

**The Women House Church Leaders of China: Interviews with a Muted Group**

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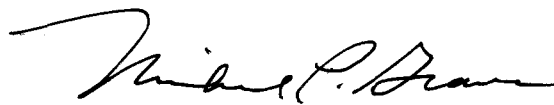
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**Abstract:**

While studying the Bakweri people of Cameroon in the 1960s, Edwin and Shirley Ardener discovered that it was the men who dominated and controlled the power and language of the group and created the societal understanding and the cultural makeup of their tribe's identity. The men did not allow the women to speak or have a say in the elements of their culture; these women were muted. Throughout history many individuals, especially women, have been muted in any number of ways. These include political, economical, social, cultural constrictions, even to the point of death, to keep them from being represented. In the larger society, some have even been muted in the ultimate way—through murder. Today, this is dramatically evident in the way that the Chinese government is attempting to mute the Christian house churches in China and the women who lead them. How we understand and give a voice to this muted group and its women may have a dramatic effect on the way we interact with the next rising world superpower, China.

This thesis investigates the muted voice of the house church in China and focuses on the muted women leaders of the Chinese house churches. I conducted interviews with seven such women in China to determine how these muted women view their voice in Chinese society.

Key words: Muted group, power, language, persecution, culture, China, women, house churches, Christianity.

## **Chapter One: Statement of Problem and Description of Methodology**

### **Background**

In 2004, while studying communication theory, I encountered the Muted Group Theory (MGT), an approach analyzing how women have been somewhat muted in their power and use of language. As I evaluated this theory through research and, eventually preliminary surveys, I found the theory also relevant to a group of individuals I had begun to work with in 2002. Through working with OTAN (Outreach to Asian Nationals), I encountered these individuals who are a part of a group known as the “house churches” or the underground churches in China. It became clear to me that a study of MGT applied to this arguably “muted group” would be apt and probably insightful. Specifically, I wanted to observe if the same style of muting of women in certain cultures, discovered by anthropologists Edwin and Shirley Ardener in the late 1960s, is found among the house church women of China.

I originally researched the Muted Group Theory in the United States by reviewing several books and articles on the subject and then by conducting a survey questionnaire. For this thesis I extended my research to the “house churches” of China. When I speak of the house church, I am referring to those groups of individuals who, because of governmental restrictions, cannot freely voice their beliefs and therefore are muted. They must meet, without government approval, in homes or buildings in secret and under the threat of being discovered and arrested.

In an initial survey I wanted to find out just how pervasive the Muted Group Theory might still be in certain segments of the United States. Structuring a survey that

would honestly reveal peoples' beliefs and feelings was a daunting task. So I constructed fifteen questions contrasting thought between men and women and placed them on a Likert scale of 1-7, one being "strongly disagree" and seven being "strongly agree" (Appendix I). I then gave this survey to two different groups of individuals totaling eighty participants. The first group was composed of sixty students, ages 17-27, from a communication class at a private conservative Christian college on the east coast of the United States. The second group was composed of twenty teachers, ages 23-51, from a small nonsectarian public middle school in a rural county in the Southeastern part of the United States. In the college communication class there were twenty-three males and thirty-seven females. In the middle school there were two males and eighteen females.

The survey revealed that the communications students held to the typical conservative mindset surrounding their environment in many of the questions. They believed that men should dominate the political world and that what a male says is more important to the society. The students also believed that the world is more of a "man's world" yet they revealed that both men and women share in which gender best identifies the culture they live in. The students clearly believed that there was a difference between the languages that men and women speak and that men have a harder time expressing themselves to women, while women do not have as much difficulty in expression. These students were more extreme in their answers and were not often neutral. Finally, the students saw control of marriage as being shared and not dominated by either gender.

The public school teachers seemed to follow a similar ideological pattern on most of the questions, but with weaker responses than the students. The teachers were essentially more neutral and less extreme in their answers to the questions. For instance,

the teachers believed that neither men nor women should dominate the political world which seemed to indicate a more shared responsibility between the genders in governing the United States, while the students believed otherwise. Another strong difference was that the teachers did not see men or women controlling the marriage, which indicated a more shared relationship between the two. Finally, the teachers recognized power in a society does not necessarily lean in the favor of men or women, while the students believed men were far more important than women in what they say in the society.

After I completed the initial survey, I wanted to explore the same topic with the women house church leaders in China. This second phase became the project discussed in this thesis. I organized the core of this research project on the Muted Group Theory around interviews conducted in China with seven individual female leaders of the house churches in China. I interviewed these women, asking them questions similar to the questions employed on the preliminary survey. The Chinese informants were volunteer women picked at random from my Chinese contacts in China, who at times also acted as my interpreters. The informants were from three different provinces within China and came from a variety of backgrounds. I elected not to use a survey format because of the challenges of accurately translating meanings of key words from English to Chinese. I also did not know about how comfortable the informants would be filling out surveys. I discovered that the informants actually wanted to tell me their stories.



### Statement of Problem

MGT has informed communication studies since its late 1960s introduction by Edwin and Shirley Ardener. It has been applied in a number of disciplines. The main tenet of the MGT is that there is one group of individuals who attempts to dominate another group. The controlling group then tries to mute the other individuals of that group in a variety of ways. One such “dominated” group is the house churches of China, particularly, female leaders of the house churches. It is important to note that it is not within the churches that these female leaders are being muted but it is the Chinese government who is attempting to mute them due to their personal relationship and commitment to these churches.

The Communist government has orchestrated an intense campaign at eliminating, or at least quieting, the voices of the house churches in China (Hattaway). They have implemented random intimidation, interrogation procedures and tortures, imprisonment, and even execution in order to mute the voices of house church members and leaders. The government believes that the existence of these voices is tremendously detrimental and a threat to the sovereign leadership of the government (Secret Document). Because women are reported (Aikman) to make up as much as eighty percent of house church members, the government targets these women in order to “mute” the church and to get at what few men there are in the church. Therefore, we find the basic tenets of the Muted Group Theory being exercised upon the house churches and its women.

Feminists quickly applied MGT in the 1970s. They believed that because of the male dominance, women were not being properly represented and were then being muted. Theorists such as Cheris Kramare, Ellen Rees, Carrie Stubbs, Celia Wall, and Pat

Leary-Gannon were among many pioneers with studies on the MGTs effect on women. These will be considered in the literature review. Consequently, feminists argue that women did not feel that their voice was being heard by the men. In contrast, through my interviews, the women in China feel that their voice is being heard among the men in the house churches, as my interviews indicate. The issue is not with the men but with the government that wants to mute the female leaders because of their association with the church.

### **Methodology**

The interviews were conducted following E. Mishler's belief that interviews are significant dialogue, which encompasses a meaningful framework that has a flow of its own. "Interviewing," is "a form of discourse," or dialogue. Mishler's rationale of interviewing is "to understand what respondents mean by what they say in response to our queries and thereby to arrive at a description of respondents' worlds of meaning" (7).

The interviews ranged from approximately one hour to an hour and a half in duration. They were structured around seventeen questions that corresponded as close as possible to the questions I had used in the pilot survey. (Appendix II) My interpreters, in each of the three different cities in China where I conducted interviews, picked out my participants for me at random. I stipulated that the informants must be workers in the house churches of China. I desired to interview as many individuals as possible, given my time and geographic constraints.

I used so many questions because of the nature of the Chinese language. The Chinese do not build meaning through the use of many words but through the life around

those words (high context communication). So, in China, when you ask a question you often times are going to get a very short answer that has significant meaning (Jandt).

### **Preview of Chapters**

In the next four chapters I will be dealing with four key topics. The second chapter will report a literature review of published resources relevant to this study. Its focus will be the foundation from which the MGT was developed. Here I am going to briefly describe some of the issues that the MGT deals with and how they have affected power and language, gender communication, grammatical structure, and cross-cultural communication. The Muted Group Theories roots will help the reader understand where it ties into the muted voices of the house churches of China and its muted female leaders.

Chapter three will deal with context. Here I will look at a brief history of the Christian church in China. This chapter will also review the history and current state of persecution of Chinese Christians and deals specifically with some of the women involved in the house churches in China and how intense and deep the persecution has gone to mute the voices of these women. Paralleled with the atrocities suffered by the house churches in China for over 1300 years is the more gruesome accounts that have come out of this country in the past few years revealing unheard of stories of torture and persecution of both men and women. I will focus on the women in this persecution, because they are the ones who make up a lot of the stories coming out of China.

Chapter four will present the results of the interviews. Here I will deal with the thoughts and beliefs of key female leaders working with the house churches in China. As I sat down with these women, I found that their unique perception of the work they do

reflects a belief and commitment that produces a strength and resilience of unparalleled proportions. Their story (voice) is what they want others, like you the reader, to hear.

Finally, in chapter five, I will review the findings of this study, discuss its implications and limitations, and make suggestions for future research.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

Language and power are commanding tools in the framework of how they are implemented in the identification of a society. Words can be the quintessence of life that gives true meaning to a society, or they can be the power that a group uses to mute the existence or voice of a particular group of people within that society. There have been several studies on the Muted Group Theory that will help to give an understanding of this exercise of muting voices.

Scholars have vigorously described the way language functions for many years. Some have focused on the universals of language, while others have looked at the variation among and within language structure. Only recently, during the twentieth century, has there been a focus on how language affects a society socially. It has been found, more and more, that a language's basic effect on society is power.

When the Muted Group Theory began in the late 1960s, it revealed that the power of language in any given society begins to have problems because the very definition of "power" is somewhat ambiguous. Not only was the definition of "power" problematic, but it poses other difficulties when an individual starts to consider the "conceptualization of language," as Cheri Kramarae, contributing editor of *Language and Power*, points out. First, not all researchers have the same opinion on what language is and how its meanings can fluctuate. There are times when a unified perspective of the term "language" is difficult to assume. Further, Kramarae discovered that sociolinguistics studies of the time paid more attention to language as a resource for speakers and not as an issue of meaning conditional to the context. Thirdly, many of the current

considerations of that day saw language as a form of speech and not as a reflection of writing. Finally, many speakers did see language as a channel from which information moves from one person to another, but language also, “contains, communicates, and perpetuates the ideologies of those in power” (Cheris Kramarae, Muriel Schulz, and William O’Barr 15).

Language structure and language use traditionally have been distinguished from each other. More recently, though, research on gender and language has been developed, making connections between sexism in the structure that speakers make use of, to give meaning to a society’s language. Men are seen as the “gatekeepers of language” because they are the ones who are primarily seen as the high level educators, encyclopedia writers, dictionary editors, and publishers. There has also been a difference in the way some language development has favored men over women. In the book *Language, Gender, and Society* researchers Barrie Thorne, Cheris Kramarae, and Nancy Henly remarked:

Language aids in the defining, deprecating, and excluding of women. For example women tend to be defined by their relation to men (Miss. /Mrs. or Harold’s widow) while men are given autonomous and varied linguistic status...men’s extensive labeling of women as parts of body, fruit, or animals, and as mindless, or like children are labels with no real parallel for men (9).

This seems to indicate that men have looked at women as being less significant, and by doing so, maintained some of their control and hierarchy over them, keeping them muted.

Recently, there has been an increasing study of sex-differentiated linguistic behavior. Researchers have begun to see the impact of language use for women in “a man’s world.” Sally McConnell-Ginet put it this way: “We have only begun to realize that social constraints on speech behavior may restrict women’s and men’s options and that such constraints function in the control of women” (69). Women’s voices are beginning to be heard and those restrictions are being lifted, for some. We will see later how this is not the case for all representations of women elsewhere in the world.

The MGT shows that the cultural significance of women had been muted because much of their language had been stifled. It has also found a masculine bias from other male (and sometimes female) anthropologists and ethnographers who were studying the cultural makeup of a particular people group. In his article “Human Communication in the Critical Theory Tradition,” Robert Seiler concluded, “After reflecting on a large number of studies of culture, Edwin Ardener argues that anthropologists have characterized cultures in terms of the masculine. He noticed that many ethnographers were biased toward the observation of interviews with males in a culture” (8). The Ardeners believed that the language of a culture many times had a male bias structured into it and that creates the significance of the group while at the same time the female’s voice is suppressed, or muted, and not considered imperative. Therefore, this seems to show that women have had a difficulty in expressing themselves effectively with their own language with a male-dominated formulation of language.

This concept of male-dominated language is reinforced by several studies that date back for several centuries. In 1746 John Kirkly formulated his “Eighty-Eight Grammatical Rules.” Rule 21 states that the male gender was more “comprehensive”

than the female. As a result of this rule, our entire process of encoding language and the construction of grammatical rules have revealed that they come from a male preference of language construction and use. Dale Spencer says in her article “But it’s Grammatically Correct”:

[R]ule Number Twenty One is one man’s bias, verified by the bias of other men and imposed upon women. They did not participate in its production, they did not benefit from its use. It was a sexist principle encoded in language by males and which today exerts a considerable influence over thoughts and reality by preserving the categories of male and minus male (7).

This shows how some of the original grammatical constructs of our language went a long way in trying to mute the language expression of women so as to keep them controlled.

This design of writing is seen in many fictional literature publications by several women authors as well. One such author, Cora Sandel, wrote a story in 1932 about the marginalization of women’s voices. Its significance was not really noticed until recently in light of the study of the MGT. The story, developed in *En Gate*, was about a woman (Mrs. Arnold) who came from the sea to stay awhile in the confining and patriarchal society of a small coastal town in Norway. She later returned to the sea inexplicably and without much notice. What this story really represented was much of Ms. Sandal’s personal life, because she had been in her culture “marginalized” and had to live in exile and anonymously in Sweden because of her writings. In an article “The Riddle Solved: Cora Sandel’s ‘En Gate,’” Ellen Rees reveals that, “This woman, Mrs. Arnold, with her



unknown past and most importantly, her unpredictable behavior, is clearly a deviant figure, representing the cultural experience of women traditionally unsanctioned by the dominant patriarchy” (1).

This story characterizes how the MGT places women within the boundaries of a dominant society. It shows the problems of both language and power and how each relates to the way women have often had to speak in their muted environment. The MGT relies on the assumption that power is closely connected to the ability to articulate one’s words. The dominant group can articulate the expression of language freely because it controls the language. In the muted group the individual is forced to use the dominant modes of language in order to communicate its expressions.

