HONOR-SHAME CULTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON CHINESE MISSIONARY RETENTION AND ATTRITION

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale

Currently, there are approximately 2,000 people groups without a Bible in their native language, according to Pioneer Bible Translators. The Joshua Project (2020a) defines an unreached or least-reached people group as "a people group among which there is no indigenous community of believing Christians with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize this people group without outside assistance" and currently estimates the number of people groups matching this description at 7,402. The majority of these people groups are found within the 10/40 window which includes North Africa, Asia, and the Middle East and are primarily Muslim, Buddhist, and Hindu in faith. Most of these countries are considered restricted access nations (RANs) or creative access nations (CANs) due to their political or religious situations. The RAN Network, which focuses its efforts on reaching these closed countries, states that the need is to "build meaningful ministry partnerships with churches, Christian businesses, daring mavericks, entrepreneurs and other individual disciples of Christ" who desire to reach these people for Christ. As noted in RAN Network's vision statement, the most effective way to gain access is through business as mission (BAM). Steve Rundle and Tom A. Steffen (2003) characterizes a properly missional business as a socially responsible and income producing business that is managed by kingdom professionals and serves to promote the growth of local churches primarily among the least evangelized and developed parts of the world for God's glory (p. 61-62).

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) (or the New Silk Road) was masterminded by Chairman Xi in 2013. It focused on development and investment in business and trade opportunities from East Asia to Europe with a focus on countries that currently have minimal

trade with their neighbors and that have struggled since the economic crises hit Russia. Chatzky and McBride (2020) discovered, “China’s overall ambition for the BRI is staggering. To date, more than sixty countries—accounting for two-thirds of the world’s population—have signed on to projects or indicated an interest in doing so.” What makes this plan unique is how closely the Belt and Road Initiative aligns with a pre-Mao era vision of the 家庭教会 (*jiatingjiaohui*) or house churches within China. 传回耶路撒冷运动 (*chuanhui yelusaleng yundong*) or the Back to Jerusalem Movement (BTJM) was a missional vision having its roots in the 1920s. Paul Hattaway (2003) explains, “[Back to Jerusalem] refers to a call from God for the Chinese church to preach the gospel and establish fellowships of believers in all the countries, cities, towns and ethnic groups between China and Jerusalem” (p. x).

The BRI is not a pipe dream but is backed by a country that is poised for economic global expansion. Lee Yennee (2019) of CNBC reports, “Some economists have predicted that China’s economy will surpass America’s by about 2030. But when taking into account the different standards of living across countries—also known as adjusting to purchasing power parity—the Chinese economy has been the world’s largest since 2014.” The governmental passion for BRI and the Chinese church’s for BTJM meet in the proven entrepreneurial experts within the Chinese church that have taken advantage of the national economic fortitude.

The city of Wenzhou, writes Brent Fulton (2015), “is famous both for its economic prosperity as well as a high proportion of religious believers” (p. 24). He mentions the “boss Christian” which refers to “leaders who travel throughout China and beyond to open new markets for Wenzhou goods and to plant Wenzhou-style churches” (p. 24). It is stories like this from successful Chinese businessmen that have earned these traveling merchants the title of the

"Jews of the East." Chan Kimkwong and Tetsunao Yamamori (2002) reference distinct character traits present in Chinese Christian business models:

> Some Chinese Christian entrepreneurs have already developed models that combine successful business practices and Christian witness beyond government-confined church activities. These Chinese business leaders are creating new paradigms for holistic entrepreneurs in regions where Christianity is restricted. (p. 58)

The Chinese church has a heart for those unreached nations that are typically hostile to the Christian faith, it lives under a government which aims to do trade and commerce deals with these nations, and the business context under Communist rule has forced them to create a missional model that is well suited for such a hostile environment.

The Joshua Project (2020b) reports that out of the 544 people groups they have identified within the borders of China, 443 of them are yet unreached. This means that a significant number of the globally unreached population can be contacted without a Chinese believer applying for a visa. The Chinese government recognizes 56 ethnic groups and 302 languages which demonstrate the cultural diversity that makes travel across China more akin to a world tour. Mandarin, which is the official and primary language spoken in China, has been consistently characterized as the world's most difficult language to learn. It's a writing system that requires the memorization of two or three thousand characters just to read a newspaper and contains a tonal nature that can change the entire meaning of a word both of these leading to its obscurity. China is familiar with intercultural interaction based upon diversity among its citizens and are advanced linguistically as it possesses one of the most formidable languages in the world.

A study by the Gospel Research Alliance, and published by ChinaSource (2017), determined that, by the current growth rate and dynamics of the Chinese church, it would

become the world's largest missionary force and biggest financial supporter of global missions by 2050. There has also been a shift in focus by Chinese church leaders interviewed who did not seek materials and training any longer but now desired mentoring, church planting, and assistance in building missions platforms. It is based upon the Chinese dedication to the entrepreneurial spirit, the national promotion of the BRI, the natural diversity of the country, the linguistic expertise, the in-house unreached people groups, and the historically proven exponential growth of Christianity that justifies a need to analyze any potential hindrances to the undeniable potential for profound global missions expansion among the unreached.

The Chinese church needs to be put faithfully on mission for its own sake. Andrew B. Y. Kim (2015) wisely stated, "It became obvious to me that church panting is not the end goal of missions; mission planting is" (p. 286). He found an unhealthy "dependency" on Western churches among the leaders of the Filipino church that left church plants "weak and even dying" (p. 285). It is through non-Western involvement in the global expansion of God's Kingdom that the churches in these regions will be able to mature and own their Christian responsibilities. The ability of these non-Western missionaries to function as equal partners in or independent of Western missionary agencies will allow both the unique and quality characteristics of the Chinese (i.e. entrepreneurship, linguistic acuity, endurance under persecution, et. al.) to manifest themselves and give opportunity for the West and others to learn from the wisdom and vitality of how Chinese accomplish global missions.

The intent of this thesis is not to position either Chinese or honor-shame cultures as particularly antithetical toward individuals who are seeking to devote themselves to global missions. Sherwood G. Lingenfelter (2008) describes culture as both palace and prison. "As a 'palace,' it supplies all the essential needs for life—structure, order, access to materials, and

predictability in our relationships, and comfort, meaning, accountability, and significance in our personal lives" (p. 59). "Culture becomes a 'prison' to us when we insist on employing its structure, order, meanings, and values to all of our life experiences" (p. 59). This means that Christians must approach all cultures with critical wisdom.

There are redeemable qualities that can be found within any culture of the world based upon each having its origin in the "one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:6). Each people group and its institutions of marriage (cf. Gen. 1:27), family (cf. Eph. 6:4), government (cf. Rom. 13:1), business (cf. Gen. 2:15), and others have been established by God. God determined that all of the created order was good in every way when it took its original divinely intended form (cf. Gen. 1:31). Only a biblical worldview can satisfactorily explain the realities of the world as God is the originator of them all. As Nancy Pearcey (2015) explains, "All worldviews have to borrow a Christian epistemology—at least at the moment they are making their claims" (p. 189). Therefore, one cannot go into any given culture to only criticize without careful and respectful examination of its tenants. Andy Crouch (2009) writes, "The first responsibility of culture makers is not to make something new but to become fluent in the cultural tradition to which we are responsible. Before we can be culture makers, we must be culture keepers" (p. 74-75). Although the God-ordained institutions may be distorted by sin, that does not give cause for total abandonment. Crouch (2009) posits, "Culture in the hands of Christ: the sheer delight and joy that comes when Jesus takes the most basic stuff of the world, breaks it, blesses it and offers it back to us, made whole and made new" (p. 184). The danger in ignoring the redeemability of culture is that a colonial model will likely be presented for Chinese missions that will forever remain foreign to the Chinese church and will ultimately prove ineffective in addressing Chinese Christian's concerns on the mission field.

The fall of humanity in Adam led to the corruption of all creation: relationally the institutions began to break down (cf. Gen. 3:16) and nature itself was corrupted (cf. Gen. 3:19) as there was a move away from the Creator. Crouch (2009) warns, "The reality [is] that the world has changed us far more than we will ever change it. Beware of world changers—they have not yet learned the true meaning of sin" (p. 200). All of Adam's descendants have followed in his sinful pattern, regardless of race (cf. Rom. 3:9). The present work will strive to determine those redeemable constructs of Chinese honor-shame culture that can encourage the current movement toward global missions involvement and the corrupt constructs of the same which inhibit involvement in such activities.

Defining "Chinese"

The premise of this thesis is based upon honor-shame constructs that are present within Chinese culture. This leads to the question of what is meant by the term "Chinese." The longstanding Han prominence within China is an undeniable historical reality as the Han dynasty's success in holding power over a unified China lasted for centuries aside from the intermittent reigns of the Yuan (AD1271-1368) and Qing (AD1644-1912) dynasties. Thomas S. Mullaney (2011) describes how Han ethnicity played into the more recent twentieth-century civil conflict between the Chinese Communist party of Mao Zedong and the Nationalist party of Chiang Kai-shek. Chiang Kai-shek was seeking to establish a "mono-*minzu* [or monoethnic] China" while Mao Zedong was seeking to gain support from minorities by promoting "a composite of politically and economically equal ethnonational constituencies" (p. 30). It was Nationalists that promoted the racial superiority of the 汉族 (*hanzu*) or Han people and, although they recognized four other people groups present within China's geographical borders—namely the Manchus, Mongols, Muslims, and Tibetans—the focus was on assimilating these to the Han.

This was based on Sun Yat-sen's 民族主义 (*minzuzhuyi*) or doctrine of the people's lineage that sought "to guarantee [China's] survival as a race and a state in the modern world" (Leibold, 2004, 163). Chiang Kai-shek (1947) was convinced that "the distinction between the five stocks is territorial as well as religious, but not ethnological" (p. 13).

The rising Communist Party sought to follow through with this promise by the Ethnic Classification Project that left the question of ethnicity empty for people to fill in their self-identified ethnicity. "Nationwide, over four hundred distinct entries appeared in the census registers in response to the question of *minzu* identity" (Mullaney, 2011, p. 87). This obviously caused a problem for the central government to allow equal non-Han representation in all levels of government. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) narrowed the 400 down to just 56 and had "no legally recognized 'bi-*minzu*' designation" which allowed them to minimize the mass complexity of the situation (p. 248). Those *minzu* that did not fit under the 56 were either ranked as "yet-to-be-classified *minzu*," which categorized 749,341 people as such in a 1990 census, (Mullaney, 2011, p. 261) and the rest were, according to Susan Leigh Star (1995) "orphans of infrastructure."

The plethora of languages in China also provide challenges for defining what it means to be "Chinese." A longstanding concern of the Chinese rulers has been to unify the nation through language. Recent published statistics show 30 percent of the population that could not speak 汉语 (*hanyu*) or what is also called 普通话 (*putonghua*) or the common language and another 70 percent of those who can speak the common language but cannot speak it either articulately or fluently (Wang, 2014). Among the 544 distinct people groups within China's borders there are hundreds of distinct languages or dialects. Similar to what the CCP has done with minority groups it has done with language for the sake of simplification narrowing it to seven major

linguistic groups: Mandarin (汉语), Wu (吴), Gan (赣), Xiang (湘), Min (闽), Cantonese (粤), and Hakka (客家). Many attempts have been made by Chinese rulers throughout history to unify the country linguistically. The CCP made Mandarin speaking easier for the minority groups through 注音字母 (*zhuyinzimu*) or a phonetic alphabet created in the 1930s that breaks down each character into a phonetic pronunciation. Efforts were also made to modify the written characters to aid in ease of literacy through the simplified 简体字 (*jiantizi*) rather than the traditional 繁体字 (*fantizi*) characters. David Moser (2016) comments that the aim is not just an act of benevolence, "Since its inception, the national language policy was never only about the pragmatic goal of facilitating communication; politics was always part of the agenda" (l. 997).

Despite the CCP's efforts to create a "'unified, multinational' republic composed of a diverse assemblage of *minzu*," it was inevitable that the dominant Han culture would be imposed upon all 56 recognized and over 300 unrecognized ethnic minorities to create unification and dissuade secession (Mullaney, 2011, p. 81). Nimrod Baranovitch (2010) traces the strategy of the Chinese leadership through public school textbooks from 1951-2003 to instill the dominant Han narrative. In the beginning, there was a clear distinction made between the Han who were portrayed as "an advanced, agricultural people who inhabited the Central Plains, and all the other ethnic groups in the region, who are referred to as backward nomads" and used "the terms 'Han people' (*hanren*) and 'Chinese People' (*zhongguoren*) interchangeably, so that 'China' (*zhongguo*) and Chinese culture are associated exclusively with the Han" (p. 90). At times non-Han are even portrayed as invaders who cause massacres, looting, and destruction. During the Maoist era, there is a softer shift off of ethnicity to a Marxist classicism which "attempts to diminish the differences between the Han and the non-Han peoples and to establish that they all shared a common writing system and "more or less the same culture" (p. 93). Rather than a focus

upon how non-Han were a corrupting and destructive people that had to be removed there was now an emphasis on peace and cooperation between Han and non-Han interethnic relations of the past. While some may interpret this change in the history textbooks as a move in a positive direction towards toleration and acceptance of non-Han peoples by the CCP, others see it as "an oppressive 'historiographical colonialism' in which the Chinese state and its privileged Han majority 'claim the past'" (p. 114).

