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## Where Are Asian Christians In Jewish-Christian Dialogue?

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In surveying the recent literature in the field of Jewish-Christian dialogue, I have a growing concern about the continuing lack of contributions to this dialogue by non-Western scholars. For example, the most recent volumes in Jewish-Christian relations such as *Humanity at the Limits* (2000), *Christianity in Jewish Term* (2000), and *Faith Transformed* (2003), are all works of Western scholars.<sup>1</sup> In edited volumes such as these, the voices of non-Western scholars such as Asians, Africans, or Latin Americans are clearly absent. An exception is Catholic theologian Peter Phan in *Humanity at the Limits* and *Seeing Judaism Anew*; he is the lone Asian theologian to offer skillful analyses from the perspective of Asian liberation theology. Despite being extremely valuable to the field, the above mentioned volumes miss incorporating the much needed voices of people of ethnic groups.

My concern is not just a matter of inclusion in the age of multiculturalism. What's at stake, rather, is doing justice in Jewish-Christian relations. Purging the Christian faith of anti-Judaism is a global issue, for Christianity is no longer a Euro-American religion. And yet, through the works of missionaries in the colonial era, many Asian Christians, for example, have received anti-Judaic teachings, and Asian Christians may become the contagious agents of anti-Judaism theologies. So the absence of Asian Christians in the Jewish-Christian dialogue is disturbing. The issue which concerns us most is the ways in which Asian Christians practice their faith. Given the theological legacy of anti-Judaism in the pre-*Shoah* period, many Asian Christians inherited an understanding of Christianity which is exclusive with respect to Judaism. I am not suggesting that the absence of Asian Christians in Jewish-Christian dialogue is a result of any negligence on the part of Euro-American scholars. I am contending that most Asian Christians fail to see the need to

participate in these discussions. I write this paper solely to elucidate the issue of Asian participation in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

In the following, I will articulate the reasons why Asian Christians (even in North America) are not participating in Jewish-Christian dialogue. I am writing from my social location as a Chinese-Canadian and I challenge Asian Christians to rethink this critical issue. Through revisiting briefly the history of Christian mission in China, the Asian experiences of migration in North America, and the hegemonic relations between Confucianism and colonial Christianity, I will expose the *Problematik* of the absence of Asian Christians in Jewish-Christian dialogue and conclude with some signposts for reconstruction.

### **Colonialism and Asian Churches: A Historical Concern**

Before the eighteenth century, little was known about Christian activity in Asia. Aside from the Nestorians, who had successfully made their way to China in the eighth century, the most intensive interaction between the East and the West was by the Jesuit missionaries of the seventeenth century. In China, these Roman Catholic priests engaged in serious dialogue with Confucian scholars, investing much of their time studying Asian philosophy – notably, Confucianism. The Jesuits praised Confucian institutions as well as the Confucian philosophy. For example, Matteo Ricci held the study of Confucian studies in high regard. He attempted to summarize Confucianism into an intellectual language that his friends back home in Portugal and Italy could understand. Ricci also permitted Chinese converts to participate in ancestral worship.<sup>2</sup> Ricci's interest in the intellectual exchange of the East and the West enabled him to associate with many Chinese elites and scholars. But in terms of missionary goals, Ricci did not make many converts. Contemporary historians debate why so few converted, although there is some evidence which points to a lack of knowledge about the tenets of Christianity on the part of the convert.<sup>3</sup> However, Ricci's treatment of Asian religions represents a primary form of inter-religious learning with mutual respect. Unfortunately, Ricci's accommodationist approach did not last long. With the suppression of the Jesuit Order after 1770, Jesuit contributions to the West regarding Asians were confined to their translations and commentaries on various branches of Chinese knowledge, which provided a valuable introduction to the Orient.<sup>4</sup>