The MGT researchers have studied many cultures and observed that several marginalized groups do not have a voice in their cultures, which leads to their being silenced and therefore having little freedom with which to speak for themselves. Because of this silence, these groups often times created their own ways of communicating sometimes called “back-channel’ communication. During the Civil War, for example, slaves were forced to create their own type of language so that their owners did not realize that they were communicating to each other: “The slaves developed an elaborate communication code through which they were able to communicate right in front of their masters’ eyes without them being aware of what meanings were being made” (“Feminist Theories” 3). The slaves constructed this type of language because some owners would not allow their slaves to speak to one another.

As the MGT developed, Cheris Kramarae, found that women, when in private, speak an entirely different language when they do not have the “public ear” listening to

their words. In public she saw that women second-guess what they say, wonder if they get it right, have to speak less, and basically, at times, just have to be quiet. Cari Porter, another MGT theorist, summarized in her paper "Muted Group Theory Critique":

Women are forced to speak an entirely separate language when in the public eye. When they are in private and with other women they speak what they really think without reservations. Women in public second guess what they say in fear that they didn't say it 'just right' and will be scrutinized for their opinions.

The MGT believes that women, along with other sub-groups in our society, are muted because they do not have an effective means with which to express themselves. An example of this would be, until recently, the way our mass media continued to depict women as non-heroes in movies, television, and even cartoons. In the workplace this is apparent because women must fight to shatter the "glass ceiling" in order to climb up the corporate ladder. Language and conversations also favor men because of what is considered to be "appropriate language." Men typically can say whatever they want while in mixed company, while women in that same mixed company must use the man's form of language to communicate within that group. Even laws and "the convention of proper etiquette" (Griffin 490) have kept men in the dominant role.

Women have "come a long way," but it is only recently that where they *are*, is beginning to be totally realized. But it is clear: Women still have a long way to go. As reported by Amey Stone, in her *Business Week* Online article, "You've Got a Long Way to Go Baby:" "Given current rates of change it will be 50 years before women achieve equal pay with men and nearly 100 years before they gain equal representation in

Congress. [While at the same time] Women's incidence of AIDS has increased in 2001 to 9.1 cases reported per 100,000 women. Poverty rates among women increased dramatically from 1995 to 2002." This acknowledges that while women have come a long way in being understood "as women," they have also had increases in heart disease, AIDS, and poverty, which seems to be what gets more attention than the voice of who they are, as women should. Today, the way women are portrayed still continues to spotlight primarily on their suffrages in this world and not on who they are as a unique, separate, and viable group of individuals with a voice

I have shown how language and power are related to the Muted Group Theory and how this language and power can be controlled by the dominant group, men. I have also shown how the sub-group, women, are at times controlled by the dominant group's formulization of language and power. If the "West" is considered a dominant group, how will the West's formulization of this language and power affect "cross-cultural communication"? Will there be "barriers" in communication because of this control?

For example, China may become the next great world economic power affecting cross-cultural communication, which will necessitate our entire world coming to grips with this trend. Susumu Yoshida reported in June of 2002, "At a recent Asian leaders conference held in Tokyo, Singapore's Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew pointed out that China would become an economic 'partner' for Northeast Asia, while being a 'Competitor' to Southeast Asia." But the perceptions of this country are tremendously skewed by many in the world, especially in the West. Much of this misunderstanding is the result of the way in which the West and China communicate, which causes communication barriers that then make understanding difficult.

One of those barriers is in the way each culture evaluates the importance of words within its culture. In the West, there is more importance given to words, making most Western countries *low-context societies*. The foundational approach to cognition and communication in the West focuses on a strong intellectual inclination. The West wants to define things and events, clarify the position, and then choose the “right” alternative. Yoshida puts it this way: “Traditional cognition in the West is reflected in the strong intellectual inclination to try to define things and events, to clarify respective positions, and to choose one of two alternatives” (710).

Eastern thinking, however, according to Yoshida, is very different. The Eastern way of thinking de-emphasizes words and puts more emphasis on life. How a person lives is more important to the Eastern way of thinking than what he or she says. Often times, Easterners just listen and use long pauses of silence during a conversation to give what is said by an individual significant thought; “Hence, at the heart of the Eastern culture, there is a distinct disposition to try and hear things that have no voice” (710). Words, to an Easterner’s thought patterns, lead to the meaning of something, but the meaning is often buried between the lines which a Westerner may not be able to see or understand immediately.

The Western idea of communication, as already discussed, is what is called *low-context communication*. This is where words solely convey through communication. The meaning of thought depends on the words used: “Low-context communication is direct, and the speaker is responsible for constructing a clear message that a listener can decode easily.” (Randy Y. Hirokawa, et al. 243) Easterners, on the other hand, use a *high-context communication* approach. They look for meaning, beyond just the words that are spoken,

but in the indirect verbal mode. When an Easterner uses his or her “high-context communication,” the meaning or intention of dialogue is conveyed through the context (e.g. social roles or situations) and nonverbal channels (Hirokawa 243). High-context communications are indirect, and the receiver takes on the responsibility of understanding the right meaning. This is one reason why the communication between Westerners and Easterners may be perceived in different ways.

Today there is a push for many countries around the world to learn English. This is especially true in China. Many of these countries have come to accept and desire the idea of learning English. For example, China is importing English teachers from all over the world. This country has established companies, educational training programs, and even short-term English speaking camps to accomplish the purpose of exposing and training its people to speak English. But it is becoming clearer that the teaching of English to another culture alone does not eliminate the communication barriers that exist between the two cultures. It appears that if English is going to be taught, teachers are going to need to establish a better conceptualization of the Chinese culture, an understanding that, to some extent, includes what has developed and influenced the Chinese culture.

Serious difficulties have developed within the teaching and implementing of English in certain cultures. Language construction inside a particular country has societal influences, such as customs and uniqueness, which affects the way English is taught and understood in a particular society. The uniqueness and customs of these ancillary cultures can affect how a fastidious culture understands English. The effect of the socioeconomic environment plays a major role in a particular culture and that culture’s people’s ability,

to understand and know the meaning of various English words. For example, if one were to travel to a certain Tibetan villages, he or she would discover that the word “faucet” or “electricity” would not have the same meaning, since there is neither in certain villages, nor would there be any way to illustrate the meanings of these words.

To learn English, students from other cultures often do so at times with tremendous difficulty. They experience complexity in learning English because of its unique and sometimes confusing composition. At times, this causes the individual who is learning English to struggle with his or her own indigenous or social dialect. English does not always translate well into another culture. It also assumes certain freedoms with rhetoric that does not always exist and is quite different within other cultures. Not knowing or understanding another culture’s communication differences can lead to serious misrepresentations, misunderstandings, and even unintentional insults.

The concept of “communicative competence” is a key criterion to understanding and teaching other cultures. This concept was originally developed by Dell Hymes in 1964. He believed that to teach English more competently to someone of another culture, one’s knowledge of the rules of language structure and language use within a culture is extremely significant to truly understanding that culture’s language discourse. Without this knowledge, perception barriers can occur at any level minimizing the impact of the learning experience. Critical to communicative competence is the understanding of sociolinguistics, which is the behavior, related to language that can be seen through social and cultural influences. Also, a culture’s dialects and language structure are important. These dialects are influenced by educational, economic, and historical conditions which play a role in language behavior.

There are differences in intercultural and intracultural communication. To best understand another culture, which is the “social, cognitive, and/or physical factors that are shared by an identified group” (Chesebro and McCrosky 174), there is a distinct process in the determination of meaning within messages between communicators that must be brought to light. Also, a conceptualization of what is said through that culture’s unique attachment to language, through the activities that surround it, gives it further development. These activities are a person’s cultural habits, reactions, face-to-face meeting of flesh and blood, and other personal encounters with language that create meaning.

At first, it may appear there is a total difference between intercultural and intracultural communication amid different cultures, but a further in-depth study has revealed that there are significant and similar “building blocks” that many cultures use in developing their language. Languages are built upon a series of “blocks” that function within and around a culture’s societal life which gives its words particular meaning and distinction. To understand the language development between cultures, researchers must not only look at the construction or mechanics of words, but also the human rapport that exists between humans that give language meaning.

Ludwig Wittgenstein in his book, *Preliminary Studies for the “Philosophical Investigations*, developed a “language game” based on this idea that the importance of understanding a culture’s daily surroundings, so as to better understand its language development. He found that the building blocks of language of other cultures not only reveal the significant differences in language development between cultures, but also the similarities of these building blocks between cultures. This “language game” also seems

to point out that part of the importance of understanding a culture completely is not only found in its surroundings but also in understanding all the voices within that culture that exist and speak constantly on a daily basis, including the muted voices. It is not a game in the common sense method of what we normally think about when we think of the word “game.”

Wittgenstein’s idea of game is something that is more primitive than that, he looks at the way in which children develop their essential language skills to bring about meaning and understanding. Much of language (in the West) is learned by pointing and saying what something is, whether or not we realize what it means or not. Such as telling a child that something is a dog. Now, we as adults know what we mean and what a dog is, but to a child it does not fit into his schema of things. He has to construct certain techniques “games” to learn what a dog is, that oftentimes adults do not even conceptualize. Pointing and learning are not enough to draw meaning from something as, Shawver observes, “[T]he point is that even though the exercises of pointing and naming may be useful in learning a language game, they are not enough to explain the acquisition of meaningful language.” Wittgenstein wants us to recognize that the understanding and speaking of a language is processed more from our activities in life that surround us and form how we live. Language is not just learned through the words we simply “point” and speak about.

It is these “primitive” models of distinguishing language that we start with as children, and as children we then have to build games of understanding around meaning in order to comprehend accurate denotations. These games are constructed out of our social activities, which every culture has. That is why it is important that to properly



understand a culture and the meaning of its language use, you must consider the environment with which it is developed just like a child has to understand the environment in order to make meaning of things.

### Chapter Three: The History of China's Muted Church Voice

Throughout history there have been ongoing attempts to marginalize or quiet, or if these measures have failed, to completely silence a particular people group by permanently eradicating the voices within that culture. Often times, a dominant group would come into a weaker society and take the dominated group's language and culture away. This was done to completely restructure the weaker society's indigenous makeup in order to conform the dominated society into the makeup of the dominant culture. Sometimes, this was attempted through the power group ignoring what the marginalized group of individuals may be trying to communicate to them. Other times, there would need to be more of an aggressive approach, which means that the dominant culture would clamp down on the whole societal makeup of a people group.

This approach is best accomplished when governments from one country move into the land of another country and attempt to take over a people's political, economic, agricultural, and even language structure, in order to create a cultural dominance. These more powerful countries attempt to change a weaker country's indigenous societal construction to the point that it becomes a sort of "slave state." Dominating countries realize that to control (mute) the people, they need to restructure everything that makes a country unique, its economics, political infrastructure, education, religion, even the language, has to be redesigned. The idea is to control a people totally, as Terry Dehay explains,

Economic and political control inevitably leads to cultural dominance and this in turn deepens that control. The maintenance, management,

manipulation, and mobilization of the entire system of education, language use, literature, religion, the media, have always ensured for the oppressor nation power over the transmission of a certain ideology, set of values, outlook, attitudes, feelings, etc, and hence power over the whole area of consciousness... By thus controlling the cultural and psychological domain, the oppressor nation and classes try to ensure the situation of a slave who takes it that to be a slave is the normal human condition.

In the 1930s there arose a force that had an idea of dominance and control and a plan to marginalize a particular group of people. As the Nazi regime took its hold of Europe, the main goal was not just to expand their geographical empire, but also to attempt to bring to extinction an entire group of people, the Jews. They not only wanted to “mute” the voices of the Jewish people--they wanted to eliminate their voices all together.

Adolph Hitler was the man who led this Nazi government and who had within himself a compelling force driving him to “purify” the human race. He saw that any people, other than the Aryan race, were an inferior breed of people. Hitler saw, as his mission, to purify mankind by any means that he felt he could. His most horrific brutality focused upon the Jewish people of Europe. He rounded them up from all over the country and shipped them to concentration camps, many of which were merely slaughter houses for the extermination of the Jewish people. He felt it was his Christian duty to fight the Jewish people, just like what he believed Jesus Christ was doing:

My feeling as a Christian points me to my Lord and Savior as a fighter. It points me to the man who once in loneliness, surrounded by a few

followers, recognized these Jews for what they were and summoned men to fight against them and who, God's truth, was greatest not as a sufferer but as a fighter. In boundless love as a Christian and as a man I read through the passage which tells us how the Lord at last rose in His might and seized the scourge to drive out of the Temple the brood of vipers and adders. How terrific was His fight for the world against the Jewish poison.

(Walker)

Adolph Hitler saw himself as a Christian who felt it was his duty to combat the Jews, just as he felt Christ had done. Hitler believed that when Christ went to the cross he did so as a martyr for truth and justice. Therefore, Hitler felt his campaign against the Jews was a fight for the same truth and justice.

One of the most ignored attempts by a country to silence its individuals today may be coming out of the most populated country in the world, China. Within this country of more than 1.3 billion people, there has been a concentrated effort to either “reeducate” or completely mute the voices of one of the largest societal minority groups in China, the Christians in the house churches of China. There is an estimated eighty to one hundred million Christians in China (Aikman) at this time in which approximately ninety to ninety five percent of them are meeting in “house churches” considered illegal by the Communist Party Government in China. Who are these people and where did they come from?

First of all, the question of just how many Christians are in China is extremely difficult one to answer. The Communist government, since the beginning of the late 1970s, has allowed several large government churches to function under their control.

Some of these churches had been originally established by vigorous missionary activity done decades earlier by foreign missionaries and followed up by the indigenous people of China. Many of these churches are packed on Sunday mornings, at mid-week activities, and other “programmed” interests throughout the week. These times are designed for worship and other teaching occasions, as they are allowed. The government says that there are about fifteen million members involved in its approved churches. But the question has to be asked: Is this the full representation of all the Christians living in China?