When it comes down to how Han-ness plays out in the everyday life of the citizens, the results vary. Agnieszka Joniak-Lüthi (2015) breaks down the three levels of Chinese identity into three representative Chinese characters: 人 (*ren* signifies locality), 家 (*jia* represents kinship), and 民 (*min* stands for nationality) (p. 29). An individual, based upon his or her 户口 (*hukou*) or residence ID will be identified as a 北京人 (*beijingren*) or an individual from the capitol city or choose to identify himself in another region of China more broadly as a 东北人 (*dongbeiren*) depending on the geographical location of the person with whom he or she is speaking. 家 (*jia*) will categorize the person according to family name or surname, like 王 (*wang*) or 长 (*zhang*). Finally, the man or woman's nationality will be determined by his or her ethnicity, such as 汉族 (*hanzu*). For those who are seeking "identification beyond the most immediate kinship and home-place community" the Han narrative is accepted willingly (p. 20). However, for the non-Han minorities "Chinese-ness seems too much like Han-ness to be a possible identity option" (p. 23). This has led to a lot of political threats of unrest for the country in recent years.

In 1997, The CCP and Britain announced the start of the One Country, Two Systems principle that would last fifty years and provide Hong Kong with "its distinct political, socioeconomic, and legal arrangements under a unified China" (Wong & Mak, 2019). Certain recent actions by the CCP, including a now reneged extradition law that allowed criminals to be

transported to and prosecuted in mainland courts, has demonstrated that China is seeking to bring Hong Kong under CCP control and assimilate the city to the rest of the Han-majority country in every way and prior to the 50-year mark set by Britain and the CCP in 1997. Subsequently, over ninety percent of people under the age of 30 in this region refuse to call themselves 中国人 (*zhongguoren*) or Chinese and choose to identify as 香港人 (*xianggangren*) or Hong Kongers or some other mixed identity (Cheng, 2019).

There have been three phases of conflict reported between Uighurs and Han citizens or Chinese troops. In 1990, there was a significant uprising of Uighur militants against Chinese military forces. A Strike Hard government campaign led to the arrest of thousands and death of hundreds of Uighurs accused of violence and separatist activities in 1996. Isolated incidents of violence and protest resurfaced in 2008 and 2009 that led to the ban of foreign social media in all of China, such as Facebook and Twitter. The CCP refuses to take chances with the Xinjiang province that had been predominantly populated by the Uighur minority group and was traditionally known in English literature as the Chinese Turkestan. Before 1953, the Uighurs maintained a 75% stake of the total population in the region, however, the CCP populated the northern region with two million Han between 1957 and 1967 creating a trend in Han migration that has continued to the point that only 45% of the population were native Uighurs by 2011 (Howell & Fan, 2011). A 2020 report by The Jamestown Foundation out of Washington DC claimed that the CCP used sterilization, forced abortion, and mandatory birth control causing the Uighur population to fall by 84% in the two largest Uighur prefectures between 2015 and 2018 (Zenz, 2020). Since 2017, "the Chinese government has reportedly detained more than a million Muslims in reeducation camps" in thirty-nine locations identifiable via satellite (Maizland, 2020). Independent media outlets, such as Vice News, have visited these sites on the ground and

confirmed that Uighur children are separated from their parents, placed in highly guarded schools, and dressed in Han-style school uniforms. The children are seen singing the national anthem and being educated in Mandarin instead of their native Turkic dialect.

As one can tell from these two examples, the push to conform minorities to majority Han culture is undeniable. Regardless of how one ethically views the situation, "the question of whether it is possible to promote [both the Han national majority and the multiethnic Chinese nation] simultaneously, without making Chinese-ness appear too much like Han-ness, remains real and unresolved today" (Joniak-Lüthi, 2015, p. 70). This thesis will reflect both the historical and current state of affairs that determine Chinese culture in its employment of the term "Chinese."

Defining "Missions"

Great and fruitful discussion has taken place over the meaning of Christian missions. Significant research by numerous evangelical authors has pointed towards the very basic and foundational matters that give life to it. George W. Peters (1972) argues that it is not enough to simply create missions courses in seminaries and coordinate missions teams within churches but to have missions "integrated with the very theology of the triune God" (p. 25). It is argued that missions or the Christians' acts of obedience in expanding the Kingdom of God should find their roots in the salvific metanarrative of God—the *missio Dei*. This has been effective in clarifying the work of the church not as something that she accomplishes for God but rather involves its participation in the work that God has already begun. Christopher J. H. Wright (2010) comments, "That broad definition allows us to include many different *missions* within the category of *mission*" (p. 25). Gerald D. Wright (1998), for example, gives the following definitional parameters: light and knowledge, light and good deeds, joy and hope, light and spiritual warfare,

light and culture, and a community of light. Wright (2010) includes creation care within the *missio Dei* definition as he applies the command that kings "speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves" (Proverbs 31:8) to "what humans should do for the nonhuman creation" (p. 52). Clearly there is great benefit in grounding missions within the *missio Dei*, however, it is evident that not all Christians define missions the same within this metanarrative framework.

Denny Spitters and Matthew Ellison (2017) have voiced their concern strongly over the claim that anything is able to fall under the category of missions within the conventional Christian understanding. "Without the gospel as [missions'] primary vehicle for existence and expression—easily lapses into little more than humanistic accomplishment" (l. 560). They define missions more explicitly as one who moves from his or her home culture to a host culture to evangelize and plant churches. Further, this all takes place among an unreached people "with no access to the gospel and who could not hear it even if they wanted to" (l. 1412). This definition of missions is given out of fear that, if one takes the focus off of the frontier mission task then these hard-to-reach people groups will inevitably be abandoned for more responsive people groups.

While sharing the concern of Spitters and Ellison and the belief that missions is often defined too broadly, missions will not be so narrowly defined here. A specific definition of missions must be given for the sake of clarity in the face of such great diversity in missional understanding. An equally valid concern is shared that one should, as Spitters and Ellison seem to have done, "not allow any expression of missions to be the entire mission" (Wright, 1998, p. 27). Concern is shared that with so narrow a definition given for missions there could result a similar neglect of many cross-cultural missions endeavors that are not directly connected to pioneer missions. Rather than limiting missions to pioneer tasks among frontier people groups, it

is recommended that global missions through evangelism and church planting should be included with specific resources and attention given to reaching the unreached. Thus, “missions” will be more broadly and yet, comparative to the prevailing understanding, more narrowly defined as evangelism and church planting beyond the borders of one’s home culture within a host culture.

Defining “The Analytical Biblical Lens”

It is not uncommon for the average Chinese to believe that Christianity is a religion particular to the West. This concern can be traced back to Chairman Mao’s Protestant Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the 1950s (i.e. the Chinese church will be self-governing, self-supporting, and self-propagating). The CCP “penned articles that argued that Christianity was not ‘above politics’ but rather a ‘tool of reactionary forces’” and they exhorted Christians “to ‘purge’ churches of foreign control so that they could become ‘truly Chinese’” (Vala, 2018, p. 29). Any Western tenants of the Christian faith are still viewed as imperialist attempts to subvert the Chinese government. Xu Xiaohong of the National Committee of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement claims, “Anti-China forces in the West are trying to continue to influence China’s social stability and even subvert our country’s political power through Christianity, and it is doomed to fail” (Blanchard, 2019). One might be concerned that this present work, written by someone from a Western perspective, will unwittingly err by imposing the long-feared colonial understanding of the Christian faith on the Chinese church. While it is impossible to completely separate an individual entirely from one’s home culture, an awareness of the possibility of this occurring can minimize the potential for such flawed conclusions. The aim of the present work is to orient the examination of Chinese honor-shame culture through a principally biblical lens.

This biblical lens is in essence supra-cultural and will come across as foreign within any cultural context. When the apostle Paul presented the gospel to the Athenian philosophers, they

listened patiently until he mentioned the resurrection of the dead and then "some mocked" (Acts 17:32). Pilate, the Roman governor, was confused when confronted with Jesus who said that His Kingdom was not geographical and would not be defended by military might (cf. John 18:36). Even the Jewish culture that was most familiar with the Messianic prophecies and hopes was left disoriented by the thought of a suffering Messiah (cf. Luke 24:25-26). Jesus often spoke to how the Christian life confronted mainline thinking among world cultures.

> But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:25-28)

The gospel is not only supra-cultural but contracultural as it goes against favored presuppositions and idolized notions of success.

Although it may seem that this work is overly critical of Chinese culture at certain points, this is not the objective. In actuality, it is promoting a Kingdom culture that surpasses all cultures and involves a call to preserve and restore God's original and perfect intentions for the Chinese culture as opposed to replacing or removing it. Donald B. Kraybill (2018) explains:

> Jesus doesn't plead for social avoidance or withdrawal from society. Nor does he assume that the kingdom and the world split neatly into separate realms. Kingdom action takes place in the world, in the middle of the societal ballpark. But it's a different game, with special rules and a new coach. Kingdom values challenge the taken-for-granted social ruts of the dominant society. Rooted in the deep love and abiding grace of God, kingdom people seed new ways of thinking and living. (l. 198)

There is no aspect of Chinese honor-shame culture that remains untouched by the redemptive and transforming power of the Kingdom.

Defining "Missionary Attrition"

Rundle and Steffen (2003) report that "as many as 40 percent of Western business professionals who are given foreign assignments return early, and many of those who stay suffer from a range of problems including depression, marital problems and alcoholism" (p. 58). And attrition is a huge concern for governmental and professional entities that are losing large amounts of money. However, for Christian missions, attrition goes far beyond the financial loss. Laura M. Gardner, a pastoral-care leader noted:

> The problem is that there's much more lost than money. Think of the damage to the family leaving a thriving work for either personal needs (depression; loss of funds; loss of vision) or other reasons (war in the country, needs of aging parents, etc.) Think of the sadness of a couple or family who have invested 8 to 10 years in a ministry and now have to leave it; they wonder if they misunderstood God's call; they wonder why their church is dropping them, etc. Think of the cost to the team left on the field (lessened morale; overloaded workloads for those still there who must pick up the task). Think of the sadness of the people groups a team was ministering to. In some of our field locations, the translation project took more than fifty years, because for one reason or another team after team had to leave. The people wondered if they would ever get the Book. There's a loss to their donors who wonder if all that money they invested was wasted. (Hampton, 2016, l. 402)

The blame for attrition was frequently placed on the overseas workers and their inability to cope with a new environment; however, pinpointing fault is not so simple. Attrition can result from

inadequate pre-field orientation, failure to resolve family or personal issues, loss of funding from supporters, a crackdown by local authorities on foreign entities, war or other security risks, health issues, immoral behavior on the part of the missionary, traumatic situations that have an impact on a missionary psychologically, burnout as a result of high work demands from organization leaders, unrealistic expectations held or promises made, team conflicts, spiritual oppression, lack of approval from the family, or a change in occupation due to promotion from or discontinuance of a position. William D. Taylor (1997) lists four faces of attrition: acceptable attrition commonly occurs among old sending countries that have a significant number of older missionaries that are approaching retirement age; preventable attrition is likely to occur among those new to cross-cultural work and include issues surrounding support, lack of commitment, or disagreement with superiors; desirable but unrealized attrition involves "missionaries [that] stay who should leave, and they compound the tragedy, in that their staying makes some of the better people leave" (p. 10); and attrition among the vulnerable define those that are not properly equipped in one way or another for cross-cultural work.

What can be clearly seen from this brief introduction of issues that lead to attrition is that it is a labyrinthine matter. There are situations where attrition is necessary and staying would do more harm than good. Other times it is not "conscious rebellion against God or a lessening of commitment to follow Him" but "a sense that the place or context for the fulfillment of the call has changed" (McKaughan, 1997, p. 18). Some attrition can be avoided through better orientation and a more thorough vetting process by the organization. Still other attrition is inevitable and unforeseeable with changes in political stability or contracting a serious illness.

There has also been a change in the concept of the career missionary. Adoniram Judson (AD1788-1850) wrote the following in a letter to his father-in-law:

> I have now to ask whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring, to see her no more in this world? Whether you can consent to her departure to a heathen land, and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life? Whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean; to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India; to every kind of want and distress; to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death? (Duesing, 2012, p. 106)

Previously, overseas travel was only possible by ship and it was a long, treacherous voyage that one would not dare repeat—furloughs were out of the question. No access to modern professional medical attention left many common illnesses as potentially life-threatening. If one desired to write home, a letter could take months to reach the family and months more for a response. Today, this has all changed with the convenience of air travel, mass production of vaccines, along with instant, cheap communication via the internet. These advances can greatly benefit the mental and physical health of missionaries and yet also make it more likely for missionaries to attrit from their cross-cultural roles due to homesickness or some other personal reason.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The main argument that is presented in the present work for explaining the cultural reasons for a Chinese missionary to either attrit or remain on the field is based upon those constructs that arise out of an honor-shame culture. There has been a great deal written on honor-shame cultures in recent times where one can gain a general understanding of what it means for a culture to meet these criteria. David A. deSilva (2000) has been the authoritative voice on setting out the specific cultural components of an honor-shame society. Significant focus is commonly given to Islamic people groups in discussion of this topic. In the introduction to Roland Muller's (2000) work, he writes, "My desire is … to provide the Christian teacher with concepts and tools that will better enable him or her to understand the Muslims they are trying to reach" (p. 13). Authors like Jayson Georges (2016) or Juliet November (2017) may give an example here or there from Chinese culture as they explain honor-shame dynamics. Werner Mischke (2013) gives a nod in the footnotes to China and mentions it by name simply in passing. Works that deal with China specifically and in-depth as a culture that involves patronage, kinship, purity, and tight culture perspectives is difficult to find. Mark E. Lewis (2021) has a yet unpublished work focused on how differing honor-shame concepts influenced ancient Chinese states and societies toward the end of the Han dynasty. This should prove to be a significant contribution to assist one's understanding of what has led up to the modern Chinese mindset.

As mentioned above, the Chinese church demonstrates indisputable promise of being a global missions powerhouse based upon the historical trends in growth among Protestant churches. Carsten Vala, as reported by ChinaSource (2020) states:

> I start with numbers given by the official Three Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) of 3 million in 1982 and 10 million in 1995 and 15 million in 1999, from which one can

> extrapolate a 10% growth rate. Interviews with Protestants in different parts of the country revealed that the growth rate was unusually high in the 1990s, so perhaps 10% is too high. We could estimate a 7% annual increase to be a bit more conservative.