The modern Christian missionary enterprise in China came about as a result of the Opium War (1839-1842).<sup>5</sup> Although not all Western missionaries during that period were uncritical of the aggressive political and economic maneuvers of their home countries, the fact that they could enter China with guaranteed political protection and freedom to preach Christianity shows they cannot be exempted from the accusation of imperialism.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese lost the war because they could not stand up to the sophisticated gun power of industrial England. China was forced to sign the Treaty of Nanjing (1842). As a result, Hong Kong Island was conceded to the British, and China was forced to open up five coastal ports for trade. Even though France and the United States did not participate in the war, they negotiated similar treaties with China in 1845. It took the second Opium War, which involved the cooperative force of several European countries in 1858, to officially force the “opening” of the door to China as more coastal ports were opened.<sup>7</sup> One benefit of the treaty was that foreigners were permitted to travel outside the treaty ports. In terms of Christian mission, Western missionaries and the Chinese converts gained protection for practicing and promoting the Christian faith. The guaranteed tolerance of Christianity was in place.

I would like to offer two issues for reflection. First, there is a key difference in terms of approach by the Jesuits of the seventeenth century and by the Protestant missionaries of the nineteenth century. The Jesuit missionaries expressed interest in Confucian and Asian indigenous cultures, and were committed more to mutual learning than to establishing churches. Although their presence in Asia was not entirely free of criticism, the Jesuits displayed high sensitivity to the host cultures. Their respect of Asian religions and cultures was exceptional.

Unlike the Jesuits, the Western missionaries of the nineteenth century “forced” their way into Asia. Colonial missionaries displayed a “messianic syndrome” in which they came with the belief that they possessed a superior civilization and religion. For missionaries, the door to Asia was finally “opened,” albeit by military might and invasive political agenda. Through this worldview, Western missionaries poised as “saviours” presumed to have the “cure” for uncivilized Asian societies. This “messianic syndrome” can be demonstrated in a letter by Daniel Nelson, a Lutheran missionary in China:

In the thousand of market towns and villages, we have barely made a beginning. The masses of the people are still groping in the dark

and waiting for the light of the Gospel. We are responsible for these millions of people, and it is our Mission to bring them the Word of God and the hope of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>8</sup>

Lutheran theologian David Vikner concludes that the missionary enterprise in China “was both a curse and a blessing.”<sup>9</sup> The blessing included the opportunity to share the gospel with Asians, provide medical services, built orphanages, and create opportunities for liberal education for women. There is little doubt that Christian missionaries expanded the scope of education in China so as to include liberal arts subjects such as geography and mathematics. More importantly, those studies were available for the blind, the handicapped, and for girls – a practice inconceivable for most Asians at that time. In fact, these blessings were counter-cultural practices.<sup>10</sup> Yet, the availability for such learning was “forced-open” by imperialistic military powers. In retrospect, Western missionaries functioned both as agents of a religion and a culture. This fact fostered in the Asian society the perception that Christianity was and still is a *Western* religion, or, as the late professor Joseph Kitagawa put it, the “spiritual engine” of Western civilization.<sup>11</sup>

Colonialism has a definite effect on how Asian Christians understand Christianity. Without deconstructing the colonial mind – that is, questioning and purging habits of thinking instilled by colonizers – Asian Christians will continue to be guardians of colonial Christianity.

These factors explain the reason why contemporary Asian Christians’ efforts in theologizing focus primarily on the history of oppression and of coercion by the Western colonial powers. Asians, whether they are Christians or not, are supersensitive to any teaching that suggests Western thought is intrinsically superior to Asian thought. Combating Western domination occupies the central role of contemporary Asian scholars, Christians and non-Christians alike. Theologically speaking, Asian liberation theology is the Christian arm of postcolonial critique. I am a sympathizer to this theological movement. Yet, in their efforts to critique Eurocentric Christianity, most Asian Christians fail to pay equal attention to the erroneous assumption made by classical Christianity that Judaism is inferior compared to Christianity. This view originates in the classical Christian doctrines of christology and the atonement whereby supersessionism is used as a foundation for religious teaching.