The CCC (China Christian Council) is the only Protestant Chinese organization that is allowed to function openly in China. This organization was designed to give China’s Protestant churches some perceived minimal distance from the government organization, the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM), established in the 1950s to approve and control all church activities practiced within China’s borders. The association between the CCC and the TSPM is extremely friendly and would cause one to doubt that there is much autonomy for the churches, because the Three Self ideology is to make sure that all church activities are in line and conform to the official political and social objectives of the Communist Government of China.

The CCC concurs, with the government, that there are approximately fifteen million baptized believers on its church rolls. The CPA (Catholic Patriotic Association) also approved officially by the Communist Government, says that they have some six million baptized Catholics. But China’s Public Security Bureau, the official police force, has doubted these numbers and has privately conveyed that they believe that there are somewhere in the neighborhood of twenty five million Christians in China. But even this

number is questioned by several who work and visit China and its Chinese Christians.

David Aikman, who used to work as the Bureau Chief of Time magazine in China, wrote in his book *Jesus in Beijing*:

Both Chinese within China and visiting outside observers generally believe that the numbers of Christians who attend churches not approved by government-unofficial, so-called 'house churches' - may exceed by a factor of three or four those under the various Chinese government-approved umbrellas (7).

This then puts the number of Christians possibly in China at around 80 million. But the fact remains: nobody really knows how many Christians there truly are. We do know that Christianity has grown at a phenomenal pace since 1979, when China began to relax its religious intolerance, at least on the surface.

According to Aikman, China has had Christian influences that date as far back as two millennia ago. It has been established by some evidence that Christianity officially had its beginnings in China around A.D. 635. In Xian, there lies in the Forest of Steles Museum a nine-foot by three-foot two-ton tablet called the "Nestorian Tablet" that outlines the beginnings of Christianity in China. This tablet tells the story of the theology of the early Christian explorers as well as how they were received by the imperial authorities in Changan, which is now modern day Xian.

Some anecdotal evidence has been passed down through Chinese stories, that one of the magi that visited Christ at his birth was a man by the name Liu Shang from China. He was the chief astrologer at the court of the Han rulers during Christ's birth. He disappeared for two years after discovering a new star that was called the "king star" by

the Chinese astrologers. These Chinese astrologers believed that when this star appeared a king was born. Liu Shang possibly could have gone to Jerusalem at this time, because the Silk Road was being used extensively by individuals for travel and trade. Paul Hattaway remarks in his book *Back to Jerusalem*,

A journey from China to Jerusalem would have taken between one and two years, and it is interesting to note that the gospel account states that King Herod “gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi in Matt. 2:16 (4).

It was also these Nestorians, as these early Christians came to be known, that went up and down the Silk Road introducing this “new religion” into China. This religion was referred to in the Chinese characters as *jing jiao* translated “religion of light” or “luminous religion.” The churches established from these early missionaries enjoyed a fairly strong favor throughout China for about 150 years, surviving through some minimal persecution.

In 845 A.D., catastrophe struck and the persecution of China’s Christians began. The new expansionist faith of Islam was moving and taking over large areas of the world. In 751 A.D., the Chinese armies were defeated in Central Asia, and this ushered in a new era of religion strongly supporting the Islamic faith. In 845 A.D. an imperial decree was sent forth ordering the more than 3000 monks of the “Religion of Light” to stop their religious practices and return to lay life. So began the on again off again persecution and attempted muting of the Christian voice and the churches throughout China for the next several hundred years.

In 1307 Pope Clement V had appointed Giovanni of Monte Corvino to be archbishop of Peking. He, with the help of some clerical support from Rome, had established a strong Catholic community in the port of Quanzhou on the coast of Fujian Province. But the freedom with which the priest had to travel back and forth to Rome, entitled *pax mongolica*, by some was being challenged by the increasing conversion of Mongols to Islam. The Ming Dynasty replaced the Mongols and the anti-foreign Chinese nationalists sought to change the religious direction of China to move towards a belief in Maitreya Buddha, a messianic figure, who was coming to rule China and the world.

As this new direction took hold in China, most Chinese began to believe that the Christians in China were from a foreign religion that totally depended on their support from an alien and conquering dynasty. In 1368 the Ming rebels moved into Peking and by the end of the fourteenth century had all but decimated any semblances of Christianity and anything that resembled foreign influence. It would not be the last time that there would be a virtual disappearance of Christianity in China.

It took some two centuries before Christianity began to develop any new tangible ground. As the Reformation took hold in Europe, there developed the Catholic response to it, the Counter-Reformation. This new move by the Catholics, mostly Jesuits, breathed new life into the desire to evangelize Asia (Aikman 29). By 1582 an extremely brilliant Jesuit named Matteo Ricci began his slow trek from the Portuguese-held cooperative Macau toward a very suspicious Peking. His intent was to reach, if possible, the mind-set of the intelligentsia of China. He would dress according to the Chinese audience. Also, his talent as a clockmaker made him respected by those Chinese that he worked with, and this talent eventually got him an audience with the emperor himself.



As Ricci and his successors worked with the Chinese people, especially those in the emperors' court, they gained a tremendous influence and saw many baptized as Catholics. This allowed the Jesuits to maintain their power, even when the Ming Dynasty fell in 1644 and was replaced by the Manchus replaced if (Aikman 31). Two of Ricci's successors were even given imperial appointments in astrology.

In 1666-67 a Jesuit by the name of Verbiest had established an extremely close relationship with Kangxi (1654-1722), who was later thought by many historians to be one of the most gifted of all Chinese imperial rulers (Aikman 32). As Kangxi and Verbiest's relationship grew, Kangxi tremendously enjoyed asking Verbiest many profound and inquisitive questions. Verbiest tried very hard to convince Kangxi to be baptized a Catholic, but Kangxi very firmly but graciously had to refuse. He realized that he was the theological bastion of the Chinese culture. If he converted to Catholicism, it would throw his whole Chinese imperial culture into an irreparable tale spin. But he may have been closer to Christianity than one may think. His poem "The Cross" points to his deep-felt compassion and respect for Christianity:

*The blessed door was closed a long time for an ancient people  
A mission fulfilled when the blood from the Cross became a stream  
And grace a hundred-fold flowed from the West.  
His body surrounded by soldiers walking the midnight road,  
A disciple turned his back three times before the rooster crowed.  
As five thousand whips broke his arm,  
Six feet tall, he hung there, together with two thieves.  
Tragedy shoot the furthest places and the highest officials.*

*After seven words it was finished and millions of souls cry out.*

*The way to Heaven depends on God's Son (Aikman 10).*

Kangxi died in 1723 and his successor, Emperor Yong Zheng, issued an empirical order in 1724 called the "Edit of Expulsion and Confiscation." This order was sent out throughout China where church buildings were wrecked or turned into military facilities, schools, or assembly halls. During this same time many Catholic missionary priests continued to operate at tremendous risk of their own lives. Many were persecuted and some martyred for their faith. Again, it seemed that the Christianity that was brought during the Ming dynasty was in jeopardy of becoming muted or possibly extinct from the Chinese culture.

On September 4, 1807 a twenty-five-year-old Englishman by the name of Robert Morrison set foot onto the shores of southern China. He had a tremendous zeal for evangelizing the Chinese culture. He was brought there on an American ship and while en route the captain asked him: "And so, Mr. Morrison, do you really expect that you will make an impression on the idolatry of the great Chinese Empire?" "No, sir," said Morrison. "I expect God will" (36).

In Robert Morrison's twenty-seven years in China, he saw only ten Chinese come to know Christ (be baptized). One of the major reasons for the difficulties in reaching the Chinese was that Western missionaries had been associated with the merchant traders from the British East India Company responsible for bringing opium into China to sell, which eventually led to the Opium War of 1831-1839. This act of barbarity upon the Chinese people had a tremendous effect on the perception of the Christian message. Some of the missionaries, because of their zeal to see others come to know Christ, used

opium ships to smuggle their tracts and religious material into China. This had a counter effect on how the Chinese people received what the western missionaries were saying to them.

In 1853 an individual by the name of J. Hudson Taylor (1832-1905) arrived in Shanghai and began a work that to this day has reaped a far greater harvest than any other foreign missionary. He established the China Inland Mission in 1865, which was vastly unlike any other organization that had graced the stage of China missions. The CIM principles were very different: They dressed like the Chinese, ate like them, lived among them, were interdenominational, required no formal education, and allowed single women to become missionaries. Allowing women was a huge step because many missionary organizations up until this time had felt that women's voices on the mission field should be muted somewhat. The significant principle, though, that caused the most contention was that the mission's authority would be in China not in some other foreign country. Even more amazingly and percipiently, Hudson Taylor realized the importance of understanding both language and culture as vital elements in reaching a people.

Many Chinese who continued to believe in the old ways of China fanned the flames of anti-foreignism. The worst case, gripping China in the early 1900s, was the Boxer Rebellion. For fifty-five days in early 1900, hard core rebels laid siege on Peking (now Beijing) inflicting heavy casualties on both Chinese as well as foreign Christians, "In the early months of 1900, thousands of Boxers roamed the countryside. They attacked Christian missions, slaughtering foreign missionaries and Chinese converts. Then they moved toward the cities, attracting more and more followers as they came" (*The Boxer Rebellion: Small Planet*). There were some 230 Western missionaries killed during this

rebellion, many of them living in rural China. Several countries came into China to put down the rebellion and divided up certain parts of it, like the spoils of war.

For the next several decades, there was a fledgling safety for the foreigners in China and the Christian movement that developed which allowed some security for a few missionaries, like Pearl S. Buck and others, to continue the missionary work among the Chinese people. But in 1949, all hope of security came to an abrupt close. Mao Zedong overcame the National Party and declared atop the Tianamen gate that the formation of the People's Republic of China was now China's new name. In the next several months more than ten thousand missionaries were forced to leave China. Some were horribly treated as they had to leave: "A number of them were imprisoned and subjected to brainwashing before being expelled, leading, interestingly, to the writing of some of the most remarkable Christian reflections on Communism produced in the twentieth century" (Aikman 44).

During the beginning of Mao's rule there seemed to be a formulation of the promises that he had made when he took power to bring to the Chinese people the resources that they needed to be the nation they wanted to be. In 1956, he invited the "intelligencers" to come out and share with the public their desire for the best prerequisites that were needed to govern the country. This was called "The Hundred Flowers." Many of these intellectuals came out, lectured, and wrote books on the subject of balanced government. But in 1958 Mao dramatically reversed his direction with the "Great Leap Forward" and used the carrot that he had extended to his intellectual community to then persecute them extensively.

During the time of this Great Leap Forward, Mao completely reversed his economic and political development of China. The very individuals that he had lured to speak out, he now began to pursue. He also wanted to destroy the family unit by splitting up the families and moving them onto large agricultural farms and turned the whole country into an enormous commune. Mao wanted China to become a massive industrial-agricultural nation. He divided up the families to live and work in these communes and provide the food for the almost one billion people that lived in the country. But two years of drought and flooding, which caused immeasurable starvations that killed millions, ended this program.

Next, Mao started the “Cultural Revolution,” which almost destroyed the Chinese civilization and the Christian church as we know it. He formulated a massive group of hundreds of thousands of mostly young teenage men and women to round up anyone to torture, humiliate, imprison, or even kill. This “Red Guard,” as they were called, scoured the Chinese countryside rounding up any one that was affiliated with anything resembling the old life of China:

The revolution almost became a riot. Houses were looted, the elderly abused, and innocent people condemned....Priceless art treasures were destroyed. Churches, even those operating under the authority of the government, and all other religious buildings were closed. The Chinese church went through a winter of desolation (Walls 29-30).

In 1976 Mao Zedong died and his main governmental leaders that helped him lead these governmental abuses were put into jail. During 1976-80, China began to move away from Mao's strong leftist leanings and his continuous changing programs. In 1979 the Chinese

Communist Party began to reinstate some of its previous religious policies in an attempt to show that it was cooperating with its past ideological enemies. This move allowed the governmentally controlled TSPM churches to operate in larger cities and helped the underground house churches through a period of unprecedented vocal freedom, especially in the countryside. Much of this freedom came because the TSPM was not really organized enough to administer the strong control that the Communist government wanted it to have.

The renewed vocal freedom that the house churches were enjoying again did not last long. On March 31, 1982 the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party produced a new document, Document 19, which outlined the new guidelines, or restrictions, those churches were to abide by. Jonathan Chao, in his edited book *The China Mission Handbook*, summarized "Document 19" in this way: "The 'three designates' policy: (1) Christians may worship only in churches designated by the TSPM; (2) only designated pastors are allowed to preach; and (3) they can do so only within their own designed district" (Chao 28). This document returned the house churches to increased persecution. Governmental campaigns were launched to disband these churches and arrest and imprison those preachers who did not conform because they were thought to be "spiritual polluters." One was even considered to be a "counter-revolutionary" if discovered to be Christian and not registered with the governmental churches. Christians were then arrested, interrogated, beaten, and tortured to get them to recant their faith. If they didn't, they were jailed for months or years for "reeducation" or in some cases, executed.

But the president at this time, Deng Xiaoping, saw that this campaign was doing a great deal of harm to the image of China. Some in the world thought that China was going to go back to a new Cultural Revolution and undoing much of the past progress. Therefore, Deng relaxed the order and swung the ever changing political religious pendulum back the other way. The pendulum swung so far back that during the last half of the 1980s many saw China as more of a modernistic culture. Some even felt that the country was gradually becoming reforming.

During this time some key religious leaders began to address the people of China. Billy Graham visited China in April of 1988. He was not only hosted by Bishop Deng, Chairman of the CCC, but he was also received by Premier Li Peng. In March of 1988 a prominent, former Three-Self pastor wrote a widespread letter condemning the “open” churches of China, the TSPM churches. He asserted that these TSPM churches were people, according to their preaching, who had “lost their way long ago.” He even accused many lower level Three-Self pastors of secretly being members of the Communist Party. Deng himself, in November of 1988, seemed to express repentance because of his own support of some of his leftist hard liners’ policy regarding the restrictions of the unregistered churches. Deng also wrote a letter in late 1987 to the RAB, Religious Affairs Bureau, protesting the threat that they had leveled to a prominent house church leader, Samuel Lamb, to close his house churches down. In February of 1989 Deng went further, speaking against the Three Self churches in what they were teaching. In an interview in the United States with the News Network International, he said, “Today the Three Self is probably not good because the church is the Body of Christ. Christ is the head of the church” (Aikman 169). He seemed to be suggesting that it may be time to phase out the

Three Self all together. But when Deng returned to China he immediately recanted much of what he said and gave the impression that his words had not meant what they were perceived to mean.