This 7% figure is significant when considering that the population growth rate of the country stood at only 5% in 2017. Total numbers of current Chinese Christians have ranged anywhere from 60 to 100 million as the CCP does not accurately report nor does the government likely have access to precise figures.

Many books have been written on how exactly Christianity has impacted the country and its citizens. Other biographical and autobiographical records have either been preserved or compiled on missionaries sent to China—Robert Morrison, Lottie Moon, Margaret E. Barber, John L. Stuart, Gladys Aylward, and Hudson Taylor to name a few. There have also been retellings of revival movements started within certain regions. For example, Paul Hattaway (2018) has written on the revival that occurred in Shandong Province between 1800 and the early 2000s. Arthur Lin (2020) is another who follows the dawning of the church in Guangxi Province from the late 1800s to the mid-1900s. Andrew T. Kaiser (2016) laid out the Christian movement in Shanxi Province from 1876 all the way to the present. More useful works have been produced which deal in whole or in part as to how one contextualizes the gospel and develops a more Sinicized theology. Jackson Wu (2013) has been a predominant voice through his dissertation, articles, and blogs particularly in the area of the concept of Chinese face and biblical honor-shame tenants of the faith. I' Ching Thomas (2018) has done excellent work on communicating the gospel in a culturally relevant way to the Chinese. Gregg A. Ten Elshof (2015) has taken a quite different approach as he demonstrates how elements of Chinese culture, particularly Confucian, can find assent with the Christian.

A very relevant and important area, when one takes into consideration the noted statistics of the current state of the church and the economic strength of the country, is the preparedness of the Chinese church for global outreach. This also seems to be a realm with the least treatment by the Western church at both a popular and scholarly level. In those cases where Chinese missions is discussed, it seems to be primarily focused on those Chinese who possess a dual nationality and are living abroad or are not from mainland China. Both *Following Jesus: Without Dishonoring Your Parents* and *Kids Without Borders: Journals of Chinese Missionary Kids* are two books that specifically focus on Chinese ministry and missions, but all of the contributors are either Taiwanese, Chinese American, or from the autonomous zone of Hong Kong. Tabor Laughlin (2020) is one of the few who has managed access to a small sampling of mainland missionaries to make a contribution toward the correlation of the Chinese church and its place in global missions. It is very difficult to find substantial works that have been concentrated specifically on how best to train and equip the Chinese church to fulfill its global purpose.

There are a number of probable factors contributing to the void in writings pertaining to mainland Chinese missions. First, although the Chinese government has had occasions of greater and lesser tolerance toward the spread of Christianity within its borders, it has never had a warm relationship with the church. When the home country places pressure and a watchful eye on those Christians seeking to be sent and the host cultures to which these missionaries are ministering have an equal, if not firmer, stance against the Christian faith, one cannot be surprised by the current dearth of published resources available. At certain times where Chinese Christian leaders have attempted to participate in the global discussion on missions, they have been denied. In 2010, the CCP refused one hundred Chinese house church pastors' access, through "monitoring, blocking of departure, detention and interception in customs," to the Third

Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization (Covenant Companion, 2010). Second, although the Chinese church has been alive and well for over a century now, it was not until the last few decades that China has opened up to the world and has had the financial stability to participate freely in international travel. Missional movements have likely not reached a point where it would attract attention from the global church.

The present work seeks to help fill in the gap by prompting a relevant discussion, both culturally and in the sense of fitting current trends, that will serve to assist the Chinese church in overseas missions. It will point out barriers to missions and realize the potential for it that may be more apparent to a cultural outsider than one who is a cultural insider. Chinese culture to the Chinese person will often be as water to a fish—one finds it difficult to describe or differentiate life from its original context. This is not something that is specific to Chinese but is the situation among people from every ethnic group. I will always be limited in my understanding of the Chinese church and culture and will have a perspective that is culturally skewed by my non-Chinese worldview as I do not share a Chinese nationality. However, I lived in China for eight years and have worked with Chinese Stateside and in China for another five. This work has included evangelism, discipleship, as well as preaching in and training leaders from Chinese house churches. In this time, I have also done a considerable amount of personal research on both China's culture and the state of the Chinese church. There may be some that will disagree with me on certain conclusions that are made and that is expected. This work is primarily intended to stimulate further thought on and conversation about how the Chinese church can effectively fulfill their part in obedience to the Great Commission.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter will first give a description of what research methodology was used to form the conclusions found within the present work. Second, the nature of the research sources will be discussed. Finally, it will be explained how they each contribute to the reliability of the deductions made from the material amassed.

The research methodology employed in the writing of the present work is primarily a documentary analysis in which data has been collected from various published sources to present an accurate historical understanding of the Chinese church and culture as well as a precise grasp of their current state. Data has been assembled from a wide variety of sources, countries, political positions, and worldviews in order to provide the most objective perspective on China and all of the surrounding issues possible.

Various news agencies have been utilized from countries that represent a diversity of voices from both political allies and enemies of the CCP. There have been both ancient and current events and informants that have been referenced in order to provide the truest forms of Chinese culture and then follow the evolution of thought and worldview up to the mind of the modern-day Chinese citizen and his or her government. Care was taken in order to, as often as possible, obtain authentic and well-attested stories from the lives of Chinese or neighboring Asian and Middle Eastern countries that share a very similar cultural identity to that of the Chinese honor-shame construct. These accounts come from biographies as well as third-party interviews and experiences. Anthropological literature has been utilized to confirm the accuracy of identifying Chinese culture as properly honor-shame as it parallels countries that fall within this category. Intercultural and missiological writings have been cited as the encounter of foreign cultures is a common experience shared by all who work or study abroad. Theological works

have been cross-referenced that fit the qualifications of a “biblical” analytical lens as opposed to a lens that carries a culture-specific overtone such as liberation theology, critical race theory, or feminist theology. Both audiovisual and written forms of documents are represented in this research. Personal experiences have also been interjected in places where it was felt they could add something substantial to the topic of discussion.

It is due to the great diversity of sources in this work that one needs to take into consideration the possibility of significant bias by any source that may force one toward an unfair conclusion. Leta Hong Fincher (2014), for example, brings a feminist bias that is stated before you even open the book as “The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China” is printed on the book cover. Note the feminism that guides her criticism of the country:

> In China, the world’s most populous country, gender-discriminatory norms are exacerbated by a one-party state intent on social engineering, with a massive propaganda apparatus that maintains a tight grip on information and whose goals increasingly go against those of women. (p. 4)

Yang Jui-Wei (2015) is another author who does not hide his political bias when giving the following statement in his introduction:

> This article argues that since the 1960s the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been securing their power, by promoting certain pro-racist value and anti-multicultural values and suppresses certain anti-racist value and pro-multicultural values and it could achieve a result that poses a threat to the world” (p. 1).

There can be biases that can blind one to positive cultural aspects over a lens of human rights violations, disagreements on the organization of government, or from the perspective of religious liberties’ violations. Other sources such as any government entity like the National Bureau of

Statistics of China, which are overtly pro-CCP, will likely fail to recognize that there are faults in the country and its mainstream culture.

Each source’s biases have been identified and taken into consideration when formulating conclusions based upon the information that each source presents. It is realistic to state that an author cannot write from a completely objective perspective just as a Christian cannot theologize totally apart from his or her cultural context. Simply because one carries a particular bias either for or against something does not automatically invalidate everything that source claims. An attempt has been made to counter these biases by making the best effort to allow facts and statistics to speak for themselves from each source without falling prey to an overly critical or uncritically optimistic attitude in the delineation of the contents concerning Chinese culture as it relates to Christian missions. The purpose in writing is not to prove either Chinese culture or the CCP as either inherently good or evil, but to recognize what is the state of either one and discuss it in a meaningful way that will benefit the Chinese Christian as he or she navigates what it means to follow God’s leading to a foreign context as a missionary.

Chapter 4: China: An Honor-Shame Culture

Honor-shame cultures are collective at their core from both aspects of honor and shame. deSilva (2000) states, “Honor is a dynamic and relational concept” (p. 23). “When people fail,” writes Kurt W. Fischer (2004), “they do not simply lose their own face, but they shame all those around them” (p. 770). This cultural analysis will begin to define Chinese culture as a predominantly honor-shame based society through patronage, kinship, purity, and a tight culture. The concept of honor will prove to be much more complex within the collective Chinese context than among an individualist culture as can be found in the West. This discussion will not only clarify what is meant by an honor-shame culture but also bring to light the specific cultural constructs that either positively or negatively impact a Chinese Christian seeking to fulfill his or her calling to foreign missions.

Patronage

It is often assumed that legal tender is the sole means to pay for goods and services within a society. Yet one can still hear stories within the last century of Western church pastors receiving livestock in exchange for serving his pastoral duties. Today, when an individual seeks to sell a vehicle an offer will be made for one to outright purchase the automobile or trade for another that is of interest to the seller. When one hears of patronage that treats relationships between a patron and a client as a kind of social currency it is often met with suspicion and moral questions by Western ears. Patronage is one of humanity’s oldest forms of currency recorded in the annals of history.

The most common form of patronage is when the patron who possesses a certain superior status of either social clout or financial means will have the ability to provide certain benefits to a client that does not possess such relational or monetary resources. There are known patronage

cases where people of equal status can also make exchanges based upon individual needs specific to a business deal or legal transaction. As Georges (2019) notes, "Patronage is a *relationship*, not some legal arrangement" (p. 19). In Mandarin the term 关系 (*guanxi*) is the term used to refer to the patron-client exchange. Literally translated *guanxi* means joint (*guan*) chain (*xi*) but is most commonly translated as relationship. It is a web of connections that exist in Chinese life between friends, family, coworkers, government officials, and other greater or lesser-known acquaintances.

The patron has 面子 (*mianzi*), also known as face, defined by Hu Hsien-Chin (1956) as honor which one possesses based upon "the kind of prestige that is emphasized in this country: a reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation" (p. 447). Wu (2013) notes that *guanxi* involves factors beyond personal achievements to include association "with certain people or having particular titles or names" (p. 175). While serving in China, our private language school was funded and staffed by foreigners. Although the school had the funds, facilities, and employees none of the foreign investors or staff had the connections to successfully navigate the legal system and local government offices. The school was able to run without legal interference due to two Chinese nationals who had the appropriate *guanxi*. They were, as Wilfried R. Vanhonacker (2004) explains, "well-versed in situational and relational ethics, that is, knowing when and how to use *guanxi* and when and how to pay back the resulting indebtedness" (p. 49). When the school was sold by the foreign organization to a Chinese national who served as the new principal, the school struggled to provide visas for the foreign teachers and eventually was forced to close. The two nationals who had *mianzi* were no longer present to serve as the administrators of *guanxi*. The honorary position of one who maintains

mianzi and the relational arrangement of the patron-client interaction are evidence of an honor-shame cultural dynamic.

Kinship

In Chinese culture, the family name comes before the individual's given name as a clear demonstration of the priority (or honor) that is given to the family unit and the collective nature by which the individual is viewed within foundational societal institutions. China is a culture that is overtly centered on kinship. "Male offspring were especially valued for their role in carrying on the family name, explains Li Liu (2007) of Beijing Normal University, "without a male heir, a family line originating from its ancestors is terminated, and the family's place in the universe gets lost forever" (p. 57). China is world-renown for having the largest population with 1.39 billion people. Beginning in the 1950s, the population grew on a steep trajectory from 540 million to 940 million by 1976. The booming industrialization caused concern of famine and housing shortages as more people were expected to start searching for higher-paying urban jobs as opposed to working on farms. In response to these concerns, the government started limiting births provincially in 1979 and finally standardized the one-child policy in 1980 which limited ethnic Chinese to only one son or daughter per couple. China's total fertility rate dropped from 6.1 in 1990 to 1.6 in 2016.

It is the cultural importance placed upon a male heir to carry on the family name that explains the resulting current skewed sex ratio (116 boys for every 100 girls born). Charles Kraft (1996) shares, "Family and relatives are the big things to [kinship cultures]. Those with family are wealthy (whether or not they have any money)" (p. 121). The Chinese government eased the child restrictions in 2016 to allow couples to have two children. Despite the allowance a survey done by Sina.com in the first half of 2016 found only a 6.7 percent increase in second child

births and the high societal pressures are likely a significant contributing factor. Great financial responsibility is placed upon a son's family who is seeking to find a wife for him. 房子 (*fangzi*), 车子 (*chezi*), and 票子 (*piaozi*) or a house, car, and money are viewed as the 要求 (*yaoqiu*) or requirements that must be met in order for a daughter to agree to take a man as her husband. The cost of housing has not slowed despite the coronavirus pandemic as apartment resales in Shanghai hit new record prices in April of 2020.

There is an inordinate amount of competition in children's education that deters couples from having a second child as well. Laurie Chen (2018) reported that more than sixty percent of primary school children (up to seventy percent in larger cities) were tutored outside of the classroom and parents paid an average of 120,000 RMB ($17,400) and up to 300,000 RMB ($43,500) to provide such extracurricular education. There are only a handful of universities categorized as 双一流 (*shuangyiliu*) or "two of the same kind" that are considered to provide a quality education, among which are Peking University and Tsinghua University. Also, Zhang Duanhong (2019), writes of "the 'exhausting high school, carefree university' paradigm, in which university life is treated as a reward for making it through the rigors of the country's college entrance exam." He believes that this has further limited the spaces available in universities and increased competitiveness for college entry as "even at the best schools, more than 90 percent of students graduate on time."

