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Cui Wantian / Yahya Wijaya / Christoph Stückelberger

Christian Faith and Values

An Introduction for Entrepreneurs in China



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Globethics.net China Christian Series

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CONTENTS

Introduction	7
1 Creed of Christian Entrepreneurs	9
<i>Creed of Chinese Entrepreneurso, The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles' Creed</i>	
2 Jesus Christ	13
<i>Jesus is Truly Human, Jesus is Truly Divine</i>	
3 The Bible	17
<i>The Bible as the Word of God, The Old Testament, The New Testament, The Bible and Business</i>	
4 Basic Doctrines	25
<i>The Trinity, Sin, The Gospe, God's kingdom and Eternal Life, Christian Doctrines and the Business Context</i>	
5 The Church	33
<i>What the Bible says, Basic Elements of the Church, Church Diversity, Membership and Discipline, Church Mission, The Church and Business</i>	
6 Christian Spirituality	41
<i>The Nature of Christian Spirituality, Christian Worship, Preaching, Sacraments, Prayer, Bible Study, Meditation, Retreat, Ethical Life, Business</i>	
7 History of Christianity	49
<i>The Early Church, The Medieval Era, The Reformation, Christianity in Asia, Christianity in China</i>	
8 Christian Denominations	61
<i>Main Denominations, Evangelical and the Charismatic Movements, The Eumenical Movement, Christian Denominations in China</i>	
9 Christian Business	67
10 Twelve Missions / Criteria	73

INTRODUCTION

Faith is the mainsail for the ship called “China Dream”.

With the debates on whether China's economy may develop sustainably or whether China may rise peacefully, the future of China draws attention and concern from the whole world.

The destruction of the environment, the degeneration of morality, and the explosion of social problems all lead people to the non-economic fields and help people realize that China, the growing giant, without the support of ethics and morality, will collapse sooner or later.

History proves that the sustainable development of a country or a nation always needs a special class who are not just developing the economy, but also holding fast to ethics and morality. And the emerging group of Chinese Christian entrepreneurs are an essential part of this class for China. A key to the fulfilment of the “China Dream” is the revival of Chinese civilization. The core of civilization is culture, and the core of culture is faith.

Historians expect the emergence of Chinese Puritans. Pastors predict they will extend the “China Marvel” to a “China Miracle”. Protestant faith can contribute to individuals and to Chinese society as a whole.

It remains to see whether the controversial theory of Max Weber on religious ethics impacting economic performance will be proved right in China or not. Let us hope and work that Chinese Christian entrepreneurs may apply the everlasting biblical principles in their business practice to pass the “positive energy” to the world as “salt and light” for a harmonious and sustainable transformation of society.

Against that background, this book aims to provide help to Chinese Christian entrepreneurs in understanding the fundamentals of Christian

faith and its related business ethics. We have tried to make this book practical, from the entrepreneurs' point of view. We have sketched out the main content of Christianity in simple words, as an introduction to Christian faith.

The book is a fruit of the Values-driven Enterprise Certificate (VEC), a joint programme of the Kingdom College, Beijing/ Hong Kong and the Globethics.net Foundation, Geneva/Switzerland with its Globethics Leadership Centre (GLC). This new centre includes training of trainers and auditors and especially supports small and medium enterprises in their values and standards. The book can also be used by Bible groups, students, or anyone who looks for a short overview of the basics of Christian faith.

This book is written in reliance on the LORD Jesus Christ and based on the criteria and values of the Bible. May the Holy Spirit be with us and lead us! May God have mercy on us, forgive us and bless us! Glory to the LORD Jesus Christ!

Prof. Dr. Cui Wantian, Shenyang/China

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1 April 2014

CREED OF CHRISTIAN ENTREPRENEURS

- *A creed (Latin: credo) is the summary, orientation and confession of faith. Credo means “I believe”.*
- *Creeds of Christian faith exist since the first century. The classical creeds were adopted by Church councils in the 4th and 5th centuries. They are still the foundation for all Christians worldwide.*
- *Special creeds build the basis of the different church denominations to express their inner unity and differentiation from others.*
- *Special creeds for groups such as business people or other professionals or special situations such as war or disasters unite these special communities.*

Creed of Christian entrepreneurs in China



This creed was formulated in 2013 by Christian entrepreneurs in China.

1. We believe in the triune God: God (Father) as creator, God (Son) as liberator and God (Holy Spirit) as sustainer. God cares for us and the whole world.
2. We declare that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only one we believe in, depend on and love.
3. We trust in the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, the counsellor sent

by the Lord Jesus Christ.

4. We believe that the Bible is God's Holy Word. We believe in constant prayer and love for one another among all the believers.
5. We are thankful to be called and elected by the Lord Jesus Christ to serve the kingdom of God as the community of love. We believe that we are justified by faith and our sins are forgiven by confession and repentance. We believe that we witness by living out the Word, and we shall receive the blessing of eternal life.
6. We believe that we are stewards of enterprises and resources entrusted to us by God; we are not the owners. We are convinced that we are to manage and administer the enterprises in a godly way.
7. We believe that the enterprises and resources entrusted to us by God, and those that will be entrusted to us, are our calling, which we will obediently follow all through our lives. We will not abuse God's name or God's power.
8. God's glory and praise, the Halleluiah, is our destiny. Our mission in life is to be good stewards and shepherds for Jesus Christ, to make our products and services witnesses for God, to build His enterprises into fields of ministry, to let work be service and life be worship, and to witness to God's grace and salvation in the enterprise operations.
9. We believe that all people are equal, each one has different gifts, and all believers are in one family. We believe that all human beings have great dignity and value from God, and we have the power and authority entrusted by God to achieve freedom and happiness not only for ourselves, but also for others and especially for needy people.
10. Emmanuel – God be with us: This is our goal. We know that only by operating the enterprises according to the will of the all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving Lord Jesus Christ, we can walk through the trails of the wilderness, cross the valley of death, and serve God's kingdom through business.

11. God builds communities. Christians can live their faith only in community and union with other Christians. They encourage, correct, orientate and support each other. This is the foundation and reason for building church communities and belonging to the worldwide church as the body of Christ.
12. The Lord Jesus Christ is love. We believe that love is the only way in our business, our living, and our lives. Love enables us to enjoy cooperation, peace, and harmony.

The Lord's Prayer

The "Our Father" is the common prayer of all Christians as reported in the New Testament (Matthew 6:9-13; shorter in Luke 11:2-4).

(Modern version from the English Language Liturgical Consultation)

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
 your will be done,
 on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
 now and for ever. Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

The basic creed of Reformed churches, accepted by all churches as the most familiar creed, is the Apostles' Creed. It has received this title because of its great antiquity; it dates from very early times in the Church, a half century only from the last writings of the New Testament.
(Modern version from the English Language Liturgical Consultation)

I believe in *God, the Father almighty*,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in *Jesus Christ, God's only Son*, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in *the Holy Spirit*,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Questions for reflection and discussion

- Which parts of the creed do you believe and where do you have difficulties to understand or to believe?
- “My faith”: Formulate in few phrases the core of your faith.

JESUS CHRIST

- *Christians believe in the uniqueness of Jesus, that he is truly human and, at the same time, truly divine.*
- *As a human being, Jesus provides a model of a natural human being as intended by God.*
- *As the revelation of God, Jesus' life, suffering, and death show the hard way that God has chosen to bring precious salvation and peace to the world.*



The most important factor that unites Christians of various denominations and streams is the common confession that *Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour*. It is certainly not easy for the modern mind to accept such a confession.

In fact, even for Jesus' first disciples it was not easy to come to that confession. Only after a long process of wondering and reflection, they realized that the man they had followed and listened to is the revelation of God. Despite the first followers' testimonies in the New Testament, the controversy over Jesus continued within the early church and led to the formulation of the church's doctrine of Jesus, known as Christology. One of the most crucial issues is the relation between the divinity and the humanity of Jesus. Respond-

ing to that controversy, the church affirmed that Jesus is both truly human and truly divine.

Jesus is truly human

The Christian confession that Jesus is Lord and Saviour does not deny the common opinion that he is a truly human being. In his lifetime, his disciples first followed him as a compelling teacher or a potential community leader. His neighbours recognized him as a son of Joseph and Mary. The public identified him as just a man from Nazareth. At best he was acknowledged as a great prophet (Mark 8:28). Even the miraculous events associated with him, including his virgin birth, and the miraculous deeds that characterized his mission work do not negate his humanity.

The Bible also describes the human characteristics of Jesus' performance, experience, and limitation. He was born in a worker's family (his father was carpenter) with a particular ethnicity and language; his mobility was limited to particular geographical and cultural settings; he followed, albeit critically, the religious tradition of his people; he participated in spiritual movements of his community, including allowing himself to be baptized; and he responded to the social, cultural and political challenges of his times. Moreover, he was also noted to have normal human feelings and reactions. He cried when sad, was thankful for good things, prayed in times of uncertainty, and could be angry when disappointed by wrongdoing. As a normal human being, he knew hunger and thirst, grief and fear, as well as suffering and death.

He was not a monk who concentrates on prayer separated from the world. He was a leader and a "businessman" in the midst of the world, with a vision of how to deal in a fair way with money, employees, tax authorities, daily material sorrows and planning, Sunday work, work-life-balance, and reconciling religious rules with a human economy.

However, as a human being Jesus demonstrates a shocking character, reflected in his teaching and deeds. The audiences of his sermons were amazed “for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes” (Matt. 7:28). Witnessing his authority over windstorm and waves, his astounded disciples said one another: “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (Mark 4:41). Similarly, when seeing how he healed a demoniac, people said: “Never has anything like this been seen in Israel” (Matt. 9:32). His friendly attitude to sinners and the ostracized was also uncommon in such a respectable teacher, so that other religious leaders cynically commented, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them” (Luke 15:2). However, these religious leaders failed to find a theological basis to judge him for his teaching and deeds, as the Gospel of Matthew notes: “No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day anyone dare to ask him any more questions” (Matt. 22:46). Contrary to the common tendency to materialism, Jesus showed a genuine solidarity with the poor; and refused to meet the ambition of the young rich man, saying that “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a someone who are rich to enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 19:23). Finally, far from cursing those who betrayed him and made him suffer on the cross, he asked for his Father’s forgiveness for them (Matt. 23:34).

The early church believed that the particular human character reflected in the life of Jesus depicts genuine humanity as God has created it. For that reason, Jesus is referred to as “the last Adam” (1 Cor. 15:45) and presented as the concrete *model for transforming the character of Christians* (Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:9-10). The role of Jesus’ humanity in Christian morality, therefore, is equal to that of the Torah, the Law, in the Jewish moral tradition. That is why the Apostle Paul insists that Christians are no longer bound to the Torah (Gal. 5:4; Eph. 2:15), but only to Jesus Christ.