In May of 1989, all hope of the perceived compromises came to a halt. Students took this “new face” of Deng and the government as reasons to start protesting and demanding more human and religious rights. Students began demonstrating all over China, and set up camp in Tiananmen Square, in the heart of Beijing. At first Deng did not appear to mind and gave the impression that he supported the students somewhat, because he met with them on different occasions. He thought that it was good for students to be able to voice their concerns and express the opinions that they felt they needed to. But when the students started to disrupt the very cultural fabric of China through their demonstrations, then something had to be done. Deng Xiaoping, with the support of the regional commanders of the People’s Liberation Army, began a suppression of the students movement. He declared martial Law, and when it was all over hundreds, maybe even thousands, of civilians and students were killed.

In 1991, because of the government’s concern for this “Christianity fever,” the new secretary-general, Jiang Zemin, called for a “normalcy” to be initiated. He asked for a tighter control to be issued to the five main religions: Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam, and Daoism, so that “democracy” could not creep back into the Chinese life through “peaceful evolution” and the effect of Christianity would not undermine Communist rule. Document 6 was issued in 1991 reinforcing Document 19’s restriction of religious activity and spelling out that any church must be registered with the Three Self or RAB. In 1994 Documents 145 and 144 affirmed that no foreigner



could conduct any religious activity in China without getting permission from the government. This slowed down the rapidly growing Protestant work of foreign pastors and teachers. The TSPM, which is China's official church, is monitored by the atheistic government of China and demands all of its churches to follow these tenets:

- One has no ability to have faith.
- There is no promise of the resurrection.
- There is no hope of salvation.
- A theology of love replaces justification by faith.
- Atheists are in heaven.
- Socialism, China, the Communist Party and the government must be loved/supported above all else.
- Economic goals take priority over religious activities.
- Evangelism outside the official church is prohibited and those under 18 cannot partake in or be "brainwashed" by religious activities/beliefs.
- Preaching outside church and receiving self-proclaimed evangelists into one's home, church of meeting is strictly forbidden.

*(Voice of the Martyrs (6))*

It is no wonder that many of the unregistered house churches in China today do not want to be affiliated with the official governmental church. There is little, if any, fair and balanced representation of their belief structure. What is it about these house churches that seem to bring such an incredible to the government? In David Abeney's book, *China: The Church's Long March*, he uniquely lays out the strengths of the

Chinese house churches and implies that they in no way threaten the governmental system of China. But these tenets do seem to reveal a belief pattern that if a government does not understand these truths and how they are lived out, they could misunderstand their direction:

1. The house churches are indigenous. They have cast off the trappings of the West and have developed their own forms of ministry.
2. The house churches are rooted in family units. They have become part of the Chinese social structure. The believing community is built up of little clusters of Christian families.
3. The house churches are stripped of nonessentials. Much that we associate with Christianity is not found in Chinese house churches today. Thus, they are extremely flexible.
4. The house churches emphasize the lordship of Christ. Because Jesus is the head of his body, the church must place obedience to him above every other loyalty: it cannot accept control by any outside organization. The word of God is obeyed and every attempt to force unscriptural practices on the church is resisted.
5. The house churches have confidence in the sovereignty of God.
6. The house churches love the word of God. They appreciate the value of the Scripture and have sacrificed in order to obtain copies of the Bible. Their knowledge of the Lord has deepened as they have memorized and copied the word of God.

7. The house churches are praying churches. With no human support and surrounded by those seeking to destroy them, Christians were cast on God, and in simple faith expected God to hear their cry. Prayer was not only communion with God but also a way to share in the spiritual conflict.

8. The house churches are caring and sharing churches. A house church is a caring community in which Christians show love for one another and for their fellow countrymen. Such love creates tremendous force for spontaneous evangelism.

9. The house churches depend on lay leadership. Because so many Chinese pastors were put into prison or labor camps, the house churches have had to depend on lay leaders.

10. The house churches have been purified by suffering. The church in China has learned firsthand that suffering is part of God's purpose in building his church. Suffering in the church has worked to purify it.

11. The house churches are zealous in evangelism. No public preaching was allowed. People came to know Christ through the humble service of believers and through intimate contact between friends and family members. The main method of witness in China today is the personal lifestyle and behavior of Christians, accompanied by their proclamation of the gospel, often at great personal risk (David Adeney 20).

As one looks back at the development of the history of Christian work in China, it is not difficult to conclude that there have been extended periods of time when there were repeated attempts to mute the voice of the Christian people of China. Oftentimes, those

who were in the dominant system of power used extreme measures to manipulate, control, and sometimes eliminate those different voices that deemed a threat because they were different. At first, it would seem that extreme persecution of this magnitude that the house churches in China have suffered would dismantle the faith and belief system these individuals live by. But the brutal force of persecution has elevated and strengthened the mindset of those being persecuted. One group used persecution in the attempt to mute the voice of the Christians, but ironically it gave that “muted” voice a deeper, richer, and louder voice.

The brutal force that the Chinese Christians went through caused the church in China to struggle deeply, but it never quite seemed to completely undo what had begun several centuries before by one man was said to have gone to see this “king.” It is oftentimes the smallest events that have the greatest accomplishments for being completed. This was true in 2000, when a group, called the “Back to Jerusalem Movement,” was sending out its first missionaries, thirty-nine, out of China. Within the first few days of sending them out, thirty-six missionaries were arrested. When hearing that thirty-six of the first thirty-nine missionaries were arrested, this is what was reported about the Back to Jerusalem group reported:

Believers from around the nation lifted up holy hands before the Lord and with tears streaming down their checks they thanked the Lord for performing the great miracle of getting three Chinese missionaries out of China! We have learned to be thankful for any advance of the gospel (Hattaway 81).

When you look at the church of China you find a group of individuals that have struggled long and hard for what they believe in. Is this true for its women? When you look at China today, it seems that small beginnings have produced great rewards for its women. Some current literature appears to reflect that women in China are well represented and that the discourse for women is constructed in such a way as to give women a true voice and the rights that they deserve. In a recent interview with the regional program director of East and Southeast Asia's United Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Jean D'Cunha stated:

Chinese women are very active in the public sphere. They make up 45 percent of the workforce, and are also managers and professionals. They are also decently represented in decision making—data shows that 36 percent of government officials are women, and they make up 25 percent of the National People's Congress (CPC). (qtd. in Sivelle 76).

In this same woman's magazine, *Women of China*, November 2005, from which this quote was taken, there were also many articles that dealt with a wide range of women's issues and opportunities. One such article was about the eighth generation of women pilots, known as *taikonaut*, who will be training to go into space. A number of women are preparing to be the first Chinese women in space. Along with the article a report was done on the tremendous difficulties that women face from childbirth in mountainous villages in China and what is being done through a foundation set up to help these rural women. Some women doctors are traveling to remote sections of China to assist women in their pregnancies. Another article was written about a woman who was attempting to bring dignity to her minority people group within China by getting involved

in her province's political foundations as a legislator. There was even a piece written about another woman who was helping women with their personal issues by starting her own "crisis counseling" hotline. All of this would seem to indicate that women in China are being broadly and fairly represented.

Then, there are the voices of those women who have cried out for the lives of their very children. Because of the "one child" policy enacted in China in 1979, many women have had to deal with severe problems and difficulties. In some cases women have been known to be beaten (sometimes to death) by their husbands because they gave birth to a girl and did not give them a baby boy, which is the preferred sex, so as to carry on the family name. Men and women have been known to leave their babies out in the elements to die, when they have given birth to girls. Sometimes parents have even dismembered their own new born girls through some means, because of certain loopholes in the rules that give couples another chance if they have birthed an individual child with a certain category of deformity:

Gruesome accounts of young girls drowned in rivers, suffocated in their sleep or simply abandoned in the fields have become a regular event in the Chinese press. They are part of the crusade against the resurgence of one of China's oldest social vices, female infanticide. Pressed by rigorous birth-control regulations, parents have reportedly mutilated baby girls to take advantage of loopholes allowing a second child if the first is born deformed (Lawrence 129).

With these two extremes battling out the informational discourse, there is one voice that gets lost, or intentionally muted, in this mass media shuffle. It is the voice of the women

who make up almost eighty percent of one of the largest societal segments in China, which are the women who are involved in the leadership of the house churches of China. Many are pastors and evangelists to a congregation of some eighty to one hundred million estimated church members. Several of these women serve some dozen or so churches at one time in order to try and meet the immeasurable growing need of these bulging house churches throughout China.

One might ask, as Aikman did in his book, *Jesus in Beijing*, why is there such a statistical discrepancy between men and women pastors and leaders? One of the main reasons seems to be that the men of China are so driven with the goal to make money. There is a great deal of pride in and among Chinese men along with an enormous measure of demands upon them to make a distinction in their manliness by the quantity of money that they make and the job that they hold. The men in China believe that, "In China men are more interested in making money, more interested in their careers. In China women are more willing to ask questions, more serious about life, more open and vulnerable about their personal thoughts" (98).

Another element arises when one looks at the fact that it is the men of these house churches who are arrested and who are incarcerated for longer periods of time. The reason for this is that it is the men who are thought to be the leaders by the authorities as well as those within the house churches of China. Therefore, the PSB (Public Security Bureau) believes that if they can eliminate these men they can either extinguish or at least control the house churches in China. Men are arrested and habitually harassed, tortured, imprisoned, and sometimes killed. So it has become the women in the house churches of China, who have had to rise up and fill in the gap of church leadership. They have to

continue to be the clear distinction and guiding principles that distinguish the house churches of China from all others and defines who they are.

Interestingly, although it is the women who have filled in this leadership vacuum, they themselves are not always viewed as leaders by the Christian community or even themselves as a whole. I met several underground house church pastors and evangelists and without a doubt the overwhelming majority of them believed in the more “patriarchal” model of church hierarchy. The interviews I conducted with seven key women leaders in the house church movement, which I will discuss later, often revealed that though these women were on the front lines of church work and leadership, they often viewed themselves not so much as leaders but as helpers. They could see themselves as teachers but when I asked if they thought they were leaders they many times said “no.” If I pressed them on this issue a little sometimes they would refer to a male individual as their leader, such as the South China Church does with their jailed leader Pastor Gong. It seems that the underground women pastors and evangelists look at themselves more as teachers and not as leaders.

One such woman, who is known as a principal teacher (leader) in the house church movement in China, is Sister Ding. She works for a church in Wuhan and is thought of as one of the most remarkable women pastors in China. She carries with her a rare form of authority and intelligence that combines itself with solid spiritual wisdom. She would today be considered the “Condoleezza Rice” of the Chinese house church. She has a remarkable narrative talent that complements her analytical mind and self-confidence. She understands world events and politics and is something of a calculated planner of thoughts and actions.



She was born in Xiuling in June 1961. Her father was known as a “cadre” in the village, which is an individual who is a part of a group of military professionals, and therefore not a Christian. Her mother became a believer after she had secretly attended a local house church meeting. Her mother began taking Ding to church on a regular basis and exposed her to Christian teaching. This was not allowed under China's religious requirements because she was less than eighteen years of age. She was brought to faith by an old woman in the church by the age of thirteen and baptized in 1974. So began her deeply committed and consecrated life to Jesus Christ.

In 1974-1975, there was an intense persecution against some of the key house church leaders. One of the key leaders, Zhang Rongliang, was put on trial. The Communist controlled media showed his trial sessions on the classroom TVs to show the disdain the government and its people should have toward these “Christian” individuals. Ding felt every time they showed these trials sessions they were putting her on trial as well. She did not like these school sessions at all. When she got home, she would find some place to go to secretly practice her preaching. Often times her father would catch her preaching and would tear up her notes and materials. If he caught her going out or coming in from late night meetings, he would beat her and drag her around the house by her braids.

The 1970s brought about very difficult times for the house churches of China, especially in Henan Province. Ms. Ding was asked to preach more and more at the church gatherings of her village as well as in other nearby villages. She did not have a Bible of her own, so she would borrow a Bible from some Christian friends and painstakingly hand copy it word for word.

Her reputation as a powerful and dynamic preacher grew more and more. There was strong resistance to her faith by her father in her home, but she felt the call of God to full-time Christian service increasing in her life every day. Finally, she yielded to this burden with a sad heart. She knew that if she were to leave her father would turn on her mother in anger, because she had become the buffer between her mother and father. But her mother very stoically packed a small bag for her and sent her on her way. She never came home to live again.

Ding joined a Christian group called the Fangcheng Christians and witnessed the growth of Christianity throughout Fangcheng county, Henan province, and throughout many parts of China in the 1980s. Often times PSB authorities would invade or surround several of these group meetings to break up and arrest the principle leaders. It had become known to these authorities that Ms. Ding was quickly becoming a powerful and formidable leader. It is these leaders that the authorities wanted to arrest and imprison, because they felt if they could “cut-off” the head of the church by arresting its leaders, they could eliminate its voice. The Christians in Henan province became simple targets for the PSB’s arrest, imprisonment, torture, and sometimes execution.

On October 12, 1989 Ms. Ding was arrested at a railroad station in Henan. The authorities interrogated her 123 times before they finally sentenced her to a labor camp for three years to go through what they called “re-education.” Ding, under every effort to break her, refused to give the PSB any information about her church or contacts, some of whom were Americans or any of the preferred information that they wanted. This is not uncommon for the house church leaders of China. When they are caught, despite the torture, slander, or beatings they must endure, they have an incredible resilience towards

the prescribed pain to break them so as not to give the authorities any details about their church or ministry.

Some of the house churches' curriculum of preparation for their missionaries and workers such as Ding teaches them how to bear up under extreme torture, how to escape from buildings and handcuffs, or simply how to witness to their executioners, even on their way to be executed: "We teach how to witness for the Lord under any circumstances, on trains or buses or even in the back of a police van on the way to execution" (Hattaway 83). Many times they have to go to prison, but yet it is even here that they believed that they are called to do a great service work.