The highly competitive nature in higher education has conditioned both sexes to pursue the greatest quality of education and the highest paid positions obtainable. A student must place his or her entire life on hold and focus all one's attention on study and this means that marriage is often placed on the backburner. According to *The Sixth National Population Census of the People's Republic of China*, nearly 12 million men and 6 million women between the age of 30

and 39 were unmarried and it was estimated that by 2020 there would be 30 million bachelors. For women this has proven to be a greater social problem than for the men. Roseann Lake (2018) shares a conversation she had with a friend, Zhang Mei, who was in her thirties and had fallen into the 剩女 (*sheng nü*) or leftover women category. The character 剩 (*sheng*) signifies "leftover" and is the same one used to refer to remnants left from an evening meal. The pressure to marry is very great as any woman at this stage in life is nearing the end of her marrying and reproductive prime, according to Chinese thought. Pressure during holidays with the family is very stressful and had left Zhang Mei feeling at a loss with the upcoming Chinese New Year celebrations. Roseann offered the idea of a rent-a-boyfriend that she had heard about where Chinese men could be rented out for the holiday for a fee. During class, they did a search of 租 (*zu*) or rent and found that the predictive text offered girlfriends, boyfriends, cars, lovers, girlfriend services, and wedding clothes in that order. Rates for a boyfriend were determined based upon the time of year, distance traveled, a need to smoke, kiss, hold hands, or drink.

The philosopher, Confucius (BC551-479), upon whose teaching pillars Chinese society has been built, was a strong advocate of the family. He recognized human flourishing occurring within five complex relationships and three of these are familial: father/son, elder/younger brother, and husband/wife. Confucius felt that it was "in the context of the family that we acquire the building blocks for navigating the wildly complex relational networks that comprise human society" (Ten Elshof, 2015, p. 14). Linda S. Pickle (2001) found a reflection of the filial core of Chinese culture within Chinese characters as "the complementary relationships among words and concepts are like the reciprocal relationships among members of the families" (p. 29). Within the building design of the Chinese home Judy Schaaf (2001) has found a common layout where the family's kitchen, storeroom, and ceremonial space are found in a central common

room where the family can communally interact with one another. The traditional folktales that have been passed down, according to Howard Giskin (2001), also share a message of "communal responsibility for the well-being of family, clan, and society as a whole" (p. 130). deSilva (2000) says that within kinship cultures harmony is focal through "sharing ideals and sharing possessions" (195).

Filial piety is no surprise in the face of a culture that centers on the family. Liu (2008) explains, "Filial piety is more than just showing filial obedience to parents: most importantly, it indicates raising sons to support aging parents and having sons to continue the family line" (p. 56). This too is a practice that finds support within Confucianism as a "value that calls on adult children to fulfill obligations to respect, obey, support, and care for elderly parents" (Shea, Moore, and Zhang, 2020, p. 29). 养儿防老 (*yang er fang lao*) or "raise children to provide for old age" is the Chinese parental motto that shows the expectations placed upon the children to care for their aging parents. The challenges are real as the elderly population has been projected by the 2015 United Nations World Population Ageing report to reach 26.3 percent of the population by 2050. Adding to the difficulty is that this age demographic phenomena comes on the heels of the 1980 one-child policy that leaves two sets of aging parents on the shoulders of one married couple. Tang Youcai and Jeanne Shea (2020) discovered that those coming from rural areas "have both higher proportions of elderly folks and lower levels of economic development" (p. 92). The Wall Street Journal (2014) reported, "China lifted nearly 40 million people out of poverty last year, by its own measure, but more than 82 million rural Chinese still get by on less than $1 a day."

Thomas (2018) discusses how the filial piety includes reverence expressed to all distant relatives "as members of a family across the barrier of life and death continue to play an essential

role in that community and their kinship status retains its importance and authority" (l. 620). 敬祖 (*jingzu*) or 拜祖 (*baizu*) is the ancestral veneration of the deceased which can include an altar in the home where incense is burnt daily and food, drink, and spirit money are offered during the Qingming and Zhongyuan festivals. Hu Anning (2016) found that "the most popular practices of ancestor worship in contemporary China are venerating the spirits of ancestors or deceased relatives and visiting the gravesite of ancestors" (p. 176). The same study found that rituals were more likely to be carried out by middle to high income families and predominantly male members.

Purity

When one considers the concept of purity and pollution within an honor-shame culture, one immediately goes to the area of religious rites and rituals. In Chinese culture, there are elements of this found in Buddhist temple practices. 禅苑清规 (*chanyuanqinggui*) or "rules of purity for the Chan monasteries" is an infamous twelfth-century standard that was set to unify the various Chan monasteries but was also replicated by other Buddhists, such as Japanese Zen monks. According to T. Griffith Foulk (2004), the work was divided into five fascicles which were five basic types of rules and procedures involving standards of behavior addressed to individual monks; procedures for communal calendrical rites; guidelines for the organization and operation of public monastery bureaucracies; procedures for rituals of social interaction; and rules pertaining to the relationship between public monasteries and the outside world, in particular civil authorities and lay patrons (p. 289). The one who maintains the rules of purity in Wuliang's 日用清规 (*riyong qinggui*) or "daily rules of purity" concerning an individual's day-to-day regimen in such matters as bathroom usage, dress, meditation, eating, bathing, and sleeping are commended for avoiding "bad habits" that are "transgressions and evils" (p. 300).

The concept of purity, according to deSilva (2000), can include “persons, foods, times and space” (p. 331). As mentioned above, it has suited the governments of China in ease of communication and historical connection to the nation by promoting Han culture as the predominant Chinese culture. As Han-ness becomes Chinese-ness, it is not a stretch to conclude that anything that diverges from Han language and customs is concomitantly deviating from what is Chinese. Kevin Carrico (2017) lists some of the Han-specific customs and rituals as playing a traditional instrument, like the *guqin*, writing calligraphy, studying classics, such as the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* or *Dream of the Red Chamber*, paper-cutting, embroidery, archery, and traditional clothing. Carrico also learned how profound cultural things could become when he was told that 深衣 (*shenyi*), one type of male Han clothing, “was homophonic with the term for deep meaning 深意 (*shenyi*)” (p.163). Yang (2015) documented several social media comments that reflects how nationalism can overflow into racism. One user posted concerning the Hong Kong protests:

> Where did the people of Hong Kong come from? People of China are your ancestor, your grandfather and grandmother are Chinese, you dog [expletive] who sells out your own to others. Second class citizens who suck up to those who are of another race. You were second class citizens during British rule, your leader was appointed by the Queen of England, why didn’t you say anything about that? Why didn’t you ask for an election then? You people are nothing but [expletive]. (p. 83)

Another user posted the following addressed to Taiwanese:

> Actually, it is kind of sad. Taiwan’s Fujian and Guangzhou group are the most pureblooded Chinese, originating from the Henan province. The more we move to the north of China, the less pure their heritage is. Yet, those from Taiwan who descend from

> the Fujian and Guangzhou group, do not acknowledge their own bloodline…Taiwan's Fujian group are the purest of Chinese blood, they should be proud. Some people these days are so strange. (p. 84)

Pride in and distinctions amongst Han Chinese can also surface. The ability to speak 东北话 (*dongbeihua*) or the dialect of those living in the northeast added credibility to my interaction with Chinese who were native to this region of China. Friends have shared that they have witnessed individuals who were not able to speak like a 上海人 (*shanghairen*) or a native to Shanghai that resulted in exclusion from group conversation for it.

This phenomenon may be encouraged by the 户口 (*hukou*) and the identification system that is strictly based upon one's hometown. Ma Li (2018) agrees with this assessment. "*Hukou* has become a deeply ingrained socio-cultural identity people use in constructing stereotypes" (p. 38). Zhang Min (2020) states that this is certainly the case with the millions of migrant workers. "Rural-to-urban migrants have been relegated to second-class status" and these individuals commonly known as "the floating population have been denied permanent urban residency and do not have access to public services such as education and health care that are associated with urban household (*hukou*) residency status" (p. 200). Ma (2018) demonstrates that throughout Chinese history the *hukou* and similar policies have made greater or lesser social distinctions between the Chinese people. The Qin Dynasty had the 保甲 (*baojia*) as a national determiner of taxation and military drafting. The 户籍 (*huji*) was a household identification in this time period that later developed into what is now known as the *hukou*. The Chinese government during the famine of the 1930s used the *hukou* to prohibit rural dwellers from fleeing to the cities where food rations were larger. The urban *hukou* became a coveted identification that could, during the

Mao-era, only be obtained through military service, university acceptance, or marriage. "Politically, it was a clear-cut resolution to separate the two classes" (Ma, 2018, p. 40).

In April 2020, reports of African evictions from homes, forced quarantine, refused admittance to hotels and restaurants went viral on Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp. It was believed that this was a result of rumors surrounding a group of African men breaking quarantine and infecting others with the coronavirus (Asiedu, 2020). Stereotyping of particularly Africans based upon race has long preceded this situation. In 2017, Pan Qinglin of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference stated, "Africans bring many security risks" and urged the government to "strictly control the African people living in Guangdong and other places" (Chiu, 2017). Regardless of skin color it is common for people of other countries who are traveling or working in China to be referred to as 老外 (*laowai*). 老 (*lao*) can be a respectful title when addressing a superior, such as a teacher (*laoshi*), or someone you know well, like one's wife (*laopo*). 外 (*wai*) literally means "outsider" and refers to foreigners in general. It is likely for one to always remain an outsider no matter how much time a non-native spends in country. Those who look unique to, speak different from, and find their home elsewhere to the majority Chinese culture will likely always be viewed as less than or outside the predominant homogenous community.

Tight Culture

Honor-shame cultures, China included, are also typically more of a *tight culture*. Michele Gelfand (2018) explains the dynamics of tight and loose cultures in this way:

> Broadly speaking loose cultures tend to be open, but they're also much more disorderly. On the flip side, tight cultures have a comforting order and predictability, but they're less tolerant. (p. 36)

There are aspects of Chinese culture that loose cultures find intrusive and extreme that define it as a tight culture. China is only one of six countries where drug trafficking offenders are regularly executed. Huang Zheping reported for Quartz in 2016, that the Supreme People's Court issued a new judicial interpretation that added 12 new types of illegal drugs, lowered the threshold for conviction of illegal use of 33 precursor chemicals, and escalated the penalties for drug sale to juveniles. Much has been reported about the Chinese government's utilization of CCTV cameras which dominate the urban scene. Holly Chik (2020) of Inkstone News, wrote an article documenting that eighteen of the twenty most surveilled cities in the world are located in China. Most of these cameras simply observe public behavior but some cameras broadcast license plate numbers of vehicles that fail to observe city noise ordinances and display jaywalkers' faces on digital screens to shame the offenders. The government's meticulous monitoring of citizens' internet activities has been aptly known as the Great Firewall. Danny O' Brien (2019), writer for the Electronic Frontier Foundation, explains the extent of this cyber control:

> The Great Cannon is a large-scale technology deployed by ISPs based in China to inject javascript code into customers' insecure (HTTP) requests. When users visit insecure websites, their browsers will also download and run the government's malicious javascript—which will cause them to send additional traffic to sites outside the Great Firewall, potentially slowing these websites down for other users, or overloading them entirely.

A social credit system was unveiled in China that involves both official (local government) and unofficial (private businesses) systems to track citizens behavior in 2014. Nicole Kobie (2019) writes, "China's social credit system expands [credit checks] to all aspects of life, judging

citizens' behaviour and trustworthiness … you could lose certain rights, such as booking a flight or train ticket."

Tight aspects of culture expand beyond government to other aspects of life in China. Social conformity is found within the routines of everyday life. When walking urban streets, it is common to see managers and employees dancing and singing in unison in the mornings and elderly women in traditional Chinese dress with decorative fans in hand dancing in sync to a rhythmic drum beat and clanging cymbals in the square. Anything outside of the common and established cultural norms or that has the potential to create disorder or dissent among society is automatically suspect in tight cultures. In 1854, when Reverend W. Gillespie first encountered the Chinese, he came away with this impression:

> Change is abhorrent to them. They think it is impossible to be wiser than their ancestors were thousands of years before them … The result is that the Chinese mind is in a state of torpid hibernation. The empire has long been in a state of stagnation. Their condition, both socially and intellectually, has been for centuries stationary … Genius and originality are regarded as hostile and incompatible elements … Progress, in such a state of things, is impossible. (Roberts, 1992, p. 142)

When Gillespie saw resistance to change as an inability to progress and respect for the past as torpid hibernation, he was actually witnessing a combination of tight and kinship aspects of culture and misinterpreting them with loose and individualist cultural lenses. Ruth Benedict (1946) observed that the cultural neighbors to China, the Japanese, had their reassurances "based rather on a way of life that is planned and charted beforehand and where the greatest threat comes from the unforeseen" (p. 28-29). The suspicion of that which is abnormal is not limited to innovations but commonly extends to ethnicity. Gelfand (2018) notes, "people in tight cultures

are more likely to believe their culture is superior and needs to be protected from foreign influences. China, for example, ranks in the 90th percentile of countries with the most negative attitudes toward foreigners" (p. 50).

It is the tight culture aspects of China that involve resistance to change, a group mentality, and collective honor that leads to shame as the primary avenue utilized for leading wayward citizens back toward conformity. Te-Li Lau (2020) explains that "shame is the emotion of interconnectedness. We have shame before those with whom we wish to be associated or identified" (p. 137). In a Western context, shame is overwhelmingly viewed in a negative light. Stephen Pattison (2011) shares this view, "Shame can and often does connote misery, diminishment, and discomfort, especially if it comes to dominate a person's or group's attitude to itself" (p. 22). And it not only commonly originates from a group assessment, but the assessment of shame reflects on an entire group. For example, "public disgrace or ridicule of a serious nature is bound to have an effect on the reputation of the family" (Hu, 1956, p. 452). It is true that shame is a formidable and uncomfortable experience, as Hu (1956) describes, "Indeed society will point to their failure or misfortune as deserved punishment for defying its injunctions" (p. 454).

