" of China for 50 years? These are probably the questions to which every China-concerned person would like to know the answer.

To understand these Chinese intellectuals, the first question is somewhat ironic: "Who really are the Chinese intellectuals?" In other words, what defines an intellectual? This issue continues today because historically Chinese intellectuals were the opposite of the totally unschooled, uneducated majority. Today, almost all people in China have had at least some degree of education. If defining an intellectual by his or her education or lack thereof, many people can be called intellectuals; but if the definition includes "the presence of social consciousness and

independent thinking ability,” then, the majority of these people would not be considered intellectuals by Western standards.

Why is this true? The majority of Chinese who receive higher education are students of natural science and technology. They believe that science, technology and development are able to change the world and alter human destiny. Among them, there are highly honored scientists and inventors. Not calling them “intellectuals”, does not seem right; however, they do not offer themselves as the “consciousness of society,” let alone give up their scientific research to act as “the voice of the people.” Their focus is on how to live well and influence the scientific com-

Apparently, the social science people... must continually convince themselves of what TRUTH is.



munity, and thus, to call them intellectuals does not ring true.

In the past, their opportunities in science were provided exclusively by the government. This unavoidable reliance on the government effectively restricted their freedom of expression. Since the dawning of the Reform era, the work avenues for these scientists have become diversified and their opinions less stifled. But their main “battlefield” is still in the area of science and technology, not in the political or social arena.

It is because of their single-minded belief in science and technology that the Chinese Communist Party and its government favors these intellectuals as the ideal candidates for a new generation of leaders. Among the Politburo’s seven standing members, five have science and technology backgrounds (Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Zhu Rongji, Hu Jintao, and Li Lanqing). Some refer to them as “technocrats.” This suggests that Chinese intellectuals with scientific backgrounds are comfortable holding both scientific and

governmental titles and explains why Chinese intellectuals with similar backgrounds are not too worried about their future. While this group of people pursue change, they never desire social turmoil. Their sense of success and social responsibility is expressed mostly in their professional undertakings in scientific development and its application. From this activity, they are also able to generate the necessary finances to meet personal and family needs. More importantly, this kind of pursuit is readily accepted by the government and the people; no political risk is involved.

For another group of Chinese intellectuals, who have higher education, the case is rather different. These are

called the “social science people.” Social science deals with human existence, its ideology, social systems, ethics and morality. In China, the party claims to already have all the answers in this area. Thus, the task of the social science people is not that of pursuing the truth, but one of proving why the ordained communist ideology is truth.

Apparently, the social science people not only have to persuade others to accept the communist truth, but also must continually convince themselves of what that truth is. Unfortunately, Marxism’s market in China is no better than in other parts of the world. With the passing of time, more and more people have given up Marxist belief. Their blind following of these doctrines has been replaced first, by a sense of lostness, then doubt, and finally attack upon these doctrines. This shift is not so much the result of individual decisions, but rather of the realities of life being inconsistent with the doctrine.

As Chinese intellectuals, the first choice that those in the social science

category are facing is whether or not to be apologists for the official truth. If they choose not to be, then their knowledge can only be sold cheaply in the marketplace to provide them with the necessities for minimal survival. China’s traditional values exert a much heavier influence upon these individuals than they do upon intellectuals with a scientific background. While they uphold their “social consciousness,” and while they want their voices to be heard and desire to influence those who are in power, the struggle and pain they are caused in the face of violating their personal integrity forces them to pursue financial gain, even though this brings self-condemnation.

Due to this, some have suggested the possibility of “inside reformation” meaning cooperation with those in power—pushing for a gradual change. Most of those who support this stance have already secured a position within the ruling class or have great potential for doing so. Those who are marginalized by the power structure prefer a quick overthrow of the current government to provide new opportunities for making and influencing political decisions.

All of these mentioned above adhere to the slogan of “voicing the will of the people” and talk about “national” interests, but where are the real intellectuals? Where are those who are not attached to the government, but represent the “consciousness of society” and are capable of independent opinion? There are so few! A social environment and economic foundation that will allow this type of person to thrive are only now emerging.

If asked persistently what Chinese intellectuals believe, I fear that most of them believe only in practical reality. What is this reality? It is how to survive in the changing society or perhaps how to have a better life. Anything that can help Chinese scholars to realize these goals will be widely received.

Huo Shui is a former government political analyst now out of China. Translation is by Ping Dong.

Who are the Chinese Intellectuals?