In prison the authorities think that this is where they have finally successfully muted the voices of the house church leaders of China. But it is here that some of the most intense witnessing goes on through the example of their lives, as well as their word. When Ding went to prison after her interrogation, it was here that she believed some of her best spiritual training was accomplished. Many of the church leaders who find themselves in prison are thankful they are there, because prison is where a church leader oftentimes has his or her most captive audiences. Ding proved to be a model prisoner and was awarded many privileges not normally granted to prisoners.

Ding's tremendous gifts and talents have been responsible for some of the most beneficial developments for women throughout China, as well as Christian workers in general. Her vision and leadership have paved the way for many women throughout China to become leaders within the house church movement all through the 1990s. In 2000-2002 she set up a twenty-four hour prayer chain involving some two million Chinese Christian women. David Aikman, who spent some time with Ding, remarked,

“Ding is unquestionably the most gifted and intelligent of all the women leaders in the Chinese house church movement, and I suspect she is smarter than most of the ‘uncles’....Women have simply played too important a role in the continuity of the church of China” (107-108).

The attempt by the governmental authorities to silence these voices appears to have only encouraged the women house church leaders and workers to say more. Just recently, the story of several women, who the authorities have tried to mute, has been able to filter out of China through Chinaaid.org. I will cover just three of these hand written testimonials that were able to be smuggled out of China recently.

The first voice comes from the Testimony of Sister Li Qiongthey. Li Qiongthey was born in 1973 in Chongqing and currently lives in Hubei. She became a full-time Christian worker in 1992. In 1993 she was arrested for just being at a fellow Christian’s house. She was sentenced by the PSB to spend three days of “study” in one of their re-education classes. On August 8<sup>th</sup> 2001 she was arrested in Jingmen while walking down the street with Pastor Gong and another follower in Christ. They were going to a meeting when ten PSB officials of Jingmen approached and started beating the men. They were taken to the Jingmen Detention Center.

This is where one of the central themes of all PSB interrogation began. That theme is to cause as much injury and humiliation as possible in order to get the testimony that the PSB want and to break the spirit and will of the Christian followers. After the PSB officers had gotten Sister Li’s name and address they began to kick and punch her mouth and chest to the point where she lost consciousness. This type of torture lasted for

over half an hour. When she awoke, there was a police doctor that gave her some kind of injection, and the other officers stopped beating her for the moment.

They took Sister Li to Zhong Xiang and on August the eleventh a team of six individuals began to beat Sister Li again telling her, "If you believe in Daoism or Buddhism, we wouldn't beat you, but if you follow Gong Sheng Liang, we will beat you to death." They threatened her by telling her that she was so far away from home that they could throw her into the Hang Jiang River and no one would know. The PSB officers wanted her to admit to being raped and having sex with her teacher Gong. As the interrogation continued, they took the electric club and began to apply it to her chest as another one of the guards thrust his hand into her shirt and began to touch and violently pinch her for more than 10 minutes. They ripped her clothes and started to pull her hair out of her scalp and throw it into her face. If Sister Li went unconscious because of the beatings, the guards would throw water on her to revive her. Finally out of sheer pain and confusion, Sister Li signed something, but she was not sure what it was she signed, and they would not allow her to read what she had signed. In her testimony she wrote in February 2006, she remember it this way:

They rolled up part of the paper and only let me see the place where I needed to sign. Liu Cheng Zhen (the supervisor) made me put my fingerprint on the paper. I've never read the paper. (Li Testimony)

On September 30, 2001 she was sentenced to three years of re-education through labor for disturbing social order. She never was given a trial and not allowed to contact her family or a lawyer. On December 4, 2003 she was released. Since that time, until she wrote this article, her health has never been the same.

Another voice is that of Liu Xianzhi. She was born in 1971 in a city called Tianmen in Hubei Province. She was one of six children, five boys and one girl, and therefore considered “one too many.” She became a follower of Christ in 1989, and then gave herself to full-time Christian service in 1990. She was arrested first in July of 1991 for attending a worship service and again in October of 1991 where she was participating in a Bible study. Her mother was a Christian and together they were repeatedly harassed by their own family. Lui remembers, “My father, an unbeliever, persecuted my mother and me together with my five brothers and sisters-in-law, claiming that we were just idling around doing nothing. They forbade us to believe in Jesus, and drove us out. Later we returned home due to our relatives’ effort. But mother and I still refused to renounce our faith” (Lui Testimony). Life was rough for Lui and her mother, but they remained faithful. Then Lui left to study for three months of extensive Bible training.

She was only at this training school for two weeks when local residents heard that they were there and reported them to the authorities. When they learned that the authorities were coming after them, they ran up into the mountains. They would come down from the mountains when the coast was clear, but the authorities would come again and they would have to run into the mountains once more. This went on for several days so their teacher moved them on up and around the mountain to another place so they could continue their studies. It would seem that this kind of mayhem would dishearten any one, but the truth is that this seemed to bind this group of believers even more. Lui fondly portrayed it this way:

The difficulties didn’t scare us away. Instead, we loved each other deeply with the love in Christ. We cared for each other and looked after each

other. The three months of trainings gave me knowledge of orthodox Christology, and also I clearly understood the pattern of church service (Lui).

But in October of 1990 Lui's destiny turned in the other direction. She was picked up in Jingmen City where she had gone to encourage some brothers and sisters in the house churches because of the persecution that they were going through. When they had just sat down the authorities burst into their house and arrested them. They took them to the police station to interrogate them. At the police station Lui was beaten, kicked, and cursed at. The police wanted to know who she was and why she was in that city. She would not give them an answer. After being slapped several times, she said, "I'm a follower of Jesus Christ."

They continued to kick and slap her around until midnight and into the next morning. After breakfast the interrogations continued about her belief in Jesus, such as whose house did they meet in and what the other believers' names were. Lui kept silent, because she was ready to partake in the sufferings of her Christ. They were escorted on to one of the most repressive prisons, Huyaguan Prison in Jingmen City. There they registered as prisoners. As they signed her in, the PSB officers shouted and slapped Lui across the face several times and then demanded that she kneel down. They kicked her to the ground and slapped her several more times upon which she finally replied, "I am just a follower of Jesus. I have done nothing deserving this treatment." The officer in charge scolded her, "The law doesn't allow you to follow Jesus."

Lui was released a few months later but arrested again on July 21, 1991. This time her interrogation landed her a sentence of re-education through hard labor. As she rode in

the car to the prison where she was to spend her years, she thanked God for allowing her to have this type of opportunity to serve Him. This is another theme that runs throughout many stories of those persecuted. The women count it an honor and a blessing to live for Christ in this fashion:

I felt so honored to share the hardship with the Lord!...On the road, I kept thinking about the hardships the overseas missionaries had encountered while they spread the gospel in China, as well as the history of our church, which was marked with blood and tears. I looked up into the sky. O Lord, as long as your name is upheld in China I could contently spend my days in jail! Tears of gratitude flew down my face. Yan Lu asked if I regretted. I said, "For Jesus, never!" He mocked me, "There are your comrades in jail. Take your time and worship Jesus there! ("Lui Testimony")

One key theme that the interrogators also implement is the issue of sexual intercourse and rape. Many times when women who are Christian workers are captured, the officials of the prisons will tell them that they only want the women to confess that they have had sexual intercourse and/or been raped by certain top level house church leaders. They oftentimes torture them either until they get them to say what they want them to or beat them so unconscious that they do not know what they are saying or signing. The reason for this is two-fold. First it brings into effect a more serious crime, generally rape, which can be more severely punished (death) and is not nearly as difficult to prosecute. Secondly, if leaders can be viewed as sex offenders, it tremendously undermines the validity of the messenger as well as the message itself. In May of 2001



Lui was arrested again and this time it was much worse for her with the sole intent by the interrogators to get her to say that she had had sex with Pastor Gong:

They posed ridiculous questions on me. One of them pointed at me, saying, “How many times have you had sexual intercourses with Gong Shengliang? We’ll give you a lesson if you don’t confess everything!” I was so confused. I was a Christian evangelist. Why were they questioning me about things unrelated to my faith and evangelizing? Didn’t they know what they have accused me of was sinful in God’s eyes? What on earth was going on I had no idea. Therefore I couldn’t answer the way they wanted me to. Then they forced me to stand up, and walk before them. It took all night. All eight of them took turns to harass me and torture me, like there was no end to it (“Lui Testimony”).

My research found several other excessive examples of persecution through humiliation by the Chinese PSB authorities. A similar humiliation attempt was brought onto a young SCC worker named Tong Cuijuan in August of 2001 when she was just barely 18 years of age. She was arrested and interrogated by the police of Zhongxiang City of Hubei Province for two months. At first when they brought her in they treated her very well and even said they would adopt her as one of their daughters, if she would confess about herself and also describe for them the “teacher-student love” relationship she had with Pastor Gong. She did not understand this and asked what this meant. They informed her that they had already gotten confessions from other women who had said that Pastor Gong had raped them and the interrogators wanted her to admit the same. Tong felt she could not set up her teacher and say things that were not accurate about

him. She refused to agree to this lie and misinformation, and this started the entire humiliation process.

These women are not the only ones who have faced these kinds of atrocities. There are times when even the official churches of China are not safe. Recently, “On November 22, 2005, over 40 baton-wielding uniformed men who claimed they were from the Bureau of Education brutally beat 16 Catholic nuns as their government-registered church was bulldozed to the ground” (Haverluck 2005). As these men recklessly devastated the building and shamefully treated the nuns in deplorable ways they were heard to say “Beat them to death! Beat them to death!” All the nuns had to be placed into the local hospital with broken bones, extensive hemorrhaging, or other serious injuries to their bodies.

## Chapter Four: Discussion of Interviews

On December 30, 2005, I interviewed the first three house church workers, Sarah, Wendy, and Grace,<sup>1</sup> in a hotel room in downtown Beijing with another female house church worker (Harmony) who was my interpreter. She was my main contact in Beijing for the underground house churches. I was originally to go to the lobby and meet them at 8:30 A.M. As I waited in the lobby, they did not arrive until almost 9:30. At that time a young lady arrived and instructed me to go to my room and wait there until they knocked on the door. There is a lot of security that goes into meeting with these workers that individuals, such as myself, have no idea of. They must do this in order to protect themselves as well as those they are meeting with.

I went up to my room and waited. In about fifteen minutes, there was a quiet knock at the door and, as I opened it, three young ladies, modestly dress, walked in with smiles and “Ne-hows,” which is hello in Chinese. One was Harmony and the other two were house church workers. The other worker came in about thirty minutes later. We exchanged pleasantries and got down to business rather quickly. I tried to use a recorder, but immediately ran into trouble with it on the first worker. Once I discovered this after the first interview finished I had to resort to notes. The interviews took about an hour to hour and a half to conduct with each woman.

I sat on one bed while they sat on the other bed as I asked them the questions. I posed a series of questions (Appendix III) designed to bring to light the relationship that power and language have between men and women in China. My questions followed very closely those I had used on a survey I had given to the two groups of American men

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<sup>1</sup> These are their English names that they gave in order to guard their true identity.

and women. These women I interviewed were brave and remarkable women who were amazingly confident and very relaxed and definite about who they were and the work that they were doing. As I interviewed each woman individually, all three of these women communicated to me that the women house church workers essentially desire the men to lead in the houses churches of China. They desperately want men to rise up and be the leaders they are called to be. These women did not seek to be pastors, preachers, or evangelists. They want men to fulfill these types of roles because they like to listen to men speak and respect men's leadership.

Because of the ongoing persecution and imprisonment of the men, which then creates a lack of male leaders, and the overall distance men put between Christian faith and their work, there has been a vacuum that the women have had to fill. The three women I interviewed in Beijing remarked "that if men do not rise to serve, women may and will preach and teach so as to see people get saved." But they also voiced that the church cannot survive on this principle alone. It seems that the reason women are in leadership is because they have to fulfill a desperate need for the moment, one Chinese culture does not give them. These women believed that they were not designed to lead; men were, and therefore they are not to try and accomplish or perform this task. They do feel they can and should work alongside men so as to properly build the church. If the men are not there to lead, they step in and "teach" with the goal of one day seeing a man step into this leadership position.

The next set of interviews took place on January 3, 2006. I interviewed two female pastors with a male interpreter in a hotel in Qiqihar, China, a twelve hour train ride north of Beijing. Just like the first interviews in Beijing I had to go to my room and

wait for the workers to show up. Before I could even ask the first set of questions the workers wanted to tell me their story of “salvation to Christ.” It was a very interesting story, which I believe was important so that these women could feel that I had given them a voice and knew who they were. It also seemed that they were trying to build some kind of credibility with me before we got started.

As I asked the first few questions, the women did not understand the questions and thought I was trying to make them look like they had something to hide. My male interpreter did very little to help. In fact he oftentimes would agree with them that my questions were very Western. I could only get through a few of the questions and realized that this was not going to work and was only going to frustrate them and myself. This was a very different response than I received from the women in Beijing but I was able to decipher through their conversations some very useful information.

Liu (the woman who did most of the talking) did communicate that women have had to step up and be pastors and evangelists because the men are more concerned about making money, which all of the women I interviewed agreed with. Some of the women also believed they must sacrifice their families (husband and children) in order to work for the “kingdom family of God.” They believe that the house churches do need more men leaders to work alongside the female workers. The reason for this is that the need for pastors is so great that many individual house church pastors who are asked to serve churches have to turn down these pastoral positions by the dozens. Liu herself is responsible for twelve churches of her own, and she helped to plant over one hundred churches from 1991-1994.

I believe some of the communication barrier was that these women wanted to get their need for pastors and pastoral training made clear to me. This was one factor that kept coming up in the other interviews as well. The need for basic theological training is so great and the resources so scarce, that each of the women interviewed almost begged for individuals to come train them. I came in asking questions that dealt with men and women's communications relationships, they wanted to talk about their need for help in meeting the teaching and pastoral needs of thousands if not millions of individuals. I was asking Western questions to meet Eastern needs. Sometimes the need is so great that they can not see or hear anything else.