Jesus is truly divine

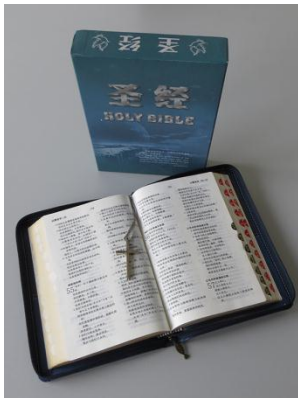
The realization that the human Jesus is God's revelation resulted from a faithful reflection of the believers. It was based on *Jesus' own statements* about his relation to his Father and the Spirit accompanying him (John 14:11, 26) and the personal experience of the disciples witnessing the manifestation of that statement in Jesus' life, death and resurrection. The church then affirmed that in the humanity of Jesus, God participated in the fate of humankind and shared the sinners' suffering and death in order to save them in a familial way, as a father invests and gives his whole own life to save his beloved children and give them access to the fullness of life. The Christian belief in the divinity of Jesus entails a transformed understanding on the will and character of God. The Christian God is neither an almighty God nor untouchable far in heaven. The Christian God is a *God of proximity*, on earth in the midst of his creation, with compassion, caring and love. God knows exactly what it means to be human, with human vulnerability and finitude. As demonstrated in the life and character of Jesus, God's power is exercised to help those in need rather than to demonstrate God's own superiority. The divinity of Jesus also means that the salvation offered to the world is so precious as to involve God's own struggle, suffering, even death. It is not easy for God as it is not for humans. As the Bible says, Jesus is Emmanuel: the God who is with us (Matt. 1:23).

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How can the shocking character of Jesus be a model in a character-building programme of business professionals?
2. How can the idea of the suffering God inspire business leadership?
3. What is the meaning of "God is with us" in the business setting?
4. How can the proximity, caring and compassionate character of the triune God be expressed in daily business?

THE BIBLE

- *The Bible is the foundation of Christian faith and life*
- *The Bible is both divine and human. It delivers the word and action of God through human experiences. It reveals the love of God in various literary forms and cultural symbols.*
- *The Old Testament reflects the experiences of the people of Israel with the liberating God who calls them to live in freedom in a just and holy life.*
- *The centre of the New Testament message is the good news of God's sacrificial love revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.*



The Bible is central to Christian faith. The Bible is not only the foundation of Christian confessions but also a main source of Christian ethical standards and a basic reference for Christian worship, pastoral services as well as mission works of the church.

The Bible is divided into two main collections: the Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT). The OT consists of 39

books, the NT of 27. The original manuscripts of the OT are written in ancient Hebrew, while those of the NT are in ancient Greek. The biblical messages are expressed in various literary forms including historical

stories, illustrative stories, myths and legends, laws and rules, advice, songs, preaching, proverbs, poetry, letters and parables. To understand the meaning of a biblical verse accurately, one should be aware of its literary form. To treat a song lyric as a rule, for instance, can be misleading. Likewise, a parable should not be treated as a historical report.

The Bible as the Word of God

Christians believe that the Bible is the Word of God, not in the sense that it is directly spoken from God's mouth, but rather through the testimonies of faithful individuals and communities who know the presence of God in their life histories. Christian faith therefore recognizes the Bible as both divine and human. The divine nature of the Bible refers to the belief that God called and inspired those giving the testimonies that make up the biblical accounts, so that they reveal the character, will and works of God. The belief in God's calling and inspiration is a result of careful examination and deep reflection on those testimonies by the related communities. The human nature of the Bible refers to the human roles in producing the biblical accounts and their relations to particular situations and cultural conditions. Such awareness of the particularities is important for understanding the differences and varieties of the biblical contents. Given this dual nature, the Bible can best be approached in faith and by study. Many people find simple readings of the Bible have helped them answer fundamental spiritual questions and strengthen them in overcoming life challenges. Others search for more detailed meanings of the Bible through scholarly interpretations and historical studies of the social, political, economic, religious and cultural context in which God revealed His truth. This is to ensure its relevance for today's contexts. These two ways of approaching the Bible are complementary rather than contradictory.

The Old Testament

The OT reflects the spiritual experience of the people of Israel in different political and cultural situations. With the history of the people of Israel as the setting, the OT introduces God as the creator and master of the whole universe but also the leader and deliverer of the people. The OT depicts God as the almighty and the most powerful, but also as a good shepherd and a forgiving lover. God blesses the righteous with richness and power, yet God also advocates for the poor and the weak. The OT is a rich spiritual resource. It offers various theological themes implying certain ethical positions especially on justice, law, community, family and economy.

The story of the exodus, which is the act of God who sets the people of Israel free from slavery in the land of Egypt, is central to the OT message. The exodus story teaches not only about the liberating character of God, but also that slavery and oppressive power are not to be tolerated. Moreover, the OT also demonstrates that the liberated people are called to obey God's commandments in order for them to keep living in freedom and not to return to a condition of enslavement. Freedom to love God and others is the heart of OT law and order.

The OT reflections of the Israel history acknowledge that the people often fail to maintain the freedom that God has granted. There were occasions where they allowed injustice and hypocrisy to dominate their society. However, God never accepted such a situation. God through the prophets always urged the people to be consistent with their calling to be the people of the liberating and loving God. The prophet Jeremiah, for instance, delivered God's critical words responding to the people's neglect of justice and obedience: "For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed the innocent blood in this place... then I will dwell with you in this place..." (Jer. 7:5-7). Similarly, the prophet Amos preaches: "Seek good and not evil, that you

may live; and so the LORD, the God of hosts, will be with you... Hate evil and love good, and establish justice in the gate; it may be that the LORD, the God of hosts, will be gracious..." (Amos 5:14-15). The prophets criticize economic exploitation and call for fair business.

Another crucial theme in the OT is that of *creation*. The first book of the OT starts with the story of God's creative work producing the good world (Genesis 1). There is a controversy among theologians over whether the creation story in Genesis 1 is a historical report or a myth. What is important, however, is what message is delivered through the story. It is obvious that the creation story explains the role of God in the world. God is not one among creatures. God is the creator and thus the real master and owner of the whole world. Consequently, all kinds of human mastery and ownership over worldly things are relative and must be run in consistency with God's ethical preference. No one has the right to claim an absolute mastery or ownership over a piece of land or other properties, let alone over other humans. The creation story also depicts the creative and innovative character of God. The story of creation is started by God changing chaos into order. This shows that God's creativity is not just a matter of producing new things, but about producing new good things out of bad, evil ones. In other words, God does not deem the bad and the evil normal. Changing bad or evil things into good ones is what creativity is all about.

The OT creation story places humans in a distinctive position. Humans are made "in God's own image" (Gen 1:27). On the one hand this is a claim of distinctive human dignity: all humans, regardless of race, nationality, social status, occupation and other attributes, are worth respecting more than any other creatures. On the other hand, this points to distinctive human responsibility: humans are responsible for maintaining God's creation. No other creature has the capability to take that responsibility. The OT concept of "the image of God" acknowledges both human capacity to reason and capability to bear moral responsibility.

Since being made in the image of God contains not only the idea of human status but also that of human responsibility, it gives no basis for pride, let alone human idolatry. Psalm 8 exemplifies a proper attitude in regard to it, namely to praise God and acknowledge God's sovereignty: "O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth..." Far from justifying human superiority, the image of God attribute recalls the dependence of human distinctiveness on God's sovereignty.

Many of the OT texts are based first on oral tradition of story-telling and songs in worship during centuries. Others like the books of the prophets have been written down in few years. OT books date from 900-100 years BC (before Christ). Key prophetic and legal texts date from 700 to 400 BC, the time of Confucius (551-479 BC) and Buddha (5th-4th century BC).

The New Testament

The NT is a collection of testimonies by believers of Jesus Christ. The books of the NT were written in a relatively short period, between 50/70 and 150 AD (after Christ), the oldest therefore already about 20-40 years after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ which happened around the year 30 AD.

The first four writings of the NT, the gospels, take the life of Jesus as the setting of their stories. The rest of the NT describes the living faith of the early churches, moulded by the work of the Holy Spirit, which is basically the continuing presence of Jesus Christ in ways transcending the boundaries of time, space and culture.

At the heart of the NT message is a belief that God reveals God's character, will, and acts in the form of a human being, Jesus Christ. If the OT witnesses that God speaks to the people through the prophets, the NT pictures Jesus Christ as the personification of God's Word (John 1:14). The NT testifies that Jesus did many miracles including healing the sick, awakening the dead, multiplying bread and fish, and walking

on the sea. These miracles demonstrate not only the mighty power of God in Jesus, but also the compassion and forgiving character of God. That is why Jesus' miracles are often accompanied by his proclamation that sinners have been forgiven. Thus the NT tends to portray the power of God as the power to forgive, to embrace, to care and to save rather than to conquer or to threaten. In that sense, the NT focuses on the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as the revelation of God's incomparable love and nonviolent power that saves the world.

The NT continues the OT's *commitment to human freedom and social justice* centred in God's love for the world, as well as hope in God's saving act based on God's merciful character. The NT promotes love as the core of God's law, overcoming the legalistic lifestyle of some Jewish believers, such as the Pharisees. The gospels record the uneasy relationship between Jesus and some of the Jewish religious leaders, exposing their hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness. They also mention Jesus' appreciation of all humans, Jews and non-Jews, thus laying the foundation of the Christian community as a global family. The famous story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) is one of such contrasting narratives. In that story, Jesus refuses to limit the norm of loving others within an ethnic boundary as implied in the chosen people claim.

The NT universal outlook and *Jesus' only orientation to the kingdom of God* is further explored in the works of the apostles, notably the apostle Paul. In the letter to the Galatians, for instance, he strongly criticizes the practice of law by the Galatian Christians. What is at stake in such practices, Paul insists, is the freedom granted by God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ (Gal. 5:1-6). In the letter to the Romans, he affirms that faith in Jesus means freedom from "the law of sin and death" (Rome 8:2) to become "children of God" and therefore "heirs of God" (Rome 8:15-17). By applying the attribute "children of God" and "heirs of God" to the Roman Christians who were not Jews, Paul points to the universal scope of God's saving grace.