Lau (2020) and others have noted a need to differentiate between the positive and negative uses of shame. In fact, the complete absence of shame is shamelessness. Li Jin, Wang Lianqin, and Kurt W. Fischer (2004) note, "In Chinese culture, a shameless person is considered even more shameful than a shamed person" (p. 790). Mencius' contribution to the traditional Chinese concept of shame was to view it "as a constitutional nature of a human being and a foundational psychological ability of the moral mind" (Seok, 2017, p. 89). Stating Mencius in the negative, he might feel that an individual who felt no shame was in essence subhuman. The word

for “face” in this context moves from the Chinese simplified character 面子 (*mianzi*) to 脸 (*lian*). *Mianzi* has been explained above as an honor obtained by “reputation achieved through getting on in life, through success and ostentation” (Wu, 2003, p. 447). *Lian*, on the other hand, moves into the moral realm of developing one’s honorific character. 丢脸 (*diu lian*), or a loss of face, “is a condemnation by the group for immoral or socially disagreeable behavior” (Hu, 1956, p. 448). A shameless person is described as one who does “not want *lien*” (不要脸) or “has no *lien*” (没有脸). Hu (1956) states that at this point an individual “does not care what society thinks of his character, that he is ready to obtain benefits for himself in defiance of moral standards” (p. 453). This demonstrates that it is improper to categorize shame as purely communal and, as Lau (2020) shows, “the *other* may be internalized such that one can be an *other* to oneself” (p. 21).

It is possible for one to regain *mianzi* after one has lost it as an individual can find a new status position elsewhere. For example, Bo Xilai was Liaoning’s provincial governor in 2002 and his departure from that office was literally celebrated by his superior, party secretary of Liaoning Wen Shizhen. Bo managed to recover from this by rising to a seat among the 25-member Politburo in 2007. It was not until the murder of Britain Neil Heywood in Bo’s tenured city of Chongqing in 2011 that resulted in Bo’s implication for Heywood’s murder to cover an estimated $136 million in illegal assets in which case Bo finally fell from the Chinese government’s grace never to return again. *Lian*, unlike *mianzi*, cannot be regained after one loses it.

Once there was money that went missing out of my coworker’s purse. Most of the organization’s employees were Korean Chinese as there were many Korean missionaries volunteering. Since the Korean Chinese and Korean missionaries shared a common language the Koreans gave precedence to them over the Chinese. The day the money went missing a Chinese

worker was in the room along with a number of Korean Chinese. One Korean missionary was certain that the Chinese worker had taken the money and confronted him with the accusation that he was a thief. The Chinese became irate and was determined to take the entire organization to court over defamation of character. The loss of face incurred from the accusation would take something away from the man that was viewed as irreplaceable. It was later discovered that one of the Korean Chinese had taken the money and it took hours of conversation before I had convinced him to abandon his idea of taking the organization to court. The reality is that shame is a "human emotion" and "part of who we are" (Lau, 2020, p. 5).

Lau (2020) defines "shame as the painful emotion that arises from an awareness that one has fallen short of some standard, ideal, or goal" (p. 29). Although a painful experience, this should not lead one to assume that all public shame is inappropriate. Ahmed, Harris, and Braithwaite (2001) demarcated positive and negative shaming with the terms reintegrative and disintegrative. Disintegrative shaming stigmatizes and labels an offender and "no effort is made to reconcile the offender with the community" (Braithwaite, 1989, p. 101). Joei Chan (2019) of Linkfluence points out that "before the rise of social media, widespread condemnation was a lot harder to generate … public shaming has moved from tabloids to platforms like Twitter and Facebook. Anyone can participate, and doing so is as simple as opening an app."

It is quite common for the rich and famous of China to be the recipients of social media shaming. Gao Lu, wife of a deputy chair of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and late party patriarch's grandson, drove her $350,000 Mercedes-Benz SUV affixed with license plate numbers designated to senior government officials onto the central piazza of the Forbidden City in Beijing when it was closed to the public in January 2020. Even Chairman Xi and his political figures do not drive their motorcades on these sacred historic grounds. Frank

Chen (2020) writes, "Indignant netizens rushed to heap insults on the Weibo account of Luxiaobao LL, believed to be one of the women in the photos, with trolls pouncing on her in a doxing war that soon exposed her identity and high-flying lifestyle."

Adam Taylor (2013) of the Business Insider reported on a group of 富二代 (*fuerdai*) or second-generation rich who were criticized as rich and bored with nothing to do but "show-off their fancy lives" after several posted how many millions they had in their respective bank accounts. One of the missing components that keeps social media shaming from having a positive impact is the social distance between the shamers and the shamed. There is no meaningful relationship between the person tweeting and the person the tweet is centered on.

Ling Jinhua suddenly lost his chance of becoming one of seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee in 2012 when his son crashed a million-dollar Ferrari 458 Spider at 4am on one of Beijing's ring roads. Despite all online information on the crash being removed later the next morning, the driver of the car was revealed months later with criticism of a lavish lifestyle. While this might deter similar behavior in the future, it does not show much promise of transforming the offender. The negative impact of shame leads to a "shrinking" of the self and to one "feeling small, worthless, or powerless" and responding in "anger" (Lau, 2020, p. 210). For example, before she was forced to remove her posts by the state media, Gao Lu shot back at the criticism of netizens by calling them "lemons" or common people who are simply jealous of the upper class.

In a collective environment, shaming is a mechanism to preserve the honor of the entire community. There is an investment in the offending individual and a communal risk remains if the offender continues in a state of shame. Reintegrative shaming treats "the wrongdoer respectfully and empathetically as a good person who has done a bad act" and seeks to hold the

intrinsic value of the offending party (Ahmed, et. al., 2001, p. 4). The restoration of an offending member restores honor to the entire group.

An elder of our church had fallen into an adulterous relationship that was discovered by the husband of his mistress. Both the church and the family were deeply wounded and shamed in the process. The elder was immediately asked to step down from his leadership position. Instead of a complete break in community, both the wife and the church were willing to seek reconciliation and restoration in the face of genuine repentance on the part of the fallen elder. Mascolo, Fischer, and Li (2003) comment, “Whereas shame in the USA carries stigmatizing connotations, shame/guilt among the Chinese offers the promise of reintegration into the family or community following reestablishment of appropriate behavior … it is a vehicle for social cohesion and the development of self” (pg. 26-27).

Chapter 5: Honor-Shame Culture Towards Attrition

Kinship/Patronage

养儿防老 (*yang er fang lao*) or "raise children to provide for old age" is an expectation of parents toward children to pour their adult lives into meeting the needs of their aging begetters. This practice meshes kinship cultural aspects with tenants of the patronage culture within Chinese society. When the children are growing up, the parents invest large amounts of time, energy, and finances into creating the best possible future for their children. When the children leave the home and go on to make a life of their own as a result of that strong support base, there is anticipation that the child (or client) will find a way to pay back the parent (or patron). This cultural phenomenon can negatively impact both the will of the younger generation to have the courage to go as missionaries and the older generation to act as a support for those missional endeavors.

When the only Chinese child is born there are three sets of parents (parents and both sets of grandparents) who are falling over one another in an attempt to care for the treasured family heir to see that s/he is given the most protection and the best care possible. Chinese will jocularly refer to these only children who receive everything their little heart's desire and more as 小皇帝 (*xiaohuangdi*) or "little emperors." However, as the saying goes, there's a grain of truth in every joke. Vanessa L. Fong (2004) writes:

> Students I knew in urban Dalian were all raised to be winners, regardless of their gender. Prior to the one-child policy, parents tended to invest more in sons than in daughters. Many parents told me that this was the case in their own natal families. But parents who obeyed the one-child policy had no sons to favor. Like their male counterparts, singleton

> daughters were their parents' only hope for the future, and received all the encouragement, investment, and pressure their parents could muster. (p. 107)

Fong (2016) noted that those who fell under the little emperor category frequently demonstrated the following character traits: more self-centered; weaker life skills; less self-control; less generous; less trust and trustworthiness; favored safe bets over high-risk, high reward propositions; more pessimistic; more likely to back away from competition; and viewed themselves as unlucky and pressured (p. 90-92). One characteristic of environment that was pinpointed as a consistent influencer in many of these traits was that, "unlike their parents, the Little Emperor generation have never known anything but soaring economic growth" (p. 92).

Entering a foreign mission is not a task for the faint of heart. The environment can often present a variety of dangers such as illness, political and militaristic instability, persecution, along with poverty and death. These can all prove to be rude awakenings to these individuals and may be challenging for them to cope. The ability to lead as a servant is useful to a cross-cultural worker, as Rasa Paulinenè (2012) illustrates: "A key aspect of intercultural competence is to develop listening, observational and communication skills so that personal values norms and behavioural preferences can be recognized and processed in light of one's own culture" (p. 94). This may prove to be quite the challenge when one has been raised with all attention drawn to one's self. Yet, if the cross-cultural worker is inherently concerned about how s/he does things in his or her home culture and is not able to place locals above his or her own needs and desires, s/he will fail miserably in the host culture. A hesitancy to get oneself into high-risk situations and a predisposition to pessimism will likely hinder one's success on the field, particularly in pioneering mission fields. The trust issues will prove a challenge in missions as this line of work is often done with a team, entails open communication with the sending church or mission

agency, and the level to which the host culture can own the gospel for itself is directly affected by the missionary's willingness to surrender control to the locals as soon as possible. This does not mean that a little emperor cannot succeed in missions or that all little emperors will struggle in these areas but that these are potential hurdles that need to be addressed early in the pre-field training process.

As Fong (2004) noted, the only child is raised to be a winner and the highly competitive academic environment can lead to a number of personal challenges. Hannah Kyong-Jin Cho (2020) discusses several ways by which honor-shame culture and the Asian drive to win can lead to negative results on the field that lead to missionary attrition. "In the shame-based society of Korea, with its tendency to conceal failure and focus on success, it may be difficult to enable missionaries to be open to constructive ways of dealing with burnout" (l. 170). The tight culture present in many Asian contexts could lead to behavior that results in an unhealthy missionary and unrealistic ministry goals. Instead of calling the supporting church or sending agency in the face of personal or ministerial failure, the missionary may resolve to carry on and try to work things out and, in the end, only make matters worse. "Emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment" each lead to burnout and either leave the individual ineffective on the field or abandoning the field altogether (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, p. 3). The fear that keeps these feelings and experiences bottled up is a fear of shame that results in "lost support and confidence of family and community" (Kyong-Jin Cho, 2020, l. 1268). It is this fear, in extreme, but all too common cases, that can move one to choose suicide over admittance of substantial failure.

Perfectionism is also listed as common in Korean "narcissistic clergy [who] are likely to pursue huge success as evidence of their superiority" (Pan, 2006, p. 252). While perfectionism

and an entrepreneurial spirit are positives when appropriately applied, they can also lead to overwork and overconfidence. One middle-aged Korean man found that his father's expectation to always achieve perfect scores in grade school was carried over into adulthood and ministry. "I think the image that I had of my father, which was perfectionism, was reflected in my image of God, so I tried to make Him happy" (Kyong-Jin Cho, 2020, l. 2483). A Chinese husband shared:

> Sometimes when I argue with my wife, it gets intense, but we do not want people to know. If we let other believers here know, they will feel discouraged. They will say, "How can missionaries be like this?" So my wife and I talk through problems and solve them on our own. Sometimes we feel heavy stress and want to leave the field. (Laughlin, 2020, p. 210)

As a result of this pursuit to succeed there are missionaries who are "strong in starting new projects" and yet acting as "lone rangers" in these pursuits (Moll, 2006, p. 28). The entrepreneurial spirit can achieve much for pioneer missions but will inevitably prove challenging with such an independent spirit. "Though the participants assumed their faith would keep them going, and that they could do 'all things in Christ,' in reality they regularly depended on their own efforts to overcome any challenge" (Kyong-Jin Cho, 2020, l. 2378). Laughlin (2019) states that missionaries may refuse to leave the field despite failure "partly out of a fear of shame if they did return to China as 'missions failures'" and end up spending the majority of their time with the local Chinese diaspora rather than serving the natives.

There are three biblical concepts that can assist in properly reorienting one's mind to avoid pitfalls brought on by these Chinese cultural constructs. First, is a proper theology of risk. Anna E. Hampton (2016) defines cross-cultural risk as "risk taken for the sake of carrying the gospel cross-culturally with a high probability of experiencing great loss" (l. 799). The tendency

of an only child to avoid high-risk situations, gravitate toward pessimism, and back away from competition can lead one to avoid the call of God or quit when the level of difficulty increases. There may also be significant pressure from parents who fear the loss of their only hope for a lasting lineage due to risk. Regardless of one's aversion to suffering, both Jesus and the apostle Paul promise us that suffering is an inevitable experience of Christ followers. Jesus roots His claims in the position the world took toward Himself. "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you … If they persecuted me, they will also persecute you" (John 15:18, 20). Paul bases his claim of the inevitability of Christian persecution on the wickedness of the world that is ever growing in intensity. "Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and imposters will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:12-13). Geographical location may change the nature or ferocity of risk, but trouble can never be completely removed for the faithful Christian.

When the apostle Paul discusses risk, it is frequently compared to the potential reward. In his epistle to the church at Corinth he wrote, "This light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4:17). Paul contrasts the current suffering and future reward using the descriptives of light/weighty and momentary/eternal. The eternal glory that will be experienced in the hereafter is unending whereas the present suffering is only temporary, and the glory is weighty in comparison to the affliction suffered. One who has gone through any extent of suffering will also recognize that there are ancillary and unexpected personal spiritual benefits that occurred only as a result of the trial and testing. Paul points this out in the following passage: "We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame" (Rom. 5:3-5). It is through the experience of risk that "potentially faith-

shattering questions" surface that are not typically considered in a setting of security and, when one uses the experience to push into God rather than from Him, one is able to mature more quickly than in any situation of normalcy (Hampton, 2016, l. 488). Nik Ripken (2013), commenting on 2 Timothy 3:12, comments, "Clearly, there is a sense in which the danger of our lives increases in proportion to the depth of our relationship with Christ" (l. 181).