On January 10, 2006 I interviewed two women evangelists from the South China Church in Datong China, Shanxi Province. This is an organization of 100,000-200,000 people throughout China whose leader, pastor Gong, is currently serving a twenty year prison term. He had been sentenced to death and this was then commuted to life before his sentence had again been recently reduced to twenty years. Each of these women has been an evangelist for this church for almost fifteen years.

These two women were a small part of a larger group of women evangelists which I and two other men had been teaching. We had been training about 38 to 45 Chinese SCC men and women (mostly women) for three full days in an underground walled in compound. We had to arrive at this compound in the cover of night around 10 P.M. It was a very dirty and somewhat unkempt house with dusty floors and soot, from the coal that was being used, all over the house and grounds. Yet, one could tell that this is a very close interwoven group of mostly women who have a tremendous gift of service. Each one is responsible for a particular gift of service that she/he must perform.

One would stoke our stove at night to keep us warm. Another would come and make our beds at night before we went to bed and in the morning when we would arise. Others would serve us our meals and we even had one to wash our feet.

Also many of these women have been beaten, tortured, and put into jail for their faith and their preaching of the gospel. At the start of each meal, two or three different evangelists would come to serve us our meal and later enlighten us about their story of pain and suffering that they had experienced. Yet it was not a story for sympathy but a story for testimony for the hand of God working among them. It is reported that the South China church is one of the most persecuted churches in China at this time.

The interviews were conducted after the three days of training in the compound had been completed. In a small apartment that we again had to go to in the cover of night, I met with the two women. We had to be quiet and hide our faces as we drove in the car so as not to be seen. Once we had quietly made our way up four flights of stairs and into the apartment, we were able to converse very normally. At this apartment I had two young female interpreters whom I had met in Harbin and who had been appointed to travel with us, helping with our translations. The workers I interviewed were very relaxed and almost excited about giving me the information that I was seeking. They answered each question with thoughtful and confident explanation. Both of these women were evangelists with the SCC. They were accompanied by two or three more workers who just stood and listened quietly.

The first woman, Mary, was a thirty-three-year-old young lady who came from a family of five sisters and whose mother and father were farmers. As I begin to ask her the questions from my survey, her first responsibility that she informed me of was to

introduce herself. So she began to tell me about her life from the time she came to know God. She came to know God in 1992 and entered what she called “pre-Christian” school. This is a training time that the South China Church puts all of its new members through. During this time they are taken throughout several different stages of what they call “truth meetings.” This is a time of first being taught about Jesus Christ and learning about the truths that He gave to each of His followers to follow. They also are instructed about how Christianity came into China through foreign missionaries. The South China Church has a deep respect for foreigners and the missionaries that have come over. Mary also told me about the times she had already been arrested, which were twice, in 1995 and in 1996, for preaching the gospel.

Mary concurred that about eighty percent of the women in the house church movement do function as pastors and evangelists. But many of these same women want men to step up and serve as the leaders. They, the SCC, believe that it is the men who should be in the leadership position. They recognize that, if standing on the same standards of telling the truth, it is better for the man to be in leadership. It enhances the truth to have the man show the believers how to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ.

But in the SCC, they feel that it can be men or women who can preach. It is apparent that they differentiate pastors and evangelists from leaders. Mary made very clear to me that, “In our church there is not much difference between men and women. There is much more balance and equality. This is true in works as well. To preach the gospel, there is not much difference between men and women except in the Holy ceremonies. This is baptism, the Lord’s Supper, weddings, and funerals. These are the things that only men should do.”



When it comes to the language that men and women share, Mary felt it to be equal. There is no difference between the language that men and women use, as long as the language is constructed and evaluated, from what they called, “of the truth.” There is a lot of focus on truth when it comes to language. The women of the SCC church put much more influence on the truth of the words spoken between men and women and how these verbalized words are applied to truth. If a man is not speaking the truth with his words, then his words are not more worthy, to be heard. If a woman’s words are more understood as truth than a man’s words, then she will be heard over that man.

Deborah is a thirty-one-year-old female who was born in the country to farming parents. She said “she received salvation” in 1990 and then gave herself to full time evangelism in 1992. She had to secretly run away from home during that time so her parents would not try to stop her from becoming a Christian. This is a common story of many of the evangelists in the South China Church. She, too, felt that the way men and women communicate is the same as long as it is according to the Bible and the teaching of Mr. Gong.

Mr. Gong, who has been mentioned before, is the principle leader of this group. In fact, many of the statements I heard were characterized as the teachings of Mr. Gong, which shows the women’s amazing commitment and devotion toward Mr. Gong. When they prayed for things they always seemed to mention Mr. Gong and often times through tremendous cries and tears. In 2002 he was picked up in a raid by the PSB and charged with “counterrevolutionary” activities. He was also charged with planning of the murders of certain individuals in another group in China.

Deborah agreed with Mary that it was the men who are to be the true leaders of the house churches. She expressed that the women of China's house churches have a natural respect for men and a tremendous appreciation that the men are stronger than the women and that the women want the men to walk before them. Men are considered to be leaders because of this strength the women believe they naturally have. The women of the SCC believe that they have a weak nature inside. So it is the man who should be the leader to help the women be strong and bring all believers to the knowledge of the will of God. Men should be the ones to teach believers to understand the mission of their lives and to protect the believers from the attacks of the enemy. These women were interviewed had a deep appreciation and esteemed respect for male leadership, but they also understand that they cannot wait for a sufficient number of male leaders to step up and lead. Women, because of the perceived call of God, will reach out to preach, teach, and serve, with the voice that they have inside themselves, the truths other believers need to hear.

Overall these women with the house churches in China distinguished their voice as being equivalent with men's voices. There is common ground these women believe that men and women communicate from as they work together. The interviews did reveal, in a couple of instances, that the women wanted or needed someone to help teach their men how to communicate with them better, indicating that there are areas of communication difficulty. I am not sure though that this communication failure reflects a muted environment for women or simply a weakness in communication styles and understanding between men and women.

Each of these seven women had been jailed or detained, as well as interrogated, by the PSB because of their teaching and preaching. The severity of their incarceration had not been quite as brutal as I have witnessed from others whom I had not interviewed but who through casual conversation exposed horrible encounters of persecution. I have been a part of other informal testimonials that have revealed some heavy sacrifices by the house church workers. Recently, several stories of the persecution have just been able to make their way to the United States. These stories give further clarity that the apparent sheer purpose of the Chinese government is to discredit and mute the Christian voice in China, especially its women.

When comparing the results of my U.S. survey with the results of the China interviews I found that, first, the women in the house churches of China have a more distinct understanding of working alongside of men. They do not see any differences in the way men and women work and communicate together. The Western individuals did verbalize a difference in the way men and women work together. The Chinese women are very careful not to cross any personal or physical boundaries that could jeopardize the work that they are doing, but they feel free to work collectively. Along with this idea, the men and women do not perceive the world as either a man's world or a woman's world. They see the world again as something they share together and work in together. They see their identity as being shared as well as their expression to each other and even their cultural significance as being mutual. However, the men and women in the American surveys seemed to indicate more willingness, and even a desire somewhat, to separate the two genders in the same various ways (i.e. communication, understanding, and perception).

Secondly, the women of the house churches in China do not see arguments as something to win or lose. They were somewhat confused by the question and thought that it was more of a Western idea because they do not think in terms of winning arguments with men or losing arguments with them. This may be better understood in the light of the deep respect that the women in China have towards their men. The women may not like that men work so much at their jobs and focus more on money and status, but they somehow still have a great respect for them, and what they do.

When you look at the women that I interviewed you see a group of individuals who have the kind of tenacity and spirit to have an impact on their country. It is amazing how they do this with as little training as they get. Yet they are dedicated with incredible fortitude and endurance. They view their struggles and persecution not with fear but with a deep sense of love for who they believe in and for the people they serve.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

Why should the rest of world be concerned with the manner in which the Chinese government treats its own citizens especially its women? Is it not the responsibility of China's own indigenous people to take care of themselves, to speak for themselves? People, as well as the governments that govern them, should take care of their own, and who's to say that there is a world ideological system that has the preeminent philosophy and worldview structure that is best ordered to govern all other civilizations that exist upon this earth? It is one thing to think that America, or anyone else for that matter in the world, should consider itself responsible for the kind of treatment that all the governments in the world should be giving to every one of their citizens.

But China is a massive, economically growing country of more than 1.3 billion people, which is one-fifth or twenty percent of the world's population. As it begins to repeal and reform some of its old communistic command guard systems of leadership, it has started to emerge as a key economic world power in global affairs. It is not *if* China is going to become a formidable power. It is what kind of challenger has it already become. Peter Brooks of the Heritage Foundation, when addressing a hearing of the Subcommittee on the Western Hemisphere of the House Committee on International Relations, recognized:

These economic reforms have transformed China into a rising power in world politics. In fact, some would argue that, today, China is no longer a "rising power"--but a "risen power." Chinese leaders believe that if its economic growth continues apace, China will overcome 150 years of

“humiliation” at the hands of foreign powers, returning to its past glory as the “Middle Kingdom” (Brooks 873).

Brooks went on to clearly lay out China’s aggressive twenty-year plan for promoting itself as not just one of the world powers but *the* world power. Its initiative is four fold; the first is called “China’s Grand Strategy.” China sees herself as in as little as seven to ten years to be able to effectively and efficiently challenge the world’s most powerful nations, including the United States, so as to control the whole international economic structure. China already has the second largest economy and defense budget which is beginning to allow it greater flexibility and influence in the Asian world as well as the global market. China is playing a more critical role in many key global issues such as weapons proliferation, human rights, energy, security, relations with North Korea, and Iran. China wants to quietly build up its own political foundations while undermining those of the United States.” “China is looking to ‘quietly’ use its growing economic strength to build new political relationships abroad while exploiting dissatisfaction with the United States wherever possible” (Brooks).

Secondly, the PRC (Peoples Republic of China) wants the rogue state of Taiwan to come back under its leadership and control. To do this China is trying to isolate the island of Taiwan as much as possible. As China secures deals with other countries, it in turn receives assurances that these countries will break or restrict diplomatic relations with Taiwan. It is interesting to note as well that the United States has presently assured Taiwan that it would come to its aid if China were to invade militarily. But if China

continues to enlist positive global relationships, it will become increasingly more difficult for the United States to use its influence if and when China decides to invade Taiwan

Thirdly, China wants desperately to make sure its appetite for natural resources is satisfied. It realizes that keeping her people happy is making sure their standard of living is constantly improved. China does not have enough of its own natural resources to feed its 1.3 billion people; therefore, it is constantly looking for those resources in other countries. One of the key areas that China is focused on is Latin America. Latin America is rich in natural resources like oil, copper, iron, soy beans, and aluminum. Because of these natural resources, when China's President Hu Jinto visited Latin America he promised to invest 100 billion dollars in the next decade to these Latin American countries.

Finally, and most problematically, are the military and security issues that China is currently involved with. China, along with having the world's second largest military budget, is aggressively investing itself militarily into several countries, especially in Latin America. It presently has diplomatic military ties with 146 nations. In 2004 it had military exchange programs with 50 other countries which involved joint military exercises, security sessions with other officers of those countries, seminars on defense and security issues and field trips. Most alarming is the way in which China is using its own intelligence to get the information that it wants: Chinese intelligence services are undoubtedly active in Latin America and the Caribbean, using Chinese front companies, students, visitors, and intelligence officers to steal and exploit technology and

commercial secrets of interest to enhance their military prowess and economic competitiveness.

This information seems to point to a country that has its sights on becoming not just one of the greatest world powers but *the* greatest world power. The question then that has to be asked is, “What kind of worldview system would the societies of the world like guiding this next universal super power?” China is officially an atheist country with about one to two percent being Daoist (Taoist), Buddhist, Muslim, and around three to four percent being Christian. The remaining inhabitants are guided by a mixture of gods and spirits, possibly left over from Confucianism, that have any number of personas governing them. The governmental body is almost entirely atheistic, or believes in nothing at all, and has exemplified the actions of that kind of belief system in how it has attempted to mute those who have just wanted to voice their simple and humble principles of life.

We have heard what this atheistic society feels about the voices of those who follow the teachings of Christianity in China and how they have tried to mute them. If this is the way the governmental leaders of China will treat their citizens about what they desire to believe, what will happen if this unbelieving society takes the stage as a supreme world power? How will China relate to the rest of the world in the next ten to twenty years? How would China relate to the world if it were to “unmute” its Christian voices?

In Jonathan Lewis’ book *World Mission* he records 2000 years of recorded history of what empires and kingdoms went through when they did not pay attention to those just



beyond their borders. In each of the five periods he outlines, great empires were conquered by those that they did not think to worry about and chose to pay little attention to at their borders. China is a country we need to pay attention to, because it is no longer on the other side of the borders of the countries of the world, it is beginning to show up inside those borders. Some in the world seem to be giving China a voice in the affairs of their lives and whether we in the West like it or not China is speaking.

There is also a voice in China that is speaking as well, even though it has suffered for the things that it is trying to say. We find ourselves realizing that the voice of the house church women in China is both fundamental in the development of a sound, indigenous, societal Chinese construct, as well as critical to what kind of worldview system could be influencing this most powerful country. These house church women are already in a key pivotal position, acting as pioneers within their own Chinese culture, to humbly influence and thereby possibly revolutionize the course of this world's events. There are those who have tried to mute the voices of these women but there has at times been a way to hear what is not intended to be heard. We must never forget that without women none of this world would even have a voice to speak with today.

### **Limitations**

One of the key limitations to this study is the difference in language and cultural structure between cultures of the West and the East. Many words were difficult to cross over those cultural barriers that exist between the West and the East. I needed to have a better understanding of word usage and meaning. A whole way of thinking and

communicating has to change as one discovers the meaning of things not in the discourse of words but in the environment and life that surround those words.

Another limitation was the gender of the interpreters. When I used a male interpreter to interview the women, there was not as much freedom of expression or thought. The Chinese male took control of the language and the questions to suit what he thought should be said and communicated. Women interpreters on the other hand, seemed to understand and accept what I was trying to say, or would seek to better comprehend the questions by probing through the questions to get what I meant. The women interpreters did not try to analyze what I said, they merely repeated the questions, while the male interpreter would evaluate what I said and would then tell me if that was an appropriate question.