The identification of *Christians as children of God* is meant to illustrate the ethical type of the Christian communities. Christians are liberated people who should enact freedom in daily life. However, freedom is often misunderstood as anarchy or libertinism. The attribute of the children of God explains the kind of relation to God Christians are called to enjoy. Children are different from slaves, whose relations to their masters depend on their work. Children are also different from the homeless living in the wilderness without any commitment to anybody. If slaves are controlled by rules, those in the wilderness are lawless. In contrast to slaves and the homeless, children are related to their parents first of all by love. So, it is love that shapes the children's character, and love motivates the children's deeds regardless of the existence of rules. The NT neither asserts the OT law nor sets out a new system of moral law. Instead it underlines love as the essence of the OT law (Matt. 22:36-40) and the greatest virtue of the Christian community (1 Cor. 13:13). Love itself is not an abstract concept. Instead it is manifested concretely in the way Jesus treats his disciples. Therefore he says to his disciples: "I give you a new commandment... Just as I have loved you, you should also love one another..." (John 13:34.)

The Bible and business

It is obvious that the Bible is not a one-to-one guide for doing business. But it provides core values and criteria. There are indeed many biblical statements regarding business and economic cases. For example: the prohibition of taking interest in the case of money-lending (Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:37), the call for fair salaries and caring for the weaker (Luke 12:42ff), the warning not to replace trust in God by trust in money (in this case called mammon: Matthew 6:24) and to abstain from greed (Luke 12:15), the call for justice throughout the Bible, the invitation to freedom based on trust in God (1 Cor. 10:23ff). However, a direct and literal application of those statements to today's cases would not be

appropriate since the biblical accounts reflect economic situations and social structures very different from ours. Interpretation is needed in order to grasp the relevance of such statements for our situation.

The Bible works more constructively in today's business situation if we focus on its principles and essential values rather than on the details of specific cases. The Bible's consistent emphasis on human freedom and social justice, for instance, is always relevant for today's economy, which may tend to overrate economic values. The Bible's depiction of the creative character of God can also be an inspiration for building entrepreneurship that balances creativity and the spirit to change bad things into good. In fact, for those committed to develop ethical businesses, there are abundant resources in the Bible worth exploring. Many more details can be found in the documents of the Values-driven Enterprise Certificate (VEC).

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What is the meaning and authority of the Bible for you?
2. What do you get from daily Bible reading and what are difficulties?
3. From where do you get support to understand the Bible?
4. Are there contemporary parallels to the injustice and slavery condemned in the OT?
5. How to reconcile the NT's emphasis on caring and sharing and love even of the enemies with the need to gain profit in economic life?
6. What kind of firm would you have if all the people in it were treated as fellow children of God?

BASIC DOCTRINES

- *The doctrine of the Trinity is a depiction of the divine love revealed in the relationship of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as implied in the Bible. The yin-yang philosophy can be helpful for understanding the doctrine of the Trinity.*
- *Sin means trust only in oneself, in human powers and authorities instead of trust in God. Christian belief is aware of the power of temptations, it yet recognizes the incomparable greatness of God's grace, transforms sin into love and makes sin no longer irresistible.*
- *At the heart of the Christian doctrine is the good news that God loves the world so much as to provide salvation despite human weakness, selfishness and distance to God, called sin.*
- *The kingdom of God is the ultimate goal of life and history. Christians do not have to care for their own salvation because eternal life is promised. They are free to care for others. Where this happens, the kingdom of God is already in their midst.*

The Trinity



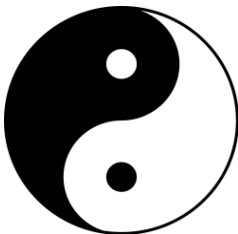
Christians share with people of other religions in realizing that the greatness of God is beyond human intellectual capability to explain. Such awareness is taken into account when Christians declare, with the other monotheist religions, the belief in the One God. The Christian confession that there is only one God is not intended as a mathematical statement. Christians do not count God since

God is beyond mathematics. The same can be said concerning the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. It has nothing to do with questions such as: how many gods are there? The doctrine of the Trinity understands God neither as a single individual living in loneliness who decides everything arbitrarily nor as three individual gods, each with a distinct role and character. Instead it affirms God's incomparable greatness and God's eternal power over the whole creation, on the one hand; and God's various ways of revealing God's love to the world, on the other hand.

There have been attempts to express the Trinity in more contemporary symbols and language. For instance, the use of the terms "Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer" instead of "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," to respond to the objection raised by feminist groups and also the accusation that the Trinity is a kind of three-theism. Such attempts so far fail to gain wide acceptance.

Nevertheless, an interpretation from the perspective of Asian philosophy suggested by Lee Jung Young (1996) may be helpful. Lee uses the Asian symbol of yin-yang as the standpoint to understand the Trinity. In that philosophy, every reality consists of yin as well as yang elements. Yin and yang can be understood as cold and hot, or feminine and masculine, or darkness and light. They look contradictory but they are not. In fact, they are so complementary that one cannot be there without the other. Yin and yang "are not only one but also two at the same time... Yin and yang are relational symbols, because they are primarily defined by relationship." According to Lee, the yin-yang relationship consists of three and not just two elements. Yin is the first element and yang is the

second, but the third element is the dots within yin and yang. Again, there is neither yin nor yang without those dots. The three elements are both three and one at the same time. It should be noted that from an Asian perspective "numbers are more than mathematical devices. They con-



vey profound spiritual and cosmological meanings.” Therefore, for Asians familiar with the yin-yang philosophy, the concept of God the Trinity should not be too alien.

The doctrine of the Trinity is based on the biblical depiction on the love of God for the world, which is the essential meaning of the gospel. The divine love is not only about God’s relations to the world, but also about the reality in God’s self. As the letter of John proclaims, God is love (1 John 4:8). Love is about relationship. The doctrine of the Trinity shows that God reveals God’s self in the familial relationship of the one Jesus calls Father; Jesus himself as the Son; and the power Jesus refers to as the Holy Spirit. It is this loving relationship that overcomes the problem of sin, offers forgiveness, calls for repentance, and produces hope for the world. As such, God’s loving relationship is not self-centred but, on the contrary, self-giving and, in so giving, productive and constructive for the salvation of the world. The picture of God as the Trinity also implies a rejection of the belief in one authoritarian centre of power and the belief in a number of divine authorities involved in uncontrollable competition.

Sin

The goodness of God’s creation affirmed in Christian faith is often confronted with the reality of evil. The existence of evil and its effective influence on humans are so wide-ranging, from massive crimes against humanity to common lies in the family. No one could honestly claim to be immune to any form of evil. Christianity deals with that reality by developing the doctrine of human fall and sin. The term “sin” refers both to the power behind evils and to their manifestations. In the Bible, sin as power is often associated with the personalized figure of Satan or the Devil. The Bible mentions almost every type of sin. Yet, sin is never the centre of the biblical account. Rather, it is always related to a particular good and contrasted with what is good.

Firstly, the core meaning of sin is to act not in line with God's will, but our own will. The prayer in the Lord's Prayer "Your will be done" is the centre for overcoming sin. Sin means a life in distance from God and not in accordance with him.

Secondly, sin is related to the story of creation, which affirms the goodness of humans and other creatures. It is important to note that sin is not a part of creation. This means that sin does not come from God. It even works contrary to the spirit of creation. According to the creation story, humans are created as relational beings (Genesis 1 and 2). Sinning is when their relations to God, to each other, and to other creatures are disrupted (Genesis 3). So, sin is not natural. It is not embedded in human nature. That is why Christians use the term "human fall" to refer to the effect of sin on human life. Sinful humans are not what God wants humans to be. When sin is attached to humans, human nature is distorted. Distortion is not to be considered normal. Sin is abnormal, no matter how common it is.

Thirdly, the Bible links sin to God's mercy. Sin is indeed powerful and massive and no human being can live without sin, in full unity with God. It affects the world seriously and extensively in people and structures. However, the point of the biblical accounts is not the hugeness of sin, but the greatness of God's forgiveness proclaimed or offered to sinners: "Come now, let us argue it out, says the LORD: though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool..." (Isaiah 1:18); "... where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Rom. 5:20b). Thus the message is that the problems of sin are not unsolvable, no matter how big they are. It is true that the problems of sin are not easy to solve. Humans may not be able to cope with them by themselves. But God's mercy is greater than sin, and it is offered freely and widely to us all. Concretely, the belief that humans are totally hopeless in facing the reality of sin is a false belief.

Fourthly, the Bible relates sin to essential human freedom. Humans are by nature free creatures. Sinning is basically losing freedom. Sinful humans are no longer free to respond to God's love and to love others. They are enslaved by the power of self-centredness that in turn becomes self-destruction. Salvation in Jesus is actually God's initiative to redeem freedom for sinners. To receive salvation is to reclaim freedom and to prevent us from losing it again. Paul says: "Therefore, do not let sin exercise dominion in your mortal bodies to make you obey their passions. No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness..." (Rom. 6:12-13a); "For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another" (Gal. 5:13).

The gospel

Gospel means good news. It is the central message of Christianity. The gospel affirms that God is consistently and continually working for the goodness of the world. John 3:16-17 summarizes the gospel message: "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life. Indeed, God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." The gospel thus is family news. God offers a familial way (through God's Son), rather than a legal way, to save the world. Since it is a familial way, love is the logic and therefore forgiveness is unlimited and sacrifice is needed. Only in such a way can the world be saved, for a legal way can only produce condemnation and judgment. Captured by the power of sin, humans in the legal way are left without hope. In the familial way, love is the ultimate norm. Humans are saved by God's love and are called to live in freedom to love so that hope for the good future is feasible.

The term "gospel" also refers to the four New Testament books drawing on the life of Jesus as their setting, namely the Gospel of Mat-

thew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke and the Gospel of John. This does not mean that the good news is confined exclusively to those four books. In fact, each part of the Bible offers a particular perspective on the good news, either explicitly or implicitly.

God's kingdom and eternal life

This gospel leads to a new direction in life and all decisions and also a new meaning of eternal life: Look in every decision at the ultimate goal of your life and of society which is the kingdom of God, the total realization of love in every moment. This is never possible to reach fully on earth. All efforts to implement and impose God's kingdom on earth by religious or secular movements (normally with power and violence) ended in dictatorship, oppression and war. But the "kingdom of God", the "new Jerusalem", and the "community of love" remain the benchmark and vision.

Christian faith means: "Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow." Do not care about your sins and your salvation because you know that you are accepted by God; but care about the needs of the needy. Do not care about your eternal life, because God promises that you will be with God after death; rather plant signs of hope and seeds of God's kingdom on earth. Eternal life (which means a life with God) starts today. Eschatology (the doctrine of the last things) becomes what is called present eschatology. As Jesus said: "Where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." (Matthew 18:20) And where Jesus Christ is, there is the kingdom of God.

