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A Survey of Christianity in Hangzhou

ZHANG ZHONGCHENG

[Abstract]

There are about 300,000 Christians in the Hangzhou area (which includes the 8 districts of Shangcheng, Xiacheng, Jianggan, Gongshu, Xihu, Binjiang, Xiaoshan and Yuhang, the 3 county-level cities of Jiande, Fuyang and Lin'an, and the 2 counties of Tonglu and Chun'an. There are 200 villages and towns (districts), including 31 villages, 99 towns and 70 sub-districts, with a total area of 16,596 square kilometers, including the urban area of 3,068 square kilometers.) In the last few years, population growth and development have remained rapid. Every year the number of Christians has trended upward, moreover there has also been a shift in the makeup of Christian believers; i.e., they are becoming increasingly younger and better educated and due to the increased pace of urbanization. A floating population from other places has continued to pour into the city and there is a sharply rising trend in the number of Christians from outside Hangzhou among them. A large number of Hangzhou Christians also have considerable economic clout and enhanced ideas about involvement in various social welfare undertakings; moreover many actually participate in various ways in such activities. New issues arising from this situation—the contradictions brought about by the inadequate numbers of Christian worship venues and the need for rational distribution of such venues —need to be considered. Other issues await exploration as well: management within Christian churches and organizations, the need for

ongoing improvement in the quality of believers [i.e., their education and maturity in the faith], as well as the overall quality of those in charge in Christian groups, relationships among those of different denominational backgrounds and treatment of privately run meeting points. This survey is aimed at research and analysis of Christianity in the eight urban districts of Hangzhou in the hope of providing an overall picture of its development, future trends in that development and exploring responses to ongoing Christian work.

Basic trends in the development of Christianity in Hangzhou are shown in the results of research and analysis presented in this report. Though these are trends, they may change due to changes in the times. What follows is based on analysis presented in the first part of this report and some of these trends may have shifted due to various changes.

Development Trends in Protestant Christianity in Hangzhou

1. The number of Christian believers continues to grow rapidly

Growth in the number of Hangzhou Christians can be seen in baptism statistics over the years. Though the growth is not consistent every year, we can see[1] that in the older area of the city, following the 2003 Seventh Hangzhou Christian Conference, at which a younger leadership team was installed in the Hangzhou Christian Council and TSPM, the main leaders of the city CC/TSPM

1 Table 1 in Survey Part 1. All statistics quoted in this article are set out in statistical tables with accompanying explanation in Part 1 of the survey, published in *Nanjing Theological Review* 2 (2010): 111-134.

were all young and middle-aged professional clergy. Following the Eighth Conference, June 17-18 2008, a gradual shift took place toward placing younger persons as senior pastors in all large churches in urban Hangzhou. By the end of 2008, younger clergy were to be found in all large churches. Following the dedication ceremony and initiation of formal worship in the new Chongyi Church (completed in 2005) in particular, there was a distinct rise in the number of Christians in the urban area. The intention in building the new Chongyi Church had been to alleviate the crowded conditions at other churches in that area (especially the longstanding pressures of crowding at Sicheng Church), but in fact when worship began at Chongyi Church, every church remained full on Sunday. In 2004 there were 1,050 baptized Christians in the urban area; in 2005, the number rose to 1,052, a rise of 0.19%; in 2006, there were 1,193, an increase from the previous year of 13.40%; 2007 saw a 0.59% rise to 1,200; in 2008, the total stood at 1,570, a rise of 30.83%; and in 2009, a total of 1,633 baptized Christians was recorded, a rise over 2008 of 4.12%. These figures illustrate the gradual growth in the number of Christians in Hangzhou.

From questionnaires given to Christians (including 225 evangelists) in the eight Hangzhou districts, we see that the number one reason for and path to becoming a Christian is "family." This is a very noteworthy phenomenon. It demonstrates clear family influence on an individual's conversion to Christian faith; the spread of Christianity in Hangzhou is typically "family-driven." Sociologically, the family is the smallest basic social unit. The family plays all sorts of social functions and roles: socialization, an economic function, ethnic continuity, etc., but its primary function is that of cultural transmission. This is social education. Children who grow up in a home where both parents are Christians are generally

Christians as well. There are two types of situations here: 1) both parents are believers and frequently lead their children to Christianity as well. Here the children have no opportunity to exercise their own choice in whether or not to become Christians. This is what we mean when we say "family- driven." This phenomenon is more evident among Christians in Xiaoshan district and less so among Christians in the downtown area and is subtly linked to the diversity of urban life and lifestyle.

2. *An increasing number of persons with middle and senior middle school education are becoming Christian: a clear change in the composition of believers*

Prior to the 1980s and continuing into this century, there was a decline in the number of uneducated believers and of those with only a primary school education. At the same time the number of those with junior high school education remained basically the same while those who had finished senior middle school rose slightly; the number of believers with college and undergraduate education and above was also on the rise. From the period prior to 1980 to the present, Christians with college level education grew 106.06%, while undergraduates increased 173.33%. There was also some growth in the number of post-graduates and above in the church; at the very least, this fact can be seen in the educational background of the professional clergy. Scholars of the sociology of religion have found that in religious circles in China at present a special group has emerged—an "intellectual elite." For example, Prof. Chen Cunfu 陈村富 of Zhejiang University has written that the emergence of such an elite has been seen in major cities—Beijing, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Guangzhou and Nanjing. Though such an intellectual elite among Christians is not large at present, and comprises mainly those at universities,

hospitals, research institutes and joint Chinese-foreign enterprises, some are also found in schools.[2] Observational study shows that this group not only exists but that the trend is toward quiet growth. Part of this group of Christians goes to registered and recognized church (es)[3] to take part in worship and other activities; another fairly large part, who feel unable to get the help they need from the established churches, have their own independent and self-organized Christian meetings. Specific statistical data and analysis of this trend awaits specialized research.