The interviews were also limited because I only interviewed women house church leaders. Subsequent research should focus on a broader cross section of men and women workers and leaders. This would facilitate insight into how the overall leadership perception between men and women sense about each other role.

Finally, Language was the key barrier that I encountered. It was extremely difficult to make sure that a point was understood, when the researcher does not understand the language. Most of the interpreters helped me immensely and seemed to understand both the intent of most of the questions and what I was developing. There did not seem to be any fear or intimidation exhibited by these women respondents towards my questions. In fact, there was a certain kind of exuberance and anticipation to each of questions that every one of the workers conveyed.

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

This thesis has branched off in an area where there has not been a significant amount of effective research done. There have been limited studies prepared on the house church movement and history in China. Some information, that is just recently finding its way out, deals with the persecution that the Chinese Christians are facing while living inside China. Few studies, if any, have focused on what the women believe, think, and feel about what is going on inside their own country and the work they have to do to meet the needs of the people.

Future research should focus on a greater cross section of interviews between men and women. Attention should also be given to what men believe is important and the differences in power and language, if any, they see between men and women's communication in the house church leadership.

Survey questions should continue to be developed through culturally sensitive channels and mechanisms. Understanding the Chinese language and historical culture would greatly enhance the effectiveness of the interview questions and the interview process.

Finally, as information continues to flow out of China through some of the web sites in America, rhetorical analysis should begin investigating the content and context of the testimonies that are being posted as well as through the interviews that are conducted.

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## Appendices

## **Appendix I**

### **American Survey Questions:**

1. I perceive the world as more a man's world?
2. I perceive the world as more of a woman's world?
3. A man most often wins the argument?
4. A woman most often wins the argument?
5. A man should most often dominate the political world?
6. A woman should most often dominate the political world?
7. A woman most often controls the marriage?
8. A man most often controls the marriage?
9. Is there a difference between the language of men and women?
10. A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man?
11. A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman?
12. The woman most identifies the culture she lives in?
13. The man most identifies the culture he lives in.
14. What women say is more important to a society?
15. What men say is more important to a society?

**Appendices II: Muted Group Theory Survey**

**Private College Students**

**Statistics**

		Gender	Age	I perceive the world as more of a man's world.	I perceive the world as more of woman's world.	A man most often wins an argument	A woman most often wins an argument
N	Valid	60	59	60	60	60	60
	Missing	0	1	0	0	0	0

**Statistics**

		A man should most often dominate the political world	A woman should most often dominate the political world	A woman most often controls the marriage	A man most often controls the marriage	Is there a difference in the language between men and women	A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man
N	Valid	60	60	60	60	60	60
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Statistics**

		A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman	The woman most identifies the culture she lives in	The man most identifies the culture she lives in	What women say is more important to a society	What men say is more important to a society
N	Valid	60	60	60	60	60
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0

**Frequency Table**

**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	23	38.3	38.3	38.3
	2.00	37	61.7	61.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17.00	2	3.3	3.4	3.4
	18.00	32	53.3	54.2	57.6
	19.00	12	20.0	20.3	78.0
	20.00	7	11.7	11.9	89.8
	21.00	2	3.3	3.4	93.2
	23.00	1	1.7	1.7	94.9
	24.00	2	3.3	3.4	98.3
	27.00	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	59	98.3	100.00	
Missing System	1	1.7			
Total	60	100.0			

**I perceive the world as more of a man's world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	2	3.3	3.3	8.3
	3.00	2	3.3	3.3	11.7
	4.00	9	15.0	15.0	26.7
	5.00	26	43.3	43.3	70.0
	6.00	15	25.0	25.0	95.0
	7.00	3	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**I perceive the world as more of a woman's world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	5	8.3	8.3	8.3
	2.00	10	16.7	16.7	25.0
	3.00	28	46.7	46.7	71.7
	4.00	17	28.3	28.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A man most often wins an argument**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	13	21.7	21.7	26.7
	3.00	16	26.7	26.7	53.3
	4.00	16	26.7	26.7	80.0
	5.00	10	16.7	16.7	96.7
	6.00	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most often wins an argument**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	2.00	6	10.0	10.0	11.7
	3.00	10	16.7	16.7	28.3
	4.00	16	26.7	26.7	55.0
	5.00	12	20.0	20.0	75.0
	6.00	14	23.3	23.3	98.3
	7.00	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A man should most often dominate the political world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	2.00	3	5.0	5.0	6.7
	3.00	2	3.3	3.3	10.0
	4.00	9	15.0	15.0	25.0
	5.00	15	25.0	25.0	50.0
	6.00	16	26.7	26.7	76.7
	7.00	14	23.3	23.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A woman should most often dominate the political world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	12	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2.00	16	26.7	26.7	46.7
	3.00	12	20.0	20.0	66.7
	4.00	15	25.0	25.0	91.7
	5.00	4	6.7	6.7	98.3
	6.00	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most often controls the marriage**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	2.00	5	8.3	8.3	10.0
	3.00	8	13.3	13.3	23.3
	4.00	20	33.3	33.3	56.7
	5.00	15	25.0	25.0	81.7
	6.00	9	15.0	15.0	96.7
	7.00	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A man most often controls the marriage**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	2.00	2	3.3	3.3	6.7
	3.00	10	16.7	16.7	23.3
	4.00	21	35.0	35.0	58.3
	5.00	14	23.3	23.3	81.7
	6.00	9	15.3	15.3	96.7
	7.00	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**Is there a difference between the language of men and women?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	4.00	2	3.3	3.3	5.0
	5.00	4	6.7	6.7	11.7
	6.00	18	30.0	30.0	41.7
	7.00	35	58.3	58.3	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2.00	7	11.7	11.7	26.7
	3.00	14	23.3	23.3	50.0
	4.00	7	11.7	11.7	61.7
	5.00	9	15.0	15.0	76.7
	6.00	10	16.7	16.7	93.3
	7.00	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
		Total	60	100.0	100.0

**A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	3.00	3	5.0	5.0	6.7
	4.00	6	10.0	10.0	16.7
	5.00	18	30.0	30.0	46.7
	6.00	19	31.7	31.7	78.3
	7.00	13	21.7	21.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most identifies herself in the culture she lives in**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	1.7	1.7	1.7
	2.00	3	5.0	5.0	6.7
	3.00	7	11.7	11.7	18.3
	4.00	18	30.0	30.0	48.3
	5.00	21	35.0	35.0	83.3
	6.00	9	15.0	15.0	98.3
	7.00	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
		Total	60	100.0	100.0

**A man most identifies himself in the culture he lives in**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	2	3.3	3.3	.3
	3.00	6	10.0	10.0	13.3
	4.00	23	38.3	38.3	51.7
	5.00	17	28.3	28.3	80.0
	6.00	10	16.7	16.7	96.7
	7.00	2	3.3	3.3	100.0
		Total	60	100.0	100.0

**What women say is more important to a society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	7	11.7	11.7	11.7
	2.00	7	11.7	11.7	23.3
	3.00	14	23.3	23.3	46.7
	4.00	23	38.3	38.3	85.0
	5.00	7	11.7	11.7	96.7
	6.00	1	1.7	1.7	98.3
	7.00	1	1.7	1.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

**What men say is more important to a society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	6.7	6.7	6.7
	2.00	1	1.7	1.7	8.3
	3.00	2	3.3	3.3	11.7
	4.00	21	35.0	35.0	46.7
	5.00	17	28.3	28.3	75.0
	6.00	11	18.3	18.3	93.3
	7.00	4	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	



**Descriptive Statistics (students)**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	60	1.00	2.00	1.6167	.49030
Age	59	17.00	27.00	18.9492	1.78522
I perceive the world as more of a man's world	60	1.00	7.00	4.8333	1.35505
I perceive the world as more of a woman's world	60	1.00	4.00	2.9500	.89110
A man most often wins an argument	60	1.00	6.00	3.3833	1.23634
A woman most often wins an argument	60	1.00	7.00	4.3000	1.39369
A man should most often dominate the political world	60	1.00	7.00	5.3000	1.45484
A woman should most often dominate the political world	60	1.00	6.00	2.7667	1.30665
A woman most often controls the marriage	60	1.00	7.00	4.3000	1.30579
A man most often controls the marriage	60	1.00	7.00	4.3000	1.29274
Is there a difference between the language of men and women	60	1.00	7.00	6.3667	1.04097
A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man	60	1.00	7.00	3.7667	1.86281
A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman	60	1.00	7.00	5.4833	1.24181
The woman most identifies with the culture she lives in	60	1.00	7.00	4.4333	1.18417
The man most identifies with the culture he lives in	60	2.00	7.00	4.5500	1.09583
What women say is more important to a society	60	1.00	7.00	3.3833	1.31602
What men say is more important to a society	60	1.00	7.00	4.5833	1.41770
Valid N (list wise)	59				

**Muted Group Theory Survey**

**Rural Public Middle School Teachers**

**Statistics**

		Gender	Age	I perceive the world as more of a man's world.	I perceive the world as more of woman's world.	A man most often wins an argument	A woman most often wins an argument
N	Valid	20	14	20	20	20	20
	Missing	0	6	0	0	0	0

**Statistics**

		A man should most often dominate the political world	A woman should most often dominate the political world	A woman most often controls the marriage	A man most often controls the marriage	Is there a difference in the language between men and women	A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man
N	Valid	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0

**Statistics**

		A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman	The woman most identifies the culture she lives in	The man most identifies the culture she lives in	What women say is more important to a society	What men say is more important to a society
N	Valid	20	20	20	20	20
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0

**Frequency Table**

**Gender**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
	2.00	18	90.0	90.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**Age**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	23.00	1	5.0	7.1	7.1
	26.00	1	5.0	7.1	14.3
	28.00	1	5.0	7.1	21.4
	34.00	1	5.0	7.1	28.6
	36.00	1	5.0	7.1	35.7
	40.00	2	10.0	14.3	50.0
	42.00	1	5.0	7.1	57.1
	43.00	1	5.0	7.1	64.3
	45.00	2	10.0	14.3	78.6
	46.00	1	5.0	7.1	85.7
	50.00	1	5.0	7.1	92.9
	51.00	1	5.0	7.1	100.0
	Total	14	70.0	100.00	
Missing System	6	30.0			
Total	20	100.0			

**I perceive the world as more of a man's world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3.00	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
	4.00	2	10.0	10.0	25.0
	5.00	10	50.0	50.0	75.0
	6.00	4	20.0	20.0	95.0
	7.00	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**I perceive the world as more of a woman's world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	4	20.0	20.0	25.0
	3.00	9	45.0	45.0	70.0
	4.00	5	25.0	25.0	95.0
	5.00	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A man most often wins an argument**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	5	25.0	25.0	30.0
	3.00	2	10.0	10.0	40.0
	4.00	6	30.0	30.0	70.0
	5.00	6	30.0	30.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most often wins an argument**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	3.00	5	25.0	25.0	35.0
	4.00	7	35.0	35.0	70.0
	5.00	1	5.0	5.0	75.0
	6.00	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A man should most often dominate the political world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2.00	3	15.0	15.0	35.0
	3.00	6	30.0	30.0	65.0
	4.00	2	10.0	10.0	75.0
	5.00	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
	6.00	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A woman should most often dominate the political world**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	3	15.0	15.0	15.0
	2.00	2	10.0	10.0	25.0
	3.00	7	35.0	35.0	60.0
	4.00	2	10.0	10.0	70.0
	5.00	2	10.0	10.0	80.0
	6.00	4	20.0	20.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most often controls the marriage**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
	2.00	1	5.0	5.0	15.0
	3.00	2	10.0	10.0	25.0
	4.00	10	50.0	50.0	75.0
	5.00	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
	6.00	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A man most often controls the marriage**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	2.00	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	3.00	2	10.0	10.0	20.0
	4.00	10	50.0	50.0	70.0
	5.00	5	25.0	25.0	95.0
	6.00	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**Is there a difference between the language of men and women?**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	5.00	6	30.0	30.0	30.0
	6.00	4	20.0	20.0	50.0
	7.00	10	50.0	50.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	4	20.0	20.0	20.0
	2.00	6	30.0	30.0	50.0
	3.00	1	5.0	5.0	55.0
	4.00	1	5.0	5.0	60.0
	5.00	6	30.0	30.0	90.0
	6.00	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A man has a hard time expressing herself to a woman**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	4.00	1	5.0	5.0	10.0
	5.00	8	40.0	40.0	50.0
	6.00	7	35.0	35.0	85.0
	7.00	3	15.0	15.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A woman most identifies herself in the culture she lives in**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3.00	2	10.0	10.0	10.0
	4.00	8	40.0	40.0	50.0
	5.00	5	25.0	25.0	75.0
	6.00	5	25.0	25.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

**A man most identifies himself in the culture he lives in**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.00	1	5.0	5.3	5.3
	3.00	4	20.0	21.1	26.3
	4.00	10	50.0	52.6	78.9
	5.00	4	20.0	21.1	100.0
	Total	19	95.0	100.0	
Missing	System	1	5.0		
Total		20	100.0		

**What women say is more important to a society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.9	5.9
	2.00	2	10.0	11.8	17.6
	3.00	6	30.0	35.3	52.9
	4.00	4	20.0	23.5	76.5
	5.00	3	15.0	17.6	94.1
	6.00	1	5.0	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	85.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	15.0		
Total		20	100.0		

**What men say is more important to a society**

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1.00	1	5.0	5.9	5.9
	2.00	2	10.0	11.8	17.6
	3.00	5	25.0	29.4	47.1
	4.00	5	15.0	29.4	76.5
	5.00	3	5.0	17.6	94.1
	6.00	1	85.0	5.9	100.0
	Total	17	15.0	100.0	
Missing	System	3	100.0		
Total		20			