Historically, the encounter between the intellectual segment of Chinese society and the Christian faith has been filled with animosity, misunderstanding and lost opportunities. Following the Opium Wars, when China opened to the West and Protestant missionaries began their work, most converts were from the masses. Confucian scholars were hostile to these efforts, rarely converted to Christianity and, during the 19th century, incited their people to attack the missionaries.

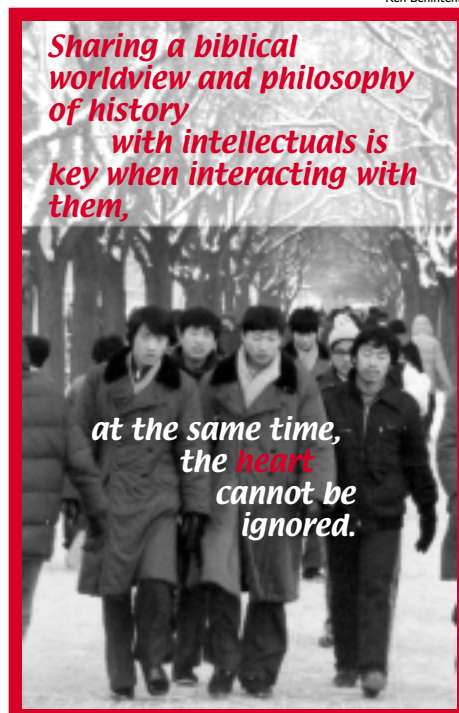
During the first decade of the twentieth century, many students turned to Christianity and, for a short period, Christianity made headway among some intellectuals. After the 1919 May 4th Movement, however, many Chinese intellectuals rejected Christianity and turned to socialism or Marxism. They became more organized and articulate as they criticized Christianity as a foe of modern science and a tool of imperialism.¹ In 1927, a forceful anti-Christian movement caused most missionaries to flee to the coast. In the 1930s, evangelism and revival campaigns saw thousands of students turn to Christ, but the opportunity to address the May 4th intellectuals' search for an ideology to save the nation had been missed.

After the Chinese Communist Party triumph in 1949, intellectuals were hounded and persecuted via political campaigns. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76) many professors were assigned humiliating tasks, and some, unable to endure the "loss of face", committed suicide. During this period, the government worked systematically to wipe out all religion, particularly the Christian church. However, at this same time, outside China, a period of conversions took place among intellectuals from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Southeast Asia who were studying in the United States and Canada. Today, hundreds of churches exist in North America as a result.

With their confidence in the system shaken, Chinese intellectuals began to

examine Western politics and philosophy. Then, on June 4, 1989 with the Tiananmen Square tragedy, once again there was despair over finding answers to China's problems. Intellectuals have continued to research Christianity and increasingly, many have been drawn to it. Among those who have come to faith in Christ, some have remained apart from both the registered churches of the Three Self Patriotic

Ken Benintendi



Movement as well as the unregistered house churches. This segment, known as "Culture Christians," does not regularly meet together in community for worship and prayer. Their place in society and their cultural background determine how their faith is worked out within society. Today, in China, they engage in artistic pursuits or conduct research—one of the major areas of exploration being the relationship between Christianity and Western culture. They meet in small discussion groups and, increasingly, are able to publish the results of their research in academic journals.

Many of these intellectuals make up the ranks of international students currently studying or doing research at

North American universities and on the campuses of U.S. institutions and substantial numbers are also on campuses in countries such as Canada, Australia, France, Germany, Great Britain and Japan.² As the Asian economy progresses, predictions are that the total number of international, university-level students in North America will increase from the present 1/2 million to 1.5 million in the next quarter century.³ Many of these will be Chinese. With China looming on the horizon as a world superpower in the coming century, reaching these scholars becomes an immensely strategic opportunity.

Sharing a biblical worldview and philosophy of history with intellectuals is key when interacting with them, but, at the same time, the heart cannot be ignored. Many scholars who have come to faith recount that a kind gesture by a Christian or the singing of a hymn was instrumental in their journey to faith. In addition, because they are careful scholars, often come from an atheistic background and are sensitive to peer group pressures, time and patience are needed as they seek to understand the Christian faith and know its Author.⁴

END NOTES

1. Chinese Communist religious policy dates back to the critique of Christianity in the 1920s by the intellectuals and to Mao's experiment with anti-Christian legislation in the 1930s. *Soul Searching*, Hamrin, Ling and Su, editors, China Horizon, 1997, p.2.

2. *Serving China: A Primer for Pastors, Churches and Ministries*, China Harvest and ChinaSource, 1998, p. 20.