Supersessionism (from Latin, *supersede*, to sit upon or to preside over) is a theological claim that Christianity has replaced Judaism as God's chosen people. To argue that Jesus was the messiah, classical Christian theologians maintained that the coming of Jesus makes Judaism obsolete, because of the Jewish rejection of Jesus as the messiah.<sup>12</sup> In this classical Christian teaching, God has forfeited the Jewish people's rights to be God's chosen people. The proof of this claim points to the destruction of the Second Temple and the dispersing of Jews around the world. Some Christians charge that God used horrific events such as the demolition of the Temple to punish the "perfidious Jews." In that light, the *Shoah* was then interpreted as an act of divine punishment. These theological statements are no longer valid in light of what we know about the *Shoah*. Most Christian denominations have published declarations to renounce such teachings. But many have not realized how much of their Christian traditions have been built upon anti-Judaism. Without anti-Judaism, these aforementioned classical Christian doctrines are unsustainable. Asian Christians cannot reject colonialism on the one hand while at the same time practicing versions of Christian faith which have built upon excluding Judaism on the other.

Second, many Asian Christians presume classical (colonial) Christianity as an untouchable truth. The idea of reinterpreting Scripture, despite it being the heart of biblical studies, is not only foreign to many Asian Christians; it is often equated to tampering with "biblical authority." Many Asian Christians do not realize that they have been educated to safeguard colonizers' Eurocentric agenda. Moreover, many have considered supersessionism as the only "biblical" approach in reading of the Bible. It is not typical of Asian Christians to critique the politics of reading the Bible because it was against the interests of colonizers to educate their subjects to consider any other alternatives. Sometimes, Western Bible teachers were blinded to their Eurocentric political agendas. Many of the missionaries might have genuinely believed that the rest of the world would be better off if they live and believe the same way as Western Christians did.

Such a colonial mindset has huge consequences for how Asian Christians read the Bible. The Christian Bible consists of Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and New Testament (and the Apocrypha for Roman Catholics). How to interpret these texts that are bound together as *one* book is an interpretive challenge to anyone who reads

them. For Asian Christians who are separated from the Jewish world not only religiously, but also by geography, linguistics, culture, and worldview, the potential for misunderstanding is unimaginably high. Since most Asians grow up under the influences of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and other Asian folk religions, the question of what kind of interpretative lens they bring to read the Jewish texts called “the Bible” is an interesting pursuit. This challenge is even more dramatic for some Asians who have never met a Jew and possess no knowledge of contemporary Judaism.

Asians’ contact with Jews and Judaism is very limited. Depending on where they live, their interaction with contemporary Judaism as a living faith tradition is minimal. Asians’ perceptions of Judaism, however, come from Christianity. That posits a concern for us when Asians learn a version of Christianity that assumes Judaism is an outdated religion. For many, Christianity alone presumes to be the only truth. We have yet to see Asian Christians actively participating in purging the colonial mindset when it comes to practicing their faith. What is needed is for Asian Christians to reexamine the extent through which they have internalized the colonial ideals and/or have domesticated the virus of supersessionism. Without purging these colonized assumptions, supersessionism will be further passed on to the next generation through the educational activities of Asian pastors and church leaders. That is, Asian pastors and religious teachers may become the unsolicited carriers of anti-Jewish Christian teachings despite the fact that colonial Christian teachers have departed long time ago. This reality forms the historical context of the absence of Asian Christians’ participations in Jewish-Christian dialogue.