Christian doctrines and the business context

The doctrine of the Trinity should inspire Christians in taking their position in personal, familial, political and professional living. As the

image of God, humans are called to develop loving relationships characterized by productive and constructive participation in those areas of life. Christians should resist the temptation to support an authoritarian power institution or to be opportunists in a situation of uncontrollable power competition, bringing suffering to human life and creation.

There is a common view that business is by nature immoral or amoral. As a consequence, evil practices such as manipulation, human exploitation, corruption, and environmental destruction are considered normal in business. The Christian doctrine of sin rejects such a view. *Business is a part of God's creation project and, therefore, is not evil by design.* The temptation to sin in business is indeed strong and often looks inevitable, so that to avoid sin in business may not be easy and cannot be done straightforwardly. Christian business actors, however, are to realize that God's grace and mercy are great enough to empower those struggling to resist the power of sin, especially together and not alone.

The gospel is not only about an afterlife. It is good news to be actualized here and now in practical ways, including business. The way God saves the world should inspire Christian business actors in treating their stakeholders. Business has a great potential to be either good news or bad news for people, community, and the environment. Christian faith provides the foundation for being good news.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. What are the implications of the belief in the Trinitarian God for developing human relations in the family, church, corporation, and society at large?
2. Are you free to express love in your family and business environment? If not, what hinders you, and how do you deal with that?
3. How can grace and mercy be practised in business?

4. Can I start each day and each decision with the short prayer:
“God Jesus Christ, Your will be done, Your kingdom come”?

THE CHURCH

- *The church is the community of Jesus believers committed to proclaim the good news to the world as Jesus has revealed and lived.*
- *Three main elements of the church are fellowship (community), proclamation (worship, mission), and service (works of love).*
- *The gospel and church as global community need to be enculturated in different cultural contexts. This leads to diversities in ritual styles, doctrinal emphasis, and cultural traditions of churches.*
- *Church leadership in its different forms has always to be servant leadership.*
- *The church and the business community could mutually and constructively share their resources.*

What the Bible says about the church



The Bible does not provide a fixed definition of what the church is. However, there are stories and advices in the New Testament that portray the life of the church in its early periods. Acts 2:41-47, for instance, describes what happened when the followers of Jesus Christ gathered: new members were baptized, the people listened to the teachings of the apostles, broke bread and ate together

while praising God and praying. The book of Acts also tells about miracles and signs, and that the people shared their belongings for the common good.

The NT also explains the essence of the church and the meaning of church life through metaphors such as the body of Christ, saints, the flock of God, children of God, and the family of God.

The metaphor “the body of Christ” (1 Cor. 12:12-31) teaches that the head of the church is Jesus Christ only and all church members are like members of his body. Each body member has a particular form, function and capacity, yet all follow the will and mind of the head. Since Jesus is the head, no one else has absolute power in the church, neither a pastor, president nor Pope. Also, church members do not work individually but support and complement one another. Every member should feel what felt by the others, so that no one would be satisfied if another member was in an unhappy condition.

The metaphor “saints” (1 Cor. 1:2) emphasizes a high standard of morality employed in the lives of church members. As a consequence, they did not participate in particular traditions and acts that were common in society yet hard to reconcile with the Christian belief. These included emperor worship, adultery, and inhuman treatment of slaves.

The metaphor “the flock of God” (1 Pet 5:1-11) expresses the experience of the community of believers of being looked after by God. They are protected from dangers, strengthened when they are weak, healed from sickness, and comforted when they are in sadness. In practice, God’s providence is manifested through the works of church leaders in the form of services known as pastoral care. In principle, ordinary members are also to perform pastoral services for each other.

The metaphors “children of God” (Rom 8:1-17) and *“the family of God”* (Eph. 2:19) depict the church as a community of liberated people. The morality of church members does not depend on a series of rules or law but on the awareness that they are God’s beloved children. The

church's way to shape the moral life of its members, therefore, is not by setting up obligations and sanctions but by creating an atmosphere conducive for the growing of love, faithfulness and responsibility. As a result, the church life should be characterized by creativity, flexibility, and dynamics, yet also consistency to the principles of God's family. It is interesting to note that the attribute "children of God" was also used for church members who were actually slaves in their daily life. This not only awakened their consciousness that their human dignity was equal to their masters but affirmed that master-slave relations did not apply within the church.

Basic elements of the church

Based on these biblical descriptions of the church, theologians commonly identify three main elements of the church, namely fellowship, proclamation, and service.

Fellowship refers to the internal life of the church, which has to show the maintenance of familial relationships as a practice of love. There is now a growing awareness among many Christians that fellowship should also be extended to the broader society.

Proclamation is what the church must do with the good news that God so loves the world and therefore offers salvation and calls for repentance to all sinners. Proclamation not only nurtures the life of church members but is also the core of the church mission to the world.

Service is an implementation of church's commitment to justice, peace, compassion and creation in the forms of practical social and economic projects both inside and outside the Christian community. The characteristics of the church can certainly be elaborated in more detailed ways. Different important components of church life can be distinguished: leadership, interpretation, sacraments, care for personal needs and social justice, as well as ecumenical unity and openness to the world.

Church diversities

Christians believe that the beginning of the church lies in the miraculous events that occurred in the celebration of Pentecost in Jerusalem, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. According to the story in the book of Acts (2:1-12), when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples of Jesus, they spoke in various languages, so that their message could be understood by all the people who were attending the celebration. Many of these people were Jews who had immigrated to various countries for several generations, so that they were no longer familiar with the language of their ancestors. This preaching in different languages is an indication that from the beginning the church has been contextual and diverse. To receive the church's message, people do not need to be able to understand one language of the church like Latin before the Reformation or Arabic for Islam. Therefore the Bible has been translated into over 2500 languages. It is the church that makes itself and its message understandable to the audience. Thus, from the beginning the church has been plural, at least in terms of language.

In a later development, as a result of the ministry of apostle Paul, which was specifically directed to non-Jewish peoples, Christian churches with no background in Judaism or Jewish culture were established. Both the ritual styles and theological emphases of those new churches were not identical to the churches with a Jewish background since they inherited different cultural traditions and faced different moral issues. Consequently, the church became more diverse, not only culturally but also theologically, though it always strove to maintain unity in the essential beliefs. Diversity existed not only between one congregation with another, but also within the internal lives of those early congregations. The Corinthian church is an obvious example in the Bible. There, the role of ordinary church members was very significant, and they were very active. Although there were leadership offices called elders, bishops and deacons, it seems that members with "gifts" played

prominent roles. They could speak “in tongues” and prophesy, both men and women. There is an impression that the role of those lay people was so dominant that it led to tensions with more conventional churches, such as those with a Jewish background. That is why Paul, considering the need to preserve the unity of the church, suggested to particular groups, including women, in the Corinthian church to slow down (1 Cor. 14), even though in principle the church is an egalitarian community in which discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, social class or gender is not valid (Gal. 3:28).

The theological resources contained in the Bible and church history are so rich that no single church tradition can accommodate them adequately. From time to time, new findings resulted from theological research, fresh reflections and as an answer to new developments in society. Such findings often challenge particular teachings and policies of the church that have long been established. Efforts to renew church teachings and policies often receive positive responses from the church leadership, so that they can run quite smoothly. However, not infrequently reforming efforts provoke controversy and end up in church division.

Membership and discipline

Church membership is inclusive: it is open to all people of all ethnic groups, nationalities, social status, gender, and age. To be admitted into church membership, one is required to declare publicly one’s acceptance of the basic Christian beliefs. The membership sign is *baptism* (see chapter 6), which has been used since the early church. Members of the church are the main actors in the church’s various activities. Within the scope of the local church, they participate in ministerial groups, mission works, social outreach, pastoral care, worship services, as well as in the leadership and management of the congregation.

As a community, the church embraces particular principles of belief and upholds certain moral values. In baptism or the rite of confession of

faith, new members state their promise to live according to this belief and moral values. Their fellow church members are asked to help, support, and encourage them in fulfilling their promise. Most churches have a disciplinary system that governs the policies concerning members who deviate from the church's teachings and morality. Actions range from advice to temporary exclusion from participating in communion. *Church discipline* is only the last resort to help members of the congregation to "repent". If repentance occurs, the disciplinary action is terminated.

Church mission

The mission of the church is based on its understanding of God's own mission. The latter refers to the core belief of the Christian faith concerning the good news (gospel) that God loves the world and therefore provides the way to salvation as revealed in Jesus Christ. The church's mission is basically to proclaim the good news to the world and to bring about the atmosphere of salvation (Matthew 28:19-20). That concept of mission has been understood and manifested in different ways. There are mission projects that take the form of simply introducing Christianity to non-believers or believers of other religions, aiming at setting up new churches. Yet for centuries, as practices of mission, the church has been carrying out social projects and establishing institutions of public services such as hospitals, schools, and nursing homes. Proclaiming the good news cannot be reduced to preaching the Gospel, which often stimulates unfriendly reactions from other religious groups. Also, the proclamation cannot be well articulated only through the conventional social projects and public services. The church's mission includes broader sectors of life including politics, business, technology and environment. Churches have therefore established regional, national and international specialized institutions for research, training, advocacy at international organizations and professional development work. The proclamation has to be reformulated to be accountable to the infor-

mation society and in respect to other resources of spirituality. It should be delivered with more humility and in dialogue with other faith and cultural traditions. Yet in no case may the church compromise its commitment to God's liberating love as it has been revealed in Jesus Christ.

The church and business

Business is one key area of society toward which Christians and the churches can direct their mission of proclaiming the good news. In the context of business, the good news should be related to a just, peaceful, healthy and trustworthy environment while still economically productive. With its rich spiritual and ethical resources, the church has the capability to contribute to meeting such needs of modern enterprises and business institution, as capacity building, ethical accountability, and social responsibility. On the other hand, the business community could also contribute to meeting the church's needs. Apart from the conventional contribution in term of funding, business actors could help the church renew its system of management, financial transparency and mission strategy. The entrepreneurial experience is inspiring for the churches to promote innovation in response to challenges of the world.

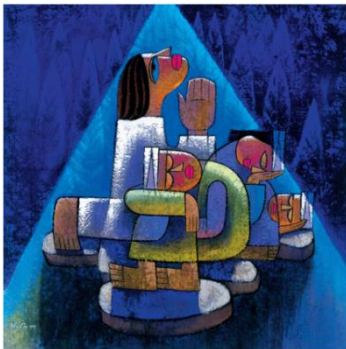
Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Which biblical metaphor best reflects the situation in your church?
2. Do you find a tension between your membership in the church and your profession in business? If any, how do you solve it?
3. Should today's churches maintain a system of discipline or should they forget such a system because its effectiveness is now doubtful?
4. In what practical ways could the church play a role in helping you perform better in business? In what practical ways could business people help the church perform better in its mission?