3. "Re-Inventing International Student Ministry in IVCF/USA" by Ned Hale, *Internationals on Campus*, Spring 1999, Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, p. 1.

4. *Serving China: A Primer for Pastors, Churches and Ministries*, p. 20.

Unless otherwise noted, the information for this article was taken from the introduction of Soul Searching, by Samuel Ling, General Editor (China Horizon, P.O. Box 40399, Pasadena, CA 91114) and "Culture Christians—A New Phenomenon" by Tony Lambert, China Insight, Nov/Dec, 1998, OMF International, 10 West Dry Creek Circle, Littleton, CO 80120. ☞

Peoples of China

Intellectuals and Gateway People Groups

Jim Nickel

The concept of Gateway Peoples has been widely promoted among Christians over the past few years as a key to fulfilling the Great Commission. Gateway peoples are groups that, while unreached themselves, are perceived to have the potential to play a strategic role in making the gospel accessible to a cluster of other unreached peoples.

The theory is good, but there is a problem in the way it has been applied, at least in China. The Gateway Peoples for China that appear on current lists are all ethnolinguistically defined. Their selection appears to have been based primarily on size. I don't know how this approach is working in other parts of the world, but in China, there is little to suggest that the groups currently identified as Gateway Peoples are actually playing a strategic role in reaching other people groups.

I would like to suggest that, at least in China, a better approach to the identification of Gateway Peoples might be to look for sociologically defined people groups that have already demonstrated the capacity to impact multiple people groups.¹ Intellectuals fall into this category.

Intellectuals have played a major role in shaping China throughout its history. From the impact of Confucian scholars to that of university-trained leaders in China today, there is no question but that Intellectuals have had—and continue to have—a major impact upon the nation. If Chinese Intellectuals can be reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ, it seems evident that their contribution to the evangelization of all the peoples of China could be substantial.

“Intellectuals” is really a macro-

grouping that includes a wide range of scholars, educators and professionals. In the ICS map “People Groups of Mainland China” Jim Ziervogel lists seven different groups under the heading “Intelligentsia:” Science and Technology Professionals, Artists and Writers, High Level Intelligentsia (including University Professors, Senior Researchers and others), Middle School Teachers and Staff, Primary School Teachers and Staff, Performing Artists and their Support Workers, and

Medical Personnel.² What an impact could be made at all levels of Chinese society if people from each of these groups became devoted followers of Christ.

As we consider the concept of Gateway Peoples as it relates to Intellectuals, we might ask which one of the sub-groups that make up this macro-grouping might be a Gateway People with regard to the others. Intellectuals as a whole might be a Gateway People with regard to all of China, but first we have to reach them. Perhaps one of my readers would take up the challenge of developing a Gateway Strategy for reaching Chinese Intellectuals.

There is one other critical factor that must not be neglected if we are to successfully pursue a strategy of reaching the unreached peoples of China through Intellectuals. Intellectuals must be challenged to use their gifts and influence to advance the kingdom

BUT... Is it Biblical?

Only seven verses in all of Scripture contain the words “intelligent” or “intelligence.” The first reference is found in 1 Samuel 25:3, where it is used to describe a major difference between Abigail and her husband Nabal: “She was an intelligent and beautiful woman, but her husband, a Calebite, was surly and mean in his dealings.”

Several other examples of intellectuals are cited in Scripture: King David was described as “a wise son, endowed with intelligence and discernment” (II Chron 2:12). Daniel was admired as one who had insight, intelligence and outstanding wisdom” (Daniel 5:11; 5:14). In Acts 13:7 we find a civic leader and seeker after God named Sergius Paulus described as an intelligent man.

Two passages in the Bible raise questions about the value of intelligence. Isaiah 29:14 declares that “the wisdom of the wise will perish, [and] the intelligence of the intelligent will vanish.” This passage is quoted in 1 Corinthians 1:19, where Paul explains that there is a difference between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God.

God is not impressed with human intelligence, and we should not be either. On the other hand, He does not ignore the need of intellectuals for revelation that speaks to them on their level, and He graciously chooses to use the giftedness that believing intellectuals bring to His service.

Let us look for women like Abigail in China, who will save their nation from the just wrath of an offended Heavenly King. Let us pray that God will raise up wise and intelligent men in China like David, Daniel, and Sergius Paulus, who will impact their nation through their godly example and discerning leadership.