### **Asian North Americans’ Experience of Marginalization**

Asian North Americans have always struggled with the quest of identity. Their skin color is their “racial uniform” by which they are recognized as *other*. In order to maintain the Asian identity, Asian immigrants try hard to keep their cultures and languages. Those who are born or raised in North America are often told by their parents, “Be proud of yourself and dare to be different.”<sup>13</sup> Yet, the reality of living in a multicultural and pluralistic North American society makes retaining their monocultural identity impossible. While Asian North Americans are recognized as *others* by the dominant North

American society, their countries of origin reject them as being “too westernized.” Asian North Americans are caught “in-between” two worlds. As the late Professor Jung Young Lee says, “To be in-between two worlds means to be fully in neither. The marginal person who is placed between this two-world boundary feels like a non-being.”<sup>14</sup> Sometimes, marginalization worsens when Asian North Americans internalize a mindset in which the cultural and ethnic distinctiveness of Asian peoples is perceived as incompatible with the powerful Eurocentric culture. Asian North Americans debase themselves when they believe that they are a “minor key,” irrelevant or an obstruction to the society.<sup>15</sup>

It is even more challenging for many Asian North American women who are in “double jeopardy” or a “double bind” as they are marginalized not only from the dominant North American cultures but also the patriarchal Asian cultures. The identities of Asian North American women are often defined in relation to the family and particularly to the men in these families. Korean-Canadian theologian Grace Ji-Sum Kim says, “Korean North American women are caught between two cultural values: Korean values and North American values.”<sup>16</sup> Many North American women feel the pressure to preserve the male-oriented cultures, yet at the same time are caught up by the North American ideals of gender equality and independence. The contrast between the two realities creates a greater sense of alienation, powerlessness, and marginalization for Asian North American women, especially those women who were born and have been educated in Asia before immigration.

Such is the characteristic of Confucian tradition which governs the lives of many Asian in North America. While the Confucian culture has religious qualities, they are never explicitly stated.<sup>17</sup> Confucian sages never ruled out the possibility of the existence of deities, yet they fell short in articulating a clear picture of the religious realm. The classic Confucian notion stresses that heaven and earth are one. However, without articulating explicit understanding of what constitutes heaven, the religious realm is skewed by the moral dimension. That is why Asian people seldom see Confucianism as a religion.<sup>18</sup> Some contemporary Confucian scholars do not even consider the religious dimension of Confucianism. Confucian scholar Liu Shu-hsien argues that Confucianism should be understood as (1) a philosophical way of life, (2) as a political ideology, and (3) as a



storehouse of popular values.<sup>19</sup> In his list, Liu stops short of identifying Confucianism as a religion. One can make the argument that since heaven and earth are one, it is assumed that the religious dimension is automatically assumed when human matters are being discussed. Yet, the overarching concern of Confucian sages over the moral perfectibility of human affairs on earth marginalized the metaphysical realm. In light of the fact that the religious dimensions of Confucianism might suffer a lack of clarity, many Asians feel the need to find something religiously *explicit* to enhance their way of life. In searching for an explicit religious agent to carry the Confucian way of living many Asians find the teachings of colonial Christianity to be a “perfect” client.

### **Social Functions of Asian Churches**

Can the Asian churches in North America help Asians to cope with the racial tension? Given the fact that issues of assimilation, racism and the quest for identity occupy Asian North Americans, they have also been struggling to define the role of the Asian church for Asian North Americans. There are psychological as well as social needs for Asian North Americans. In the case of Asian immigrants, coming to North America means uprooting and re-establishing. This journey of resettlement is usually tense and uncertain; thus, as Asian sociologist Fenggang Yang writes, it “[produces] the intensification of the psychic basis of religious commitment.”<sup>20</sup> Such needs push new immigrants to appreciate anew Asian cultural values, and at the same time look for means to affirm those values in the new country.

Another need is to find ways to enter the social, legal, and economic realm of North America. In pluralistic and secular North America, Christianity has lost its dominant status. Yet, most Asian immigrants come to North America with the perception that Christianity is the dominant religion and culture. To survive, Asians need to find ways to enter the North America mainstream. One way is to participate in the principal religious shaper of North America society: Christianity. By attending Christian churches, Asian immigrants achieved a certain level of cultural assimilation in the dominant Euro-American society. First, their participation in Christian churches increases the feeling of belonging. Second, their participation increases their chances of understanding the culture of their host countries. From these perspectives, Asian Christians

“share” to some extent the “language” and “values” of their neighbors.