CHRISTIAN SPIRITUALITY

- *Christian spirituality is about realizing that we are Jesus' beloved friends.*
- *Worship, Bible study, meditation, and retreat are practices of Christian spirituality intended to enjoy and maintain the friendship.*
- *Christian spirituality is extended to daily life by ethical living.*
- *Christian spirituality can contribute significantly in responding to the questions and challenges of the "business spirituality movement".*

The nature of Christian spirituality



Spirituality refers to what drives, motivates, enlivens, and nurtures one's way of life. The starting point of Christian spirituality is the relationship with Jesus as God's revelation. The nature of that relationship determines Christians' self-identification. As the Gospel of John notes, Jesus calls the disciples his

friends and not his servants (John 15:15). What binds Christians to Jesus, therefore, is not obligation or fear of sanctions, but the recognition of being beloved friends. Unlike servants whose relation to their masters is limited by job description and work hours, friends relate to each other all the time in deed, heart and mind. Friendship is a relation between

free parties who freely make themselves responsible to each other. It influences one's personality and affects one's attitude in corporate life. For Christians, the relationship is a continuing lived experience with Jesus' contemporary presence: the Holy Spirit. Therefore Paul characterizes Christians as those who "live by the Spirit" and "led by the Spirit" (Rom 8:12-14; Gal. 5:16).

A friendship needs to be maintained in order to sustain it. Remembering crucial past events, keeping in touch through intensive ways of communication, displaying symbols of friendliness, as well as performing shared commitments are what friends normally do to maintain their friendship. In the Christian tradition such ways of maintaining friendship include worship and its elements, notably preaching, sacraments, and prayer; Bible study; meditation; retreat; and ethical living.

Christian worship

The Christian community meets regularly in the worship service at least once a week on Sundays. Sunday is selected since it was the day of Jesus' resurrection. Christian worship is a celebration of the salvation granted by God through the self-giving life of Jesus Christ. Therefore the calendar of Christian worship circles around two great events of salvation: the birth of Jesus (Christmas) and his resurrection (Easter).

In worship, the people's response to salvation is expressed in the forms of praise, confession, prayer, Bible readings, preaching, declaration of faith, offering, and sacraments. The styles and structures of Christian worship vary. Many churches keep the traditional style and structure of worship formed in a particular stage of church history. Other churches reshape their worship style and structure to become less formal, in order to create a friendly atmosphere for the young attendees. There are also differences according to denominational doctrinal emphasis. For instance, Protestant worship is structured relatively simply and gives more room for preaching, and Roman Catholic worship is more

centred on the Eucharist, while Pentecostal worship includes the performance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit as depicted in the New Testament. Music and other kinds of arts are commonly used in Christian worship. The music style and the type of arts used in churches as well as the extent of their usage also vary. So long as essential Christian beliefs are accommodated, such differences and diversities only reflect the nature of Christian worship as a celebration by liberated people.

Preaching

Preaching (or the sermon) is an important element of Christian worship. In preaching, the people listen to the Word of God and allow the Holy Spirit not only to help them understand the Word but also to drive them to work out the Word in their daily life. Preaching must be based on a responsible interpretation on particular biblical verses, as well as an objective analysis of the actual situation. The preacher, therefore, should have sufficient theological knowledge and an authorization from the church leadership. Usually it is the pastor who preaches, but not exclusively so.

Sacraments

Sacraments are the fundamental Christian rites conducted to mark and symbolize the central points of the Christian faith. The Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church recognize seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation (chrismation), Eucharist, confession, anointing of the sick, holy orders and marriage. Based on the belief that a sacrament has to have a clear biblical warrant, the Protestant Churches reduce the number of sacraments to two: *baptism and the Eucharist.*

Baptism is used in different ways in churches. The most traditional way is to immerse new members in the water in a river, as depicted in the Bible regarding baptism by John the Baptist in the river Jordan. This

method is still maintained in some churches, such as Baptist and Pentecostal Churches, although not always in a river. Other churches use the method of sprinkling or pouring water on the heads of the participants.

The churches not only differ in the way baptism is carried out, but also who is offered baptism. Some churches baptize only adults, considering that confession of faith, which is a prerequisite of baptism, cannot be asked of children. But the Roman Catholic Church and most Protestant churches baptize children based on their parents' profession of faith, arguing that the grace of God includes children as well as adults. Most churches provide a course in basic Christian faith to equip those to be baptized as adults or those who have been baptized as children while they are preparing for confession of faith as adults.

The *Eucharist or Holy Communion* is the rite of sharing a meal among members of the Christian community. It is rooted in the Jewish tradition of family supper. However, the event referred to in the celebration of the Eucharist is "the Last Supper," when Jesus shared bread and wine with his disciples on the night before he died. There he commanded his disciples to commemorate him by conducting such sharing meals (1 Cor. 11:24). Christians believe that the Eucharist marks and symbolizes the presence of Jesus among the community. The Eucharist refreshes the memory of the suffering and death of Jesus and also implies the congregation's confirmation that they are members of one family called to love one another as a witness to the world (John 13:35).

The importance of the Eucharist is equal to that of the ancestral rite in the Chinese tradition.

The frequency of the Eucharist varies. The Roman Catholic and Anglican churches normally celebrate the Eucharist in every service, but most Protestant churches conduct the Eucharist less frequently and tend to prioritize preaching over the Eucharist.

Prayer

Prayer is a way of communicating with God. Basically a Christian prayer is a friendly communication, so that Christians are free to express whatever feelings and thoughts they have. However, Jesus gives a sample of prayer, commonly called “the Lord’s Prayer” (Matt. 6:9-13), as a model of an appropriate prayer distinguishable from that of the hypocrites intended to show off. Christians pray both individually and corporately. Christians are expected to pray regularly, for instance right after waking up in the morning, at every meal time, and at night before going to bed. Many Christian families have the tradition of praying together at dinner times. Christians are also called to pray as a community. In Sunday services, the congregation’s prayers are usually divided into several categories: *prayer of repentance*, *prayer of thanksgiving*, *prayer of intercession*, and *the Lord’s Prayer*. In prayer of intercession, the church prays for the world, the country, the surrounding society, the sick and the weak, and for various needs of the congregation itself as well as its members individually.

Bible study

The church is a learning community in the sense that its knowledge and understanding of the Word of God can never be claimed final. God’s knowledge, wisdom and ways are basically “unsearchable and inscrutable” (Rom. 11:33), so that learning is a never-ending process. Bible study is a church activity intended for Christians to help each other in understanding biblical messages better in order to find their relevance for today’s situation. In addition to participating in the church Bible study, many Christians learn the Bible individually or with their families at home. Protestants are more familiar with Bible study than Roman Catholics since it was the Protestant movement that first promoted that activity for ordinary members. However, after the Second Vatican Council, the Roman Catholic Church provides more opportuni-

ties for ordinary members to learn the Bible. The goal of Bible reading is to nurture, criticize, and reform our own life, our communities and our society and by doing so to glorify God.

Meditation

Meditation is not uniquely Christian. Many other religious traditions also practise meditation. *Christian meditation is normally a combination of Bible reading, reflection, and prayer. It is usually practised in silence.* Many Christians meditate individually everyday on a regular basis, often in combination with prayer and Bible reading. Early morning or late night is normally selected as a good time for meditation. In meditation, Christians enjoy their relationship with God in an affective rather than cognitive way.

Group meditation is also common among Christians. The groups normally gather in quiet rooms either in church or in other places. The setting with soft light or candle light, protection from noise and freedom from time pressure helps concentration in meditation.

Retreat

Retreat is an act of temporary withdrawal from daily life to stay in a retreat centre that is usually located quite remote from the workplace. Retreat participants spend a certain period of time, normally from one day to one month, to focus on human essential issues, such as God's vocation, life direction, family relations, professional goal and achievement, and phases of life. A retreat programme consists of reflective activities including Bible readings, meditation, and prayers. It is intended to refresh the vision and commitment of the participants so that they may perform more confidently and responsibly both in their works and personal life. In many churches, retreat is offered to pastors and other church leaders as well as ordinary church members.

Ethical living

Spirituality deals with the interior dimension of life. However, this does not mean that spirituality has nothing to do with daily living. In fact, *Christian spirituality shapes people's integrity as such that their daily moral performance is consistent with their religious convictions, and their renewed character is reflected in their deeds.* The awareness of being beloved friends of Jesus and children of God can and should produce the mentality of free, responsible people and can and should be revealed not merely in a religious setting but anywhere including in the family, neighbourhood, workplace and business.

Business and spirituality

Many business people now realize the need to pay attention to the spiritual dimension of business, although they tend to avoid any explicit reference to religion. Such a “*business spirituality movement*” attempts to elevate the business institutions beyond the levels of profit and self-interest. The business world is then attached to ideas such as “company as community”, “working toward a higher purpose than profit”, “manager as spiritual elder”. Businesspeople find such ideas inspiring for them to make their businesses more meaningful.

Christian businesspeople practising forms of Christian spirituality should be familiar enough with the language used in these ideas. It is not hard to see the relevance of the virtues and values implied in Christian spirituality for the condition promoted by business spirituality.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How do you relate what you get from worship, Bible study and other practices of spirituality to your business and its vision?
2. Do you find prayer works in your life? How often is your church pray for the businesspeople?
3. Which values embedded in Chinese culture are affirmed by Christian spirituality, and which values are challenged?

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY

- *The development from a simple fellowship of Jesus' disciples to the world's largest religion is a complex, difficult, yet amazing process.*
- *Since the beginning of its history, there have been varieties and diversities in the ways the church express its faith, deliver its messages, and organize its institutions.*
- *Persecution, restriction, suspicion and heresies (unbiblical doctrines) challenge the churches from time to time.*
- *Learning from its encounters with cultures, philosophies, and other religions, the church should be capable of balancing faithfulness to the gospel and openness to other spiritual and moral resources.*
- *The church should be aware of political and economic exploitation trying to drive the church away from its original vision and mission.*
- *The church should continue to play a significant role in the development of the world's civilization, nations and societies.*



The embryo of the church is the table fellowship of Jesus disciples who gathered together in Jerusalem after the ascension of Jesus. As witnessed in the Bible (Acts 2), a miraculous event occurred when the city was celebrating Pentecost, a Jewish festival fifty days after Passover. On that day, groups of Jews residing in different countries, and no longer familiar

with the language of their ancestors, came to Jerusalem to participate in the festival. On that day, the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and

made them preach so that every visitor understood their preaching as if it was spoken in his or her own language. Christians consider that event the starting point of the church history and transform Pentecost into the celebration of the Holy Spirit.