And let us earnestly seek to help the intellectuals of China understand the futility of human intelligence apart from the wisdom that comes from God, showing them first the simplicity of the gospel and then the fulfillment that can come through the pursuit of godly wisdom. — JLN

The Bible has little to say about intellectualism. But what it DOES SAY is very instructive.

of God among the unreached. People do not naturally have a concern for people unlike themselves. This tends to be even more true of Intellectuals than is the case in the general population. However, as Intellectuals are taught the biblical mandate to make disciples of all peoples, the Spirit of God can and will give some of them a burden to fulfill the Great Commission.

Multiplying laborers to reach the unreached peoples of China must be a priority for us as followers of Christ. Reaching Intellectuals with the gospel and giving them a vision to pass it on to all the peoples of China is a Gateway Strategy if I ever saw one!

END NOTES

1. Some of the early writings and lists of unreached peoples published under the auspices of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization contained a balanced emphasis upon both ethnolinguistic and sociologically defined people groups. See, for example, *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task*, Harley Schreck and David Barrett, editors. Monrovia, CA: MARC 1987. While mission researchers continue to look at people groups in various ways, recent missions mobilization material has focused almost exclusively on ethnolinguistic peoples. This is understandable, as the emphasis has been upon identifying and targeting all remaining unreached peoples, and ethnolinguistic designations lend themselves more readily to this task. However, in most cases, sociological definitions are much more useful in developing evangelistic and church-multiplication strategies (of which the Gateway Peoples strategy is one). Therefore, it makes much more sense to look for Gateway Peoples among sociologically defined groups than among ethnolinguistic ones.

2. While somewhat dated now (it was published in 1982), this map would form a good starting point for someone wishing to pursue research on the sociological peoples of China. It includes brief descriptions of 32 such groups. It is available from the Institute of Chinese Studies, P.O. Box 25988, Colorado Springs, CO 80936-5988. E-mail: <ics@xc.org>.

Jim Nickel is President of the Institute of Chinese Studies, Colorado Springs, Colo. ICS staff and volunteers have been doing research on unreached Chinese peoples since 1977. 卍

Partnership

continued from page 8

Western Christian culture—is lessened. Because partners from other cultures understand things about their culture that we can never hope to, partnership makes sense.

Why do we not make developing these partnerships a top priority? I believe that the fear of losing our role in ministry—of losing power and control—is often at the heart of the matter. I wonder if, subconsciously, we believe we can do things better than internationals, talking about partnership but still seeing ourselves as “in charge” and internationals as “helpers.” I am convinced that pursuing partnerships of mutual respect, equality and honor will bear fruit greater than anything we could imagine.

● *Leadership development that involves Christian internationals as equal partners is irreplaceable reentry preparation.* I have never forgotten the words of an African brother who said, “You Americans are always telling us that we should go home to our countries with the Gospel, but rarely do you give us the leadership experiences and testings in ministry that would help us believe we have the gifts and skills to face such a calling confidently.” We also have a difficult time serving internationals because we do not want to let go of our need to lead. We may have many excuses for not letting internationals lead; however, if we truly desire to be servants, we will give up our need to lead and make room for them to learn.

● *The international fellowship is the ministry structure that best prepares internationals for reentry.* A Taiwanese graduate student, who had been a Christian most of her life, recounted that she had often asked to help lead a Bible study in the Christian group she was a part of but was refused. She felt the Americans who always led the studies thought she had nothing to offer. International fellowships, on the other hand, offer a place where internationals can belong without being made to feel like curiosities. They offer a place where internationals can learn—in fact, are expected—to lead. They offer

a place where internationals can give and receive mutual support.

The more we understand the university and its impact on internationals, the more our understanding of the value of these fellowships in providing community for international students and scholars grows. Thousands of internationals currently experience a lack of community on university campuses. The need for community, especially for this new generation of internationals, is best met through international fellowships.

International fellowships provide an invaluable opportunity for cultural blindspots to be brought to light through interaction with other cultures. Every culture has its strengths and weaknesses, and what may be seen as strength in one may be thought to be weakness in another. Growth comes as blind spots are worked through in interpersonal relationships. As understanding comes, internationals from each culture are better able to appropriately and authoritatively address those issues within their own culture.

Several months ago I sat in a Mandarin Bible study and listened to a Mainland Chinese leader: “We Chinese never think about whether or not a leader deserves our obedience. Rather than cause a problem by disagreeing, we simply follow. However, only God really deserves that kind of obedience. First we must obey Him and after that we can obey man.” Here, from a Mainland Chinese, was truth spoken very directly in a culture that often chooses more indirect communication—a right he had in speaking to those of his own culture.