The fact that many Asians choose to attend Asian churches shows that Asian churches, as opposed to Caucasian churches, meet social needs for Asian North Americans in unique ways. Even though Asian churches are not considered the major agents of acculturation, at least not consciously, their adoption of the English language (in some cases) and North American lifestyle help their members to live harmoniously in North America. Facing a pluralistic, fast-paced, and uncertain society, many Asians find the conservative stream of Christianity particularly attractive. Such a version of Christianity offers its adherents absolute values and certainty. To clasp onto a faith tradition that teaches that Christians alone know the way of eternal truth offers its adherents a secure sense of acceptance and achievement. In addition, the Christian message of hope thus “empowers” many Asians to deal with their pre-migration traumas and post-migration uncertainties in North America. Asian churches are key players in providing psychological ease for Asian Christians. It is in these churches that Asian North Americans are able to see themselves as having accomplished something even as they experienced resistance in the secular world.<sup>21</sup>

The Asian churches become important social agents for Asian assimilation in North America as well as providing the needed psychological release to help them cope with the pressure of everyday life. One of the key concerns is the moral education of their children. For many Asian parents, the individualistic atmosphere of North American society worries them. Asian churches, at least from Asian parents’ perspective, are places which both preserve Asian cultural values and incorporate the religious principles and activities that had shaped the civilization of Western world. That is, ethnic Asian churches both preserve and maintain ethnicity. As Yang argues, “The ethnic congregation contributes to ethnic attachment by increasing social interaction among co-ethnic members and by providing a social space for comfort, fellowship, and a sense of belonging.”<sup>22</sup>

By joining ethnic churches, Asian immigrants achieve “selective assimilation” where certain Asian cultures are preserved, especially virtues such as filial piety.<sup>23</sup> Selective assimilation means taking control over the pace and aspects of assimilations.<sup>24</sup> It gives Asian North Americans power to manage the conduct of their lives. For

example, in terms of family obligations, Asians people already have a strong cultural foundation of honoring parents. They do not need Christianity to teach them this. However, Christianity provides an *explicit religious* reason for observing filial piety – the love of God. From the perspective of conservative Asian Christians, Asian churches provide a religious foundation that is reliable, certain, and authoritative for rejuvenating the Confucian ethics of filial piety. Through Christianity, certain Confucian ideals are being fulfilled and carried on. Many Asians believe that Christianity can provide the absolute religious foundation for the moral principles of Confucianism. That is why most Asians Christians find conservative Christianity attractive. The patriarchal and absolute nature of classical Christian theology speaks selectively to the Confucian minds.

### **Some Reflections for Consideration**

I believe the close match between Confucianism and Fundamentalism and the internal concerns of Asians' struggling to survive explains the fact that the language of supersessionism in classical Christian theology has not alarmed many Asian Christians. Through the works of Western missionaries from the very beginning, Asians understood Christianity as a Western religion that superseded or supplemented Asian religions. For those Asians who have converted to Christianity, it is not that difficult to accept the erroneous church teaching that argues Christianity replaces Judaism. In order for Western missionaries to convince Asians to accept Christianity, Western missionaries condemned Asian religions. In addition, these missionaries taught Asians that all world religions except for Christianity were wrongheaded and not worth practicing. After two hundred years of evangelizing, many Asian Christians have internalized this imperialistic message.

Given the Asian churches around the world continue to display classical/colonial understanding of Christianity which has built upon supersessionism, most Asian Christians fail to realize that their theology regarding Judaism and other religions turns their status from that of being a marginalized people to that of oppressors. Anti-Judaism in Asian Christianity is a serious issue. In the following, I offer some reflections for reconstruction.