3. The number of financially strong Christians among believers is gradually increasing

There is a view current in academic circles that in

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2 Chen Cunfu, 转型期中的中国基督教—浙江基督教 (Chinese Christianity in Transition—Zhejiang Case Studies) (Dongfang chubanshe, 2005), 51-52. Dr. Chen presented a paper in English on his research on Catholic Churches in Wenzhou, Zhejiang at a meeting of the US Catholic China Bureau. The paper discusses boss Christians and other trends and can be accessed online at http://www.usccb.net/conference/conference20/ChristianCommunitiesChen.pdf. He describes "boss Christians" as "young, well-educated, with a wide field of vision, capable of managing things and rich." *Constructing China's Jerusalem: Christians, Power, and Place in Contemporary Wenzhou* by the anthropologist Nanlai Cao focuses on similar trends in Wenzhou as well (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011). A number of reviews can be found online, such as http://chinaperspectives.revues.org/5911 and http://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/constructing-chinas-jerusalem-christians-power-and-place-contemporary-wenzhou. [—ed. note]

3 The author uses the terms jianzhi jiaohui 建制教会 and fei jianzhi jiaohui 非建制教会 to distinguish these two types of places of worship. The first, *jianzhi jiaohui*, literally institutional church, refers to registered and recognized churches, while the second *fei jianzhi jiaohui*, or non-institutional churches, refers to unregistered places of worship. This translation uses registered and unregistered to avoid confusion in English--ed.

some medium and large Chinese cities, especially those in coastal provinces, two groups of Christian believers are quietly on the rise: the previously mentioned intellectual elite and the "boss Christians" (what Western scholarship calls "city Christians"), indicating that the number of Christians with economic clout is rising. Though it is very difficult to gather statistics on this for Hangzhou Christianity, the indicators can be seen in several circumstances. One is that in downtown Hangzhou, large churches have been experiencing a rise in income for the calendar year. This is especially noticeable in the monthly donation statements for these churches. As long as they do not embark on any really major undertakings, these churches' finances are not only sufficient to cover regular expenditure, but are healthy enough to show a surplus. The second is that in recent years, investment in "hardware," that is, facilities and equipment, has been very visible in Hangzhou Christianity. Chengbei Church has undertaken reconstruction of its surrounding property, Chongyi Church has been completed, the renovations at Gulou (Drum Tower) Church have been finished, major repairs have been done at Tianshui Church and the second phase of construction at the Hangzhou Christian Nursing Home has begun, etc. All these are projects that required major funding for completion. Boss Christians have given considerable financial support to such "hardware" projects, especially in the construction of Chongyi Church. The Christians in this group generally have greater financial strength. They are a very important force in construction of hardware in Hangzhou Christianity, as well as for the development of its charitable enterprises. Finally, Hangzhou Christians have formed some "fellowships for business people." These Christian business people use business-style methods to gather and discuss how to play a greater role in economic and social construction. There

are also some churches that had formed special meetings for Christian business people and Christian entrepreneurs,[4] for training and sharing activities around Christian attitudes toward finances. In 2008, the Hangzhou CC / TSPM held its Sixth Forum on Theological Reconstruction on the theme "Strive to bring into play Christians' role in economic and social construction and development." A number of Christian entrepreneurs participated and also spoke to the theme of the forum. All this fully illustrates that Hangzhou Christianity today is already reflecting on a number of cutting-edge global topics. Of course there are prerequisites for such discussion. Moreover, the intellectual elite and the boss Christians generally have wider knowledge and experience, are more open-minded, have a broader capacity for action, and broader social contacts. These special characteristics play an important role in the construction and development of Hangzhou Christianity today.

4. Christians continue to increase in the area around Hangzhou

Increased numbers of rural people emigrating to the cities and the rapid pace of urbanization inevitably results not only in increased participation of people from elsewhere who now work in other professions and industries in Hangzhou, but makes itself felt in the course of development in Hangzhou's Protestant churches as well. Of the 1,321 valid questionnaires returned, 273, or 20.67% indicated residence outside the city; moreover, along with the development of economic construction, the level of openness in the entire society is increasingly

4 For example, such meetings were organized by Chongyi Church during the global economic crisis with very good results.

greater and the number of "outsiders" among Hangzhou Christians is gradually increasing as well. This group of believers consists primarily of new arrivals in Hangzhou who have settled there for work; a young and middle-aged group who came to Hangzhou for education and settled there after graduation; people from outside who now reside in Hangzhou and have joined churches there, making up the core of those at youth meetings at some churches, and a large number of those who participate in the various ministries of Hangzhou Christianity (a large number of core lay volunteers). There is also quite a large number of parents who have joined the Christians there when their children venture to Hangzhou. Such Christians can be found in all the large churches. Also included are those who come to start businesses and migrant workers, who are usually to be found on the fringes of the urban area. Some churches and meeting points in Hangzhou have already shown concern for and launched pastoral work among believers who have moved to Hangzhou from elsewhere. For example on traditional holidays like Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival, Sicheng Church and Gongcheng Church have special meetings, enabling these Christians from outside Hangzhou not to feel anxious or left out during holidays. They bring them the warmth of home. At the same time, believers with special skills to offer are encouraged to take part in caring for these special groups; for example, one Hangzhou Christian started a "Chongyi Clinic" just to serve migrant workers. The response was very good. Some other Christian entrepreneurs opened a school for migrants, or gave special condolence payments to migrant workers in difficulty, and so on.