The early church: 1st to 6th centuries

Since the disciples were Jews, the members of the first Christian congregations were all Jews. In fact, they did not intend to separate themselves from the broader Jewish society with its distinctive religious law and cultural tradition. However, the congregations' strong reference to Jesus' teachings triggered a tension with the Jewish religious elite who then accused the Christian community of heresy. While the Jewish elite treated the congregations with hostility, the church's teachings and community life attracted many non-Jews, first the proselytes (foreigners who were sympathetic to the Jewish tradition), then foreigners with no relation at all to the Jews. Later on, the mission project of Paul to the western part of the Roman Empire, targeting foreign people in their own countries, drove the early church to shape its own identity totally separated from the Jewish religion and culture. Started from the first non-Jews congregation in Antioch (now Syria), new Christian congregations were established in many places from Asia Minor (now Turkey) and Greece to Rome. By the mid of the 2nd century, Christianity had spread across a broad area from West Europe to Central Asia.

Given that early congregations were formed in different cultural settings, there were great variations among them in worship order and community management. However, as a reaction against the gnostic groups that emerged in the 2nd century that challenged the church's principal messages, the church strengthened its institutional element. As results, worship was made more structured, the practice of discipline was tightened, and the church's leadership was made more hierarchical.

The 2nd century was marked by the role of early church figures, notably Ignatius, Polycarp, and Justin Martyr, who all were assassinated by the Roman government on the accusation of being a political threat. *Christians suffered from persecution since the earliest period.* Apart from the tension with the Jews, many leaders of other religions also disliked Christians for their distinctive way of life. Christians not only avoided popular art and sport shows that ran against their convictions of human dignity and holy living, they also refused to participate in the rites of the emperor worship. This stimulated the suspicion from the side of the Roman authority that Christians were potential rebels. Thus, the persecutions of Christians came from two directions: from certain groups of people, and from the Roman authority. Up to the year 250, the persecution mostly came from the people and was characterized by incidental and local attacks. The exception was the massacre of Christians ordered by the Emperor Nero in 64. From 250 to 313, the persecution was more massive and systematic since the initiative came directly from the Roman government, notably under the Emperors Decius (250) and Diocletian (303). In that period of persecution, many church leaders were killed, including bishops of Rome, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Carthage.

In 313, Caesar Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, which reversed the state's policy toward the church. Realizing the failure of his predecessor in paralysing the church and the potential of the church to become a unifying power in the empire, Constantine stopped the persecution and recognized the rights of Christians as legal citizens. Moreover, Constantine treated the church with privilege and gave an impression that he himself was attracted to the Christian belief. The special treatment for the church was even enhanced in the period of *Emperor Theodosius, Constantine's successor, who declared Christianity as the state's religion.* However, the support from the empire was not without a political agenda. The emperors who supported the church also claimed

their rights to control the leadership of the church. This resulted in controversies within the church regarding *church-state relations*. A number of Christians refused to be involved in state-sponsored church activities and established local Christian communities in remote areas that then became monasteries.

While the political position of the church was strong, the internal life of the church faced another threat in the form of *doctrinal controversies*. The most challenging was the controversy over Christological issues, such as: the relation between Jesus and the Father. The controversies increased the interest among the church leaders in studying crucial theological issues, particularly those related to the nature of Christ. The controversies were discussed and resolved in the councils of Nicea (325), Constantinople (381) and Chalcedon (451).

The medieval era: 7th to 15th centuries

The medieval era is characterized by the *schism between the western church (Rome) and the eastern church (Constantinople) in 1054*, the emergence of Islam in the Arab lands, the establishment of orders and monasteries emphasizing the spirituality for the poor, and the development of scholastic theology in the western church.

The western church refers to the Christian communities in the western part of the Roman empire, and the eastern church to those in the eastern part of the empire. There had been differences between those two groups of Christian communities in terms of church order, doctrinal emphasis, and perspectives on church-state relations. After unsuccessful attempts to harmonize the differences, the structural separation occurred when the western church was grouped under the leadership of the bishop of Rome, who was named the Pope. Churches in the eastern part of the empire maintained the episcopal system in which the highest authority is distributed among the bishops as regional leaders. The western church

was then known as the Roman Catholic Church, and the eastern church as the Orthodox Church.

Islam emerged in the 7th century in the Arab lands (Mohammed: 570-632). In less than a century, the Islamic caliphates took over the eastern part of the Roman empire and the whole of Persia. There had been a significant number of Christians in certain parts of the area taken over by the Islamic caliphates. The relationships between the Islamic authorities and the Christian communities in those areas were fairly good. Although the caliphates changed the political and legal systems according to what they believed to be the Islamic law, the Christian communities were given relative rights of autonomy. However, from 1050 to 1450 the Christian West Europe and the Muslim Turks were involved in a long war that the Christians named “the crusades”. The reason for waging the war was actually political, but both sides used religious sentiment to gain support from their people and religious elite.

As a reaction against the tendency of the (western) church to focus too much on power and wealth, several Christians promoted ascetic ways of life. Many of them came from rich families but then opted for living simply in order to be with and for the poor. Among these people were Francis of Assisi who established the Order of Friars Minor, and Dominic de Guzman who established the Order of Preachers.

The medieval church realized the need to provide theological responses to the re-emerging Greek philosophy, particularly the thought of Plato and Aristotle. The most important theologian in this period was Thomas Aquinas, a Dominican monk. Thomas’ great theological work, the *Summa theologiae*, is an important source of theological learning even today. The *Summa* was quite successful in providing arguments explaining the position of Christian theology in philosophical discourse.

The Reformation: 16th -17th centuries

Since the early 16th century, there had been movements in the Roman Catholic Church that were dissatisfied with the church's emphasis on rituality, institutional interest and power. The aspirations of such movements mounted in 1517 when Martin Luther, a German monk and theologian, posted 95 theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. In those theses, Luther challenged claims and practices of the Roman Catholic Church that he considered to have seriously deviated from biblical principles. While Luther's theses criticized the church's tradition and teachings broadly, what triggered Luther's action was the selling of indulgences by Johann Tetzel as part of the fundraising project to build the basilica (church) of St Peter in Rome.

Luther's theses gained enthusiastic support from the German people who had been longing for renewal. Despite the fierce reaction from the Pope, Luther continued his movement by renewing the doctrine, worship order, and church order. His work then inspired further movements by several Christian scholars and leaders, including the reformers Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich and John Calvin in Strasbourg, and then Geneva. Those three reformation figures were critical of the church's overrating of non-Biblical resources and called for a return to the Bible as the main reference of the church's teachings and practices. Given the hostile reaction from the church's leadership in Rome, an inevitable result of the reformation movement was the separation of the churches related to that movement from the leadership of the Pope. Those churches were then called Protestant. Since reformation is the heart of Protestant Christianity, critical views and renewing works are continuing in the Protestant churches. Later generations of critical figures within these churches came up and produced new styles of churches, such as the Baptist, the Methodist, and the Pentecostal.

Christianity in Asia

Christianity was introduced in Asia since as early as the 4th century with the establishment of the church in South India (St Thomas Christians claim to be there since the 1st century) and the Nestorian Church in the kingdom of Parthia, which then became Persia and is now Iraq and Iran. The Nestorian Church sent their missionaries to almost the whole of Asia including China through the Asian trade route. However, the mission of the Nestorian Church failed to produce a strong Asian Christian community given the resistance from and competition with the already established religions supported by the rulers in those countries. By 1400 the fruit of the Nestorian mission had almost vanished. Even in Iran and Iraq, the Nestorian Church is now a very small minority group with fewer than 50,000 members.

Most churches in Asia today are the result of western European and American mission works, starting in the 16th century. The early Roman Catholic missionaries came from Spain and Portugal. In the beginning, the church's mission was attached to the political and economic expansion projects of the sending countries. However, since 1550 the church carried out its mission independently, realizing that there had been serious conflicts of interest between the church and the state in the mission fields. The Roman Catholic orders, particularly the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), took over the mission work. Among the most influential missionaries were Francis Xavier and Matteo Ricci. Jesuit missionaries worked in many Asian countries and learned how to deal with the local people's cultural sensitivities.

Protestant missions influenced by pietism came to Asia in the early 18th century. The first missionary was Bartholomeus Ziegenbalg, a German sent by the king of Denmark to do evangelism in Tranquebar, India. In the 19th century more Protestant missionaries were sent to Asia by Protestant churches and mission boards in western Europe, without any support from their governments. The mission boards included the

London Missionary Society (LMS), the *Nederlands Zendeling Genootschap* (NZG), the *Rheinische Missions Gesellschaft* (RMG), and the Basel Mission (BM). The missionaries faced the local cultural challenges with different attitudes. Some tried to replace the local cultural expressions with the European ones, while others paid more respect to the local culture and religions.

Christianity in China

The famous inscriptions written in the Chang-an (Xi'an) Monument, a limestone found in 1625, indicate that in 635 a Nestorian bishop by the name of A-lo-pen arrived in Chang-an, which was at that time the capital of China. This confirms the historical analysis that a Nestorian Christian community has existed in China since the 7th century in the period of Tang dynasty. However, the Nestorian Church did not survive, because of political change in the 9th century when the new Emperor employed a confrontational policy against ascetic religions, addressed particularly to Buddhism but also applied to minority groups including the Nestorian, which was also ascetic.

Christianity was reintroduced to China in 17th century by Roman Catholic missionaries from the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits). The first missionary in this period was Matteo Ricci, who had to wait for 18 years before being allowed to enter the country. Not only was Ricci successful in building good relations with the ruling elite, he also associated the Christian message with Chinese language and symbols. Ricci pioneered the development of an authentic Chinese Christianity, not necessarily identical with the western style one.

Among those attracted by Ricci's mission work was a scholar called Hsu Kuang-chi. Later on, Hsu continued Ricci's project of enculturating Christianity in Chinese culture and thus became the first indigenous missionary in China.

However, Ricci's project provoked controversy among missionaries, particularly with regard to the practice of the ancestral rite, which was crucial for Chinese tradition. After showing inconsistency for almost one century, in 1742 the Roman Catholic Church formally required Christians to discontinue practising the ancestral rite. The church's rejection of the Chinese tradition provoked a tension in its relation with the Chinese Emperor. This led to the Emperor's order to expel the missionaries from the country. In the 18th century the restrictions on Christianity increased, and the church in China stagnated.