There is wisdom in having a plan as to how one will respond to a risky situation before one occurs as opposed to trying to manage the crisis after it has already happened. To endure extraordinary circumstances requires a solid faith. Gerald L. Sitters (2007) retells the story of Ignatius who sought to prepare Roman Catholic Jesuits for cross-cultural work. He developed a four-week course that covered the topics of confession and repentance, the life and teachings of Jesus, the final week of Jesus' life, and the resurrection and eternal reward. The aim of this preparation was in order "to engender an unbendable, unalterable, unshakeable devotion to the will of God" and to "break them of bad habits and idolatry, and prepare them for a lifetime of sacrificial service" (p. 377-379). Development of Christians whose quality is such that they can remain faithful to Jesus through the most difficult and trying circumstances should be the goal of every leader serving in a pastoral role.

Hampton (2016) states that missionaries "should be concerned about security in their corner of the volatile region" but to understand that "security is not a feeling—it never is" (l. 336). When Daniel's three friends were facing the king of Babylon who was furious over their insubordination to his command to commit idolatry, they made this statement in response to the king's challenge on their life: "If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods" (Dan. 3:17-18). The three men knew that they

were secure, not based upon their earthly dilemma but by the God whom they served. The book of Revelation is written to a church that is feeling the heat of imperial persecution and things look very bleak from an earthly perspective as believers are put in prison, lose jobs, are ostracized from Roman and Jewish communities, and even suffer martyrdom. How does the apostle John bring comfort and courage to the destitute? He moves the faithful's eyes beyond the terrestrial to the incorporeal reality:

> After this I looked, and behold, a door standing open in heaven! And the first voice, which I had heard speaking to me like a trumpet, said, "Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this." At once I was in the Spirit, and behold, a throne stood in heaven, with one seated on the throne. And he who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, and around the throne was a rainbow that had the appearance of an emerald. (Rev. 4:1-3)

The reminder is given that the one who is seated on this throne is "the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come" (Rev. 4:8). Although from a human perspective all hope should be seen as lost, the divine perspective breaks in and the suffering are recognized as the conquerors (cf. Rev. 3:11-12). It is the divine presence in the face of death that allows the believer to "fear no evil" (Ps. 23:4).

Abraham Heschel (1965) offers us a reality check in the midst of our theoretical discussions regarding those facing immanent risky situations. "We formulate and debate the issues while oblivious to and alienated from the experiences or the insights that account for our raising the issues" (p. 2). There is no better to give counsel to the suffering than those who have already been through a similar fire. Ripken (2013) and his wife shared a similar conviction as they set out on a global journey in pursuit of it:

> Surely, wherever believers have suffered, and still suffer, for their faith, we could find wise and faithful people who would be willing to share their spiritual survival strategies and other faith lessons learned from the hardship they have faced. Perhaps their personal, practical, tested, biblically-based counsel could help us. (p. 142)

Chinese seeking global missions in restricted access nations do not have to travel far to find these wise counselors as a previous generation of Christians who have lived through the destruction of churches, imprisonment of congregants, banning and burning of religious materials, and public criticisms during the Mao era are likely residing just next door. These men and women of faith not only have valorous stories to tell but can share the character and practices that enabled them to retain their faith in the midst of those tumultuous times.

Second, is a proper understanding of the *missio Dei* that was discussed briefly above as the mission of God found in the salvific metanarrative from Genesis to Revelation that the church is asked to participate in. The mission of God to save the world was determined prior to our existence (cf. Eph. 1:3-6), motivated by His love (cf. John 3:16), and achieved by His power demonstrated through the gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16). It is not possible to speak of missions apart from the Holy Spirit. As Harry R. Boer (1979) noted, “The Holy Spirit who was operative in the old dispensation is presented in these verses (Acts 6:8-15 and 7:51-52) not simply as the Holy Spirit without further qualification, but He is identified with the Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost” (p. 80). The significance of this is the fact that, manifested in the Spirit’s outpouring at Pentecost, the disciples “began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance” and each heard “in his own tongue” whether Parthians, Medes, Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians

(Acts 2:4, 6, 9-11). When reading through the early happenings of the first-century church, one cannot ignore the constant reminder that what is taking place is primarily and inseparably God's work. "The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47). So, being sent out by the Holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia, and from there they sailed to Cyprus" (Acts 13:4). "And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia" (Acts 16:6). "The Lord opened [Lydia's] heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul" (Acts 16:14). These are only a few of many similar references to divine intent and action. In fact, it would be more fitting if the book had been titled "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" rather than the historical title, which reads "The Acts of the Apostles."

The cultural upbringing within an achievement driven culture can create a ministry that is equally concerned with a personal need to succeed. An individual can begin to feel the unnecessary pressure that they are personally responsible for Kingdom growth and for a lack of interest in the gospel on the part of those they are seeking to reach. An anthropocentric missional focus like this can lead to a missionary being consumed by ministry to the point of being overworked and drained of energy. A forty-five-year-old Korean missionary to the Middle East shared with Kyong-Jin Cho (2020) that he was "not able to focus on mission ministry any more during the burnout" and it was not until he looked back that "he realized that God was doing the ministry, not him. God was carrying out His mission, not him" (l. 2576). This is especially important to recognize when one is working with frontier people groups where the gospel response will be very limited for some time. Ripken (2014) retells the following conversation he had with a supporter while serving in the closed country of Somalia:

> A leader of a sponsoring mission board called me on the phone from the midst of an evangelistic crusade in East Africa. After making some small talk, he reached the point of his call. In essence, this was the question that he wanted to have answered: "How many people have you baptized, how much money have you spent, and is it cost effective for you to be in there?" I knew at this point that this was not just a polite phone conversation! After I gave him my answer, he told me, "I will leave my hotel in five minutes. When I return this evening after our evangelistic crusade, a few hours from now, there will be more than one hundred and fifty new people in the kingdom of God. What you are telling me is that you have had only one convert in one and a half years, you have spent one million dollars, and you have seen three people martyred? How can you justify staying in that place?" (p. 93-94)

The pressure to compare ministries can lead to the abandonment of vitally important missionary endeavors and to faithful missionaries feeling like failures. Overlooking the biblical teaching of the *missio Dei* that has sought from the beginning to make His people "a light for the nations, that [God's] salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6) and has always been accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit will create a mission narrow in vision and impotent in effectiveness.

Third, is knowledge of all the "one another" passages found in Kingdom instruction. There are fifty-nine verses that reference the need for a Christian to do something for the sake of someone other than himself or herself. The apostle Paul asked that, rather than finding ways to bring more and more honor to oneself, one should "outdo one another in showing honor" (Rom. 12:10). There are additional commands to love (cf. Phil. 4:2), serve (cf. Gal. 5:13), express kindness and compassion towards (cf. Eph. 4:32), submit to (cf. Eph. 5:21), position oneself

humbly towards (cf. 1 Pet. 5:5), bear with and forgive one another (cf. Col. 3:13). The Christian life is driven by the need for one to constantly point outwards with love and accomplish this through subservience toward God and one's neighbor (cf. Matt. 22:37-40). The good done to others is frequently, if not always, described as motivated by the good that the individual has already experienced in Christ. "Therefore welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7). The good is also done, regardless of the behavior and attitude of the other, for God's sake. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ" (Eph. 5:21). Self-centeredness, limited self-control, lack of generosity, and lack of trust all have the potential for interfering with the need for a missionary's work to be handed over to the locals and inhibit positive team dynamics that directly influence work progress and lead to a missionary leaving the field in frustration. Laughlin (2020) had six of twenty-five of Chinese missionary interviewees respond that team conflict occurred because of different ways of doing things and incompatible personalities with other Chinese coworkers as well as frustration over conflicting time perceptions with people from the host culture (p. 150). However, having a firm foundation built around the "one another" focus of Christ and His church will eliminate many of these challenges for a Christ follower with mature faith.

Purity

中国 (*zhongguo*) or China carries a literally meaning of the center country or kingdom. The Zhou Dynasty (BC1046-256) plays into this thinking as it saw four types of barbarians (四夷, *siyi*) surrounding the nation: 东夷 (*dongyi*) or eastern barbarians, 南蛮 (*nanman*) or southern barbarians,西戎 (*xirong*) or western barbarians, and 北狄 (*beidi*) or northern barbarians. The nationalist pride of China has been a pillar of Chinese culture for ages and the patriotism continues on unwaveringly in the hearts of both the people and politics. It is possible that there

may be a hesitancy on the part of Chinese Christians (and their family members) to work among certain unreached people groups based upon the predominant culture's stereotyping. Violent conflicts in Xinjiang Province with the Muslim Uighurs beginning in the 1990s and more recent suspicions of black Africans proliferation of drugs, crime, and Coronavirus infections have led to fears of both Muslims and blacks. The Joshua Project (2020c) has calculated that 85.7 percent of the unreached people groups of the world are adherents of Islam. Work in Africa will also be a challenge for those who have antipathetic thoughts toward blacks.

Ethnocentrism is a problem in China, but it is not a problem specific to the Chinese. The Jews had a long struggle under both covenants with ethnocentric tendencies. A 2,000-year-old Herodian inscription discovered in 1871 is "the closest thing to the Temple we have," according to David Mecorach, senior curator of Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Archaeology at the Israel Museum. The artifact is a sign that was posted on the outskirts of the Temple proper which warns: "No foreigner may enter within the balustrade around the sanctuary and the enclosure. Whoever is caught, on himself shall he put blame for the death which will ensure" (Zion, 2015). The apostle Peter had to receive a vision and witness similar outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Cornelius and his household in order to understand God's intent for inclusion of the Gentiles in the early church (cf. Acts 10). Even beyond this point in time, Paul's mention of a strict reprimand in his epistle to the Galatian Christians shows that Peter still struggled with this truth for some time (cf. Gal. 2).

Several missionary training model possibilities are given by Ebenezer Sunder Raj (1991) from Asian Cross-Cultural Training Institute in Singapore. One is for missionaries in various host cultures and trainees from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to meet in one particular location, like ACTI in Singapore. Another is for training to occur at a school in the home culture where all

of the trainees share the same cultural background. The final model is for the training to occur in the host culture that the trainees are seeking to serve where they can learn the culture and language firsthand and from locals working at the institute. What Raj discovered is that “cross-cultural training in close proximity [with teammates and trainers from diverse cultures] for ten months … adds strains to the participants, both trainers and trainees” (p. 44). Despite the difficulties, it was the diversity of culture that attendees discovered “proved helpful for life on the mission field” (p. 45).

Gospel influence has been present in China long enough that there are Christians reported to be among the Cai, Lopi, Hua Miao, Chuanqing, Nasu, Tujia, and multiple other people groups within the borders of China (Hattaway, 2000). There are also either unreached or simply lost people groups who share either a similar faith or culture with most, if not all, of the unreached of the world within the 10/40 window. It cannot be denied that the training options within the borders of the China could not be any better suited to the ACTI model that would serve to equip Chinese Christians for global missions in the best possible way. Acclimation to a future host culture, removal of ethnocentric barriers, and language acquisition from native speakers are all easily accessible to the Chinese church.

Chapter 6: Honor-Shame Culture Towards Retention

Patronage

关系 (*guanxi*) or the patronage web of relationships that serve as the cogs in the machine that is the Chinese society, discussed above, reflects the patron-client relationships that are found within the biblical text. Patronage was often used by Paul in regard to support raising. Verlyn D. Verbrugge and Keith R. Krell (2015) write in reference to Paul's asking for financial assistance, "Paul lived in the Greco-Roman world with its encouragement of reciprocity for favors received, and at times he could work comfortably within that system without compromising his loyalty to the principles of the gospel" (p. 91). For example, Paul speaks in the following way toward the Gentile church and the need to give support for their fellow Jewish congregation:

> At present, however, I am going to Jerusalem bringing aid to the saints. For Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to make some contribution for the poor among the saints at Jerusalem. For they were pleased to do it, and indeed they owe it to them. For if the Gentiles have come to share in their spiritual blessings, they ought also to be of service to them in material blessings. (Rom. 15:25-27)

Paul is calling to mind how the Jews have served the role of spiritual patrons to the recently converted Gentile arrivals and now there is a chance for the Gentiles to repay their spiritual patrons back through giving monetarily to meet the Jews physical needs. Paul also carefully utilized the patron-client culture in raising his own personal support. "Paul refused money from unbelievers in new locations and from immature Christians because their worldly conceptions of patronage would spoil their relationship with Paul and the very nature of God's grace" (Georges, 2019, p. 84). Paul's requests were nestled in "a reciprocal friendship with spiritual equals" as spiritual family and "not their sociocultural status" (Georges, 2019, p. 84-85).

Chinese patronage lends itself to a similar commitment to missional giving. God is the Blessed One, the ultimate patron, by whom the Christian has been blessed in Christ "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:3). As each Christian is a client indebted to demonstrate their thanksgiving to God for all that He has done, all that they have—including finances—is owed to Him. The first-century church position was this: "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35). The oldest church building unearthed behind the walls of a maximum-security prison in Armageddon had an inscription of a Roman army officer, Gaianus, for his financial gift to build the floor and a woman, Ekoptos, who donated a table that served as an altar (McGreal, 2005). This demonstrates that patronage was alive and well and that it was common for patrons (or benefactors) to receive public recognition (honor) for their assistance to the church.