There is an upward trend in private meeting points and unregistered churches.[5]

It is impossible to find in-depth information regarding the circumstances of unregistered churches in Hangzhou. The Hangzhou CC/TSPM has not done any investigation or study in this area, and in fact any attempt to study it meets with a great deal of difficulty. On the one hand, how can the Hangzhou CC/TSPM truly make contact with the unregistered churches? There are not enough opportunities or platforms to initiate sharing and dialogue at present. On the other hand, it may be that the unregistered churches retain some unusual ideas that block such an undertaking. Add to this the fact that the Hangzhou CC/TSPM currently lacks sufficient personnel and energy for the task and there is simply no way to undertake such a study.

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5 In Part 1 of the survey, the author provides definitions of several terms used in his analysis: 1)"non-institutional church" 非建制教会 refers to those that have not registered with government authorities and do not have a government issued registration certificate as a religious worship venue. Frequently they have no set place to gather, with the church relocating according to the believers' needs. They can set up a church anywhere and their work is not subject to government ministries' referrals or filings. 2)"house church" 家庭聚会 is a traditional term. Today most scholars and the CCC/TSPM do not use the term, preferring "unregistered church" instead, meaning one that has not been approved or registered. 3)"privately run or established meeting points" 私设聚会点 refers to a situation in which a considerable number of believers with a convenor 主持人, hold a collective religious gathering at a set time in a place that has not been registered. Most people involved in such meeting points refer to them as "house churches." Actually, the essential characteristic of such private meeting points is that they are unregistered, not that they are "house" churches. These privately run meeting points are often associated with self-styled preachers. These preachers' antecedents, training, political background, education, religious attainments and personal qualities tend to vary widely.

As to understanding and analysis of private meeting points and unregistered churches, in this essay appropriate reflections can only be based on consideration of ideas and conditions, or on consulting the findings of others. For example, drawing on the analysis of conditions in unregistered meeting points in Shanghai by Shanghai scholar Zhang Hua 张化, we can make conjectures about conditions of unregistered meeting points in Hangzhou.[6] Since Hangzhou and Shanghai are geographically close and there is frequent interaction between the two, Shanghai's situation can serve as a reference for that of Hangzhou. We may then appropriately undertake some simple analysis. For a more in-depth study, we would have to respect principles of academic norms and not make blind assertions. The rather rapid development of unregistered churches, including the distribution of Protestant meeting points, differs greatly from the traditional model.

Looking at the nation as a whole, the indications are that private meeting points or house churches and unregistered churches will continue to spread. In some areas, the number of people involved has already surpassed the number of Christians in churches with links to area CCC/TSPMs. This of course is not true in Hangzhou; furthermore, there are a considerable number of people who take part in meetings in both the registered and unregistered churches.

Analysis shows a variety of reasons why these private meeting points and unregistered churches are developing. The large numbers of people who follow where urban expansion leads and those who relocate to large-scale residential developments naturally includes Christians. They find it inconvenient to go to the downtown churches for services, so they form their own meeting points. Others

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6 See www.pacilution.com/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=1972.

feel that they do not get "spiritual sustenance" in the big churches; they want "to be filled with spiritual food." Still others feel they cannot be satisfied in the registered churches: the activities there are rather dull and provide very few opportunities to interact with others. Another complaint is that the quality of the professional clergy is too low; they cannot meet the daily-lengthening list of believers' demands. At times dissatisfaction may be due to differing views, or the influence of past denominational association. There are cases with foreign background involved. The number of such people may not necessarily be large, but their influence on the church, their impact or even threat to it, is not small. Most of these are in the city center area, especially around university campuses, or near office buildings with a preponderance of young white-collar workers, or among foreign-funded enterprises.

The social contribution and positive function of Hangzhou Christianity cannot be ignored. There are a great many outstanding Hangzhou Protestants, including intellectuals, entrepreneurs and business people spread throughout society in businesses and industries, who already play a positive role. For example, during the aftermath of the May 12, 2008 earthquake in Wenchuan, Sichuan, the Hangzhou CC/TSPM immediately mobilized every church and meeting point to hold prayers and collect donations for the disaster victims. City churches contributed 5,000,000 RMB. Adding individual and Christian entrepreneurs' donations would bring the total to over 10,000,000 RMB.

Analysis of the results of our questionnaires illustrates why this is the case. Question 25 asks: "Do you think the church should participate in social service?" In the 225 questionnaires received from evangelists, 211 respondents or 93.7%, answered yes. And in the forums held on survey

results,[7] many Christians who spoke mentioned that the church should actively participate in projects to care for society. The fifth forum question was: "How can we bring into play and integrate all of the resources of Hangzhou Christianity to make a greater contribution to the whole society and to economic construction?" Some discussants said that we should actively mobilize the outstanding aspects of Christian ethics, thus witnessing to harmony for the whole society. Others said the most outstanding thing about Christianity was contained in the word "love"; with "love" the whole society would be stable, a necessity for social development. The whole society today—every sector—needs love, and the church has an enormous ability to contribute love to society. The church has an invisible effect and contribution in all aspects and a very important