First, since Christianity has become a global religion, the challenge to purge anti-Judaism from Christianity is also global.

There is no geographical, cultural, or linguistic boundary. The call to reject anti-Jewish Christian theology is extended to *all* Christians regardless of race and culture. Just because one is not a German, for example, does not exclude one from rethinking Christianity. The *Shoah* occurred in Poland under Nazi occupation. Yet, genocides inspired by religious teachings can occur anywhere. What concerns Asian Christians is the “anti-Jewish virus” which has been “blessed” by centuries of Christian teaching. Millions of new Christians from former communist nations, such as Asia and Africa, will be taught to distrust Jews because Jews are presented as enemies of the gospel.<sup>25</sup> Revising Christian understanding of Judaism “is not simply a matter of justice or correctness. It is essential for the integrity of Christianity itself to have accurate understandings of Judaism because it is impossible to proclaim Christian faith without reference to Judaism.”<sup>26</sup> Asian Christians must reexamine the Christian heritage for today’s multicultural, multi-faith reality.

Second, the popular idea of an “Asian Holocaust” has directed the attention of many Asian Christians *away* from critiquing the complicity Christianity played in that horror. Some Asian Christians considered their primary task to address the genocides occurring exclusively in Asia. While I believe that all genocides are important materials for theological and ethical reflection, as an Asian Christian I cannot ignore the *Shoah* because of the Christian connection to the genocide. I am not turning a blind-eye to the painful suffering of Asian people during that period. Rather, I believe that we must acknowledge a significant difference between the Rape of Nanking, for example, and the *Shoah* – that is, the latter entails two thousand years of Christian supersessionistic doctrine. Christian theology has nothing to do with the horrors of the Rape of Nanking, the Killing Fields of Vietnam and Cambodia, or the bombing of Hiroshima by the United States of America. The uniqueness of the *Shoah*, as far as Christians are concerned, is that it brings problematic Christian theology and teachings to the surface. It forces all Christians, regardless of race and culture, in the First or Third World, to reexamine their Christian belief. Just because Asian Christians in Asia and in North America were not physically involved in the anti-Jewish apologetic of the early church does not mean that Asian Christians have purged anti-Jewish teaching from the their pulpits and classrooms. If faith in Jesus could provide the anti-Jewish seedbed for Auschwitz and Birkenau, there is no reason to

believe that Asian churches are ontologically immune from having the ability to trigger other forms of faith-inspired oppression. What I am calling for on the part of Asian Christians, particularly in North America, is a serious reexamination of the relationship with Judaism.

Third, Asian Christians and theologians must engage themselves in conversation with their Jewish partners and colleagues. The other side of the same coin is to challenge Western Christians and Jewish scholars to involve Asian Christians as their conversational partners. Whether the task is editing volumes or holding conferences, we must see the job as incomplete without the participation of Asian Christians and other ethnic Christians, especially in North America where they are our neighbors. In this age of globalization, the relationship of Jews and Christians is no longer an exclusively Western issue. The effort to address anti-Judaism must extend to other ethnic Christians.

Where Asian Christians are concerned, we need to employ Irving Greenberg's working principle: "No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of the burning children."<sup>27</sup> Such a call summons all Christian leaders, including Asians, to do their Christian reflection with the Jewish people. In a post-*Shoah* and postcolonial era, no theology can be constructed in isolation, but in conversation. Conversation with others "expands one's reflections, provokes absorbing questions, and clarifies values and modes of thought."<sup>28</sup>