"One of the world's defining events of the past several decades has been China's economic ascent" (Yang, 2020, p.3). Within seventy years the Chinese economy is the second largest in the world and the leading exporter of goods in the world since 2009. The modernization of the Chinese culture along with the urbanization of the Chinese church and its members makes its financial capabilities worlds apart from the impoverished and persecuted rural church that existed for most of the twentieth century. The entrepreneurial members of the Chinese house churches, such as those in Wenzhou, understand the need for startup money in the creation of a new business, can share pertinent business advice, and possess a kindred spirit for both business and the Great Commission. As Lai (2005) points out, this will do well for the missionary's support base in more than one way. "People pay attention to their investments. If you believe prayer is crucial and if you want people to pray, get them to support you. If people are paying you, they will pray for you" (l. 1226).

Kinship

Filial Piety

China is a rapidly aging society with an expected 330 million surpassing 65 years of age by 2050 and, due largely in part to the one-child policy and societal adjustments to it, will enter an "'unstoppable' decline" into an "era of negative population growth" returning to population levels from the 1990s by the year 2065 (Campbell, 2019). China's government has introduced a retirement age postponement plan that will move progressively forward until 2035 out of concern for a sudden jump in pension payouts that Chinese citizens currently anticipate receiving at the age of 60 for men and 55 for women who are civil servants and white-collar workers. There has currently been no indication of what is the perceived ideal retirement age that the government is pursuing (AFP/kv, 2020). This is not just a concern for the health of the society and economy but is at the forefront of many only-child adults' minds who are considering the provision of caregiving for his or her own aging parents. Fong (2016) tells the story of Liu Ting, a college student who for the first six months of his undergraduate studies, did everything a stereotypical college student is known to do—enjoy dorm life, party, and indulge in his personal interests. Suddenly, his mother was diagnosed with uremia and received word that she would die without a kidney transplant. "Liu Ting moved out of the dorm to a rundown apartment. He used his student loans to pay for his mother's medication. He also took a part-time job as a janitor on campus" (p. 89). While Liu Ting's situation took place prematurely, a similar burden of care responsibility is presumed to happen inevitably. Caregiving, according to Shea, et. al. (2020) includes the following:

> material support, affective caring about, respectful treatment of, interpersonal gestures of caring for, taking care of someone, nursing through sickness, assisting in disability or frailness, helping with instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) like housework or grocery shopping, and helping with activities of daily living (ADLs) like bathing, dressing, eating, transferring, and toileting. (p. 28)

Though the cultural expectation to provide such extensive care was traditionally fairly natural when families worked and lived locally and communally, urbanization and modernization has substantially shifted the dynamics of elderly care.

For some time now, many are leaving their more rural hometowns in search of work as blue collars desiring to take advantage of the building boom that has been so extraordinary that it has resulted in the infamous ghost cities. Traditionally, ghost towns are once economically successful places that, through time and the depletion of natural resources or failure of big industry, experience a mass exodus of residents and significantly slowed or stagnant economic growth. Wade Shepard (2015) describes the exceptional current phenomenon of China's ghost cities as "a new development that is running at severe undercapacity, a place with drastically fewer people and businesses than there is available space for" (p. 56). While some may see them as the result of poor planning and complete absence of foresight, the truth is that many of these ghost cities are actually construction projects "for years after they appear to be built" as "some 80 per cent of new apartments sold in China are contracted a year or two before their construction is actually complete" (p. 74-75). Many of these ghost cities have some sort of external component that gives it promise of future growth such as significant government backing as a worthy development, subway systems which connect to currently populous metropolitan areas, universities, or industry. "Over 2 billion square metres of new floor space is

created each year as China's housing capacity grows by an incredible 13.4 per cent annually" (p. 199). With these statistics, it is not such a surprise when Tom Miller (2012) claims, "By 2030, when China's urban population is projected to swell to 1 billion, its cities will be home to one in every eight people on earth" (p. 1). How can these migrants along with the arrival of permanent residents filling these vacant spaces be expected to care for their parents from a distance? There are still more white collars who are working and studying abroad with even greater distance placed between they and their aging parents and this situation is no less challenging.

One option for children living abroad is to bring their parents along with them. Although many Taiwanese immigrants shared that they had considered this option, several significant concerns left them looking for a more practical alternative. There were concerns about personal time and energy available to care for their parents, the difficulty of parents making such an extreme transition at such a late stage in life, an inability to function in the host culture with no language skills, driving abilities, and limited social connections (Sun, 2020, p. 316). The aging parents shared similar concerns of losing the familiarity and the sense of stability in life. Although it was comforting to know that they would be close to their children the loss of community and Taiwanese culture proved to be too much of a challenge for them.

Responsibility to a grandchild may serve as motivation enough to persuade the grandparents to move with their children to a new location. At least at the level of in-country movements of migrant workers, this has been the case. Zhang (2020) writes, "Nearly 50 percent of China's elderly migrants relocate to urban areas to tend to the needs of adult children and grandchildren" (p. 198). In Shanghai, "approximately 90 percent of children under the age of three are cared for and reared by at least one grandparent" (p. 199). The change in pace of life and schedule for the aged parents proves to be a significant adjustment for them to make. While

"it is a way to reestablish intimacy between aging parents and adult children," this arrangement can also lead to certain challenges (p. 207).

Childcare is such a big responsibility that the grandparent's life is mostly domesticated and there is little time spent outside the home, particularly when the grandchildren are young. It was discovered that the grandparent felt trapped when family feuds arose between their child and spouse or between parents and child. There was a sense of feeling underappreciated for all of the sacrifice in time and energy made when their children would not take parental responsibility once home at the end of the workday. Once the grandchildren entered primary school and the grandparents' assistance was diminishing, they are simultaneously transitioning from "young-old to old-old seniors" (Zhang, 2020, p. 214). If the grandparents stay, there is a possibility of feeling as if they are a burden and contribute nothing to their children. At the same time, if the children ask the parents to leave as help is no longer needed, the grandparents can feel "exploited" or "abandoned" (Zhang, 2020, p. 215). Although it is possible for aging parents to travel to the host culture with their missionary children, it is not likely, especially if the country has a struggling economy, poor healthcare, or political instability.

Chinese Christians seeking to follow God's leading to be a light to the nations may struggle with a personal need to care for their own parents and view moving away as abandonment of that responsibility or they may receive criticism from the surrounding community as an attempted reminder of the children's need to stay close and care for their biological parents. It is possible for filial piety and that strong honor-shame cultural kinship bond to act as a hindrance to following through with a call of Christ to participate in global outreach. One must take care not to make such strict applications of Jesus' statements such as "no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for

the gospel" receiving a hundredfold in the age to come (Mark 10:29-30) or that one's love for father, mother, son or daughter should not exceed one's love for Christ (cf. Matt. 10:37). The objective in saying this is not to soften the need for rigorous and sole devotion to Jesus or to minimalize His teaching at this point, but to take whatever measures to obey His command for devotion without breaking His other command for children to honor their father and mother (cf. Mark 7:10). It is also necessary that one does not act in such a way as to nullify the Christian faith in the minds and hearts of his or her Chinese community. It is not necessary for one to neglect responsibility to parents in order to obey Christ. In fact, Jesus chastised the religious leaders for not honoring their parents in refusal to provide for them financially by giving an excuse of obedience to God (cf. Matt. 15:3-6).

There are innovative communities that are arising in certain locations where aging is already a factor. Tang & Shea (2020) tell of a rural village in Jiangxiang where the local government recognized the need to ensure the financial support of the elderly. Villas for all 186 native-born families were built and sold for a subsidized price where the "remaining profits went into the village collective fund, as did profits from the collective agricultural, tourism, and industrial ventures" within the same village (p. 108-109). In this scenario, "financial support for seniors is coming from collective village revenue, rather than from their children" (p. 125). The local government has recognized the necessity of traditional filial piety along with the concerns of a modern China and have sought a successful communal economic solution.

Japan is another filial Asian culture that is struggling with the highest aging population in the world. A CNA Insider reporter, Yumi Araki, narrates on Murayama Danchi which is one of the largest residential complexes run by the Tokyo metropolitan government where over fifty-two percent of its residents are more than 65 years of age. The storefronts that once targeted

parents with children are now more geared towards the aged generation with an elderly advisory care center to assist those who frequently suffer from dementia and struggle to remember where they are or what they were in the process of doing. There is a place that grills store-bought fish for free as this activity can pose a danger for the aged, a rehabilitation center for physical exercise, and free pickup and drop-off services via bicycle taxi. The delivery and occasional welfare check services are all dependent on volunteers.

The early church also gave prominence to the care of the economically disadvantaged, which included care of the aged widows but not to the neglect of filial piety. Paul encouraged the church to only provide assistance for those widows who did not have children or grandchildren to care for them in order to “let them first learn to show godliness to their own household and to make some return to their parents” (1 Tim. 5:4). The New Testament speaks of the church in familial terms referring to older men as fathers, older women as mothers, younger men as brothers, and younger women as sisters (cf. 1 Tim. 5:1-2). The care within the church also models that of the family as it is demonstrated in education of the young and naïve by the elder and experienced. The older women are to model “reverent” behavior and they are to “train the young women to love their husbands and children” (Tit. 2:3-4). The care is not limited to head knowledge but extends to meeting the monetary needs as anyone might have them. The goal of the church is a constant building and strengthening of relationships and that through sharing of meals, spiritual communion, and monetary wealth (cf. Acts 2:44-47). It would be a shame if the government outshined the church in providing proper care for the elderly. There must be a way in which the Christian can follow in obedience to the missional call of Christ while the believing community steps up to be the care providers of the missionary’s aging parents.

Vanessa Hung (2007) shared several cases within the local church of Hong Kong and how they stepped up to meet this particular need among their members who were seeking to pursue global missions. Mandy was called by God to serve overseas while she had an elderly mother. Up to this point she had cared for her mother for years but knew that God was asking her to go abroad. When she shared her dilemma with the local church, they created a group of members to visit and provide care for her mother on a rotation. This included continuance of a weekly routine of going out for “dim sum.” This not only provided Mandy with a chance to fulfill her calling, but allowed her mother to live happily “because she acquired so many surrogate sons and daughters who looked after her” (p. 78)

Hung (2007) also shares the story of Tommy and his mother who was aged and in poor health when he desired to enter the mission field. He came to the church with his situation and Grace, a member of the church, was committed to the need for missions but had not been called herself to do so. She moved into Tommy’s house to provide daily care to his mother while he followed God’s leading. This not only allowed Tommy the chance to serve overseas but also provided Grace with a means to do something to assist the global work of the Kingdom. Both of these scenarios demonstrate how one can honor a filial piety culture while simultaneously honoring the command of Jesus to go into the world to make disciples (cf. Matt. 28:19-20). Research by Ken Chih-Yan Sun (2020) of Taiwanese immigrants who hired foreign domestic workers (FDWs) found that it actually had a positive impact on the aging parents. “Unlike parents who receive care from their own family members, those who had FDWs caring for them felt empowered because they were able to receive the support they need without intruding on their children’s lives too much” (p. 306).

Vocational Expectations

It is undeniable that limited accessibility to quality higher education has contributed significantly to the major financial investments placed in children's education:

> Peking University does not publicize its admission rates, but applicants from Beijing are believed to have a 0.5 percent chance of acceptance, which is up to 40 times higher than applicants from elsewhere in the country. When compared globally, Peking University's low admission rate reveals the exceptionally competitive nature of tertiary education in China. Two of the world's most well-regarded higher education institutions in the United States, Harvard University and Stanford University, have admission rates around 5 percent. (China Power, 2020)

This means that there are a large number of brilliant students that are not able to achieve the lofty dreams of their parents and may have to settle for less reputable occupations in the end. "In 2013, the tertiary education system supplied more highly-skilled workers than the economy demanded, resulting in a new-graduate unemployment rate more than three times higher than the national average. Educational attainment [had outstripped] market demands" (China Power, 2020). It is simply not possible for every child to reach such high achievements and this should not leave the graduate feeling hopeless.

There are also Confucian constructs of shame that may serve to positively expand or modify a parent's or grandparent's view of what it means to achieve honor. Seok (2017) says that it is not unreasonable to hold that "shame is one of the important moral dispositions of early Confucianism" (p. 79). Shame can be brought upon someone through a plethora of activities that include dress, food and drink, occupation, burial rites, education, land rites, and hypocrisy. Among the possible producers of Confucian shame is that one thinks "only of money (salary)"

(p. 79). There are higher aims beyond the mere acquisition of wealth. This is a virtue that parallels that of Jesus when He instructed His disciples, "For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul" (Mark 8:36)?

The same goes for the Chinese concept of honor (or face). The honorary Chinese terms of *mianzi* (honor based upon position) and *lian* (honor based upon moral behavior), as mentioned above, cannot be so neatly categorized. Haring (1956) lays out the awkward and obviously errant position that one is in who seeks to gain *mianzi* with no regard for *lian*:

> The people who rise on top, particularly in times of stress and strain, there are those who care for *mien-tzu* far more than for *lien*. Opportunists often build up their reputation by all possible means, avoiding social censure for a time. Then, once wealth is acquired, power attained and position consolidated, they trust their *mien-tzu* to be strong enough to hush talk about their moral character. (p. 467)

Someone who maintains a high *mianzi* and is obviously deficient in *lian* could never be considered truly honorable. This too aligns with Jesus' criticism of the Jewish scribal leaders who liked to walk around in long robes and loved greetings in the marketplaces and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts, who devoured widows' houses and for a pretense made long prayers. They will receive the "greater condemnation" (Luke 20:46-47). These leaders holding positions of great respect were preoccupied students of the Mosaic Law proving to be as useful as dishes half washed and as attractive as occupied tombs (cf. Matt. 23:23-28).