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7 In addition to the statistical analysis based on the survey, fourteen forums were held in Hangzhou churches to discuss the findings. Each church hosted two forums: one composed of lay believers and one composed of clergy and other church leaders. Each group of about ten persons included a team leader, a recorder and a discussion facilitator. The lay believers discussed the following questions: 1) What have been your experiences and feelings since becoming a Christian? 2) What are your suggestions and comments with regard to the management of the church/meeting point? 3) What do you think are the pressing issues at present in the development of Christianity in Hangzhou? Questions posed to the teams of clergy and leaders were 1) What have been your experiences and feelings since becoming a Christian? 2) What are your suggestions and comments with regard to the management of the church/meeting point? 3) What pastoral care management strategy should the church pursue in the midst of rapid urbanization? 4) What do you think are the pressing issues at present in the development of Christianity in Hangzhou? 5) How can the resources of Hangzhou Christianity be mobilized and integrated to make a greater contribution to social and economic construction? 6) How can the relationship among denominations be coordinated? 7) How can we improve our work with regard to the "unregistered" (house church, privately run meeting points and university student fellowships)? Or, what is our responsibility to the "unregistered" church? [—ed. note]

stabilizing effect on society. Some discussants felt that although from one angle it appeared that Christianity had not directly produced great economic benefit, in bringing into play its outstanding positive ethics, especially in the process of urbanization and building a harmonious society, it had much to offer. Even government and government offices that approve land for church buildings are indirectly making a contribution to social harmony. Some people felt that the history of Christianity showed its huge role in the economic development of an entire society, something that is especially clear in ideas about economic development and reasonable finances. In changing or adapting people's views of economics, in guiding people toward proper views of wealth, Christianity had made huge contributions; for example, in the Puritans' view of money,[8] which continues even now to make an essential contribution to economic development and construction.

During the forum there was an extremely clear and strong call by some believers and leaders for engaging in the social welfare enterprise. This marks a change in awareness: previously many Christians held that faith was only a personal matter, but now an increasing number of people have come to realize that although personal existence and personal faith are private matters, they also have an important social aspect in interaction with others in society.

Hangzhou Christianity is constantly encouraging its believers to make their contribution to economic and social construction. Projects in which believers are already engaged include: organizing repeated visits by well-known doctors from large city hospitals to rural areas to give medical advice and hold clinics; organizing funds to

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8 Most clearly expressed in John Wesley's famous three rules about money: Earn all you can; save all you can; give all you can.

build roads of "love" in minority townships; organizing several hundred believers from the city to take part in The Caring Foundation as messengers of love; joining with the Hangzhou YW/YMCA to hold "youth cares service centers" to develop activities to serve the people. Care extends to senior citizens as well: 130 senior citizens have already moved into the Hangzhou Christian Nursing Home (Phase 1) in Beicheng Village, Dingqiao Town, where they are receiving excellent care. The nursing home has been widely praised by the residents and their families, all sectors of society and government departments. To increase facilities at the nursing home, construction was begun on Phase 2 on March 30, 2009, with a plan to add 310 superior beds to increase capacity. The Hangzhou Christian Nursing Home makes a powerful contribution to the care of the elderly in Hangzhou.

In recent years, a number of books on Theological Reconstruction have come out of forums on the subject held by the Hangzhou CC/TSPM. Beijing Religious Culture Publisher has produced *A Life of Love* and *Witness to Love*, both of which contribute to a growing awareness of engagement in social and economic construction among Hangzhou Christians. These publications serve as beautiful witnesses. The Hangzhou city CC/TSPM (including district, city and county CC/TSPM), all exhort Christians to actively contribute to society. During the global and domestic financial crisis, Hangzhou Christianity became actively engaged, willingly bearing that hardship in common with society. This behavior fully reflects the modern demeanor of Hangzhou Christianity and is a phenomenon that should not be overlooked by the wider society.

Issues in Hangzhou Christianity

Though Hangzhou Christianity is enjoying smooth and natural development overall, the rather rapid pace of that development has naturally led to some problems. Moreover, these problems naturally become both opportunities and challenges for Protestant Christianity.

1. Sites for religious activity cannot meet ongoing demand

Though in recent years Christian circles in Hangzhou have constructed numerous new churches and renovated other sites, with the annual increase in baptisms each year throughout the churches and demands for even more venues brought about by continuing initiation of new work, the number of venues falls far short of ongoing need. That is to say, since the 1990s, the number of venues for meeting points has not kept pace with the growth in the number of Christians. Conditions in some districts are more egregious; for example the statistical figures provided by the Xiaoshan District Christian Council show 140,000 Christians, yet there has been no improvement to date in the longstanding situation regarding meeting point venues. As far as the eight districts of Hangzhou are concerned, there are 210,594 Christians, with at present 203 venues for worship and other activities. If these were evenly distributed, each meeting point would have to accommodate 1,037 Christians. However, the number of venues in the Hangzhou area that can accommodate over 1,000 Christians is miniscule. Overall, Christian venues are not as yet able to keep up with the growth in Christian numbers or with growth in existing activities. This problem was raised at some of the forums held in conjunction with this survey. Local Christians are numerous and meeting point venues always insufficient. Among the large churches

in the Hangzhou urban area there have been improvements in recent years. But Christians need to hold all sorts of activities, including worship every Sunday. Though most churches hold three services of worship on Sunday, they are always overcrowded. Many Christian activities cannot be held due to the limitations of venues or space.