Chinese students who returned to their homeland have made their mark repeatedly in recent Chinese history. Many of the current generation studying abroad may be expected to do the same. Our ability to partner with them now will help determine what sort of mark they leave on China’s future when they return.

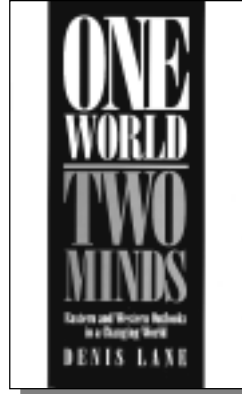
Carolynn Hudson serves with International Ministries Fellowship and works with Chinese scholars in the Bay Area of California. 卍

Book Review

Where East Meets West

A review by Wright Doyle

One World: Two Minds, Eastern and Western Outlooks in a Changing World by Denis Lane, OMF International-Canada, 5759 Coopers Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada L4Z 1R9, 64pp. (paperback), ISBN 981-3009-71-1. Phone: 905-568-9971. U.S. \$3.75 and Canadian \$4.50 plus postage.



The value of brand names is that they elicit confidence. I trust that a car made by Toyota will perform well, if properly maintained.

The same goes for authors: any book by Denis Lane will be worth reading. I met Mr. Lane years ago when I was a new worker with OMF. Since then, I have heard him speak many times and have profited from his writings. I also know him as a man of intelligence, hard work and integrity.

Thus, I am not surprised to find this little book (only 64 pages) packed with information and valuable insights. At a time when Chinese and Americans struggle to understand and respect each other, this book (first published in 1995) could hardly be more timely. *One World: Two Minds* takes its place next to Lin Yu Tang's *My Country, My People* and Boyd's *Beyond the Chinese Face* in the list of significant aids to understanding these two vastly differing cultures.

Mr. Lane first outlines basic backgrounds and viewpoints characteristic of East and West, then shows the effect of our background upon our thinking.

In doing so, he has to make generalizations. Actually, I was amazed to see how few of his "stereotypes" missed the mark. He adds qualifications to avoid overstating his case. When he details the effects of Eastern and Western ways of thought upon such matters as politics and religion, for example, he takes care to mention the immense changes taking place in Asia. After showing

how Asians tend to respect and follow persons in authority, he notes the effect of Western democratic and individualistic ideas upon such a modern society as Singapore.

Like most observers, he finds the West to be focused on the individual, the East on the group. Descartes said, "I think, therefore I am," putting himself at the center of reality. Western man sees himself distinct from the rest of reality, which he then divides up into different components, each of which he proceeds to analyze. In recent times, however, the West has lost confi-

dence in its ability to find a true explanation for the world and has even denied the validity of knowledge of anything not measurable by the senses. The West has fragmented into a collection of individuals each seeking to fulfill himself in isolation from others.

Confucius, whom Lane sees as typical of the East, sees man as part of the larger whole, including human society. Fulfillment comes from finding harmony within this greater reality. Instead of logically dissecting the world, the Asian seeks to find his place in it.

Our different backgrounds affect our thinking. In the West, we exalt logic in making decisions and seek to reduce all thought to the scientific method. In practice we fail, of course, but this is our ideal. The East will seek a more holistic way of arriving at a conclusion, including prolonged discussion with others in a search for consensus. All of a sudden, "a conclusion appears as if by magic." That is because the Asian participants have been using their whole being to review the whole situation, not just the particular point at issue. The whole situation includes "all people present at the discussion. Those people are not simply individuals, but people to relate to." Lane shows how this focus on relationships produces a vastly different, but no less valid, method of coming to a decision.

Lane notes that Western women might be more comfortable with the process than Western men, a point Lin Yu Tang anticipated when he called China a "feminine" culture.

In Parts Two and Three (the heart of the book) he succinctly addresses differences in political outlook, educational method, viewing history, making decisions, feeling secure, and major aspects of religious outlook. For each topic, he first presents the Western, then the Asian view, followed by a "When East Meets West" section. Finally, he compares and contrasts West-

Our different backgrounds affect our thinking.

ern and Asian worldviews with Christianity. By doing so, Lane refuses to identify either West or East as correct; he measures both against the trans-cultural truth of the Bible.

Lane's brief expositions of the Christian position at the close of each section end up covering most of the basic articles of Christian faith in a highly practical manner. These analyses alone are worth the price of the book and lift the debate about contextualization to a higher plane. Going beyond platitudes, Lane outlines principles that

should inform any future consideration of such controversial topics as ancestor worship, evangelistic techniques (he raises probing questions about the invitation system), democracy and dogma.