With the introduction of a business as mission model, as discussed above, it is not necessary for a missionary to resign oneself to a vow of poverty as an Anglican or Greek Orthodox votarist. In fact, for a missionary to not succeed in business or run an illegitimate

business could inhibit the ability of the missionary to stay long in the host culture and prohibit future missionaries who seek to start a legitimate business in order to gain a visa in country. Patrick Lai (2005) refers to a T-5 category tentmaker:

> T-5s have non-missionary or religious-professional identities. T-5s may have a job with a business, but by prior agreement do little or no work for the company. Some T-5s create cover or shell companies to enable them to reside in the country. The company, whether functioning or not, provides a cover visa by which the T-5 may enter and reside in the country. (l. 633)

Although T-5s can gain access to a closed country, it is the T-4 tentmakers whose non-missionary identity is backed by active and professional work consistent with the identity found on their visa that keeps missionaries on the field long-term. “Many tentmakers have been rebuked by officials for sharing their faith but have continued to work in the country as the officials valued their economic or educational input more than fearing their religious zeal” (Lai, 2005, l. 888).

Meg Crossman (2009) demonstrates the endless entrepreneurial possibilities available to missionaries through Chinese Christians who picked up trades that enabled them to live as self-supported evangelists among the Tibetan minorities within China’s borders. One 40-year-old house church evangelist bought a pair of scissors and a stool in order to cut people’s hair. As he cut, he built relationships with his customers and was able to plant two small Tibetan house churches. A team of Han evangelists recognized that there was a high demand for teachers in Tibet as living conditions as well as the pay were subpar. They went to school for two years to be certified as teachers and were welcomed with open arms by the local authorities and three villages now have a Christian presence through their work. Another group of house church

evangelists had rural farming backgrounds and recognized ways that they could assist the local Tibetan farmers in plowing their fields and the locals were so impressed by their diligence that they were willing to visit them and listen to gospel presentations.

Paul Tokunaga (1998) shares the following story of Patrick who is a Chinese American businessman:

> A twentysomething in the Chinese church we attend. Patrick majored in industrial engineering at Georgia Tech and is currently working as a consultant. He and a few other young men from the church have a dream: in a few years, they leave their jobs, form a company and manufacture a product. Here's the ingenious part: they make enough money that, on a rotating basis, one or two of the five-person leadership team can do missionary work for several years, funded by the company. (p. 170)

Missionaries can run a legitimate business and make a significant amount of money in the process while, at the same time, recognizing

> that tentmaking is not about money, visas, entry strategies, or all the other issues missiologists love to debate … the most important aspect of tentmaking is giving the lost a good look, and often a first look, at who Jesus really is … using daily-life strategies to tell people about Jesus. (Lai, 2005, l. 212)

When a Chinese entrepreneur uses his or her expert education and life skills to start a business among an unreached people group, it is possible to gain both *mianzi* and *lian* among the locals regardless of salary. When one factors in all that is gained in addition to this by following this particular entrepreneurial avenue the honor, from an eternal perspective, is incalculable. As the prophet Isaiah declared, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good

news, who publishes peace, who brings good new of happiness, who publishes salvation" (Isa. 52:7).

MK Education

ACTI in Singapore noticed a "high drop-out rate among Asian missionaries" (p. 53). A lack of cross-cultural knowledge, an inability to communicate with home churches for pastoral care, and difficulty with team conflict were some of the most prominent. However, ACTI felt the need to include a fourth reason leading Asian missionaries to attrit as concern for the education of missionary children. Research conducted by the Hong Kong Association of Christian Mission found that missionary parents' attrition due to concern for their children ranked second (Hung, 2000). Polly Chan (2002) points to the many challenges that face Asian children. Among them are the need for a long-term educational plan that includes what to do on furloughs and graduate studies, when and if it is best to send their children back to their home culture, and the linguistic and learning techniques that differ with each transition the family makes (p. 65).

The option of a school specific to missionary kids can assist in providing a quality education and can cater more to Chinese children's needs. An example would be the Murree Christian School in Pakistan (est. 1956) that has opened up dialogue between the school and the Asian parents to express their specific needs. The Dalat School in Malaysia started a program to help Hong Kong students continue studying their Chinese language and culture in 1998. An MK school can be more suitable for the child, as Karen Wong Chiao-Lin, a 14-year-old Chinese student, shares, "I felt at home in [Christian] school. The teachers were very understanding and many of my friends were MKs. Unlike in the local school, I did not feel very different from others" (Chan, 1999, p. 4). More Chinese Christians serving as educators in these Christian schools would also serve to minimize the stress for Chinese parents and children.

"As more and more Chinese people—many of whom are involved with the Belt and Road Initiative—head abroad for work, demand is increasing for schools with Chinese as the medium of instruction that follow the domestic curriculum" (Quinn, 2020). To meet this demand, China's Ministry of Education currently reports 20,000 schools that offer some manner of education that models China's homeland educational system, and these institutions receive curriculum and supplies from the government. The BRI make living abroad for missionaries less of a challenge. This avenue will help ease the pressure of missionary parents' concern over whether or not their children are learning at the same competitive level as their peers back home. As Chinese immigration continues to grow and China ceaselessly expands its global influence, the ways that Chinese missionary parents will be able to manage their children's education will likewise broaden.

"Leftover" Women

The current 剩女 (*shengnü*) or "leftover" women phenomenon arose out of the one-child policy which left daughters to share the same higher education and vocational expectations as sons, as discussed above. Fincher (2014) follows the popularity of this cultural thinking to the start of a 2007 mass media campaign that has continued to this day. "State media news reports, surveys, columns, cartoons and television shows about 'leftover' women are clearly an attempt to stop urban educated women from delaying marriage any further" (p. 15-16). This has resulted in many women focused on marriage in order to have purpose and they struggle with this culturally established identity.

The apostle Paul states something radically different when he encourages Corinthians, "Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife … those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that" (1 Cor. 7:27-28). The apostle is not against marriage as he

demonstrates to the Ephesians that the marital relationship is a reflection of Christ and His church (cf. Eph. 5:22-33). Instead, the point he makes is that in marriage a person's "interests are divided" between spouse and the things of the Lord (1 Cor. 7:34). The unmarried is able to devote their full attention to the work of God. This also means that marriage is not intrinsic to human identity. According to biblical teaching, God's image and Christ's righteousness are the only realities intrinsic to human identity (cf. Gen. 1:26; Rom. 8:31-39).

The impact of women on the exponential multiplication of both Protestant churches and converts throughout China's history is undeniable. Gail King (2010) writes, "Chinese Christian women of the seventeenth century were of all classes, from peasants to imperial princesses, literate and illiterate, poor and wealthy. They taught the faith to their children, they met with other women to worship, they belonged to religious societies, and they donated generously to the Chinese church" (p. 55). Peter Chen-main Wang (2010) found that in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many Chinese women were founders of women's meetings, principals of women's schools, leaders of women's Bible studies, and excelling in Christian disciplines of prayer, Bible reading, evangelism, and worship. "Female missionaries together with missionary wives in China came to outnumber the men by the late nineteenth century" and were involved in evangelism, female education, and medical services (p. 165).

The conspicuous influence of women on the church continues to the present day. Lü Xiaomin (b. 1970), a Hui minority Muslim background believer, has written over 1,500 worship songs that have become infamously known as 加南诗选 (*jiananshidie*) or the *Canaan Hymns*. Shan Chuan Hang (2005) notes, "Among the young generation, the first fruits of the evangelical movement in China in the 1980s were mostly among women in the rural area. Even now, over 70 percent of believers in the church are still women … Many of them are single women who

exercise leadership with excellence and great courage." Shan attributes the predominance of Christian women to the need to carry on with ministry despite the imprisonment of Christian men between 1949 to 1979 and the Communist social work culture that had many men occupying secular jobs when the church finally experienced greater freedoms. Xin Yalin (2011) affirms this, stating, "One of the key elements in historical Christian renewal movement is the role played by key leaders. Women leaders at all levels in the [Word of Life church] have been the backbone of the movement since the beginning three decades ago" (p. 136). Word of Life is the largest house church network in China that expands to all twenty-three provinces of China with tens of millions of members. The biblical rite to remain single in order to carry out service to God followed by the past and current female missionary force of the Chinese church provide those viewed by Chinese society as 剩女 (*shengnü*) a chance to live fulfilled and godly lives that are more akin to the 圣女 (*shengnü*) or the female saints of old whose heroic faith is passed down from generation to generation.

Conclusion

The introduction began by laying out the driving motivation behind the compilation of this research. There seems to be no more suitable time for the Chinese church to fulfill its dream that began in the 1920s. The need of the unreached nations between China and Jerusalem is as great as the door is wide through the CCP's emphasis on the Belt and Road Initiative of 2013 that presents an open invitation to the church to utilize the resources God has provided to serve in accomplishing His will to spread the gospel message which is intended for "every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9). China is famous for entrepreneurs along with their many unique business methods and tireless work ethic, whether they be Wenzhou merchants traveling across country or immigrants moving across oceans to begin a new life in search of 中国梦 (*zhongguomeng*) or the Chinese dream. Chairman Xi addressed the young Chinese to encourage them to "dare to dream, work assiduously to fulfill the dreams and contribute to the revitalization of the nation" (Yang, 2013). A Chinese Christian can serve his or her country's global vision through vocation while expanding God's Kingdom through overseas gospel proclamation. And those urban Christian businessmen and businesswomen who are not called to serve themselves overseas have a responsibility to share their entrepreneurial success through the provision of enterprising guidance for those missionaries serving by means of business as missions.

Five hundred and forty-four minority cultures along with their 302 quite distinct languages have proven a challenge to national unity from dynasty to dynasty. The Chinese Ministry of Education has sought to reach 500,000 international students in Chinese universities by the end of this year to add to the diversity of ethnicities and languages within China's borders (Cai, 2020). This leaves an abundance of pre-field cross-cultural possibilities sitting at the

church's doorstep. There is good reason for the global church to remain optimistic in expectations for China to become the leader in funding for and sending of missionaries and establishing foreign NGOs by the year 2050. The Chinese church has started to recognize the need to shift in what sort of equipping needs are necessary to enter this next stage of ecclesiastical maturity. As Kim (2015) noted, it is not enough for the church to share the gospel, make disciples, or plant other churches, "the end goal of missions [is] mission planting" (p. 286).

Honor-shame is a cultural construct that acts as the hub of a wheel that links to a number of customs or habits—patronage, kinship, purity, and tight culture—as spokes which connect to and hold the entire wheel of Chinese culture together and allow it to function efficiently. Each aspect of honor-shame culture presents its potential challenges to a Chinese Christian who is seeking to obey the commission of Jesus to go into all the world and make disciples (cf. Matt. 28:18-20). Yet all but one of these customs, namely purity, carry equal promise of giving the same individual a basis for and means of entering the mission field and ministering long-term in a host culture.

There is nothing wrong with kinship as it relates to filial piety or the collective mindset toward family. In fact, this cultural disposition is shared extensively with the Judaist and Greco-Roman culture and is encouraged by both Old and New Covenants. The expectation of parents for their children to care for them in their old age is a biblical concept and a Christian must recognize this responsibility to his or her parents. However, Jesus has also created the church to operate as a family and to meet one another's spiritual and physical needs when necessary. The church can stand in the gap for the missionary to provide appropriate care for his or her parents that will both ease the conscience of the missionary and satisfy the needs of his or her aging father or mother.

The little emperor phenomenon of the one-child policy that places the attention of two sets of grandparents and the parents on the sole heir to the family lineage has created children who are more self-centered, weak in life skills, and frequently struggle with self-control, risk, trust, and generosity. Yet the high level of competition in the academic realm based on this same policy has created an abundance of extremely gifted individuals who may never land a place in his or her dream university or the high-paying and posh position in the private sector work at Alibaba or a respected governmental agency. The perfectionism and a strong desire to succeed, when appropriately applied, can be of great benefit to work among UPGs in RANs within the 10/40 window. The likelihood of the only child duplicating these same high educational demands on his or her child is expected. Again, the BRI and the expansion of China's influence on a global scale has led to the construction of 20,000 Chinese schools and will likely lead to further viable options being offered for Chinese parents to educate their children while ministering abroad.

The patron-client relationships, entrenched in the Chinese concept of *guanxi*, functions as a fascinating web of connections through family, friendship, coworkers, and classmates that serves as a propulsion to keep everyone and everything moving forward within society. While it is possible for an individual to abuse patronage in order to propel one's self forward at the expense of others, those within the church have the love of Christ to reign in the fleshly impulses to act solely in one's own self-interest. The apostle Paul applied patronage language when he referred to the relationship between the missionary and the congregation that provided financial support. The Chinese are familiar with patronage cultural concepts and will find the commands to give sacrificially in support of cross-cultural workers reasonable and familiar. The economic development of the nation and the urbanization of the average Chinese Christian increase the

ability of a Chinese missionary to find financial backing sufficient to serve full-time and long-term on the mission field.

There will inevitably be cultural conflict surrounding false concepts of honor and fears of filial and societal shame. Illness, imprisonment, theft, kidnapping, traumatic shock through observation of extreme poverty or warfare, can be a few of the many other risks that commonly accompany work among a UPG residing in a RAN. Spiritual warfare is another trial that was not discussed in the present work that is always present in every mission field. This warfare, as defined by Mary Anne and Jack Voelkel (2012), happens as a result of the missionary's location of service as one partners "with God as he advances his kingdom *behind enemy lines*" (p. 11, emphasis added). All things considered; the Chinese church has its obvious challenges to global missions. Pre-field training and on-field member care that equips missionaries with a cross-cultural education that is indigenous to the Chinese Christian and contextualized to his or her chosen host culture will serve to set up these individuals desiring to do God's will for long-term success. My hope in the Chinese church is firmly placed upon the power of Christ and the wisdom of His Holy Spirit that has been placed in the hearts of His missional church scattered across the globe. My prayer for the Chinese church is that 2050 is a date that will be proven far too late and that faithful servants will be sent faster and more effectively than the statisticians ever anticipated.

这样，我就常常与你们同在，直到时代的终结。(太 28:20)

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