Property rights for many Christian venues are unclear or not specifically defined and rights of use are uncertain. Protestant Christianity began to grow during the era of Reform and Opening Up, but without external funding the process of establishing a venue was generally subject to temporary lease or fixed lease, leased land or purchase of land (access to land) on which a simple structure was built, followed by construction of a regular church. When urban renewal brought large-scale construction projects, a thorny and inescapable crisis arose for these venues. As the integration of Hangzhou's urban and rural areas speeded up and population density and industry in suburban and urban areas underwent huge changes, the time came when Christian venues had to relocate. Though many meeting points had certificates of registration as religious venues, they did not know what to do when faced with demolition. Government departments in charge of religion and the Hangzhou CC/TSPM frequently racked their brains over this. There was no reasonable solution. Because property rights were unclear and obtaining an indemnification difficult, social contradictions were produced or exacerbated during the relocation process that affected Christian interests. Many churches for whom the process of obtaining the necessary three certificates (proof of building ownership certificate; proof of land use right certificate; title deed) had been reasonably near completion, were faced with a new difficulty and for a variety of reasons could not complete the process in a timely way. As a result, in Hangzhou, both in the urban

area and other city districts, only a tiny minority of venues were in possession of a complete set of proof of land use rights, proof of building ownership, and title deeds. If the prospect of relocation arises again in the future, Christian legal interests will once more face the possibility of inability to procure guarantees and Christianity's development needs will be stymied.

2. The lack of trained Christian clergy and the nonstop growth of Christianity

Looking at the overall development of Christianity in Hangzhou, it is clear that there is still a shortage of all sorts of trained personnel. Beginning with an analysis of the numbers, the eight Hangzhou districts have a total of 210,594 Christians and a total of 205 evangelists 传道人 (pastors 牧师, Teachers 教师, elders 长老,[9] evangelists 传道员),[10] making the ratio of evangelists to believers 1:1027. If we calculate on the basis of greater Hangzhou, with its 279,733 Christians, the certified number of evangelists in the first half of last year was 355; a ratio of one evangelist to every 788 believers. But whether we look at the figure for the eight urban districts or for greater Hangzhou, the burden of work and the pressures on evangelists are enormous in both. A heavy work burden easily leads to pressure and spiritual exhaustion. One very important reason for this is that there truly is a shortage of pastoral workers. Moreover full-time pastoral workers are unevenly distributed. Some churches and meeting points have a fairly large number of clergy and pastoral workers,

9 In some Chinese Christian traditions that do not have an ordained ministry, the position of Elder is comparable to that of pastor-ed.

10 This figure is that issued in the first half of 2008 by the Hangzhou CC/TSPM, its first certified figure. There were some evangelists who were not yet counted in this total of 205.

while some have not a single full-time clergy. The shortage of personnel is still a problem for Christian circles and a concern for the relevant government departments. Though since the 2003 Seventh Hangzhou Christian Conference, the transition to younger staff and the shift to a new generation of leadership has basically been completed, Hangzhou Christianity is still experiencing a shortage of young and middle-aged personnel.

It is not only numbers of personnel but the quality of personnel that is far from adequate. Quite a few seminary candidates have passed the university entrance exam and some see "pastor" as simply a kind of profession. We can expect them to mature quite rapidly with several years of seminary training and years of service in the church. But in terms of their shouldering responsibility, they still need to improve in the two areas of love for country and love for church, in social and cultural knowledge, in specialized Christian knowledge and even in their capacity to reflect on Theological Reconstruction. They need improvement in all these areas, the more so because the demands the churches themselves place on evangelists continue to rise. Evangelists' responses to questions 23-30 reflect the fact that there are still inadequacies; for example: seven respondents to question 24 still feel that there is no need for administrative management; 19 respondents to question 26, 8.44% of 225 evangelists, still feel that the church need not consider diversifying its methods of evangelism; 6 respondents to question 28 still feel there is no need to undertake Theological Reconstruction. To some extent these responses also illustrate that Christian evangelists in Hangzhou need to continue to improve their quality in all areas.

Additionally, in all areas, the issue of evangelists' lack of knowledge and experience needs to be addressed. The reasons for this situation lie in the fact that generally speaking most of the people Christian evangelists come

in contact with are also Christians; such encounters offer no occasion to learn something new. There is an urgent need for training and improvement in areas such as work procedures and norms and the ability to take action.

3. There are also management issues within Christianity itself that need to be resolved

There are also issues of management in Hangzhou Christianity that need strengthening and improvement. First, the traditional Christian view and phenomenon that Christianity itself does not require administrative management needs to change. The current survey reveals that of the 225 evangelists surveyed, 196 or 87.11%, felt that administrative management of Christianity was necessary; 7 respondents or 3.11% felt that it was not necessary; while 6 respondents or 2.67% did not know whether it was or not; 5 respondents or 2.22% felt that it did not matter; and 11 respondents or 4.89% left the question blank. From the records of the survey forum it can be seen that there were also a few who felt that administrative management within Christianity was unnecessary. Their concept of what this meant was quite shallow, their reasoning being that the manager of Christianity should be God. This view was especially prevalent among Christians from the Xiaoshan district. There were also some people who felt that changes in the management team and other sorts of procedures were unnecessary within the management of churches and meeting points, since Christians serve God their whole lives. Precisely because of this view it is widely true that the age of those in management is quite elevated in many churches and meeting points. In fact, management is a necessity in any profession and management within Christianity is no exception.

Second, there are no standard management procedures in Hangzhou Christianity: procedures for getting things done do not exist or are not known. Some places are still dominated by a single voice; some meetings in Christianity are useless, or meetings are held but decisions are not executed; thus there are the outward appurtenances of a meeting but no substance; in some places no one knows how to call a meeting. There are churches and meeting points where general meetings have been held, but nothing has been carried out according to the intention of the meeting, including having no way to implement procedures such as changes in legal persons or delaying until change is impossible.