Fourth, to further explain the reason for construction of a new Asian Christianity, I suggest that a good reason for Asians and Jews to engage in dialogue is their common experience as victims of classical Christian teachings. Although different in many ways, these two communities have experienced injustice and oppression. Both communities have been regarded in varying degrees as irrelevant by the dominant Western Christian culture. Jews and Judaism, on the one hand, have been condemned by the Christian church as being deprived of God's blessing. They were forced to live on the fringes of society, even close to the point of extinction. For their part, Asian Christians who are religious minorities in Asia (only three percent) and cultural minorities in Diaspora also experienced hardship and discrimination. These two histories, while not exactly comparable, share the theme of "oppression-avoidance." Thus, Asian Christians and Jews share similar interests and concerns. Together as partners in

conversation, Asian liberation theology and Holocaust theology can make groundbreaking insights in religious thought. Asian and Jews have close similarities with respect to education and family values; they also share a strong work ethic and social readiness to contribute to the common good. From this perspective, it is inconceivable that Asian Christians and Jews would not have a desire to dialogue when their respective interests are so highly complementary.

## **Conclusion**

In this paper, I examine the historical and sociological reasons for the absence of Asian Christians in Jewish-Christian dialogue. For historical reasons, I outline the history of colonialism in which Asian Christians learned a version of Christianity which has anti-Judaism at its core. Most Asian Christians fail to see the need to engage in Jewish-Christian dialogue because most think their primary task is to offset Western domination.

In the social realm, I argue Asian Christians are trying hard to avert injustice caused by Western domination. It is legitimate to say for Asian Christians to say that they are victims of colonial Christianity only as long as they recognize their potential to be oppressors. Asian churches must come to the realization that they are capable of carrying out injustice in the same proportion that Western Christianity has done in the past, for example, in terms of sexism, homophobia, traditionalism, racism and prejudice (against other intra-Asian communities). For Asian Christians to live out their faith as if there were no need to dialogue with Jews is to commit exactly the same mistake that classical Christianity made. While themselves being marginalized, Asian Christians can be the cause of injustice and oppression to other minorities. The pressing need for Asian Christians is to untangle the hegemonic relations between Asian cultures and classical Christianity, and to reexamine their Christian traditions in light of scholarship in Jewish-Christian relations.

I am convinced that how Asian Christians read and re-read the Jewish roots of Christianity significantly matters in how Asian Christians function as messengers of God's peace and justice. Living in our pluralistic age, the degree to which Asian Christians are open to other religious traditions as well as their willingness to question assumed faith affirmations are indications of a mature Asian Christianity in the making.

## Notes

- 1 See Michael A. Signer, ed., *Humanity at the Limit: The Impact of the Holocaust Experience on Jews and Christians* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000). Tikva Frymer-Kensky, et al., ed., *Christianity in Jewish Terms* (Boulder: Westview, 2000). John C. Merkle, ed., *Faith Transformed: Christian Encounters with Jews and Judaism* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2003).
- 2 Jonathan Chao, "The Gospel and Culture in Chinese History," in Samuel Ling and Stacey Bieler, eds., *Chinese Intellectuals and the Gospel* (New Jersey: P&R Publishing, 1999), p. 13.
- 3 Willard J. Peterson, "Why did they Become Christians? Yang Ing-jün, Li Chih-tsao, and Hsü kuang-ch'i" in Charles E. Ronan and Bonnie B. C. Oh, eds., *East Meets West: The Jesuit in China, 1582-1773* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1998), pp. 129-147.
- 4 Mary Gertrude Mason, *Western Concepts of China and the Chinese, 1840-1876*, re-issued (New York: Russell & Russell, 1973), pp. 11-12.
- 5 Before the Opium Wars, there were Western missionaries already working in China. The first Protestant Missionary in modern China was Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society. Morrison arrived in Canton in September 1807. See Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Chinese Missions in China* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 211-212.
- 6 Kathleen Lodwick, *Crusaders Against Opium: Protestant Missionaries in China, 1874-1917* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1996), pp. 30-41, 52, 129. Lodwick discusses how Western missionaries reacted to the opium trade in China. The book gives good information on how Western missionaries fought against the opium trade.
- 7 Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Chinese Missions in China* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1929), pp. 211-212.
- 8 The Board of Foreign Missions, *White Unto Harvest in China: A Survey of the Lutheran United Mission – The China Mission of the N.L.C.A., 1890-1934* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1934), p. 2.
- 9 David L. Vikner, "Lessons from the Church in China," in *Currents in Theology and Mission* 17 (1990): 371.
- 10 Committee of Reference and Counsel of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America, *Christian Education in China: A Study made by an Educational Commission Representing The Mission Boards and Societies Conducting Work in China* (New York: Foreign Missions Conference), p. 256.