Mission work to China by the Protestant church started in the late 19th century. The first missionary was Robert Morrison, an English missionary affiliated with the London Missionary Society, who arrived in Canton in 1807. Morrison began with translating the Bible into Chinese. He continued the mission work by founding the Anglo-Chinese College in Hong Kong, through which he tried, on the one hand, to introduce Christianity to Chinese, and, on the other hand, to introduce Chinese language and culture to Westerners. However, the fruit of Morrison's mission work in mainland China was limited because of the restrictions applied and, later, the wars between China and Britain. Other missionaries coming after Morrison included Hudson Taylor who founded the China Inland Mission (CIM), which then became the Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF), and Timothy Richard who established modern educational institutions and published Christian magazines in China. The availability of modern education helped in forming a new middle class consisting of ambitious educated Chinese with a vision to renew the nation. One of them was Dr Sun Yat-Sen who became the first president after successfully leading the revolution to change the empire into a modern republic of China.

In discussing the evangelization of China it is important to mention the role of the native missionaries, such as Wang Ming-Tao and Wu Yao-Tsung. Wang was a conservative Christian who opposed the

church's social concerns and tended to focus on the salvation of the individuals. Accusing the existing church to have embraced modernism, Wang founded a new church called the Christian Tent, managed and supported financially by Chinese themselves. On the contrary, Wu was a progressive Christian who paid attention to justice issues. He was first sympathetic to the revolutionary ideas in Marxism, and therefore he believed that the church should have partnered with the communists.

The spirit of independence has been strong in the Chinese church since its early history. This was manifested in the Three-Self Movement (self-governance, self-support, and self-propagation) declared in 1954. The movement reflected Chinese Christians' awareness of the potential misuse of Christian mission for the purpose of western countries' political interest. It therefore called for a significant lessening of the Chinese church's relation with the West. Wu was the president of the Three-Self Movement. The communist regime, which took over power in 1949, was in favour of the Three-Self Movement and urged all churches to join the movement. However, the church's position under the communist government was so difficult that many church buildings had to be closed and pastors had to find secular jobs. Church activities were severely restricted. Wang, who refused to join the Three-Self Movement, was arrested by the communists and sent to a forced-work camp.

Since the dawn of the open door policy, there are indications that the church's life in China is improving. In addition to the officially recognized and registered China Christian Church CCC/Three Self Movement TSPM, many family churches and house churches are growing, in both urban and rural areas. It is estimated that the growth of Christianity in China today is among the fastest in the world, with an estimated number of 60-100 million Christians.

Questions for reflection and discussion

1. How did political and economic factors affect the church's history by promoting or restricting Christian faith?
2. Why should the church be free from political intimidation and economic preoccupation?
3. What should the church do in facing persecution and restriction?
4. Should the Chinese church maintain its spirit of independence in this era of global interconnectedness?
5. How can the church contribute to the development of the nation and appreciation and transformation of Chinese culture?

CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS

- *Because of differences in doctrinal emphasis, organizational system, and moral interest, the Christian church is divided into denominations and theological camps.*
- *When doing its mission work, each denomination and every theological camp generates its derivatives in different parts of the world*
- *While also affected by the global denomination division, Chinese Christianity tends to be less dependent. The existence of house churches in China is worth noting.*
- *The ecumenical movement is working for the unity of the church.*

Main denominations



We use the term denominations for the grouping of churches according to doctrinal emphasis and/or organizational system. The great schism of 1054 divided the church into two main branches, namely the Orthodox Church in the eastern part of the Roman empire and the Roman Catholic Church in the western part. The Reformation in the 16th century generated further diversity by division from the Roman Catholic Church. The congregations that followed the leadership of Martin Luther, mostly in German areas, were grouped as Lutheran churches, while those who followed John Calvin were grouped, mostly in Switzerland and the Netherlands,

as Reformed churches or, in Scotland, as a Presbyterian church. Both Lutheran churches and Reformed/Presbyterian churches are also called Protestant. The Church of England, known as Anglican, took a position between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. From the Anglican tradition, several denominations emerged, including the Methodist Church, the Salvation Army, the Brethren, and Congregational churches. Baptist churches are a branch of Congregationalism, while Pentecostalism came out of the Methodist tradition.

Evangelicals and the charismatic movement

The fastest growing denominations today are the evangelical and charismatic movements. In many denominations, there are evangelical and charismatic groups. There are also denominations founded specifically on evangelical or charismatic beliefs.

Evangelicalism as a movement first emerged in the 19th century within the Protestant churches as a reaction against rationalism and liberalism rooted in the Enlightenment and Renaissance. Evangelical leaders accused the church of conforming too much to such ideas at the expense of fundamental biblical beliefs. Evangelicalism is characterized by a literal interpretation of the Bible, apologetics against rational criticism of Christian doctrines, and eagerness for church planting.

The *charismatic movement* is similar to *Pentecostalism* and emerged in the early 20th century. It first developed as a renewal spiritual movement within the Roman Catholic and other mainstream churches. As with the Pentecostal churches, the charismatic movement emphasizes the actual experience of the Holy Spirit as depicted in the Bible, in the forms of speaking in tongues, visions, prophesy, and divine healing. There are also charismatic churches that promote the so called “prosperity gospel”, which attempts to relate Christian teachings to the modern demands for wealth, health and salvation.

Almost all denominations have a vision to be present globally and attempt to make that vision into reality through mission or evangelism projects. As a result, almost every church wherever it is can be identified as affiliated to a particular denomination. There are, however, congregations claiming to be “*free churches*” in the sense that they have no formal tie to any denomination. Free churches are more flexible in terms of worship and organizational style. They are financially and institutionally independent. Yet, most free churches tend to follow the teachings of evangelical or charismatic groups.

The ecumenical movement

While there is nothing wrong with diversity, conflicts and splits such as occurred in the history of the church are inconsistent with its nature. The Gospel of John notes Jesus’ prayer hoping that his followers will be united (John 17:21) and known as a community of sharing love (John 13:35). The enculturation of the gospel in different cultures, sectors of society and languages is necessary and positive, but continuing divisions in the church and sometimes unfair conflicts is a sad reality. This has been realized by the leaders of mainstream denominations. Attempts to work toward unity have long been on the agenda of those denominations. This is known as the *ecumenical movement*. The World Council of Churches (WCC) with its headquarters in Geneva/Switzerland is an interdenominational body established for that purpose, with 350 member churches from all continents. The main Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox denominations are now members of the WCC. The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the WCC but has been a strategic partner since the 1960s. Bodies uniting particular denominations, such as the World Communion of Reformed Churches (WCRC), the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), the Anglican Communion, and the World Methodist Council (WMC) exist on global, national and regional levels. Despite the success of the ecumenical movement in promoting shared

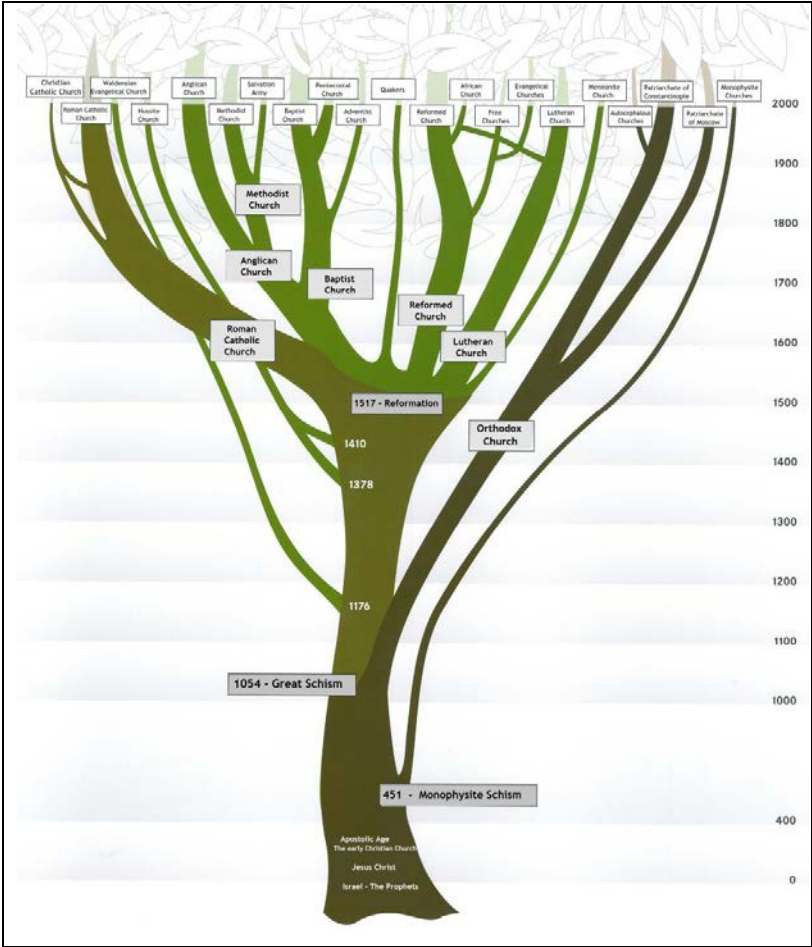
Christian concern on justice, peace, pluralism, and environment, there is still much to do to make the vision of one united church real.

Worldwide, 2.2 billion Christians represent 33% of the world population; 50% are Catholics, 37% Protestant and 12% Orthodox.

The influence of Christian denominations in China

Both the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches have generated their own versions within Chinese Christianity. However, in accord with the spirit of nationalism, the Chinese churches, including the Catholics, tend to limit their relations to their western counterparts. In the era of the Cultural Revolution, this spirit was shown particularly in declaring the “three-self” nature of the church. The Protestant denominations joined the Three-Self Movement, while the Catholics formed the Catholic Patriotic Association.

The most interesting church phenomenon in China, however, is the massive existence of house churches. Chinese house churches are different from free churches in Western countries such as the USA. They are congregations formed by Chinese Christians, from both Roman Catholic and Protestants backgrounds, in facing the state’s repression during the Cultural Revolution. While the main Protestant Church and the Catholic Church are officially registered, most of the Chinese house churches are “unregistered”. Chinese house churches are independent from the “registered” and official Chinese denominations.



Questions for reflection and discussion

1. Do you think a particular denomination can cover the whole truth of the Christian faith?
2. Should denominations compete against each other or should they work together?
3. How can Christianity in China avoid denominationalism?
4. What is the contribution of Chinese Christianity to the global church?
5. How can you participate in the effort for church unity?

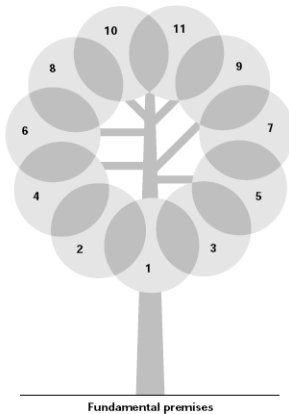
CHRISTIAN BUSINESS

- *For Christians, business and economy as production of goods and services is a service for God to improve human life.*
- *Christian business is based on core values and virtues.*
- *The key person for Christian business is the entrepreneur with his/her values, virtues and convictions, supported by the management, employees, investors, Christian communities and churches.*



Values are benchmarks, fundamental orientations for personal and societal life like justice or freedom. Values are like the main branches of a tree that together build the tree. Values are like the guard rail along a highway or road to guide and avoid losing track of the way.