Again, a rather thorny issue is the chaos in financial management. On the one hand, this is the result of having no sound financial system in place, such that management is carried out on the basis of finance-related laws and regulations; things like IOUs and multiple signatures for reimbursement are serious phenomena. On the other hand, many churches have not maintained a practice of doing audits for a long time; in fact, because financial management is in chaos, the books are not standardized and thus it is fundamentally very difficult to undertake an audit. The prevalence of erroneous views of financial management is fairly serious. Many leaders and important persons in churches feel that basically finances do not need to be audited. This is in fact one of the causes of the financial chaos within Christianity. In addition, many churches and meeting points do not have bank accounts: donations received are kept in someone's individual account. In terms of financial management, this is a huge no-no (and in fact is a violation of the law). There are too many loopholes and occasions for abuse. Actually such an approach to financial management is terribly unsecure. Further, there are some churches and meeting points where

the level of those who take part in financial management is quite limited: they have no qualifications in financial management and have no idea of standard practices. There are even financial managers who have not grasped the most basic skills of financial management—writing checks, issuing receipts, etc.—and they do a great deal of damage.

4. Different denominationational traditions must find a path to coexistence

Beginning in 1958, Chinese Christianity, including in Hangzhou, put into practice a united form of worship. Following the institution of united worship, the majority of Christian believers no longer insisted on features special to their original denominational affiliation, were no longer self-contained organizationally, did not carry on activities under the name of their former denominations, nor publish materials reflecting their denominational background. Futhermore, once the Hangzhou Gulou (Drumtower) Church reopened for worship in 1979, mutual respect in faith matters and the principle of seeking unity while reserving differences was maintained, in order to consolidate church unity and solidarity and appropriately satisfy different faith practices. Even today Seventh Day Adventists gather on Saturdays at Sicheng Church for their Rite of Humility. Seventh Day Adventists also ordain pastors, teachers and elders who hold to Seventh Day Adventist beliefs; the Seventh Day Adventist Wenxin Meeting Point also selects young believers to attend Zhejiang Seminary to pursue advanced studies and serve as back up for their clergy and pastoral workers. Out of respect for their special faith characteristics, Sabbath services are also arranged at the Gongchen Church for Hangzhou believers who formerly belonged to the True

Jesus Church; ways are found to arrange baptisms in the river. The Chengxiang Church in Xiaoshan district also arranges special meetings for Christians with different faith characteristics. These collective Christian activities for those from different denominational backgrounds are managed by the district Christian Council or by the Hangzhou City CC/TSPM. These groups manage their finances independently. When the Hangzhou Christian Conference meets, appropriate arrangements are made for participation by those leaders of different denominational backgrounds: some serve as committee members, others as members of the Standing Committee.

Overall, taking the situation in Hangzhou as a whole into account, it should be possible to resolve the issue of denominational traditions and coexistence among denominations fairly harmoniously. However, each of these denominations with different faith backgrounds has its own development needs, and over time, their demands increase. Another dimension of this that differences in dogma and teachings do exist among believers of different faith backgrounds, and these differences are to some extent fundamental to their nature. When these different believers gather in the same church, meeting point or venue it is impossible to avoid some unfortunate situations: denominations try to "steal" those of other denominational backgrounds, or unfriendly "debates" might arise. Because both sides want to emphasize their own faith characteristics and their "spiritualness," and because they have tentative plans to buy land and build a church, or others have already privately opened meeting points elsewhere, gradual alienation from the CC/TSPM may result. We may add to the mix the Xiaoshan "guilds" and meeting places and other such churches of different backgrounds among which contradictions may

at times arise.[11] How to deal with the issue of Christians of different backgrounds in the church is a difficult issue facing the church today and one the Hangzhou CC/TSPM finds particularly hard. Government departments dealing with religion must pay attention to this issue.

Other issues which no one in Christian circles has yet touched on or devised ways to deal with include the unregistered churches, private meeting points and some rather diffuse Christian student fellowships. Specialized research remains to be done on these.

Hangzhou Christian Development Strategy

1. Continued improvement in hardware; reasonable distribution of Christian worship venues

Due to the rapid growth in the Christian population in Hangzhou, and because Christians are not equally distributed in districts and counties (municipalities), thought must be given to the need for appropriate additions to the number of venues for Christian worship. The rapid pace of urbanization makes this especially urgent. As needed additions are made to the number of worship venues, consideration should also be given to rational distribution of such venues and to increasing their size. Many churches want to initiate needed work but do not have sufficient space or venues. In addition to building up software, churches also need hardware facilities to carry

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11 At present there are three groups among Christians in the Xiaoshan district: 1) *gonghui*公会 or guild Christians. This refers to churches formed by Christians who had a distinct mission board background at the time united worship was instituted in 1958; this is their name for themselves, a special term particular to Xiaoshan district; 2) church Christians with a meeting point background; and 3) Seventh Day Adventists.

out their work, including worship space and office space. Without such a base, it will be very difficult to keep up with the increasing work. This is a major reason for the growth of private meeting points or unregistered churches. When increasing the number of venues, consideration should be given to factors such as achieving balanced distribution in the districts as well as the concentration of Christians in a particular place.

Hangzhou Christianity is also facing the need to resolve the three types of certification for buildings and property of some existing worship venues. This requires special care on the part of relevant government departments in taking into account the actual situation of Christianity in addressing their worries.

In this thorny issue of appropriate increase in the number of venues based on the current situation of Christianity, some conceptual adjustments must first take place among in-charge departments and relevant government departments. Although from one point of view, the development of Christianity and the increase in its venues does not seem to have directly produced huge economic benefits, by bringing into play its fine ethics and morals, Christianity can play its positive role, and indirectly make a great contribution to society. This includes in particular its stabilizing role. It thus has a great deal to contribute in creating a harmonious society during the process of urbanization. Even the government and government departments dealing with religion indirectly contribute to social harmony in approving land for Christian church construction.

To sum up, there is a need for specialized study and analysis before it is possible to consider the overall situation with regard to increasing the number of Christian worship venues in order to implement policy.