- 11 Joseph Mitsuo Kitagawa, *The Christian Tradition: Beyond its European Captivity* (Philadelphia: Trinity International, 1992), p. 58. Also see John King Fairbank and Merle Goldman, *China: A New History*, enlarged edition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 223. Distinguished Chinese scholar John King Fairbank points out that China had a full range of vocabulary already in place to describe God, souls, sin, repentance, and salvation; they were largely the established terms from Buddhism. And yet Western missionaries were reluctant to use them lest Christianity lose its distinctiveness. Western missionaries at that time tried hard to make sure that the Christian faith they promoted was distinctively non-Asian in character.
- 12 In another paper I have outlined how early church theologians failed to take the political contexts of the time in their theologizing. See Alan Ka Lun Lai, "A Christian Rereading of the Bible After the *Shoah*: Implications for Understanding Same-Sex Marriages," *Journal of Religion and Culture* (2004): 79-93.
- 13 Fenggang Yang, *Chinese Christians in America: Conversion, Assimilation, and Adhesive Identities* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), p. 114.
- 14 Jung Young Lee, *Marginality: The Key to Multicultural Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), p. 45.
- 15 Fumitaka Matsuoka, *Out of Silence: Emerging Themes in Asian American Churches* (Cleveland: United Church Press, 1995), p. 53.
- 16 Grace Ji-Sun Kim, *The Grace of Sophia: A Korean North American Women's Christology* (Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2002), pp. 73-76.
- 17 Both Confucianism and Judaism manifest cultural and religious dimensions. Yet, the religious dimension in Judaism is much more explicit and stronger than in Confucianism.
- 18 The question "Is Confucianism a religion?" reflects more the interests of Confucian scholars and students than the general public. The general Asian public appreciates Confucianism most as a humanistic culture.
- 19 Liu Shu-Hsien, "Confucian Ideals and the Real World: A Critical Review of Contemporary Neo-Confucian Thought," in Tu Wei-Ming, ed., *Confucian Traditions in East Asian Modernity: Moral Education and Economic Culture in Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 111.
- 20 Yang, p. 30.
- 21 Ibid, p. 94.
- 22 Ibid, p. 33.



- <sup>23</sup> Not everything in Confucianism is desirable for preservation. For example, many Asian Christians accept the missionary teaching that ancestral worship is idolatry. They have no desire to preserve it. Asian people selectively pick and choose certain aspects of Confucianism that do not jeopardize the Christian faith.
- <sup>24</sup> Yang, p. 197.
- <sup>25</sup> Irvin J. Borowsky, "Introduction: Removing Anti-Judaism from the New Testament," in Howard Clark Kee, and Irvin J. Borowsky, eds., *Removing Anti-Judaism from the New Testament* (Philadelphia: American Interfaith Institute/World Alliance, 1998), p. 11.
- <sup>26</sup> *A Sacred Obligation: Rethinking Christian Faith in Relationship to Judaism and the Jewish People*, 2002.
- <sup>27</sup> Douglas K. Huenke, "In the Presence of Burning Children," in Steven L. Jacobs, ed., *Contemporary Christian Religious Responses to the Shoah*. Studies in the Shoah, vol. VI (Lanham: University Press of America, 1993), p. 13.
- <sup>28</sup> Mary C. Boys, "The Interreligious World: A Nun's Experience There," *Review for Religious* (November-December 2001): 566.