Virtues are attitudes, behaviours of individuals and a concretization of values. For example, the value of equity and justice is visible in the virtue of mutual respect of each other or of humility. Virtues can be compared with the way how the driver drives his car on the road or how the animal moves from one branch to the other on the tree.



Premises are the basis and precondition of values and virtues. For example, life, love and dignity are preconditions for freedom and justice. They are like the roots of the tree or the road with all its layers. A tree dies without soil and roots, and a guard rail or good driving instruction are meaningless if there is no road.

The following lists of ten premises, twelve values and twelve virtues are not timeless and are not in hierarchical order. As the branches of a tree or as points on a circle, premises, values and virtues among themselves are interdependent and have in principle similar importance. But in specific situations, one or another premise, value or virtue becomes more or less important and relevant.

Premises in the light of Christian faith

- I want to live.
- I cannot survive on my own, but only in a community.
- I cannot generate my own life. It is given, a gift of God.
- God as the magnificent Creator wants life in its diversity.
- God as Jesus Christ wants to save life, not to destroy it.
- My gratitude to God is the foundation of responsible action.

- God as Holy Spirit is a liberating force, able to work through all human beings.
- Human beings cannot be perfect. God forgives us and enables new beginnings.
- Life on earth is only the great foretaste of eternal abundance. This liberates us from greed.
- Faith, hope and love (1 Cor. 13:13) are the basis of values and virtues.

Fundamental Christian values

- *Justice/equity*: All human beings are created by God and are his children. God alone is creator, all human beings are his creatures. This creates a fundamental equality of all men, women and children. Society has to enable equal access to resources for a life in dignity.
- *Compassion and caring*: compassion for the other and caring for the weaker in society is a consequence of this equality and justice and of Christian freedom. Freedom from sin leads to freedom for caring and solidarity.
- *Stewardship/servant leadership*: acting as a good steward means using the natural, human, financial and organizational resources entrusted to us efficiently and responsibly in the service of the objectives and the community.
- *Freedom*: Human beings tend to be selfish and trust themselves more than God. This is called sin. God in Christ liberates the believers from this sin and invites them to trust God. To depend on the wisdom of God makes human beings free from self-dependence and self-salvation. We become free to care for others.
- *Sustainability*: God-Chris not only liberates human beings, but the whole creation. Non-human creatures also suffer from violence and injustice and look for peace and liberation from suffering. Human and non-human beings build together the ecosystem as Gods house

called earth. Caring for creation is essential for Christian faith because destroying this earth means violating God the creator himself.

- *Responsibility/accountability*: Responsibility means response to God, giving back what we receive, being accountable for what he entrusts to us.
- *Participation/community*: all human beings can contribute to improving lives, including children, aged people, people with disabilities. Salvation alone is not possible. Christians must always seek the common good of the community and the people of God.
- *Sharing/solidarity*: building communities needs sharing and solidarity in order to reduce inequalities that grow again and again.
- *Transparency*: Community can only be built on trust, openness and transparency in communication and financial matters. God is a God of light and not of darkness, of revelation and not of secrets.
- *Innovativeness*: God gave human beings almost unlimited gifts of creativity and innovation to save and improve lives and use limited resources more efficiently and sustainably as an expression of thankfulness and joy to God and God's kingdom.
- *Peace*: Great inequalities and injustice lead to conflicts, instability and war. Peace is the fruit of justice, caring, freedom and solidarity.
- *Forgiveness/reconciliation*: human thinking and action cannot be free from errors, mistakes and sin. God's forgiveness and human forgiveness again and again enable new beginnings, overcome apparent impasses, and open the way to the future.

Fundamental Christian virtues

(in brackets exemplified for entrepreneurial virtues)

- *Thankfulness*: be thankful for all you receive from God, human beings and nature
- *Truthfulness*: do not lie, tell the truth about real costs, damages, dangers

- *Integrity*: act honestly, avoid hidden agendas and tricks, keep your promises
- *Trust*: trust in God, employees and stakeholders
- *Respect*: be respectful and gentle to others and treat them as your guests
- *Generosity*: be generous in blessing others as God is generous in blessing you
- *Prudence*: be prudent in combining risk-taking and risk-minimizing
- *Courage*: take entrepreneurial risks and resist injustice
- *Joy*: be joyful, praise and thank God for God's blessing
- *Harmony*: balance the different interests and values in harmonious way
- *Sufficiency*: use what you need, be frugal with resources, avoid greed
- *Modesty*: be humble, remember that you are a servant, not king or owner of the world.

Some biblical references

- *Matthew 23:23*: "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices – mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law – justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."
- *1 Cor. 13:13*: "And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."
- *Col. 3:12-14*: "¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

- *Col. 4:2 and 5-6*: “² Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ... ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.”

Questions for reflection and discussion

- Where do you agree with these values and virtues?
- Where do you disagree or add or remove values and virtues important to you and your understanding of Christian faith?
- Which values and virtues are easier to implement and which are more difficult?
- Which value and which virtue have highest priority for you, now?

TWELVE MISSIONS

- *Christian enterprises are guided by five principles (dimensions): Christ-centred, human-oriented, performance-oriented creation-oriented, society-oriented.*
- *They correspond to five sustainability and five personal principles.*
- *These principles are concretized in twelve missions/criteria.*



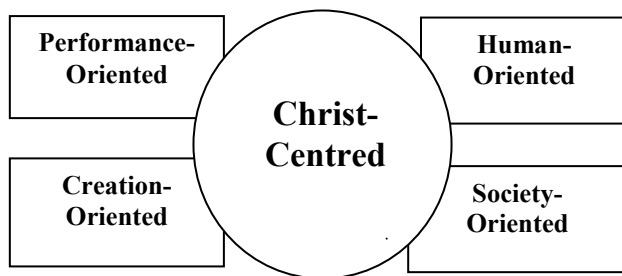
The Values-driven Enterprise Certificate (VEC) is an initiative of the Kingdom College (Beijing/Hong Kong) with Globethics.net (Geneva/Switzerland) for Christian entrepreneurs in China.

Enterprises that follow the VEC process orient their business on five principles and twelve missions, also called criteria. The principles are general areas of orientation. The missions/criteria are domains and fields of action.

They are developed in detail in manifold training and certification materials.

Five principles

1. *Christ-centred*: Jesus Christ (the triune God) is the cornerstone of orientation for all sectors of life including professional life
2. *Human-oriented*: The economy should serve people, meet their (basic) needs and promote equity/justice. Profit is not a goal, but a necessary means to serve people better
3. *Performance-oriented*: high quality, secure, innovative, efficient, reliable, long term products and services
4. *Creation-oriented*: environmental protection, careful use of limited resources
5. *Society-oriented*: economy and business is a service for all stakeholders in order to build a stable, peaceful, sustainable, just nation



These five principles can also be formulated as

Five sustainability principles

Sustainability means a state of the planetary ecosystem, of which human beings and the man-made systems are a functional part, where non-living and living nature, biological species, and humanity coexist in mutually beneficial interdependency and balance that can be sustained in a long-term.

1. *Christ-centred*: Sustainability means preserving the planetary ecosystem balance
2. *Human-oriented*: Sustainable living at work and at home
3. *Performance-oriented*: Sustainable business performance
4. *Creation-oriented*: Sustainable nature and ecosystems
5. *Society-oriented*: A sustainable society with social integration

These five principles can also be formulated as

Five personal principles

1. *Family-oriented*: caring for our family
2. *Character-oriented*: being strong in our value-orientation
3. *Capacity-oriented*: use our talents in the best way for the responsibilities we have
4. *Health-oriented*: caring also for our own and others' health
5. *Joy-oriented*: fulfil all activities with joy over the beauty of life and thankfulness towards God.

Twelve missions/criteria

The criteria represent twelve aspects and areas of activities of a Christian company. They are all developed in detail in the VEC Handbook 2.

Christ-centred

1. *Values*: Christian faith and values

Human-oriented

2. *Employees*: Human resources and labour practices (human rights and decent work)
3. *Governance*: Ethical governance in the company structure
4. *Management*: Ethical management for sustainability

Performance-oriented

5. *Product and marketing*: Ethical product responsibility
6. *Performance and profit*: Ethical economic performance and profit
7. *Innovation*: Technical and other innovation
8. *Investments*: Ethical Investments

Creation-oriented

9. *Environment*: Ethical environmental performance and resources

Society-oriented

10. *Law*: Laws and legal frame
11. *Community*: Social value creation, philanthropy, social projects
12. *Competitiveness*: Ethical competitiveness and trade

Questions for reflection and discussion

- How can a Christian entrepreneur convince his management, family (in the case of a family enterprise), investors and employees to commit to these values and virtues and redirect company strategy and workers' praxis accordingly?
- How can a Christian entrepreneur be supported in this strategy?
- How can a company get not only a long-term reputation as an ethical, Christian company, but also short-term financial benefits to sustain the company?



Kingdom Business College (KBC), registered in Hong Kong and Beijing, offers training and research for Chinese business and entrepreneurs. It has a professional team of experts. Advice is related to values, environment, human resources, technological innovation, marketing, strategy, organization, brand, enterprise culture and others. The aim is to enhance the core competitiveness of enterprises, to improve the enterprise management system, to build the enterprise to become the industry leader and to take social and environmental responsibility in society in China.

Picture credits

9: Orthodox icon depicting the Emperor Constantine, accompanied by the bishops of the First Council of Nicaea (325), holding the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381 AD

13: Sudhir Bairagi, “Blessing Christ in Kolkata with Howrah Bridge and Slums”

25: Melisande Schifter, Globethics.net

33: Andrey Rublev, Russian icon of the Old Testament Trinity (between 1408 and 1425 AD)

41: Icon of the apostles Peter and Paul. www.catholiccompany.com/blog/peter-paul-martyrs-christian-faith

49: He Qi, “Praying at Gethsemane”, 2001.

57: Unknown artist, “The Nativity of Christ”, 20th century.

61: He Qi, “Journey with Jesus”.

65: Based on a poster from the Musée international de la Réforme, Geneva, Switzerland.

67: Kim Yoo, “Singapore”, in Masao Takenaka, *Christian Art in Asia*, 1975, 79.

25: Carbon Credit Network, www.carboncreditnetwork.org/opportunity



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China Ethics

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