While the entire book deserves careful reading, some passages rise to brilliance. We all know that Asians tend to focus on the group and Westerners the individual; how many of us have found a synthesis in the doctrine of the Trinity? God is both three unique Persons and a perfectly harmonious community. We would do well to imitate Him and value both society and its component units.

I have only one small criticism. Although Lane does not say so, a careless reader might infer that Asians and Westerners have two totally different and equally valid ways of thinking and reasoning. But Carl Henry, in his massive *God, Revelation, & Authority*, has demonstrated that there is only one common logic, used by all of us regardless of culture. We may place more or less emphasis upon relationships or symbols, but we all think the same way. Likewise, the once-popular dichotomy between so-called Hebrew and Greek thought in the Old and New Testaments has been shown to be overdrawn. Both Testaments and both languages employ the same kind of "linear" reasoning and both include poetic devices.

While this little volume needs to be supplemented with longer works on history, culture, religion, and psychology of both East and West so that Lane's necessary over-simplification can be balanced by more "exceptions," the book should be read by anyone seeking to bridge the gap between East and West. Let me put it this way: I began working with Chinese in 1975 and have tried to read a bit about Chinese culture, but I plan to read this book again.

Wright Doyle and his wife served as missionaries to Taiwan for 12 years. Since then he has been director of China Institute, a ministry to scholars from Mainland China based in Charlottesville, Virginia. 卍

Resource corner

Serving Chinese Intellectuals

Soul Searching: Chinese Intellectuals on Faith and Society

Carol Hamrin, Samuel Ling, Daniel Baida Su, eds, 1997. Ten essays by mainland Chinese intellectuals who recently turned to Christ. 107 pages, English. Suggested donation \$8.

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Apologists or Antagonists?

Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel

Aniversaries carry a special meaning in Chinese tradition. In this respect, NATO's accidental bombing of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade this past May had particular significance for the rock-throwing demonstrators who retaliated by attacking the US and British embassies in Beijing.

This tragic accident took place within days of the 80th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement. For Chinese intellectuals in the year 1919, May fourth signified a turning point in attitudes toward the West. Angered by the post-World War I Treaty of Versailles, which ceded the Shandong peninsula to Japan, thousands of students took to Tiananmen Square. Their fervent nationalism would later be channeled into political activity culminating in a revolution that would change China forever.

These students had no doubt encountered Christianity in their colleges and universities, many of which were founded by Western missionaries. Yet faced with China's increasing humiliation by the international community, many had, by this time, concluded that

Christianity was not only irrelevant to China but was yet another weapon in the arsenal of foreign powers intent on carving up China's territory for their own. The question, "Does the Gospel have anything to offer China?" drew a negative response. Christianity and the intellectuals' goal of a strong and prosperous

China appeared to be mutually exclusive.

Seventy years later, another generation of students took to the same square in Beijing. This time, however, they extolled Western political ideals as the saving hope of China. In the aftermath of Tiananmen, many concluded that, since the

rise of Western democracy could be linked to the Christian faith, Christianity must have something of value to offer China. Not a few became Christians during this period, which constituted the season of greatest openness to the Gospel in the history of intellectuals in China.

Within half a decade the tide had turned again. *The China That Can Say "No"* was a bestseller in Chinese bookstores. Western ideals were fast falling out of favor as Chinese intellectuals, many of whose study experiences abroad had left them disillusioned,

proclaimed that China must chart its own path to strength and prosperity. Some outside observers proclaimed that the window of opportunity to reach Chinese intellectuals was fast closing.

As several of the writers in this issue of *ChinaSource* point out, identifying the Gospel with a particular nation or political system can be dangerous, for when that country or system becomes offensive to those we seek to reach, our Gospel becomes offensive as well.

The history of Chinese intellectuals' encounters with the Gospel suggests that "what God can do for China" is in the end an insufficient attraction for Chinese intellectuals to come to faith. Those who have believed have usually done so not because of what Christianity as a collection of moral and ethical principles can do for China but because they have seen Christ in the lives of individuals who share deeply the concerns of the Chinese people. **Having been led into an encounter with the living God, they are no longer asking "What can Christianity do for China?" but rather "What can I—and my fellow Chinese—do for Christ?"**

Dr. Brent Fulton is the Executive Director of ChinaSource and Editor of the ChinaSource journal.



Brent Fulton

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