2. The training of Christian personnel must be intensified to enable Christian work to proceed normally

There is a dearth of full-time Christian evangelists in Hangzhou, and at the same time the quality of these evangelists stands in urgent need of improvement. Not only do some large churches need adequately trained people, even meeting points must consider attracting full-time Christian clergy to participate in management and church ministries.

To this end, the Hangzhou CC/TSPM should encourage each church and meeting points to train and attract personnel on the basis of their actual situations. The Hangzhou CC/TSPM should help these bodies to update their thinking in regard to the hiring of personnel in an appropriate and timely manner. Some churches and meeting points are not willing to train and hire people. They feel their church or meeting point has no need of full-time evangelists for church management or pastoral care. Of course the reasons for this are rather complicated. It may be that some lay volunteers (including lay persons in charge or lay leaders) are afraid that once these full-time clergy and pastoral workers are in, they will threaten these lay leaders' own position. Or it may be that they are not willing to pay these full-time evangelists' salaries, or that they are afraid the church cannot afford it, and so on. The Hangzhou CC/TSPM can assist churches and meeting points in these concerns by ensuring standards in training and hiring and in ensuring candidates' quality, availability and relatively long-term service to the church.

Religious affairs departments can consider setting up platforms and requirements for Christian training and hiring of personnel. For example, in introducing personnel from elsewhere in the country, assistance would be needed in change of residence procedures and so on.

There is also a need for increased management in hiring and using personnel; for example, when necessary this should be linked to the preacher/evangelist's attendance and performance. Otherwise, continued growth in full-time staff could create the common problem of "eating from the same big pot." Or the church might become unable to pay the living expenses of its full-time staff or fulfill their necessary social benefits. These are improvements that Hangzhou CC/TSPM and all Hangzhou district, county (municipal) CC/TSPMs should conscientiously consider and boldly undertake. They are also complex and important matters Christianity should reflect on in the course of its own institutional reforms.

In this day and age, the notion of a personnel shortage is much different from what it was twenty or thirty years ago. Then it was purely a matter of numbers. Today we have growth in numbers but still need all sorts of outstanding talent, individuals with specialized talents (for example, ministers of music and of literature, ministers engaged in Christian literature work, individuals with language talents—ability in English or other languages—clerical administration and logistical matters, etc., who are professional and versatile. Church personnel must raise their standards in a timely manner, for today's Christianity requires both all-round ability and professionalism.

The mere fact that talented persons are trained and on board does not mean all will be smooth sailing from hereon in. There is the matter of follow-up training and further study and improvement in order to improve quality in all areas. Only in this way can we adapt to the times and the needs of development. Christianity today needs high-quality individuals (quality Christian professionals with political quality, education, etc.) to be involved in management, church affairs and ministries who are able to meet the developmental needs of Christianity itself.

Only in this way can the church attract and unite Christian believers to work for harmony in both society and the church.

The Hangzhou CC/TSPM began establishing Christian training centers in 2003 and these have played an important role in training lay volunteers and lay leaders. This work must be maintained and strengthened and the quality of teaching improved to enable it to deliver more lay workers of a high quality to Hangzhou Christianity. This work must continue over the long-term, for it can to a certain extent offset the shortcomings of full-time evangelists.

Looking at this matter of training and hiring of personnel within the process of urbanization, we can also consider bringing in a considerable number of persons from other areas and provinces to take part in local Christian work and in this way we can attend to the needs of the floating population.

3. Management in the churches needs to be strengthened and standardized

The work of managing Christianity is a long-term work. At whatever level of government, the government department in charge and the Hangzhou CC/TSPM must give management more attention and create more platforms for guidance and training.

First of all, the work of managing Christianity must make timely conceptual adjustments. From the forum we learned that some Christians, even including a minority of full-time evangelists, still feel that Christianity does not require management. One can find this concretely reflected in the survey statistics. Every profession and sector in society needs administrative management. Christianity is part of the whole society and so naturally also requires this

type of management. The Hangzhou CC/TSPM should pay attention to improving the level and skill of church management, internally as well as throughout the churches.

At present the management of Christianity in downtown Hangzhou and the management work of the Hangzhou CC/TSPM is relatively more standardized, but in each district and county (city) management is relatively weaker. This is due to a shortage of office space, as well as a relatively small number of permanent staff. Office procedures are also relatively weak. Therefore, the task of managing Hangzhou Christianity in a situation where the number of Christians continues to rise is increasingly important.

In addition to improving its own overall quality, those involved in internal Christian management should study advanced management experience and knowledge in the broader society, including with regard to institutional construction, oversight mechanisms and so on. At the same time, the management of Christianity is not only a system question; making management humane must also be considered. Christianity should have a real pioneering and progressive spirit in management.

Standardization of procedures should be urged in managing Christian churches and meeting points. In financial management especially, national financial regulations should be put into operation. We must consider that Christianity is a part of society and thus its financial management needs to be standardized; it cannot use its special nature as a religious organization as an excuse not to implement necessary management and standards. At the same time the fact that Christianity is a religion must be considered: as a non-profit, a self-supporting body, it rates appropriate concern, and should get tax breaks and tax-free preferential treatment.

4. Uniting and guiding groups with different denominational traditions and unregistered churches must be addressed

Different denominational traditions and unregistered churches in Hangzhou require study and discussion by the Hangzhou CC/TSPM with the religious affairs administrative department to act as intermediary. Along with the deepening of political institutional reform in China, the government should transform its functions, primarily in accordance with public law and regulations, to carry out its management function; limits on government administrative action must be standardized. Moreover, it is necessary to continually improve democracy and transparency in these areas. The management of religious affairs is no exception. What religious management departments manage according to law are religious affairs that involve national interests and social public interests. Religious management departments and religious bodies are not in a subordinate administrative relationship; these departments cannot be involved in concrete affairs of Christian churches, but should allow religious bodies to carry out institutional management according to their charters.