## Descriptive Statistics (teachers)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Gender	20	1.00	2.00	1.9000	.30779
Age	14	23.00	51.00	39.2143	8.73700
I perceive the world as more of a man's world	20	3.00	7.00	4.9000	1.07115
I perceive the world as more of a woman's world	20	1.00	5.00	3.0500	.94451
A man most often wins an argument	20	1.00	5.00	3.5500	1.31689
A woman most often wins an argument	20	1.00	6.00	4.0500	1.43178
A man should most often dominate the political world	20	1.00	7.00	3.2500	1.83174
A woman should most often dominate the political world	20	1.00	6.00	3.5000	1.70139
A woman most often controls the marriage	20	1.00	6.00	3.8500	1.34849
A man most often controls the marriage	20	1.00	6.00	4.0000	1.12390
Is there a difference between the language of men and women	20	5.00	7.00	6.2000	.89443
A woman has a hard time expressing herself to a man	20	1.00	6.00	3.2500	1.83174
A man has a hard time expressing himself to a woman	20	2.00	7.00	5.4500	1.14593
The woman most identifies with the culture she lives in	20	3.00	6.00	4.6500	.988093
The man most identifies with the culture he lives in	19	2.00	5.00	3.8947	.80930
What women say is more important to a society	17	1.00	6.00	3.5294	1.28051
What men say is more important to a society	17	1.00	6.00	3.5882	1.27764
Valid N (list wise)	12				



### Appendix III

#### China Interview Questions:

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
  - a. First name
  - b. Age
  - c. Family background
  - d. Church work
  - e. Position in church (how long)
  - f. Full time job outside of church (if one)
2. Whose language is more dominate in the house churches of China?
3. What is the role of women in the house churches of China?
4. Where do women believe men fit into the role of the church?
5. Do you believe the way men and women communicate in the house churches is different form each other? Why or Why not? If why, how?
6. Do men listen to the voice of women in the house churches of China?
7. What in the history of how women have been viewed in the house churches of China? Or, has the voice of women been listened to?
8. Do women play an important role in defining what the culture of the house church in China is? How?
9. Do women speak differently with other women in the house churches than they do with men in the same house churches? Why?
10. Does the Chinese language (words, meanings of words, and usage of words) favor men
11. Do men dominate (control) the things that are talked about?
12. Are there conflicts (barriers) between the way men and women communicate in the Chinese house church?
13. Who are thought to be leaders of the Chinese house church?
14. What is the definition of a leader by the women in the CHC?
15. Has the persecution of the CHC affected the way men and women communicate between each other? Why?
16. Who do you believe the persecution is designed to affect more, men, women, or both?
17. What would women like to say, if they could say anything to men?

## Appendix IV

### China Interviews: Beijing Hotel December 30, 2005 (Female Interpreter)

#### Wendy: 27 House Church worker

Soft spoken—

Smiles a lot—very relaxed

#17 Final question—I am tired, I do not want to talk about these things. I am annoyed. I do not like this—I say this only to myself. She was speaking of the difficulties that existed between men and women.

#### Sarah: 31

1. Mother, father, two brothers. Working with church 7 years. Small group leader (10)
2. Sisters: Women's language is more dominate
3. Very important—50% sister preachers, few men
4. Women expect brothers to stand up. Women are like Deborah. They wish men would stand up. Men though love money—not God—Women are touched more by the love of God.
5. Yes—Women focus on relationships and feelings—men focus on thinking and decision making.
6. Yes—as long as women speak God's word.
7. Same—Yes. The view of Women in the house churches has been historically viewed as fairly equally.
8. Yes—more preachers are women as well as are believers. Women pay more of a price in, Time sharing, encouraging people, visiting the sick and elderly, and prayers
9. Yes—(how?) Women to women share a lot easier, but with men only share spiritual life things.
10. Women can use language better.
11. Before, it was true that men dominate things said, but now more equal and shared.
12. Yes—Women to men not very easy to open up with. Women are friends with each other. Some sisters are conservative.
13. Men—do the women want them to be? Yes.
14. Do what man speaks, practice the truth.
15. No
16. Both—More harm for women—because they are weak.
17. Know and do God's word. The women do not want to dominate the church.

**Grace: 31**

1. Father and mother, young sister: choir. Small group (4). Husband helper house pastor—church work full time.
3. Men lead communion super once a month. Both men and women do the same church work. Some churches in Northeast china have both men and women do baptism and communion.
4. Leadership—pastor
5. Yes—women think about detail, men think about outline of things. Why? God designed it this way.
6. It depends—some men who love God with all their heart will listen—some men who want to control will not listen.
9. Yes—women are conservative—want to keep space from men—because of rumors—temptation
10. Yes
11. Most of the time
12. Yes—self centered people become barrier.
13. Men—God created men to be leader, women helper
18. Encourage—build him up to do better.

**Qiqihar Hotel: Liu January 3, 2006****(Male Interpreter)**

I stated that I was doing research on womens communications efforts.

Married—1991-1994 planted 100 churches with other sister. Liu is very strong and articulate, very sure of herself. Great passion, drive—extremely forceful and very straight forward.

1997—till now—planted 12 more churches in 100 mile diameter.

1. 4 deacons (2 men and 2 women)—the way that they make decisions is that they get together and pray. They listen to God and then everybody should obey God. If it is from God they should listen but if it is not from God it doesn't matter who it is from men or women. Men and women language is equal language between the two—this is God's way—spiritual—prayer is decisive.

2. Men's heart is more callous and harder—they want to make more money.

This interview was much different form the first one in Beijing. It was conducted with two female evangelists who have planted several churches in the area. One was married (Liu) and had one child. She travels all over the area a works with the churches. She was the most vocal; in fact, she did about 95 percent of the talking.

3. They have not thought of these questions from my perspective. Their background is different and it is not the same thing when looking at this question from my perspective and their perspective.

5. They think that my questions are too western. They think that these questions are implying something like women are going around and playing tricks on men when they talk to each other.

16. One or two weeks ago two of their pastors were arrested. We have to be even more cachous now. When the government comes after the church it wants to suppress the church whether they are men or women.

**Datong China, (Underground Christians apartment) Two South China**

**Church Evangelist. (Two Female Interpreters) 1/10/06—9:45-11:20pm**

X=Informant

T=Tim Wommack, Interviewer

(Tim) Ok what I am doing is a study of women's communication efforts in the house churches of China. This is going to aid in the communication understanding, relationship, and the communication of intercultural communication of Americans and the House Churches of China. It will help us to understand those differences.

(X) - What do you mean by communication?

(T) Ok it is a better way of how Americans are going to talk with the House Church of China. Understand them. Because there is a difference between languages so how do we combine, how do we...combine the understanding of those languages? So what is first Chinese language name?

(X) X

(T) How old are you?

(Xiao) 33 in real age

(T) What is your family background?

(X) I have five sisters.

(T) And what do they do?

(X) Some are business.

(T) Mother and father?

(X) Some are just working for others. Mother and father are farmers.

(T) What kind of farmer?

(X) Rice and vegetables

(T) What province are you from?

(X) Hubei

(T) What is your position in the church and how long have you been involved in it?

(X) I want to introduce myself.

(X) I was introduced to salvation in 1992 and then I entered pre-Christian school in 1994. Then God called her to preach the gospel while was getting these lessons for three months in Hubei province. She was arrested twice in 1995 and 1996. Then she was sent by the church Datong in 1998. She is an evangelist in this church. She is an evangelist from this year until now. She has been the same position

(T) So you are full time now? You have no job outside the church now?

(X) No

2. It is reported that there are 80% women pastors and evangelist in China, is that true?

(X) Yes

(T) Whose voices are more dominate in the house churches in China, men's voices or women's voices?

(X) It depends on what he or she is saying. If he is talking about in Holy Spirit or speaking on the Holy Bible, speaking on the truth, depending on this, it doesn't matter,

women or men. As long as they talk according to the bible, in the Holy Spirit, and in truth then it's right.

(T) So it depends on the Holy Spirit and truth

(X) Yes and this language of rising up Jesus and cross.

3. (X) Depending on the gift of God, the will of God. If God wants me to do this, then I will do this. If He wants me to say that then I will say that.

(T) How do they determine that will of God?

(X) It's depending on the truth of the Holy Bible and also the guide of the Holy Spirit and also the need of the church.

4. (X) In our church no much difference between men and women. They are much more balanced and equal, in the works also. To preach the gospel there is not much difference between men and women. (Now, she has something else to say) The Holy ceremonial. They have special Holy ceremonial in the church, if they have special ceremony like baptism, funerals, or they have need for wedding, then they will not do that kind of work. Only men.

(T) We call those ordinances. What about communion, who gives communion?

(X) Men give communion, (X-Yes) and men do baptism (X-Yes). And men do marriages (X-Yes).

(T) But both men and women preach? (X-Yes)

(T) Why the separation? Why do the men do the ordinances?

(X) Those works are very Holy. So only men are strong who work to do this.

(T) So the ordinances are stronger than preaching and evangelism?

(X) Compared to the brothers sisters should be weak. Compared to the men women are weak.

5. We must have certain distance between brother and sister when we have communication, like a private communication. It is like a communication like this. So that is what the teacher (Gong, was their teacher before he was put into jail) told them to be distance. For self control.

(T) What is that distance, is there a particular measure?

(X) You can't tease each other, making jokes. Also measured distance

(T) Yes, how far is that distance?

(X) You cannot sit on the same piece of material, no matter how big it is.

(T) And the reason for that is self-control? (There was a strong dialogue between the interpreter and house church evangelist about this issue which was very interesting.

(X) They (men and women) cannot pat each other on the leg or back and cannot even hug each other a lot.

(T) Was it ok that I hugged you guys when we said good-by?

(X) There are two reasons you (TIM) can hug her she gives to you. One, you have different background and culture they admire you. Two, you are grandpa.

6. (X) Yes (T-Why) Yesterday evening they showed you that picture. Their church is every interested in this communication. That is why they have communication meetings. So that is why no matter sisters or brothers they have a lot of communication when problems come up. That is why they can solve the problems. It is important for them to listen to each other when they communicate with each other.

7. She is not sure about other Chinese churches, but this church (South China Church) has always been set up like this from the beginning. (T) When was this church set up? (X) 1986

8. (X) There is no such word as culture in the church. So maybe ask the question like, do women play role in the church. (T) I have already asked that question.

10. (T-I had to redefine or explain the question here a little further) In American culture, and American language, men define the words and create the meanings of words. By dictionaries, encyclopedias, and things like that. So it is the language that favors men. So it is when women have to speak, they have to use that type of language, the language that men created? So if I am not mistaken, men created the language of China.

(X) I have never thought about that kind of question. Language is just for communication as long as we can understand each others talking, that's ok.

(T) So men and women talk the same? Women talk with women the same way they would talk with a man? In the house churches. (X) Just in chatting or in some situation in the church? (T) In the church, when the Chinese women are talking amongst themselves do they talk the same with each other as they would with a man?

(X) Are you asking the question about some serious thing or talking about something like, do you want some food or something simple like that? (T) Let's keep it serious.

(X) As long as they keep the thing on the conversation about the church, talking about the work of the church, it is exactly the same between a man and a woman. But in their common life we can be little like a cheating. But she will be more serious and more polite way to men.

11. (X) Since our church is a communication church. As long as the topic, the men talk, is like right question or the right thing, so that all people can accept it. They won't reject it.

12. (X) There must be because one thing come out all people have different kind of point of view on this thing. Sometimes we get to the same point, sometimes we do not get to the same point. That is why we have this discussion, sometimes very strong these discussions. But we still talk on; talk on until we base on this Holy Bible to get to unite as one the solution to the situation.

(T) Is that a problem between men and women or is that a problem with the situation? (X) If is about the work of the church or the problem of the church there will be no difference between men and women.

13. (X) Are you asking that no matter if this man are good or bad or this women is good or bad, difference between men or women? Because if you answer that question she will say "according to how she love God and how good and basic she is on the Holy Bible. (X) They all have the same kind of ability. Standing on the same standards, men is better to be a leader of the church.

14. (X) First-Show a way to all believers, so the believers can follow him in the way of truth and to believe in God. Have the believers follow him according to the truth of the bible. Help the believers follow the truth of God and to serve God. To recognize these people and don't let them get mad, don't let them get mixed up. (T) When you say these people what people? (X) Believers. Also (a leader) must be a "watcher" for the believers.

15. No

16. It is the same between men and women. In their case (SCC) it is their leader Mr. Gong who the authorities keep their eyes on. (T) Why do you think this is true? (X) The government now is thinking about their church. If they (the authorities) can cut off this Mr. Gong and put some pressure on this people they will go away.

17. (X) Stand firm for the Lord.

### **Xue Tongyu—31**

Born in the country from farming parents. Parents were unbelievers—passed away—mother did receive Christ—2 brothers 1 one sister

1990—received Salvation

1991—Salvation was firm

1992—Full time service—left home secretly, parents against her salvation

Served in church—cooking, cleaning

1992—baptized—3 months training evangelist. She is Full time evangelist.

2. Depending on conversation topic, both are balanced in influence of truth in the bible.

3. According to Mr. Gong, role of women is according to the truth found in the bible.

4. Men and women have the same works according to the bible. Preaching the gospel and managing the church.

5. In the Lord it is the same—different in daily life, no topic to talk about. Because too few men in the church and always together with sisters on the field. Men and women believers talk the same because of the need to be feed by the word of God.

6. It depends on the Word of God or truths of the Bible. If a woman says things right them men will listen.

7. Historically in their church yes, not sure outside their church.

9. No—It is all for the working of the church and how to get the believers to live to serve God better and better.

11. Yes—because women think that men are much stronger and want men to walk before them. Women have a natural respect for the man, therefore they let them dominate.

12. No—because we are all talking in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

13. Brother—because he is brother, he should be stronger. In the nature of women they have a weakness living inside them.

14. To bring the believer to know the will of God, and to do the will of God. Be obedient. Teach us (believers) to understand the mission of our life. He has responsibility to protect the believer from the attacks of the enemy. It is more important to be responsible to bring believers to God.

15. No—because is has nothing to do with it. It is the will of the Lord. This is the road of the cross. This is only way to heaven. All Christians are to fellow Christ with their cross.

16. Both—No matter man or women. Whoever has the high positions. These are the persons who are really important in the managing on the church. Satan attacks this person first.

17. Be strong and stand firm on the truth. So we can go to heaven, and welcome the kingdom of God coming earlier together.