A minority of meeting points of different denominational backgrounds have a certification of registration as a venue for religious worship on record with the religious affairs departments (such as the Seventh Day Adventists' Wenxin Meeting Point), while others have no such certificate on record (such as the Seventh Day Adventist group that meets on Saturday afternoons in the Sicheng Church and the True Jesus Church Christian Meeting Point that meets on Saturday afternoon in the Gongchen Church in Gongshu district, neither of which has its own recorded certificate of registration). First of

all, lack of a registration certificate gives the members of these meeting points the feeling that they are doing something slightly disreputable, that their name does not ring true. Such issues today should be appropriately discussed and studied: is there after all some kind of relatively rational management method that can be applied? Is it possible for the religious management departments to consider broadening their thinking on this issue of groups with different denominational traditions, so that there might be independent meeting sites based on need and denominational characteristics? Religious affairs departments need to research and strive for this. At the same time, prior to this step being taken, it is necessary for the CCC/TSPM to expand its inclusivity, further enhance its functions of organization, coordination, service, guidance, etc., in order to gradually strengthen its legitimate representativeness. Having different denominations meeting in one church is not necessarily in and of itself united worship. We should carefully consider that although different denominational traditions share the same faith, differences do after all exist in terms of tradition and certain dogmas and that adhering to these traditions and dogmas is often a matter of preserving the fundamentals of a denomination—otherwise it would cease to exist. In dealing with the different Christian denominations then, the departments in charge of religious work should begin with the reality and consider whether there should be independent meeting sites. This stance would be more conducive to coordination and respect among denominational traditions and to their common development. At the same time it would be a contribution to harmony in society.

The issue of unregistered churches or privately established meeting points is increasingly showing itself to be important and urgent. In recent years, the issue has

become a hot topic in academic circles in the sociology of religion. But until now it has been limited to calling for changes in awareness and including it as part of management; at present no good policy that can be put into operation has emerged. For a long time the existence of unregistered churches or privately run meeting points has been a fact, but there has not been any sort of oversight. This can never be a good way to manage things. The various levels of Christian Councils and TSPMs have hardly had any contact with the issue and it seems they do not dare to and cannot decide what on earth should be done. Management of these two, the unregistered churches and the privately run meeting points, would require a change in the management methods of religious affairs departments. Just who would manage this "vacancy" is a question that needs to be explored. Those "meeting points" that are willing to be included into the CCC/TSPM system could establish contact with the local churches, adopting the "church with attached meeting point" model. But it should be admitted that there are a considerable number of persons in privately run meeting points or unregistered churches who are unwilling to come under the "CCC/TSPM" system. There has to be another way for them.

For these unregistered churches and privately run meeting points, analysis and treatment can proceed on the basis of their concrete situations. Approval and registration can be considered for meeting points where conditions have matured, and they can be brought into the normal scope of management. It is also necessary for relevant government departments to strengthen everyone's awareness of the laws and regulations. At the same time, thought must be given to this question: What in these meeting points requires management? The scope of management should include education for those in charge of the meeting point in laws, regulations

and policies and regulation of their behavior. The bottom line is compliance with the law. From the angle of maintaining social order, (religious) activities that obstruct social, production or everyday order must be prevented. Religions must be required to maintain good relations with those around them; when necessary administrative measures can be taken to stop obstructive behavior. With regard to social safety, political safety, fire safety, church safety, it is necessary to ensure the safety of the meeting points' buildings, along with fire and health precautions. The leader in charge must be responsible to prevent any incident that would endanger public safety. In matters of finance, a long perspective must be taken, undertaking guidance and reminders to manage and follow financial regulations and take preventive measures.

Conclusion

From the planning stages to research work, this survey and analysis of Christianity in Hangzhou was carried out very conscientiously. The study of the current situation of Christianity in Hangzhou, with its developmental trends and policies has an obvious special significance against the larger background of a period of social transition in the whole of China's political economy. The greatest effort went into this survey, from the questionnaire design, setting the forum questions and the training of survey staff, distribution and retrieval of the questionnaire, statistical summary and follow-up research work.

We hope this research truthfully reflects the real situation of Christianity in Hangzhou, that the future trends of development in Hangzhou Christianity can be seen in it, and that we were able to point out appropriate possible strategies. We also hope that it will be helpful to relevant

government departments and Hanghzou City Christian circles in their own research, both in prompting religious management departments and other social researchers to undertake special research in Christianity, and prompting Hangzhou City CC/TSPM to play a positive role in Christianity's own development. Hangzhou Christianity should actively reflect internally on how to improve their own work in these constantly changing times, including such questions as how to undertake pastoral care for the rapidly rising floating population formed during the urbanization process. Every leader in Hangzhou Christian circles has the responsibility and the obligation to vigorously promote the positive factors in Christian culture and encourage believers to work hard to study and grasp modern scientific cultural knowledge in order to make their proper contribution to raising the whole people's quality in these areas, developing the socialist cultural enterprise and building a harmonious society.

Due to specific difficulties and inadequacies in this study, and existing limitations on research into Christianity, separate research projects are needed on the study of issues concerning different denominations and specialized study of privately run meeting points and unregistered churches. We hope to attract others to the field through this survey and draw the attention of more scholars to the work of Hangzhou Christianity, including religious affairs departments, academic circles and Christian Councils and TSPMs at all levels, as well as all sectors of society.

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